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AMERICAN, kertész, capa, & the hungarian
american photographic legacy
BORN HUNGARY

Oct 5, 2024–Jan 26, 2025

VMFA

VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

Robert Capa, one of the best-known Hungarian American photographers, once famously said that to be a great photographer “it is not enough to have talent, you also have to be Hungarian.” Capa was humorously referring to the surprisingly large number of important 20th-century photographers who hailed from Hungary, among them André Kertész, László Moholy-Nagy, Martin Munkácsi and, of course, Capa himself. Capa’s pronouncement was echoed by the magazine *Coronet*, which posed the question in 1937: “Can we help it if the best photographs consistently seem to be produced by Hungarians?” Yet each of these Hungarian photographers—and many others to boot—left Hungary, eventually settling in America where, collectively, they transformed the language and practice of modern photography across the fields of photojournalism, fashion, street, and fine art photography.

This exhibition explores the work of thirty-four Hungarian-born photographers who eventually made their way—and sometimes their fortunes—in the United States. Its title reflects how the nationality of each of these artists is noted in art publications: American, born Hungary. Some left Hungary to pursue new professional opportunities, others were escaping rising antisemitism, fascism, and political turmoil, especially after World War I. The paths they took were equally varied, with some artists first emigrating to other European cities, including Paris and Berlin, where they honed their skills

and developed their reputations and networks. Others moved directly from Hungary to the United States, seeking new opportunities or a better life. Once on American soil, most of the artists settled in three major cities: New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Each had flourishing photographic communities and industries. Exploring and adapting to their new homeland through the camera, these photographers evolved distinctive ways of seeing and making pictures that shaped modern photography. *American, born Hungary* follows in the footsteps of these important artists and underscores the key role of Hungarian immigrants in defining American photographic culture and practice in the 20th century.

Modern Hungary: A Historical Context

Located at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, Hungary was, until the 19th century, a largely rural country deeply embedded in the culture of the Magyars, a formerly nomadic people who came from eastern or central Siberia and settled in Hungary in the 9th century. Periodic waves of invaders occupied the region until the 19th century. In 1867, Hungary was incorporated into the Austro-Hungarian Empire, after which it became a major power with the continent's fifth-largest economy and second only to the Russian Empire in land mass in Europe.

From 1867 to the beginning of World War I in 1914, the country's capital, Budapest, was the fastest growing city in Europe. Urban development modeled after Paris transformed the city into a beacon of culture and commerce, with a flourishing artistic and intellectual class. This remarkable achievement would become a distant memory with the outbreak of World War I. Hungary joined forces with the Central Powers (Germany, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire) against the Allied Powers (France, United Kingdom, Russia, Italy, Japan, and the United States). By the end of the first year of the war, more than eight hundred thousand Hungarian soldiers were killed, wounded, or captured, and the country suffered from unrelenting cycles of rising prices, inflation, and shortages. In 1918, the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed, and after the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, Hungary was forced to cede two-

thirds of its land and one-third of its population to neighboring countries, including Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

From 1919–1921, Hungary was marked by intense civil conflict between conservative and liberal forces and an extreme rise in antisemitism, with violent purging of Communists, leftists, and many Jews. This period, known as the White Terror, sparked an exodus of the intellectual class, including many artists, writers, musicians, and photographers. From 1920–1944, Hungary was ruled by a fascist government, which collapsed at the end of World War II. The country then became a Soviet satellite until 1989, when it threw off Communist rule and was declared the Republic of Hungary.

PRE-WW1



POST-WW1



Photography as both a profession and an amateur practice was widespread in Hungary at the end of the 19th century. Hungary's first camera clubs, which sought to promote photography as a fine art, formed in Budapest around the turn of the 20th century. At this time, the dominant style in Hungary was Pictorialism, characterized by soft focus, rich tonal range, and "painterly" effects—typically images of traditional folk and rural life, idealized portraits, and sentimental narratives. This approach, which became known as the "Hungarian Style" of photography, was embraced by official cultural institutions and closely aligned with nationalist visions of Hungary as an essentially agrarian, traditional culture.

By the end of the 1910s, Pictorialism seemed increasingly out of step with the social, cultural, and political realities of modern life. Several young photographers, including Kertész, Munkácsi, and the married couple Imre Révész and Irma Biró, began to use photography as a tool to capture the contemporary moment. They were in part influenced by the new illustrated magazines from Germany and France that deployed photography and graphic design in innovative ways. The development of lightweight, handheld cameras and faster, more sensitive film also encouraged more experimental approaches to the medium. Some photographers, like Kertész, participated in avant-garde artistic circles and sought to integrate these aesthetic

concepts into photography. But as social and political tensions in the country continued to rise in the 1920s, many of Hungary's most innovative photographers and artists left to seek opportunity elsewhere.



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)

American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Fountain and Church in Fog, 1917

Gelatin silver print

Born into a middle-class Jewish family in Budapest in 1894, André Kertész began to photograph in 1912 when his mother gave him a small, handheld camera. Like many other soldiers during World War I, he took his camera with him to the front, where he made photographs of daily life, capturing scenes of soldiers at rest and play. After the war, Kertész continued to make photographs in Budapest, where—much to the chagrin of his parents, who expected him to become a stockbroker—he joined artistic circles that included contemporary painters and sculptors. This lyrical view of a fountain and church shrouded in fog reveals his keen sense of composition and atmosphere. Kertész generally made contact prints during this period, which are made directly from negatives without using an enlarger.

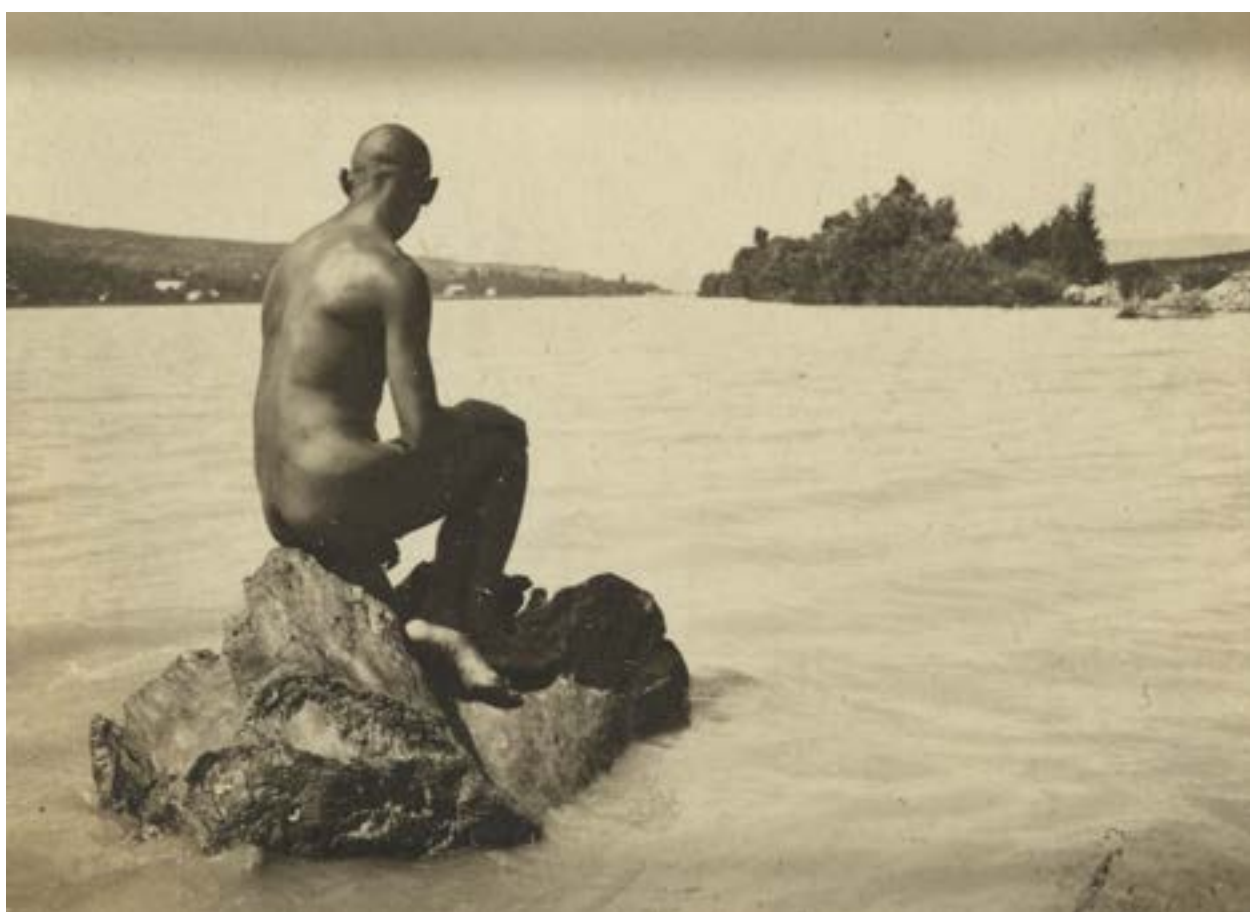
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Aldine S. Hartman Endowment Fund, 2013.226



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Wine Cellars at Budafok, Hungary, 1924
Gelatin silver print

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Collection of the Sack
Photographic Trust



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Untitled (Man sitting on rocks by the shore), 1914–18
Gelatin silver print

Collection of Paul Sack

Imre Révész (Révész Imre)

American, born Hungary, 1895–1975

Irma Biró (Biró Irma)

Hungarian, active 20th century

Hungary, 1920s

Bromoil transfer print

Little is known about the team of Imre Révész and Irma Biró, a married couple who produced work together and jointly signed their photographs. Révész, who launched his career as a war photographer, opened a portrait studio in Budapest in the 1920s, and soon the couple expanded to advertisements. Although their early work, such as this soft-focus landscape, was typical of the Pictorialism-inspired “Hungarian style,” by the late 1920s the team had embraced collage, abstraction, and other modern strategies. The couple were divorced by 1934, when Révész moved to the United States and became an advertising and fashion photographer. He continued to sign his work “Révész-Biró,” perhaps in homage to Biró, who was killed at Auschwitz in 1944.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Eric and Jeanette Lipman Fund, 2021.161





Imre Révész (Révész Imre)
American, born Hungary, 1895–1975

Irma Biró (Biró Irma)
Hungarian, active 20th century

Hungarian Landscape, ca. 1925
Bromoil transfer print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Eric and Jeanette Lipman Fund,
2021.94

André Kertész (Kertész Andor)

American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

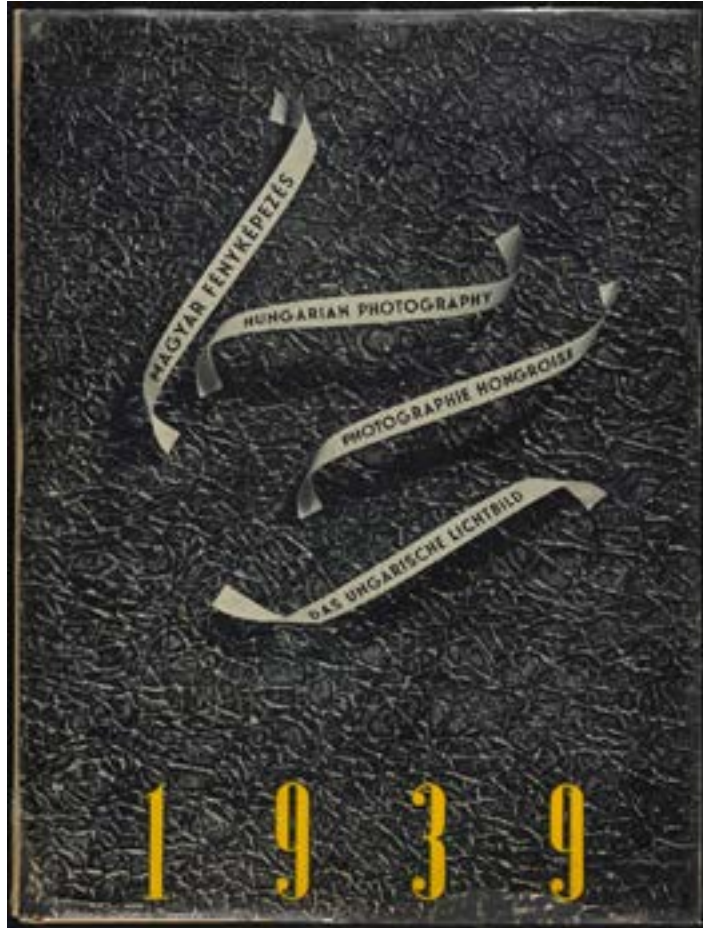
Bocskay Tér, 1914, from the portfolio *A Hungarian Memory*, 1914–24

Gelatin silver print, printed 1980

Soon after he first began to explore photography, Kertész carefully staged this mysterious nocturnal scene with his brother, Jenő, as the model. Posed against a white wall lit by an unseen source, Jenő's hunched figure casts an uncanny shadow; though he appears to be walking, the length of the exposure likely required him to hold still. When Kertész first made this photograph, he printed it as a tiny contact print measuring approximately 2 x 2 inches. In 1980, the elderly Kertész returned to the original negative to make larger prints, including the one you see here, and published them in a portfolio of fifteen photographs titled *A Hungarian Memory*.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Charles McDowell, 2015.241.3





Charles Rosner, editor
Hungarian, 1902–1972

Magyar fényképezés (Hungarian photography), 1939

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Margaret R. and Robert M.
Freeman Library, Rare Book Collection, 30804006689193



Imre Révész (Révész Imre)
American, born Hungary, 1895–1975

Irma Biró (Biró Irma)
Hungarian, active 20th century

Photo-reklám (Photo advertising), 1933-?
Book

From the Collection of Victor V. Gurbo



Imre Révész (Révész Imre)

American, born Hungary, 1895–1975

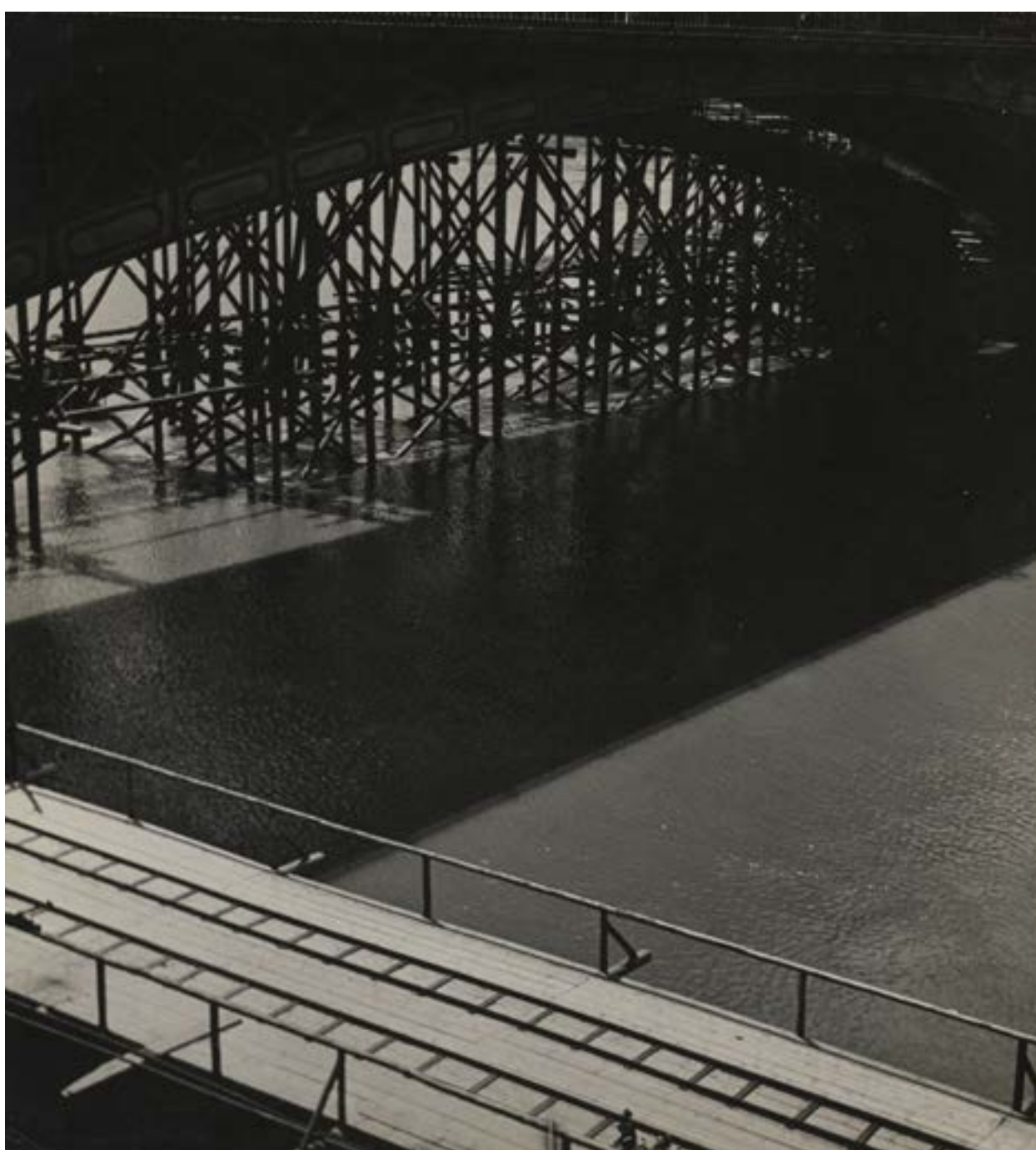
Irma Biró (Biró Irma)

Hungarian, active 20th century

Itt a Balaton! (Here is Lake Balaton!), ca. 1932

Collage of gelatin silver prints with gouache

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, by exchange, and Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund, by exchange, 2021.101



Francis Haar (Haár Ferenc)

American, born Hungary, 1908–1997

Margit-Híd, 1932

Gelatin silver print

Born in 1908 into an artistic family, Francis Haar attended art school in Budapest, where he studied applied arts. After graduating, he worked as a designer and architect and taught himself photography. By 1930, he was an active member of avant-garde artistic circles in Budapest that championed photography as a modern art form. In 1934, Haar opened his own studio, which he ran until 1937 when he emigrated to Paris and then, subsequently, to Japan and Hawaii. The impact of his early training in architecture and design is evident in this view capturing the complex geometry of Margit híd, a three-span bridge that crosses the Danube River in Budapest.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2018.207



Martin Munkácsi (Mermelstein Márton)

American, born Hungary, 1896–1963

Aerial View of Pest, 1926

Gelatin silver print

Like many Hungarian photographers, Martin Munkácsi started his career as a journalist and writer who made pictures to accompany his stories. A specialist in sports reportage, Munkácsi possessed exceptional technical skills and an eye for dynamic composition. These gifts enabled him to make powerful yet spontaneous pictures, often on the fly. He was especially drawn to unconventional viewpoints that conveyed the spirit of the modern age, in this case a dizzying aerial view of Pest—one half of the city which, along with its neighbor Buda across the Danube River, make up the city of Budapest.

