



Cameron:
Songs for the Witch Woman

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with a contribution by
William Breeze and Susan Pile

Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles



Untitled "Peyote Vision," 1955

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Untitled, 1955

There was a time when boundaries and disciplines did not constrain art or artists—a time when the word "art" brought together painting, poetry, music, choreography, and moving images. Art was once synonymous with freedom and liberation from convention and from fetishisms. There was a time when art was an assault on what art was, and practices were motivated by an elated passion for regions of the mind that amaze the vision more than the eyes.

Cameron was of a time of heedless belief in the power of art to invent and celebrate new ways of representation and being. Her work oscillates between the psychedelic and surreal and defies a conventional understanding of modernity as a logical notion of progress in art. She reminds us how little we perceive of our existence and how much our mind, if fully explored, awakens an alternative knowledge.

Her life and her art parallel with some of the greatest creative minds of our time including Kenneth Anger, Wallace Berman, William Blake, Bruce Conner, George Herms, Henri Michaux, and Unica Zurn. With intellectual chemistry, a different history of our time can be written. If not written, a history that can be hallucinated is the only strategy to overcome the gruesome cruelty of a culture that has neglected the values of humanity for too long, a culture that might leave the negative trace of systematic erosion, destruction, and obliteration.

From Cameron's work, a museum can learn courage—the courage of a woman who defied the conventions of her time and followed so many women who remained in the shadow of patriarchy but who have often taken more revolutionary risk than their seminal husbands, lovers, and friends.

I am proud that MOCA is the location of the exhibition *Cameron: Songs for the Witch Woman*, the first survey of Cameron's work in an American museum. MOCA follows a long legacy of historical experimentation and research and a tradition of institutional independence. *Cameron: Songs for the Witch Woman* also invites us to contemplate our ethos as a museum, our commitment to other disciplines, and a history that was born and that blossomed in a place in this country where creativity is synonymous with freedom.

I am extremely grateful to Yael Lipschutz for curating this exhibition for MOCA, and to Alma Ruiz, MOCA Senior Curator, who is a strong advocate of voices that are often an antidote to the status quo. This exhibition would not have happened without the participation of MOCA's able staff, especially Catherine Arias, Director of Education; Sandy Choi, Associate Registrar; Gladys-Katherina Hernando, Curatorial Assistant; Rosanna Hemerick, Director of Collections; Susan Jenkins, Director of Exhibition Management; Clarissa Morales, Administrative Assistant to Exhibition Management; and Jang Park, Director of Exhibition Production. I am also extremely grateful to MOCA's Board for their support, their trust, and their commitment to build and foster a courageous and unique institution. Their patronage makes it all possible. Heartfelt thanks also go to the lenders as well as to the Cameron Parsons Foundation and its director Scott Hobbs for their assistance. I would also like to thank Charles S. Cohen for his generous support of MOCA Pacific Design Center.

Philippe Vergne
Director
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Above: George Herms, portrait of Cameron, n.d.
Courtesy George Herms, James Fee and Craig Krull Gallery
Right: Cameron during World War II

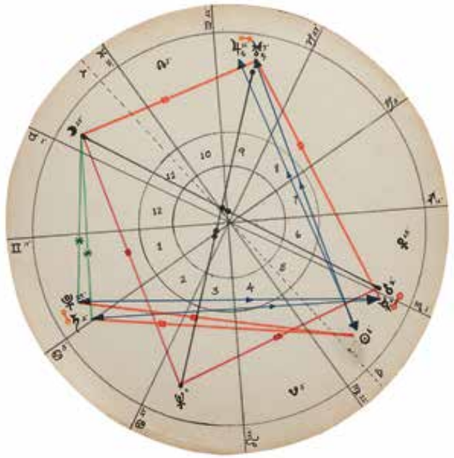
"Rise up! I have surpassed the tomb you dreamed for me," declared Cameron in 1956. An exhortation to her deceased husband, rocket scientist and occultist Jack Parsons (1914–1952), Cameron's prose implied a spiritual breakthrough and a fearless resolve to continue on the magical path Parsons had introduced to her in 1946. Originally published in Wallace Berman's avant-garde art journal *Semina,* today Cameron's words resonate not only as mystical poetry, but as a shot across the bow of time: that her art not be buried with her body, that we see her art undead and always alive. This retrospective, the first posthumous survey of Cameron's work since her passing in 1995, reveals the seminal role she played within the development of Los Angeles's midcentury counterculture.

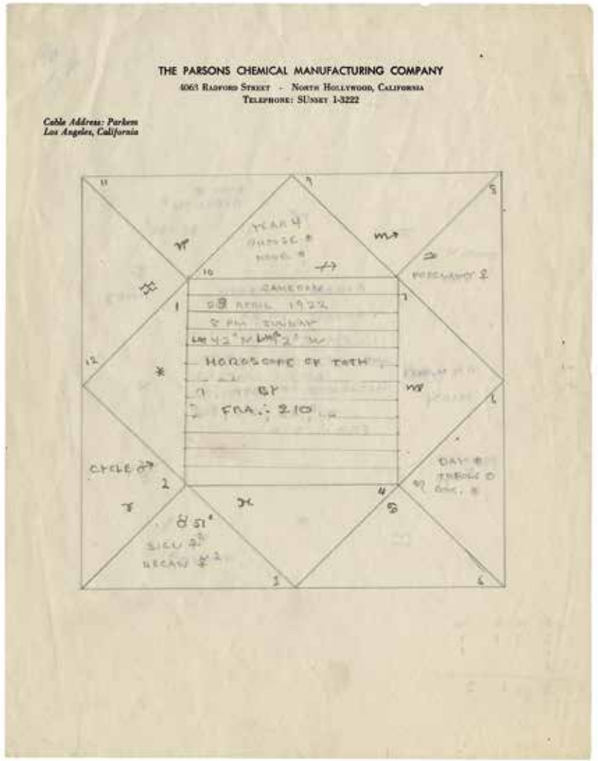
Born in 1922 in Belle Plaine, Iowa, Cameron emerged as an artist, performer, poet and occult practitioner in the mid-1940s, uniquely bridging Los Angeles's flourishing spiritual and art worlds. A visionary painter, unparalleled draftsman, and mentor to younger artists and poets such as Wallace Berman, George Herms, and David Meltzer, Cameron arrived in Los Angeles in 1946 after serving the U.S. Navy in World War II, drawing maps and laboring in the naval photographic unit. After the war, she joined her family, who had settled in Pasadena; Cameron's father took an engineering job at the newly established Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and she worked as a fashion illustrator for local Southland newspapers. Originally from a small rural town where she had grown accustomed to living as a social outcast, in Los Angeles Cameron quickly sought out fellow renegades, immersing herself in the city's flourishing jazz scene on South Central Avenue.



Long drawn to experimentation, her life was soon transformed by a chance encounter with an old acquaintance from the navy, who in February of 1946 brought her to a rollicking party at a mansion on so-called Millionaire's Row in Pasadena. This dark, rundown, eleven-bedroom mansion at 1003 S. Orange Grove was the home of Jack Parsons, co-founder of Caltech's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (J.P.L.) and a follower of the esoteric mysticism of Aleister Crowley (1875–1947) and his religious order, the O.T.O. (Ordo Templi Orientis). A haven for new age thought and free love, the abode, often referred to as "the Parsonage," was home to the Agape Lodge, the sole American outpost of the O.T.O. Instantly attracted to Cameron and her striking red hair, Parsons identified her as a fabled "Scarlet Woman," an incarnation he had been trying to invoke in a series of magical rituals. The two married shortly thereafter in October 1946, and their mystical bond transformed Cameron's life and art.

Since childhood Cameron had experienced intense visions that were so vivid she was unsure whether they were real or imaginary, and during her marriage to Jack, she increasingly devoted herself to translating such episodes into art. Jack, in turn, began to instruct Cameron in his Crowleyite traditions, divulging that he believed their union was an outgrowth of a magical operation he had begun with then science fiction author L. Ron Hubbard, a boarder at the Parsonage. Venturing out to the Mojave Desert in January of 1946, the two men conducted what Parsons termed "The Babalon Working," an elaborate magical operation intended to summon an elemental mate.[1] Cameron, he explained, was his destined partner—fated, he believed, to become a vehicle for the spirit of Babalon on earth. Initially uninterested in the occult, with time Cameron came to believe that she personified Babalon, and her series of watercolors and drawings entitled *Songs for the Witch Woman* (c. 1951–55)—a body of work created in response





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to a book of poetry that Jack had begun writing before they met—reflects the mystical manner in which she started to view herself. Peopled by seductive, elongated women bathed in moonlight, lithe dashing men, and fantastic horned creatures, the works comprising *Songs for the Witch Woman* double as portraits of her and Jack.

Their myth-steeped relationship fueled much of Cameron's early art. Her first known canvas, *Dr. Dee* (1946), depicts the sixteenth-century mathematician, astronomer, and occultist John Dee (1527–1608/9). An advisor to Queen Elizabeth I, Dee devised what he referred to as the Enochian magic system for communicating with angels, a school of theurgy later embraced by Crowley in the development of his own religious philosophy of Thelema. A gestural, heavily lacquered composition, Cameron's *Dr. Dee* emerges from a sea of black, his face glowing in garish hues of turquoise and burnt orange. On its backside, Cameron signed *Dr. Dee* "Candida," a name given to her by Jack. Other dark, brooding works followed, such as *Witches Diptych* (n.d.) and *Bride of Christ* (n.d.), in which figures similarly materialize from an abyss of black paint.

These thickly painted, expressionistic canvases, purchased in 1955 by nuclear physicist and engineer Robert Cornog (1912–1998), a resident at the Parsonage and a key figure in the atomic bomb development team for the Manhattan Project, were in line with wider, mythology rooted trends in American art at the time. Jackson Pollock's *The Moon Woman* (1942), *Male and Female* (1942–43), and *The She-Wolf* (1943), for example, were all influenced by the painter's experiences with Jungian analysis and his fascination with Surrealism, a movement that dramatically affected the development of Abstract Expressionism. While its formal qualities—large-scale mark making (Franz Kline), immediacy of gesture (Willem de Kooning), and uninterrupted fields of color (Mark Rothko)—have come to define Abstract Expressionism within art history, the movement's earlier, Surrealist stream, with its focus upon the subconscious, was a pivotal touchstone for artists ranging from Grace Hartigan to Adolph Gottlieb. It is from this Surrealist current that Cameron's art sprang. "We were what I call the Freudian generation," Cameron later remarked. "Psychology sort of released us."[2] Like those of Carl Jung, Cameron's psychological pursuits were tied to ideas of universal archetypes and mythology. "As I have come so well to realize," she wrote,

> *the myths are not remote fables for entertainment, but the real archive of the human race and when conscious mind and the unconscious mind synchronize—the legendary adventure becomes the real, concrete present—and perhaps these incredible maps of the plights of Gods are in truth, the only guide signs for the hero who ventures out beyond safer regions—the unknown.*[3]

Soon after Jack and Cameron married, he sold the Parsonage, severed his ties with the Agape Lodge, and took a job at North American Aviation. The couple rented an apartment a block from the beach, and during off hours, Jack introduced her to astrology, the I Ching, and the Tarot.

Determined to find her own destiny, in 1947 Cameron went off without Jack into the "unknown," first to Paris to study art at the Academie de la Grande Chaumiere, where she was admitted with a recommendation letter from Lorser Feitelson, then a professor at Art Center in Pasadena. No record of Cameron's attendance at the Academie exists, and after a short while she left Paris for London intending to meet with Aleister Crowley. Discovering that Crowley had passed away a short while before her arrival in Britian, Cameron made her way to the small Swiss town of Lugano, a site where artists and authors ranging from Hermann Hesse to some of the original members of the O.T.O. had been headquartered during World War I.[4] Cameron considered entering the local Lugano convent to "retire from the world," but instead locked herself alone in her hotel room for three weeks, experiencing a series of visions and experiences that she described as a mental "revolt of some kind."[5]

Ultimately abandoning her hermetic adventure, Cameron left Lugano for the U.S.; Jack wired her money for passage and met her ship in New York. Cameron, however, soon took off again, this time for Mexico, where she would live until 1949. Establishing herself in San Miguel de Allende, a city that attracted artists such as David Alfaro Siqueiros and Leonora Carrington as well as former U.S. soldiers traveling on the G.I. Bill, Cameron settled in and became fascinated by the town's history. The community had been an important seat of the Spanish Inquisition in the New World, and Cameron was particularly interested in the atrocities endured there by women and those deemed witches. Earlier, the Spaniard Francisco Goya had also examined the Inquisition, whose violence and irrationalism the artist critiqued in works such as *Witches Flight* (1798). Part of a series of six paintings related to witchcraft, Goya joined his preoccupation with traditions deemed superstitious to his more general interest in the grotesque and mythology in paintings such as *Saturn Devouring His Son* (1819–23). Over one hundred years later, Cameron's own mystical concerns found fertile soil in the rich past of San Miguel, and in her regular correspondence with Jack, who during this time wrote Cameron a series of letters instructing her in the arts of the occult. Delving deeper into magic while in San Miguel, Cameron began practicing what she referred to as "blood rites."

Cameron's psychical explorations were enriched by the flourishing local art scene, where she gravitated toward friendships with fellow expatriates Renate Druks, a Viennese painter, and Paul Mathison, an art director and scenic designer; she would later appear with both in Kenneth Anger's film *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1954). Her home away from home, Mexico as a whole was a hub for the development of postwar Surrealism and constitutes an important art historical matrix for the analysis of Cameron's work. Her world of mythical creatures was in line with the Surrealist preoccupations of other Mexico-based artists such as Leonora Carrington (1917–2011), Frida Kahlo (1907–1954), Dorothea Tanning (1910–2012), and Remedios Varo (1908–1963), whose canvases similarly feature haunting, fantastical figures. Ithell Colquhoun (1906–1988), a British Surrealist who like Cameron was heavily involved with the occult, is another point of reference.[6] Like the figures depicted by these artists, Cameron's seldom have a direct gaze and frequently appear to be off in their own worlds: we see them as otherworldly doubles, sorcerers, shamans, or animals.



Opposite page, left: Cameron's astrological chart for Jack Parsons, n.d.
Opposite page, right: Jack Parsons's astrological chart for Cameron, n.d.
Above: Aleister Crowley, *Book of Thoth*, 1944

Returning to Pasadena in 1949, Cameron spent the next three years with Jack, who during this time found himself under surveillance by the FBI due to his alledged affiliation with communists and the occult. While working at Hughes Aerospace, Jack was caught by the FBI as he attempted to remove classified documents he planned to use in a proposal for a rocket facility in Israel (reaserch he had completed at J.P.L. and Aerojet). As a result, Hughes revoked his security clearance and terminated him on September 26, 1951. Now unemployed and unemployable, Jack pursued other work, including designing explosives for the film industry.

Cameron, meanwhile, longed for San Miguel de Allende. She took Jack there for a preview in the spring of 1952; a photograph from their trip shows Jack conspicuously uncomfortable in the unaccustomed surroundings. On June 17, 1952, at 5:08 p.m., the evening before he and Cameron were to leave again for Mexico, Jack was killed in an explosion when he dropped a vial of fulminate of mercury in his garage laboratory. Though not on the premises when the accident occurred, Cameron had been working on a massive fifty-pound painting of an angel carrying a sword, which was destroyed in the explosion.

