

GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE



**ILSE BING**  
*Photographs 1928 – 1935*

Press kit

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# GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE

## Artist's quotes

*« Mye aye is most often attracted by a minor detail hidden in a banal conglomeration of things: a leaf fallen from a tree, a puddle of water in a street, a furtive expression on a face... the picture makes it possible to immortalize the reality of a moment ».*

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*« Florence Henri's work is what incited me to come to Paris in 1929. I wanted to live in a place where images were made that coincided with my own concepts ».*

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*« Nothing in the compositions remains still, even if in appearance it is, there is a dynamic and a movement that can be felt.».*

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*“I didn't choose photography, it chose me. I didn't know at the time. An artist doesn't think about it first, and then practise her art. She is drawn into it. Today I can explain how it happened. In a way it was the movement of an era when people started to look with new eyes... And in a way the camera was the start of mechanical instruments penetrating the sphere of art”.*

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## Biography

Born in Frankfurt, Germany, on 23 March 1899 to a middle-class Jewish family, Ilse Bing was both an avant-garde photographer and one of the pioneers of photojournalism. She received a good education and studied mathematics and science before turning to art history. Passionate about photography and completely self-taught, she took her first photographs at age 14 and developed her talent so that she could illustrate her thesis. In 1929, she definitively left university to make a career of her passion and chose her instrument of predilection, the Leica, which would not leave her side for the next twenty years. She launched into photojournalism and worked for illustrated magazines, first German and then French, such as *Harper's BAZAAR*, *Vogue Paris* and *Le Monde illustré*. Between 1930 and 1940, she lived in Paris and enjoyed international recognition as one of the main representatives of modern French photography. She regularly exhibited her photographs in Galerie La Pléiade alongside Brassai, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Florence Henri, André Kertész, Germaine Krull and Man Ray. In 1931, she met Hendrik Willem van Loon, which was crucial for her career. A true patron, he made her work known in the United States, and in 1932, Ilse Bing's work was exhibited at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York, which then donated her most emblematic photographs to the Art Institute of Chicago. The same year, she held her first solo exhibition at the Trittlar Gallery in Frankfurt. In 1936, she participated in the Louvre's first modern photography exhibition and the following year, her works were displayed as part of the major retrospective *Photography 1839 – 1937* held at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. Her status as a Jewish woman forced her to seek refuge in the United States at the beginning of the war in 1940. She stayed there until her death in 1998. At the end of the 1950s, Bing abandoned photography to experiment with poetry and visual arts. Her photographic work was rediscovered in 1976 through an exhibition of MoMA's recent acquisitions in New York. Her photographs would then go on to be the focus of many exhibitions and feature in the collections of the greatest museums including the Met and MoMA in New York, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

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*Dancer. Ballet Errante, 1932, silver print, vintage print, 22.2 x 27.9 cm/ 8 3/4 x 11 in.*

## ILSE BING *Photographs 1928 – 1935*

27.02.2021 – 29.05.2021

*“I felt that the camera was becoming an extension of my own eyes and was moving with me.”*

Ilse Bing

Galerie Karsten Greve is delighted to present its new exhibition dedicated to the German photographer Ilse Bing. *Photographs 1928 – 1935* showcases a wide selection of photographs taken in Frankfurt and Paris between 1928 and 1935, which illustrate the avant-garde experiments conducted by the woman nicknamed “the Queen of the Leica”.

As a self-taught photographer, Ilse Bing did not restrict herself to a particular genre, demonstrating considerable freedom in the choice of her subjects and taking interest in portraits, fashion, dance and still lives alike. She also drew inspiration from cities, whether in architecture or in scenes of daily life, including details that could be thought insignificant (*Dead Leaf and Tramway Ticket On Sidewalk, Frankfurt, 1929*). Her snapshots, characterised by close-ups, perspectives and bold framing choices, as well as the attention given to the details of city life, are emblematic of the “New Vision” style. This modernist photographic movement that emerged in the 1920s was led by Berenice Abbott, André Kertész, Eli Lotar, Sasha Stone and Florence Henri, an iconic figure of that modernity, whose geometry lessons resonated perfectly with Ilse Bing. However, Ilse Bing struck her own path by imbuing her photographs with delicacy and poetry, using plays of contrast and light and the spontaneity of her pictures.