Collection of Paul Sack



Imre Révész (Révész Imre)
American, born Hungary, 1895–1975

Optigram, ca. 1948
Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Aldine S. Hartman Endowment
Fund, 2018.199



Cornel Somogy

American, born Hungary, 1910–2001

Untitled, 1948

Gelatin silver print

Joy of Giving Something, Inc.



Francis Haar (Haár Ferenc)

American, born Hungary, 1908–1997

Construction Site, 1932

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow
Endowment, 2018.208



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Budapest, 1948
Gelatin silver print

Kertész made this photograph of a decapitated stone sculpture in 1948, when he returned to Budapest for the first time in more than twenty years. Though Kertész found success in Paris after leaving Hungary in 1925, at the time of this photograph, he was living in obscurity in New York and toiling away at a dead-end job photographing interiors for *House & Garden*. It would be another fifteen years before his work achieved the same recognition and admiration he had enjoyed as an artist in Paris in the 1920s and '30s. Broken and isolated, the once-regal lion stands as a cipher for the artist's own sense of loss.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of The André and Elizabeth Kertész Foundation Inc., 2019.444



Cornel Somogy

American, born Hungary, 1910–2001

Untitled (Street Scene), 1936

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund, 2014.177

Cornel Somogy

American, born Hungary, 1910–2001

St. Andre Gypsy Dwelling, 1946

Gelatin silver print

Born in Temesvar, Hungary (now Romania) in 1910, Cornel Somogy trained as a structural engineer. When he was twenty-six years old, he acquired a 35mm Leica camera—a fast and lightweight apparatus that enabled him to work quickly and explore dynamic angles, as seen in this abstracted view of roofs and houses made in the town of Szentendre, a village about fifteen miles from Budapest. Szentendre (which the artist translated as St. Andre) was home to large Serbian and Balkan immigrant populations starting in the 18th century, and their influence can be seen in the riverside town's diverse architectural styles; in the 1920s, Szentendre was also home to an artist's colony. Somogy remained in Hungary until the 1956 revolution, after which he moved to Chicago and continued his career as an engineer and photographer.

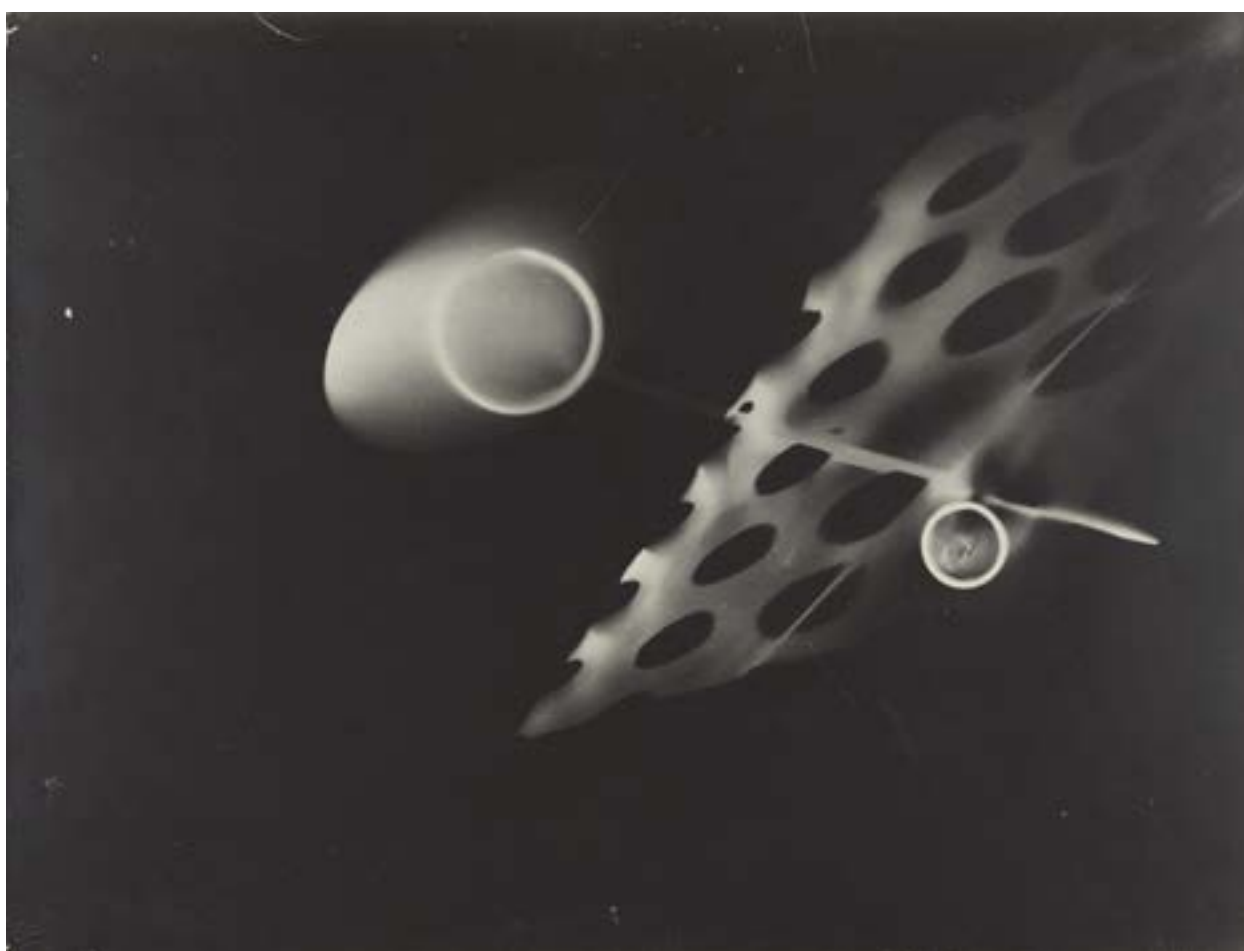
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund, 2014.178



After World War I, several Hungarian artists moved to Germany. Hungarian émigrés were especially critical to the development of the Bauhaus, a German art school in operation from 1919–1933 that combined fine arts, architecture, craft, and design. The most important Hungarian artist at the Bauhaus was László Moholy-Nagy, who moved to Berlin in 1920. There he met and married Lucia Schulz, a photographer who introduced him to the medium. In 1923, the couple moved to Weimar, Germany, where Moholy-Nagy joined the Bauhaus faculty and taught various courses, including photography. Moholy-Nagy believed in the radical possibilities of photography to express what he termed “the New Vision,” a transformative shift in seeing and experiencing the world that was rooted in the technological revolutions of the early 20th century. In 1928, Moholy-Nagy left the Bauhaus and founded a design studio in Berlin where he continued to teach.

Other important Hungarian photographers who moved to Germany included György Kepes and Martin Munkácsi. Trained as a painter and filmmaker, Kepes moved to Berlin in 1930 and joined Moholy-Nagy’s studio, where he made experimental, modern photographs that reveal the impact of the “New Vision.” Munkácsi, a journalist and photographer who had specialized in sports reportage, moved from Budapest to Berlin in 1928 for a job with the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, a pioneering illustrated news magazine. For

Munkácsi, the camera was the essential tool to capture the speed, dynamism, and spirit of modern life. Though he never studied at the Bauhaus, Munkácsi embraced many aspects of New Vision photography, including veering angles, unexpected vantage points, and radical cropping.



László Moholy-Nagy
American, born Hungary, 1895–1946

Photogram, 1925
Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the George Eastman Museum, Purchase with funds
from Eastman Kodak Company



László Moholy-Nagy

American, born Hungary 1895–1946

Untitled [“Fotogramm”], 1925

Gelatin silver print, printed 1929

Although the photogram process predates the public introduction of photography in 1839, its application as a means to make abstract images dates to the 1920s. While several photographers—including Man Ray, Christian Schad, and El Lissitzky—are credited with the reinvention of the photogram process, Moholy-Nagy’s wife defended her husband’s claim to its invention, citing his 1922 essay “Production-Reproduction,” in which he called for the “productive” use of media normally reserved for reproduction. As she put it, this essay “gradually led to implement our conclusions by making photograms, having no knowledge of previous steps taken by Schad, Man Ray, and Lissitzky.” Moholy-Nagy is widely credited with naming the process “photogram.”

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, by exchange, 2022.32



László Moholy-Nagy

American, born Hungary, 1895–1946

Untitled, 1929

Collage of gelatin silver prints with gouache

Around 1922, Moholy-Nagy and his wife, Lucia Schulz, began making photograms, cameraless photographs made by placing objects onto light-sensitive photographic papers and exposing them to light. These luminous, ghostly images of abstract forms floating in indeterminate space were revelatory, opening the pathway to creating abstract imagery through light and chemistry, thus releasing the medium from its traditional dependence on likeness and reproducibility. Although the photograms produced by Moholy-Nagy are among the most striking examples of Modernist abstraction in photography, the objects used to make these pictures were usually simple, old-fashioned items, such as a baby's rattle or, in this case, an antique postal scale.

Joy of Giving Something, Inc.



László Moholy-Nagy

American, born Hungary, 1895–1946

Lucia Moholy on a Balcony, Ascona, ca. 1926

Gelatin silver print

Art Institute of Chicago, Julien Levy Collection, Special
Photography Acquisition Fund



László Moholy-Nagy

American, born Hungary, 1895–1946

Puppen (Dolls), 1926

Gelatin silver print, printed ca. 1937–47

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Purchase



László Moholy-Nagy
American, born Hungary, 1895–1946

Nude, ca. 1926
Gelatin silver print

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri (Gift of Hallmark Cards, Inc.), 2005.27.4289



Martin Munkácsi (Mermelstein Márton)

American, born Hungary, 1896–1963

Little Belt Bridge, 1928–35

Gelatin silver print

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles



Martin Munkácsi (Mermelstein Márton)

American, born Hungary, 1896–1963

Strassenszene (Street Scene), 1928

Gelatin silver print

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Members' Accessions
Fund purchase



László Moholy-Nagy

American, born Hungary, 1895–1946

A Modernist Study, Finland, 1930

Gelatin silver print

Joy of Giving Something, Inc.



László Moholy-Nagy

American, born Hungary, 1895–1946

Marseilles, Port View (Old Harbor), 1929

Gelatin silver print

Moholy-Nagy celebrated photography's transformative potential, writing "the camera has offered us amazing possibilities, which we are only just beginning to exploit. The visual image has been expanded and even is no longer tied to the narrow limits of our eye. We may say that we see the world with entirely different eyes."

Courtesy of the George Eastman Museum, Gift of Eugene P. Wightman



László Moholy-Nagy

American, born Hungary, 1895–1946

Helsinki, 1930

Gelatin silver print

Moholy-Nagy celebrated the intrinsic qualities of the black-and-white photographic image, writing in 1928 that “the subtleties of grey tones create such a sublime effect, differentiation between them being equivalent to that of the most intensely different colors.”

Collection of the Sack Photographic Trust and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, fractional gift of Paul Sack



Francis Haar (Haár Ferenc)

American, born Hungary, 1908–1997

Shadows on the Rainy Road, 1936

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2019.15



Ferenc Berko

American, born Hungary, 1916–2000

Paris, 1935–37

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Eric and Jeanette Lipman Fund, 2016.607



Martin Munkácsi (Mermelstein Márton)

Hungarian, 1896–1963

Street Shadows, 1928

Gelatin silver print

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri (Gift of Hallmark Cards, Inc.), 2005.27.4295

György Kepes

American, born Hungary, 1906–2001

Berlin, 1930

Gelatin silver print

After pursuing traditional artistic training at Budapest's Royal Academy of Fine Arts, György Kepes moved to Berlin in 1930 and studied photography, film, design, and theory with Moholy-Nagy. This ominous, dramatically lit scene with exaggerated shadows reveals the impact of Moholy-Nagy's concept of photography as a tool to create "new relationships between the known and the as-yet unknown." Like his mentor, Kepes was not interested in photography as a form of documentation but rather as a tool to help us see the world anew.

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri (Gift of Hallmark Cards, Inc.), 2005.27.4175





László Moholy-Nagy

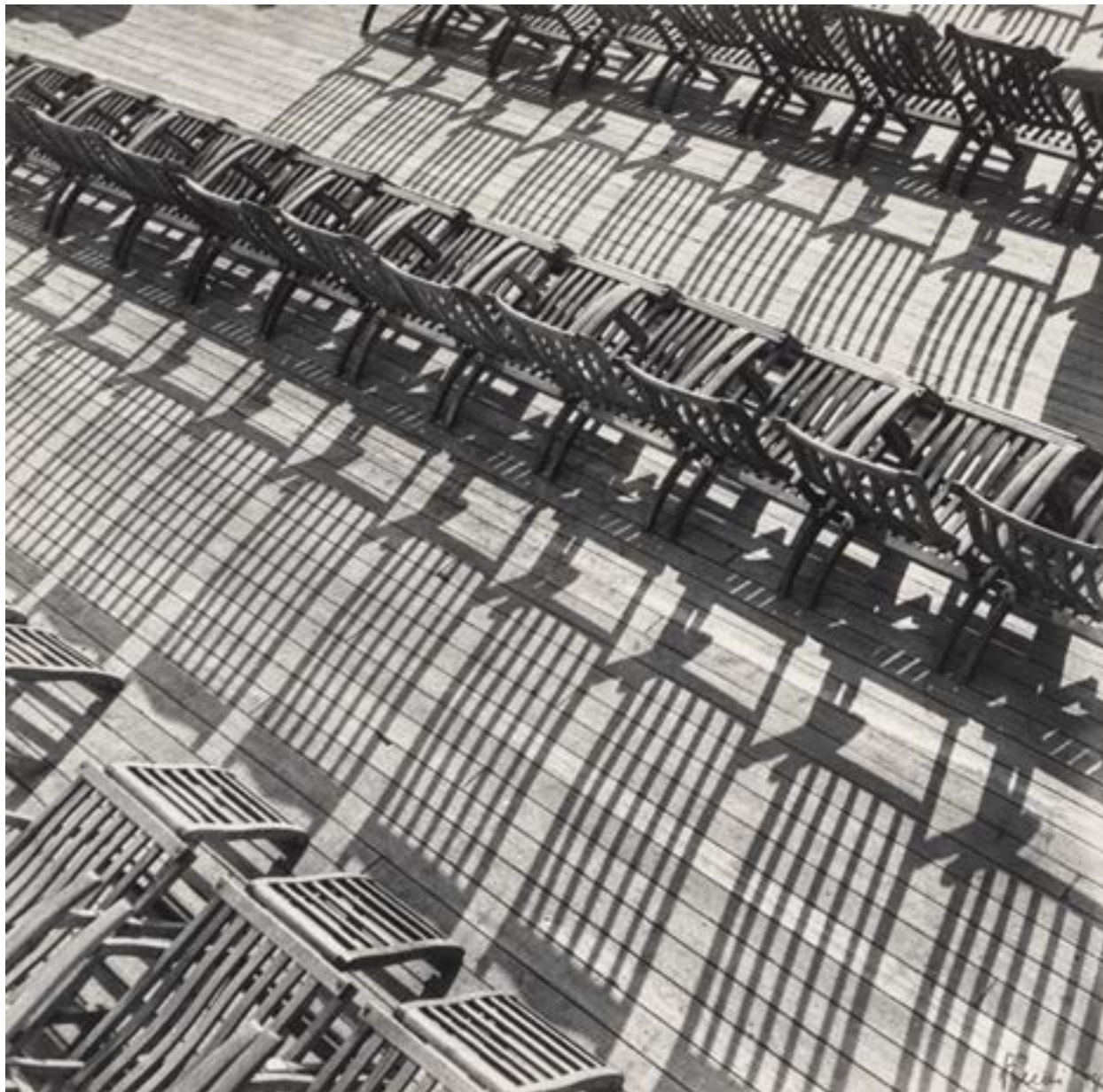
American, born Hungary, 1895–1946

7 A.M. (New Year's Morning), Germany, ca. 1930

Gelatin silver print

Moholy-Nagy believed that photography was key to understanding and interpreting the modern world, writing that those with “no knowledge of it will be the illiterates of the future. In the coming age, photography will be a basic subject like reading and arithmetic.”

Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ford Motor Company Collection, Gift of Ford Motor Company and John C. Waddell, 1987 (1987.1100.155)



Ferenc Berko

American, born Hungary, 1916–2000

Deck Chairs, Queen Mary, 1948

Gelatin silver print

Born in Hungary in 1916, Ferenc Berko was orphaned as a child and raised by family friends in Berlin. His adoptive parents, who gave Berko his first camera, were close with the artists and teachers at the Bauhaus school and spent time with Moholy-Nagy, who became a mentor to Berko. After he finished his degree in philosophy, Berko worked as a photographer in London, Paris, and Bombay before moving to the United States at the invitation of Moholy-Nagy. This view of deck chairs on the *Queen Mary*, a British ocean liner, reveals the enduring influence of Moholy-Nagy's "New Vision" on Berko.

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Gift of Manfred Heiting, The Manfred Heiting Collection



László Moholy-Nagy

American, born Hungary, 1895–1946

Chairs at Margate, 1935

Gelatin silver print

After his divorce from Lucia Schultz in 1932 and the Nazi rise to power in 1933, Moholy-Nagy left Germany for Amsterdam (1934) and England (1935) before moving to the United States in 1937. In this diptych, Moholy-Nagy transforms an everyday scene of chairs—empty on the left, occupied on the right—at the beach in Margate, a seaside town on England’s southeast coast, into a dynamic study of form, light, and viewpoint.

Courtesy of the George Eastman Museum, Purchase with funds from Eastman Kodak Company

Hungarians in Paris

Widely regarded as the artistic capital of the world, Paris was a beacon to immigrant artists in the years following World War I. Hungarian expats moved to Paris and gathered in the same neighborhoods, worked together, and haunted the same restaurants and bars. A common language, culture, and interest in art helped these artists form a vibrant and connected community.

André Kertész, who moved to Paris in 1925, was among the first Hungarian photographers to call the city home. He quickly joined an international community of artists, including many fellow Hungarian painters and sculptors. Other photographers soon followed, including Brassai, Robert Capa, Cornell Capa, Lucien Aigner, Anna Barna, Ferenc Berko, and Ylla.

