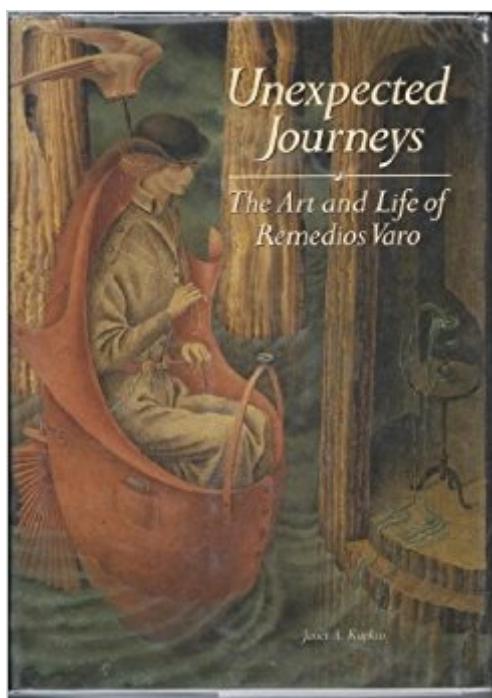


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# UNEXPECTED JOURNEYS: The Art And Life Of Remedios Varo



## **Synopsis**

This is a biography of Remedios Varo, a Surrealist painter based on interviews with the artist's family, close friends and fellow artists. The author also draws on the family's extensive archives and research in Mexico, Europe and North Africa. From her wandering childhood in Spain to her final years of intense creativity in Mexico City, Remedios Varo lived a life filled with adventures as strange as the scenes she rendered. Tapping into sources as diverse as alchemy and physics, mysticism and engineering, mythology and mathematics, she created evocative, jewel-like images whose power is reinforced by her highly precise technique. The greatest influence on her art and life was Surrealism, which she first encountered in Barcelona and later pursued in Paris where she was married to the Surrealist poet Benjamin Peret, and where her long, collaborative friendship with Leonora Carrington began. Varo had a war-haunted life - she moved to Paris to escape the Spanish Civil War, then barely escaped France during the Nazi occupation - and had intense romantic involvements with three husbands and numerous lovers. She settled in Mexico in 1942, where she remained - and was passionately admired - until her death in 1963.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

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Beautifully illustrated and with fine biographical writing.

Book is in better than describe shape, thank you!

love her artwork !

I greatly enjoy this book. She was part of the Surrealism and the book gives an excellent overview of Remedios Varo's life, her artworks, and her surrealists friends. The book shows a great compilation of her works and her great contribution to Mexican Art. Eventhough she born in Spain, she called Mexico her home.If you want to learn more about Spanish Surrealists this is a great artist to read about.

This book is everything an art book should be. First, it's about an artist that anyone with an interest in surrealist or fantasy art should know: Remedios Varo (1908-1963). Born in Spain, Varo moved to Paris as a young woman and became part of Andre Breton's Surrealist circle of poets and writers. Like other women artists in the group, including Englishwoman (and equally talented artist) Leonora Carrington, who later became her close friend, Varo was somewhat on the fringes of the circle, since Breton saw women as muses rather than artists in their own right. All the Surrealists had to flee France in 1940 when the Germans took over, and several of them, including Varo, Carrington, and Varo's then-husband, Benjamin Peret, ended up in Mexico. Varo remained there for the rest of her too-short life (she died of a heart attack at age 55) and did all her mature work there. Second, the book reproduces Varo's art successfully, revealing meticulously painted works that show a haunting world of journeys and

transformations, in which clothing becomes vessels of transportation and alchemical figures, often combinations of human and animal, weave tapestries of music and light. Many of the paintings are shown in color and in a size and degree of crispness that allows the reader to see details well. (For a larger selection of Varo's works in color, however, see Walter Gruen et al., *Remedios Varo* [Ediciones Era, 1994].) Kaplan also analyzes the works well, pointing out interesting details without (like the writers of some art books have seen) overstepping too far into speculation about what the artist might have meant. She mentions other artists who clearly did or might have influenced Varo, consciously or unconsciously, and brings out themes that intrigued both Varo and Carrington, such as the link between alchemy/magic and domestic female activities like cooking. Third, the book presents an interesting and fairly detailed account of Varo's life, well illustrated with photographs. The reader learns about Varo's youth in Spain, her time with the Surrealists, the tension and terror they all faced as the Germans encroached, her eventual settlement in Mexico, her friendship with Carrington and others, and her eventual wide recognition as an artist. Kaplan interviewed many people who knew Varo and prints their recollections of her.

and finally got it. What a stunning mind and imagination she has! And the freakish perfection of a true surrealist. I bought it for the pictures, but it turns out that the book is extremely well-written as well, and the events of her life and her personality are truly fascinating. I made my world a notch more interesting when I bought this book.

This book is quite good, and to my knowledge, the only one available covering Varo's work. As such, it is essential for her devotees, and even to some extent, for fans of surrealism. Both Varo and her fellow artist Leonora Carrington, (whose works are thematically and technically very similar) deserve wider appreciation. It is, however, excessive to award the book five stars. The reader might compare it to Druick's "Redon", which, with its simultaneously wide-ranging and penetrating scholarship and analysis, and luminous reproductions epitomizes a five-star art book. Nevertheless, I thoroughly enjoyed Kaplan's book.

This book is a must for all Varo fans as well as fans of surrealism and the surrealist movement. It is well researched and well written. Having been exposed to her work through an advertisement and buying this book to learn more about her, I highly recommend this. I have read many bio's and this one has magnificent reproductions of her artwork throughout as well as photographs of the artist

herself

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