



International Center of Photography

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news release



Tempo, Tempo! The Bauhaus Photomontages of Marianne Brandt

On view from
June 9 through
August 27, 2006

Media Preview
June 8, 2006
9:30 - 11am

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Marianne Brandt
Tempo-Tempo, Progress, Culture [Tempo-Tempo, Fortschritt, Kultur], 1927
Photomontage of newspaper clippings, black, red, and white ink
© 2005 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn
Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden

Although best known for her Bauhaus metalwork designs, the German modernist artist Marianne Brandt (1893–1983) also created a significant body of photomontages, most of which were never shown publicly, and will be united here for the first time. These large and bold collages were inspired by the work of Brandt's teacher, László Moholy-Nagy, and drew upon an array of visual sources in the popular illustrated press of the Weimar Republic in the 1920s and early 1930s.

Tempo, Tempo! The Bauhaus Photomontages of Marianne Brandt will be on view at the International Center of Photography (1133 Avenue of the Americas at 43rd Street) from June 9 through August 27, 2006.

Having abandoned traditional representational art—even burning her oil paintings in 1923—and working with abstract forms in metal, Brandt established a pure modernist style that has become an icon of Bauhaus design. In her photomontages, Brandt turned to more representational and commercial mediums to analyze and critique contemporary society and politics. A recurrent theme is the destructive and increasingly threatening side of modern technology that had become so apparent in the First World War. Brandt's photomontages, like those of Hannah Höch, also challenged gendered conventions in representation and imagined new roles for women in society.

Her fragmentary works invited women to see themselves not merely as reflections of interwar consumer society or as symbols of cultural change, but as agents of such change who were critical and politically savvy. Brandt's photomontages also address the representation of masculinity in the wake of the lost war, the dynamism of urban life, the fascination of film culture, and the militarization of technology. These works explore varied formal approaches to the pictorial surface and potential meanings embedded within photographic materials. For many Bauhaus and modernist theorists, these approaches were the keys to broadening a work of art's power in the dynamic new society of the 1920s. *Tempo, Tempo! The Bauhaus Photomontages of Marianne Brandt* offers viewers a retrospective look at Brandt's interwar photomontages and ideas essential for interpreting these works. This exhibition explores the historical and theoretical significance of the richly detailed, skillfully composed, and visually dynamic oeuvre created by Brandt in the context of the most influential art institution of the Weimar Republic: the Bauhaus.

"Like our earlier exhibitions on the art of Hans Bellmer, the photomontages of Gustav Klutis and Valentina Kulagina, the multifaceted work of László Moholy-Nagy, and the rise of the photo-illustrated press in the 1920s, this exhibition offers a new and critical perspective on the crucial role of photography in the emerging culture of modernism," says ICP Chief Curator Brian Wallis.

This exhibition has been organized by the Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin, with Elizabeth Otto as guest curator.

Publication:

Tempo, Tempo! The Bauhaus Photomontages of Marianne Brandt, written by Elizabeth Otto, reproduces Brandt's photomontages with essays that examine the political and social contexts of her surviving forty-five works. In addition to these short essays, the catalogue includes a biography and illustrated timeline of the artist's life.

176 pages, 65 color images and 55 black-and-white reproductions

Berlin: Jovis Verlag

Paperback

11 x 8 ½ in.