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That spontaneity was made possible by her mastery of the Leica, which she started to use in 1929. At a time in which 9 x 16 cm formats were dominating photographic production, Ilse Bing was one of the first to use it and almost the only photographer to work exclusively with that camera, a 35 mm. Very simple and convenient to use because of its small size and light weight, the Leica used a new framing method that involved a direct connection between the photographer's vision and their subject. With this camera, photography naturally became an extension of the photographer's gaze. This spontaneity led to it becoming the privileged tool for photojournalism and modern illustrated press.

After making her first foray into photography in Germany, Ilse Bing left Frankfurt in 1930 to head to Paris, which was, at that time, the centre for avant-garde photography. She spent the ten most productive years of her career there.

While the Leica was favoured by photojournalists in Germany and hailed as the ideal reporting tool, it was redefined in Paris as a poetic instrument. It became the perfect camera to capture what Henri Cartier-Bresson called "decisive moments". In Paris, Ilse Bing forged her style, combining poetry and realism, dreamlike enchantment and the clarity of modernity. She sought contrasts and original juxtapositions that transformed the banal reality of daily life into a new idea. Her preoccupation with geometry was still ever-present and blended with the portrayal of time and movement that her mastery of the Leica enabled her to reflect to perfection, particularly in her representation of dance. In her first representation of cancan dancers, Ilse Bing transcended the anecdotal aspect of her subject to achieve a pure representation of movement, a true stylistic break. Her work would be selected by the Galerie de la Pléiade to feature in its annual photography exhibition. She was noticed by the critic Emmanuel Sougez, who drew attention to the dynamism of her dancers and, from then on, published her work in the *L'Illustration* and *Arts et Métiers Graphiques* journals at every opportunity.

With Willem Gerard van Loon, her patron's son, she perfected her representation of movement. In *Willem Gerard Van Loon*, 1932, she captured his aerial figure standing out against the sky, in a leap that seems frozen in time and suspended in mid-air. Her talent caught the attention of George Balanchine, who asked her to photograph the rehearsal of his ballet *Errante (The Wanderer)*, performed for the first time in June 1933. In this series, Bing's photographs convoke both the expressive quality of the lights and the evanescence of the beautiful choreography. Her desire to document the performance of a ballet as a continuous whole, without any additional lighting, resulted in a feat of delicacy and vivacity.

This mastery of light and lighting is another key part of Ilse Bing's style, which gives her photographs their poetic aura. They seem straight from a dream, even when they represent the most ordinary of environments.

One of the most iconic examples is *Salut de Schiaparelli*, 1934, an advert created for an evening fragrance launched by the dressmaker Elsa Schiaparelli. In this photograph, a model asleep on a bed of lilies is bathed in silvery moonlight. Ilse Bing called upon all her mastery of plays of

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shadow and light in this photograph, in striking contrasts. The connection between the photographer's taste for fantastical beauty and the enchantment of Schiaparelli's surrealist creations is evident.

Ilse Bing experimented with plays of contrast and light and found in night photography the way to express her dreamlike vision of reality. A true experimenter, she challenged that representation through the technique of solarisation, which she tried for the first time in 1934. Discovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and reinvented by Man Ray, this technique, which was embraced by the surrealists, made it possible to partially reverse positive and negative values in the final print. In this type of picture, objects seem to shine with a supernatural aura and the limit between dream and reality dissolves.

*Place de la Concorde*, 1934, is certainly one of the most radical expressions of the imaginary world created by Ilse Bing. Taken against the light, the fountain becomes a dark shape haloed by water that forms a curtain of light.

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**Ilse Bing**

*Kneeling Dancers. Ballet Errante*

1933

Gelatin silverprint

Vintage print

27,9 x 22,2 cm / 11 x 8 3/4 in

Frame : 52,8 x 42,7 x 2,5 cm

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**Ilse Bing**

*French Can Can Dancers. Moulin Rouge*

1931

Gelatin silverprint

Vintage print

20,3 x 27,9 cm / 8 x 11 in



# GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE



**Ilse Bing**

*Merry Go Round. Street Fair, Paris*

1932

Gelatin silverprint

Vintage print

27,9 x 20,3 cm / 11 x 8 in

Frame : 42,7 x 52,9 x 2,5 cm

# GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE



**Ilse Bing**

*Dancer. Ballet Errante*

1932

Gelatin silverprint

Vintage print

22,2 x 27,9 cm / 8 3/4 x 11 in

Frame : 42,7 x 52,9 x 2,5 cm

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## Public collections

National Gallery of Canada, CA  
Jewish Museum Berlin, Berlin, DE  
Museum Folkwang, Essen, DE  
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, FR  
Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Amsterdam, NL  
Jewish Museum, New York, USA  
George Eastman House, Rochester, NY, USA  
The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, USA  
Houston Museum of Art, Houston, USA  
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, USA  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA  
Museum of Modern Art, New-York, USA  
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, USA  
The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, USA  
The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C, USA  
The International Center of Photography, New-York, USA  
New Orleans Museum of Art, New-Orleans, USA  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, USA  
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

