

Man Ray



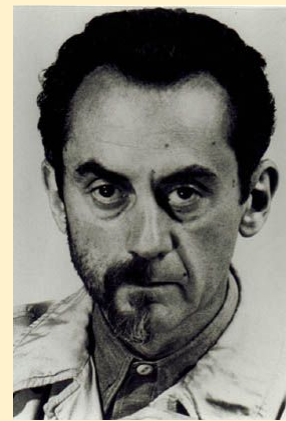
By: Calista Renfro, RaeAnne Torres, Emily Gayle, and Logan Bruner

Biography of Man Ray



- Born on August 27th, 1890 in a Jewish family that immigrated to the U.S.
- Full name is Emmanuel Radnitzky, used pseudonym “Man Ray” in 1911 (21 y/o)*
- Grew up in Williamsburg, Brooklyn and New York City
- Studied architecture, engineering, and art (was a mediocre college student who became a painter) *
- Visited 291 gallery and learned about photography from Alfred Stieglitz (owner of the gallery), experimented with it afterwards
- Married a Belgian Poet, Adon Lacroix, in 1914

- In 1915, Ray met his inspiration and future best friend French Artist, Marcel Duchamp
- They collaborated on projects, and Ray began doing ready-made art like Duchamp
- By 1921, Man Ray had “broke” with Lacroix and moved to Paris, France
- Joined Surrealist and Dadaist [Avant Garde] groups and experimented with different media
- Became unofficial photographer of group; included some famous artists*



Man Ray



Man Ray and Duchamp Playing Chess

Sources: Britannica and Masterworks Fine Art

Biography Continued...

- In 1940, Man Ray moved to Hollywood to get away from the war (WWII)
- Worked as a fashion photographer-changed the discipline with his techniques *
- After the war ended, Ray moved back to Paris with his new wife and dancer, Juliet Brown
- Published his autobiography called *Self Portrait*, in 1963 (reprinted in 1999)
- For the last 25 years of his life, he continued to paint, film, photograph, and sculpt until he died on November 18th, 1976 at 86 years old*.



Juliet Brown, 1946, Source: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia



Man Ray

“I paint what cannot be photographed. I photograph what I do not wish to paint.” -*Man Ray*

Notable Career Points

- First showcasing of his drawings and paintings was in 1915
- Showcased his collection “*Self Portrait*” in 1916
- First Photographs in 1918
- Collaboration kinetic work with Marcel Duchamp called “*Rotary Glass*” 1920
- 1920-1940: numerous people would be photographed by him since he was an “extremely celebrated photographer”
- 1920’s: directed unconventional short films*
- 1925: created “Object to be Destroyed” (major work)
- 1934: Series of photographs of a nude Meret Oppenheim next to a printing press
- 1963- published autobiography “*Self Portrait*”
- 1999- (after death) named “one of the 25 most influential artists of the 20th century” by Art News Magazine

Source: The Famous People

Movements

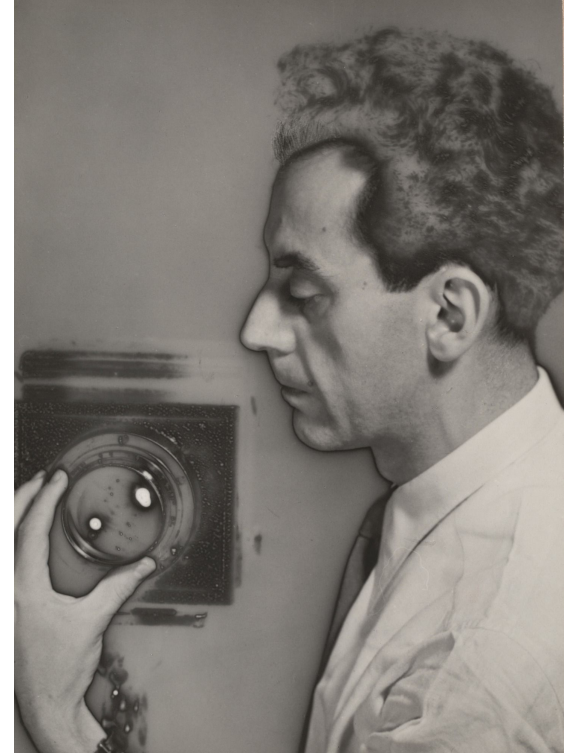
- At first, Man Ray was inspired by Cubism and Expressionism
- After meeting Duchamp, Ray changed to Dadaism
- Dadaism was a movement that arose in reaction to World War I
- It was influenced by Cubism, Futurism, and Expressionism
- Dadaism included performance art, poetry, photography, sculpture, painting and collage
- Dada mocked materialistic and nationalistic attitudes
- Dada was the first conceptual art movement that questioned society and the purpose of art
- Dada artists are known for using readymade objects which forced to question its purpose

