

Marlborough

PRESS RELEASE

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The Directors of Marlborough New York are pleased to present *Bill Brandt: Perspective of Nudes*, an exhibition of seminal nude photographs spanning the career of German-born British photographer Bill Brandt (1904-1983). The exhibition will open on Friday, March 12, 2021, and remain on view through Saturday, May 8, 2021. Composed of 35 photographs, the exhibition explores Brandt's longitudinal study of the nude feminine form between 1945-1979. The accompanying gallery publication will feature an essay by Martina Droth, Deputy Director and Chief Curator at the Yale Center for British Art, and Paul Messier, Head of the Lens Media Lab at the Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage at Yale University.

Bill Brandt first gained recognition as a photojournalist in the 1930s and 1940s, capturing images of all levels of British society for magazines like *Lilliput*, *Picture Post*, and *Harper's Bazaar*. After turning his focus to nude photography for over a decade, he published his milestone photo book *Perspective of Nudes* (1961), and in 1969 he was the subject of a major retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which traveled internationally. Brandt's first exhibition at Marlborough New York in 1976 was a critical turning point in situating his work within the context of fine art.

Initially influenced by the work of Man Ray, Brandt's earliest experiments with nude photography took place in Paris before the Second World War. But it wasn't until his return to the genre in 1944, while back in England, that his explorations into the body's sculptural potential within the two-dimensional space of the photographic print spurred a painstaking, long-term study, largely unencumbered by idealized classical conventions.

Brandt's concurrent discovery of a Kodak camera with a wide-angle lens, allowing for the use of extreme depth of field along with formal and spatial distortions, provided him with a direction for aesthetic inquiry which would guide the evolution of his nude photography over the years. Such distortions to the feminine body flouted the supposed proportional perfection of the classical nude of western art history, in favor of the more strange and quotidian. Furthermore, his use of stark contrasts between brightly lit forms and dark black shadows suggested an ongoing interplay between strict dichotomies: foreground and background, presence and absence, subject and object.

Later, a second series of nudes would develop from the first, which had mainly been captured in the privacy of London interiors. Inspired by travels in France and his own resulting work in landscape photography, these later images analogize and juxtapose the forms and textures of the feminine nude with and against the organic forms of the harsh, stony beaches of southern England and northern France.

Bill Brandt is currently the subject of a retrospective exhibition organized by KBr Fundación MAPFRE, Barcelona (2020-21), traveling to Versicherungskammer Kulturstiftung, Munich (March - May 2021); Sala Recoletos Fundación MAPFRE, Madrid (June - September 2021); and FOAM, Amsterdam (September 2022 - January 2023); as well as *Bill Brandt / Henry Moore*, organized by the Yale Center for British Art in partnership with The Hepworth Wakefield, accompanied by a major new book published by Yale University Press.

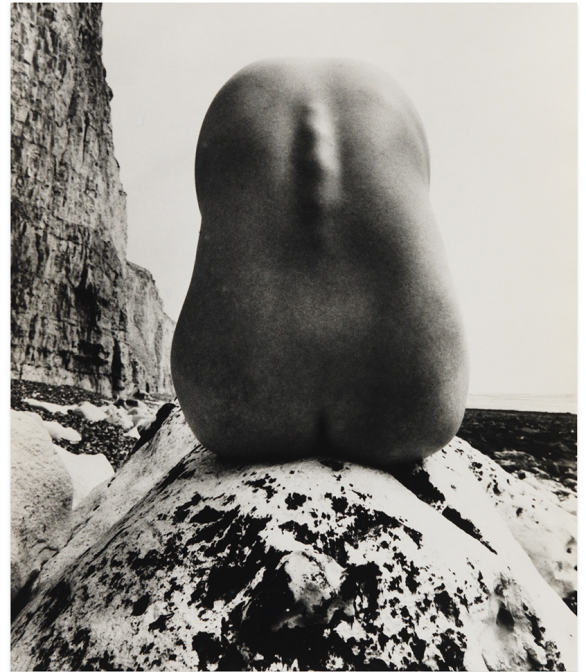
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BILL BRANDT: Perspective of Nudes

MARCH 12 - MAY 8, 2021



Bill Brandt, *Nude, East Sussex Coast*, July 1977. Gelatin silver print. 16 x 12 inches / 40.6 x 30.5 cm. © Bill Brandt / Bill Brandt Archive.

Marlborough New York follows New York State's guidelines for physical distancing amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. To schedule an appointment, please call or write to gichan@marlboroughgallery.com. It is essential that visitors wear a face mask and observe the six-foot social distancing rule at all times. Contactless temperature checks and information for contact-tracing will be gathered at Reception upon entry.