

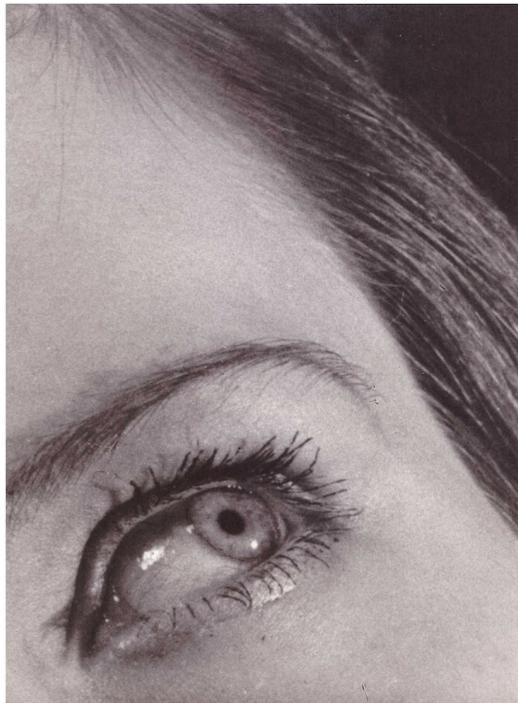
PIERRE BOUCHER • JEAN MORAL • ANDRÉ STEINER

THE TURNING GAZE

ARTISANS OF THE NEW VISION

Curators: Éric Rémy & Françoise Morin

OPENING ON APRIL 13TH FROM 2 TO 7 PM
EXHIBITION FROM APRIL 13TH TO JUNE 15TH



André Steiner, *Sans titre*, c. 1934
©Steiner-Bajolet, Courtesy Les Douches la Galerie, Paris

It is with great pleasure that Les Douches la Galerie and Eric Rémy present *La bascule du regard* [*The Turning Gaze*], bringing together the works of Pierre Boucher, Jean Moral and André Steiner. Growing out of the Bauhaus, the artisans of the New Vision represent a generation of experimental photography in the 1920s, borne along by the technical promises of industrial society.

By disturbing points of view through games of scale, dizzying diagonal lines and compositions that border on the abstract, the New Vision multiplies the possibilities of photography and decisively turns its gaze toward the future.

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THE TURNING GAZE

« The years 1927-1928 signal a modern turning point in France for French photography. In late 1927 in Paris, Germaine Krull published her book *Métal* which became one of the key works for the New Vision. As René Zuber (1902-1979) recalls with regard to the emblematic work, 'Twenty years ago, pointing her camera at the sky, Germaine Krull photographed the Eiffel Tower from the bottom up, and the Eiffel Tower fell on its face... From that day onwards, photographers went off to discover the world...'¹

Looking at the world differently, gathering and bringing together the elements of a new visual grammar where the new (as well as the old) is perceived in a new light. That is the impetus of a new generation.

Modern photographers do not adopt the perspective of New Photography, they become the vectors of this new look at the world... They are all between twenty and thirty-five years old; in a certain sense, they find themselves decision-makers, and bereft (delivered also) of reference points, for their elders either disappeared in the first war or have abandoned their activity. Moreover, they have serious reasons for wanting to change the world. Thus for them any kind of innovation is fair game; it is the result of their desires and the mark of their access to the world of creation.

In the early 1920s, photography's good fortune was to open a breach in the larger public, while also becoming an indispensable means of information for the media that was being created in its modern form.

For them, the camera is no longer a tool for recording but for discovering. »

Christian Bouqueret in *Jean Moral, L'œil capteur*, Marval, 1999, p. 8

Youth at the heart of the revival of photography

As Quentin Bajac states with regard to these young French and émigré (André Steiner) photographers, "Portraits, advertisements, press images, reproductions of works of art: when people make their start in photography, they often begin with applied photography"².

The young photographers lent their vision to the technical innovations that were flooding daily life and that often called upon the new medium to promote them (automobiles, trains, boats, electricity, etc.).

Photography must convince and promote. It must carry within itself the technical revolution that floods daily life. Electrification, the development of the automobile...

It also tries to show its own aesthetic revolutions. It is at the confluence of graphic and technical investigations proper to the medium, and commissioned work (reportage, illustration, publicity, advertising, fashion, and so on) that the photographs of these three young photographers were created.

Electricity lines, roads, railroad tracks that criss-cross the landscapes, ocean liners, and so forth are so many new motifs and centers of interest. Those objects and technical structures carry within themselves a formal vocabulary that enriches new aesthetic investigations.

They are nothing more than games in deep blacks and greys, rhythms, repetitions and the conversion of simple forms into types of geometric and powerfully delineated still lifes. The subject is not only the object of photography, photography itself is at stake. Bodies, characters, elements of daily life are at the service of an image's composition.

