

galerie gmurzynska

BRANCUSI

PHOTOGRAPHIE

Galerie Gmurzynska
Paradeplatz 2 | 8001 Zurich
4 November 2022 – January 2023

Press Contact: Mathias Rastorfer
mathias.rastorfer@gmurzynska.com
+41 44 226 70 70

Galerie Gmurzynska proudly brings to Zürich a luminous group of Brancusi's original vintage photography. Among this exhibition of 18 vintage silver gelatin prints count his most iconic sculptures as well as still lifes and a portrait – amounting to an essential selection of his less than 200 photographs left in private collections.

This is the first commercial exhibition of Brancusi's photography in German-speaking Switzerland – nearly forty years since the landmark solo museum shows of his photography at Kunsthaus Zürich in 1977 and the Fotostiftung Schweiz in 1987. This exhibition fortuitously coincides with a dedicated room of Brancusi photography coming to the Kunsthaus Zürich in November 2022 in their Dada Cabinet, with a presentation of Man Ray and Brancusi photographs from their essential collection of eighty Brancusi prints donated by Carola Giedion-Welcker.

Brancusi used photography throughout his working life as a tool for cataloguing, selling, creating and refining his sculptures and most importantly as standalone works of art. Brancusi's photographs describe everything about how to look at his sculpture. In control of framing, lighting, coloration, Brancusi shares with his viewers how he would like his radical sculpture to be seen.

He used photography initially as a way to record and sell his work. His friendship with Edward Steichen led to his first exhibition in New York with Alfred Stieglitz in 1914 and both these photography masters photographed his work. He had been sent a photograph by Alfred Stieglitz of his sculpture installed in a New York exhibition in 1921, which he frustratedly felt did not depict his work accurately.

“DON'T SEARCH FOR OBSCURE
FORMULAS OR MYSTERIES.
IT IS PURE JOY THAT I GIVE YOU.
LOOK AT THEM
UNTIL YOU SEE THEM.”

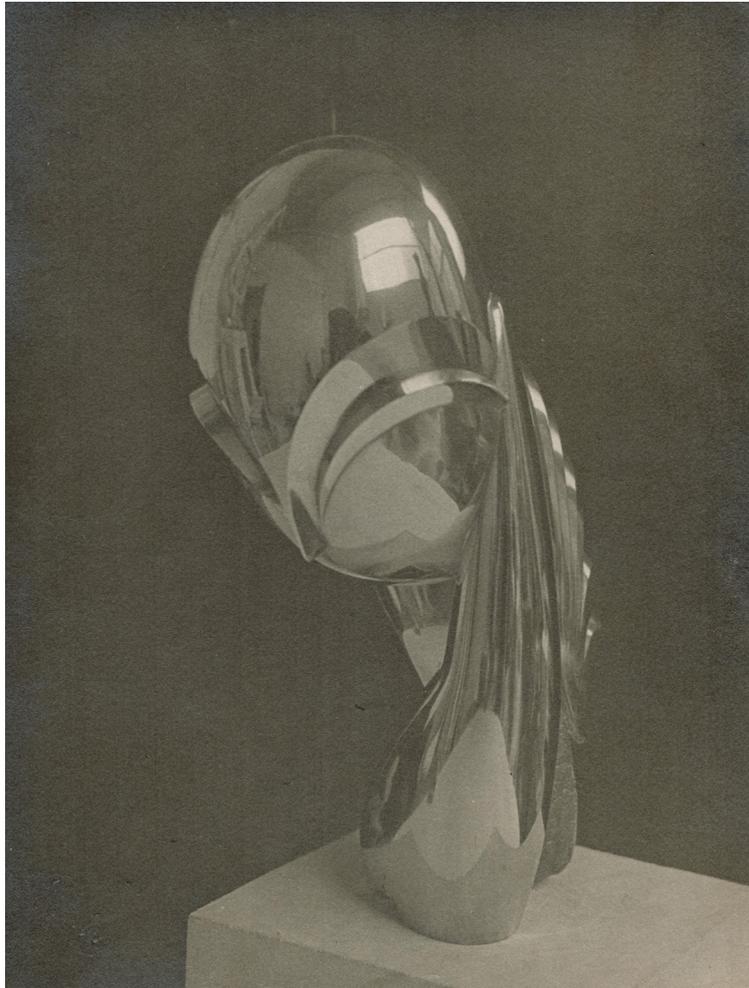
CONSTANTIN BRANCUSI

In 1921 Brancusi met Man Ray and enlisted his help with purchasing the right equipment and installing a darkroom and with lessons in darkroom technique. Man Ray lauded Brancusi in his autobiography, “one of his golden birds had been caught with the sunrays striking it so that a sort of aurora radiated from it, giving the work an explosive character.”

Brancusi adored women and women adored Brancusi and after a visit to the studio many were given photographs. Some complained that after an overnight stay it was impossible to take a bath as it was being used to wash his photographs. Apart from photographing his studio and sculpture Brancusi photographed his friends and lovers, there are dozens of self-portraits and still lifes of flowers often given or sent to girlfriends, many inscribed. “Tonight during the dress rehearsal, I will be amongst these flowers celebrating your triumph” reads one inscription.

From 1921 until his death in 1957, all exhibition catalogues, magazines and monographs authorized by the Artist only used his photographs. Many of these were used again by Marcel Duchamp in the catalogue he designed for Brancusi’s exhibition at the Brummer Gallery in New York in 1926. Brancusi first exhibited his photographs as artworks in Romania in 1925.

On his death Brancusi left his studio and all its contents to the French state, included in this donation were approximately 700 negatives and just over 1600 prints. Apart from the collection in the Pompidou in Paris there are approximately 200 prints in major public collections worldwide (MoMA, the Metropolitan, Art Institute of Chicago, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Kunsthaus Zurich, etc.) and no more than 200 in private collections.



Constantin Brancusi, *Mlle Pogany, vue de trois-quarts*, 1920, vintage silver gelatin print

**For more information on the gallery and its artists and activities please visit
www.gmurzynska.com**