Devastated by her husband's death, Cameron drove his ashes to the Mojave Desert, scattered them there, and settled into the nearby, nondescript, high desert town of Beaumont, California.[7] From Lambs Canyon, an abandoned area south of Beaumont with no water or power, Cameron devoted herself to art and magic for the next year. In a voluminous correspondence with Jane Wolfe (1875–1958), a former silent film star and disciple of Crowley who became an important mentor, Cameron describes the cosmic epiphanies she experienced in Beaumont. For example, in 1953 Cameron wrote to Wolfe that she had engaged in a ritualistic process and brought about a mystical child with Jack from beyond the grave, a so-called "wormwood star":

> *The pregnancy, as you understand, was not the actual growth of a human child but the spiritual child of a psychic union, as in the case of Cupid and Psyche—this child was female—called Pleasure—or the birth of Babalon—which is a symbolical—but most real birth of the age of the Goddess of Pleasure—being the union of the mind and body.*[8]

During this period of intense astral work in the desert, Cameron returned to *Songs for the Witch Woman*, the book of poetry and art she and Jack had created together, adding twenty-one drawings to the watercolors she had completed while Jack was alive. Reminscent of the thin Victorian figures of Aubrey Beardsely (1872–1898), Cameron's drawings, all done in black ink on white paper, reveal an acute, ornamental, even antiquarian sense of the body and line. Going forward, her work would vascillate between this tight, graphic, illustrative sensibility, and the softer, more painterly expressionistic contour that characterizes her early oil paintings.



Right: Unknown, photograph of Cameron as the Scarlet Woman in Kenneth Anger's *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome*, 1956
Following page, left: Postcard sent by Wallace Berman to Cameron, 1955
Following page, right: Poster for *Night Tide*, 1961





Returning to Los Angeles in 1953, Cameron found herself at the center of what we now refer to as the counterculture.

> *When I came back here, I went out to stay in Malibu for two or three months, and I met Kenneth Anger there in 1953. They all wanted to meet me. At that time, I was being very dramatic. I was saying that the world was coming to an end, the apocalypse. I was also studying Crowley a great deal and reading from his work publicly.* Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome *came out of that.*[9]

Starring Cameron as the Whore of Babylon, Anaïs Nin as the Moon, Paul Mathison as Apollo, Renate Druks as Lilith, and Samson de Brier as Shiva, Anger's 1954 film included images of Crowley, whose works Cameron recalls introducing to the young filmmaker. According to Anger, Cameron's "magical powers" displaced Nin, who he had originally cast in the lead.

Cameron's participation in Hollywood's mushrooming avant-garde film movement extended to her social circles—which included filmmakers such as Maya Deren, an initiated voodoo priestess with whom she shared an interest in ritual, mythology, and spirituality—and to collaborations with auteurs such as Chick Strand and Curtis Harrington, who cast Cameron in two of his films, *The Wormwood Star* (1956), a documentary on Cameron's art, and *Night Tide* (1961), a thriller starring Dennis Hopper, Linda Lawson, and Cameron, who played a mysterious woman in black.[10]

Cameron's film activity was a part of her increasing stature within the city's art world. In 1955, she attracted the attention of Beat artist Wallace Berman with her just-completed drawing *Untitled "Peyote Vision,"* which depicts a woman and an alien-like being having sex. The drawing was hung in the window of Books 55, a store specializing in esoteric philosophy and owned by Norman Rose, who let Cameron live in the back room. The work, created after hearing Aldous Huxley speak, was a result of what Cameron described as a "revolution in the unconscious."

> *I heard Huxley speak in 1954. That's when I first took peyote...I wrote to this botanical garden in Texas and ordered it. They sent it to me in the mail. I didn't even know how to take it. I got nine big, juicy, green buttons as big as apples, and I cooked them and ate them like vegetables. The walls disappeared. What I got was Huxley's "grey world." At this time I did the drawing. Peyote causes a revolution in the unconscious. Once these things have surfaced and become conscious, you have to adjust your life to it. You have to make tremendous alterations.*[11]

Psychedelic experiences such as these were of great interest to Berman, who connected with Cameron over their shared love of jazz and mysticism. Berman featured Cameron as the cover girl for the





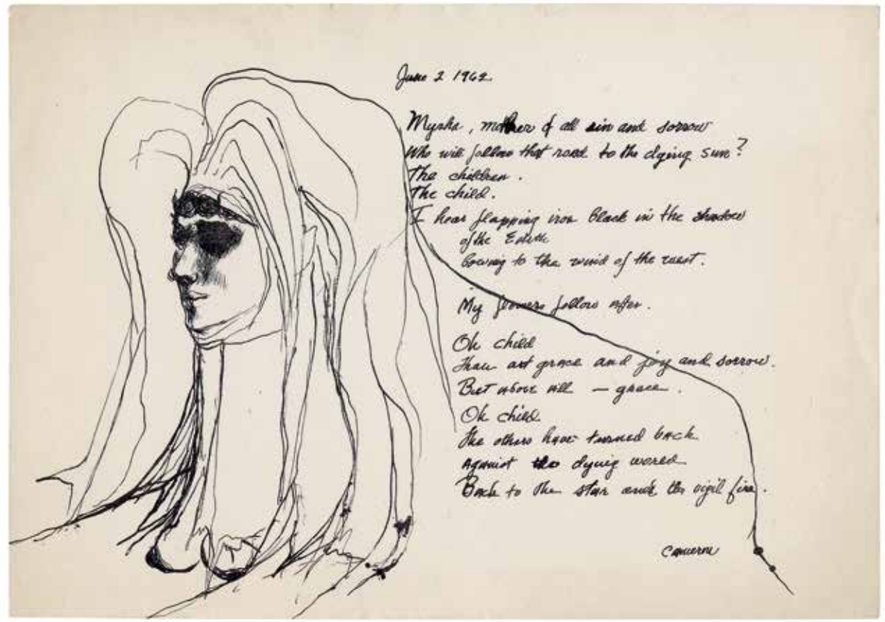
inaugural issue of his landmark journal *Semina* (1955–1964), including a small reproduction of her "*Peyote Vision*" inside. Printed on a hand press, *Semina* combined Surrealist collage with Kabbalistic mysticism and contained inserts featuring engraved poems by William Blake, W. B. Yeats, and Hermann Hesse, as well as photocollages by Berman depicting everything from a besieged Lenny Bruce sprouting fauna from his cranium, to Jack Ruby shooting Lee Harvey Oswald, to images of jazz figures Charlie Parker and Billie Holiday.

Cameron gave birth to her first and only child Crystal (b. 1955) and then moved to Topanga Canyon in 1956 with her second husband, the eccentric artist Sheridan "Sherry" Kimmel. There Cameron grew closer to Berman, his wife Shirley, and their son Tosh, who also lived in Topanga at the time.[12] Not far away were artists, poets, and photographers such as George Herms, Diane Di Prima, Aya (Tarlow), and Charles Brittin, who all became friends of Cameron. Flourishing as an artist, poet, performance artist, actor, and spiritual guide, Cameron's concerns echoed and amplified those of the Beatnik culture at large, which, with bases in San Francisco and New York, gravitated toward Eastern religion, the philosophy of free love, and sexual experimentation. Cameron's friend, the Bay Area Beat painter Paul Beattie, for instance, shared her interests in outer space, the cosmos, and mystical occurrences. So did filmmaker Bruce Conner, who created a series of mandalas in the 1960s. One may also think of the paintings and collages of Jess Collins, which have alchemical, occult-centric themes. Cameron was exhibiting her work more regularly during this period, and in October 1956 curator Walter Hopps included her in a group show with Ed Kienholz at Hopps's gallery Syndell Studio.[13] In 1957, Berman asked her to participate in a poetry reading at the Stone Brothers printing shop on Sawtelle Boulevard, along with artists ranging from Edmund Teske to John Reed, Alexander Trocchi, and David Meltzer.[14] That same year Berman displayed Cameron's *Peyote Vision* as an altarpiece in his exhibition at the legendary Ferus Gallery—her sexually provocative subject matter prompted the LAPD vice squad to shut down the show for containing lewd material.

Disenchanted by the reactionary tenor of the city, Cameron abandoned her short-lived affair with the commercial art world. Taking Crystal, together with Norman Rose and David Meltzer, she drove north in her black hearse for San Francisco where she immersed herself in the local art community. A 1957 film by Ed Silverstone Taylor called *Street Fair San Francisco* captures Cameron selling her paintings at a bustling fair on Upper Grant Avenue with Wallace and Shirley Berman, who, equally embittered by the conservative culture of Los Angeles, had also moved north.

Over the next two decades Cameron devoted herself to her art, its development moving in concert with her mystical studies. In 1964, she completed *Black Pilgrimage*, a book of poetry and small-scale paintings published by her friend Robert Alexander, the Los Angeles-based artist and founder of Baza Press and the Temple of Man, a nonsectarian sanctuary for poetry, music, spirituality, and art. Increasingly drawn to mythology—as evidenced by pieces such as *Lion Woman* (n.d.) and *Sphinx* (n.d.)—she began a correspondence in the 1960s with renowned mythologist Joseph Campbell, whose 1949 *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* was a book to which Jack had originally introduced her. "You seem to be the only authority left to me," Cameron wrote to Campbell, sending him a box of slides of her work.[15] Responding, Campbell wrote back, "I have at last had the pleasure of viewing properly your magical series of slides. Going through them, over and over; enjoying them, each round, with new discoveries, and always marveling at the little shock of enchantment that each one emitted, each time."[16]

Living a bohemian existence marked by hardship and poverty, during these years Cameron moved with Crystal back and forth between Los Angeles and a range of desolate desert locales such as Velarde, New Mexico, where they lived in an adobe shack, bathing and washing clothes in local watering holes. The shack was located near the Drop City commune, whose residents would sometimes visit Cameron after hearing through the grapevine about her eccentric ways. The rugged reality of New Mexico living necessitated that Cameron, a single mother, carry a gun for protection. For a short time she also lived in Santa Fe near the sculptor John Chamberlain (1927–2011), who in 1969 featured Cameron (sporting white kabuki makeup and smoking a joint) and Crystal in an experimental, unfinished film called *Thumbsuck*, which concerned the behavior of children around their parents. In the early 1970s, Cameron moved to Pioneertown, California, the small high-Mojave desert town built as an Old West movie set, where she lived out of what was once the Pioneertown post office. Photographs taken at this time reveal Cameron and Crystal alongside other friends who had moved to the desert, such as Norman Rose and Allen Midgette, an actor who starred in the films of Andy Warhol as well as those of Italian directors Bernardo Bertolucci and Pier Paolo Pasolini. Snapshots feature Cameron at desert



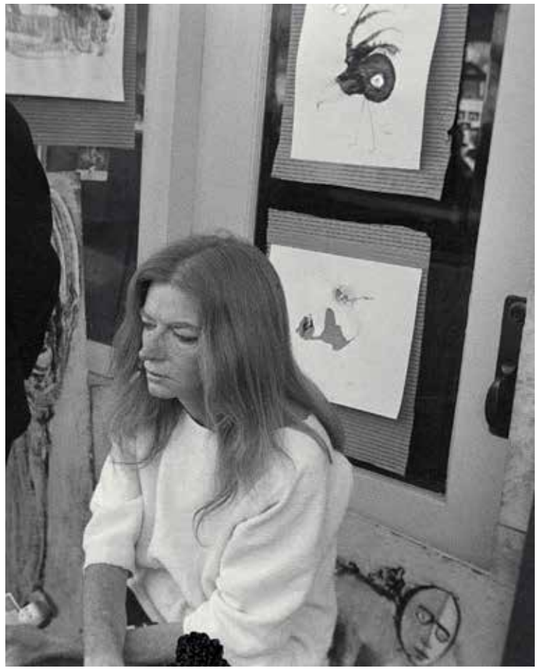
Opposite page, left: Unknown, *Night Tide*, 1961
Opposite page, right: Wallace Berman, *Portrait of Cameron*, n.d.
Above: Cameron, "June 2, 1962," printed poem and drawing published in *Semina* 8, 1963

locations such as Landers, home of the Giant Rock UFO airport and the Integratron, a geodesic domelike structure built by George Van Tassel, a UFO enthusiast who claimed that his architectural creation was capable of producing rejuvenation, anti-gravity and time travel.[17] According to Midgette, who was likewise fascinated by extraterrestrial theories, "UFOS provided Cameron with a trans-dimensional link with Jack."[18]

Indeed Cameron's cosmic consciousness, something developed with Jack in the 1940s, increased rather than dissipated with time. In 1978, she began a series of drawings called *Pluto Transiting the Twelfth House*, a reference to an area in an astrological chart in which the planet Pluto passes though the twelfth house of the zodiac; such a period is thought to entail reflection on death, rebirth, and transformation. As Jack had long ago instructed her, "Astral work is the most important part of practical magic, all magical effects and magical knowledge are gained, one way or another, by its media."[19] Cameron lived by the moon and the stars, and the hundreds of drawings that constitute this series, to which she devoted herself until 1986, can be thought of as electrocardiograms of her psyche.[20] Executed in black ink on white paper, the drawings read as odd abstract shapes that quiver and shake, suggesting spiritual metamorphosis. Like many of her drawings, the line is critical. Its nervous and electric quality is reminscent of the expressionism of Egon Schiele (1890–1918), though without his line's start-stop quality. There is an anxiousness and elegance to Cameron's line, her concentric curls evoking the topographic, perhaps a response to her earlier career in the navy, where she drew maps that were ultimately used in battle, always feeling that she had a karmic connection to the men that died and that the later tragic events in her life were the result of her participation in their deaths.[21]

Demanding deep contemplation, the buried aspects of her inner world that surfaced as a result of Pluto transiting her twelth house were, for Cameron, akin to the meditative nature of drawing itself—a crucial aspect of her practice. Unlike many artists who create in response to the history and culture of *art*, believing their work to be part of art's larger unfolding, Cameron's art was a personal and direct response to her own life's journey. In the end, Cameron's commitment to live her life as art itself constitutes a rare, avant-gardist approach, one that makes separating her biography from the thousands of drawings, paintings, and sketchbooks she left behind a near impossibility.

In the late 1980s, Cameron, now a grandmother, devoted herself increasingly to her family. Living



at the time out of a small West Hollywood bungalow and her health declining, she embarked on a series of watercolors called the *Lion Path*, a reference to Egyptian astrology and, like *Pluto*, a meditation on the mystery of death. Musing on what she felt were her past lives, she came upon the figure Hildegard von Bingen, the eleventh-century benedictine abbess and mystic. While she had long been fascinated by figures such as Joan of Arc, Cameron felt cosmically bound to von Bingen, whose liturgical music she thought sounded uncannily like her own singing. Cameron also learned at this time of the Edwardian-era text *Woman and Superwoman* (1916), by Dr. A. S. Raleigh (1881–?), who signed himself, "The Official Scribe of the Hermetic Brotherhood and Hierophant of the Mysteries of Isis." Raleigh's treatise examined feminism from a mystical standpoint, charting the evolution of society during which the masculine and feminie took turns as the dominant power principle, in accordance with the cycles of the zodiac.[22] Cameron taped herself reading from Raleigh's book, and her recordings of *Woman and Superwoman* were broadcast for years on the local public radio station KPFK-FM throughout the 1990s.

While the philosophical fields of magic, mythology, and astrology may have been the strongest touchstones for Cameron's spiritual and artistic

development, the role of female power within such bodies of thought was integral to her sense of self, from her fascination with Raleigh's theories and her belief that she was Babalon incarnate, to the intrepid, rebellious nature that fueled her lifelong journey into the unknown. In 1994, Cameron was diagnosed with brain cancer. The following year, at the Veterans Hospital in Westwood, a high priestess in the O.T.O. was called upon to perform the last rites, and Cameron eventually died in the arms of her granddaughter Iris. Her ashes were scattered across the Mojave Desert, just as she had done for Jack decades earlier.