## Solo exhibitions (selection)

2020 *Ilse Bing: Queen of the Leica*, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, USA  
*Ilse Bing - Paris and Beyond*, F11 Foto Museum, Hong Kong  
2016 *Ilse Bing: Life and Work*, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK  
2012 *Ilse Bing*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR  
2007 *Photographies. Ilse Bing*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR  
2005 *Photographies. Ilse Bing*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Köln, DE  
*Early Works. Ilse Bing*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, FR  
2004 *Ilse Bing: Queen of the Leica*, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK  
1998 *Ilse Bing*, Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York, USA

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- 1997 *Vision of a Century*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Köln, DE
- 1996 *Ilse Bing-Fotografien 1929-1956*, Suermondt-Ludwig Museum, Aachen, DE
- 1994 *Ilse Bing: Moulin Rouge, Paris, 1931*, Houk Friedman, NY, USA  
*Ilse Bing: Vintage Photographs*, Galerie Zur Stockeregg, Zürich, CH
- 1992 *Ilse Bing. Frankfurt, Paris, New York*, Houk Friedman, New York, USA
- 1989 *Ilse Bing: Germany, Paris, New York*, Edwynn Houk Gallery, Chicago, USA  
*Ilse Bing – Paris 1931-1952*, Alliance Française, New York, USA  
*Ilse Bing. Paris. 1931-1952*, Lichtbild- Galerie, Hamburg, DE  
*Ilse Bing. Photographies de la trentaine*, Olympus Galerie, Hamburg, DE
- 1988 *Ilse Bing: Photographien*, Galerie Friedrich, Köln, DE
- 1987 *Ilse Bing. Paris 1931 – 1952*, Musée Carnavalet, Paris, FR; Lichtbild Galleries, Ingolstadt, DE; Alliance Française, New York, USA
- 1986 *Ilse Bing. Three Decades of Photography*, New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, USA; International Center of Photography, New York, USA
- 1982 *Ilse Bing, Femmes, de l'enfance à la vieillesse, 1929-1955*, Galerie des Femmes, Paris, FR
- 1979 *Ilse Bing*, Heusenstamm Stiftung, Frankfurt, DE
- 1976 *Ilse Bing*, The Witkin Gallery, New York, USA
- 1948 *Ilse Bing Photographs*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA
- 1936 *Ilse Bing*, June Rhodes Gallery, New York, USA
- 1932 *Ilse Bing*, Gallery Trittler, Frankfurt, DE

## Group exhibitions (selection)

- 2020 *Photography's last century at the Met Fifth Avenue*, Metropolitan Museum, New York, USA  
*Picturing America: Ilse Bing, Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange & Edward Weston in MoMa*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA
- 2019 *Unseen: 35 years of collecting photographs at the Getty Museum*, the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, USA
- 2010 *Pictures by Women: A History of Modern Photography*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA
- 2007 *Paris in Transition: Photographs from the National Gallery*, National Gallery, Washington, USA
- 2005 *Town and Country: Modern Life in America*, Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Amherst, USA
- 2004 *La Collection Ordóñez Falcón - Une passion partagée*, La Botanique, Centre culturel de la Communauté Wallonie-Bruxelles, Bruxelles, BE  
*French Photography of the 1930s and 1940s*, Zabriskie Gallery, New York, USA