In the 1920s and early '30s, the bustling city's vibrant publishing culture provided abundant work for photographers, especially in photojournalism, advertising, and fashion. As the breeding ground for two of the most important art movements of the early 20th century, Modernism and Surrealism, Paris offered robust opportunities for aesthetic and intellectual exploration, especially for photographers like Kertész, who sought to expand the artistic possibilities of photography. By the late 1930s, the freedoms and opportunities that Paris had initially offered so many émigrés began to dry up. Between economic pressures following the Great Depression, rising antisemitism, and

the threat of a Nazi invasion, many Hungarian émigrés—especially those of Jewish heritage—started to look elsewhere in the United States, Canada, and Mexico for a new home.



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)

American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Night Scene, Paris, 1926

Gelatin silver print

Kertész made this alluring nocturnal scene using nothing but a small camera, available light, and patience. In pictures like this one, his aim was not to describe physical appearances but rather to convey his emotional responses to what he saw. As he later put it, his photography served as a “tool to express and describe my life, the same way poets or writers describe their life experiences...I never document, I always interpret with my pictures.”

Joy of Giving Something, Inc.



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)

American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Montmartre, 1927

Gelatin silver print

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

The Eiffel Tower from Passy, Paris, 1935
Gelatin silver print, printed later

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Judy Haselton, 2018.483



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Distortion #173, printed ca. 1932–33
Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow
Endowment, 2016.427

Distortion Mirror - André Kertész

The Collection of Louise Voccoli and Robert Gurbo



Robert Capa (Freidmann Endre Ernő)
 American, born Hungary, 1913–1954

La Revue du médecin: revue mensuelle réservée au corps médical (The Doctor's Review: monthly magazine reserved for the medical profession),
 September 1936

Periodical

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Margaret R. and Robert M. Freeman Library, Rare Book Collection, 30804006643711



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)
 American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Day of Paris, 1945

Book

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Margaret R. and Robert M. Freeman Library, Rare Book Collection, 30804006613045



Vu, April 1930
Periodical

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Margaret R. and Robert M. Freeman Library, Rare Book Collection, 30804006785538



Steinheil Detective Camera, German, between 1890s and 1912

Wood, metal, glass, fabric, leather

From the Collection of Victor V. Gurbo



Leica M3, ca. 1960
Metal, leather, glass

From the Collection of Victor V. Gurbo



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Chairs, Paris, 1929
Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Aldine S. Hartman Endowment Fund, 2013.27



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Paris, 1929
Gelatin silver print, printed 1950s–60s

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 2014.173



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Paris, 1931
Gelatin silver print

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri (Gift of Hallmark Cards, Inc.), 2005.27.1524

André Kertész (Kertész Andor)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Broken plate, Paris, 1929
Gelatin silver print, printed 1973

When Kertész left Paris for New York in 1936, he was forced to leave many of his glass-plate negatives behind. He entrusted them to a friend, who moved them from Paris to her country home in the South of France during the war, where she stored them underground in a trunk. When Kertész was finally able to retrieve his negatives in 1963, he discovered that many had been damaged. He discarded all the broken negatives except one. Intrigued by the central hole piercing the negative like a bullet, he printed it and was delighted with the result, remarking, “an accident helped me to produce a beautiful effect.”

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of the Collection of Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser, 2016.544.8





André Kertész (Kertész Andor)

American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Paris (Rooftops), 1927

Gelatin silver print, printed late 1940s to early 1960s

When Kertész arrived in Paris in the fall of 1925, he had little money, few friends, and did not speak French. Within the span of three years, he had become fully integrated into avant-garde artistic circles, established a stellar reputation as a poetic and lyrical photographer, and exhibited his work widely in both group and solo exhibitions. In a review of a 1928 exhibition, a French critic lauded Kertész as a “prestigious creator...whose metaphors are humble objects, the skies, the trees, and the rooftops of Paris. André Kertész attempts to reveal the object, to translate it with maximum intensity.”

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2019.13



Ferenc Berko

American, born Hungary, 1916–2000

Mannequins, Thieves Bazaar, Bombay, 1938–47

Gelatin silver print

As a Hungarian-born Jew displaced by World War I, Berko lived in many places during the 1930s, including Paris, London, Barcelona, and Mumbai (Bombay), where he eventually served in the British army and gained British citizenship. Though he was a protégé of Moholy-Nagy, while in Paris Berko was also influenced by Henri Cartier-Bresson, the photographer who coined the term “the decisive moment.” Like Cartier-Bresson, Berko embraced photography’s capacity to capture the surreal moments of everyday life, such as this uncanny view of mannequin legs shot from below.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund, 2015.232



László Moholy-Nagy
American, born Hungary, 1895–1946

Eiffel Tower, Paris, 1925
Gelatin silver print

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Dudley P. Allen Fund,
1997.144



Lucien Aigner (Aigner László)

American, born Hungary, 1901–1999

A bit of exercise to get used to the masks (from Paris Protects its inhabitants), 1934

Gelatin silver print

Like many young Hungarian boys, Lucien Aigner received a camera (a box Kodak Brownie) as a child, which he used to make pictures of his family. After earning a law degree in 1924, Aigner began working as a reporter for one of Budapest's most popular daily papers, *Az Est*, and began using his own photographs to illustrate his stories. In 1927, Aigner assumed the role of bureau chief in the Paris office. He also worked as a freelance photographer for many leading publications of the day, including *Vu*, *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung*, *London General Press*, *Picture Post* (London), and *LIFE*. At once humorous and chilling, this picture was part of Aigner's series exploring how Parisians were preparing for possible gas attacks.

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, Purchased as the gift of Katherine D. and Stephen C. Sherrill (PA 1971, and P 2005, 2007, 2010), 2015.11.86



Ylla (Camilla Koffler)

American, born Austria, 1911–1955

Adventures of a Goose, 1930s

Gelatin silver print

In the days before artists and performers were known by a single name, Camilla Koffler adopted the pseudonym Ylla (pronounced “Eela”). Born in Vienna to Hungarian parents, Ylla went to boarding school in Budapest and later studied art in Belgrade (now the capital of Serbia) before moving to Paris in 1931. To support herself, she found work as a photo retoucher for Ergy Landau, a Hungarian photographer who ran a successful portrait studio in Paris. Within a year, Ylla began specializing in photographing animals, a childhood passion that she turned into a profession, and soon opened her own studio dedicated to animal photography, catering to pet owners, journalists, and advertisers alike. This charming picture of two French police officers looking askance at an errant goose is accompanied by a caption on the back that reads, “I have done nothing against the law, officers, so I can walk proudly in front of you.”

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Virginia Museum Art Purchase Fund, 2021.597



Anna Barna

American, born Hungary, 1901–1963

Untitled, 1930–39

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels
Memorial Fund, 2018.176



Anna Barna

American, born Hungary, 1901–1963

Untitled, 1930–39

Gelatin silver print

Little is known about the career of Anna Barna, whose work first came to light in 1983, when a cache of her photographs was discovered in the belongings of fellow Hungarian photographer André Kertész. Born in Hungary in 1901, Barna lived and worked in Paris in the 1930s before permanently settling in New York in 1946. During her time in Paris, she photographed scenes of daily life (especially flea markets), plant studies, and close-up views of discarded dolls. The latter works align her with Surrealist artists who photographed dolls and doll fragments, frequently with an undertone of sexual deviancy. In contrast, the uncanny sensibility of Barna's dolls emerges from the way she photographed them closely and in high-keyed detail, as if they were sentient beings with their own inner lives.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2018.175

Anna Barna

American, born Hungary, 1901–1963

Untitled, Paris, ca. 1930s

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund and Aldine S. Hartman Endowment Fund, 2022.33

In the 1920s, two inventions shaped the development of modern photojournalism: the small 35mm camera, which allowed photographers to capture images quickly and spontaneously, and the rise of the illustrated press. Many important Hungarian American photographers capitalized on these developments to transform photojournalism in the 20th century. Martin Munkácsi created sensational coverage of sporting events, ranging from car races to soccer matches. His innovative approach to capturing images on the fly established a standard for sports photography that endures to this day. André Kertész, who began his career as a photojournalist documenting daily life on the front lines of World War I, was another powerful force shaping modern photojournalism, bringing emotion, feeling, and humor to his stories. Indeed, fellow Hungarian Cornell Capa, a superb photojournalist in his own right, credited Kertész as “having given birth to the two principal branches of modern photography: “candid” photography with a small camera, and subjective reportage.”

Robert Capa is renowned as the “greatest war photographer of all time.” Known for his iconic images of the Omaha Beach landings on D-Day, Capa earned his reputation by consistently being in the midst of the action across various wars and global conflicts. He once famously said: “If your pictures aren’t good enough, you aren’t close enough.” Inspired by Capa, photographers

like László Kondor captured devastating conflicts during the Vietnam War. Other photojournalists, such as Sylvia Plachy—deeply influenced by the work of Kertész—have sensitively documented the spirit and people of New York and other places for many decades.



Martin Munkácsi (Mermelstein Márton)
American, born Hungary, 1896–1963

Seville, Spain, 1930
Gelatin silver print

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Fund of the '80s
purchase



Robert Capa (Freidmann Endre Ernő)

American, born Hungary, 1913–1954

Trotsky, Copenhagen, 1932

Gelatin silver print

Forced into exile for protesting against the increasingly authoritarian regime in Hungary, Robert Capa moved to Berlin in 1931 and studied photojournalism. Dephot, a German photo agency founded by the left-leaning editor Simon Guttman, assigned Capa his first mission as a photographer, covering Leon Trotsky's conference on the history of the Russian Revolution in Copenhagen. Made two years before the photographer invented his pseudonym "Robert Capa," this picture showing an exiled Russian political theorist lecturing to Danish students was the photographer's first published work.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Cornell Capa



Robert Capa (Freidmann Endre Ernő)

American, born Hungary, Hungarian, 1913–1954

Four-man Jug Band, Hot Springs, Arizona, 1940

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 2014.169



Martin Munkácsi (Mermelstein Márton)
American, born Hungary, 1896–1963

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1932
Gelatin silver print

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation Gift, through Joyce and Robert Menschel, 1986 (1986.1016)



Martin Munkácsi (Mermelstein Márton)

American, born Hungary, 1896–1963

Motorcyclist, Budapest, 1928

Gelatin silver print

Munkácsi was famous for his ability to capture speed and motion, which he understood as fundamental to good photojournalism. His first published photograph, this view of a motorcyclist splashing through water exemplifies his approach: “To see within a thousandth of a second the things that indifferent people blindly pass by—this is the theory of photo reportage. And the things we see within this thousandth of a second, we should then photograph during the next thousandth of a second—this is the practical side of photo reportage.”

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Museum purchase funded by James Edward Maloney in honor of Anne Wilkes Tucker, The Manfred Heiting Collection



Martin Munkácsi (Mermelstein Márton)

American, born Hungary, 1896–1963

Liberia, 1931

Gelatin silver print

Munkácsi captured this exuberant scene of three boys running into the surf while on assignment in Africa for the German magazine *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* in 1931. Among the photographer's most famous works, *Liberia* exerted a profound effect on the legendary photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, who in 1977 lauded the picture as “the very photograph which was for me the spark that set fire to fireworks [...] and suddenly made me realize that photography could reach eternity through the moment. There is in that image such intensity, spontaneity, such a joy of life, such a prodigy, that I am still dazzled by it even today.”

T Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ford Motor Company Collection, Gift of Ford Motor Company and John C. Waddell, 1987 (1987.1100.35)



Marion Palfi

American, born Germany, 1907–1978

The Shadow of the Capitol, 1946–49

Gelatin silver print, printed later

A social documentary photographer, Marion Palfi recorded poverty, racism, and social injustices in America. Born in Berlin to a Hungarian father and Polish mother, Palfi studied dance and acted in German films in the 1920s before learning photography. She opened a portrait studio in Berlin but soon moved to Amsterdam in the mid-1930s to escape Nazism. In 1940, she married an American soldier and moved to New York, where she was granted a fellowship to document racial discrimination in the United States. Palfi always considered herself ethnically Hungarian and is therefore an important figure in this survey.

Black Dog Collection

Marion Palfi

American, born Germany, 1907–1978

Georgia, 1949

Gelatin silver print

Center for Creative Photography, Marion Palfi Archive, Gift of the Menninger Foundation and Martin Magner



Marion Palfi

American, born Germany, 1907–1978

Wife of the Lynch Victim, Irwinton, Georgia, 1949

Gelatin silver print, printed later

In 1949, Palfi made this moving portrait of the widow of Caleb Hill, the first reported lynching victim that year. The forlorn woman sits in a sea of harsh light, her gaze away from the camera, contemplating the anguish and injustice of her circumstances. Palfi made this photograph as part of her unpublished book, *There is No More Time: An American Tragedy*, a study of racism and White supremacy in the American South that was rejected by publishers for being too controversial. Palfi's friend, the poet Langston Hughes, commented that her work "brings us face to face with the hidden realities that its surface only causes us to begin to explore."

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 73.68.5



Marion Palfi

American, born Germany, 1907–1978

Charlottesville, Virginia, 1951

Gelatin silver print

Center for Creative Photography, Marion Palfi Archive, Gift of the Menninger Foundation and Martin Magner



Marion Palfi

American, born Germany, 1907–1978

Miami, 1946–49

Gelatin silver print

Center for Creative Photography, Marion Palfi Archive, Gift of the Menninger Foundation and Martin Magner



Robert Capa (Freidmann Endre Ernő)

American, born Hungary, 1913–1954

Leipzig, Germany, April 18, 1945

Gelatin silver print

On April 18, 1945, Capa entered Leipzig with the US Army to document the final days of the war. He ascended to the top floor of a building overlooking the city center in order, as he later put it, “to see if the last picture of crouching and advancing infantrymen could be the last picture of the war for my camera.” A few minutes after Capa entered the apartment, a young American soldier manning a machine gun on the balcony, Raymond J. Bowman, was hit by a sniper’s bullet, collapsed, and died. Capa made several photographs of this devastating scene, some of which were published in LIFE’s “Victory” issue on May 14, where they emblemized the heavy costs of the war.

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles



Robert Capa (Freidmann Endre Ernő)

American, born Hungary, 1913–1954

The First American Soldiers Enter the Town, Triona, Sicily, August 1943

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund and Aldine S. Hartman Endowment Fund, 2022.34



Robert Capa (Freidmann Endre Ernö)
American, born Hungary, 1913–1954

Battle of Rio Segre, November 7, 1938, 1938
Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams
Fund, 2014.168



Robert Capa (Freidmann Endre Ernő)

American, born Hungary, 1913–1954

Near Cerro Muriano (Cordoba front), ca. September 5, 1936

Gelatin silver print, printed later

This photograph, which is often known as “The Falling Soldier,” is perhaps the most famous war photograph of all time. Made at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, Capa captured the moment a bullet tore through a Republican loyalist soldier, causing him to crumple toward the earth. It’s likely that the militiamen were staging a combat scene for Capa and his companion Gerda Taro when they were ambushed. The photograph was first published in the French magazine *Vu* on September 23, 1936, and appeared in *LIFE* the following July. Starting in the 1970s, some scholars began to question whether the picture was fully staged, a debate that continues to this day.

Courtesy of the George Eastman Museum, Gift of Magnum Photos, Inc.

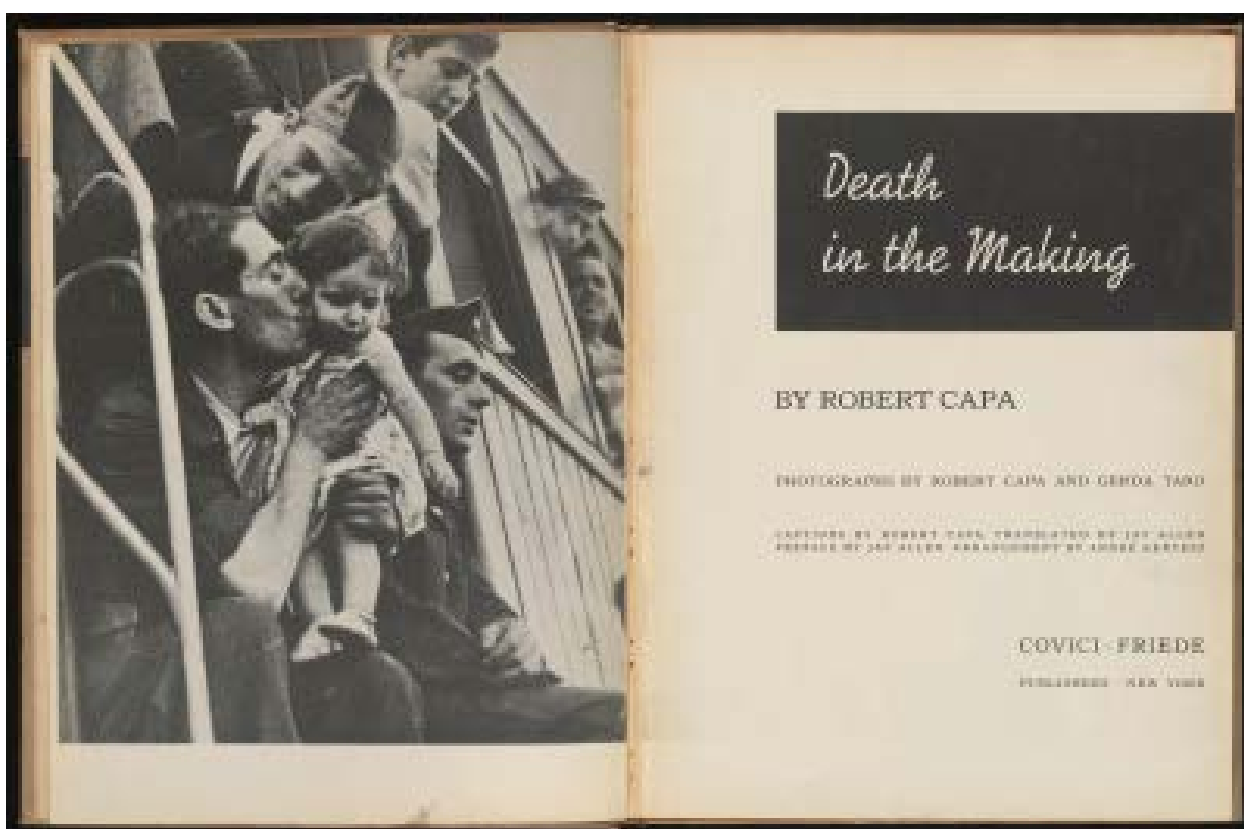
Robert Capa (Freidmann Endre Ernő)

American, born Hungary, 1913–1954

Death in the Making, 1938

Book

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Margaret R. and Robert M. Freeman Library, Rare Book Collection, Gift of Barry Singer, 30804006644024





Robert Capa (Freidmann Endre Ernő)

American, born Hungary, 1913–1954

D-Day, Omaha Beach, Normandy, France, June 6, 1944

Gelatin silver print, printed later

Robert Capa's photographs captured on D-Day, June 6, 1944, are among the most iconic images of World War II. Landing with the first wave of Allied soldiers on Omaha Beach, Capa braved intense enemy fire to document the invasion. Despite technical issues that destroyed most of his film, the eleven blurred and grainy pictures that survived vividly convey the chaos, fear, and heroism of that historic day. Capa later reminisced about this harrowing event: "My beautiful France looked sordid and uninviting, and a German machine gun, spitting bullets around the barge, fully spoiled my return."

