



WO | MAN RAY. Le seduzioni della fotografia

Turin, CAMERA – Centro Italiano per la Fotografia

17 October 2019 – 19 January 2020

16 October 2019: opening

Exhibition curated by Walter Guadagnini and Giangavino Pazzola

Press Release

From 17 October 2019 to 19 January 2020, CAMERA – Centro Italiano per la Fotografia pays homage to a great master of the 20th century with the exhibition **WO | MAN RAY. Le seduzioni della fotografia**. The exhibition features around **two hundred photographs**, produced from the 1920s in Paris – where Man Ray became the unrivalled protagonist firstly of the Dadaist season and then of Surrealism – right up until his death (in 1976). The exhibition itinerary is dedicated exclusively to a single subject, the **female figure**: the primary source of inspiration for his entire poetics, especially his work on photography.

Thus, along with **Man Ray**, we also find **Lee Miller, Berenice Abbott, Dora Maar** and **Meret Oppenheim**. Not to mention Kiki de Montparnasse, Nusch Éluard, Juliet (his last wife) and various other female artists, models, friends and companions, including the leading female protagonists of Paris in the 1920s and '30s, such as Gertrude Stein, Nancy Cunard, Sylvia Beach and Youki Foujita Desnos. In various ways, for longer or shorter periods, they were all linked to **Emmanuel Radnitzky, known to all as Man Ray** (born in Philadelphia in 1890), and who reached the *Ville Lumière* in 1921 preceded by his fame as the 'New York Dadaist', introduced by Marcel Duchamp, himself a friend of Tristan Tzara (they too are also to be found in the show, the former in crossdressing guise and the latter alongside a huge – nude – female figure) and chomping at the bit to show the magic he could perform in the darkroom.

These are the largely **female protagonists** of the exhibition held at CAMERA, along with Man Ray himself, the creator of legendary works such as *Le Violon d'Ingres* (1924), *Noire et blanche* (1926), *La prière* (1930) – all on show here – the favourite portraitist of the intellectual circles of Paris and a sought-after fashion photographer; the creator also of 'rayographs' and 'solarisations': two technical procedures that went on to become the very emblems of photographic invention in early 20th-century avant-garde movements. Beyond that, Man Ray was also the mentor of two of the leading female photographers of the day: **Berenice Abbott** and **Lee Miller**, initially assistants of his, but who managed to shake off his incumbent personality and put forward a language of their own. In the words of Sylvia Beach, publisher and



owner of the 'Shakespeare & Co.' bookshop, "Being photographed by Man Ray or Berenice Abbott meant being someone," and before our very eyes – captured by the sharp gaze of the American female photographer – here we come across James Joyce and Jean Cocteau, André Gide and Eugène Atget in a splendid series that takes us right into the heart of an unrepeatable season in European culture. While **Lee Miller**, also over from the United States with the fame of a beautiful model, worked with Man Ray from 1929, becoming so skilled as to be considered little less than the co-author of the 'Électricité' portfolio (1931) – on show here – one of the outright masterpieces of photography in its day. She would herself go on to become a protagonist of fashion photography and photojournalism in her own right in the 1930s and '40s.

And then **Meret Oppenheim**, who concedes her naked body for one of Man Ray's most iconic series, 'Érotique-voilée' (1933), while at the same time producing her own works marked by her stinging Surrealist-feminist humour; **Dora Maar**, whose unsettling genius is emerging only today, labelled all too long as the unfortunate muse of the omnipresent Picasso; **Nusch Éluard**, companion of the poet Paul and a true icon of the Surrealist group, by whom a rare collage is displayed (as well as the splendid portraits and nudes produced by Man Ray, including the sensual silhouette from the 1935 book *Facile*, a publishing masterpiece of the day). Indeed, **surrealism appears in its purest forms** in this exhibition, thanks to the photographic work of the man "with a magic-lantern head," as he was defined by Breton, to the point that an entire room is given over to the documentation of the mannequins at the Exposition International Surréaliste of 1938: *Les mannequins. Résurrection des mannequins* remains an epochal event in the history of 20th-century art.

"As is now consolidated practice here at CAMERA," notes the **Director Walter Guadagnini**, "we decided to recount a chapter of the history of art and photography from an original viewpoint. While everyone knows Man Ray, his nudes characterised by sensual eroticism, both provocative and playful, the story of the women who collaborated with him, lived with him, argued with him, learnt from him, and who turned out to be just as much protagonists of the worldwide art and photography scene is not so well known. In this new perspective, we recreate an environment, tell a story which is largely unknown to many, and display a series of masterpieces."

Emanuele Chieli, President of CAMERA, underlines: "This exhibition represents a new major step forward in the process of research and public presentation undertaken by CAMERA – Centro Italiano per la Fotografia now almost four years ago. In fact, not only is it the first exhibition staged at CAMERA dedicated to a great maestro from the history of 20th-century photography on the world stage, but also the exhibition also reflects what is still a pressing theme, i.e. that of the role of women within every area of society, including that of the arts."



Thus a unique show, both in terms of the **quality of the photographs on display** and its **innovative approach, coupling both biographic and artistic elements of the protagonists of these events**. A great range of images are made available to the public thanks to collaboration with numerous national and international institutions and galleries, from the CSAC – Study Centre and Archive of Communication of Parma University – to the ASAC – Historical Archive of the Venice Biennale – from the Lee Miller Archive of Sussex, to the Mast in Bologna and the Fondazione Marconi in Milan. Both with their loans and with scientific knowledge, these institutions have contributed to making this study on one of the most innovative periods of the 20th century as exhaustive as possible, featuring genuine masterpieces of the photographic art.

Curated by Walter Guadagnini and Giangavino Pazzola, the exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue published by Silvana Editoriale, containing reproductions of the works on show, essays by the curators and other scholars, Mauro Carrera and Paolo Barbaro, as well as a series of bio-bibliographical notes.

CAMERA's activity is made possible thanks to the support of Intesa Sanpaolo, Lavazza, Eni and Reda, and in particular the display and cultural programming is supported by the Compagnia di San Paolo.

INFORMATION

CAMERA – Centro Italiano per la Fotografia

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Opening hours (Last entrance 30 minutes prior to closing)

Monday 11 am – 7 pm

Tuesday Closed

Wednesday 11 am – 7 pm

Thursday 11 am – 9 pm

Friday 11 am – 7 pm

Saturday 11 am – 7 pm

Sunday 11 am – 7 pm

Tickets

Adults: €10

Concessions: €6 (under 26 and over 70)



Concession-Rate Entrance

Members of Touring Club Italiano, Amici della Fondazione per l'Architettura, members of the Ordine degli Architetti, AIACE, Enjoy, Slow Food, Centro Congressi Unione Industriale of Turin, and holders of the MenoUnoPiuSei card.

Entrance ticket holders for: Gallerie d'Italia (Milan, Naples, Vicenza), Museo Nazionale del Cinema, MAO, Palazzo Madama, Borgo Medievale, GAM – Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, Forte di Bard, MEF – Museo Ettore Fico and FIAF.

Free Entrance

Children under 12

Holders of an Abbonamento Musei Torino Piemonte, holders of a Torino+Piemonte Card, holders of a valid ICOM card, handicapped citizens and a family member or another accompanier who may demonstrate that s/he is an employee of the healthcare services.

Booking and presales by Vivaticket.

Contacts

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