This reexamination of Cameron's work comes at a time when the careers of a number of her female contemporaries—Jay De Feo, Niki de Saint Phalle, Dorothy Iannone, and Barbara T. Smith—are being rediscovered as well. While the recent surge of museological interest in these figures coincides with a hyperactive international art market, the attention to them is significant on a deeper level. The type of intensely personal, visionary explorations spearheaded by artists like Cameron is rare today, and her reemergence into the light indicates how hungry young artists and intellectuals are for a more vital path. It is this exhibition's aim that, like a beacon in the darkness, Cameron's transcendental art will illuminate this road.



Opposite page: Aya Tarlow, Cameron at a street fair, San Francisco, 1959
Above: Unknown, torn photo of Cameron, n.d.

Notes

1. For Crowley, Babalon was a feminine spiritual principle that personified the extinguishing of the personal ego through the submersion of the individual life in the universal life, symbolized by the voluntary surrender of the last drop of the blood of the aspirant into the Cup of Babalon. In Crowley's system of spiritual attainment, this is achieved by the transcendence of reason through the crossing of the Abyss, which is fixed just below the feminine sephiroth Binah (number 3) on the Tree of Life, which corresponds to Babalon, rather than Babylon. The name has roots in Revelation, i.e. the Whore of Babylon, but also references the Elizabethan Enochian-language words "babalon," meaning "wicked," and "babalond," meaning "harlot."

2. Taped, unpublished interview with Cameron by Sandra Starr, c. late-1980s. Getty Research Institute.

3. Cameron, letter to Jane Wolfe, August 23, 1953.

4. Unpublished interview with Cameron by William Breeze, c. late-1980s. O.T.O. Archives.

5. Unpublished interview with Cameron by William Breeze, c. late-1980s. O.T.O. Archives.

6. Rejected by the Golden Dawn (the occult order to which Crowley belonged), Colquhoun joined the Typhonian Order.

7. Cameron always believed that Jack's death was not an accident, and suspected that the FBI was perhaps behind it.

8. Cameron, letter to Jane Wolfe, August 23, 1953.

9. Sandra Starr, *Lost and Found in California: Four Decades of Assemblage* (Los Angeles: James Corcoran Gallery, 1988).

10. Chick Strand featured Cameron in the film *Loose Ends*.

11. Starr, *Lost and Found in California*.

12. Sherry Kimmel was Ken Kesey's inspiration for the character of McMurphy in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. See, Scott Hobbs, "Scarlet Woman," *The Huffington Post* (April 25, 2012); http://www.huffingtonpost.com/scott-hobbs/scarlet-woman_b_1447843.html.

13. Syndell Studio presents a group show (October 6–31, 1956) that includes work by Cameron and Ed Kienholz (see Kristine McKenna, *The Ferus Gallery: A Place to Begin* [New York: DAP, 2008], 35); in 1954 Walter Hopps opens Syndell Studio in a storefront at 11756 Gorham Boulevard in Brentwood with Craig Kauffman, Michael Scoles and Ben and Betty Bartosh. Open by appointment, the gallery introduces Bay Area Abstract Expressionism to Los Angeles (see *The Ferus Gallery*, 119).

14. Michael Duncan and Kristine McKenna, *Semina Culture: Wallace Berman and His Circle* (Santa Monica: Santa Monica Museum of Art, 2005), ii.

15. Cameron, letter to Joseph Campbell, October 2, 1961.

16. Joseph Campbell, letter to Cameron, 1965.

17. Conversation with Crystal Kimmel by Yael Lipschutz, June 2014.

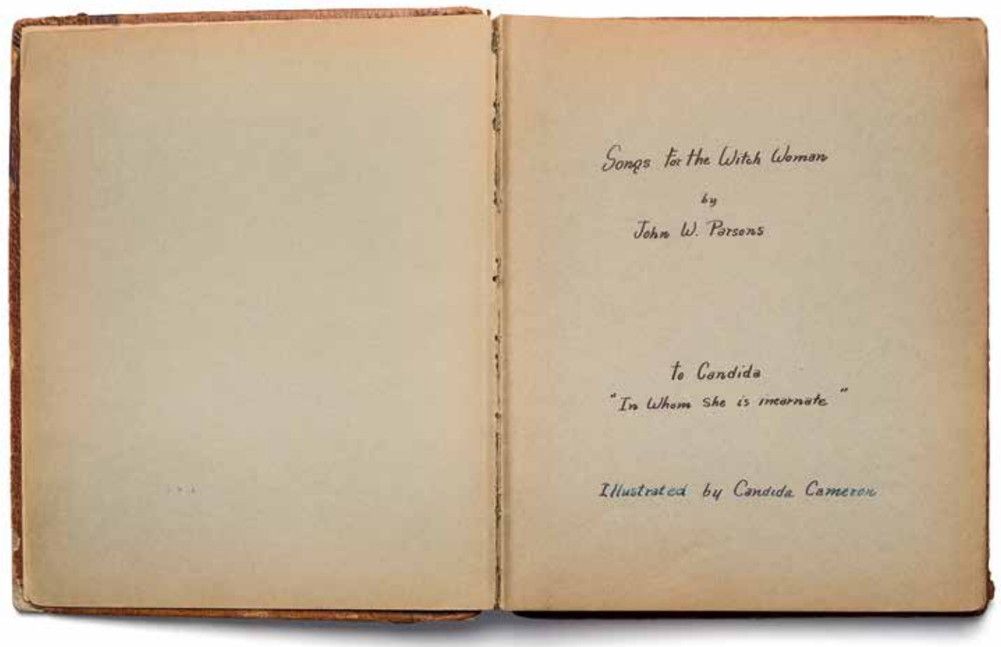
18. Spencer Kansa, *Wormwood Star: The Magickal Life of Marjorie Cameron* (Oxford, U.K.: Mandrake, 2014, Kindle version), section 13 "Thumbsuck."

19. Jack Parsons, letter to Cameron, 1949.

20. Conversation with Victoria Ballesteros by Yael Lipschutz, June 2014.

21. Michael Duncan, *Cameron* (New York: Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery, 2007), 40.

22. Kansa, *Wormwood Star,* section "1984–1995."





Pages 19–23:
Cameron and Jack Parsons, *Songs for the Witch Woman*, 1951



Pan

4

Do not lament thus, you who have known
and lost me
With pale pastels and sounds of a tuneless
lyre;
I was the honey and amber girl when
first you found me,
I was the golden boy in the petals of
new desires,

I was the wind of summer, the scent
of roses,
I was the star, the night, the garden,
and I the fire.
I was the rod that wakes, the flower that
disposes,
I the immortal singer, the song, the lyre.

I am the Autumn now; my winds are
blowing
Blossoms of Summer barrenly they blow
Leaves and desires and summer hopes
fore knowing
I shall be Winter and silence of the
snow.

cont.



The Garden

6

There is a garden where Death has gone
to sleep ...
Dark Death, like a pale, tired boy, nods
drowsily,
For he is enamored of her and doth keep
Her luminous blossoms forever from decay.

There in the dusky day, in the dim air
Dreams, like disturbing notes from a
secret song,
Shimmer and float between beauty and
despair
In an ecstasy no heart endures for long.

And to this golden garden all lovers
come,
Young lovers, happening on eternity
Where dark Death sleeps and dreams,
there venturing some
Are briefly raised beyond desire or pity.

cont.



Danse

7

The night, a huge black panther flecked
with stars,
Uneasily allows the warm west wind's
caress.
The moon, disasterous golden banner,
slightly smiles.

Off-stage, an orchestra complains of Love.
Center, a sad-faced ape in clown costume
Dances slow, stately circles.

A were wolf, left, sings raucously,
A horrible, small song,
While, right, a vampire, fondling a
skull,
Is also smiling.

(His saxophone in the orchestra (sings),
"(M)y love, my love, my love."
(Were wolf (sings)
"Oh, moon, oblique and smiling sinister,
Oh, bloody promise in the sky,
Oh, beautiful dancer mine,
Betrothed, beloved ... "
(He howls)

cont.



Sorcerer

8

I see him tread a craggy path
Over dark hills, outlined against the sky,
In a flapping cloak and his sardonic eye
Gleams with a joyous wrath

And he lifts his arms and beheld,
A flight of birds all gold
In the sunset, carrying dreams,
Strange dreams from out of Africa and
Spain.

Then, in a harsh verse, he spells the sun
And leaps and dances on its crimson
tomb,
Casting distorted shadows on the moon
Now risen.

I see him flinging out his cloak,
That swells and swirls like thick smoke,
That rushes outward and expands
To engulf the houses in all lands.

cont.



Narcissus

10

Drug me with drugs
Slow acting, sensuous, sweet.
Co-mingle gum and musk,
Hashish and amber.
Let me drink and breath
And hear slow, desirous music
Until aroused
To subtle, dangerous moods,
Until I see
Ochre and mazerine and purple
Emit lascivious sounds.

Then I shall go
Through dark and gothic ruins,
Grey and golden mists
Down to a forrest coeval,
Green
With an old dream

I shall go naked
Amid magnolia and oleander
Datura and Jasmine,
Whose blossoms will open and
vaginally flower

cont.



Punch

13

Light and airy, bright and faery
In the glade — how she whirls.
Like a person of girls.
On the strings, gossamer things.
Leading upward to the wings
In the boughs
Worked by long inhuman fingers.
Watched by sly, inhuman eyes.
Eyes of spiders watching flies.

Right foot forward, left foot back,
Flashing curls and dainty face.
Like a little painted death.
Now he spies her, draws his breath,
Tiptoes closer, stares enwrapt,
Reaches out essaying hands —
Seeks the strands.

Down, down, dreadful down
On the unsuspecting clown,
Clutching fangs and fearful screams
And silence, and thereafter —
Low, long laughter.



Sabat

12

Ah, the horned moon
Smiles in the purple sky.
Not more obliquely sly
Than your sly smiling, sister
See the ebon goats'
Wise, dubious yellow eyes,
No more wildly wise
Than your wild, wise eyes, sister,
Hark, a muted drum
Beats in the woods below
And what the lights that go
Incessant, to and fro.
Stars, they have caught, sister,
And their eyes,
Like yours,
Yellow and wise.
What shall the altar be,
And what the chalice cup?
What incense offered up,
And what the altar fire?

cont.



Arcadia

15

The wind is a tumult of shouting and laughter
And over the valleys and in the sky
I hear your piping and follow after.
I see the rioting clouds go by.

Your hair is a banner for rally of rainbows,
The wind is a tame wolf with your rollicking sheep,
Splendor of sunbursts are shafts for your arrows
And meadows marshall and march at your feet.

Flower and feather and fur in wonder
Follow your stride to the singing sea
And ocean greets you with murmer and thunder,
With swell of billow and shimmer of lea.

cont.



Autumn (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955





Left: *Witch Woman* (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Right: *Lesbians* (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955







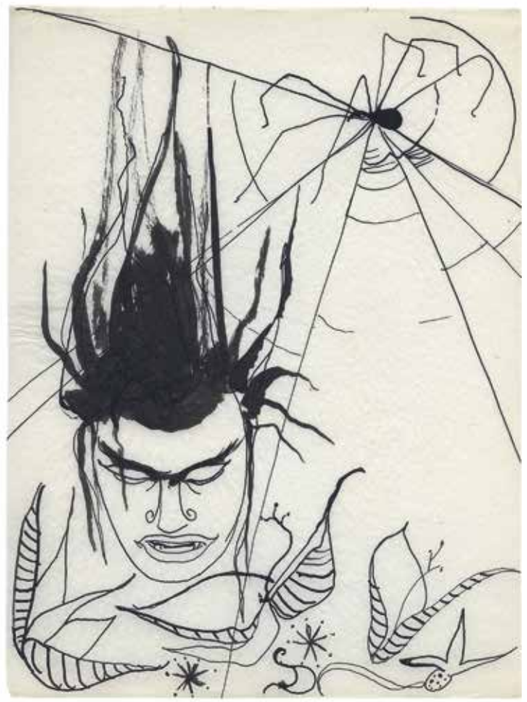






Opposite page, clockwise from left:
Sabat (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Night (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Passion Flowers (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Garden (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Above, left to right:
Sorcerer (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Farewell Unknown (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955





Left: *Stonehenge* (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Right: *Neurosis* (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955



