

English



Mey Rahola 1897–1959
The new photographer

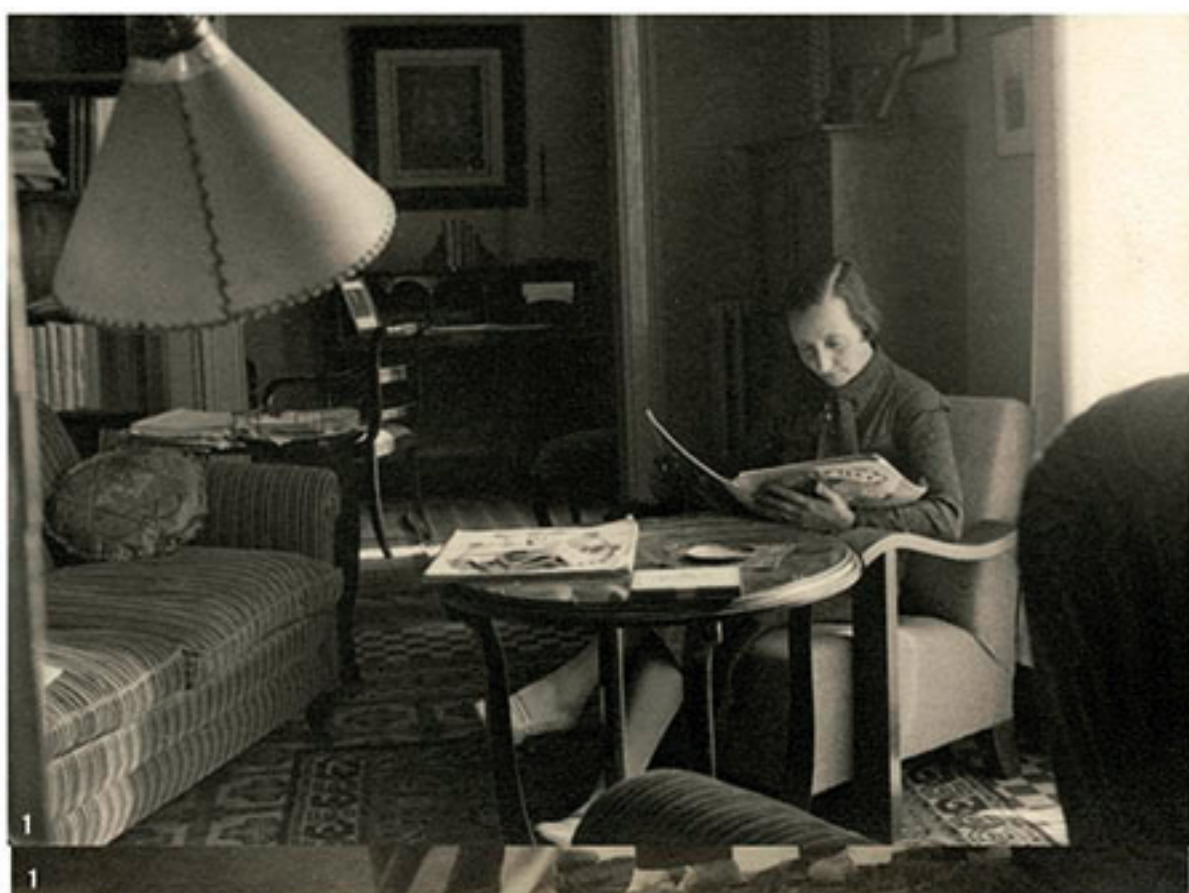
25.11.22–
29.05.23

#MeyRahola

MUSEU
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Mey Rahola (León, 1897 - Vaucresson, 1959) is one of the few photographers to gain recognition in Catalan photographic circles during the Second Spanish Republic. Fully identified with the ideal of “the modern woman”, emancipated and athletic, she contributed decisively to the aesthetic renewal of photography. The Spanish Civil War and her subsequent exile cut short her emerging career and her work was largely forgotten. It was not until 10 years ago that her archives were recovered and examined. As a result of this study, we present this first retrospective, put together by the Museu Nacional and the Museu de l'Empordà. It includes nearly 100 photographs of an artist who left her work organised and signed. At last, Mey Rahola can now take her rightful place in the history books of photography.

