







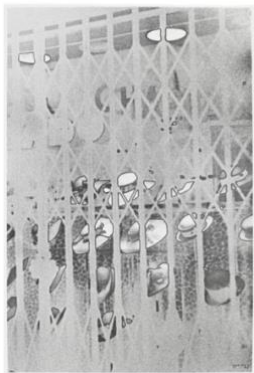



Collection Selection Box
Fashion Photography (1910 – 45)

V&A

Introduction

This box contains a selection of works by photographers working in fashion between 1910 and 1945. The works cover a range of photographic styles and techniques, showing the influences of artistic movements such as Aestheticism, Modernism and Surrealism upon commercial fashion photography.

Box 1: Fashion Photography (1910 – 45)

			
<p>Baron Adolphe de Meyer (1868 – 1946) Fashion Study, Two Models at a Table 1919 Gelatin silver print Museum no. PH.210-1985</p>	<p>Germaine Krull (1897 – 1985) Mannequins 1925 Gelatin silver print Museum no. PH.228-1985</p>	<p>George Hoyningen-Huene (1900 – 68) Photo shoot with beachwear by Schiaparelli British Vogue 1928 Gelatin silver print Museum no. PH.723-1987</p>	<p>Edward Steichen (1879 – 1973) Evening Dresses for Vogue American Vogue 1930 Gelatin silver print Museum no. CIRC.969-1967</p>
			
<p>Ilse Bing (1899 – 1998) Hats, Hats, Hats 1934 (photographed) 1985 (printed) Paris, France Photograph from solarised negative Museum no. E.3059-2004</p>	<p>Sir Cecil Beaton (1904 – 80) Miss Mary Taylor American Vogue 1935 Gelatin silver print Museum no. PH.191-1977</p>	<p>Norman Parkinson (1913 – 90) Bettine Milton in Wedding Dress 1930s London Gelatin silver print Museum no. E.245-2013</p>	<p>Herbert List (1903 – 75) Schneiderpuppen (or 'Die Sklavin I') 1936 London Gelatin silver print Museum no. PH.53-1981</p>



Peter Rose Pulham (1910 – 56)
Fashion Study
About 1933–36
Gelatin silver print
Museum no. CIRC.7-1977



Horst P. Horst (1906 – 99)
Mainbocher Corset
American Vogue
1939
Gelatin silver print
Museum no. PH.222-1985



Toni Frissell (1907 – 88)
Model underwater
American Vogue
1939
Gelatin silver print
Museum no. PH.11-1986

Baron Adolphe de Meyer (1868 – 1946)
Fashion Study, Two Models at a Table
1919
Gelatin silver print
Museum no. PH.210-1985



Adolphe de Meyer became *Vogue's* first contract photographer in 1913. Condé Montrose Nast (1873 – 1942), the owner of the society magazine, was drawn to de Meyer as much for his social connections as his renown as a portrait photographer. In 1899 de Meyer married Olga Caracciolo, the rumoured illegitimate daughter of Edward, Prince of Wales. He was then made a baron by King Frederick Augustus III at the Prince's request, in order to attend the latter's coronation. The chic couple travelled Europe together and de Meyer photographed many of their famous acquaintances in a style influenced by the painters of the Aesthetic movement. His sparkling fashion pictures, romantic portraits and still lifes appeared in *Vogue* alongside fashion illustrations by artists such as Georges Barbier (1882 – 1932), Pierre Brissaud (1885 – 1964) and Charles Martin (1884 – 1934). He depicted women as cosseted and passive creatures; wearing ethereal creations by Parisian couturiers, they lounged in elegant interiors or sun-dappled gardens. In 1922 he was lured to *Harper's Bazaar* to become its chief photographer in Paris.

At a glance, this image of two models at a table seems to be taken outdoors. In fact, it was made in a studio, where de Meyer was able to control the environment to produce the delicate, impressionistic idiom that was characteristic of his photographic style. De Meyer used an 8 x 10-inch plate camera with a ground-glass back that was sharp in the centre but less so around the edges. His masterful use of backlighting creates an aureole around each of the women, transforming their hats into halos.

Germaine Krull (1897 – 1985)
Mannequins
1925
Gelatin silver print
Museum no. PH.228-1985



Krull led an extraordinary life, travelling and working throughout Europe, Asia, South America and Africa. She is known for her contribution to Modernism, a form- focussed style of photography popular in Europe in the 1920s and '30s. The eminent Man Ray (1890 – 1976), famously said: "Germaine, you and I are the greatest photographers of our time – I in the old sense, you in the Modern one".