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- My America: Art from the Jewish Museum Collection, 1900- 1955*, Jewish Museum, New York, USA;  
Memorial Art Museum, Rochester University, Rochester, USA
- The Art of Flying - Au cinéma et à la photographie, de la culture et de l'économie Forum NRW*, Düsseldorf,  
DE
- 2002 *Grands photographes du 20e Siècle. Ilse Bing et Willy Ronis*, Kamera und Fotomuseum, Leipzig, DE
- 1999 *Insight: Women's Photographs From the Collection of the George Eastman House*, Johnson Museum of Art,  
Cornell University, New York, USA
- 1996 *History of Women Photographers*, New York Public Library, New York, USA
- 1995 *Ilse Bing – Marta Hoepffner – Abisag Tüllmann. Drei Fotografinnen in Frankfurt*, Historisches Museum  
Frankfurt, Frankfurt, DE
- 1994 *The camera in Photographic Self-Portraits from the Audrey and Sydney Irmas Collection*, Los Angeles County  
Museum of Art, Los Angeles, USA
- Women photographers of the republic of Weimar*, Museum Folkwang, Essen, DE (Wanderausstellung:  
Jewish Museum, New York; Fotomuseum, Winterthur).
- 1993 *The iödern Race. Genormte Verführer*, Werkbund-Achiv, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, DE
- 1991 *Ilse Bing, Pol Piérat, Barbara Jaffe*, Musée de la Photographie, Charleroi, BE
- 1989 *The New Vision. Photography Between th World Wars, Ford Motor*, Company Collection, The  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA
- 1986 *50 years of modern photography, 1936-1986*, Fotokina, Köln, DE
- Self-Portrait in the Age of Photography*, Houston Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA
- The new photograpy in France 1919-1939*, Musée Sainte-Croix, Poitiers, FR
- 1985 *Naked photo*, Stadtmuseum München, München, DE
- L'autoportrait á l'âge de la photographie*, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, CH
- Ami Alber, prints; Ella Bergmann, drawings; Ilse Bing, photographs*, The Arts Club of Chicago, Chicago,  
USA
- Self Portrait. Photographer's person 1840-1985*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA
- 1984 *Portraits of Artists. Faces Photographed*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, USA
- The Dog Observed*, The Dog Museum of America, New York, USA
- 1983 *Dance Figure*, Teatro Municipale, Reggio Emilia, IT
- 1976 *Photographs from the Julien Levy Collection Starting with Atget*, The Art Institute of Chicago; Center for  
Photography, New York; Cincinnati Museum of Art, Cincinnati; The Lakeview Academy of Arts  
and Sciences, Peoria & San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, USA
- 1937 *Photography 1839 – 1937*, Museum of Modern Art, New-York, USA
- 1936 *Exposition internationale de la photographie contemporaine*, Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris, FR
- International Photography*, The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, USA
- 1934 *Les Photographes*, Galerie de la Pléiade, Paris, FR