This exhibition recovers the complete works of photographer Mey Rahola, forgotten for 80 years, despite having been one of the first women to make a name for herself in the field of artistic photography in Catalonia.



1. Untitled [Self Portrait reading the magazine *D'Ací i d'Allà*], c. 1934. Mey Rahola Archive

2. *Ball Players*, 1936. Long-term loan from the Generalitat de Catalunya. National Photography Collection, 2020. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya

3. Untitled [Figures from behind, coast of Cap de Creus], 1932 - 1936. Long-term loan from the Generalitat de Catalunya. National Photography Collection, 2020. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya



↑
This is one of only two surviving photographs by Mey Rahola of the Spanish Civil War. The photographer makes a portrait of everyday life during the war. The image features mainly women, the heroines kept in the shadows. Mey Rahola's career was cut short by her exile, when in 1939, together with her husband, she journeyed across France and settled in Lyon in 1940, the city where she lived until the end of World War II.



↑
In France, Rahola became a professional photographer to help support her family financially. The photographs she took during this period are in tune with the humanist photography that was emerging in France, with artists such as Robert Doisneau and Sabine Weiss, among others. People and their daily lives featured at the centre of the images.



4. *Queue for Bread*, 1936 – 1937. Long-term loan from the Generalitat de Catalunya. National Photography Collection, 2020. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya

5. *Untitled [Lyon, city gravediggers]*, 1939-1945. Mey Rahola Archive

6. *Sea Strikes in Bad Weather*, c. 1936. Long-term loan from the Generalitat de Catalunya. National Photography Collection, 2020. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya

↑
The most unique part of Mey Rahola's work is linked to the sea and to sailing. "My mother was always on the lookout for masts, clouds and sails", in the words of her daughter. For the first time, Rahola takes photographs from the sea, introducing the use of high- and low-angle shots. She was the only woman of Spanish nationality admitted to the Saló Internacional d'Art Fotogràfic de Barcelona in 1935, in which she presented three images of seascapes. She was a member of the Agrupació Fotogràfica de Catalunya, and was one of the first women to see their work recognised.

Cover. *Untitled [Albert Xirau with a bird]*, 1932-1936. Mey Rahola Archive

Photos: ©Estate of Mey Rahola

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Opening lecture

Mey Rahola, the reconstruction of a forgotten photographer. Led by the curators Lluís Bertran, Roser Cambray and Roser Martínez.

Thursday, November 24, 2022,
at 6 pm, in the Dome Hall.

On-site activity. Also streamed
via the Museum's YouTube channel.
To follow the conference online,
prior registration is required at
museunacional.cat.

Guided tours*

Every Saturday, from December 3
to May 27, at 11 am (Spanish) and
at 12.30 pm (Catalan).

*On the Saturdays of 4th March, 1st
April and 6th May 2023, these tours
will be replaced by a tour led by the
exhibition curators and photographers
(11 am, in Catalan).

Prior registration on the Museum's
website is required.

Presentation ceremony of the
centenary of the Agrupació Fotogràfica
de Catalunya (1923-2023).

Saturday, January 28, 2023, at 11.30 am,
in the Dome Hall. Prior registration
on the Museum's website is required.

For other activities relating to photography,
see museunacional.cat

Coinciding with this exhibition, the Museu de l'Empordà in Figueres is holding
the exhibition *Mey Rahola. Desig d'horitzons*. Focusing on the photographer's
fascination with the sea and sailing, it can be visited until April 10, 2023.

Organised by

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