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Man Ray

Born:

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1890

Man Ray was born in 1890 in Philadelphia. He was a master of fashion and surrealist photography, best remembered for his experimental "rayographs" and portraits of iconic members of the artistic and literary avant-garde. His innovative perspective and experimental technique changed the discipline of photography forever. Born Emmanuel Radnitzky, Man Ray grew up in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, learning the foundations of photography from art dealer and photographer, Alfred Stieglitz. Due in part to his close friendship with Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray was soon immersed in the New York art world as a formative member of the American branch of the Dada movement.

Man Ray moved to Paris in 1921, and for the next 20 years he maintained his photography studio. Some of his portrait subjects included James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Pablo Picasso, Ernest Hemingway and Salvador Dalí. Man Ray also experimented with the photographic medium, reinventing the use of solarization for his photograms and developed his "rayographs". A "rayograph" was made by placing a three-dimensional object or series of objects on top of a piece of photographic paper and exposing it to light. These silhouetted items included ropes, light bulbs, vegetables and parts of the body. At the onset of World War II, Ray returned to the United States in 1942, settling in Los Angeles. However he would not remain on the West Coast for long and returned to Paris, where he passed away in 1976.