



Douglas James '20

DOROTHEA TANNING (1910-2010)

Ouvre-toi (Open Sesame)

Signed in pencil, lower right, "Dorothea Tanning, 70"
watercolor, pastel, charcoal and pencil on paper
13 1/2 x 18 in. (29 1/8 x 23 1/4 x 1 1/8 in.)
1970

30183

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, New York, acquired directly from the artist

Dorothea Tanning (1910 – 2012) was born in Galesburg, Illinois. The child of Swedish immigrants, Tanning attended Knox College before traveling to Chicago and taking night courses at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1935, Tanning found work in New York as a commercial illustrator for Macy's department store. While there, she attended the landmark 1936 MOMA exhibition *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* featuring artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Rene Magritte, Eileen Agar, Meret Oppenheim, and Max Ernst for the first time on American shores. Taken with Surrealism, Tanning began creating paintings that incorporated fantastical imagery and meticulously rendered dreamscapes. Over time, she was introduced to European artist refugees fleeing World War II and their gallerists, leading to her first solo show at the Julien Levy gallery in 1944 followed shortly after by her marriage to fellow artist Max Ernst in 1946. After her marriage, Tanning traveled widely between New York, Arizona, and Paris, continuing to produce art at a steady pace. Over a nearly 70-year career, Tanning produced artwork that was not limited by a single art movement or medium, her oeuvre includes painting, sculpture, illustration, poetry, personal memoir, as well as costume and stage design.

Tanning's first retrospective took place in Knokke-le Zoute, Belgium in the summer of 1967. Since then, she has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, the most recent include "Dorothea Tanning: Birthday and Beyond," Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia (2000); "Dorothea Tanning/Run: Multiples – The Printed Oeuvre," Gallery of Surrealism, New York (2013); "Dorothea Tanning: Behind the Door, Another Invisible Door," Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; expanded as "Dorothea Tanning," Tate Modern, London (2018-2019); and "Collection Close-Up: The Graphic Work of Dorothea Tanning," The Menil Collection, Houston (2019). Her work is represented by museums across the world, including the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Smithsonian Institution American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and the Tate Collection, London.

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