

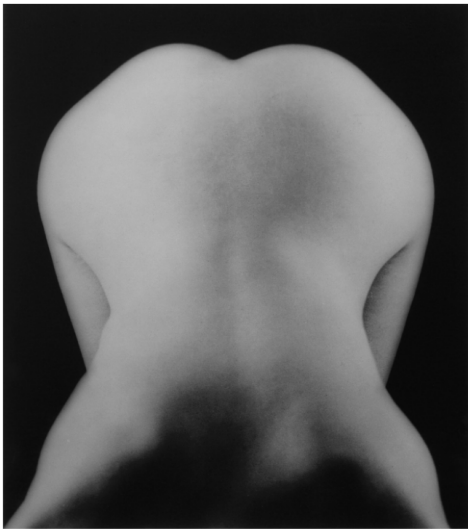
## MEDIA RELEASE

25 September 2023



### HEIDE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART PRESENTS A MAJOR SURVEY OF GROUND-BREAKING PHOTOGRAPHER LEE MILLER

4 November 2023 – 25 February 2024



**Melbourne, Australia:** Heide Museum of Modern Art has today announced a major survey exhibition of ground-breaking twentieth century American photographic artist **Lee Miller** (1907–1977), presented from **4 November 2023 to 25 February 2024**. Curated by Miller's son **Antony Penrose**, the exhibition **Surrealist Lee Miller** brings **100** photographs from across the artist's remarkable oeuvre to Australia.

A Surrealist before the movement had a name, Lee Miller was one of the most original photographic artists of the twentieth century. Defying the expectations placed on her as a woman and an artist, she was as unconventional in her life as in her work. The exhibition **Surrealist Lee Miller** reveals how Miller captured the intensity of her experiences in unforgettable images spanning a remarkably broad oeuvre: from portrait, fashion and surrealist photography in New York and Paris, to landscape and architecture, coverage of the horrors of the Second World War, and the extraordinary world of her creative circle, which included **Man Ray, Picasso, Max Ernst, Dora Maar** and many others.

**Curator and Co-director of Lee Miller Archives Antony Penrose said:** *"I am delighted to bring this exhibition of the work of my mother, one of the most remarkable female photographers of the twentieth century, to the Heide Museum of Modern Art here in Australia. This is an opportunity to share the originality and breadth of her work, including her images from Paris, New York and Egypt, her Vogue fashion shoots and images of London during the blitz, her documentation of*

# MEDIA RELEASE

25 September 2023



*the liberation of France and the horrors of Dachau and Buchenwald concentration camps. In all these areas her surrealist way of seeing is self-evident and aligns with her commitment to the ideals of that movement. Peace, freedom, justice and truth were her fundamental values from her beginning as a Vogue fashion model to her later role as a highly significant WWII frontline war time photographer. Much of her life and her photography was dedicated to making the importance of those values evident to others, as Lee's commitment to honesty and truth was fundamental to her life and art."*

**Heide Museum of Modern Art Head Curator Kendrah Morgan said:** *"Heide has long been committed to shining a light on the contributions of under-acknowledged women artists, and we feel especially privileged to present the work of Lee Miller, who created some of the most memorable photographic images of the twentieth century. A truly modern woman, Miller was an exact contemporary of Heide founder Sunday Reed, and intriguing parallels exist between the Reeds' support of avant-garde artists, and Miller and her husband Roland Penrose's promotion of their creative circle of surrealists."*

While known for her war work and portraits of her famous contemporaries like Picasso (who painted Lee Miller six times), it is Miller's surrealist images that endure with a fresh directness. Through the 100 photographs on display at Heide, audiences will discover the artist's strong sense of the surrealist notions of incongruity, dislocation, dark humour and the uncanny, and her ability to perceive and capture surprising juxtapositions or elements of the marvellous in everyday subjects. Miller's surrealist eye extends to her remarkable work as an official correspondent during the Second World War and creation of images in which the unreality of war assumes a disquieting beauty.

It is only in recent years that the extent of Miller's photographic legacy has begun to be fully explored, largely due to Antony Penrose's discovery of a vast archive of his later mother's work in an attic after her death in 1977. Since then, Miller has been recognised as an important artist and contributor to not only the surrealist movement, but also the development of photography as an art form.

In early September the movie *LEE* was launched at the Toronto International Film Festival, presenting the inspiring life of Lee Miller based on Antony Penrose's biography *The Lives of Lee Miller*. Directed by **Ellen Kuras** and produced by and starring **Kate Winslet**, the film will be released in Australia during the run of Heide's exhibition. Penrose's new book *Lee Miller: Photographs*, with foreword by Kate Winslet, will also be available to purchase at Heide as part of the exhibition.