The influence of the New Vision brought over from Germany was however less radical than in its country of origin. "... What is most arresting in the end is that this modernism as manifested in Paris is generally quite moderate... The French new vision was a tempered new vision of a peculiarly French classicism"³.

That may be due to the strong presence at the time of another current: Surrealism. Their photographic works were never part of only one trend; they were coloured by both influences according to the type of commission and investigation. Their photographic compositions then took on the disturbing strangeness that the Surrealists would try so hard to have surge from the banality of daily life.

Éric Rémy

Co-curator

¹ Typescript by René Zuber, Archives Zuber.

² *Praha, Paris, Barcelona, modernités photographiques de 1918 à 1948*, Collectifs, p. 72

³ *Ibid*

THE TURNING GAZE

Pierre Boucher

Pierre Boucher began as an illustrator in the advertising department of the Printemps department store chain, then joined the Tolmer workshop (led by Claude Tolmer and Alexey Brodovich who held his classes there from 1926 to 1927).

The House, which specialised in advertising for companies connected to the world of luxury goods and fashion (Piguet, Lelong, Molyneux, Patou, etc.) incorporated a graphics workshop where Pierre Boucher worked from 1927 to 1928, and a photography workshop where Jean Moral worked from 1928 to 1932. Jean Moral worked on illustrations and photography, drawing Pierre Boucher's attention to photography.

From 1928 to 1930, during his military service, Boucher studied photography in the air force's photography division. Perhaps because of his beginnings at the Tolmer studio, Boucher was more aware of graphics, and never lost his taste for photomontage and recomposing images. His photos range from experimentation to documentary photography, dipping into photo-graphics, industrial photography, reportages and nude photography along the way.

Of the photographers here, he was certainly the most open to different currents. His collaboration with René Zuber⁴, who was aware of the Bauhaus' aesthetic, put him on the path toward New Objectivity, and his work with nudes turned towards phantasmagoria.

"Like Man Ray, Pierre Boucher is above all an illustrator. He astonishes us with the extreme richness of his ideas, his limitless imagination, his original, confident taste. For him, photography is a second way of expressing the artistic thought that his pencil has already sketched »⁵.

Jean Moral

At his father's death, Jean Moral was placed in a boarding school, where he used his free time to draw. In 1925, at the age of seventeen, he discovered photography. He attempted to capture the places and people that were dear to him out of fear of losing them, the suffering of his childhood. Moral engaged in photography with a new eye and as an autodidact. According to his Daughter, "Jean Moral, a ward of the state following his father's death in 1914, was a tormented soul of incredible sensitivity... His vision could not but be one of a free world. He liked naturalness and immediacy. He framed almost all his prints in the heat of the viewfinder. The manufacturer Rolleiflex was not mistaken when it chose him, in its advertisements, as the model of the photographer of movement and direct shots"⁶.

Jean Moral, a wanderer with his Rolleiflex in easy reach⁷ always favoured outdoor photography. Low-angle shots, close-ups, experimental angles inhabit many of his photographs, for the subject is merely an excuse for the composition. For the first few years, in his laboratory, he worked on transforming his outdoor shots through solarisation and double exposure. His compositions were often created in the heat of the moment and rarely in the dark room. A man who loved fresh air, he was one of the first to put models on streets for fashion photography, playing with urban space to galvanise and bring the city's energy into the heart of a craft that until then had been carried out exclusively in a studio. His work was noticed by Carmel Snow, the high priestess of American fashion, making him the only French person under contract at *Harper's Bazaar* and allowing him to cover the Paris collections for the great fashion magazine for many years.

An avid sportsman and outdoor aficionado, like Boucher and Steiner, Moral developed his style in the shots of beaches, mountains, the DELIGNY swimming pool that would be published in *Paris-Magazine* for a decade.

In his shots, he aims for maximum expression by using unusual perspectives. They take over the world by photographing it in an unusual way: in three close-ups, disturbed by the counter-framing, in an aerial view, by the high-angle shot and the low-angle shot. He tightens the composition to the point where the limit becomes an essential internal element to the composition.

⁴ In 1927, René Zuber studied at the National Academy of Graphic Arts and Books in Leipzig and participated in *Film und Foto*.

⁵ *Nu en photographie*, with photographs by Laure Albin Guillot, Pierre Boucher, Man Ray, Roger Schall (Paris: Éditions Mana, 1937), 27.

⁶ Michel Lefebvre, Kessel, Moral : Deux reporters dans la guerre d'Espagne (Paris: Éditions Tallandier, 2006), 24.