Movements

- Before the movement began, Man Ray's works had Surrealist characteristics and drew on the movement's ideas for the rest of his life
- He was the only American member of the Paris surrealist movement
- The Surrealist movement grew from the Dada movement
- Surrealists studied the unconscious and the power of imagination
- The movement was influenced by Karl Marx and psychoanalysis
- The Surrealists believed the rational mind restrained imagination

Things Man Ray Experimented with

- Photograms (“Rayographs”)
- Solarization in Photo/Rayographs
- Ready-made art
- Fashion and Portrait photography
- Superimposing things into photographs
- Short films
- Continued Painting and doing sculpture
- Was also an essayist and a poet



Man Ray Self Portrait

Man Ray's Process

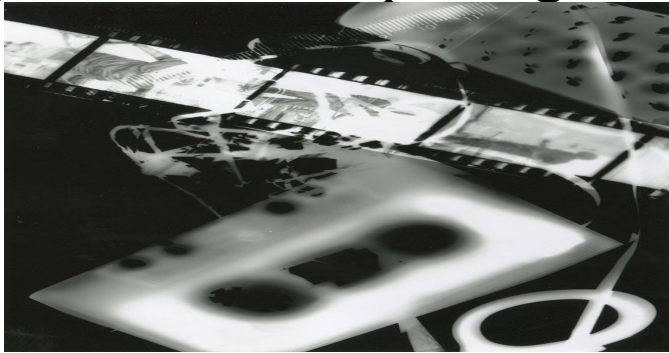
- Man Ray conducted a multitude of chemical and optical experiments in his darkroom, exposing the elasticity of light and its unrealized effects on light-sensitive paper
- Man Ray said, “I deliberately dodged all the rules,” he once described his method. “I mixed the most insane products together, I used film way past its use – by date, I committed heinous crimes against chemistry and photography, and you can’t see any of it”.
- Man Ray’s process was also inspired by his lover and muse Kiki of Montparnasse
- He would use the outline her body to represent other objects

Man Ray's Process Continued..

- This began his interest in minimalism and abstraction which then led him to experiment with “Rayographs” for the first time
- Man Ray's most famous Rayographs were of Kiki, later to be published in his book
- In 1922 he published a book of his Rayographs, *Les Champs délicieux* (“The Delightful Fields”)
- This book got him a lot of recognition from other artists including Tristan Tzara, an influential Dada artist at the time
- After the book released he worked on Dada art as well as solarization photography, another method he invented

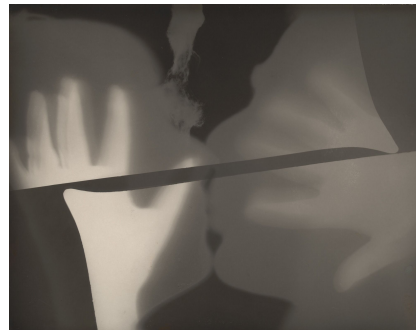
What's a Rayograph?

- A “rayograph”, a term Man Ray invented, was made by placing a three-dimensional object or series of objects on top of a piece of photographic paper and exposing it to light
- These images lyrically and impressionistically represented objects such as ropes, light bulbs, and thumb tacks.

