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media release



Edward Steichen  
Actor Gary Cooper, 1930  
Courtesy Condé Nast Archive, New York © Condé Nast Publications



Edward Steichen  
Model Marion Morehouse and unidentified model wearing dresses by Vionnet, 1930  
Courtesy Condé Nast Archive, New York © Condé Nast Publications

## Edward Steichen: In High Fashion, The Condé Nast Years, 1923-1937

On view from  
January 16, 2009  
through  
May 3, 2009

Media Preview  
January 15, 2009  
9:30–11:00 am

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As part of the International Center of Photography's 2009 Year of Fashion, the museum will host a retrospective of Edward Steichen's fashion and celebrity portraiture. *Edward Steichen: In High Fashion, The Condé Nast Years, 1923-1937*, will be on view at ICP (1133 Avenue of the Americas at 43rd Street) from January 16 through May 3, 2009. It will feature 175 vintage photographs, drawn mainly from the extensive archive of original prints at Condé Nast, along with a selection of important prints from the collection of the George Eastman House Museum. This will be the first exhibition in which the full range of his fashion photography and celebrity portraiture will be shown, including many images that have never been exhibited before. Having previously traveled throughout Europe, the exhibition will be presented on its North American tour in this version only at ICP.

Edward Steichen (1879-1973) was already a famed Pictorialist photographer and painter in the United States and abroad when he was offered the position of chief photographer for *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* by Condé Nast. Upon assuming the job, the forty-four year old artist began one of the most lucrative and controversial careers in photography. To Alfred Stieglitz and his followers, Steichen was seen as damaging the cause of photography as a fine art by agreeing to do commercial editorial work. Nevertheless, Steichen's years at Condé Nast magazines were extraordinarily prolific and inspired. He began by applying the soft focus style he had helped create to the photography of fashion. But soon he revolutionized the field, banishing the gauzy light of the Pictorialist era and replacing it with the clean, crisp lines of Modernism. In the process he changed the presentation of the fashionable woman from that of a distant, romantic creature to that of a much more direct, appealing, independent figure. At the same time he created lasting portraits of hundreds of leading personalities in movies, theatre, literature, politics, music, and sports, including Gloria Swanson, Gary Cooper, Marlene Dietrich, Joan Crawford, Colette, Winston Churchill, Amelia Earhart, Jack Dempsey, Noel Coward, Greta Garbo, Dorothy Parker, and Cecil B. De Mille.

**Organizing Institutions:**

This exhibition has been organized by the Foundation for the Exhibition of Photography, Minneapolis, the Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne, and the International Center of Photography, New York.

**Exhibition Curators:**

The exhibition curators are William A. Ewing, Director, Musée de l'Elysée; Todd Brandow, Executive Director, Foundation for the Exhibition of Photography; Carol Squiers, Curator, International Center of Photography; and Nathalie Herschdorfer, Curator, Musée de l'Elysée.

**Publication:**

The exhibition will be accompanied by a 288-page publication, *Edward Steichen: In High Fashion, The Condé Nast Years, 1923-1937* by William A. Ewing and Todd Brandow (Minneapolis: FEP Editions, 2008). Preface by William A. Ewing and Todd Brandow, and essays by William A. Ewing, Nathalie Herschdorfer, Carol Squiers, and Kunsthhaus Zürich curator Tobia Bezzola.

**Venues:**

A slightly different version of this exhibition traveled to venues throughout Europe including Kunsthhaus, Zürich, Museo Chiostri di San Domenico, Reggio Emilia, Italy, Museo del Traje, Madrid and Kunstmuseum, Wolfsburg, Germany. It was presented in conjunction with the *Edward Steichen: Lives in photography* retrospective at the Jeu de Paume, Paris. ICP will be the first North American venue before the show travels to the Williams College Museum of Art in Williamstown, MA, the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto and the Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale/Nova Southeastern University.

**Exhibition Support:**

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musée de l'Elysée



Lausanne