Courtesy of the George Eastman Museum, Gift of The Associated Press



László Kondor

American, born Hungary, 1940

Leading in the Helicopter, Vietnam, 1970

Gelatin silver print, printed 1995

During the Vietnam War, László Kondor continued in the footsteps of his fellow Hungarian émigré Robert Capa, when, as a member of the United States Army, he captured memorable images of the war in Southeast Asia. Where Capa's images of the Spanish Civil War and D-Day served as poignant reminders of the heroism and sacrifice of armed conflict, Kondor's photographs are indelible reminders of a deeply unpopular war that divided the United States.

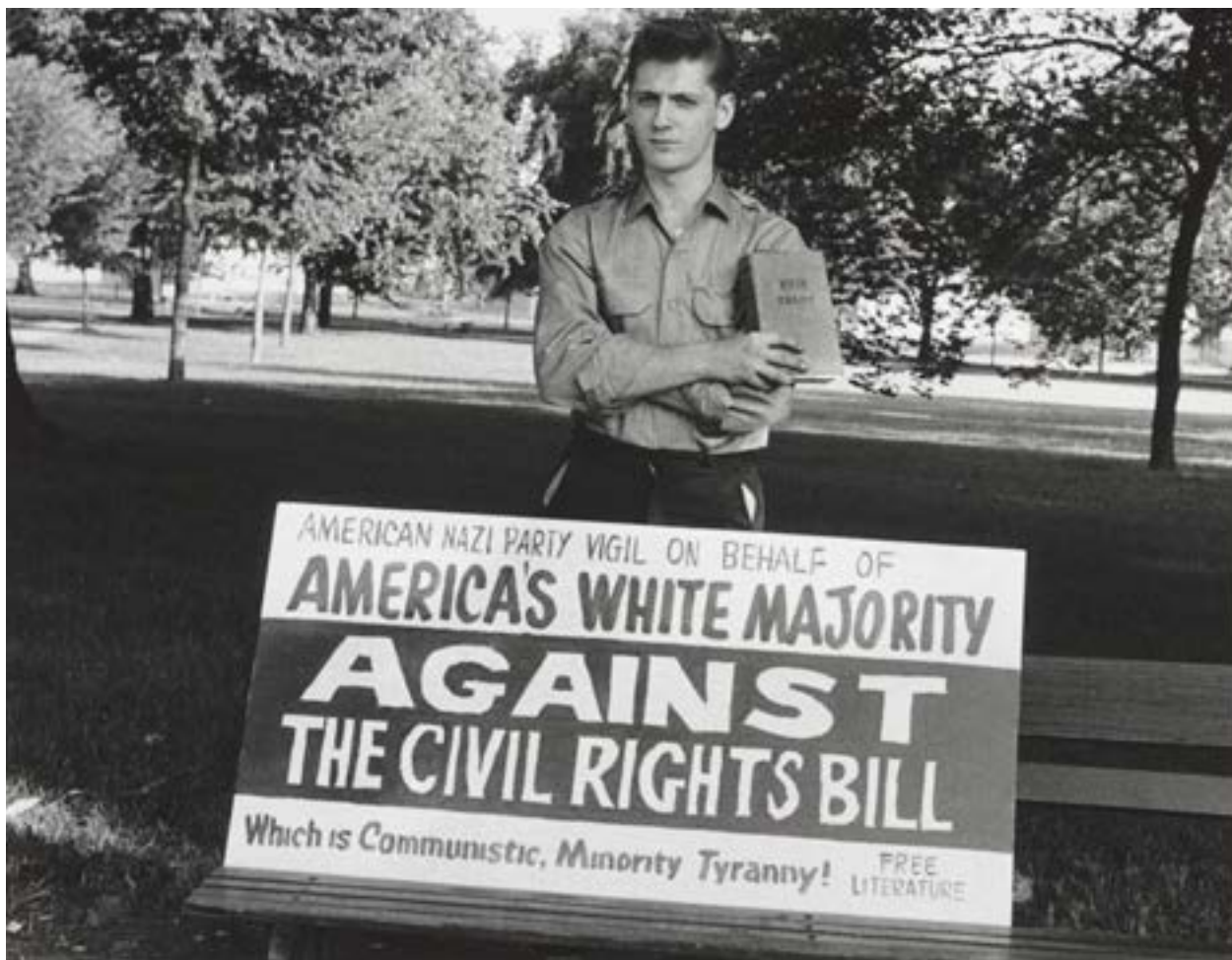
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2018.211



Cornell Capa (Freidmann Kornell)
American, born Hungary, 1918–2008

Talmudic Scholars, 1955
Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, John Barton Payne Fund, 65.31.7



Marion Palfi

American, born Germany, 1907–1978

Washington, DC, Against the Civil Rights Bill, 1964

Gelatin silver print

Palfi was the first photographer to arrive in Greenwood, Mississippi, at the start of the town's civil rights protests in 1963. She continued to work as a civil rights photographer, capturing the March on Washington in 1963 as well as counter-protestors who resisted civil rights legislation, including the man shown here.

Center for Creative Photography, Marion Palfi Archive, Gift of the Menninger Foundation and Martin Magner



László Kondor
American, born Hungary, 1940

**Allen Ginsberg at Peace, Love Protest,
Grant Park, Chicago, 1968**

Gelatin silver print, printed 1997

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels
Memorial Fund, 2021.81



Cornell Capa (Freidmann Kornell)
American, born Hungary, 1918–2008

President John F. Kennedy, Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson and David E. Bell, March 2, 1961

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Eric and Jeanette Lipman Fund,
2021.164



Cornell Capa (Freidmann Kornell)

American, born Hungary, 1918–2008

JFK Campaigning, 1960

Gelatin silver print, printed later

Born Freidmann Kornell, Cornell Capa adopted the fictional surname devised by his older brother Robert. Though he initially studied medicine in Budapest, in 1936 the younger Capa followed his brother to Paris, where he learned the photography trade. A year later, he moved to New York and began working as a journalist for the *Picture Post*, *LIFE*, and other magazines. He later joined Magnum, the photography cooperative founded by his brother. Following Robert Capa's death in 1954, Cornell began to organize his brother's archive; this ultimately led him to establish the International Center for Photography in 1974, a photography archive, school, and museum in New York.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2017.402



László Kondor

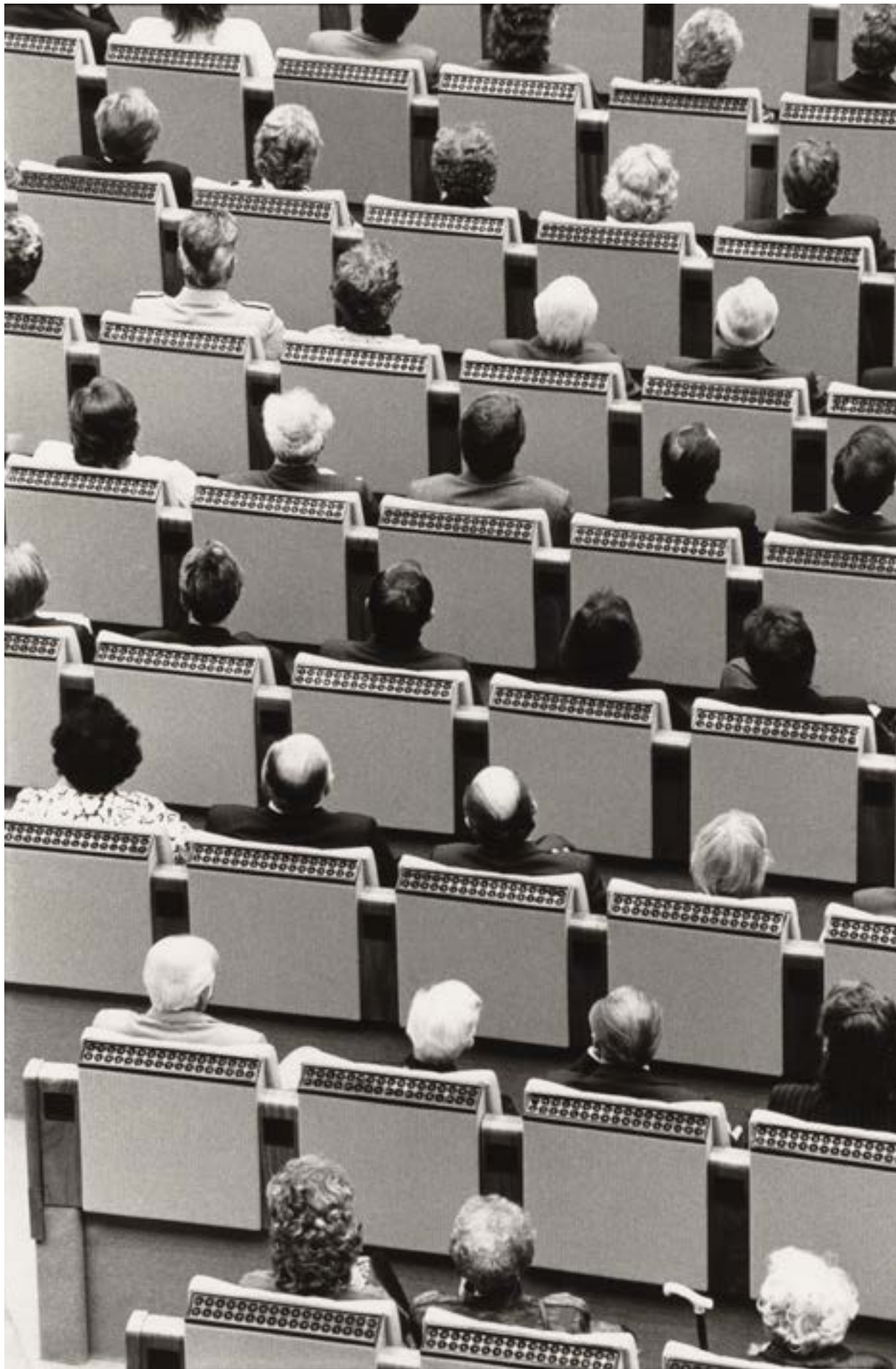
American, born Hungary, 1940

Boys with U.S. Flag, Midway Park, Chicago, 1968

Gelatin silver print, printed 1995

Made during the social and political tumult of 1968, László Kondor's view of a young Black child waving an American flag speaks to the dissonance between the child's enthusiastic patriotism and lack of freedom and equality experienced by so many African Americans. Kondor was especially attuned to those who struggled, perhaps due to his own childhood. Born during World War II, Kondor fled Hungary for Austria after the short-lived revolution of 1956. He taught himself photography while living in a refugee camp. In 1961, he moved to Chicago and after finishing university enlisted in the United States Army where, as staff photographer, he captured powerful documents of the Vietnam War. After the war, Kondor served as the photographer for Chicago mayor Richard D. Daley before opening a photography studio specializing in advertising, portraiture, and fashion photography.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund, 2021.⁸³



Sylvia Plachy

American, born Hungary, 1943

Communist Party Congress, East Berlin, 1989

Gelatin silver print

Plachy made this photograph in early October 1989 at the Palace of the Republic in East Berlin during the fortieth (and final) anniversary of the German Democratic Republic, commonly known as East Germany. Within days, the Berlin Wall fell and the Iron Curtain—a term that signifies the efforts by the Soviet Union to prevent open contact with the West—lifted, leading to the reunification of Germany and the transition to a democratic government in Hungary.

Joy of Giving Something, Inc.



Sylvia Plachy

American, born Hungary, 1943

Transitional Hungarian flag, Budapest, 1989

Gelatin silver print

After the second world war, Hungary was taken over by a Soviet-allied government and became part of the Eastern Bloc. The short-lived Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was a failed attempt to overthrow Soviet influence. Hungary remained under Communist rule until 1989, when it peacefully transitioned to a democratic system.

Courtesy of the George Eastman Museum, Purchase with funds from the Ford Motor Company Fund



Sylvia Plachy

American, born Hungary, 1943

**View from my window (when I was growing up),
Budapest, 1972**

Gelatin silver print

Born in Budapest, Sylvia Plachy and her family escaped the turbulent, short-lived revolution against Soviet oppression in 1956 by moving first to Austria before settling in the United States. While in Austria, the teenage Plachy was given a box camera and began making pictures. Like so many Hungarians who had to start over in new places, she used photography to communicate and integrate into her new life: "It helped me to say hello and to talk to people, to meet people I was curious about, or at least to take a picture of them. It was a way of communicating with the world." Plachy has served as staff photographer for the *Village Voice* and has published her photographs widely in *Vogue*, the *New Yorker*, *Art Forum*, *Newsweek*, the *New York Times Magazine*, and elsewhere.

Courtesy of the artist



Sylvia Plachy

American, born Hungary, 1943

Fractured Light, Budapest, 1976

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist



Sylvia Plachy
American, born Hungary, 1943

Wiseguy, 1983
Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

No American city is more closely associated with the massive influx of Hungarians in the 20th century than New York. Centered around 2nd Avenue and 80th Street in Manhattan, “Little Hungary” served as the anchor for new immigrants and offered multiple gathering spots, including schools, churches, shops, and restaurants, for the new Americans from Hungary. As the capital of both the publishing and art industries, New York offered especially robust opportunities for photographers, with magazines such as *Life*, *Fortune*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, and *Vogue* commissioning talented photographers to produce everything from in-depth documentaries to unconventional fashion and advertising shoots. Meanwhile, institutions like the Museum of Modern Art began to celebrate photography as an art form.

Photography also offered to these émigrés a powerful means by which to explore and understand the city and their place in it. Some captured the dynamism and massive scale of New York’s architecture, while others used their cameras to examine the social, economic, and racial discrepancies they witnessed. Professional success was not always guaranteed. For example, the talented photographer John Albok labored as a tailor for decades, using the camera only in his spare time. Even Kertész, who had been celebrated as a leading artist in Paris, languished as a staff photographer for *House & Garden* for many years before his talent was rediscovered in the 1960s. Yet for all its challenges, the

city remained a beacon for new émigrés, including a new generation of Hungarian artists who left the repressive regime at home to embrace the vibrant counterculture of New York in the 1950s and ’60s.



John Albok (Albók János)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1982

City Fruit Garden, 1934
Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow
Endowment, 2018.338



John Albok (Albók János)

American, born Hungary, 1894–1982

Untitled, 1933

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 2015.231



John Albok (Albók János)

American, born Hungary, 1894–1982

Fifth Ave., NYC, Depression, Forsake, 1933

Gelatin silver print

As a boy, John Albok learned photography and longed to be an artist, but poverty forced him to labor in his father's tailoring workshop. In 1921, he immigrated to New York, where he used his camera to record urban life in the city during the Great Depression, eventually making an estimated sixty thousand pictures (most were never developed). Despite early artistic successes, including a 1938 solo exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York, Albok made his living operating a tailor's shop on Manhattan's East Side for more than sixty years. His kinship with the struggles of the working class, informed by the extreme poverty of his own childhood, is felt across all his pictures, including this view of a man whose misery and weariness is palpable even though we cannot see his face.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2018.339



Nickolas Muray (Mandl Miklós)

American, born Hungary, 1892–1965

Dancers, 1921

Gelatin silver print

Born in Szeged, Hungary, in 1892, Nickolas Muray grew up in Budapest, where he studied photography and photoengraving, a technology that enables a photograph to be reproduced in ink from a printing plate. He pursued extensive training in Berlin in color photoengraving before immigrating to New York in 1913, where he initially found work as a color printer. By 1920, Muray had opened his own photography studio in Greenwich Village and soon developed a strong following for his portraits of artists, dancers, performers, and celebrities. Muray was also a champion fencer; he competed for the United States at the 1928 and 1932 Summer Olympics and won several national championships in fencing.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2017.401



André de Dienes (Ikafalvi-Dienes Andor György)
American, born Hungary, 1913–1985

Indians Coming from Church, Taos, ca. 1940s
Gelatin silver print

While traveling through the southwestern United States to photograph Native American communities on Hopi, Apache, and Navajo reservations, de Dienes visited Taos Pueblo, a Pueblo Indian settlement in Taos, New Mexico. There, he took this photograph of women leaving San Geronimo de Taos, the first Catholic church in Taos Pueblo, which had been built around 1620.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Fred R. Bell, 85.13



Nickolas Muray (Mandl Miklós)
American, born Hungary, 1892–1965

Day of the Dead, Mexico, ca. 1940
Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Eric and Jeanette Lipman Fund,
2021.162



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)

American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Lost Cloud, 1937

Gelatin silver print

Lured by the promise of a lucrative contract for fashion work and unsettled by rising antisemitism in Europe, Kertész and his wife Elizabeth left Paris for New York in 1936. Soon after their arrival the contract fell through, and Kertész struggled to find his footing. Despite his reputation as a leading European photographer, he was unable to secure meaningful work—*LIFE* rejected his photographs three times—or make connections with important editors, curators, and other artists. Made a year after his arrival in New York, this photograph of a lone cloud abutting the Empire State Building can be seen as a self-portrait of sorts. Kertész later recalled that when he saw the cloud he was “very touched” because it “did not know which way to go.”

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the artist



Arnold Eagle

American, born Hungary, 1909–1992

One Third of the Nation Lower East Side, ca. 1935

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 2014.170



Arnold Eagle

American, born Hungary, 1909–1992

Untitled (Boy at Window), 1935

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Paul Sack



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Fire Escape, New York, 1949
Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams
Fund, 2014.174



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Looking down on fire escapes and clotheslines, 1943
Gelatin silver print, printed ca. 1965

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow
Endowment, 2018.336



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Construction Worker, ca. 1950s
Gelatin silver print

Joy of Giving Something, Inc.