Krull moved to Paris in 1926, where she embraced fashion photography and began working for the fabric designer Sonia Delaunay. Her artistic practice developed during the 1920s, and she published the ground-breaking photo-book *Métal* in 1928. Throughout the 1930s, Krull's photographs appeared frequently in *VU* magazine and *Variété*, a Belgian Surrealist-influenced publication. Krull's political convictions led her to join the French Resistance in 1941 and after the war she travelled to Bangkok, Brazil and India. She continued to photograph throughout her travels, and enjoyed a long and versatile career a portraitist, fashion photographer and photojournalist.

During the 1920s, Krull worked with fashion designers Paul Poiret and Sonia Delaunay in Paris. This photograph aptly embodies Krull's involvement with both fashion and Modernism, two defining elements of her early career. Modernism valued experimentation with shape and form, which can be seen here in the bold lines of the mannequins, shadows and asymmetrical garments. Krull later departed from this style of photography, adopting a more photojournalistic approach.

George Hoyningen-Huene (1900 – 68)
Photo shoot with beachwear by Schiaparelli
British Vogue
1928
Gelatin silver print
Museum no. PH.723-1987

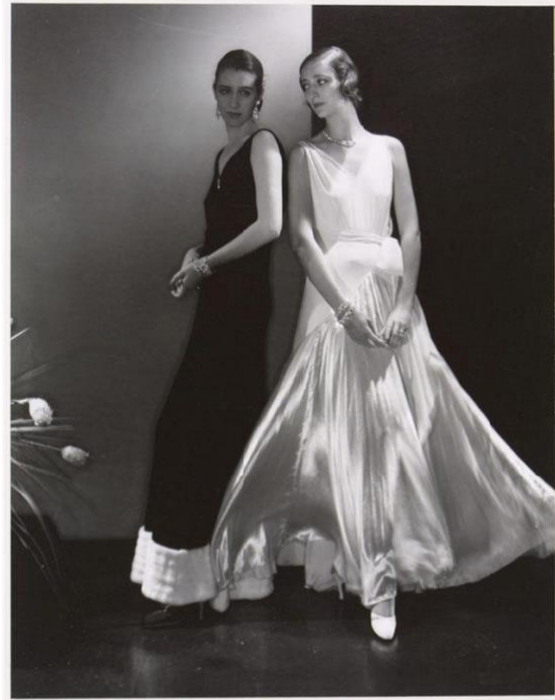


Russian-born Hoyningen-Huene first gained renown through a project with Man Ray in the 1920s to produce a portfolio of 'the most beautiful women in Paris'. Hoyningen-Huene explained: 'Man was to take the pictures and I was to supply the sitters as well as the props and backgrounds'. The portfolio's success led him to join French *Vogue* in 1926, where he produced coolly refined studio pictures, often inspired by ancient Greek sculpture and classical forms.

Hoyningen-Huene worked at *Vogue* in Paris and then *Harper's Bazaar* in New York until 1946, finally settling in Los Angeles in 1947 after a period in Mexico. He remained in Los Angeles teaching at the University of California until his death in 1968. During his career Hoyningen-Huene exhibited widely, including at the seminal 1929 photography exhibition *Film und Foto* [Film and Photo] in Stuttgart. He was well-connected throughout European and American photography circles, and worked closely with other photographers such as Lee Miller (1907 – 77) and Horst P. Horst (1906 – 99).

This image depicts model Bettina Jones wearing a two-piece bathing suite made by Italian fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli (1890 – 1973). The bathing suit consists of a black and white striped sweater over black flannel shorts, and features side buttons and striped bathing socks. The image is meticulously constructed and reveals Hoyningen-Huene's painterly sense of geometry, volume, light and shade. He was the first fashion photographer to employ male models extensively. One of his early male models was Horst P. Horst, who was also his protégé and companion.

