Jonathan Long

Krull, Germaine (1897-1985)

One of the major photographers of the interwar European avant-garde, Germaine Krull produced work that was highly diverse in both subject-matter and technique. Her most characteristic early images are nudes exploring lesbian sexuality, and street scenes of Berlin. She is best known, though, for *Métal* (1928), a portfolio of sixty-four images which gathers together industrial photographs taken in Holland, France and Germany. *Métal* embodies a new kind of industrial aesthetic, in which concentration on decontextualised details and fragments rather than the entirety of machines and buildings seeks to highlight the beauty of modern industrial forms. Krull lived in Paris from 1926 to 1935, and played a major role in importing the avant-garde photographic techniques of Neues Sehen (New Vision), developed in Central Europe, into France. Her French period is marked by studio work, pioneering photoreportage, and street photography, some of the latter collected in the book *100 x Paris* (1929), in which conventional images of the metropolis are interspersed with street scenes employing avant-garde techniques. During World War Two, Krull worked as co-ordinator of the Free French photographic service in Africa. After 1945, she lived largely in Thailand and India, her later photographs documenting the lives of Tibetans in India.

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