

## *Ruth Bernhard: Photographs 1930 – 1974*

Even if Ruth Bernhard tested many subjects both imaginatively, and mastered them sensitively in her about 40 year-long creative career as a photographer, to this day and above all in Europe, she is especially associated with the female nude. She photographed still lifes in the spirit of new objectivity, she was commissioned to photograph fashion, she created portraits of children and animals, arranged seashells and snails for the camera, explored leaves and blossoms in black and white, discovered belt buckles as subjects, and arranged parts of dolls in a sometimes surreal fashion. And yet it is specifically the female nude that preoccupied her over decades, and posed for her an always new challenge.

– Hans-Michael Koetzle: Meditations on the beauty. Excerpt from: *Ruth Bernhard* Exhibition catalogue by Galerie Albrecht, Berlin 2021.

All of Ruth's photographs were created out of a deep respect, reverence and love for what she experienced. She described her photographic process in terms akin to meditation or a Zen like state of being. Ruth would spend hours, days, weeks or even months arranging her chosen or found subject to be photographed. She entered into the experience like a sculptor, finding the intrinsic life in material matter. She searched for perfection with a fierce and singular concentration of effort, before eventually making a single exposure, which became an act of thankfulness and appreciation for the gift that was presented to her, and for her whole life. She strongly objected to the prevalent terminology of "taking" or "shooting" photographs. For her, a photograph was a fusion of creativity, the connection or collaboration between a photographer and what is being photographed, and therefore a photograph was always "made".

– Michael Kenna: Photographing the invisibles. Excerpt from: *Ruth Bernhard* Exhibition catalogue by Galerie Albrecht, Berlin 2021.

I try to be aware of light at all times, I am always watching for it. I am not looking at light because I am a photographer, I am photographing because I am deeply involved with light. Something happens when I am affected by a visual experience, it is meaningful beyond what I am looking at. When I look at a tree, I cannot forget the invisibles, the roots, the water system inside the tree. When I photograph, I try to make those invisibles felt. I identify with nature and natural objects. I become the thing I photograph. I have to fall in love with it.

– Ruth Bernhard

*Ruth Bernhard (\*1905 Berlin †2006 San Francisco, USA) studied at Berlin Academy of Art from 1925–1927. In 1927 she moved to New York City. In 1934 Bernhard began photographing female nudes, the work with which she became known to the rest of the world. In 1936 she opened her photo studio in Los Angeles. In 1954 she moved to San Francisco. Her photographic work spans from 1930 to 1976.*

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Poster  
Reverse  
In The Box Vertical, 1962, silvergelatine print, 35 x 22 cm  
One World, 1946, silvergelatine print, 26 x 35 cm

# RUTH BERNHARD

## *Photographs 1930 – 1974*

October 14 – November 27, 2021

Opening October 14, 7 – 9 pm

Introduction by Hans-Michael Koetzle at 7 pm



STIFTUNGKUNSTFONDS