Punch (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955



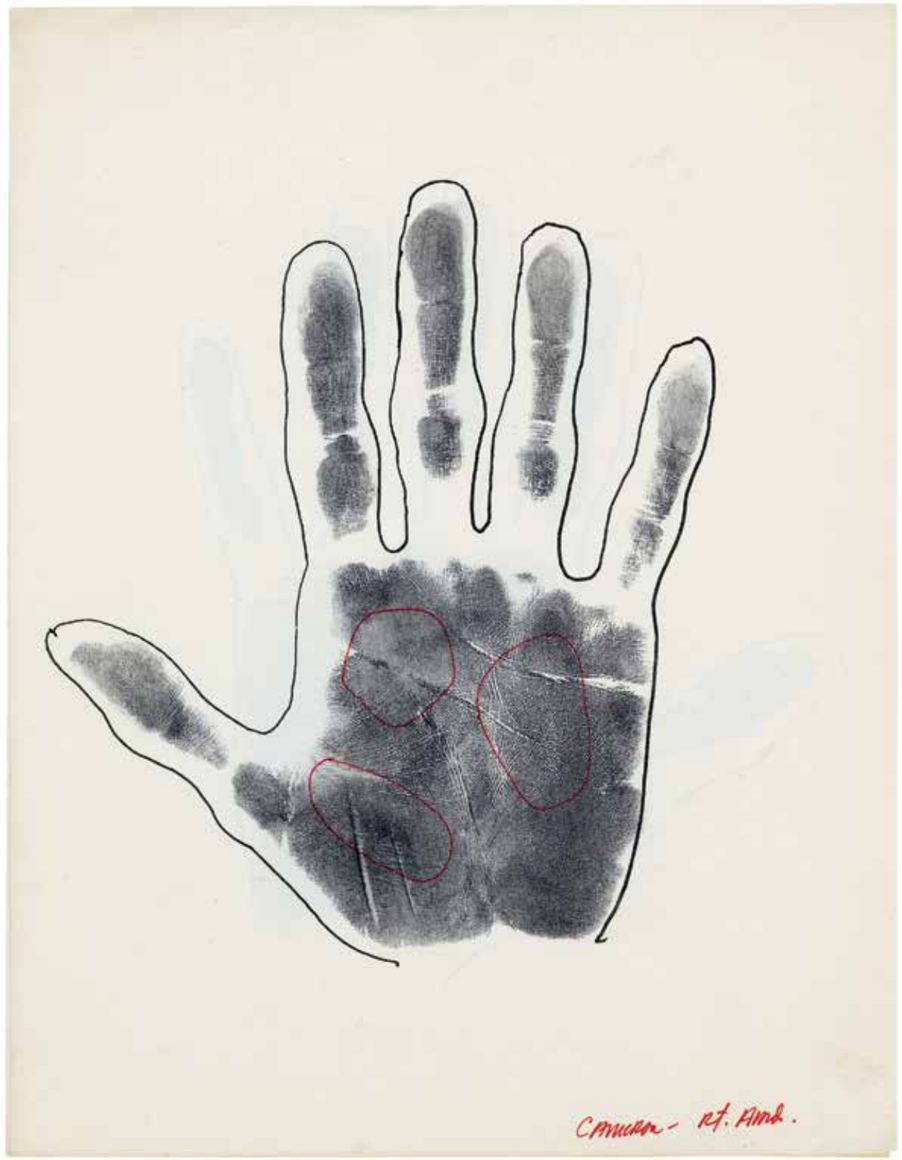








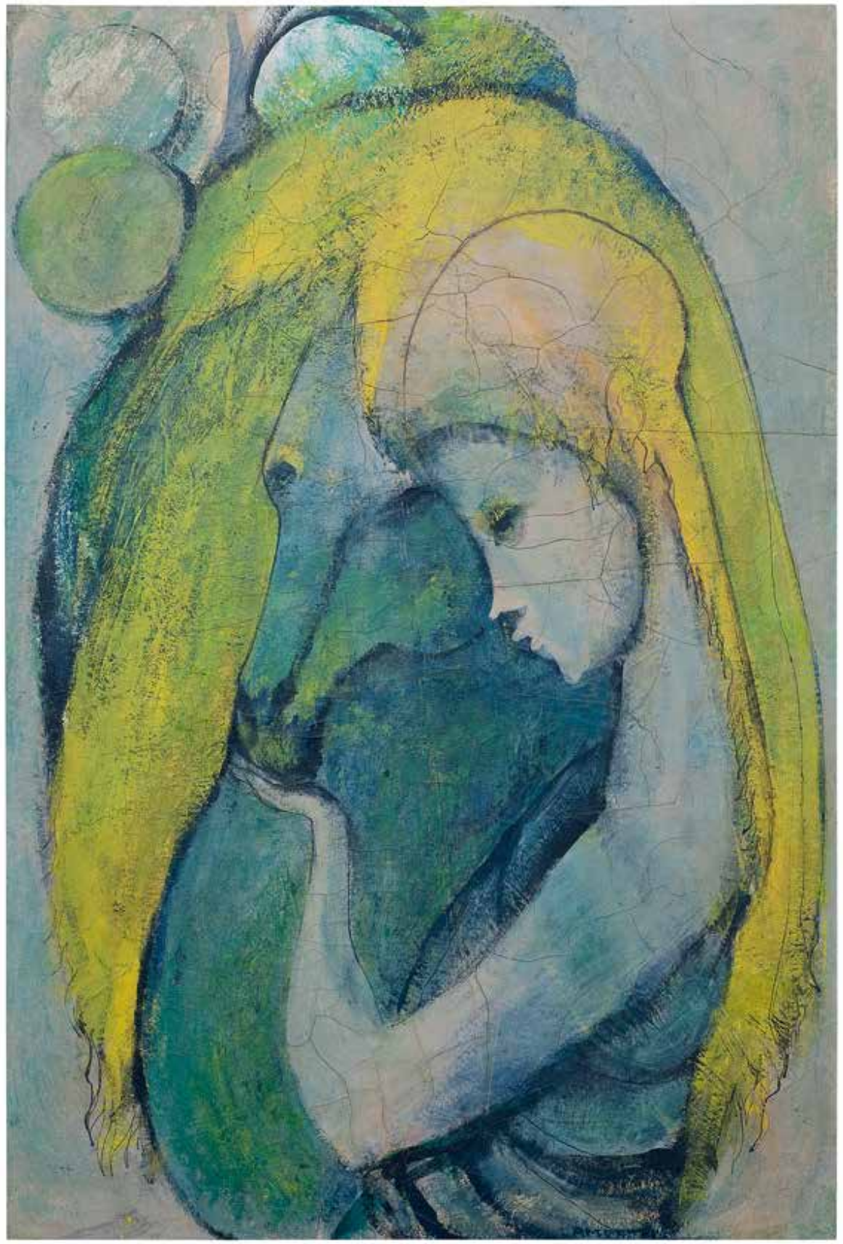
Opposite page, clockwise from left:
Star [The Fool] (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Harpocrates (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Pan (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
King David (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Above: *Merlin* (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955



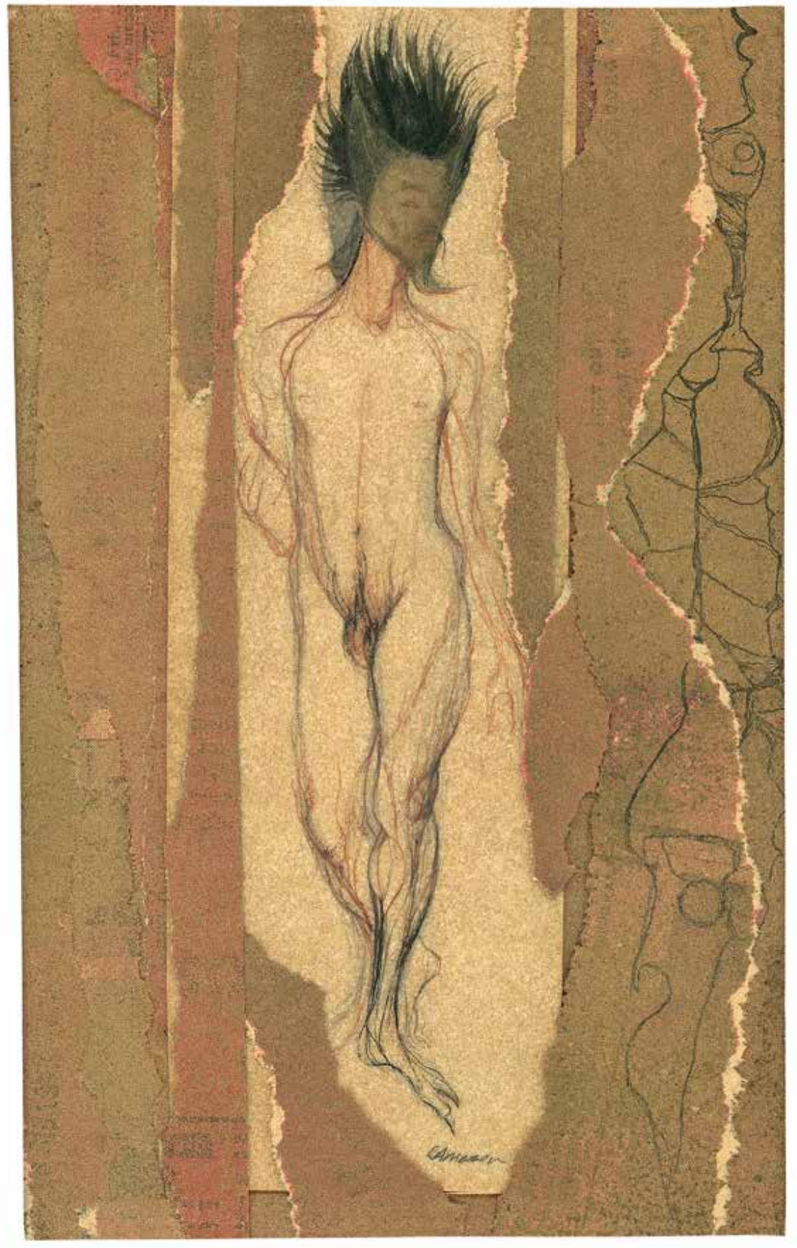
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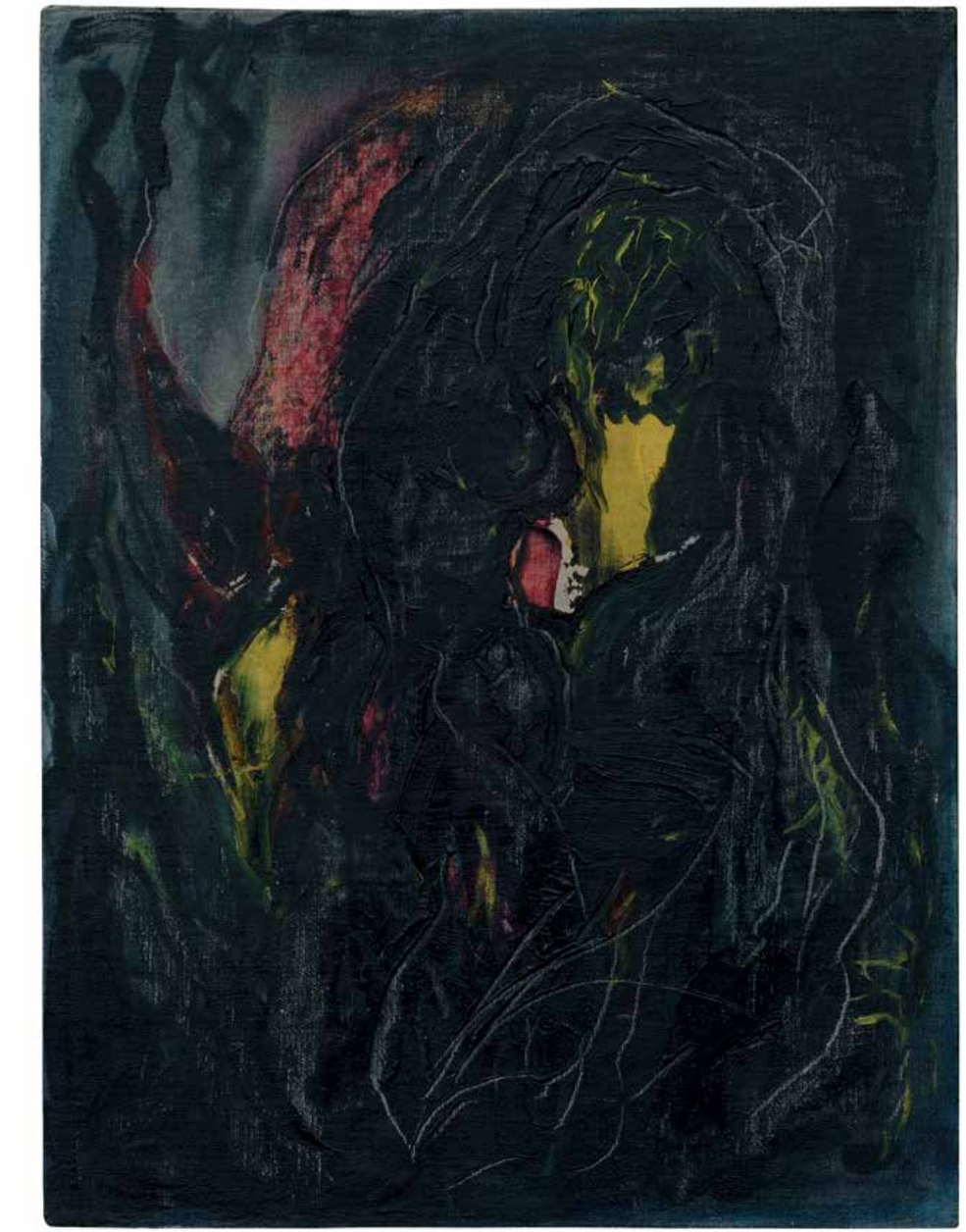
Alien Assemblage, n.d.



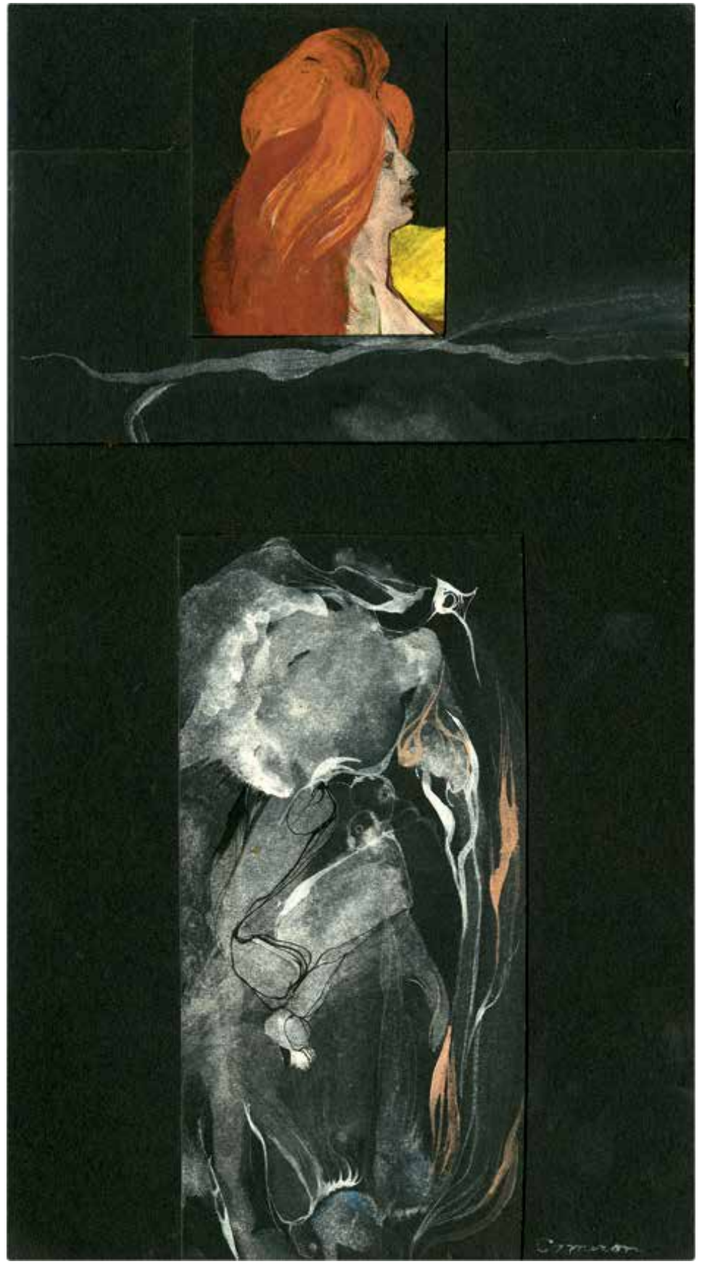
Sun Horse, 1952



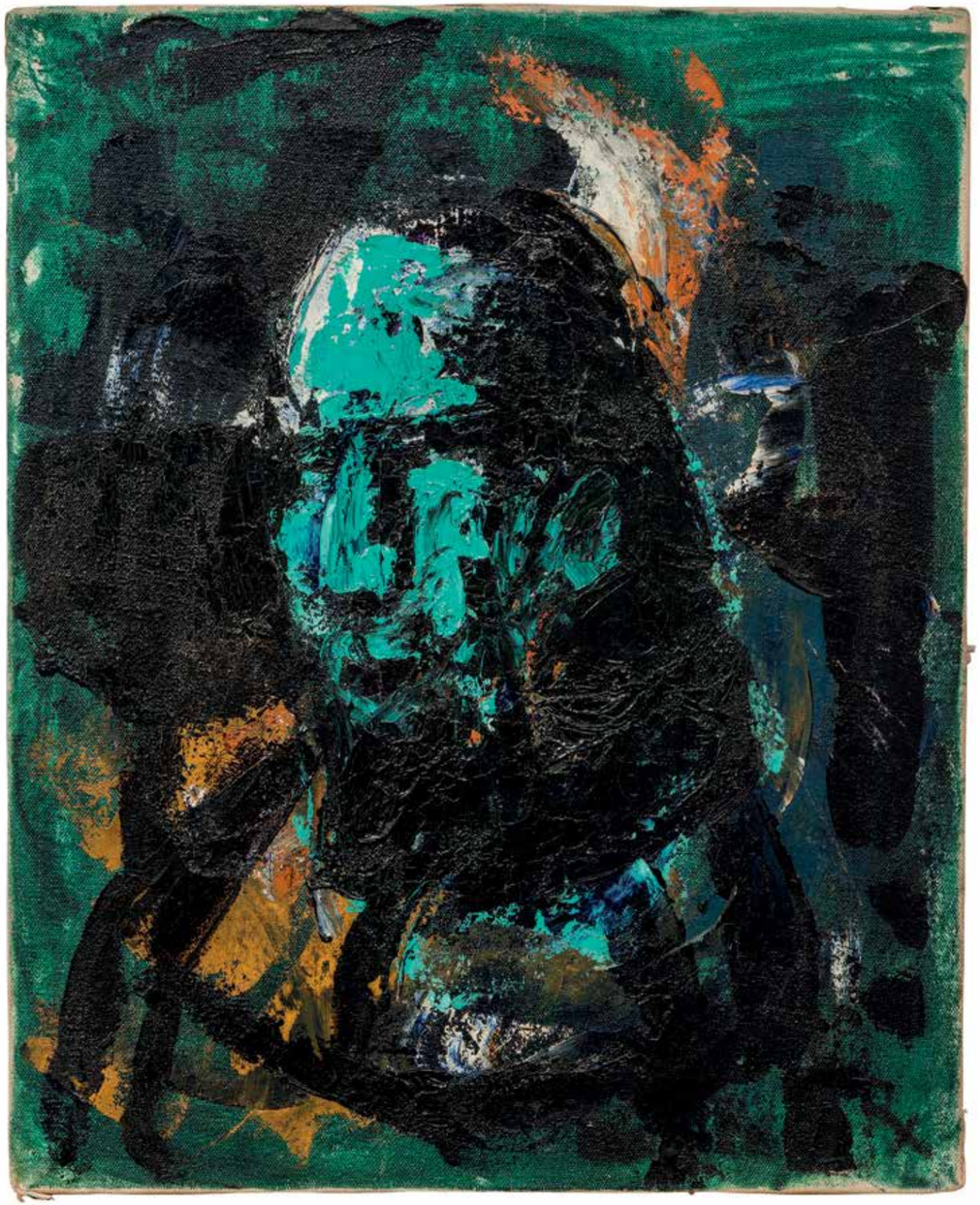
The Elixir, n.d.



