Photograph - Rockefeller Center and Chrysler Building Tops

Object: Photograph

Place of origin: New York (City) (made)

Date: 1936 (made)

Artist/Maker: Bing, Ilse, born 1899 - died 1998 (photographer)

Materials and Techniques: Gelatin-silver print

Credit Line: Bequeathed by Ilse Bing Wolff

Museum number: E.3029-2004

Gallery location: Prints & Drawings Study Room, level F, case X, shelf 913, box F

Public access description

Ilse Bing (1899–1998) was one of several leading women photographers in the inter-war period. Born into a Jewish family in Frankfurt, she initially pursued an academic career before moving to Paris in 1930 to concentrate on photography.

In the 1930s Bing was championed in the USA by the writer Willem Hendrik van Loon, who introduced her work to the editors of Harpers Bazaar magazine and the influential gallerist Julian Levy. In her scenes of New York, made during her visit in 1936, Bing resolved her interests in Modernist design and the comedies of urban randomness. Her skills as a photojournalist are evident in vernacular sidewalk scenes such as this – gatherings of ethnic minorities, card schools and barber’s shop frontages, reminiscent of contemporary American realist painting. This populist iconography is combined with responses to modern architecture – a subject also shared with contemporary American photographers such as Alfred Stieglitz and Berenice Abbott.

Descriptive line

'Rockerfeller Center and Chrysler Building tops', photograph by Ilse Bing, 1936, vintage gelatin-silver print

Physical description

Black and white photograph of the tops of four soaring New York skyscrapers against a grey sky.

Dimensions

Width: 27.9 cm, Height: 20 cm

Museum number

E.3029-2004

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O101084/rockerfeller-center-and-chrysler-building-photograph-bing-ilse/