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Picasso pictured on the beach in 1935

with his Afghan hound, Kasbel

**The unseen Man Ray**

From a snapshot of Picasso and his dog to close-ups of starfish, a new book reveals another side to the surrealist's art. Hannah Duguid reports

*Wednesday, 13 May 2009*

When Man Ray died in Paris in 1976 he left behind an archive of thousands of his photographs that reflect the life and work of one of the most important artists of the 20th century. They were taken over the course of his life, from his early years, after he left New York for France in 1921, to when he returned to Los Angeles after the outbreak of the Second World War.

Man Ray was a close friend of Marcel Duchamp. He was an American Dadaist and Surrealist. He was a trickster and a game player, a man whose epitaph in the cemetery in Montparnasse reads "unconcerned but not indifferent". He had many sides, as a man and an artist. His portraiture work shows a life lived alongside art's great personalities: Picasso, Brancusi and Gertrude Stein. He loved hats, masks, fast cars and women. There are photographs of his lovers: Kiki de Montparnasse, Lee Miller, Ady Fidelin and his second wife, Juliet.

A selection of photographs from the archive has been brought together in a new book titled Trees + Flowers - Insects Animals. Some of the work is familiar, such as a photograph of Duchamp masquerading as his female alter ego, Rrose Sélavy. But alongside the famous images are photographs of buildings, landscapes, grasshoppers and unknown people who sat for Man Ray. These are not the photographs that he made his name with - the rayographs and solarized portraits of bohemian celebrities - they are his experiments, the back room work, some of which has never been seen before.

The title for the book was found by the curator John P Jacob scrawled on the back of a photograph in Man Ray's handwriting. "The structure of the book evolved out of the archive," says Jacob. He trawled the vast collection of photographs from the Man Ray Trust, selecting images for the book and noting themes and recurring motifs that he had not seen before. He found groups of photographs of cars and of masks, which were a favorite theme of the Surrealists. There's a well- known photograph of Marcel Duchamp, Tonsure, which shows the artist with the shape of a star shaved into the back of his scalp. It is published alongside a close up of star fish on pebbles taken during the 1920s.

"I found this star motif in his work which is what can happen when you go through a large body of work. It was a form he found in nature but that he was attracted to conceptually as a perfect form. It is beautiful in nature, but magical, and he gave it magical qualities. I was hoping the book would show how he found and documented things in the world," says Jacob.

Man Ray imbued everyday scenes with drama and mystery, making the familiar feel strange and unsettling. Buildings and landscapes are photographed from odd angles with dramatic shadows. The edge of a cliff juts out like an enormous hook nose, a beak, with a hole in the rock that is positioned in the place of an eye. It is an eerie formation, an uncanny arrangement of nature which is the sort of unusual observation that the Surrealists loved. A dead leaf curls up as it dries to become an object of beauty and reveals an astonishing natural symmetry. The ruins of a castle in Provence are frighteningly empty, as though it is the aftermath of a terrible event

Man Ray invented a new aesthetic for photography. At a time when photography was finding its way as a medium, his photographs became works of art in themselves. During his lifetime he said of his work: "I began as a painter. In photographing my canvases I discovered the value of reproduction in black and white. The day came when I destroyed the painting and kept the reproduction. From then on I never stopped believing that painting is an obsolete form of expression and that photography will dethrone it when the public is visually educated. I know one thing for sure: I need to experiment in one form or another. Photography gives me the means, a simpler and faster means than painting."

For him, photography was a way to get results without the laborious effort that academic painters required. Photography was modern and challenged assumptions about the unique work of art. It was also a way for him to have fun.

There are a series of portraits of friends with their dogs. Picasso and Kasbel, his beautiful Afghan hound, sit together on the beach. Gertrude Stein is photographed with her dog, Basket. Basket sits on Stein's knee and stares straight into the lens with an intensity that mirrors that of his mistress. There is a less well-known image of a young woman sitting with two puppies.

He has more fun in a series of self- portraits in which he is dressed up as a woman, his hand to his hip, back slightly arched and his chin raised to show off the jaunty angle of his wide-brimmed hat. In another, his hands are clasped and his eyes serious as he poses wearing a religious frock.

The banal details of everyday life take on a new significance when viewed by Man Ray: flowers, cacti, and tree roots that snake like mossy veins across the floor of the woods. A fly on a window pane becomes a monstrous beast suspended over a view of the sea. It's a trick of perspective, not the only game that Man Ray played with his audience.

"He was a very funny man," says Jacob. "For the historian, he plays with facts and dates, things are very unclear. There's a raw humor. The archive was very difficult to work out, there is no catalogue raisonne of his work and there's so much confusion about what he did. This work has been very little seen. These are the things that he preserved as his legacy. When he preserved certain pieces, he wanted that part of his creative process to be understood. It doesn't just occur in a vacuum. The landscape pieces of him work very much as part of his process; they seem to have been preliminary documentary work that he did before making one of his films. They may not be his most iconic pieces, but if he didn't want them seen, then he would have destroyed them."

That they are not his iconic pieces gives us an insight into the way that Man Ray worked and how he was able to find artistic potential in everyday life. In this collection, trees, flowers, insects and animals have become magical works of art.

**After reading the article, answer the following in complete sentences:**

**The main idea of the article is:**

**One fact and example that supports this main idea:**

**Another fact and example that supports this main idea is:**

**In addition to the 2 facts and examples above, this fact and example supports the main idea:**

**Finally, this fact and example also supports the main idea:**