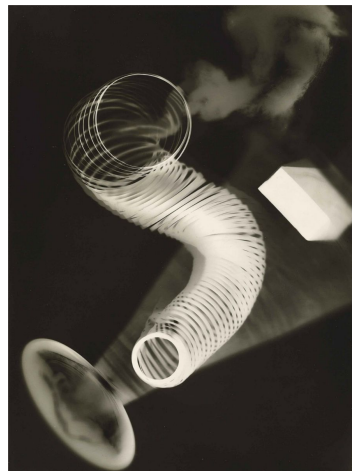


Rayography

- One of Ray's most famous rayograms/photograms is *The Kiss Rayograph*.
- It was made by transferring silhouettes of hands and heads onto photo paper without a camera (Man Ray: "Rayographs, etc").
- It has been considered that many of his rayograms such as this one depicts himself and his lovers (The Art Story).
- He made rayographs to experiment with light, shadows, form, balance, and more.



Man Ray, *The Kiss Rayograph*. Gelatin silver print (photogram) - The Museum of Modern Art, New York. 1922.



Man Ray, *Untitled Rayograph*. Australian Securities Exchange. 1922.

Man Ray Self-Portrait

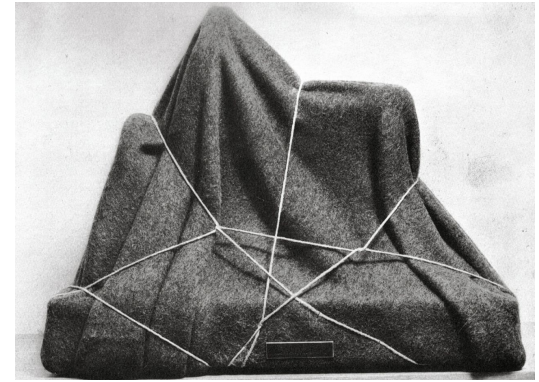
- In this photo: multi-talented, Man Ray captures himself in a gray-scale, solarized gelatin silver print (Smithsonian American Art Museum).
- According to the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM), Ray caught this moment in 1932 which is when the social realism movement was popular (Modern Art Movements: 1870's to 1980's).
- Social realism is meant to portray the working class, and in Ray's Self-Portrait, he was depicting himself as a working artist.
- This emphasis on his mind for photography and art is shown through symbols such as his eyes and hands bringing the viewer's eye toward the lens of the camera.
- The photography Ray practiced began as documentation for sculptures and activities, but soon became more of a way of fine art for him (The Art Story).



Man Ray, *Self-Portrait*, 1932, printed after 1960, solarized gelatin silver print, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Lucien Treillard, 1989.55.3

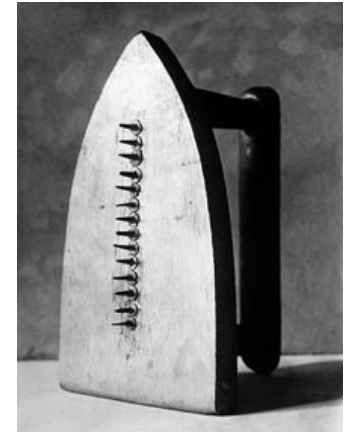
Dada Sculptures

- Ray's photography skills came in handy when photographing works such as *The Enigma of Isidore Ducasse*.
- It is a sewing machine wrapped in an army blanket and tied with string (The Art Story) and is otherwise known as *Object Wrapped in Felt and String*.
- This is a known Dada object because the response to WWI is portrayed through the army blanket, while also going against artistic norms at the time by confusion and questions.
- Another popular sculpture is *Le Cadeau* (The Gift), otherwise known as *Iron and Tacks*.
- It is an iron with tacks in it, rendering both objects used as useless.
- The Gift was meant to be a literal gift to the gallery owner at his first solo show (The Art Story), but was lost by the end of it.