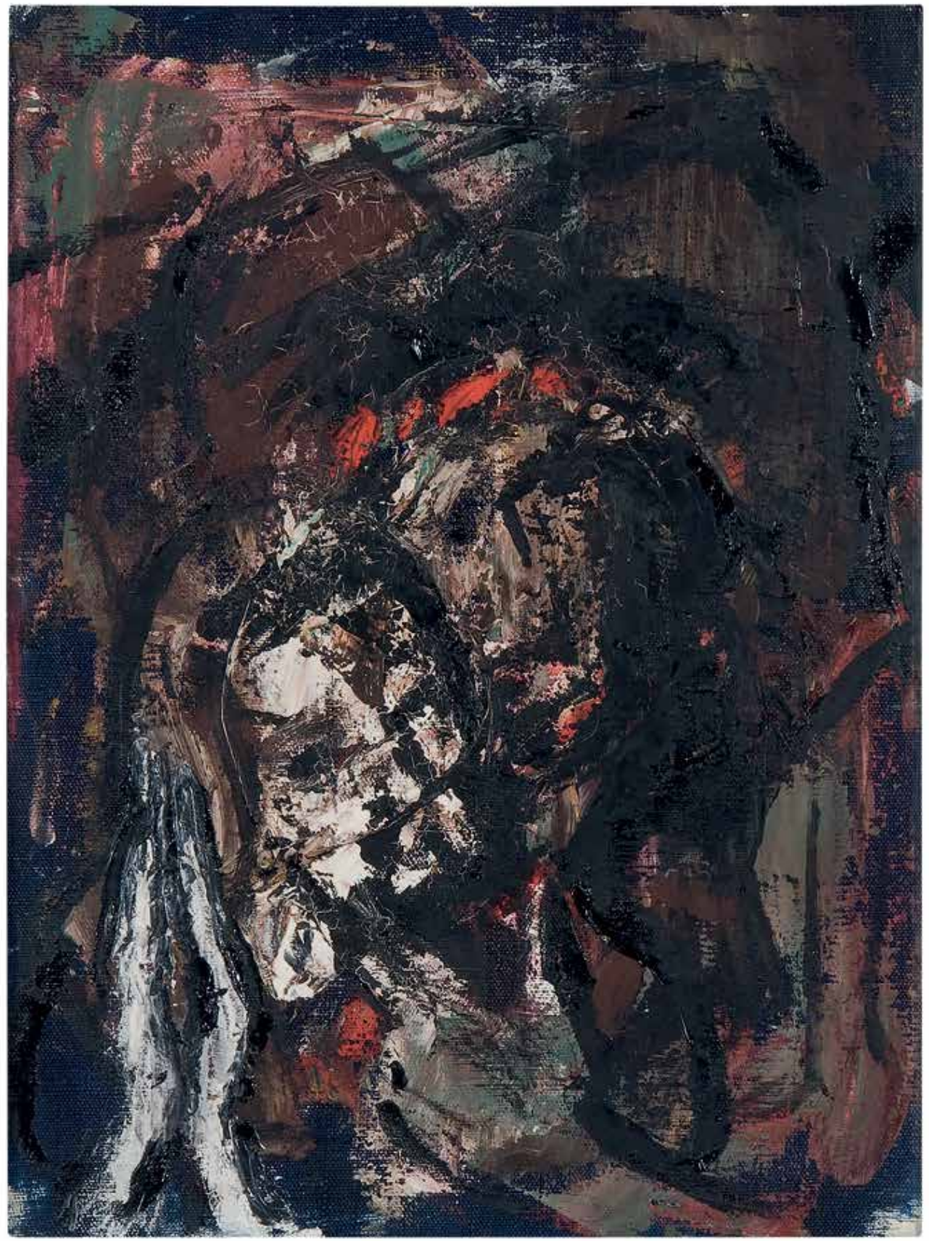
Witches Diptych, n.d.



Untitled, n.d.



Dr. Dee, 1946



Bride of Christ, n.d.



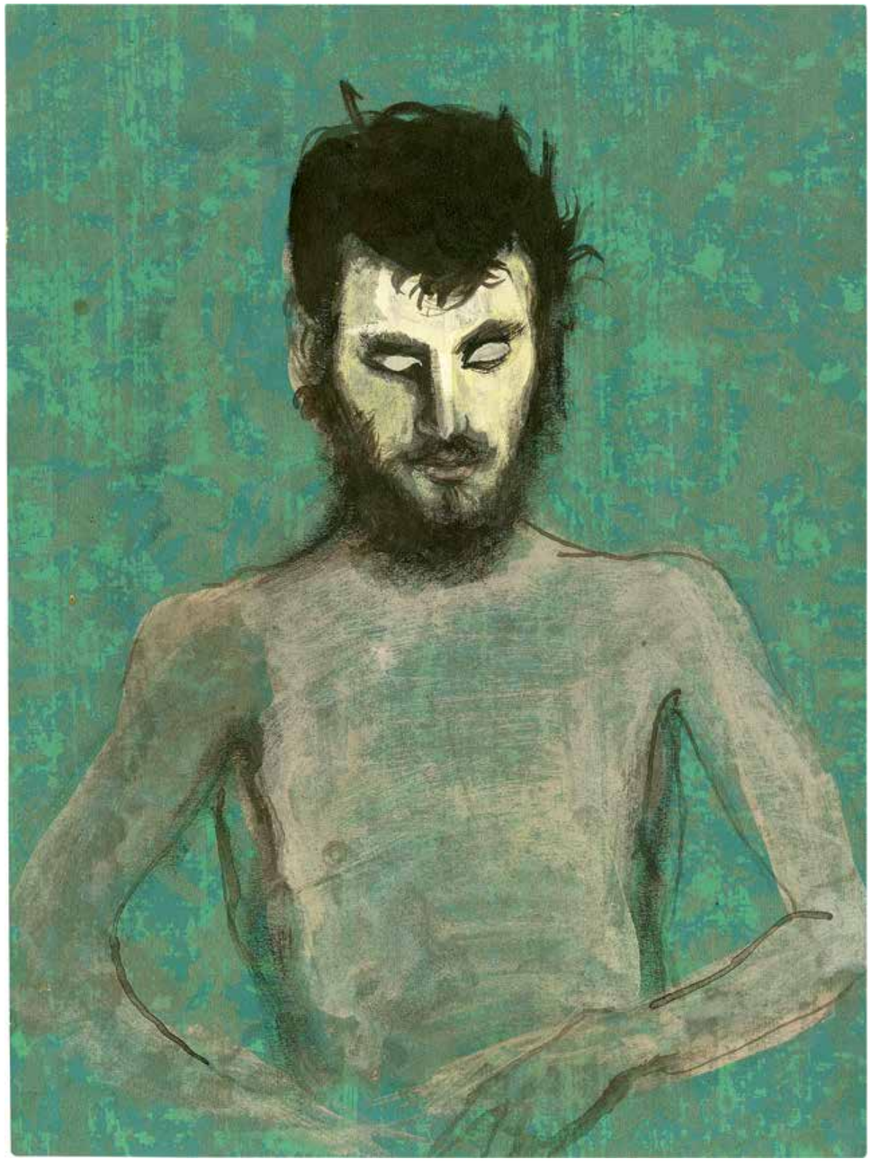
Witches Diptych, n.d.



Spanish Ghost, 1958



Buried Doll, 1955



Portrait of George Herms, 1967



Night Tide, 1958



Fossil of Raven, 1958



Untitled, n.d.



Walking Bird, n.d.



West Angel, n.d.



East Angel, n.d.



Samson de Brier, 1962



Untitled (portrait of Crystal), 1959



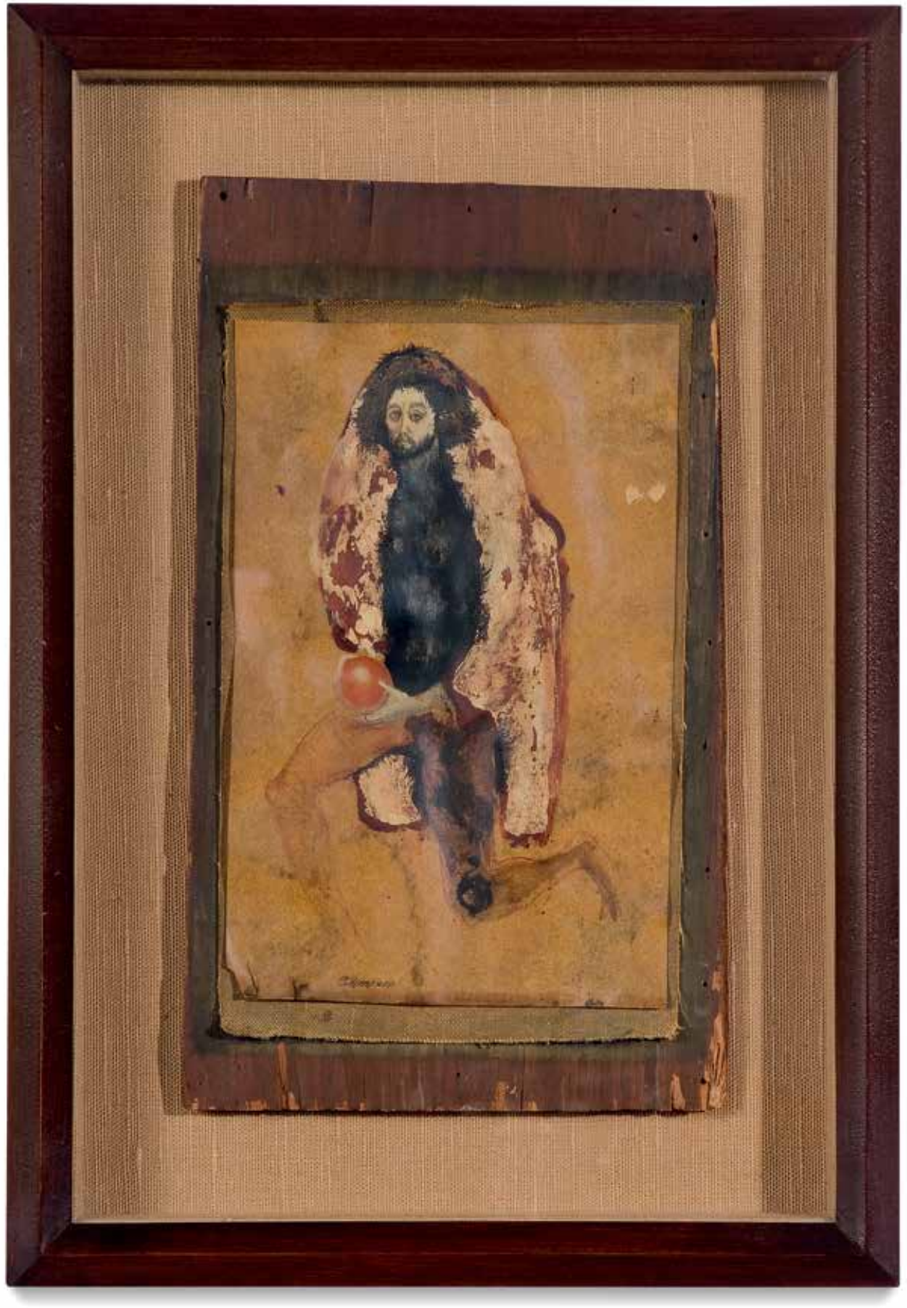
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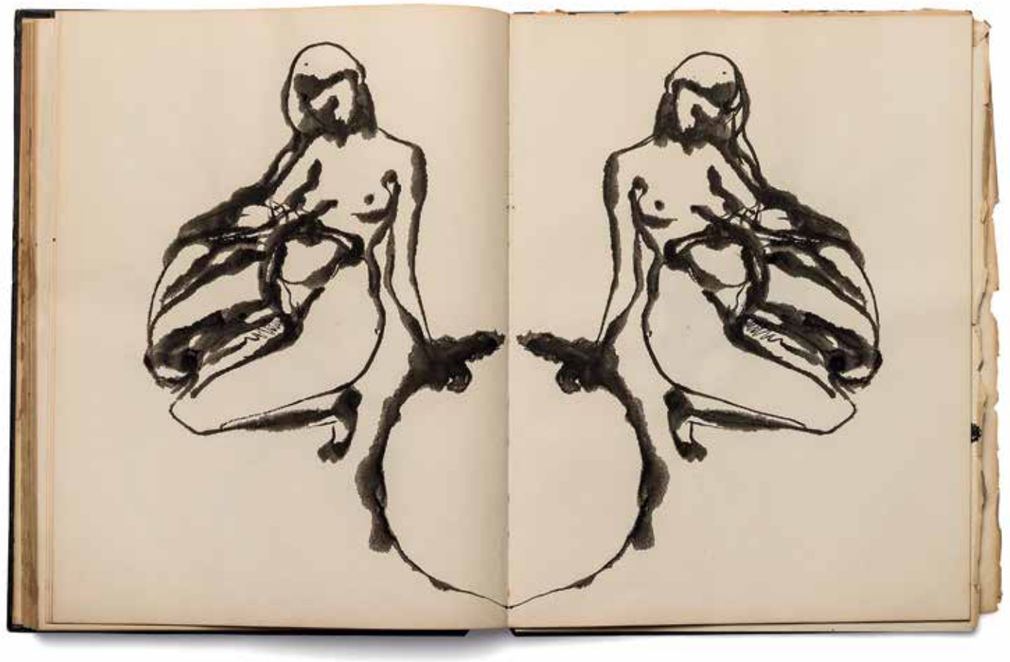
Holy Guardian Angel according to Aleister Crowley, 1966