Edward Steichen (1879 – 1973)
Evening Dresses for Vogue
American Vogue
1930
Gelatin silver print
Museum no. CIRC.969-1967

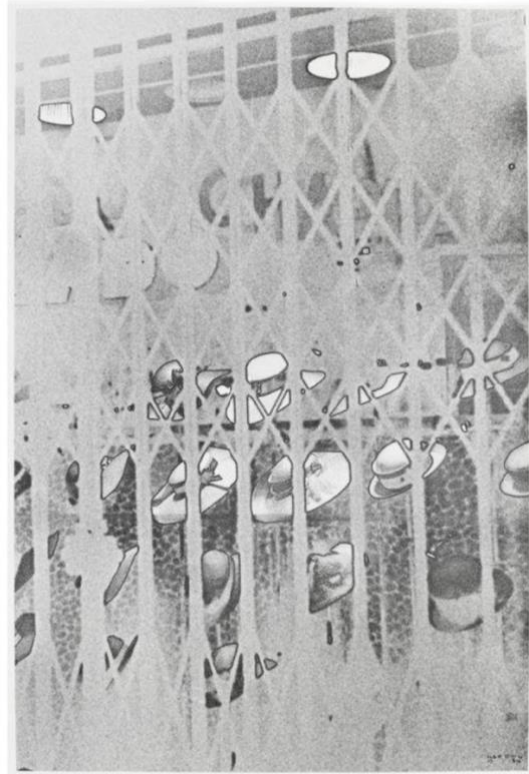


Steichen began his career as a fashion photographer in 1911, when he was commissioned by the luxury periodical *Art et Décoration* [Art and Decoration]. Thirteen of his photographs showing garments by the 'belle-époque' designer Paul Poiret (1879 – 1944) were featured alongside the article *L'art de la Robe* [The Art of Dress]. Although Steichen did not then return to fashion until the 1920s, he later called these images 'the first serious fashion photographs ever made'. Steichen joined Condé Nast in 1923 as Chief of Photography, working for magazines like *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*. He brought a sharply modern aesthetic to fashion imagery. Steichen also worked with advertising agencies, who were increasingly using photographs rather than graphic arts in their campaigns.

In this period, Steichen was widely considered to be one of the best paid and best known photographers in the world. Steichen retired from fashion and commercial photography in 1937. During Second World War, he was Director of the Naval Aviation Photographic Unit. Following the War Steichen was appointed Director of the Photography Department at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. He remained in this post until retiring in 1962.

This photograph appeared in the American edition of *Vogue* magazine. It epitomises the glamour of 1930s fashion and captures the desirable look of the period. Fashion photographs were increasingly replacing illustrations in magazines, so new schools and agencies for models were opening in New York. Steichen described Marion Morehouse as 'the best fashion model I ever worked with.' Her willowy silhouette was ideal for displaying the fashions of the 1920s and '30s, such as this Grecian-inspired, bias-cut dresses by Madeleine Vionnet.

Ilse Bing (1899 – 1998)
Hats, Hats, Hats
1934 (photographed)
1985 (printed)
Paris, France
Photograph from solarised negative
Museum no. E.3059-2004



Bing was one of several prominent female photographers during 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. Bing worked prolifically in advertising and fashion, architectural photography and photojournalism. She became known for unusual angles and cropping, and her work was published in magazines including *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Le Monde Illustré*.

Bing's work was exhibited around the world in photographic exhibitions in the later 1930s, including the first modern photography exhibition held at the Louvre in Paris. In 1941 Bing emigrated to New York to escape Jewish persecution. She would remain in New York until her death in 1998. Bing continued to make photographs throughout the 1940s and 1950s, working exclusively in colour from 1957. However, in 1959 she gave up photography altogether and instead devoted herself to painting and poetry.

Fashion photographers George Hoyningen-Huene and Horst P. Horst photographed fashions with cumbersome 10 x 8 inch plate cameras, largely confining their work to the studio. In contrast, Bing's portable Leica provided her with the freedom to roam. She first experimented with the technique of solarisation in 1934 in Paris. Solarisation happens when negatives are exposed to light in the darkroom during developing and printing, producing partly reversed images. Bing's experiments developed from an interest in light. She explained at the time that 'light was considered the medium that permits photography. But for me it became the main subject: the protagonist of my photography'. The abstract feel caused by solarisation creates an unusual effect as the hats float behind the grid, taking on new and surreal qualities.