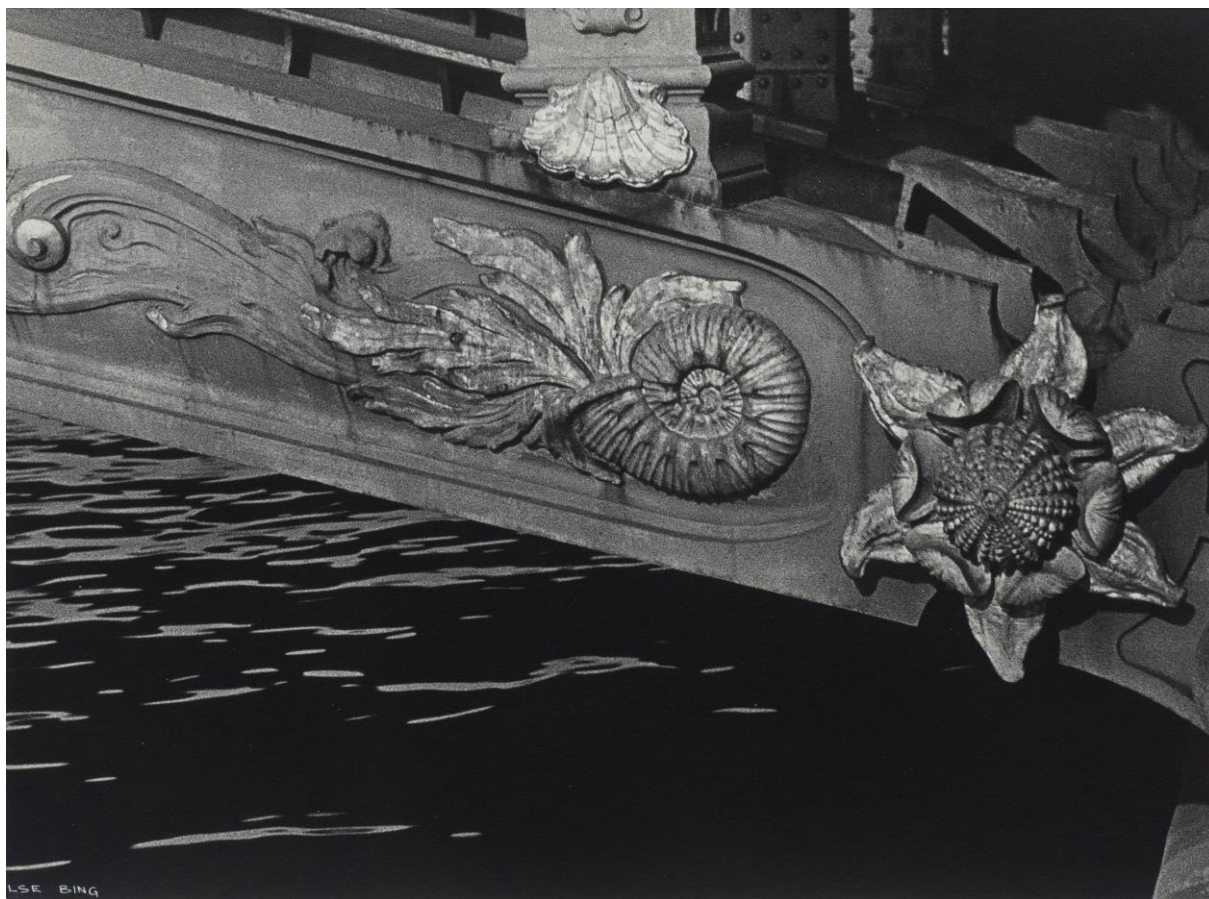
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- XXIX *Salon international d'art photographique*, organisé par La Société française de photographie et de cinématographie, Paris, FR
- 1933 *Les Photographes*, Galerie de la Pléiade, Paris, FR
- XXVIII *Salon international d'art photographique*, organisé par La Société française de photographie et de cinématographie, Paris, FR
- Photographs of Studio Shall, Ilse Bing, and M. Jacques Azema*, Maison Tiranty, Paris, FR
- Second Philadelphia International Salon of Photography*, Pennsylvania Museum of Art, Philadelphia, USA
- 1932 *Modern Photography*, Galerie d'art contemporain, Paris, FR
- Modern European Photography: 20 Photographers*, Julien Levy Gallery, New York, USA
- Les Photographes*, Galerie de la Pléiade, Paris, FR
- Modern Photography*, La Plume d'Or, Paris, FR
- International Photography*, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, USA
- 1931 *Les Photographes*, Galerie de la Pléiade, Paris, FR
- Das Lichtbild*, Museum Folkwang, Essen, DE
- XXVI *Salon international d'art photographique*, organisé par la Société française de photographie et de cinématographie and Le Photo-Club, Paris, FR

## Bibliography (selection)

- 2006 *Ilse Bing: Through the Looking Glass*, Larisa Dryansky, Edwynn Houk: Abrams, New York
- 1998 *Ilse Bing: Vision of a Century*, Edwynn Houk Gallery: New York
- 1987 *Ilse Bing: Paris 1931-1952*, Françoise Reynaud, Bernard de Montgolfier, Paris: Musée Carnavalet
- 1985 *Photographers Encyclopedia International, 1839 to the present, A-K*, Michele and Michel Auer, Editions Camera Obscura: Hermance, Suisse
- Ilse Bing: Three Decades of Photography*, Nancy C. Barrett, New Orleans Museum of Art
- 1982 *Femmes de l'enfance à la vieillesse – Photographies 1929/1955*, Ilse Bing, Editions des femmes, Paris

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**Ilse Bing**

*Pont Alexandre III - Rosette*

1935

Gelatin silverprint

Vintage print

21,6 x 27,9 cm / 8 1/2 x 11 in

Frame : 42,7 x 52,8 x 2,5 cm

# GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE



**Ilse Bing**

*Eiffel Tower*

1934

Gelatin silverprint

Vintage print

27,9 x 22,2 cm / 11 x 8 3/4 in

Frame : 52,9 x 42,7 x 2,5 cm



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**Ilse Bing**

*Fountain. Place De La Concorde*

1933

Gelatin silverprint

Vintage print

21,6 x 27,9 cm / 8 1/2 x 11 in

Frame : 42,7 x 52,9 x 2,5 cm

# GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE



**Ilse Bing**

*Gold Lame Evening Shoes*

1935

Gelatin silverprint

Vintage print

22,2 x 27,9 cm / 8 3/4 x 11 in

Frame : 42,7 x 52,9 x 2,5 cm

# GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE



**Ilse Bing**

*Flowers (Ostern)*

1928

Gelatin silverprint

Vintage print

11,4 x 7,9 cm / 4 1/2 x 3 in

Frame : 37,8 x 45,3 x 2,5 cm

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## THE EYE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Published in June 26, 2020