Arnold Eagle

American, born Hungary, 1909–1992

Under the Third Avenue EL, North of 27th St., New York, 1939

Gelatin silver print

In 1929, Arnold Eagle emigrated from Budapest to New York, escaping a country ravaged by war, inflation, and antisemitism. He found work as a photo retoucher and acquired his first camera. In 1936, Eagle helped to establish the Photo League, a left-leaning cooperative of photographers in New York who shared a strong commitment to documentary photography as an engine of both personal expression and social change. During the 1930s and '40s, Eagle produced extended documentary projects, including a series on the vanishing elevated subway trains and the communities around them. This photograph shows the view from under the Third Avenue EL, the last elevated train in New York. With its rushing, converging perspective and latticed pattern of light and shadow, it offers an almost cinematic rendering of pedestrian experience at a moment of transition and transformation in urban life.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Alex Nyerges and Kathryn Gray, 2021.872





John Albok (Albók János)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1982

Raining, 1938
Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams
Fund, 2015.229



John Albok (Albók János)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1982

Central Park, 1938, 1938
Gelatin silver print

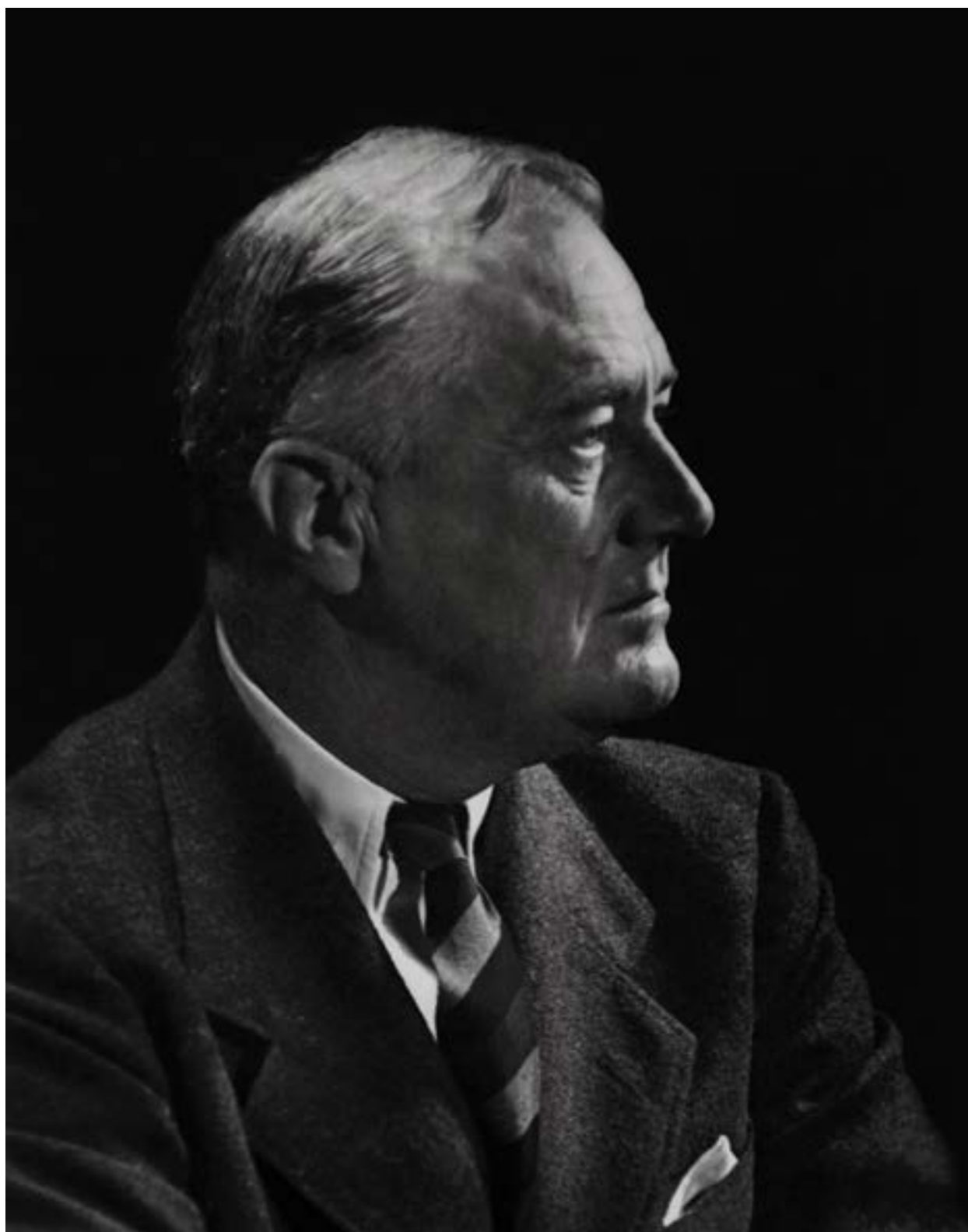
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams
Fund, 2015.23



John Albok (Albók János)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1982

Mischief Makers - July 4, Central Park, 1945
Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Missy and Burt Finger,
2017.214



Marcel Sternberger

American, born Hungary, 1899–1956

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, ca. 1939

Vintage silver gelatin print signed on recto

Born in Hungary in 1899, Marcel Sternberger moved to Paris, where he received a PhD in law from the Sorbonne and worked as a journalist. In 1934, he received a camera as a gift and began to explore photography, quickly establishing a practice as a portraitist in Europe. In 1938, he photographed US Ambassador Joseph Kennedy, who used Sternberger's portrait in a Christmas card he sent to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Because of this picture, Roosevelt invited Sternberger to Washington, D.C., to make the portrait that was ultimately used as the inspiration for FDR's image on the American dime—the first time a photographer's work was used to design a US coin. With the outbreak of the war, Sternberger stayed in the United States, eventually settling in New York, where he ran a successful portrait studio.

The Marcel Sternberger Collection, Curator Jacob Loewentheil,
Copyright Stephan Loewentheil



Marcel Sternberger

American, born Hungary, 1899–1956

Diego Rivera in Pose as Buddha, ca. 1952

Vintage silver gelatin print

A neighbor of the painter Diego Rivera in Mexico, Sternberger captures him here mimicking the pose of Buddha, with his eyes rolled back in his head. A strong proponent of psychological portraiture, Sternberger wrote: “The task of coordinating psychological understanding with aesthetical interpretation is tremendously challenging. ...You must concentrate all your carefully cultivated sensitivity, all your artistic experience to ‘feel’ your way into your subject’s character, decide rapidly which his best [physical] points are, and how to exploit them to greatest advantage.”

The Marcel Sternberger Collection, Curator Jacob Loewentheil,
Copyright Stephan Loewentheil



Lucien Aigner (Aigner László)

American, born Hungary, 1901–1999

Prison Guard Overseeing visitors (from Guests at Rikers Island Prison, New York), 1937

Gelatin silver print

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, Purchased as the gift of Katherine D. and Stephen C. Sherrill (PA 1971, and P 2005, 2007, 2010), 2015.11.14

Lucien Aigner (Aigner László)

American, born Hungary, 1901–1999

Bill Robinson at a Baseball Game in Harlem, 1936

Gelatin silver print

Born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1878, Bill “Bojangles” Robinson was among the first Black dancers to perform solo and toured extensively through Europe and the United States, eventually becoming the top-paid African American entertainer of the time. Famed for his agility and finesse, Robinson began performing in Harlem’s famed Cotton Club in the 1930s and was named both honorary mayor of Harlem and mascot of the New York Giants baseball team. Aigner’s view of the dapper dancer captures both his elegance and his tense alertness.

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, Purchased as the gift of Katherine D. and Stephen C. Sherrill (PA 1971, and P 2005, 2007, 2010), 2015.11.119





André de Dienes (Ikafalvi-Dienes Andor György)

American, born Hungary, 1913–1985

Sunday Morning, ca. 1950

Gelatin silver print

André de Dienes spent his childhood in various European cities, including Budapest, and moved to Paris to attend art school in 1933. He supported himself by working for a variety of newspapers and agencies. His big break came when de Dienes moved to New York in 1938 and began to make fashion photographs for magazines including *Esquire*, *Vogue*, and *LIFE*. Not wholly satisfied with editorial assignments, de Dienes also pursued many personal projects at this time, such as photographing communities in Harlem, where he made this sensitive portrait.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 2014.172



Anna Barna

American, born Hungary, 1901–1963

New York, Downtown, 1945–55

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow
Endowment, 2018.177



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Lexington Avenue at 44th Street, New York, 1937
Gelatin silver print, printed later

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Judy Haselton, 2018.472



Jolán Gross-Bettelheim
Hungarian, 1900–1972

**Untitled (Roof Top Composition with One Line of
laundry and Shadows), ca. 1950**

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow
Endowment, 2020.122



Jolán Gross-Bettelheim

Hungarian, 1900–1972

Untitled (Manhattan Rooftop), ca. 1938

Untitled (Manhattan Street Lamp), ca. 1938

Untitled (Tree with Bare Branches), ca. 1940

Untitled (Under the El, New York, NY), ca. 1940

Untitled [Buildings and Smokestack Angled Right],
ca. 1940

Untitled (Manhattan Fire Escape), ca. 1938

Gelatin silver prints

Better known as a printmaker and painter, Jolán Gross-Bettelheim was born in Budapest and pursued artistic education in Berlin and Paris. In 1925, she enrolled in the Cleveland School of Art before moving with her husband to New York, where she produced numerous prints and lithographs of urban subjects, including bridges, buildings, and factory views, often from veering angles. Her small but dynamic photographic studies of buildings and trees betray strong graphic qualities and may have served as inspiration for her printmaking. After the death of her husband, Gross-Bettelheim, who was a member of the Communist Party, returned to Hungary in 1956 and lived the remainder of her life in semi-seclusion.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2020.125, 2020.120, 2020.117, 2020.126, (and Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund), 2020.127, 2020.116



Balthazar Korab (Koráb Boldizár)

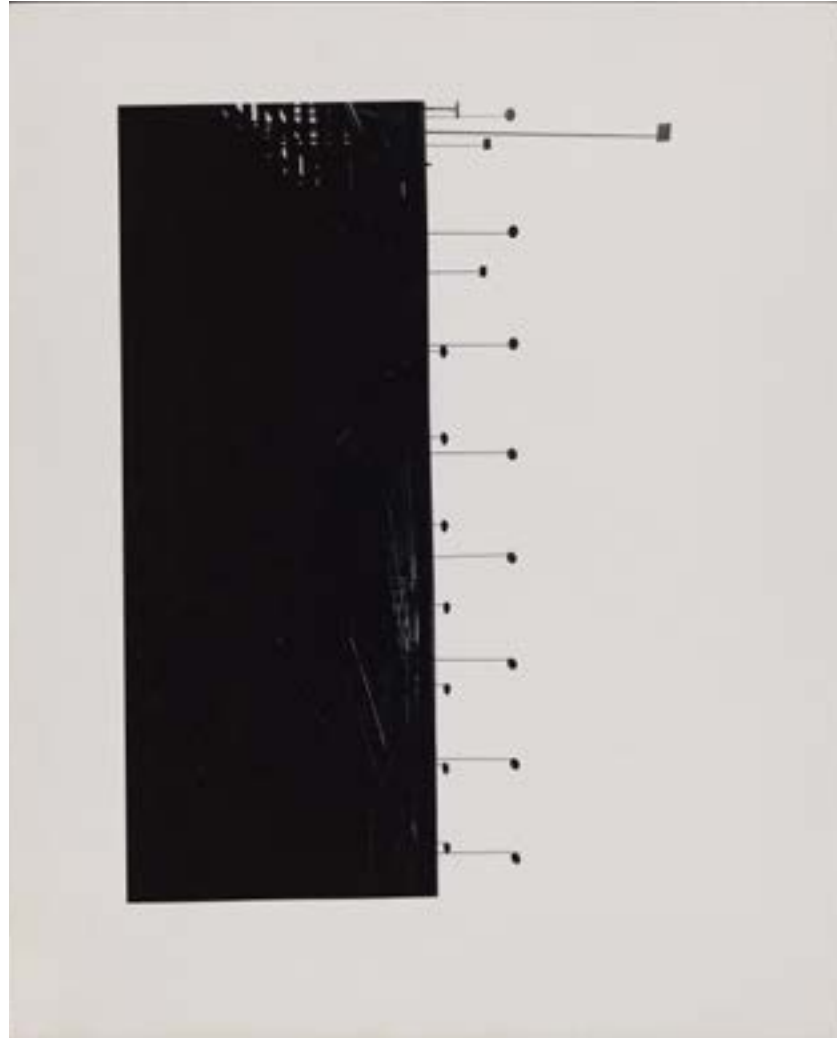
American, born Hungary, 1926–2013

TWA Study, I, 1957

Gelatin silver print

Balthazar Korab was one of the most renowned photographers of mid-century architecture. Born in Hungary in 1926, Korab studied art in Budapest but left after the Soviet occupation in 1946. He moved to Paris to study architecture and worked briefly as a draftsman for the architect Le Corbusier. In 1954, he moved to Michigan, where he worked as a designer for noted Modernist architect Eero Saarinen and began to focus on architectural photography. By 1958, Korab had established himself as a leader in this field, creating dazzling, streamlined views of architectural projects by Saarinen, Mies Van der Rohe, and Frank Lloyd Wright, among others. This abstract, luminous view of Saarinen's TWA Flight Center at New York's JFK Airport beautifully captures the dynamism and fluidity of Saarinen's modern masterpiece.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Aldine S. Hartman Endowment Fund, 2013.26



Ferenc Berko

American, born Hungary, 1916–2000

Billboard Lights, New York, 1950

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Eric and Jeanette Lipman Fund,
2016.605



Ferenc Berko

American, born Hungary, 1916–2000

Tram Lines and Wires, NY, ca. 1949

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. Wilkins C. Williams
Fund, 2014.171



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Williamsburg, Virginia, 1951
Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Aldine S. Hartman Endowment
Fund, 2013.28



Paula Wright (Weisz Paula)
American, born Hungary, 1897–2001

Nature Fantasy, 1960
Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels
Memorial Fund, 2020.131



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Martinique, 1972, printed 1970
Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow
Endowment, 2018.206



Sylvia Plachy
American, born Hungary, 1943

Suzanne Szasz, 1995
Digital print

Courtesy of the artist



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)

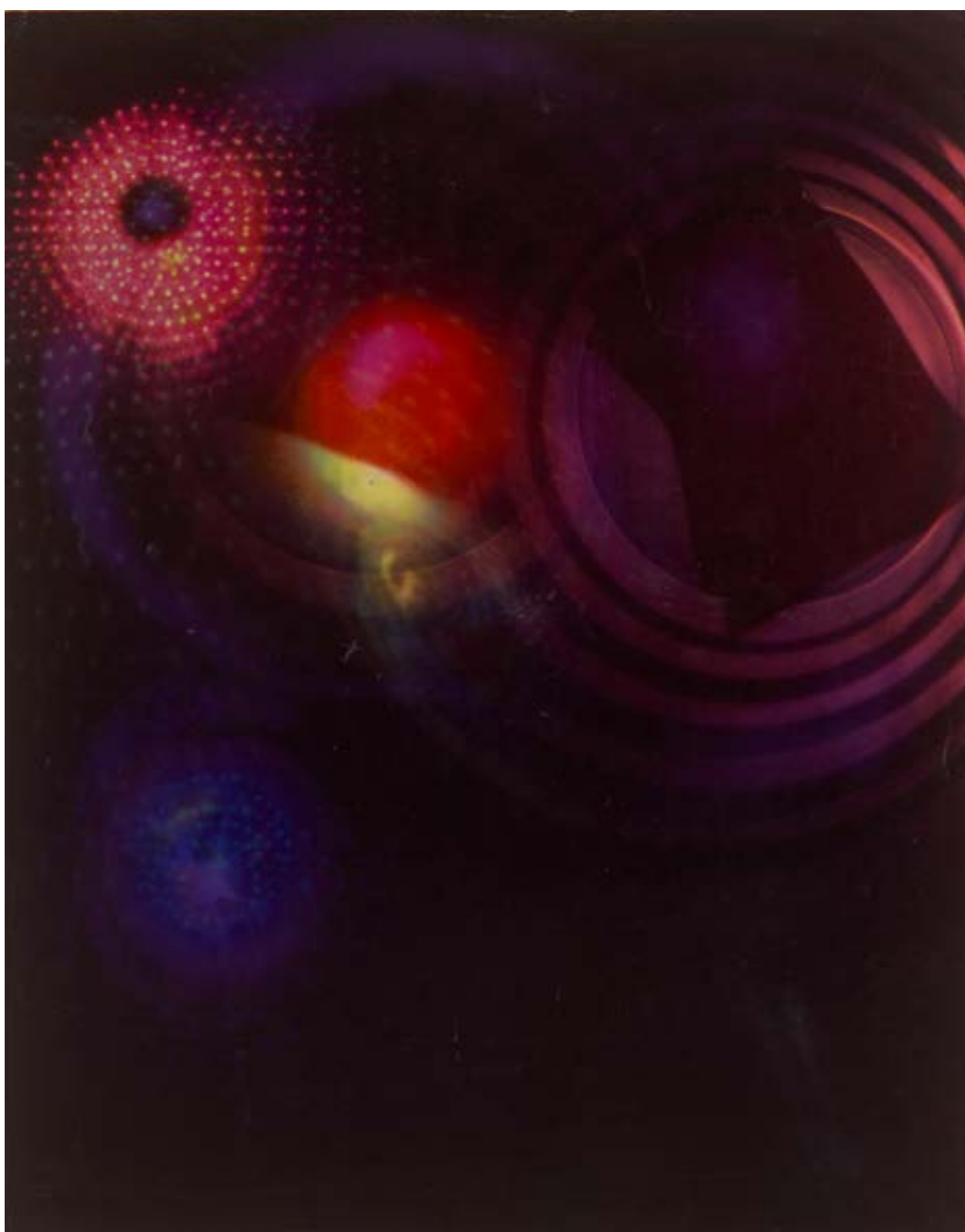
American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

January, 1980, 1980

Cibachrome, Polaroid

Several years after the death of his wife Elizabeth in 1977, Kertész was given a Polaroid SX-70 camera that produced small, square color prints. Although he had essentially stopped photographing some years before, he was delighted with the simplicity and portability of this instant camera and began making luminous views from his window overlooking New York's Washington Square Park. He also photographed small objects—often made of glass—on his windowsill. Experimenting with these intimate and personal still lifes offered a creative and emotional outlet for Kertész, who selected his favorite Polaroids to reprint as Cibachrome prints.

Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, VA, Museum purchase, 82.42



Nicholas Ház

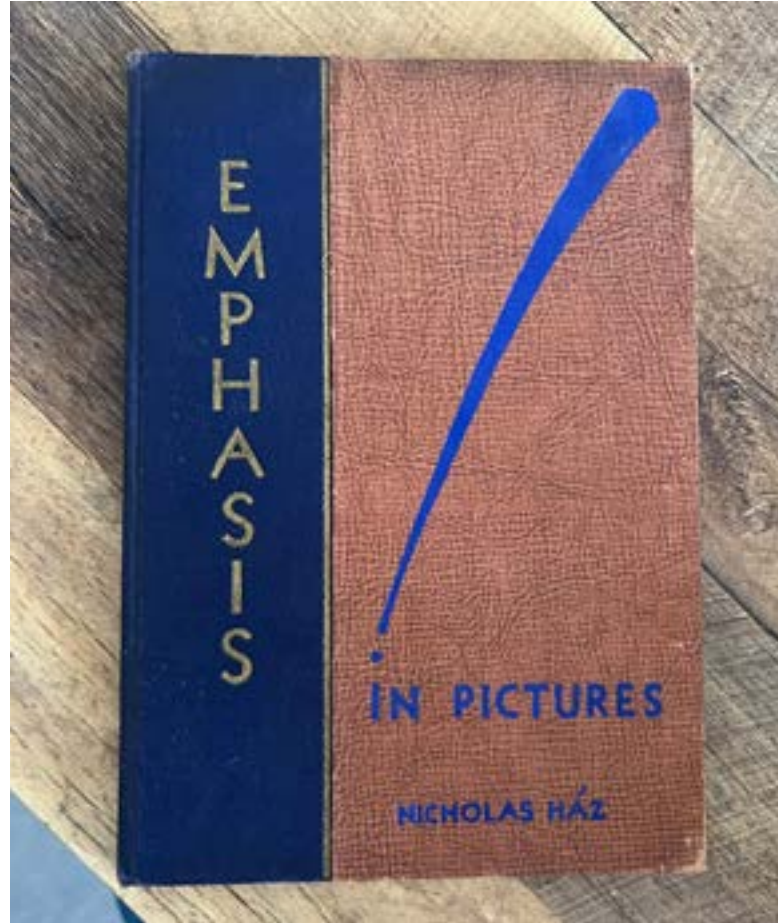
American, born Hungary, 1883–1953

Color abstraction, ca. 1948

Dye imbibition print

Trained as a painter and graphic designer in Hungary, Nicholas Ház moved to New York in 1913 and eventually found work as a studio assistant and retoucher for fellow Hungarian émigré Nickolas Muray. By the mid-1920s, Ház had established his own studio and later a photography school, where he lectured regularly on the subject. In the 1930s, when many painters but few photographers were exploring abstraction, Ház experimented with abstract color photography and in 1939 mounted a solo exhibition of this work at New York's Julian Levy Gallery, a bastion for avant-garde photography. He also published several important books on photographic technique and composition.

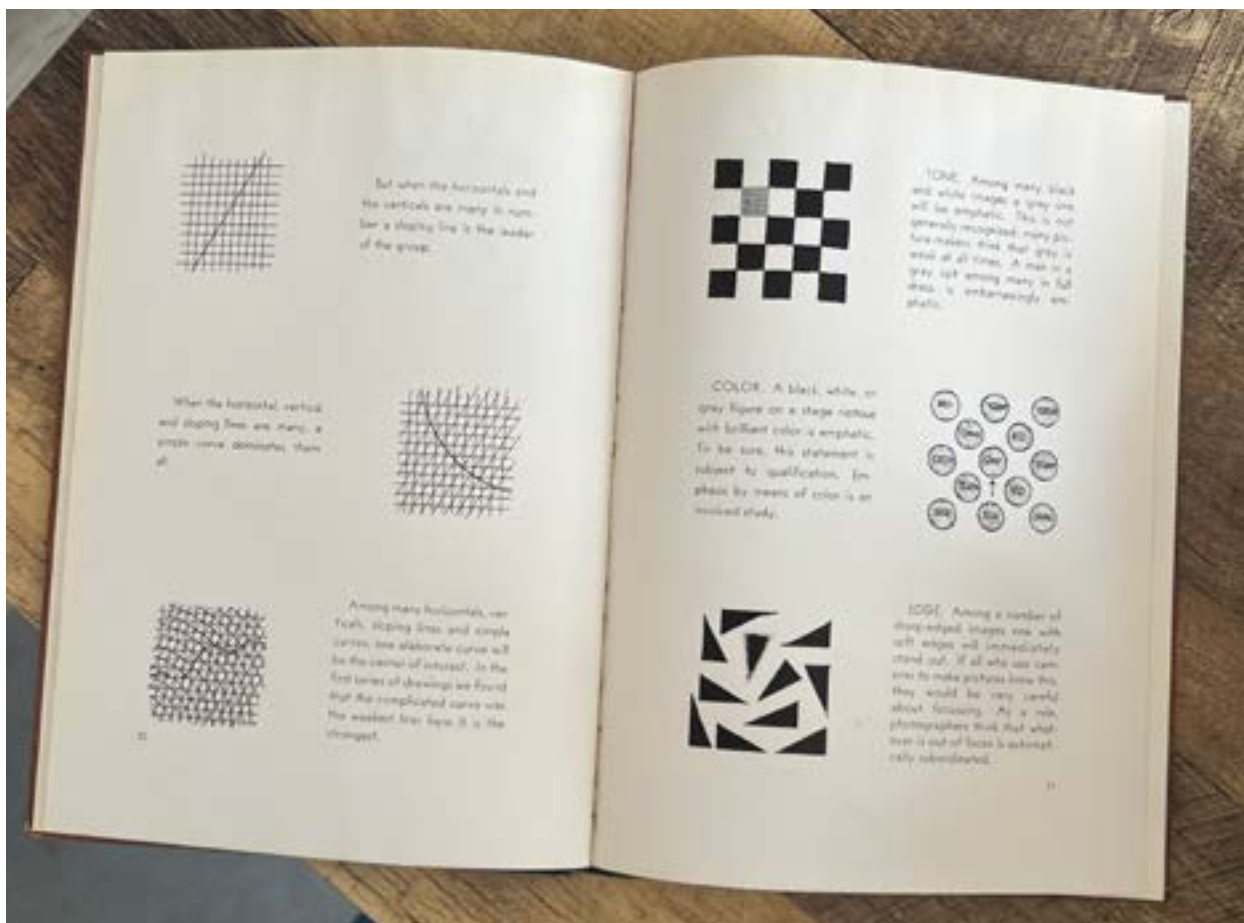
Courtesy of the George Eastman Museum, Gift of Eugene P. Wightman



Nicholas Ház
 American, born Hungary, 1883–1953

Emphasis in Pictures: A First Aid to Composition,
 1937
 Book

Courtesy of Michael Schewel



Nicholas Ház
 American, born Hungary, 1883–1953

Emphasis in Pictures: A First Aid to Composition,
 1937
 Book

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Margaret R. and Robert M.
 Freeman Library, Rare Book Collection, 30804000258979



Orshi Drozdik
American, born Hungary, 1946

Blink and Sigh, 1976–77
Diptych of six gelatin silver prints

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow
Endowment, 2023.18a-b





Orshi Drozdik

American, born Hungary, 1946

Blink and Sigh: Six Test Strips, No Face II., 1977

Gelatin silver vintage print, montage of 6 test strips

Courtesy of Einspach Fine Art & Photography and Courtesy of the Artist

Orshi Drozdik

American, born Hungary, 1946

Blink and Sigh, 1976–77

Collage of seven gelatin silver test strips

As an art student in mid-1970s Budapest, feminist artist Orshi Drozdik—who splits her time between Budapest and New York—began exploring performance-based practices, in part inspired by Váleria Dienes, an early 20th-century artist, theorist, and a founder of modern dance in Hungary. In *Blink and Sigh*, the artist performed small movements in front of the camera. She then composed and combined some of these self-portraits from test strips normally used for determining the tone of a photograph during development. Drozdik originally showed these works with her poem-manifesto, entitled “I Am a Photograph,” which interrogates the conflation of image and self in photographic portraiture and reflects upon the way that the gaze historically constructs feminine identity:

*I'm an image with light,
Of course in black and white,
Soaked in chemicals and on photo paper,
And I've developed the photograph.
I sigh and blink.
The camera took the picture,
The photo on the paper,
I blink and sigh.
I can't hear and can't watch you,
I sigh and blink,
I'm a photo.*

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2023.19





György Lőrinczy

American, born Hungary, 1935–1981

New York, New York, No. 29, 1968

Gelatin silver print

Lőrinczy reproduced ninety-six of his New York photographs—often grainy, highly contrasted, occasionally solarized, and slightly out-of-focus black-and-white photographs in his artist's book *New York, New York*, which was published in Budapest by Magyar Helikon in 1972. Hailed as stream-of-consciousness street photography, akin to the chance techniques employed by Beat poets, Lőrinczy's *New York, New York* brilliantly captured Manhattan's frenetic pulse during 1968, a crucial year in American history. Lőrinczy's book design was equally innovative: he printed photographs across two-page spreads without gutters or margins and interspersed some of the spreads with semitranslucent sheets printed with graphic designs.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2018.213



György Lőrinczy

American, born Hungary, 1935–1981

New York, New York, No. 3, 1968

Gelatin silver print

The Hungarian-born photographer, writer, and theorist György Lőrinczy first came to prominence in March 1965, when his work was included in a group exhibition in Budapest. Rejecting the social realism favored by the Hungarian Communist Party, Lőrinczy experimented with abstraction, often employing techniques such as elevated viewpoints, close cropping, and photomontage that had been developed by avant-garde photographers several decades earlier.

In 1968, Lőrinczy visited New York, where he made numerous photographs as part of a series celebrating Manhattan's vertiginous skyscrapers and raw, nervous energy. His work had clear affinities with contemporaries, such as William Klein, who also documented New York's manic exuberance and psychological tensions at this time. Lőrinczy's harsh, grainy prints, along with his embrace of photomontage, solarization, and other experimental techniques, were strikingly innovative. Lőrinczy gravitated to people who emanated confidence, individualism, and defiance, qualities he associated with the countercultural spirit of 1960s New York.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund and Aldine S. Hartman Endowment Fund, 2022.37



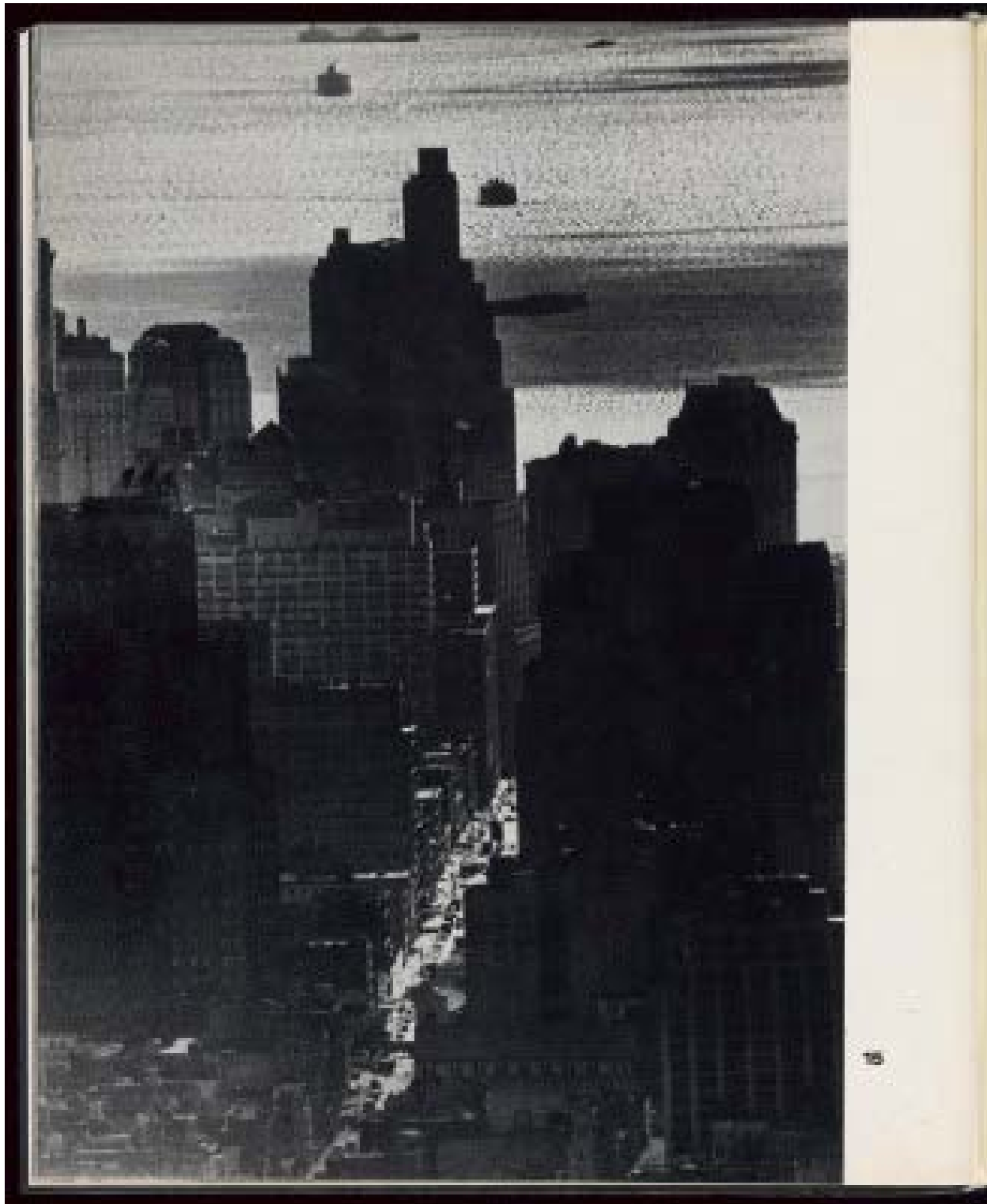
György Lőrinczy

American, born Hungary, 1935–1981

New York, New York, 1968

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels
Memorial Fund and Aldine S. Hartman Endowment Fund,
2022.38



György Lőrinczy

American, born Hungary, 1935–1981

New York, New York, 1972

Book

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Margaret R. and Robert M.
Freeman Library, Rare Book Collection, 30804006693807



György Lőrinczy

American, born Hungary, 1935–1981

New York, New York, No. 13, 1968

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Aldine S. Hartman
Endowment Fund



György Lőrinczy

American, born Hungary, 1935–1981

New York, New York, No. 76, 1968

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Aldine S. Hartman
Endowment Fund



György Lőrinczy
American, born Hungary, 1935–1981

Substances, ca. 1967
Ferrotyped gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow
Endowment, 2018.173



György Lőrinczy

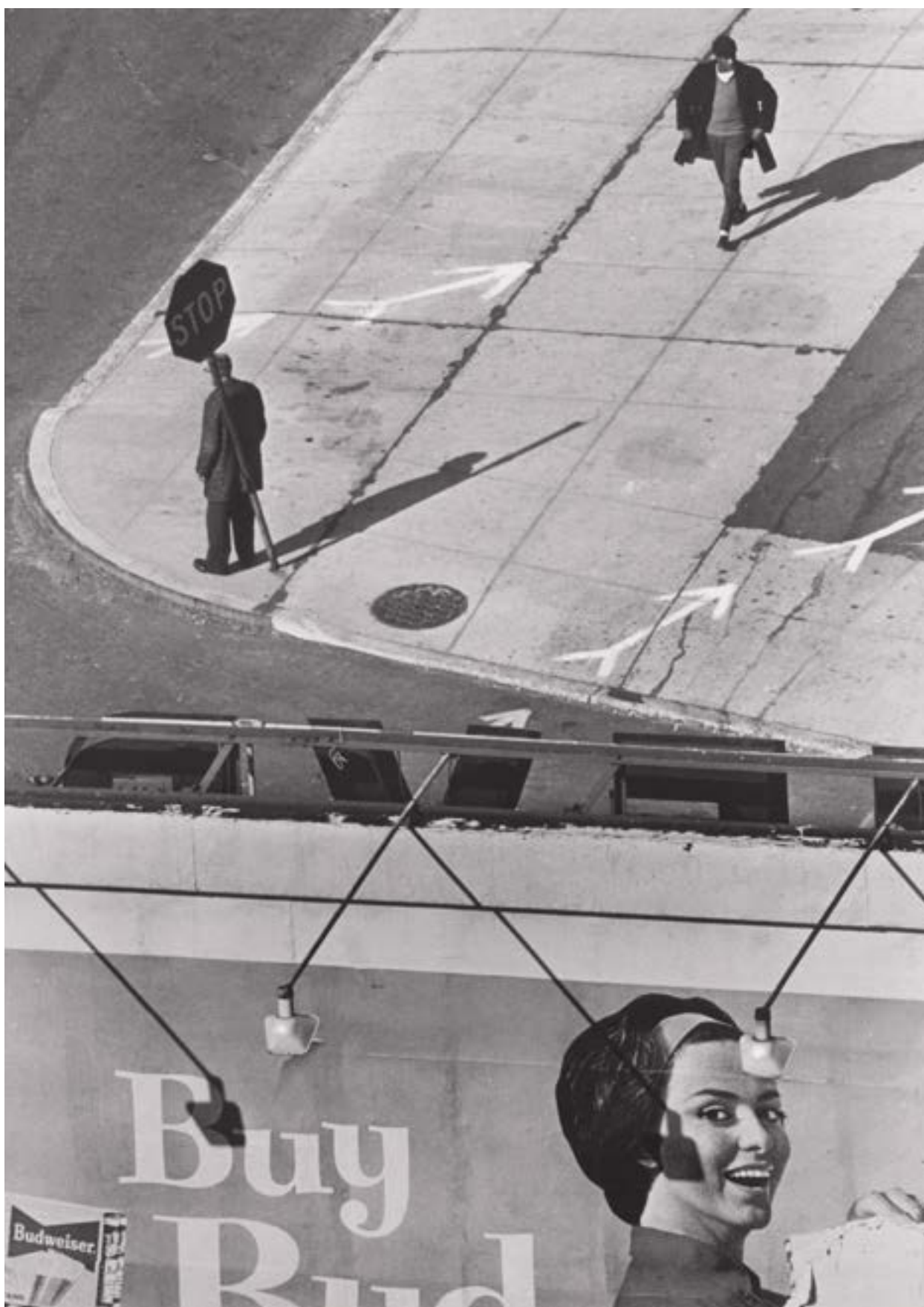
American, born Hungary, 1935–1981

Wall Street, New York, 1977–78

Gelatin silver print

In 1974, Lőrinczy moved to New York permanently and worked for several years as an editor and designer for *Art-Rite* magazine, a collaborative artist-run publication that featured such artists as Vito Acconci, Christo, Ed Ruscha, and Andy Warhol. Lőrinczy frequently made humorous photomontages, like the one here where the artist can be seen posing with an image of a US Fighter jet in a variety of places, including Wall Street and on the freeway in Los Angeles. Lőrinczy died in New York at the age of 46 in 1981, one month after a solo exhibition of his work opened to critical acclaim.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2020.129



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)
American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Billboard, 1962
Gelatin silver print

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the artist



Paula Wright (Weisz Paula)

American, born Hungary, 1897–2001

Trinity Church, ca. 1960

Gelatin silver print

Paula Wright studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest and trained as a painter. She also learned photography and worked in a prominent portrait studio in Budapest. In 1929, Wright moved to New York, where she opened a studio specializing in portraiture. She also explored the city with her camera, making both street photographs and experimental double exposures. Wright continued to work in her studio well into her nineties: “I’m 93 years old, I’m still here, belying my age, looking younger and still working.”