**Surrealist Lee Miller** is a rare chance for Australian audiences to experience the extraordinary oeuvre of the groundbreaking photographic artist through 100 photographs that traverse her life and career.

*Ends*

**MEDIA CONTACT:** For further information or interview requests, please contact Isabel Wright, [isabel@articulatepr.com.au](mailto:isabel@articulatepr.com.au), 0400 359 485, or Claire Martin, [claire@articulatepr.com.au](mailto:claire@articulatepr.com.au), 0414 437 588

# MEDIA RELEASE

25 September 2023



## EXHIBITION DETAILS:

*Surrealist Lee Miller*

4 November 2023 to 25 February 2024

Heide Museum of Modern Art, 7 Templestowe Road, Bulleen Victoria 3105

## IMAGES AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD [HERE](#)

**IMAGES CAPTIONS (L - R):** *Nude bent forward, Paris, France* c.1930 by Lee Miller (NC0109-2) © Lee Miller Archives England 2023. All Rights Reserved. [www.leemiller.co.uk](http://www.leemiller.co.uk); *Fire Masks, Downshire Hill, London, England 1941* by Lee Miller (3840-8) © Lee Miller Archives England 2023. All Rights Reserved. [www.leemiller.co.uk](http://www.leemiller.co.uk); *Portrait of Space, Al Bulwayeb, near Siwa, Egypt 1937* by Lee Miller © Lee Miller Archives England 2023. All Rights Reserved. [www.leemiller.co.uk](http://www.leemiller.co.uk)

## ABOUT LEE MILLER

Lee Miller first entered the world of photography in New York as a fashion model to the great photographers of the day such as Edward Steichen, Nickolas Muray and Arnold Genthe.

In 1929 she went to Paris and worked with the well known surrealist artist and photographer Man Ray and photographer George Hoyningen-Huene. By 1930 she succeeded in establishing her own studio. She became known as a portraitist and fashion photographer, but her most enduring body of work is that of her surrealist images. She returned to New York in 1932, and again set up her own studio which ran for two years and was highly successful. It closed when she married a wealthy Egyptian businessman Aziz Eloui Bey and went to live with him in Cairo, Egypt. She became fascinated by long range desert travel and photographed desert villages, architecture, and the landscape. During a visit to Paris in 1937 she met Roland Penrose, the writer and surrealist artist who was to become her second husband, and travelled with him to Greece and Romania. In 1939 she left Egypt for London shortly before World War II broke out. She moved in with Roland Penrose and defying orders from the US Embassy to return to America, she took a job as a freelance photographer for *Vogue*.

In December 1942 Miller became a correspondent accredited to the US Army, and teamed up with *Time Life* photographer David E. Scherman. She followed the US troops overseas on D Day + 20. She was probably the only woman combat photo-journalist to cover the front-line war in Europe and among her many exploits she witnessed the siege of St Malo, the Liberation of Paris, the fighting in Luxembourg and Alsace, the Russian/American link up at Torgau, and the liberation of Buchenwald and Dachau. She billeted in both Hitler and Eva Braun's houses in Munich, and photographed Hitler's house Wachenfeld in Obersalzburgh near Berchtesgaden in flames on the eve of Germany's surrender. Penetrating deep into Eastern Europe, she covered harrowing scenes of children dying in Vienna, peasant life in post war Hungary and finally the execution of Prime Minister Lazlo Bardossy.

After the war Miller continued to contribute to *Vogue* for a further six years, covering fashion and celebrities. In 1947 she married Roland Penrose and assisted with his biographies of Picasso, Miró, Man Ray and Tàpies. Some of her images of

# MEDIA RELEASE

25 September 2023



famous artists such as Picasso are considered the most powerful portraits of the individuals ever produced, but it is mainly for the compelling surrealist images which permeate all her work that she is best remembered.

Lee Miller died at Farley Farm, Sussex in 1977.

## ABOUT HEIDE

Set on sixteen acres of parkland with Yarra River frontage, Heide Museum of Modern Art, or Heide as it is affectionately known, is one of Australia's most important cultural institutions. Once a significant Wurundjeri gathering place, the property was later a dairy farm before becoming known as a hub for Australian modernist art and writing after it was purchased by art patrons John and Sunday Reed in 1934.

The Reeds opened their home to the most progressive artists of their era, including Sidney Nolan, Albert Tucker, Joy Hester, John Perceval, Charles Blackman and Danila Vassilieff. Nolan's famous Ned Kelly series (1946–47) was painted in the dining room of the Heide farmhouse.

Continuing this spirited legacy, today Heide works to inspire creative talent, collaborating with emerging and mid-career artists as well as celebrating those who have made major contributions to Australian and international art.