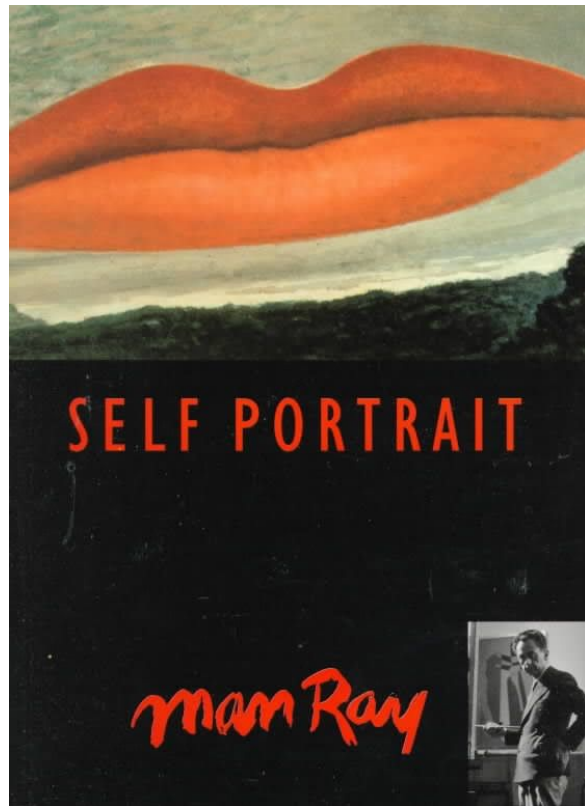
Man Ray, *The Enigma of Isidore Ducasse*. 1920.

Man Ray,
*Iron and
tacks* - The
Museum of
Modern Art,
New York
(replica of
the lost
original).
1921.



Man Ray Self-Portrait

- Photography and the art of questioning reality were important practices in Ray's everyday life, but it is important to remember that he expressed his artistic creativity through endless ways, one being a writer.
- He wrote this autobiography in the 1940's (Penguin Books) taking readers deep into the world of well-known artists throughout Europe.



Man Ray, *Self Portrait*. Little, Brown, 1998, Autobiography and Biography - 319 pages.

Photography

- *Ingre's violin* is a classic photo by Man Ray because he was fascinated with Juxtaposing an object with a female body (ManRay).
- Here, he painted musical instrument sound-holes on Kiki de Montparnasse's back.
- Another photo of Kiki de Montparnasse is titled: *Black and White*.
- It portrays the processes of black and white in photography, and is symbolic for the African culture with the inclusion of the mask.
- Ray also used other artists as models such as Meret Oppenheim in *Erotique Violee*.
- It is considered that this image represents the ongoing dynamic of men and women in Surrealism.



Man Ray,
*Ingre's
Violin*.
1942.

Man Ray, *Black
and White*. 1926.



Man Ray, *Erotique
Violee*. 1933.

Object to be Destroyed

- Ray used a metronome when painting and attached a photo of his eye to it with a paperclip in order to give himself an audience ('Indestructible Object').
- Ray smashed the timepiece out of frustration, but ended up rebuilding it, replacing his eye with his new lover's: Lee Miller.
- The new object was lost, then found at a 1957 Dada gallery in Paris
- When Ray found out, he made another one hundred different versions with different varieties of static or blinking eyes on the metronome thanks to the help of artist Daniel Spoerri.



Man Ray, *Object to be Destroyed*. Paris. 1923, remade 1933, editioned replica 1965.

Paintings

- Ray attended the Ferer Center where he gained insight on cubism and futurism from modernist, Max Weber (ManRay).
- The *Departure of Summer* was painted by Ray as a transition into a more cubist style because of the angular and flat techniques he portrays in this painting.
- *Rope Dancer Accompanies Herself With Her Shadows* is another example of Ray's abstract, cubist work.
- According to Man Ray; *Paintings, Photography, and Quotes*, he was inspired by a tightrope act he had seen.
- His technique included drawing and cutting out “acrobatic shapes,” then moving onto the final painting once he was satisfied.



Man Ray,
*Departure of
Summer*. 1914.



Man Ray,
*Rope Dancer
Accompanies
Herself with
Her Shadows*.
1916.

Ending quote

“An original is a creation motivated by desire. Any reproduction of an original motivated by necessity. It is marvelous that we are the only species that creates gratuitous forms. To create is divine, to reproduce is human.”

— **Man Ray**

Citations

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