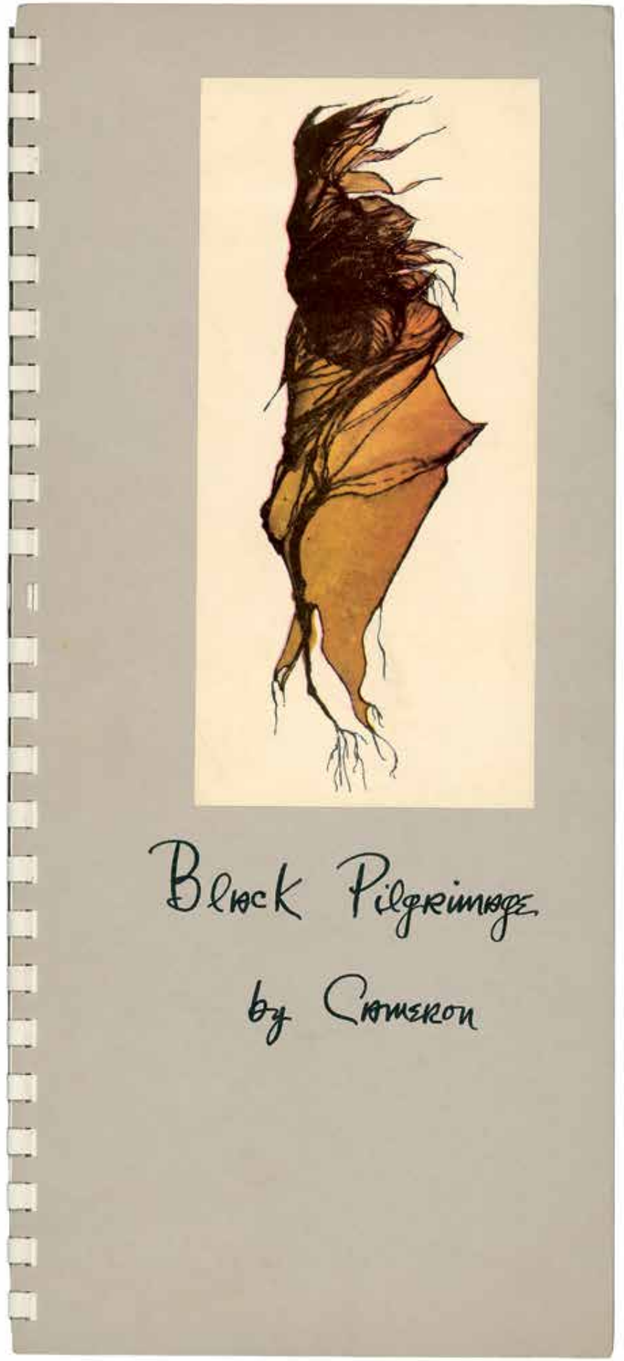
Sebastian (Imaginary Portrait of Kenneth Anger), 1962



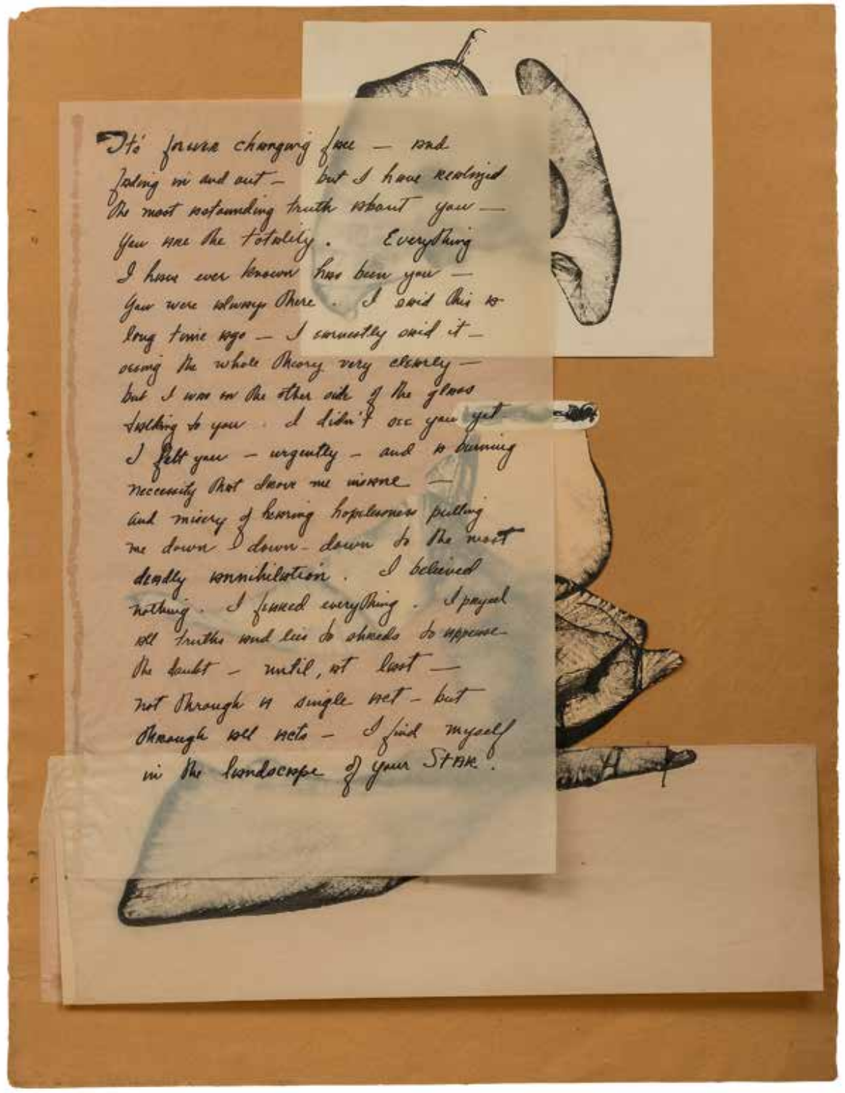
Man with Sphere, 1963

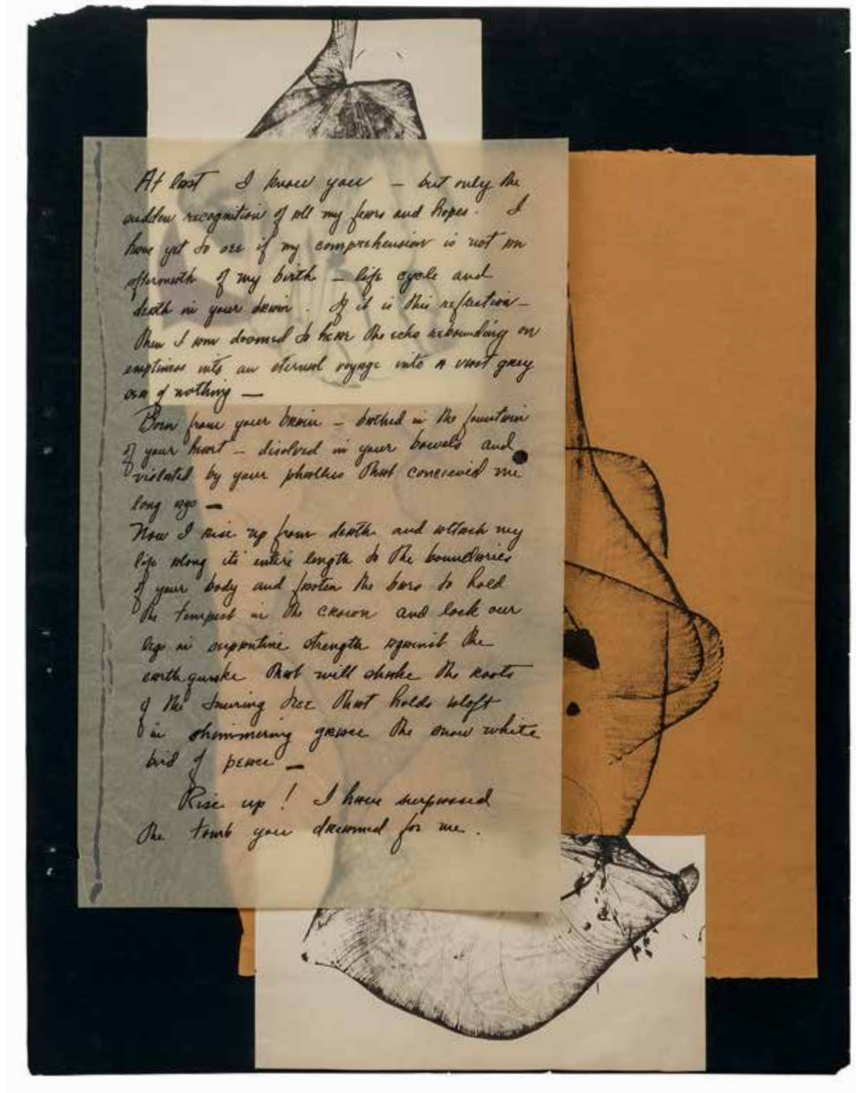


Untitled (mirrored women with hoop), 1964



Black Pilgrimage, 1964

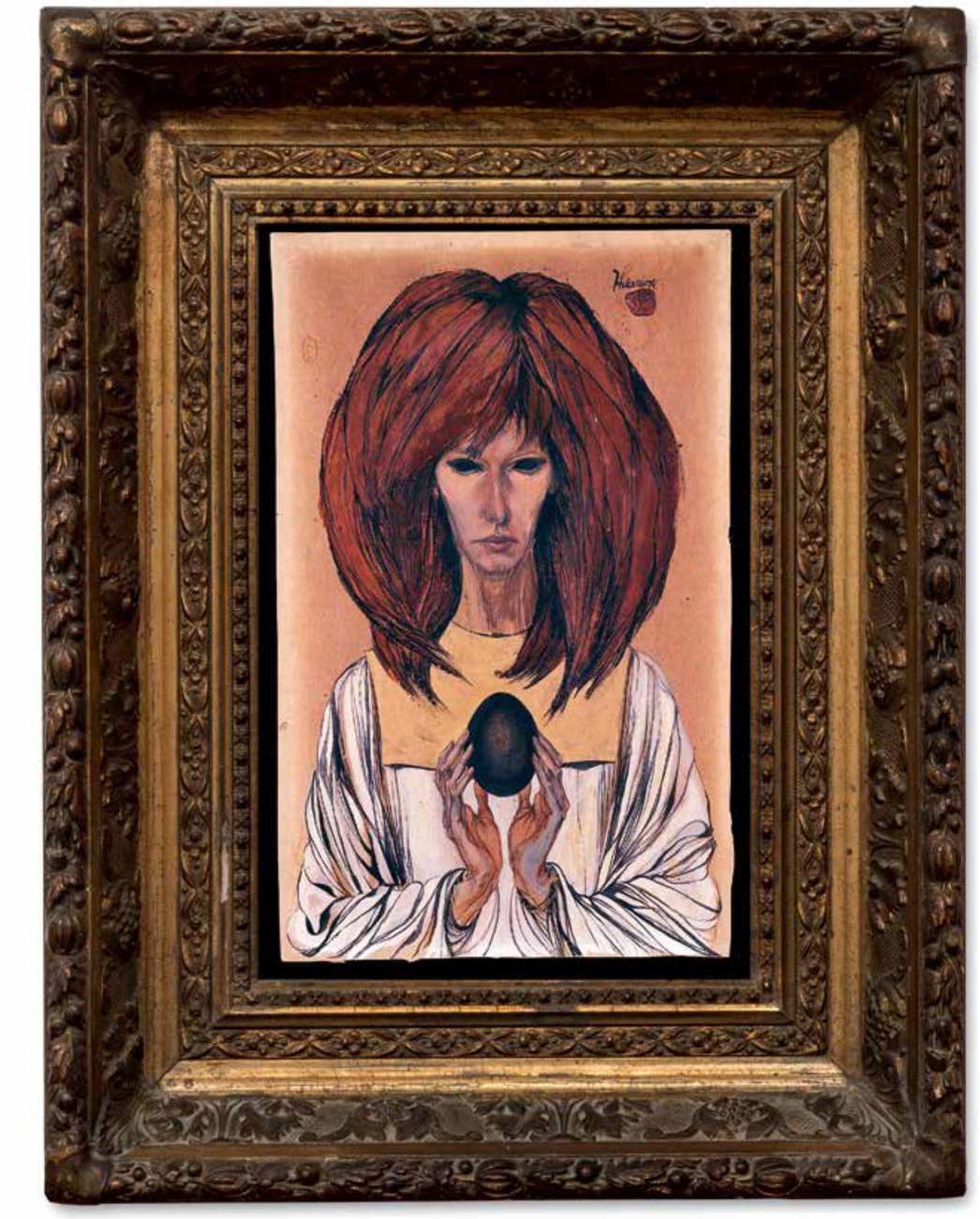




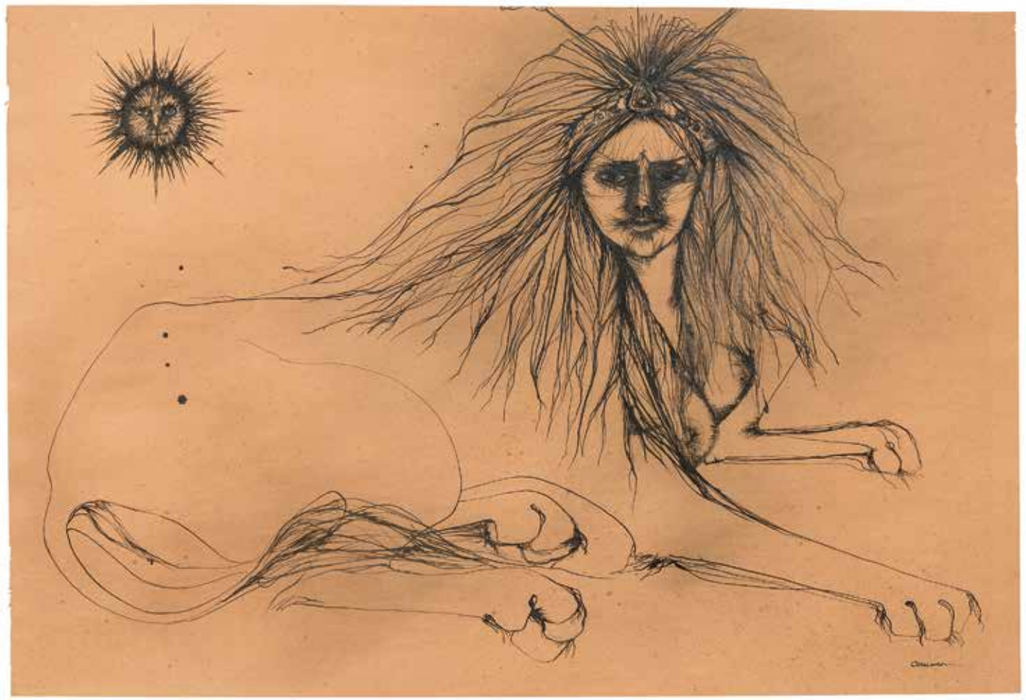
Both: *Anatomy of Madness*, 1956



Prince of the Serpents, 1965



Black Egg, n.d.



Sphinx, n.d.



