

**MAN RAY**

*Emak-Bakia*

May 20 - June 20, 2023

During the summer of 1926, between Bidart and Guéthary, *Emak-Bakia* was born.

Cinépoème, or experimental film, Man Ray's *Emak-Bakia*, was made in a characteristic villa of the time (bearing the name of the film) perched on the cliff of Parlemtia. Commissioned by American philanthropist Arthur Wheeler, the film, alongside being a classic portrayal of Man Ray's Dadaist experiments, represents one of the few vestiges of the passage to the Basque Country, by some of the world's greatest Surrealist and Dadaist artists.

*Emak-Bakia* is Man Ray's first complete film (excluding a swiftly improvised 3 minute sequence of rayograph-esque images, titled *Le Retour a la raison*, made in 1923). The film presents a succession of interspersed images - an eye reflected in the camera lens; floating nails; a field of flowers; Ray's eponymous light effects; abstract shapes; an eye; Mr. Wheeler's wife in her elegant automobile; a young woman dancing the Charleston; the movement of the waves; fish; Ray's sculpture, made while in Guéthary, entitled "Fisherman's Idol", a violin, and an ensuing succession of sundry floating objects. The main protagonist is Man Ray's muse of that time, Kiki de Montparnasse, opening and closing her eyes, the lids of which have been painted with a second pair of eyes.

In the first of three films to be made by Man Ray, and amongst the most experimental, the techniques employed in the film were ones that Ray built on for years to come, and demonstrates the early development of film-based artworks, which went on to greatly influence artists and filmmakers alike for the continuation of the twentieth century.

Alongside *Emak-Bakia*, we are delighted to present the second of Man Ray's films *L'Étoile de mer (The Starfish)*, made in 1928, which, while following a similar style to its precedent, follows a more narrative sequence. Man Ray used as his guide a poem he had heard read by its author, the Surrealist poet Robert Desnos. With his permission, he recreated this poem in film form.

Film stills, connected to both films, and an original 1939 silver gelatin portrait of Kiki de Montparnasse are shown in conjunction with the looped screenings of this pair of extraordinary films made here in the Basque Country.

*Emak-Bakia* and *L'Étoile de mer*, are indicative of Man Ray's ever experimental spirit and when seen together truly pay tribute to the incontestable ingenuity and agility of their creator, Man Ray.

The exhibition is mounted with the support of the Man Ray Trust and with the kind assistance of Réunion des musées nationaux Grand Palais, as well as Cinédoc and Paris Films Coop.

**Man Ray**, born Emmanuel Radnitsky (1890-1976), incorporated various techniques and materials into his paintings, diverted objects from their original destination, and did not hesitate to incorporate industrial processes, previously largely unused by artists, in his works. A friend of Duchamp, he was close with Brancusi, Satie, Picasso, Breton, Éluard, Desnos, and counted amongst his muses the famous Kiki de Montparnasse and Lee Miller. A Dadaist before Dada, fighting relentlessly to preserve his creative freedom, sometimes against the opinions and ideologies of his time, Man Ray embodied a close to unprecedented crossing of the main artistic currents of the twentieth century, from Cubism to Dada, Surrealism, Pop and back.