Sir Cecil Beaton (1904 – 80)
Miss Mary Taylor
American Vogue
1935
Gelatin silver print
Museum no. PH.191-1977

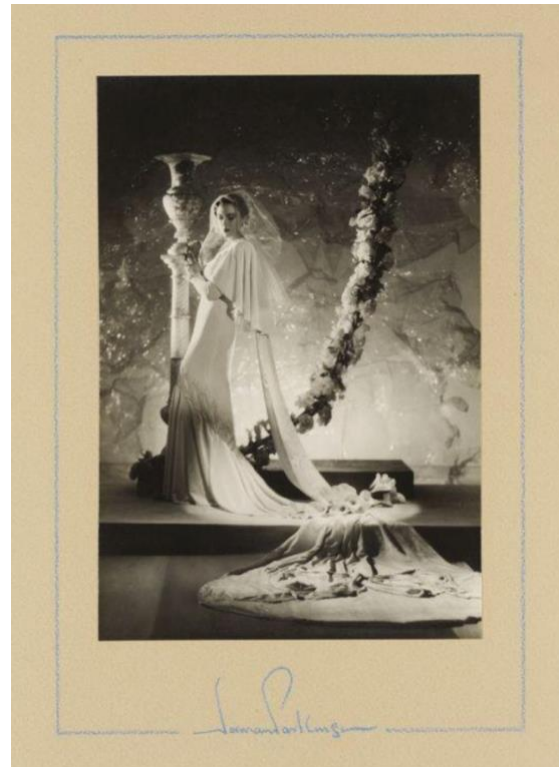


Cecil Beaton pursued photography from an early age. He spent his teenage years attempting to recreate the look of portraits by photographers such as Lallie Charles (1869 – 1919), substituting his sisters Nancy and Barbara for the stars of stage and screen. A social climber, he submitted his portraits of female relations to newspapers and magazines, where they appeared on the society pages under pseudonyms such as ‘Crivelli’, after Renaissance artist Carlo Crivelli. Beaton launched his career as a society photographer in 1927 with an exhibition in London that won him a contract with *Vogue*. His first contributions to the publication were delicate, spidery sketches, but he soon began photographing fashions. In 1939 he took a series of highly romanticised photographs of Queen Elizabeth (later the Queen Mother). They mark the beginning of Beaton’s long career as a royal photographer which continued until 1979. His photographs were an important part of the promotion of the ‘new’ Royal Family in the press.

Throughout Second World War, Beaton undertook work for the British government alongside his commissions for magazines and theatre design. In 1942 he flew to Cairo to take photographs for the Ministry of Information and then travelled on to China. After the War, Beaton resumed his increasingly successful career as designer and photographer, and published a series of books of his wartime work. He also designed sets and costumes for Hollywood films such as *Gigi* (1957) and *My Fair Lady* (1963), for which he won two Oscars in 1964. He continued to paint and photograph throughout the 1970s, even after a severe stroke in 1974. He died in 1980.

Beaton began photographing fashions for *Vogue* with a small Kodak 3A camera, providing his own theatrical props. He worked for the magazine from 1926 until 1976, and his style constantly evolved to keep up with changing trends. This image includes shadows of lighting equipment and a seam across the backdrop. Such faults would have been retouched before the image was printed in the magazine. Beaton has positioned a halo of light around Taylor’s head, which, together with the set and accessories, creates a sense of romanticism and nostalgia for the 19th century.

Norman Parkinson (1913 – 90)
Bettine Milton in Wedding Dress
1930s
London
Gelatin silver print
Museum no. E.245-2013

