

Eng

Ilse Bing

**February 16th
– May 14th 2023**





Three Men Sitting on the Steps by the Seine, 1931. International Center of Photography, New York. Gift of Ilse Bing, 1991 (16.1991)

“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 *émigré*. 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 László 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 discovered 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.



Prostitutes, Amsterdam, 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.

Ilse Bing was born in Frankfurt on 23 March 1899 to a well-off 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



The Honorable Daisy Fellowes, Gloves by Dent in London for 'Harper's Bazaar', 1933.
International Center of Photography, New York. Gift of Ilse Bing, 1991 (17.1991)

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 worked 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.

The present exhibition, comprising 190 photographs plus documentary material, is structured into ten sections which offer a chronological and thematic survey of the artist's career. It also includes a projection of the film *Drei Fotografinnen: Ilse Bing* [Three women photographers: Ilse Bing], an interview with the artist directed by Antonia Lerch in 1993. Of exceptional documentary value, it features Bing's own account of her life and work just five years before her death.

KBr Fundación MAPFRE

Av. del Litoral, 30
08005 Barcelona
Tel. +34 932 723 180
infokbr@fundacionmapfre.org

Dates

From February 16th
to May 14th 2023

Opening hours

Mondays: Closed
(except public holidays)
Tuesdays – Sundays
(and public holidays): 11 am-7 pm
Last entry: 6.30 pm

From April 1

Tuesdays – Sundays
(and public holidays): 11 am-8 pm
Last entry: 7.30 pm

Visitors must leave the galleries
10 minutes before closing time

Admissions

Standard ticket: 5 €
Ticket with reduction: 3 €
Free standard ticket: Tuesdays
(except public holidays)
Groups: 3 € / per person

Audio guide services

Available in English, Catalan
and Spanish

Guided tour

(cultural mediation service)

Wednesdays & Thursdays: 4-7 pm
Fridays & Saturdays:
12-2 pm, 4-7 pm
Sundays & public holidays: 12-2 pm

From April 1

Wednesdays & Thursdays: 5-8 pm
Fridays & Saturdays:
12-2 pm, 5-8 pm
Sundays & public holidays: 12-2 pm

(Information at the reception)

Bookshop

Tel. +34 932 723 180

f fundacionmapfreultura
@ @kbrfmapfre
t @KBrfmapfre

Tell us what you think about the
exhibition: #KBrIlseBingExhibition

**exposiciones.fundacionmapfre.org/
KBrIlseBingExhibition**



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

All images: © Estate of Ilse Bing

