

ROBERT MANN GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ALFRED EISENSTAEDT: PORTRAITS OF THE PAST

March 7 - April 27, 2019

Opening Reception: Thursday, March 7, 6 - 8pm



Marilyn Monroe, Hollywood, CA, 1953



Children at a Puppet Theatre, Paris, 1963

Robert Mann Gallery presents a collection of iconic works by the “father of photojournalism,” Alfred Eisenstaedt. The German-born American photographer, best known for his candid black-and-white photographs of celebrities, politicians, and captivating street scenes, captured life, movement and emotion in a strong yet natural manner.

Alfred Eisenstaedt was born 1898 in Dirschau, West Prussia. In 1906 his family moved to Berlin where he studied music, received his first camera, an Eastman Kodak Number Three, and used his parents bathroom for a makeshift dark room. Eisenstaedt was drafted into the German army after the outbreak of WW1 and served at the front lines in Flanders until April 1918, enemy fire crippled both his legs, yet thankfully his life was spared. After the war, he worked as a salesman, but continually found success with assignments as a freelance photographer. His first major mission was covering Thomas Mann accepting the Nobel Prize in literature in 1929. Eisenstaedt came under the influence of photographer Erich Salomon and his work regularly found its way into *Die Dame*, *Berliner Illustrierte*, *The Graphic*, *The London Illustrated News* and many other magazines.

In 1935, Eisenstaedt decided to emigrate to the United States, as magazines in Germany began to shutdown with the rise of Hitler. He settled in New York where he became one of the first four photographers hired by LIFE Magazine. Eisenstaedt’s coverage of Hollywood in the 1930’s is some of his most quintessential work, photographing stars such as Bette Davis, Katherine Hepburn and Sophia Loren, who is known to be one of his favorite subjects. He photographed Marilyn Monroe on a small patio behind her home in Hollywood in 1953, capturing her in Rembrandt inspired light that beautifully emphasized the unparalleled Marilyn mystique—femininity, naiveté and sexuality.

“In a photograph a person’s eyes tell much, sometimes they tell all.” - Alfred Eisenstaedt

Along with capturing portraits of great politicians and movie stars, Eisenstaedt was just as intrigued to set his keen eye on the human element. He found magic in the faces of Parisian children exploding with shrieks of delight at the puppet theater in the Tuileries, Paris in 1963. Enthralled in the scene, the children didn’t even notice Eisenstaedt. He easily blended in with the crowd to find those initial moments of reactions and then made various enlargements and crops in order to construct a well balanced composition and highlight the essence of the image. Sometimes all it took was one shot. Eisenstaedt’s work created memorable documents of his era both historically and aesthetically, such as one of the iconic images of the 20th century - a couple kissing on VJ Day in Times Square.

Eisenstaedt completed over 2,500 assignments in his career and his photographs appeared on 92 covers of LIFE. His photographs have been exhibited and collected by many prestigious institutions, including The Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Philadelphia College of Art, and the International Center of Photography in New York. He was the recipient of numerous awards, among them the National Medal of the Arts which he received from President George Bush in 1989 in a ceremony on the White House lawn. Eisenstaedt died on August 23, 1995 in Oak Bluffs, MA.

View *Alfred Eisenstaedt: Portraits of the Past* at www.robertmann.com starting March 7, 2019.

For additional information and press materials, contact the gallery by telephone (212.989.7600) or by email mail@robertmann.com.

Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 10-6 and Saturday, 11-6.

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ALFRED STIEGLITZ: CAMERA WORK** (1903 - 1917)

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Old and New New York (1910), 1911



The Steerage, 1907



In New York Central Yards (1903), 1911

Robert Mann Gallery presents a selection of photogravures by Alfred Stieglitz from *Camera Work*. Stieglitz, regarded as the father of modern photography, a proponent for promoting the avant-garde movement in art and an influential gallerist, was also the editor and publisher of *Camera Work*, one of the most important photographic publications of the 20th century. Spanning over 15 years, Stieglitz published exquisite photogravures of his seminal images alongside images by fellow photographers including Edward Steichen and Paul Strand, all of whom were embracing the modern photographic movement.

One of the earliest methods of reproducing photographic images in ink, the photogravure process was perfected and championed by Stieglitz. Images pulled off of etched copper plates that were made directly from the original negatives possessed rich mid tones and soft blacks, rendering velvety prints with a tonal range Stieglitz often preferred to the more typical darkroom processes. The photogravures for *Camera Work* were hand-pulled by Stieglitz himself, many were printed on delicate Japanese tissue and carefully tipped into the pages of the quarterly journal. This exhibition will include a selection of Stieglitz's many iconic images in the photogravure medium that originally hale from the pages of *Camera Work*. Quintessential masterpieces such as *The Steerage* and *Spring Showers* will be on view.

Sarah Greenough, senior curator and head of the department of photographs at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, notes that "when Stieglitz's photographs are considered it is usually for their innovations in style, subject matter, and technique. But these are the manifestations, the visible results, of something larger and more profound, something that permeated and propelled Stieglitz's entire undertaking as a photographer: a search for what he termed 'the meaning of the idea photography.'"

Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946) was born in Hoboken, New Jersey. He moved with his family to Germany in 1881 where he studied engineering at the Polytechnikum in Berlin from 1882 to 1885. Stieglitz developed a profound interest in photo-chemistry, studying under Professor Vogel, which led him to purchase his first camera. He traveled extensively, taking pictures throughout the countryside during the 1880s. Returning to New York City in 1890, Stieglitz became a partner in the Heliochrome Company, a photoengraving company that specialized in the reproduction of photographs. He was the editor of the *American Amateur Photographer* from 1893-1896 and later the editor of a commercial periodical *Camera Notes*.

Stieglitz pioneered techniques for making photographs in all sorts of volatile environments including snowfall, in the rain, and at night. He contributed not only scientific and artistic photographic studies, but his intellectual and cultural leadership was largely responsible for the success of important American artists such as Georgia O'Keeffe, Marsden Hartley and Paul Strand.

"I go out into the world with my camera and come across something that excites me emotionally, spiritually or aesthetically. I see the image in my mind's eye. I make the photograph and print it as the equivalent of what I saw and felt." – Alfred Stieglitz

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