

ubu

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Erwin Blumenfeld: Collages 1916 – 1934

October 30 - December 23, 1999

Ubu Gallery will present an exhibition of the collages by **Erwin Blumenfeld** (1897-1966) made between 1916 and 1934. The earliest of these collages are Dada works, while the later works made after the end of the Dada movement retain the iconoclastic spirit of Dada. In conjunction with a companion exhibition of photographs of female nudes at the James Danziger Gallery, these exhibitions celebrate the recent publication of *Eye to I: The Autobiography of a Photographer* by Blumenfeld and *The Naked and the Veiled*, which reproduces a selection of Blumenfeld's extraordinary photographs of the female body. Both of these books are published by Thames & Hudson.

Blumenfeld's collages reveal a man of extraordinary irony, humor, whimsy and inventiveness. While extremely personal, they contain a great deal of subtle social commentary and an occasionally overt and powerful political message. They also reveal a hint of the visual innovation, which later made famous his fashion photographs created for *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, Helena Rubenstein and Elizabeth Arden, among others. His friend George Grosz influenced Blumenfeld's early collages, but they illustrate his own graphic and calligraphic talents. Blumenfeld was also a fervent admirer and friend of the celebrated photomontages, John Heartfield, and made a seminal impact on his closet friend and sometimes rival, Paul Citroen, to whose cousin he was married. Blumenfeld, signing his name "Jan Bloomfield," was the self-appointed chairman of "Holland-Dada" (whose only "members" were Blumenfeld and Citroen). Most of Blumenfeld's collages were made in Amsterdam, a city cut-off from the Dada activities in Zürich, Berlin and Paris. They deal with his major obsessions: sex, women, religion, death and self. They also shed much light on his irreverence: his admiration and contempt for the church; although a Jew, his fascination with nuns; and his antipathy for the art establishment of his day.

Blumenfeld's collages have been the subject of numerous museum and gallery exhibitions worldwide and are represented in two of the richest museum Dada collections: the Israel Museum (Jerusalem) and the Kunsthaus Zürich.

Erwin Blumenfeld: Nudes will be at the James Danziger Gallery from October 23 – November 27, 1999.