Hekas, Hekas, este Bebeloi, 1959

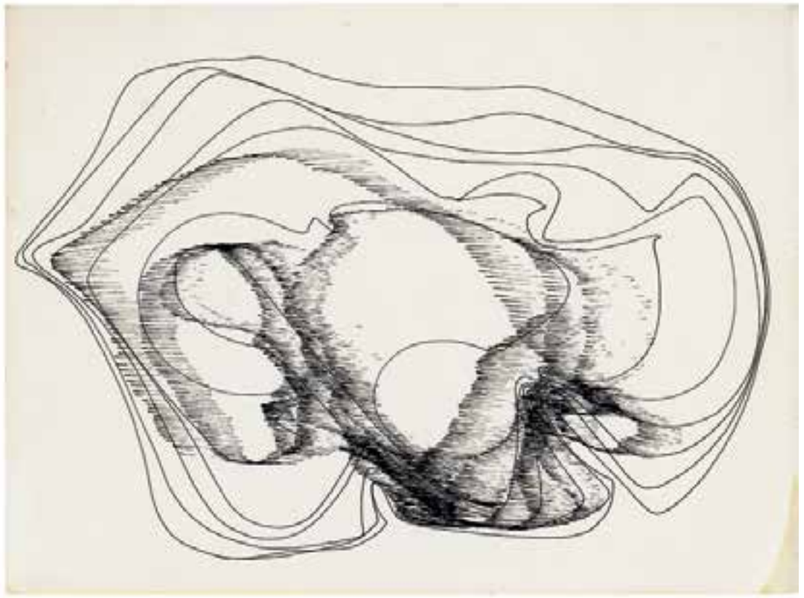


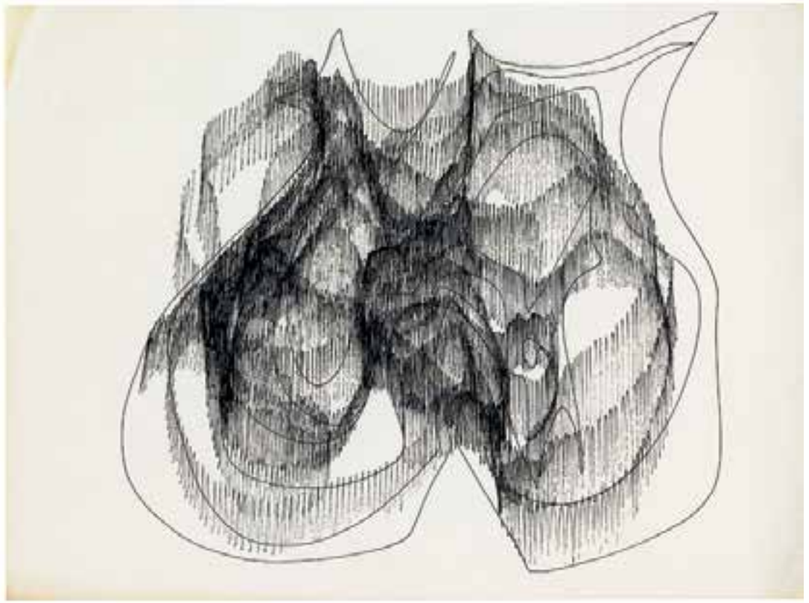


Top: *Untitled*, n.d.
Bottom: *Martyr*, n.d.

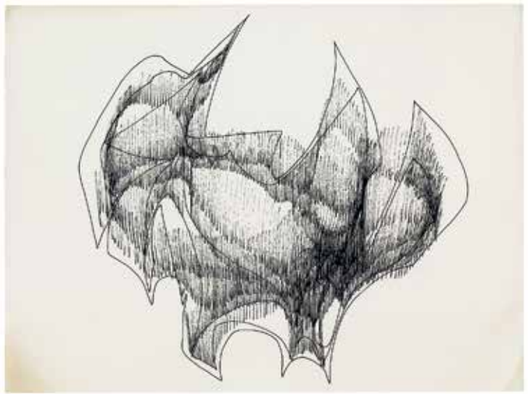


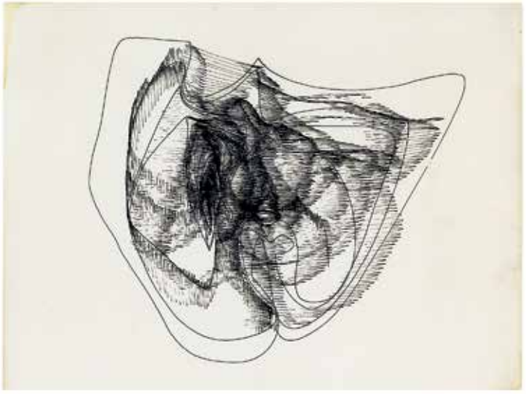
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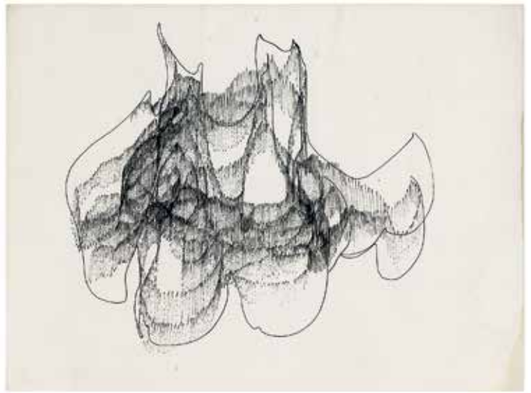




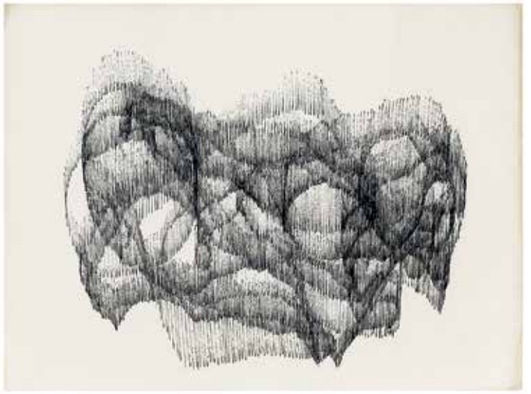
Pages 66–68:
Pluto Transiting the Twelfth House, 1978–86

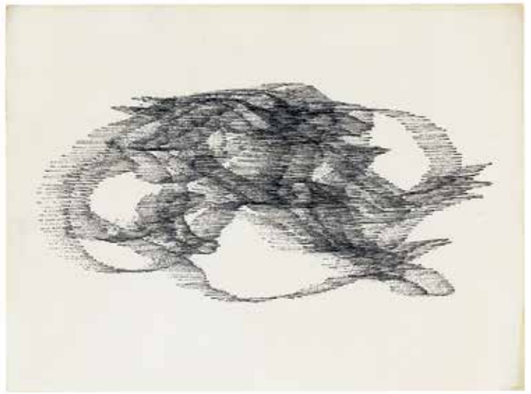


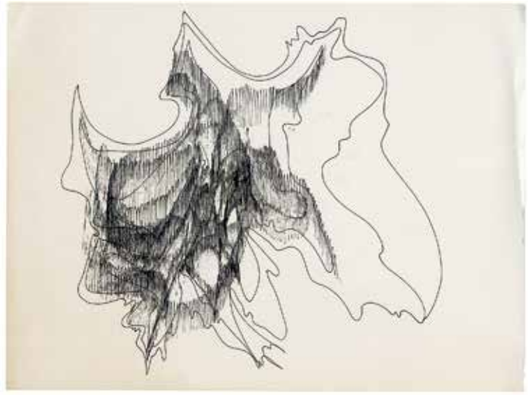


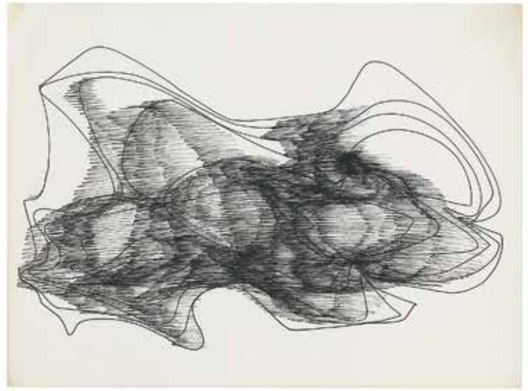


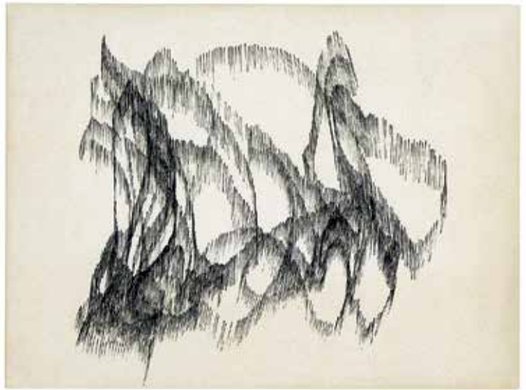


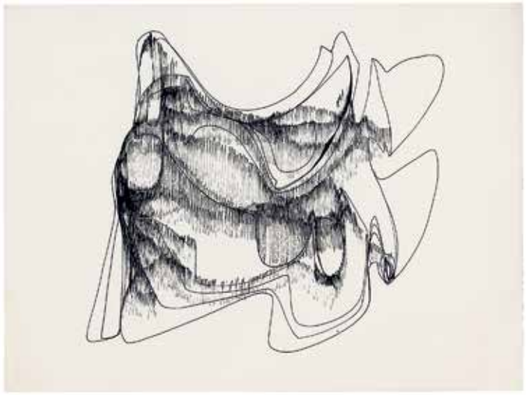






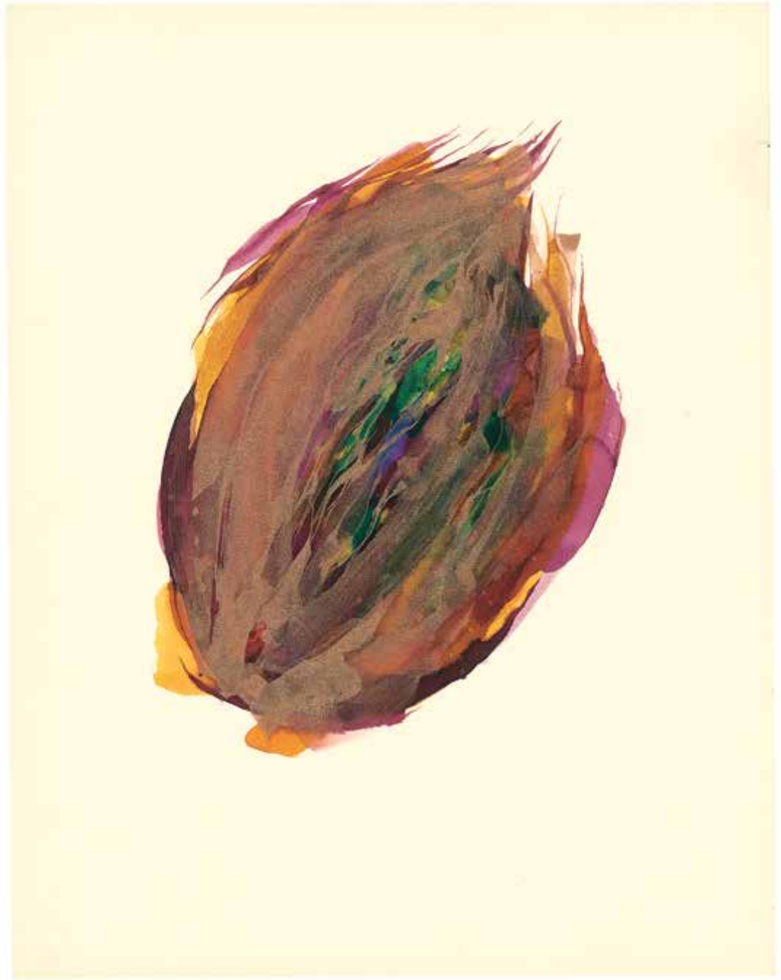












Untitled (from *Lion Path*), n.d.







Opposite page, top and bottom: *Untitled* (from *Lion Path*), n.d.
Above: *Untitled* (from *Lion Path*), n.d.



Dark Angel, n.d.

John Whiteside Parsons—who usually went by Jack—was born Marvel Whiteside Parsons in Los Angeles a century ago, on October 2, 1914. He grew up in Pasadena reading Jules Verne and dreaming about a future in which men would go to the moon and far beyond. The Méliès Brothers, Fritz Lang, and H. G. Wells fired his imagination, and he believed in his heart that such things were really possible. He came of age in the golden era of science fiction and dedicated the rest of his life to making them a reality.

Despite having little education beyond high school, his intuitive genius for explosives chemistry and his knack for practical rocketry gained him acceptance as a founding member of the experimental rocket research group formed at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) by the world-renowned aeronautics expert Theodore von Karman. Their early experiments with rocket propellants were held on campus, but were so dangerous that they became known as "the Suicide Squad" and were banished to the Arroyo Seco, a dry riverbed above Pasadena near Devil's Gate Dam. Their first success with a static rocket motor on October 31, 1936, is still celebrated every year as the foundation day of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL).

Jack followed in the footsteps of scientists like Roger Bacon, Galileo, Giordano Bruno, John Dee, and Isaac Newton by seeking hidden (literally, "occult") knowledge and mystical insight to extend his knowledge of the world and its workings. He devoured texts on alchemy and astrology, practiced ceremonial magick and meditation and learned to travel on the astral plane. He became a member and eventually the leader of the Pasadena lodge of Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.), the religious order led by the British poet Aleister Crowley.

In August 1941, the Suicide Squad flew an aircraft by rocket power alone, the first practical test of the castable composite solid fuel Jack had invented. This became the first rocket propulsion system used by the U.S. military and led to the intercontinental ballistic missile, the space shuttle, and the JPL interplanetary exploration program. Its core concepts are still in use today. The firm Jack co-founded in 1942, Aerojet Engineering Corporation, is now Aerojet Rocketdyne, one of America's leading aerospace manufacturers.

Jack met Cameron in 1946—an epic story well beyond the scope of this essay and best explored through their biographies. Their relationship is incomprehensible without some reference to Crowley's religious philosophy of Thelema (Greek for "will"). It teaches magical methods to enable its adherents, called Thelemites, to shed the complexes and societal strictures that inhibit their





Left: Unknown, wedding photo, 1946
Right: Jack Parsons's dagger, n.d.

ability to reinvent themselves. The liberation of sexuality is held to be one of the keys to releasing the inner genius and tapping the latent wellsprings of creativity. In psychoanalytic terms this entails the free but controlled release of unconscious content into a consciousness trained to translate it into concrete terms, whether science or art. The aim is *individuate*, a process Thelemites call the accomplishment of the True Will, i.e., finding one's purpose on earth. Most of Jack's prose writings are devoted to expounding aspects of this philosophy. Thelema is countercultural by design, and has coexisted easily with artistic countercultures since its inception. It was a major factor in the development not only of Cameron, but of artists as diverse as the dancer Rudolf Laban, the painter Xul Solar, the polymath Harry Smith, and the filmmaker Kenneth Anger.

Though Jack was less than eight years older than Cameron, their relationship was sometimes that of mentor and student. He trusted her and encouraged her to honor her impulses—including those that are traditionally considered destructive to marriages. His idealism tried him terribly at times, but he made a virtue of these trials, as part of his own spiritual development.

Jack lost his government security clearance twice. The last time, in September 1951, was for attempting to pass copies of his rocketry papers to the American Technion Society, who acted for the Israeli university the Technion (now Technion-Israel Institute of Technology), which was working to establish a department of aerospace engineering as well as an Israeli defense industry. He and Cameron dreamed of moving to the new state of Israel to raise a family. With the loss of his government work, Jack was reduced to working as an explosives special effects consultant for Hollywood. He died in an explosion at his Pasadena home laboratory on June 17, 1952. It was officially ruled an accident, but its timing—on the eve of their departure for Mexico and ultimately Israel—is viewed by some as suspiciously convenient.