⁷ *Ibid*

André Steiner

André Steiner earned a degree in electrical engineering in Vienna (Austria) where he emigrated from his native Hungary after the First World War. He began taking amateur photos in 1924, assisting professor Josef Maria Eder at the *Technische Hochschule*. Eder was also the president of the Photographic Society of Vienna. "Still a student in 1924 and working in a laboratory of material technology, he had in his hands one of the first four hundred Leicas, which had been provided by Leitz to certain centers of study... From 1928 onward, he owned a Leica, and six years later, having completely mastered its technical aspects, he was a photographer"⁸. He came to Paris in 1928 where he worked as an engineer at Alsthom until 1932. In 1933 he set up his first Photography studio.

Steiner approached his first years of photographic experimentation almost like a scientist, exploiting photography's technical potential (deformation, solarisation, over-exposure) to get photographic material to speak. He was an avid sportsman who had been a decathlon champion at the World Student Games in 1928. He photographed the world of sports, the body in movement, in space freed of heaviness. He continued his artistic investigations of nudes, faithful to his first works with his young wife Lilly. The nudes from the mid-thirties leave behind the classic pose in search of a composition where each part of the body is in tension. The body is no longer defined by its external curves, its envelope. Steiner was looking for its internal architecture, its tensions; he highlighted its construction.

A sort of bodily architecture in the vein of the new metal structures invading modern space.

⁸ *Le Leicaïste* N° 4, 1953, facsimile reproduced in Christian Bouqueret, *André Steiner l'homme curieux* (Paris: Marval, 1999), 30.

THE TURNING GAZE

SELECTION OF WORKS

André Steiner

Sans titre, c. 1934

Gelatin silver print, vintage

Image size: 21,8 x 16,2 cm

Print size: 21,8 x 16,2 cm

Stamped "Studio André Steiner, 18 rue Louis Le Grand, Paris 2e"

© Steiner-Bajolet, Courtesy Les Douches la Galerie, Paris

N° Inv. AS1902001



André Steiner

Étude de mains, c. 1934

Gelatin silver print, vintage

Image size: 6 x 9,1 cm

Print size: 6 x 9,1 cm

Signed in pencil on verso

Courtesy Les Douches la Galerie, Paris

N° Inv. AS1902022



Pierre Boucher

Nu avec ombres, c. 1936

Gelatin silver print, vintage

Image size: 17,9 x 17,9 cm

Print size: 22 x 17,9 cm

Stamped "Pierre Boucher" and "Alliance photo ADEP"

© Jean-Louis Boucher / Courtesy Les Douches la Galerie, Paris

N° Inv. PB1902010



Pierre Boucher

Isolateurs, 1933

Gelatin silver print, vintage

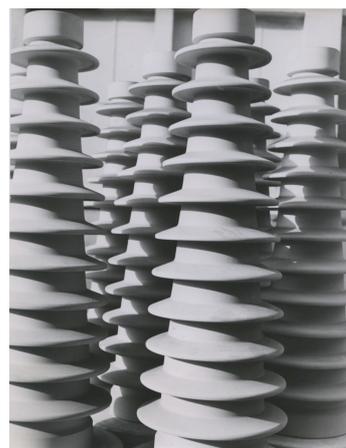
Image size: 24 x 18,2 cm

Print size: 24 x 18,2 cm

Signed by the artist and titled "Isolateurs"

© Jean-Louis Boucher / Courtesy Les Douches la Galerie, Paris

N° Inv. PB1902004



BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

From *Voici Paris, modernités photographiques 1920-1950*, assistance by Lucie Le Corre, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2011.

Pierre Boucher

1908, Paris – 2000, Paris

From 1922 to 1925, Pierre Boucher attended the School of Applied Arts in Paris, where he met Roger Parry. After his studies at the end of the 1920s, he began working at the printing publisher Draeger Frères, collaborated with the American magazine *The Spur*, for which he made fashion sketches for the biggest designers. He was subsequently hired by the illustration workshop of the department store Printemps, which he left to work with the publisher Claude Tolmer. There he met Louis Caillaud and Jean Moral, who brought him into contact with modern photography. In 1932, he became an intern at Studio Deberny Peignot, where he met Maurice Tabard, Roger Parry, Maurice Cloche and René Zuber. He then joined the studio that Zuber set up and the two men helped to found the agency Alliance Photo with Maria Eisner in 1934. Exploring all the possibilities of photography – reportage, Photo-graphism, nudes, solarisation, photograms, deformation – Pierre Boucher was visible everywhere in the exhibits and publications of the 1930s.