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund, 2020.132



Paula Wright (Weisz Paula)

American, born Hungary, 1897–2001

Central Park, New York, Winter Reflections, ca. 1960

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund, 2020.133



André Kertész (Kertész Andor)

American, born Hungary, 1894–1985

Umbrellas, Tokyo, 1968

Gelatin silver print

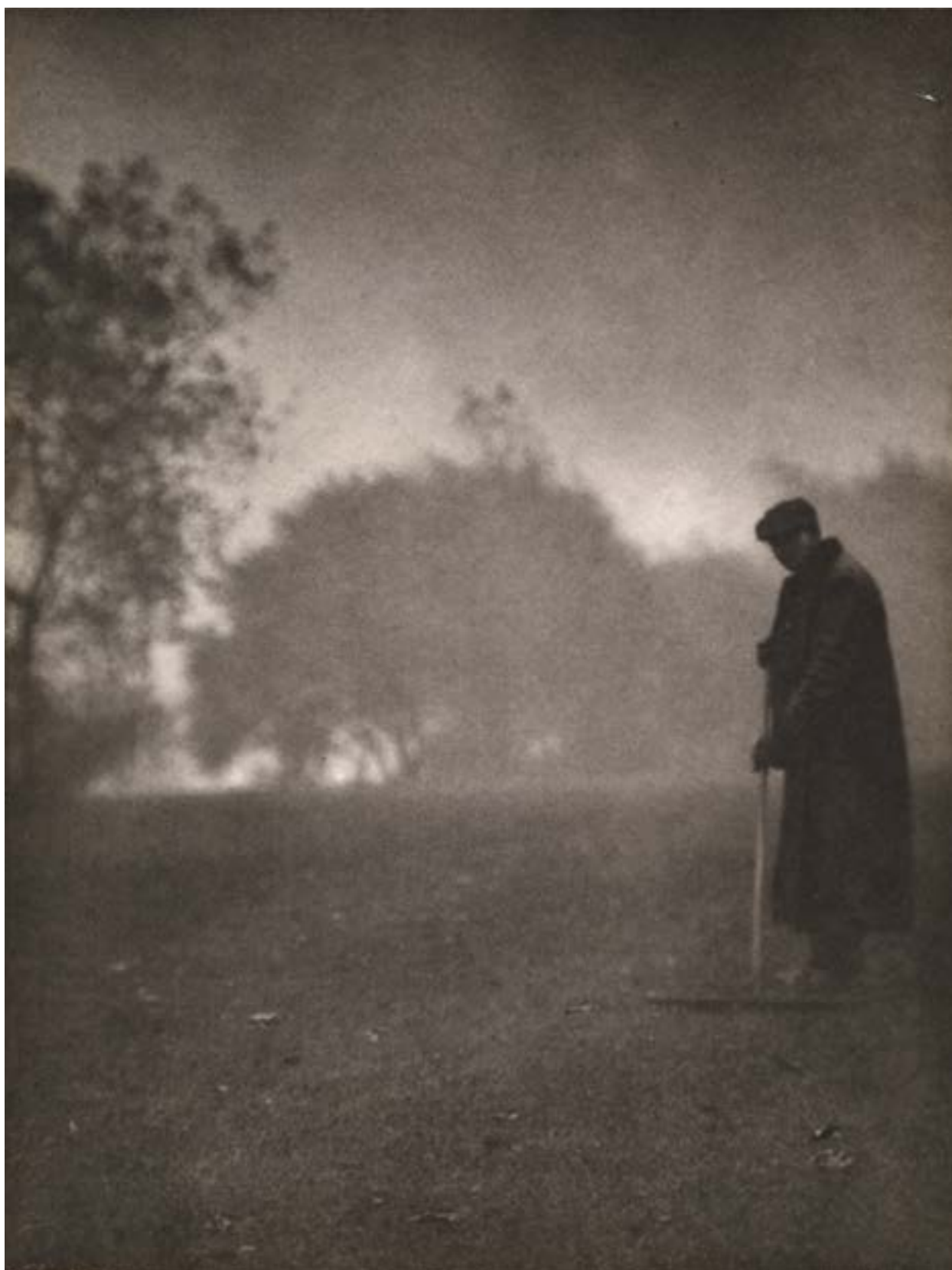
On a trip to Japan, Kertész looked out of his hotel window and spotted a line of office workers with identical black umbrellas crossing the street. The combination of chance, intuition, and alertness to the potential of the scene enabled him to capture the moment when the umbrellas seemed to be following the large traffic arrow. As Kertész later put it: “I always photographed what the moment told me.”

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Aldine S. Hartman Endowment Fund, 2013.224

Along with New York, Chicago was a major destination for Hungarian émigrés in America during the 20th century. Starting in the second half of the 19th century, industries such as steel, lumber, railroad, meat, and grain rapidly fueled the region's economy, and immigrant labor accounted for nearly two-thirds of Chicago's factory workers. As the numbers of Hungarians swelled at the end of the century, rich immigrant communities formed in Chicago's South Side and Burnside neighborhoods.

The most important Hungarian photographer to move to Chicago was László Moholy-Nagy, who founded an American version of the Bauhaus in 1937. Although financial problems forced the school to close a year later, in 1939 Moholy-Nagy opened the Institute of Design, which continues today as the Illinois Institute of Design. In Chicago, Moholy-Nagy hired fellow Hungarian émigrés György Kepes and Ferenc Berko, among others, and together they developed and taught an experimental, integrated design curriculum that emphasized photography as a modern, industrial, and technological art form. Although Moholy-Nagy passed away in 1946, the school continued to flourish and laid the foundation for several generations of remarkable photographers, including Aaron Siskind, Harry Callahan, Ray Metzker, and Barbara Crane.

Other Hungarian American photographers in Chicago include the couple Stephen and Helene Deutch, who ran a successful photography studio together in Paris before moving to the United States in 1936. The medical doctor and amateur photographer Max Thorek was also based in Chicago. One of the most exhibited photographers in the 20th century, Thorek was an avowed Pictorialist who created theatrical, painterly compositions. Thorek, who pledged to “worship at the shrine of beauty, reason, and truth,” rejected the radical Modernism championed by Moholy-Nagy and his colleagues at the Institute of Design.



Max Thorek (Torok Maximilian)

American, born Hungary, 1880–1960

Daybreak, ca. 1940

Toned gelatin silver print

Max Thorek was an avowed proponent of Pictorialism, a style of photography that emerged in the early 20th century characterized by painterly, self-consciously artistic compositions and moody, tonally rich prints, as seen in this early morning view. Thorek denigrated the work of his fellow Hungarian émigré and Chicagoan Moholy-Nagy, writing that he was “devoid of artistic feeling” and “invariably gives prime consideration to process, confusing it with expression, without realizing that the measure of success is dependent not on the tools employed, but upon results based on inspiration and creative talent.”

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund, 2018.378



Max Thorek (Torok Maximilian)

American, born Hungary, 1880–1960

Delilah, 1930–36

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund, 2015.314

Max Thorek (Torok Maximilian)

American, born Hungary, 1880–1960

Europe, 1939

Gelatin silver print

The noted surgeon and photographer Max Thorek was born in Hungary and moved with his family to the United States in the 1890s. In 1904, he received his medical degree in Chicago, where he cofounded the American Hospital (now the Thorek Memorial Hospital) and later established the International College of Surgeons in Geneva in 1935. Thorek began making photographs around 1925 and was soon entering his work into photographic salons throughout the United States and abroad. By 1950, he could proudly claim that he was the world's most prolific exhibitor, having shown nearly four thousand prints in 1,087 exhibitions during his career.

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri (Gift of Hallmark Cards, Inc.), 2005.27.4537





Max Thorek (Torok Maximilian)
American, born Hungary, 1880–1960

Stairway, ca. 1939
Gelatin silver print

Black Dog Collection



György Kepes

American, born Hungary, 1906–2001

Untitled, 1939

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund, 2014.176



György Kepes

American, born Hungary, 1906–2001

Chicago, 1937

Gelatin silver print

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection, gift of The Annenberg Foundation, acquired from Carol Vernon and Robert Turbin



György Kepes

American, born Hungary, 1906–2001

Juliet with Peacock Feather and Red Leaf, 1937–38

Gelatin silver print with gouache

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund, 2014.20.1



György Kepes

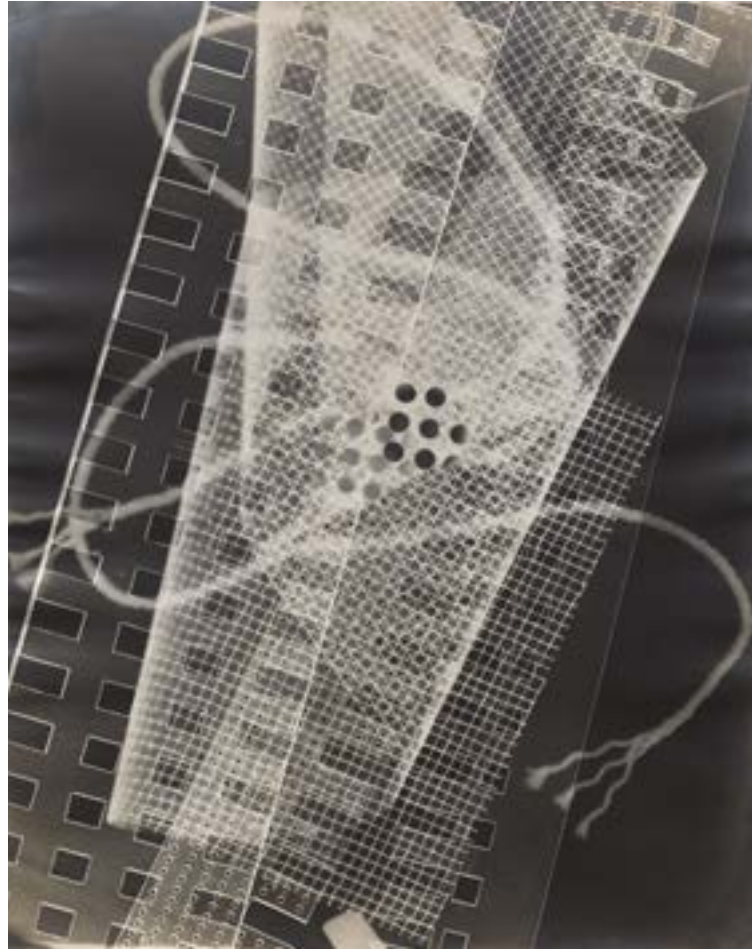
American, born Hungary, 1906–2001

Solarization, ca. 1938

Gelatin silver print

Solarization is a technique that reverses the tones in a black-and-white image. While it can be produced by extreme overexposure, Kepes purposefully created solarized photographs in the darkroom by briefly exposing the print to light during the process of development. The resulting print is silvery, rich, and mysterious and demonstrates photography's capacity to transform its subject.

Art Institute of Chicago, The Mary and Leigh Block Endowment Fund



László Moholy-Nagy

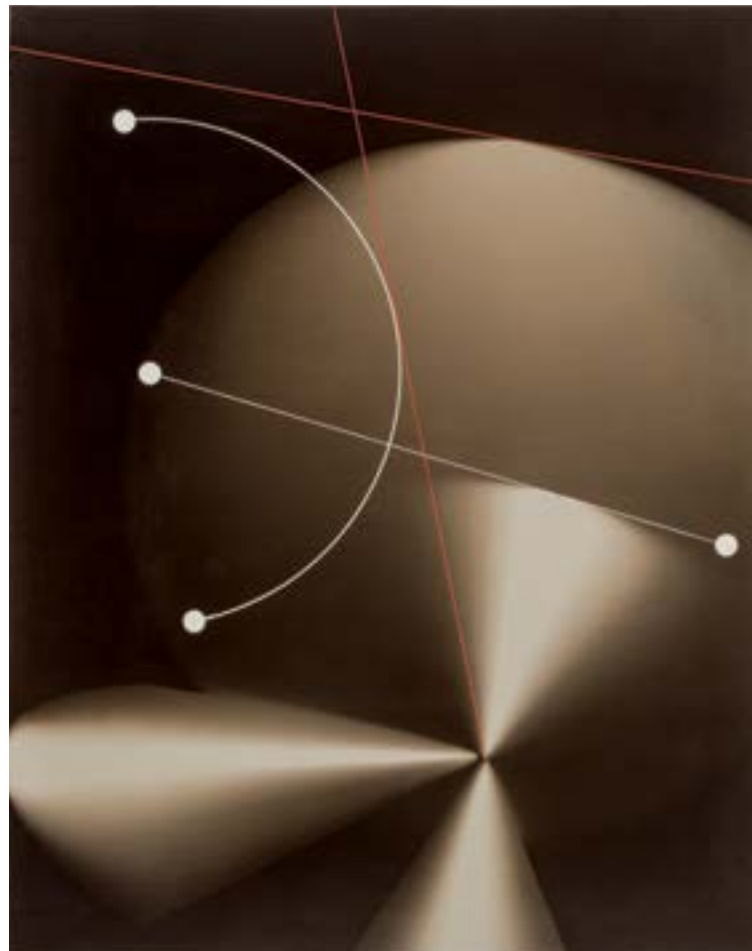
American, born Hungary, 1895–1946

Untitled, 1939

Gelatin silver print, photogram

At the Chicago School of Design, Moholy-Nagy continued to experiment with the photogram process, creating ethereal and dazzling pictures by arranging and exposing objects directly onto photographic paper. Keenly attuned to the myriad ways light shaped and transformed vision and perception, Moholy-Nagy used the photogram process to explore the nuances of light, shadow, translucence, and reflection.

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Andrew R. and Martha Holden Jennings Fund, 1992.10



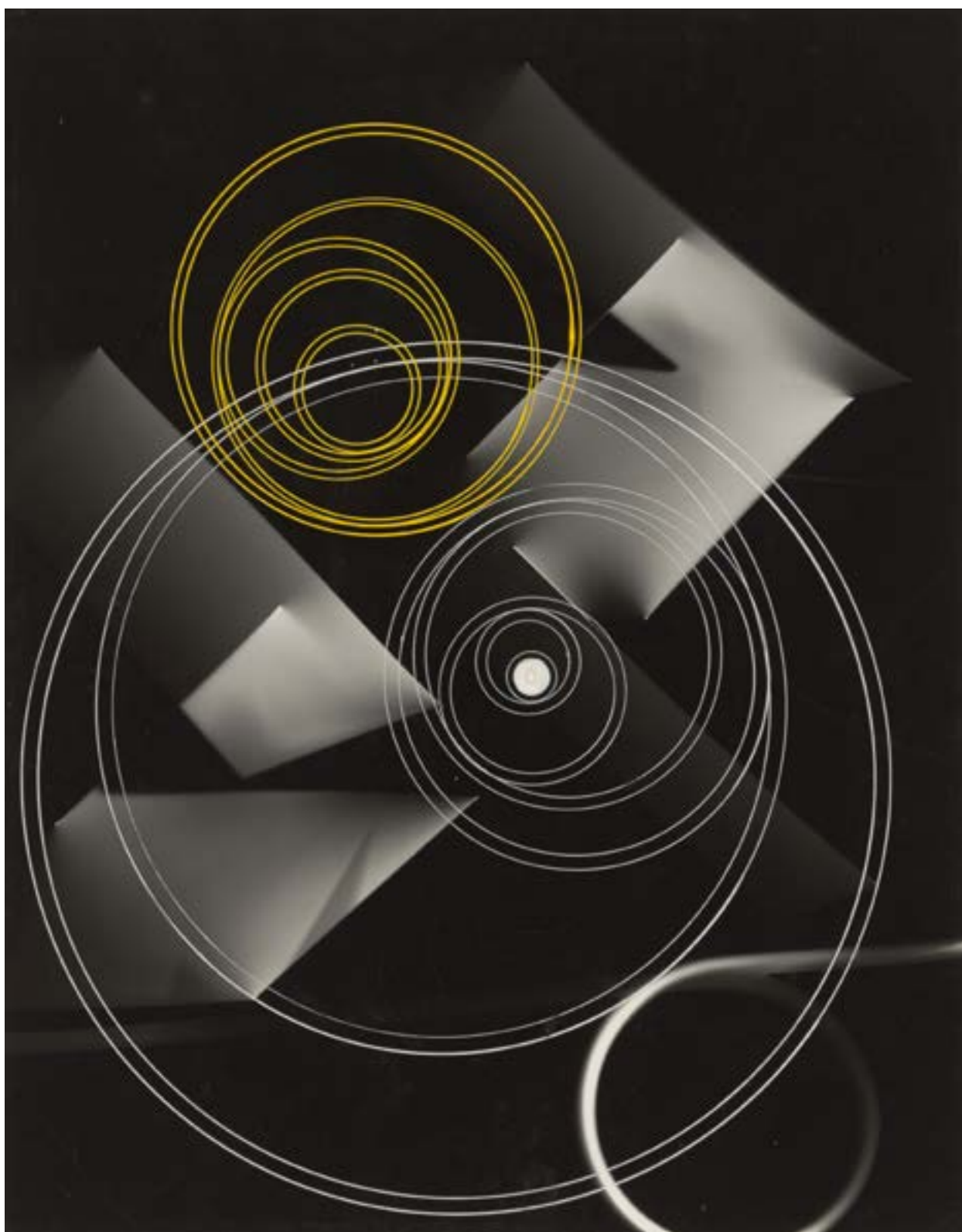
György Kepes

American, born Hungary, 1906–2001

Untitled (Photograph for Direction Magazine), 1939

Toned gelatin silver print includes photogram elements with gouache

Collection of Leland Rice and Susan Ehrens



György Kepes

American, born Hungary, 1906–2001

Photogram (yellow and white circles), 1939

Gelatin silver print with gouache

As a teacher at the Institute of Design (or New Bauhaus) from 1937–1943, Kepes led the Light and Color workshop. During this period, he further developed his concepts of integrated design uniting art, craft, and technology; form's relation to function; and what he called "the education of vision." In 1944, he published *Language of Vision*, which offered deep analysis of the structure and operation of the graphic image across the fields of painting, photography, and graphic design.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Corcoran Collection
(Museum Purchase with funds from the Women's Committee of the Corcoran Gallery of Art), 2015.19.50924



Béla Kalman

American, born Hungary, 1921–2011

Untitled, 1935/68

Gelatin silver print

Born in Budapest, Béla Kalman studied theater and the visual arts but was sent with his brother to a Nazi labor camp, from which they escaped. In 1952, his Budapest studio was closed by the Communist government and in 1956, during the Hungarian Revolution, he emigrated to the United States. Kalman worked as a studio assistant in Chicago for several years before moving to New York and eventually settling in Boston, where he photographed for *LIFE* and became a leading photographer in the advertising field. Kalman said: “Every photo is one of a kind. Nothing is repeatable.”