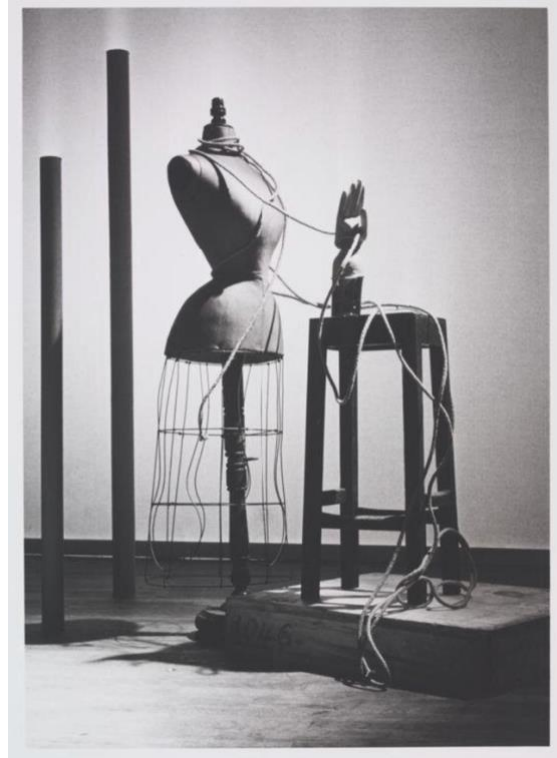


London-born Parkinson began his career as a photographer in 1931, working as an apprentice to the Bond Street Court Photographer Richard Speaight. In 1934, he set up the Norman Parkinson Studio with Norman Kibblewhite at One Dover Street, specialising in portraiture. His first solo exhibition was staged in 1935 and included portraits of Vivien Leigh (1913 – 67) and Noel Coward (1899 – 1973). In the same year, he was recruited by *Harper's Bazaar* to take editorial photographs. During the Second World War, Parkinson served as a reconnaissance photographer over France for the Royal Air Force.

Parkinson embarked on a long association with British *Vogue* in 1942, becoming one of the magazine's star photographers. From 1960 to 1964, he was an associate contributing editor of *Queen* magazine. In the 1960s, he began taking official portraits for the British Royal Family. Parkinson was elected Honorary Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society and was appointed CBE in 1981. In the same year, a major retrospective of his work was held at the National Portrait Gallery, marking his fiftieth year in photography. Parkinson continued to work as a freelance photographer until his death in 1990, while on assignment in Singapore. Throughout his long career, Parkinson charmed his sitters with his idiosyncratic persona and elegant style. He is remembered today as one of fathers of modern fashion photography.

Bettine Milton was a house model for the British designer Colin Becke. This photograph is an example of Norman Parkinson's early studio work. The sensuous lighting and opulent set design accentuates the elegant details of the gown. Parkinson's long career would take him all over the globe and he is best remembered today for capturing fashion in exotic locations and employing unusual props and juxtapositions.

Herbert List (1903 – 75)
Schneiderpuppen (or 'Die Sklavin I')
1936
London
Gelatin silver print
Museum no. PH.53-1981



List was born into a wealthy merchant family in Hamburg. He first began experimenting with photography in the 1920s, whilst travelling abroad for his family's coffee business. List returned to Hamburg in 1929 and began working with a Rolleiflex camera, a lightweight and compact camera that produced high quality images. List drew inspiration from European avant-garde art groups of the time, such as the Surrealists and the Bauhaus. In 1936, List left Germany for political reasons, moving further west and continuing to work in London and Paris.

In Paris, List met fellow photographer George Hoyningen-Huene, who referred him to *Harper's Bazaar*. However, List was not satisfied with commissions for fashion publications. Instead, he developed a personal practice of composing still lifes in his studio. In the late 1930s, List spent much time in Greece photographing landscapes, ancient artworks and heritage sites. He continued to travel in Europe during and after the Second World War, and some of his best known images from this period depict post-war Munich. List joined the photography collective Magnum in the 1950s and began working with a smaller and more portable 35mm camera. He travelled to Spain, Mexico, Morocco and the Caribbean on assignment for Magnum, before ending his photography career in the early 1960s.

This photograph was taken in the studio at fashion magazine *Harper's Bazaar*, shortly after List began working with the publication. The unnerving composition conveys List's interest in Surrealism. The arrangement of the clothes form, cord and furniture suggest a sense of absurdity, which becomes somewhat sinister once informed by the title of 'Female Slave'. List explained that his dream-like photographs were 'composed visions where arrangements try to capture the magical essence inhabiting and animating the world of appearances.'

Peter Rose Pulham (1910 – 56)
Fashion Study
About 1933 – 36
Gelatin silver print
Museum no. CIRC.7-1977



Peter Rose Pulham was born in Norfolk in 1910. He briefly studied at the London School of Architecture before attending Oxford University, where he became familiar with Cecil Beaton's Vogue photographs. Pulham moved to London in 1928, where he stayed at the Cavendish Hotel in Jermyn Street. This hotel was seen, at the time, to be the centre of London's 'high bohemia,' and Pulham became active in the contemporary arts scene of the day. His acquaintances included writer Evelyn Waugh (1903–66), poet Brian Howard (1905 – 58), and painter John Banting (1902 – 72). Pulham set up a studio in Berkeley Square and began working for *Harper's Bazaar* in the 1930s.