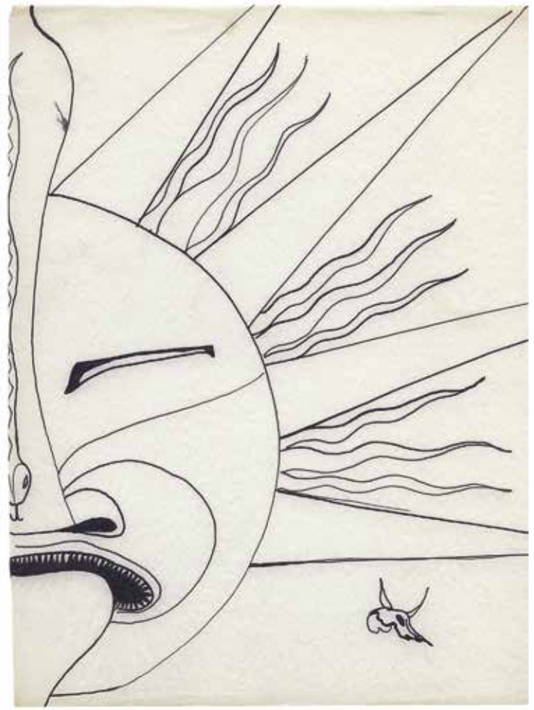
Cameron carried on in his spirit to create her own enduring legacy as a painter, poet, and visionary. Despite her many wanderings, she managed to preserve much of his archive, including the poems that inspired the title drawings of this exhibition. She always kept and treasured Jack's profound and moving letters written when their work separated them. The letter quoted below, from January 1950, is characteristic. Jack encourages Cameron to go out on her own, to wander the wasteland of the everyday world seeking "strange truths in undiscovered lands" in the spirit of Shelley's romantic epic *Alastor, or, The Spirit of Solitude*: to be no man's woman, least of all his; to fully realize her artistic genius, in which he believed unquestioningly; but above all to show the world—especially the women of the world he considered to have been unjustly held back by millennia of patriarchal power—just how it is done and just what freedom looks like.

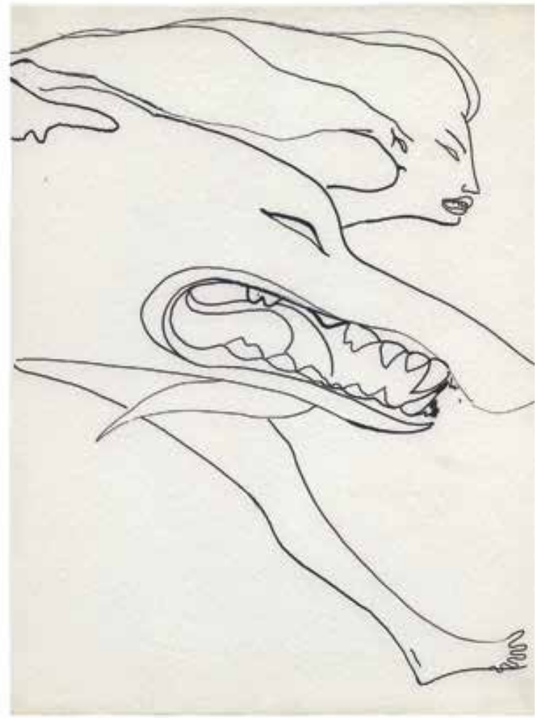
> *You, Cinderella of the Wastelands,*
> *have chosen the way of the hero—*
> *and the gods alone may guess the end of your path.*
> *You are, as Bolitho says, "Camped out with Mystery"*
> *with only Karma-Maya*
> *and the archetypes for your companions.*
> *All the eyes of the secret world are on you,*
> *wondering and hoping.*
> *May you win through.*

In 1972, the International Astronomical Union named a crater on the moon after him.



Cremation wrapping materials, 1952





Left: *Aztec* (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Right: *Aradia* (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955

Acknowledgements

It has been wonderful to work with The Museum of Contemporary Art as guest curator of *Cameron: Songs for the Witch Woman*, which expands on MOCA's legacy as a forerunner in presenting the work of postwar Los Angeles artists. Though a central figure in the development of Los Angeles's midcentury experimental art and film movements, until recently Cameron was relegated to an underground, if mythic status within art history. I was first introduced to Cameron's work in 2007, on the occasion of her solo exhibition at the Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery in New York, which ran in conjunction with New York University's Grey Art Gallery presentation of *Semina Culture: Wallace Berman and His Circle*. Organized by Michael Duncan and Kristine McKenna for the Santa Monica Museum of Art, *Semina Culture* also included Cameron's work, which stood out from the group on account of her singular attention to line and her focus on the idea of spiritual metamorphosis. Revelatory exhibitions such as these motivated me to bring Cameron's visionary output to light. When given the opportunity to do so, I proposed Cameron's story to MOCA.

My deepest thanks are due to Philippe Vergne, Director, and Alma Ruiz, Senior Curator, who have passionately believed in this undertaking from the outset. Working side by side with me in realizing this exhibition, Alma's astute eyes have been key to my thought process throughout. The entire MOCA staff has likewise been crucial, particularly Catherine Arias, Director of Education; David Bradshaw, Technical Manager; Sandy Choi, Associate Registrar, Gladys-Katherina Hernando, Curatorial Assistant; Rosanna Hemerick, Director of Collections; Susan Jenkins, Director of Exhibition Management; Jessica McCormack, Interim Public Relations Coordinator; Clarissa Morales, Administrative Assistant to Exhibition Management; Jang Park, Director of Exhibition Production; and Emma Reeves, Creative Director of MOCA TV. My selection of works for the exhibition would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of the Cameron Parsons Foundation and especially its director, Scott Hobbs, who has labored to save and preserve Cameron's work. I would also like to thank all of the lenders and artists, including the Ordo Templi Orientis and George Herms, who so generously shared their memories of Cameron with me. Lastly, this catalogue would not have happened without Stephanie Emerson, who edited its pages, and Marina Mills Kitchen and Lorraine Wild of Green Dragon Office, for their discerning book design.

Yael Lipschutz

Works in the Exhibition
All works by Cameron unless otherwise noted.

Alien Assemblage, n.d.
Mixed media
14 × 14 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Black Egg, n.d.
Paint on cardboard
11 × 8 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Bride of Christ, n.d.
Oil on canvas
16 × 12 in.
Collection of Jason Vass, Santa Monica

Dark Angel, n.d.
Ink, paint on paper
34 ¾ × 23 ¾ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

East Angel, n.d.
Graphite, ink, and gold paint on paper
23 ¾ × 36 ¾ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Hand print, n.d.
Ink and paint on paper
11 × 8 ½ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Martyr, n.d.
Ink and colored pencil on paper
6 ¾ × 11 ½ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Sphinx, n.d.
Ink on paper
23 × 34 in.
Collection of Scott Hobbs, Santa Monica

Untitled, n.d.
Ink, watercolor, and gouache on black paper
10 × 5 ½ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Untitled, n.d.
Cut paper on board
7 ½ × 12 ¾ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Untitled, n.d.
Sketchbook
12 × 9 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
11 × 8 ½ in.
Collection of Beth De Woody, New York

Untitled, n.d.
Ink on paper
11 × 14 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Untitled (from *Lion Path*), n.d.
Watercolor on paper
15 × 11 ½ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Untitled (from *Lion Path*), n.d.
Watercolor and gold on paper
5 × 7 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Untitled (from *Lion Path*), n.d.
Watercolor on paper
9 × 6 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Untitled (from *Lion Path*), n.d.
Watercolor on paper
14 × 11 in.
Collection of Lorraine Wild, Los Angeles

Untitled (Self-portrait), n.d.
Paint on paper
19 ¾ × 13 ½ in.
Collection of Scott Hobbs, Santa Monica

Walking Bird, n.d.
Ink and watercolor on paper
14 × 11 in.
Collection of Aya Tarlow, Mt. Shasta, California

West Angel, n.d.
Graphite, ink, and gold paint on paper
23 ¾ × 36 ¾ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Witches Diptych, n.d.
Oil on canvas
12 × 16 in.
Collection of Jason Vass, Santa Monica

Witches Diptych, n.d.
Oil on canvas
16 × 12 in.
Collection of Jason Vass, Santa Monica

Dr. Dee, 1946
Oil on canvas
16 ½ × 12 ½ in.
Collection of Scott Hobbs, Santa Monica

Sun Horse, 1952
Oil on fiberboard
49 × 34 in.
Collection of Barbara Guggenheim and Bert Fields, Malibu

Aradia (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Autumn (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Aztec (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Buried Doll, 1955
Oil on board
56 ¼ × 13 ¼ in.
Collection of Andrea Leonelli, Malibu

Danse (from *Songs for the Witch Woman)*, 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Farewell Unknown (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Garden (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Harpocrates (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

King David (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Lesbians (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Merlin (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Neurosis (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Night (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Pan (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Passion Flowers (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Punch (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Sabat (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Sorcerer (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Star [The Fool] (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Stonehenge (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Untitled, 1955
Ink, gouache, and watercolor on poster board
17 × 14 in.
Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, Marie Eccles Caine Foundation Gift

Untitled "Peyote Vision," 1955
Ink, paint on paper
17 ½ × 22 ¾ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Witch Woman (from *Songs for the Witch Woman*), 1955
Ink on paper
10 × 8 in.
Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York

Anatomy of Madness, 1956
Two mixed-media folios
26 × 20 in. each
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Fossil of Raven, 1958
White ink on paper
18 ⅜ × 11 ½ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Ephemera

Night Tide, 1958
Casein on paper
8 × 10 in.
Cartin Collection, Hartford, Connecticut

Spanish Ghost, 1958
Casein and ink on paper
8 × 8 in.
Collection of Philip E. Aarons and Shelley Fox Aarons, New York

Hekas, Hekas, este Bebeloi, 1959
Watercolor on parchment
14 × 12 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Untitled (portrait of Crystal), 1959
Ink and gold paint on fiberboard
43 ½ × 11 ¾ in.
Collection of Scott Hobbs, Santa Monica

Samson de Brier, 1962
Paper and copper
12 × 6 in.
Collection of Scott Hobbs, Santa Monica

Man with Sphere, 1963
Parchment on board
11 × 7 in.
Collection of Scott Hobbs, Santa Monica

Black Pilgrimage, 1964
Book
11 × 5 in.
Estate of Samson de Brier, Los Altos, California

Untitled (mirrored women with hoop), 1964
Sketchbook
11 × 17 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Prince of the Serpents, 1965
Casein on mat embossed paper
7 ½ × 4 ¾ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Holy Guardian Angel according to Aleister Crowley, 1966
Casein and gold lacquer on board
29 ½ × 19 ¼ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Portrait of George Herms, 1967
Casein on paper
12 × 8 in.
Collection of George Herms, Venice, California

Pluto Transiting the Twelfth House, 1978–86
Ink on paper
12 × 9 in. each
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Cameron and Jack Parsons
Songs for the Witch Woman, 1951
Watercolor and ink on paper
9 × 11 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica
Wallace Berman

Portrait of Cameron, n.d.
Photograph
5 × 5 ½ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Cameron's astrological chart for Jack Parsons, n.d.
Ink on paper
8 × 8 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Jack Parsons's astrological chart for Cameron, n.d.
Ink on paper
11 × 8 ½ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Jack Parsons's dagger, n.d.
Knife in leather pouch
5 × 14 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Unknown
Torn photo of Cameron, n.d.
Photograph
3 × 4 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Aleister Crowley
Book of Thoth, 1944
Leatherbound book
7 ¾ × 10 ½ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Jack Parsons
Handwritten draft of *The Book of Babalon*, 1946
Graphite on paper
8 ½ × 11 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Unknown
Wedding photo, 1946
Photograph
6 × 9 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Joseph Campbell
The Hero with a Thousand Faces, 1949
Book
9 ¼ × 6 ½ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation

Cremation wrapping materials, 1952
Paper and string
10 × 10 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Wallace Berman
Semina #1 (cover), 1955
Photo and ink on paper folder with insert
7 ¼ × 4 $^{1}/_{16}$ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Postcard sent by Wallace Berman to Cameron, 1955
Paper
5 × 3 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Unknown
Photograph of Cameron as the Scarlet Woman in Kenneth Anger's *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome*, 1956
Photograph
5 × 3 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

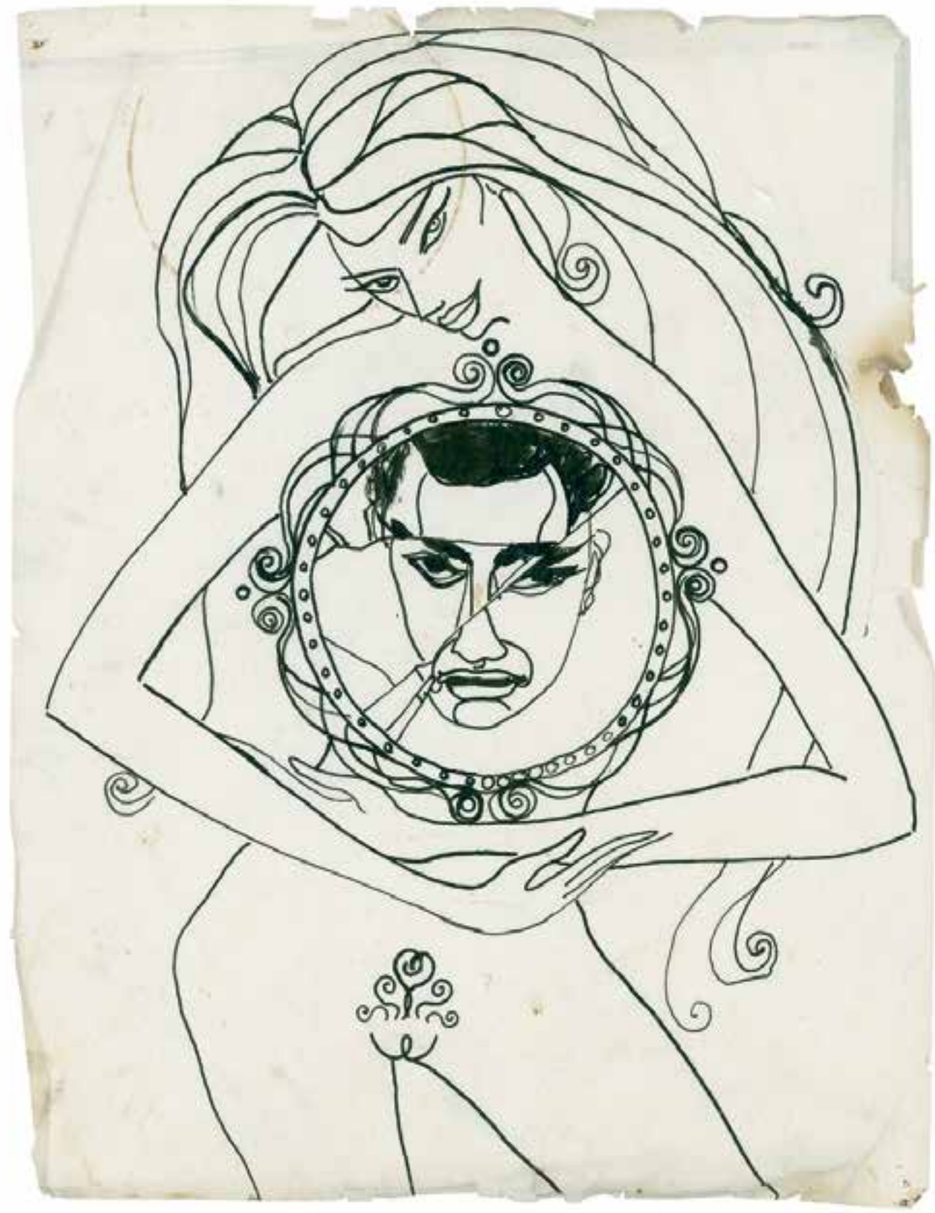
Photographic still from *Night Tide*, 1961
8 × 10 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Poster for *Night Tide*, 1961
Heavy paper
12 × 14 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Unknown
Night Tide, 1961
Photograph
17 × 11 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Letter from Joseph Campbell and slides, 1965
Ink on paper and slides
11 × 8 ½ in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica

Victoria Ballesteros
Sword Form, Pisces Moon, 1994
Photograph
8 × 10 in.
Cameron Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica



Untitled, possibly for *Songs for the Witch Woman*



Victoria Ballesteros, *Sword Form, Pisces Moon*, 1994

This catalogue was published in conjunction with the exhibition *Cameron: Songs for the Witch Woman*, organized by Yael Lipschutz, and presented at MOCA Pacific Design Center, Los Angeles, California, October 11, 2014–January 11, 2015.

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