**F11 Foto Museum** in Hong Kong presents the “**Ilse Bing – Paris and Beyond**” exhibition, featuring over 100 works of this influential female photographer who helped turn Paris into the centre of modern photography in the 1930s. This collection captures the eternal beauty of Paris when it was an artists’ mecca, and has become regarded as Bing’s classic work. A majority of the vintage prints in this show were taken at the height of Bing’s career in Paris, while the rest reflects the drastic evolution of her spirit after World War II. This exhibition, the first of its kind in Hong Kong, is an image memoir of Bing’s dramatic journey to self-fulfillment and subsequently her sojourns seeking new artistic ideas and expressions.

Born to a wealthy Jewish family in Frankfurt in 1899, “Queen of the Leica” Ilse Bing was trained in science, art history and architecture. She was one of the very first female photographers to have mastered the newly released handheld Leica 35mm camera in the early 1930s. Yet she also struggled between her life and art.

“I was happy but I was poor. Before I bought food, I bought photographic materials.” - Ilse Bing, 1989

Bing’s interest in photography began with the need to illustrate her dissertation in architecture. This first encounter with the new medium proved enchanting, leading to the purchase of her first Leica in 1929, four years after this pioneering 35mm handheld camera was introduced to the world. In 1930, Bing gave up her studies and moved to Paris to commence the most notable decade of her photography career. As a freelance photographer, she was entirely self-taught, yet she was soon recognised as a professional and artistic exponent of her trade. Bing’s friendship with renowned photographers Florence Henri and later André Kertész in Paris encouraged her devotion to modernist photography. She was enthusiastic about photographic techniques and was also a pioneer to venture into solarisation, electronic flash and night photography. Within a couple of years, Bing was able to build her career in commercial photography in Paris, applying the experimental skills she had acquired in Frankfurt to photojournalism, architectural and theatrical photography, advertising, fashion and portraiture. In doing so, she established her own distinctive photographic style embracing romanticism, symbolism and surrealism. Bing’s commissioned works included assignments for fashion magazines Vogue, Adam, Marchal, Schiaparelli and the American Harper’s Bazaar.

Bing was able to express her artistic interest in the extra photographs that she took during these assignments. Her large first body of work at the Moulin Rouge cabaret was quickly recognised and formed her first exhibition at La Pléiade Gallery in Paris in 1931. In the same year, she participated in the Salon Internationale d’Art Photographique and was named “Queen of the Leica” by photographer and art critic Emmanuel Sougez. She also roamed around Paris with her Leica creating unique compositional relationships in her works, with the ordinary details of daily living often becoming her subjects. Bing demonstrated how images could take precedence over words, and how the horizons of human experiences could be broadened and shared using a small camera.

In 1936, Bing’s work was included in the first modern photography exhibition held at the Louvre. The next year, she was introduced to the American art world with her first solo exhibition at the June Rhodes Gallery in New York City. She was also included in the landmark exhibition “Photography 1839–1937” at the Museum of Modern Art. The outbreak of the Second World War forced Bing to migrate to New York. Unfortunately, she was unable to retain all her vintage prints owing to customs duty, resulting in the

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loss of some of her most important work. Bing returned to Paris twice, in 1947 and 1952, to photograph the city that she loved so much. She discovered instead an isolated and impersonal spirit following its devastation from the war. She gave up photography in 1959 and devoted herself to more abstract art forms like poetry, line drawings and collage. Bing died in New York City in 1998, just a few days before her 99th birthday.

The Museum of Modern Art reintroduced Bing in the mid-1970s by purchasing and showing her photographs. In 1976, a solo show at the Witkins Gallery was organised, as well as "Ilse Bing: Three Decades of Photography" at the New Orleans Museum of Art. Her work can be found in many major public collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Museum of Modern Art; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Art Institute of Chicago; and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

"Ilse Bing – Paris and Beyond" is a project associated with Le French May. It will be on display at F11 Foto Museum from 17 June to 31 October 2020.

