

Wartime and Adventure

Women Photojournalists in Europe 1914 – 1945

Press Release

Between 1914 and 1945, during the two international wars of aggression and the Spanish Civil War, women took part as war correspondents, whether as professional photographers and journalists, or as amateur photographers or nurses with cameras. They witnessed the care of the wounded in field hospitals, troop entertainments at base and military conflict along the lines, just as they recorded life at home on the domestic front.

They opposed the Kaiser, fascists and Nazis, but being female does not automatically mean being a pacifist. For example the Austrian **Alice Schalek** was fascinated by war. Schalek, the first woman to be accredited as a war photographer, enthusiastically accompanied soldiers as far as the Isonzo mountains in 1914-16, and her verbal skirmishes in the press with the Viennese pacifist Karl Kraus caused quite a stir.

In Germany, women were not allowed onto the battlefields, but most middle-class women proudly volunteered for any task to support the home front. The amateur photographer **Käthe Buchler** portrayed them in such roles as tram conductor, postwoman or night watchwoman, mobilising their efforts with slide lectures.

In Britain, it was the suffragettes who fought for women's right to vote and then, when war broke out, their right to serve in the war. The exhibition shows works by a professional studio portrait photographer from London (**Christina Broom, Olive Edis**) and snapshots by nurses who, in Belgium (**Elsie Knocker, Mairi Chisholm**) and in Russia (**Florence Farmborough**), documented the care of the wounded and everyday war in camp.

Little attention has so far been paid to the women who chronicled the Spanish Civil War, with one exception: **Gerda Taro** is currently the best-known female war photographer in Europe. Her photos are a political indictment of war, and she focuses on the people, not the weaponry or military events. She met a cruel death while at work among Republicans on the front ranks.

World War II saw more women from different countries taking pictures. In winter 1944, **Germaine Krull** provided detailed reportage from the Allied liberation of Alsace for the military press agency of the Free French forces; **Eva Besnyö**, exiled in the Netherlands as a persecuted Jew, took photographs of the German destruction of Rotterdam in 1940, before she went into hiding.



Natalja Bode: Nach der Einnahme einer deutschen Stellung vor Stalingrad, Stalingrader Front, Januar 1943 [© FotoSojus, Moskau]

Exhibition

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Duration

28 September 2017 – 11 February 2018
(Closed: 18 December 2017 – 3 January 2018)

Opening Hours

Thu & Fri 15 – 19; Sat & Sun 12 – 16

Opening

27 September 2017, 7 pm

Location

DAS VERBORGENE MUSEUM
Dokumentation der Kunst von
Frauen e.V.,
Schlüterstraße 70, 10625 Berlin
www.dasverborgenemuseum.de

Contact

berlin@dasverborgenemuseum.de

Direction

S 3, 5, 7, 75 Savigny Platz
U 2 Ernst-Reuter-Platz
Bus M49, X34, 101 Schlüterstraße

Admission

3,- €, discounted 1,50 €

Supported by Senatskanzlei Berlin,
Kulturelle Angelegenheiten,
Künstlerinnenprogramm



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The Soviet war correspondents **Natalya Bode** and **Olga Lander** made a sensational contribution. Working for the Red Army, they provided pictures for major newspapers, magazines and agencies. We only have a sketchy idea of their lives and work, but their photographs, taken at scenes like the Battle of Stalingrad, are unique documents. Yet when they returned to civilian life, they encountered much distrust and contempt.

The exhibition ends with a few specimens from the scantily researched history of German women working as photographers in World War II (**Erika Schmachtenberger**, **Lala Aufsberg**, **Liselotte Purper**). From occupied Libya (1942) and the Balkans (1941-43), **Ilse Steinhoff** provided pictures for conforming Nazi publications like "BIZ", "Signal" and "Die Wehrmacht".

An exhibition with approx. 70 photographs, prints and drawings, magazines and documents, by Eva Besnyö (H/NL), Natalja Bode (SU), Christina Broom (GB), Käthe Buchler (D), Mairi Chisholm (GB), Olive Edis (GB), Vera Elkan (GB), Florence Farmborough (GB), Ruth Hallensleben (D), Elsie Klocker (GB), Germaine Krull (D/F), Olga Lander (SU), Alice Schalek (A), Ilse Steinhoff (D), Gerda Taro (D/F), Edith Tudor Hart (A/GB)



Natalja Bode: Nach der Einnahme einer deutschen Stellung vor Stalingrad, Stalingrader Front, Januar 1943 [© FotoSojus, Moskau]

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