

Hannah Höch

15 January – 23 March 2014

Galleries 1, 8 & Victor Petitgas Gallery (Gallery 9)

The Whitechapel Gallery presents the first major UK exhibition of the influential German artist Hannah Höch (1889-1978).

Hannah Höch was an important member of the Berlin Dada movement and a pioneer in collage. Splicing together images taken from popular magazines, illustrated journals and fashion publications, she created a humorous and moving commentary on society during a time of tremendous social change. Acerbic, astute and funny, Höch established collage as a key medium for satire whilst being a master of its poetic beauty.

Höch created some of the most radical works of the time and was admired by contemporaries such as George Grosz, Theo van Doesburg and Kurt Schwitters, yet she was often overlooked by traditional art history. At a time when her work has never seemed more relevant, the exhibition puts this inspiring figure in the spotlight.

Bringing together over 100 works from major international collections, the exhibition includes collages, photomontages, watercolours and woodcuts, spanning six decades from the 1910s to the 1970s. Highlights include major works such as *Staatshäupter (Heads of State)* (1918-20) and *Flucht (Flight)* (1931) as well as her innovative post-war collages.

This exhibition charts Höch's career beginning with early works influenced by her time working in the fashion industry to key photomontages from her Dada period, such as *Hochfinanz (High Finance)* (1923), which sees notable figures collaged together with emblems of industry in a critique of the relationship between financiers and the military at the height of an economic crisis in Europe.

Höch explored the concept of the 'New Woman' in Weimar Germany, presenting complex discussions around gender and identity in a series of both biting and poignant collages. The exhibition includes a number of works from the series *From an Ethnographic Museum*, in which Höch combines images of female bodies with traditional masks and objects and layers of block colours, capturing the style of the 1920s avant-garde theatre and fashion.

Höch remained in Germany during World War II and retreated to a house just outside Berlin. Entering a period of lyrical abstraction that explores the materials and possibilities of a newly developing consumer culture, the exhibition includes her later works, such as the *Raumfahrt (Space Travel)* (1956) as well as *Um Einen Roten Mund (Around a Red Mouth)* (c. 1967) which joyously makes use of cut-outs from colour-print and popular culture, incorporating red lips, petticoats and crystals.

Notes for Editors

- Hannah Höch was born on 1 November, 1889, in Gotha, Germany. In 1912 she enrolled in the Berlin School of Applied Arts and in 1915 studied at the Museum of Applied Arts in Berlin. Meeting her long-term partner and fellow artist Raoul Hausmann in the same year, she became an essential contributor to the Berlin Dada Group and exhibited at the First International Dada Fair in Berlin in 1920. During the late 1920s, Höch travelled around Europe, forming friendships with Piet Mondrian and Theo van Doesburg and beginning a relationship with the female poet Til Brugman, whom she lived with for the

Press Release

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next decade. Höch's work was referenced in relation to the artists included in the infamous exhibition *Entartete Kunst (Degenerate Art)* in 1937, a propagandistic display of works considered 'degenerate' by Hitler and the National Socialists. Höch remained in Germany during World War II and retreated to a house just outside Berlin where she continued to make work. After the war, Höch's work was exhibited internationally and to great acclaim, culminating in a retrospective at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, and the Berlin Nationalgalerie in 1976. She remained in Berlin until her death in 1978.

- Major retrospectives of work by Hannah Höch include: Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris / Neue Nationalgalerie; Berlin (1976); Museum of Modern Art, New York, (1997) and the Reina Sofia, Madrid (2004).
- Hannah Höch is curated by Daniel F. Herrmann, Eisler Curator and Head of Curatorial Studies, and art historian, Prof. Dawn Ades CBE, with Emily Butler, Assistant Curator.
- Hannah Höch is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue co-published by Prestel at the special exhibition price of £29.95. It provides a definitive monograph on the artist's works on paper and include original texts by Höch, translated for the first time into English.
- With additional support from the Goethe-Institut London.

Visitor Information

Opening times: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am – 6pm, Thursdays, 11am – 9pm.

Admission £9.95/£7.95 concs (including Gift Aid donation) £8.95/£6.95 concs (without Gift Aid). Whitechapel Gallery, 77 – 82 Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. Nearest London Underground Station: Aldgate East, Liverpool Street, Tower Gateway DLR. T + 44 (0) 20 7522 7888 info@whitechapelgallery.org
<http://www.whitechapelgallery.org/exhibitions/hannah-hoch>

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