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Erin Garcia, *Man Ray in Paris*, Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011. 128 pp. \$24.95 U.S. (hb). ISBN-10: 1-606-0606-00.

Review by Kenneth Wayne, The Noguchi Museum in Long Island City, New York.

Man Ray is an artist to be taken very seriously. He is the only American to have been a leader of two international art movements: Dada and Surrealism. Moreover, he was a central figure in both the New York and Paris manifestations of Dada. Although best known today as a photographer, he was also accomplished as a painter, object maker, draughtsman, printmaker and filmmaker. Indeed, his painting *A l'Heure de l'Observatoire--Les Amoureux* of 1932, which depicts a pair of lips floating in the sky, is one of the icons of twentieth-century modernist painting. Objects such as *Le Cadeau* of 1921, which presents an iron with tacks glued to it, rendering it useless, helped revolutionize sculpture by adding profound mystery and ambiguity.

In this beautifully designed book, seventy-four exquisite photographs are presented relating to Man Ray's famous first Paris period (1921-1939). What is particularly impressive is the fact that all of the images come from the same collection, that of the J. Paul Getty Museum, which has one of the largest holdings of the artist's work in the United States. Most of the artist's major categories from the Paris period are represented, including portraits (with such luminaries featured as Joan Miró, Jean Cocteau, Gertrude Stein, Marcel Duchamp, James Joyce, Philippe Soupault, and Tsuguharu Foujita), self-portraits, rayographs, solarizations, and nudes. A rare, early dynamic image of the Eiffel Tower graces the cover of the book.

The J. Paul Getty Museum has even more Man Ray photographs to tap in the future. Only a selection from the Getty's holdings is presented; their famous images of Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque are omitted, for example, perhaps because they are so widely known. Moreover, the works seen here obviously do not come from his time in Hollywood (1940-1951), which is also represented in the Getty collection.

Rayographs, named after the artist, are images made without a camera by placing objects directly on photographic paper and developing them. The result is like an x-ray, providing mysterious silhouettes of objects of the artist's choosing. Solarized images were invented by Man Ray with the help of photographer Lee Miller (a fellow American expatriate in Paris)—who is receiving significant attention herself these days—by turning on the light during the development process, which creates a halo-like effect around the subject and giving it an other-worldly feel.

Among the masterpieces of photography reproduced in this publication is *Le Violon d'Ingres* of 1924, which shows the back of Kiki de Montparnasse with violin openings superimposed. The title is a French expression meaning a hobby, but Man Ray uses it in a multivalent way with the literal reference to a violin. *The Tears* of 1930-1932 presents glass beads as tears on a woman's face, making it very Surrealist. There is also a well-known variation of *Noire et Blanche* (Black and White) of 1926 where a black African mask is held next to Kiki's face, both tilted, their oval

shapes resonating with each other. *Noire et Blanche* is a brilliant reference to the impact of African art on modern art as a woman's soft face is juxtaposed with a dark, mysterious mask.

Man Ray's famous portfolios *Les Champs Délicieux* (The Delicious Fields) of 1922 and *L'Électricité* (Electricity) of 1931, both composed of rayographs, are also presented in the book with a selection of images. The title of the first portfolio derives from André Breton and Philippe Soupault's *Les Champs Magnétiques* (The Magnetic Fields), a 1920 collection of automatic writings. *Les Champs Délicieux* contains twelve images of various metal objects—a comb, a gyroscope, a grate, etc.—and is a rare, early compendium. The Electricity portfolio was commissioned by the Compagnie parisienne de distribution d'électricité to celebrate and encourage the many uses of electricity in the home through ten images of such new devices as a fan and an electric iron. The one major category not seen in the book, curiously, is his fashion photographs from the period. Also, if one were trying to be comprehensive in presenting his photographic work from the time, one would want to reproduce stills from his avant-garde films.

While the images are numerous, the text by Erin Garcia, former Assistant Curator in the Department of Photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum, is extremely brief: only about eight pages, not counting the introductory paragraphs to the different sections (Playing Games, Rayographs, Portraiture, *Les Champs Délicieux*, Women, *Electricité*, Solarization, Experiments in Color, Objects). Thus, this is more of a picture book or a partial collection catalogue than a reference book on Man Ray's time in Paris. The succinct text does a solid job of summarizing the artist's Paris exploits, but does not attempt to bring new scholarship to the field.

It is hard not to feel that there is an opportunity missed here. The Getty Library is possibly the best art library in the world and is especially strong in material on Man Ray, both printed and archival. It is unfortunate that the Getty's own resources were not exploited fully to produce the book and expand the body of the scholarship on the artist. Every book has its own purpose, though, and this one presents a strong group of Man Ray's Paris photos in a beautiful manner while leaving open the possibility for other publications. There is still a great deal to be said on this artist, especially about his Hollywood period, and the Getty is particularly well positioned to foster such a study.

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