Art Institute of Chicago, purchased with funds provided by an anonymous donor



György Kepes

American, born Hungary, 1906–2001

Target and Cone, ca. 1939

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 2015.225



Stephen Deutch

American, born Hungary, 1908–1997

Untitled (Wacker Drive, Chicago), 1941

Gelatin silver printe

Born in Budapest in 1908, Stephen Deutch studied sculpture at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest. He moved to Paris in 1927 where he met his wife, Helene Beck, who worked as a fashion photographer and taught him the medium. The couple moved to Chicago in 1936, where they ran a studio together until the birth of their third child, after which Helene stepped back from the business. Deutch, who was a keen observer of the world around him, made this solemn view on Wacker Drive, noting on the back of the print: *“This woman [seats] on the same place every day, winter & summer since I’m in Chicago. This is Wacker Drive.”*

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Aldine S. Hartman Endowment Fund, 2021.588



Helene Deutch

American, born Hungary, 1906–2007

High angle over marketplace, Mexico, 1938

Gelatin silver print

Born in Transylvania (now Romania), Helene (Ilona) Beck moved to Paris at age eighteen to study at the Sorbonne. She learned photography and was hired as a fashion photographer for *Vogue Paris* and later joined a commercial firm where she worked under the famous Surrealist artist and fashion photographer Maurice Tabard. In 1931, she married fellow Hungarian émigré Stephen Deutch, a sculptor, and together they ran a successful photography studio. In 1936, the couple emigrated to Chicago and opened a new studio. Helene's photographs of Mexico, made in 1938, were published in *Coronet* magazine and exhibited in a traveling exhibition organized by the Chicago Public Library.

Courtesy of the Chicago History Museum, Gift of Stephen Deutch



Helene Deutch

American, born Hungary, 1906–2007

Women washing, Mexico, 1938

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the Chicago History Museum, Gift of Stephen Deutch



Helene Deutch

American, born Hungary, 1906–2007

Child in crate, Mexico, 1938

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the Chicago History Museum, Gift of Stephen Deutch



György Kepes

American, born Hungary, 1906–2001

Nature Photograph, Waterdrops, ca. 1950

Gelatin silver print

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Gift of the artist



Ferenc Berko

American, born Hungary, 1916–2000

Solarized Nude, 1950–51

Gelatin silver print

Ferenc Berko taught photography and film at the Chicago Institute of Design (formerly the New Bauhaus) between 1947 and 1949. Berko promoted the concepts of the New Vision, which encouraged using the camera lens as a mirror to reality, but also as a device to experiment with and document that same reality. In 1949, Berko moved to Aspen, Colorado, where he ran a studio and organized the first major photography conference in America. Held at the Aspen Institute in 1951, it included luminaries of the photography world, among them Ansel Adams, Minor White, Dorothea Lange, and Eliot Porter.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Eric and Jeanette Lipman Fund, 2016.608



Michael Simon (Simon Mihály)

American, born Hungary, 1936

**Posts and signs around rural storage tanks,
Sharon, Wisconsin, 1980**

Gelatin silver print

Photographer, collector, and art historian Michael Simon made this photograph near Beloit College, a small liberal arts school one hundred miles outside of Chicago, where Simon taught photography. Born in Budapest in 1936, as a young man Simon apprenticed with a cousin who ran a photo studio there. Sadly, most of his extended family were killed in concentration camps during World War II, and Simon fled Hungary during the 1956 revolution and emigrated to the United States. Simon, who pursued his master's degree at Rochester Institute of Technology before assuming his teaching post at Beloit, wrote one of the first major studies of Hungarian photography, *Comparative Hungarian Photographic History* (2000).

Courtesy of the artist



Michael Simon (Simon Mihály)

American, born Hungary, born 1936

**Black box and man at city intersection, Toronto,
Ontario, 1970**

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist



Michael Simon (Simon Mihály)
American, born Hungary, born 1936

Mannequin legs with mirror image, Florence, Italy,
1989

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist



Michael Simon (Simon Mihály)
American, born Hungary, 1936

Untitled, Beloit, Wisconsin, 1987

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

Few places are more associated with creative Hungarian émigrés than Hollywood, where, from the early days of Tinsel Town, Hungarians played a seminal role. William Fox (Vilmos Fried) founded the global media firm Fox Film Corporation, and another Hungarian émigré, Adolph Zukor, founded Paramount Pictures. So prevalent was the influence of Hungarians as actors, directors, cinematographers, producers, and moguls that the Viennese-born director Otto Preminger lamented: “to succeed in Hollywood, you ought to be able to do more than speak Hungarian.”

The glamor of Hollywood also lured several important Hungarian-born photographers. Globe-trotting photojournalist Robert Capa, who had fallen in love with actress Ingrid Bergman while she was touring Europe to entertain American troops, followed her to Hollywood in late 1945. Martin Munkácsi, Nickolas Muray, and László Willinger photographed for movie studios and contributed frequently to popular magazines. Perhaps the most memorable Hungarian American Hollywood story is that of the 1945 “discovery” of a nineteen-year-old model, Norma Jeane Baker, by André de Dienes. Thanks in part to de Dienes’s photographs, Baker—who would later adopt the name Marilyn Monroe—rocketed to stardom.

Hungarian Americans also transformed the genre of fashion photography. Until the 1930s, most fashion photography consisted of carefully staged interior shots that emphasized glamour and luxury. Eschewing this tradition, in 1933 Martin Munkácsi photographed models running on the beach. Infused with a carefree vitality, those pictures caught the eye of Carmel Snow, the editor of *Harper’s Bazaar*, who lured Munkácsi to New York, where he established himself as one of the leading fashion photographers of the 20th century. Other Hungarian Americans who notably contributed to the flourishing of fashion photography include Nickolas Muray, who perfected a type of color photography that allowed magazines to reproduce color photographs in vibrant tones. His keen ability to create luscious pictures with rich saturated hues made him a pioneer in the genre of food and product photography.



Nickolas Muray (Mandl Miklós)

American, born Hungary, 1892–1965

Joan Crawford and Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Santa Monica, California, 1929

Gelatin silver print

George Eastman Museum, Gift of Mrs. Nickolas Muray



Nickolas Muray (Mandl Miklós)

American, born Hungary, 1892–1965

Gertrude Lawrence, ca. 1925

Gelatin silver print

George Eastman Museum, Gift of Mrs. Nickolas Muray



Nickolas Muray (Mandl Miklós)
American, born Hungary, 1892–1965

Babe Ruth, 1927, printed ca. 1945
Gelatin silver print

Between 1920 and 1940, Nickolas Muray made more than ten thousand portraits. His first studio in Greenwich Village attracted nearly every celebrity in New York, and by 1929 he had established a studio in Hollywood, where he photographed stars of the silver screen. This iconic image shows famed baseball player Babe Ruth, bat in hand, glaring at the camera with the same menacing stare that many a major league pitcher feared.

George Eastman Museum, Gift of Michael Brooke Muray,
Nickolas Christopher Muray and Gustav Schwab



László Josef Willinger

American, born Hungary, 1909–1989

Virginia Bruce, ca. 1938–39

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Howard Greenburg, by exchange, 2020.186



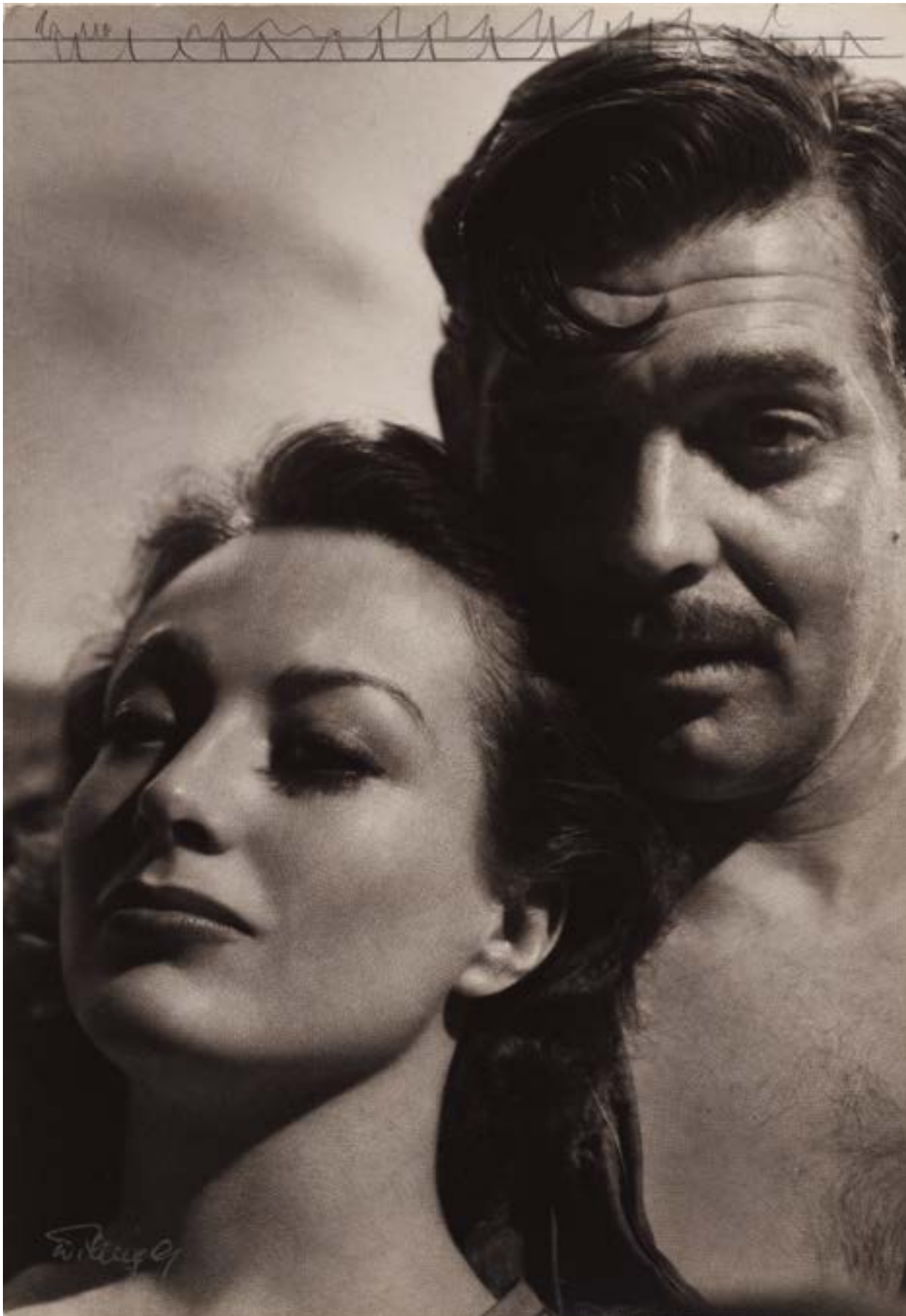
László Josef Willinger

American, born Hungary, 1909–1989

Lana Turner, n.d.

Gelatin silver print

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of the Sid and Diana Avery Trust



László Josef Willinger

American, born Hungary, 1909–1989

Joan Crawford and Clark Gable, 1938

Gelatin silver print, printed 1980

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Howard Greenburg, by
exchange, 2020.187



László Josef Willinger

American, born Hungary, 1909–1989

Lucille Ball, 1943

Gelatin silver print

Soon after settling in Los Angeles in 1937, Willinger became one of the most sought-after celebrity photographers, making publicity stills for numerous movie stars including Fred Astaire, Katharine Hepburn, Joan Crawford, Clark Gable, and Lucille Ball, among others. Toward the end of his life, he became disillusioned with the film industry, believing that old Hollywood glamour had been lost and that modern movie actors “all look the same—like unfinished pancakes.”

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Howard Greenburg, by exchange, 2020.188



Imre Révész (Révész Imre)

American, born Hungary, 1895–1975

Hedy Lamarr, ca. 1940

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Eric and Jeanette Lipman Fund, 2021.96



André de Dienes (Ikafalvi-Dienes Andor György)
American, born Hungary, 1913–1985

Untitled (Ronnie Scott), 1970s
Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift from the Goldman-Sonnenfeldt Family, **NUMBER TK**



André de Dienes (Ikafalvi-Dienes Andor György)
American, born Hungary, 1913–1985

Untitled, n.d.
Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift from the Goldman-Sonnenfeldt Family, **NUMBER TK**



László Josef Willinger

American, born Hungary, 1909–1989

Woman, Sunbathing, ca. 1932

Gelatin silver print

Born in 1909 into a prominent Hungarian Jewish family in Budapest, László Josef Willinger learned photography from his mother, a professional photographer who specialized in theatrical portraits. Willinger grew up in Berlin, where he worked in the family portrait studio and served as a freelance contributor to several German newspapers and illustrated magazines. After the Nazi party assumed power in 1933, Willinger emigrated to the United States and established a practice making glamorous shots of celebrities and movie stars. By contrast, this closely cropped, restrained, and angled view of a woman sunbathing reveals the Modernist sensibilities of Willinger's early work.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund and Aldine S. Hartman Endowment Fund, 2022.39



André de Dienes (Ikafalvi-Dienes Andor György)
American, born Hungary, 1913–1985

Marilyn Monroe, ca. 1949
Gelatin silver print, printed later

In 1944, André de Dienes moved from New York to California, where he developed a specialization in landscapes, sensual nudes, and Hollywood glamour shots, often combining the aforementioned genres. His most famous subject, however, was Norma Jeane Baker (better known as Marilyn Monroe), whom he met in 1945 when she was launching her modeling career. Charmed by her beauty and intrigued by her potential, de Dienes undertook what would become Monroe's first real photo shoot. Over the next fifteen years, de Dienes made more than a thousand photographs of the actor, ranging from casual views of the young ingénue relaxing on the beach, as seen here, to highly stylized renderings of the sultry star.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 2021.598



Martin Munkácsi (Mermelstein Márton)
American, born Hungary, 1896–1963

Katharine Hepburn, 1939
Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Mrs. Alfred duPont, by
exchange, 2020.183



Robert Capa (Freidmann Endre Ernő)
American, born Hungary, 1913–1954

Orson Welles in make-up during the filming of “The Black Rose”, 1950
Gelatin silver print

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Nancy Nigrosh



Martin Munkácsi (Mermelstein Márton)
American, born Hungary, 1896–1963

Marlene Dietrich, ca. 1940s
Gelatin silver print

Joy of Giving Something, Inc.



Martin Munkácsi (Mermelstein Márton)
American, born Hungary, 1896–1963

Fashion Study II, New York, 1948
Vintage contact print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels
Memorial Fund, 2020.141



Martin Munkácsi (Mermelstein Márton)

American, born Hungary, 1896–1963

Olivia de Havilland, 1936

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Mrs. Alfred duPont, by exchange, 2020.182



Martin Munkácsi (Mermelstein Márton)

American, born Hungary, 1896–1963

Silver White Satin Beach Costume, 1933

Gelatin silver print

In 1933, Carmel Snow, who was editor in chief at *Harper's Bazaar*, hired Munkácsi to shoot a swimwear spread. Munkácsi, who always sought to infuse his photographs with movement, captured his models running energetically on a windswept beach in Long Island, New York. These pictures revolutionized fashion photography, a genre that had been, up to that point, a carefully staged, elegant studio affair. Based on the buoyant, carefree pictures, Snow offered Munkácsi a contract with *Harper's Bazaar*, thus instigating his move to New York.

Joy of Giving Something, Inc.



Harper's Bazaar, December 1933

Periodical

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Margaret R. and Robert M.
Freeman Library, Rare Book Collection, 30804006785306



Martin Munkácsi (Mermelstein Márton)

American, born Hungary, 1896–1963

Tibor von Halmai, 1932

Gelatin silver print

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Museum purchase funded by the Caroline Wiess Law Accessions Endowment Fund, The Manfred Heiting Collection



Martin Munkácsi (Mermelstein Márton)

American, born Hungary, 1896–1963

Jumping a Puddle, 1934

Gelatin silver print

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gilman Collection, Purchase, The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation Gift, through Joyce and Robert Menschel, 2005 (2005.100.1103)



Nickolas Muray (Mandl Miklós)

American, born Hungary, 1892–1965

Frida Kahlo, 1939

Carbro print

Nickolas Muray made this photograph of Frida Kahlo at the height of their on-again, off-again, decade-long love affair, which began when the pair met in Mexico in 1931 and Kahlo had just married painter Diego Rivera. Remaining friends until Kahlo's death in 1954, Muray made more than ninety photographs of the artist between 1937 and 1948, many of them in vibrant color. They capture Kahlo's distinctive sense of style and the ways she astutely constructed dress and pose to shape and project her identity. Muray, who used Kodachrome slide film to make this work, was a pioneer of the color printing process known as carbro, a labor-intensive method that produces brilliant, highly saturated color pictures.

Courtesy of the George Eastman Museum, Gift of Mrs. Nickolas Muray

Nickolas Muray (Mandl)

American, born Hungary, 1892–1965

Duke's Mayonnaise, ca. 1940

Carbro print

Prized for its vividness and color stability, the labor-intensive carbro method combines carbon-based pigments and silver bromide prints—hence the name “car-bro.” Three separate silver bromide prints are made, each using a filter—red, yellow, blue—and then paired with a corresponding pigmented carbon tissue. When the tissue is placed in contact with the bromide print, the pigmented gelatin on the tissue hardens in proportion to the amount of silver, which corresponds to the light and dark densities of the exposure. Each tissue is then carefully washed to remove the unhardened gelatin; finally, the three tissues are superimposed on a single surface to create a full color image. Introduced in 1905, the carbro process was popular through the 1930s but was eventually superseded by other cheaper and easier color processes.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund, 2016.428

Duke's Mayonnaise Jar, 2024



