

BRUCE SILVERSTEIN

Le Baiser de Man Ray

April 26, 2024 - June 15, 2024

Opening Reception:

April 26, 2024 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.



Man Ray, *Le Baiser (The Kiss)*, 1930

Bruce Silverstein Gallery is pleased to present *Le Baiser de Man Ray*, an exhibition of important photographs exemplifying the artist's unbridled imagination and love for experimentation. Featuring close to thirty works spanning the artist's early to mid-career and culled from the Gallery's extensive archive, *Le Baiser de Man Ray* is a compelling display of wonders that will surely surprise, fascinate, and seduce even the most ardent Man Ray aficionado.

While much has been written about Man Ray's groundbreaking career and importance to the Dada and Surrealist movements, his oeuvre is impossible to categorize due to his tireless experimentation with new techniques and ideas and his disdain for the notion of a signature style. What is consistent, however, is the artist behind the work—a true creator imbued with wit, passion, and a love for all things original.

Although he initially emerged as a modernist painter and a member of the Dada movement's American branch in New York, Man Ray's frustration with the constraints of the commercial American art scene eventually brought him to Paris in 1921. In Paris, Man Ray's groundbreaking techniques that blended art and science, such as solarization and the invention of rayographs, presented him as a modern-renaissance man. He once said, "Life is an instant [...] there's no time to do two things alike;" *Le Baiser de Man Ray*, with a cross-section of remarkable photographs and photo montages, demonstrates the artist's extraordinary quest for "newness" while representing a unique view of his creative output. Included are seminal examples of his early film stills, solarized nudes, ready-mades, self-portraits, Rayographs, and masterworks of Surrealism, from the known to the newly discovered.

Highlights include:

This is a likely unique film still from one of Man Ray's first films, *Emak Bakia*, 1926. This photograph, featuring brushstroke-like gestures of light against a black background, embodies surrealism and is arguably a predecessor for Abstract Expressionist photography of the 1940s. It reflects Man Ray's wishes to 'free myself of the sticky medium of paint and [...] work directly with light itself.'

A group portrait of the Dada movement's Paris branch members, with a photograph of Man Ray affixed to it. An oversized exhibition print of *Cheveux, Marguerite "Ghita" Luchaire*, 1929, one of three known in existence and the only one in private hands.

One of Man Ray's first ready-made sculptures featuring a photograph: *Juliet*, c. 1950. This sculpture includes a print of his wife hidden within the aperture of a camera shutter.

At the heart of the exhibition is a singular, original photograph by Man Ray from 1930, "*Le Baiser*," showcasing the delicate interplay of two profiles – his muse and legendary artist Lee Miller and an unidentified woman – their lips barely touching. This image, marked by its sharp focus against a softened background and the artist's tangible alterations, embodies a moment of artistic determination. The uncropped contact print, once folded and manipulated by Man Ray, serves as a crucial reference for his final edit, "*Le Baiser, 1935*," and later, the subject of his painting, *Image à Deux Faces*, 1959.

Le Baiser de Man Ray is more than an homage to one of the great artists of the 20th century; it offers a refreshing lens on Man Ray's evolution from an early Dada proponent to a Surrealist master, reinforcing his status as a central figure in modern art. This exhibition posits that at the heart of Man Ray's diverse body of work lies an enduring commitment to photography; it is a loving caress to each and every one of us by an artist whose love of life can be seen in every one of his creations.

For more information please contact milly@brucesilverstein.com or visit www.brucesilverstein.com