Collective Works

Daniel Masclet, *Nus: La beauté de la femme* (Album of the first *International Salon of Nude Photography*, self-published, 1933)

Marcel Natkin, *L'art de voir en photographie* (Paris: Éditions Tiranty, 1935)

Albert Mentzel, Albert Roux, *Formes Nues* (Paris: Arts et métiers graphiques, 1935)

Abel Bonnard, Rémy Duval, JH Lartique, *28 Études de nus* (Paris: Arts et métiers graphiques, 1936)

Le Nu en photographie, with photographs by Laure Albin Guillot, Pierre Boucher, Man Ray, Roger Schall (Paris: Éditions Mana, 1937)

Individual Works

Truquages en photographies (Paris: Éditions Mana, 1938)

Méthode française de ski, technique Emile Allais, preface by Roger Frison-Roche (Paris: Éditions Flèche, 1947)

Photographe (Paris: Contrejour, 1988)

Reviews

Photographies d'Arts et Métiers Graphiques (1932-33,1935-39); Art et médecine, Paris-Magazine, Le Document, Revue Ford, VU, Regards

Collections (selection)

MNAM, Centre Pompidou, Paris

Musée Nicéphore Niépce, Chalon-sur-Saône

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

From *Voici Paris, modernités photographiques 1920-1950*, assistance by Lucie Le Corre, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2011.

Jean Moral

1906, Marchiennes – 1999, Lausanne

Jean Moral arrived in Paris around 1926 or 1927, lodging with his friend Fabien Loris. After working briefly at the publishers Léon Ullmann, where he met Louis Caillaud, he was employed by the advertising workshop Claude Tolmer from 1928 to 1932 as a graphic designer, then as a photographer. There he met Alexey Brodovitch, Pierre Boucher and Pierre Verger. During this period, he took modernist pictures of Paris and its quays. In 1929, in the company of the young Austrian Bubi, he discovered the beaches of Lacanau where he photographed Juliette Bastide whom he married in 1931. Around 1935, he signed a contract with *Harper's Bazaar* for sixty fashion photos per year and collaborated with the magazine until 1952. After being called up during the Second World War, he left photography and began a career as a painter, a career he continued in Switzerland, where he moved in 1961.

He was part of several exhibits: *Das Lichbild* in Munich in 1930, the first *International Salon of Nude Photography* in 1933, *The Photographic Image in France from Daguerre to the Present* (1933), the *Annual Group of Photographers* at La Galerie de la Pléiade (1933-1935), and *Document on Social Life* (1936).

Collective Works

Daniel Masclat, *Nus: La beauté de la femme* (Album of the first *International Salon of Nude Photography*, self-published, 1933)

Marcel Natkin, *Les grands courants de la photographie* (Natkin, 1935)

Marcel Natkin, *Photography and the Art of Seeing* (London: The Fountain Press, 1935, 2nd edition 1948)

Reviews

Photographies d'Arts et Métiers Graphiques (1931-34, 1936-39); *Modern Photography* (London: The Studio, 1931-37); *Paris-Magazine*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *VU*, *Paris Match*

Collections (selection)

MNAM, Centre Pompidou, Paris

Musée Nicéphore Niépce, Chalon-sur-Saône

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

MOMA, New York

TATE, Londres

ÉLÉMENTS BIOGRAPHIQUES

Issus de *Voici Paris, modernités photographiques 1920-1950*, Lucie Lecore, Centre Pompidou, Paris 2011

André Steiner

1901, Székesfehérvár, Hungary – 1978, Paris

After studying engineering at the Polytechnic Institute of Vienna, Steiner began collaborating in 1924 on photographic research with the eminent chemist and historian of photography Josef Maria Eder to test out the first Leica cameras. He came to Paris in 1928 where he worked until 1933 for Alsthom, Paramount Studios and Phototone. Steiner also began publishing his photographs in French reviews (*Paris Magazine*, *Voilà*, *VU*) and participated in the exhibit *Hungarian Photographers*, in 1931, along with other Hungarian expatriates living in Paris. He opened his own studio in 1934 and launched into every area of photography: experimentation, nudes, advertising, etc. He became a French citizen in 1945, after the war, when he dedicated himself to photography as applied to technology and the sciences. In 1948, he published a book on the sculptor Rodin, and in the 1950s, several works on his studies of nudes. In 1948 he also contributed to the exhibit *Hungarian Photographers* in Paris, alongside Brassai, Kollar, Rogi André, André Féher, Ergy Landau, and others.

Collective Works

Albert Mentzel and Albert Roux, *Formes Nues* (Paris: Editions d'Art Graphique et Photographique, 1935)

Georges Besson, *La photographie française : 1839-1936* (Paris: Editions Braun, 1936)

Reviews

Photographie (Paris: Arts et Métiers Graphiques, 1935, 1937-39); *Modern Photography* (London: The Studio, 1937-38); *Art et médecine : Revue réservée au corps médical* (Paris: Art et Médecine, 1939)

Collections (selection)

MNAM, Centre Pompidou, Paris

Musée Nicéphore Niépce, Chalon-sur-Saône

The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, NY