In 1936 he moved to Paris, where he came into contact with important Surrealist and Neo-Romantic painters such as Salvador Dali (1904 – 89) and Christian Bérard (1902 – 49). Pulham was inspired by these painters and their influence could be seen in his photographs. He would often manipulate his prints, applying ink or bleach, or deliberately adding fingerprints in order to counteract the pristine nature of fashion photography at the time. Pulham stayed in Paris and took up painting in the second half of the 1930s, until the outbreak of war forced him to return to England. After the war, Pulham sporadically continued practicing photography until his death in 1956.

This photograph is a rare example of Pulham's work. He frequently destroyed both his negatives and prints, so few examples of his photography exist except for in magazines. This image was made while he was working for *Harper's Bazaar* and the dreamlike, bohemian feel seems to pre-empt his later preoccupation with Surrealism. Cecil Beaton praised Pulham's work, commenting that it held 'a mysterious pernicious and enigmatic quality.'

Horst P. Horst (1906 – 99)
Mainbocher Corset
American Vogue
1939
Gelatin silver print
Museum no. PH.222-1985



German-born photographer Horst P. Horst was the only major fashion photographer of the 20th century whose work comprehensively straddled both the pre-war and post-war periods. He witnessed the development of fashion photography from early, elaborate sets to an understated elegance. Horst was originally a student of architecture, but began making fashion photographs for *Vogue* in the 1930s; the first photographs credited to his name were published in the December 1931 issue of French *Vogue*. Horst worked internationally for British, French and American *Vogue* for decades, however, he never limited himself to fashion photography and excelled at many genres, from portraiture to trompe l'oeil still life. Horst drew inspiration from Bauhaus design, Surrealism and Neo-Romanticism, and his fascination with the shapes, proportions and poses of classical Greek sculpture is evident in his early work. Horst's meticulously planned studio photographs requisitioned the talents of *Vogue's* team of decorators, craftsmen, assistants and lighting experts.

With war looming in the late 1930s, many photographers and artists fled Europe for America. This picture, Horst's most iconic image, was the last photograph he took in Paris before he left for New York just before Second World War broke out. It was published in American *Vogue* in December 1939. The corseted waist silhouette harked back to wasp-waisted fashions in the Victorian era. In this version of the photograph, as it was published in *Vogue*, the corset has been retouched to appear to cling tightly to the body. However, the original image is more provocative as the corset hangs loosely at one side. Horst was a master of dramatic studio lighting and known to spend days perfecting the arrangement of lights for a shoot. To create the deep shadows and highlights here he used spotlights and reflectors. So complex was the lighting, Horst said he would not be able to recreate it. Horst later said of this photograph: 'It was created by emotion... It was the last photo I took in Paris before the war... The photograph is peculiar for me. While I was taking it, I was thinking of all that I was leaving behind.'

Toni Frissell (1907 – 88)
Model underwater
American Vogue
1939
Gelatin silver print
Museum no. PH.11-1986



Antoinette (Toni) Frissell was born in New York. She trained as an actress and worked in advertising before taking up photography at the encouragement of *Vogue* fashion editor Carmel Snow. In 1931, Frissell negotiated a contract as a photographer with Condé Nast and began apprenticing with photographer Cecil Beaton. Throughout the 1930s, Frissell worked for *Vogue* and later, between 1941 and 1950, she made pictures for *Harper's Bazaar*. Her work emphasised the idea of active women, often photographing models outside or underwater with a straightforward aesthetic. This resulted in realistic images, which differed from the staged fashion photographs more common at the time.

During the Second World War, Frissell worked for the American Red Cross and the Eighth Army Air Force. She became the official photographer of the Woman's Army Corps and took photos of nurses, front-line soldiers, airmen and war scenes. Frissell continued to work for fashion publications during the 1940s, but soon became disillusioned with the nature of the industry and produced little fashion work after 1950. Instead, she joined the staff of *Sports Illustrated* as their first female photographer. Frissell also continued to work as a freelance location photographer for *LIFE*, *Look* and *Vogue* until her retirement in 1967. Frissell's photographs evoke a sense of spontaneity that mark a departure from the staged or studio-based fashion photographs that were popular throughout the 1930s. Her working processes reflect those of Martin Munkácsi (1896 – 1963), a prominent 20th century photographer whose images also emphasise movement and a carefree, instinctive attitude. This photograph of a model underwater displays typical elements of Frissell's style. She used an unusual, low perspective, which makes the model seem longer and more ethereal as she floats submerged in the water. The model's face is also obscured, leaving the viewer to focus on the garments.