



ILSE BING

SEPTEMBER 23, 2022 — JANUARY 8, 2023

Fundación **MAPFRE**

"I felt the camera grow
as an extension of my eyes
and move with me."

Ilse Bing



Ilse Bing's photographic oeuvre, created between 1929 and the late 1950s, was influenced by the different cities where she lived and worked: Frankfurt prior to the 1930s, Paris in that decade and post-war New York where above all she experienced the situation of an enforced emigré. Her work cannot, however, be easily located within the photographic and cultural trends that she encountered, although it was certainly enriched by all of them. Bing's output was influenced by Moholy-Nagy's *Das Neue Sehen* (The New Vision) and the Weimar Bauhaus, by André Kertész and by the Surrealism of Man Ray, which she encountered when she moved to Paris in 1930. At the time of her arrival the French capital was a melting pot of artistic and intellectual trends and the setting for the emergence of a number of movements that would be crucial for the evolution of the avant-gardes. Surrealist echoes are evident in Bing's photographs of objects and in her approach to the framing of her shots of chairs, streets and public spaces, images that transmit a sense of strangeness and almost of alienation.

New York, the Elevated, and Me, 1936
Galerie Le Minotaure, Paris

Cover:
Self-portrait with Leica, 1931
Collection of Michael Mattis and
Judith Hochberg, New York



The Bauhaus was an extremely important influence on Bing's work via both El Lissitzky's theories and those of Moholy-Nagy's New Vision, which promoted the fusion of architecture and photography and the autonomy of photography as a medium in relation to painting. New Vision offered infinite possibilities and Bing took full advantage of them, employing some of them in her work, such as abstraction, close-ups, plunging viewpoints, *di sotto in sù*, photomontages and overprinting, all to be seen in the images on display in the exhibition.

Ilse Bing belonged to a generation of women photographers who achieved unprecedented visibility. It was not the norm that women should be artists in a field habitually occupied by men, who regarded their presence as active agents in the social and cultural realm with disdain and even hostility. Like many of her contemporaries – Germaine Krull, Florence Henri, Laure Albin-Guillot, Madame d'Ora, Berenice Abbott, Nora Dumas and Gisèle Freund – Bing's camera became an essential tool of self-determination and a means to confirm her own identity.

Pommery Champagne Bottles, 1933
Galerie Karsten Greve.
St. Moritz / Paris / Cologne

Without Illusion, Flea Market, Paris, 1957
Collection of Michael Mattis and
Judith Hochberg, New York



Ilse Bing was born in Frankfurt on 23 March 1899 to a middle-class Jewish family. She took her first photographs at the age of fourteen. Self-taught in this field, she realized that this would become her principal activity when she began photographing in order to illustrate her doctoral thesis. She studied mathematics and physics before opting for art history. In 1929 she gave up her university studies and, armed with her inseparable Leica, devoted herself to photography for the next thirty years. In 1930 she moved to Paris, where she continued active as a photojournalist while also producing her own more creative work, gradually becoming one of the leading representatives of modern French photography. In 1941 and with the advance of National Socialism, Bing moved to New York with her husband, the pianist Konrad Wolff. Two decades later, at the age of 60, she ceased taking photographs and focused her attention on making collages, abstract works, drawings and also poetry writing. Ilse Bing died in New York in 1998.

Fashionable Hat, 1933
Collection of Michael Mattis
and Judith Hochberg, New York

Gold Lamé Evening Shoes, 1935
Galerie Karsten Greve.
St. Moritz / Paris / Cologne

Nancy Harris, 1951
National Gallery of Art,
Washington D. C.
The Marvin Breckinridge Patterson
Fund for Photography (2000.110.1)

Curator

Juan Vicente Aliaga

Fundación MAPFRE

Paseo de Recoletos, 23

28004 Madrid

Tel. 915 816 100

cultura@fundacionmapfre.org

Dates

From September 23, 2022, to January 8, 2023

Opening times

Mondays (except public holidays): 2 pm to 8 pm

Tuesdays to Saturdays: 11 am to 8 pm

Sundays and public holidays: 11 am to 7 pm

(Last access: 30 minutes before closing time.

Visitors must leave the galleries 10 minutes before closing time)

Ticket prices

Standard: 5 €

Reduced: 3 €

Free entry: Mondays (except public holidays)

Commented Tour

A short tour that explains the key concepts of the exhibition, facilitating a greater appreciation and enjoyment of the works on display.

Hours:

Wednesdays and Thursdays: 5 pm to 8 pm

Fridays and Saturdays: 12 am to 2 pm
and 5 pm to 8 pm

Sundays and holidays: 12 am to 2 pm

No additional cost upon entry.

Information at reception desk

Audio guide

4 €. Spanish and English

Bookshop

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Tel. 911 703 851

fmapfre@laie.es

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