

VOICI PARIS

MODERNITÉS PHOTOGRAPHIQUES

1920-1950

17 OCTOBER 2012 – 14 JANUARY 2013

In 2011, the Centre Pompidou was able to acquire the photographic collection of Christian Bouqueret, the last major collection of photographs covering the period 1920-1950 and still privately owned in France. The collection contains over 7 000 prints from this period and is divided into some one hundred monographies on the leading photographers in Paris at that time. The "Voici Paris" exhibition aims to showcase the rich diversity of this exceptional collection and to spotlight photography in France at a time when the French capital attracted leading creators on the international scene. Alongside French photographers, American, German, Hungarian

photographers transformed Paris into a flourishing and cultural melting-pot. The exhibition, which features some 300 prints, is divided into five thematic sections which reflect the main trends during this period: the formal inventions of the New Vision movement, the hallucinated images of Surrealism, a documentary strain alert to social realities, another more illustrative strain that captured the rise of printed media and book publishing, finally, a resurgence of neoclassicism. All these movements contributed to one of the most flamboyant periods in the history of the medium when the modernist vision was invented.

**Centre
Pompidou**

www.centrepompidou.fr

SEEING WITH NEW EYES

The New Vision movement that developed in Paris from the mid 1920s defended photography that broke from pictorial tradition and which sought, in accordance with the modernist principle, to define its own identity. It deliberately uses the most conspicuous signs and manifestations of modern society as subject matter: phonographs, cars, machinery as well as iron or glass architecture. This movement claims a highly graphic and visual language which often flirts with abstraction. Its handling of human beings is seldom naturalist in that it seeks to transfigure the body through superimposition, solarisation, fragmentation and close-ups.

SOCIAL DOCUMENTATION

The financial crash of 1929, the economic recession that followed and the victory of the Popular Front the elections of 1936, prompted photographers to pay more attention to social events and issues. They photographed France at the workplace: small trades, the living standards of blue-collar worker and farmers. From the introduction of legislation on paid leave, these photographers captured the enthusiasm among French workers for leisure activities, outdoor sports and holidays.

MODERN IMAGE-MAKING

In the 1920s and 1930s, Paris was at the centre of the unprecedented expansion of photographic publications and illustrated press. The French capital attracted photographers from across Europe who see this expansion as a source of livelihood and expression. This heralded a new stage in the relationship between text and image in which the two merged into a single and same modern language.

INSIDE VISION

In Paris, photography was used from the mid 1920s to serve surrealism. The full fascination exerted by the photographic image was systematically deployed from the simplest documentary image to the most elaborate laboratory experiments. These photographic images captured the wonderment experienced from travel through cities or revealed the disquieting strangeness of daily life. It became an effective tool to explore automatism, as practiced by the surrealists, through the photogram, solarisation, brulage or photomontage techniques.

A RETURN TO CLASSICAL ORDER

Faced with the excesses of modernism, the 1920s, and especially the 1930s, were marked in Paris as elsewhere by a resurgence of classical trends. This photographic neoclassicism resulted in a host of images that fit the traditional categories of art history: antiquity, nudes, draped fabrics, still life and portraiture.

Questions to Christian Bouqueret

[...] How would you describe the logic underlying your collection ? Did it impose itself from the outset or later ? Did you deliberately exclude works that did not fit this logic ?

As a historian I have studied the inter-war years in France. That in a broad scope. Only a handful of photography galleries in Paris (Virginia Zabriskie, 1900-2000, Octant, Vinci 1880) have exhibited photographs from this period. Clear the ground and some clarification and updating were called for. I was curious about the different aspects of photography: the photo-documentary, nudes, experimentation, fashion and advertising. As a historian, I make no distinction between different practices [...].

Do you regard your collection as a work of art ? Why were you keen to keep this entire collection in an institution such as the Centre Pompidou ?

This collection, which broadly spans different photographic trends and which is therefore necessarily incomplete, represents a milestone period in photography. I wanted to choose an institution that could preserve the entire collection and continue the work I undertook. The collections of the Centre Pompidou, which features some major works from this period and from its collections, such as the works of Man Ray or Brassai, created excellent complementarity. In addition, I wanted the collection to remain in France given the subject [...].

Extract from "Interview with Christian Bouqueret by Quentin Bajac and Clément Chéroux, April-May 201", catalogue of the exhibition **Voici Paris**, éditions du Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2012.

EXPOSITION

CURATORS

Quentin Bajac and Clément Chéroux
Assisted by Lucie Le Corre

ARCHITECTURE

Jasmin Oezcebi

PRODUCTION

Hervé Derouault

The Christian Bouqueret collection, listed as a "work of major cultural interest", was acquired with the support of sponsor Yves Rocher.



YVES ROCHER

CATALOGUE

Voici Paris. Modernités photographiques, 1920-1950

Essays by de Quentin Bajac, Clément Chéroux and Françoise Denoyelle.

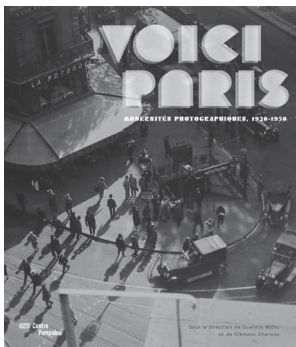
Interview with Christian Bouqueret.

Notes by Lucie Le Corre.

Éditions du Centre Pompidou

321 p., 320 ill.

Price: 49.90€



INFORMATION

01 44 78 12 33

www.centrepompidou.fr

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

From 17 October 2012

to 14 January 2013

Level 4 of the Museum

Every day, except Tuesdays,

from 11 am to 9 pm

Ticket office closes at 8 pm

ADMISSIONS

Entry with the "Museum and exhibitions" pass

13€ concessions 10€

Valid for same day and single entry

to the Museum, to all exhibitions

and to the panoramic viewing

balcony (single entry to each area)

Free with the annual Museum pass

and for under 18 year-olds

On-line ticket purchases

and print-outs (full price only)

www.centrepompidou.fr/billetterie

Museum and panoramic viewing balcony

Free for 18-25 year-olds who are

nationals or residents of the EU,

Liechtenstein, Norway and Iceland

Free on the first Sunday of each

month

TWITTER

More information on the exhibition

can be found via twitter (hashtag

#VoiciParis) or on <http://>

www.twitter.com/centrepompidou

© Centre Pompidou, Direction des publics, Service de l'information des publics et de la médiation, 2012

Graphic design

c-album

Printing

Friedling Graphique, Rixheim, 2012