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## *The New York Times*

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### *Ilse Bing, 98, 1930's Pioneer Of Avant-Garde Photography*

By Margaret Loke - March 15, 1998

Ilse Bing, one of the few surviving members of the fabled group of avant-garde artists who gathered in Paris in the early 1930's and produced brilliantly unorthodox and inventive photography, died Tuesday at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center in Manhattan. She was 98 and lived on the Upper West Side.

Susan Arthur Whitson, director of the Edwynn Houk Gallery, which represents her work, said that the gallery had hoped that Ms. Bing would attend the March 26 opening of a retrospective of her work titled "Ilse Bing: Vision of a Century." She would have been 99 on March 23.

Born into an affluent bourgeois family in Frankfurt, Ms. Bing was trained in music and art. It was while she was pursuing a doctorate in art history and photographing buildings for her dissertation that she developed a passion for photography. In early 1929 she began to do picture essays for the weekly supplement of a Frankfurt newspaper, becoming one of the few women to work in photojournalism at the time.

She soon abandoned her studies to become an artist and decided to leave for Paris in the summer of 1929 after seeing an exhibition of photographs by the Paris-based Florence Henri, who had embraced New Photography, which was characterized by extreme close-ups, unusual angles, high and low vantage points, and the rendering of everyday objects and reflected surfaces as abstract geometric forms.

Paris in the 1920's and 30's was home to modernists like Henri, who saw photography as the medium to revolutionize visual language in everything from photojournalism and commercial advertising to fashion and book illustration. Working intuitively and with no regard for conventional composition or subject matter, these modern photographers were above all entranced by the new sensations of urban living.

The only professional photographer in Paris in the 30's to work exclusively with the Leica, Ms. Bing mastered the use of this small camera as well as darkroom techniques to show the subtleties of light and movement against the inky blacks of Paris at night. She favored the overhead shots and tilted angles of German Constructivists, but her photographs are often infused with the softer, more lyrical and humanistic qualities found in the work of many French photographers.

Like Andre Kertesz and Henri Cartier-Bresson, she caught the spare, lovely geometries in ordinary Parisian life. She photographed nighttime Paris, using available light and producing images that were studies of light and deep shadow. Accidentally in the darkroom, and independently of Man Ray, she discovered a way to solarize the negative instead of the print, giving the image black outlines created from the controlled use of light during printing. Her solarized images of street scenes, especially at night, are magical coaxings of many shades of gray out of darkness.

Ms. Bing worked for magazines like Vu, Arts et Metiers Graphiques and Le Monde Illustré. She did fashion assignments for Harper's Bazaar and Schiaparelli. Her photographs were regularly shown during the 30's at La Pleiade gallery in Paris, alongside the work of other members of the photographic avant-garde.

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In 1936, she was included in the first modern photography exhibition held at the Louvre. The next year she was part of the landmark photography exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Ms. Bing's best-known photograph from this period is a strikingly original self-portrait. To create this fractured image, she photographed a mirrored image of herself -- one bent arm leaning against a table, a Leica on a tripod positioned in front of one eye -- with a side view of herself reflected in another mirror.

When Ms. Bing visited New York in 1936, she was offered a position on the fledgling photo magazine Life. But she turned down the offer because her future husband, Konrad Wolff, a pianist and musicologist, lived in Paris. They married in 1937. Both were German Jews and were interned briefly as enemy aliens by the Vichy Government in 1940, but both managed to get themselves freed. Later that year, they sailed for New York, where they remained for the rest of their lives. Mr. Wolff died in 1989. No immediate family members survive. A memorial service will be held at the National Arts Club at 15 Gramercy Park South on April 2 at 3 P.M.

In March 1993, Ms. Bing was awarded the first Gold Medal for photography by the National Arts Club in Manhattan. She told an interviewer from The New York Times that she had given up photography in 1959 because "everything moves, nothing stays and I should not hold on." Ms. Bing next turned to poetry, creating what she called "snapshots without a camera." She also made collages with old photographs and objects, and illustrated whimsical books on etymology and on numbers. And she groomed dogs for a living.

Ms. Bing was, Ms. Whitson said, "very sharp, very funny and very active -- she took up the motorcycle when she was in her 70's."

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