

Galerie E.G.P



Irina Ionesco

b. 1935, France

Irina Ionesco was born in Paris on 3 September 1935, daughter of Romanian parents. At the age of 4, she went to Romania where she was raised by her grandmother in the city of Constanza. In 1948, the two women flee the country from the Russian occupation and arrive in Paris. At the age of 16, Irina starts studying dance and contortion. She dances in different companies and then creates her own show, the snakes' dancer. For several years, she performs all over Europe.

In 1958, compelled to stay in a sanatorium for a year, she starts painting empty places where feminine objects are often represented. She then participates to numerous fairs and exhibitions.

On a Christmas night in 1964, her friend, the painter Corneille, gives her a camera, a Nikon F. In 1965, she then takes a picture of her first model, Anouk, met at a friend's house. The creation of the Ionesco's universe is under way.

She understands that the empty places have to be inhabited by women who would be her alter ego. Since that date, she starts taking pictures of women that she meets and of her daughter, Eva. Most of her models work with her for several years. The shooting is taking place in her apartment where she works incessantly.

The artist creates her photographs through a process of genuine *mise en scene*, conceiving her photo shootings as theatre sequences. The imposing figures of the women who inhabit the universe of Irina Ionesco recall those of tragic heroines. Standing in provocative poses, dressed in elaborate clothes, adorned with jewels, gloves and symbolic or fetishist objects, they seem to be offering their denuded bodies as objects of sexual possession.

1970 is the year of her first solo show, first of a long series of exhibitions and publications in France and abroad ("*Nudes*", "*Liliacées langoureuses aux parfums d'Arabie*", "*Femmes sans tain*", "*Litanies pour une amante funèbre*", "*Le temple aux miroirs*").

In 1983, she works on her project "*Pour une Pyramide*" (For a Pyramid), a psychoanalytical travel illustrated by colour images.

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In 1984, she introduces herself in Robert Aldrich movie "*Whatever Happened to Baby Jane*", by a game of superimposition; the adventure will last almost a year.

In 1985, she leaves her studio-room and travels in Egypt ("*Rêve d'Egypte*" / Egyptian Dream).

Other invitations will follow: Mauritania ("*Les Femmes des Cités-mémoires*"), Marocco ("*Regards sur Tanger*" / Looks on Tangier), Prague ("*Le cercle de Prague*", sur les traces de Kafka / Prague circle), Tunisia ("*Les rituels et les jours*" / the rituals and the days).

More recently she worked a lot in Japan ("*Les métamorphoses de la Médusa*" / Medusa metamorphosis), where she met new models.

In 2004, she published the first part of her autobiographical novel: "*L'œil de la poupée*", published by the Editions Des femmes (*The Doll's Eye*).

Solo and Group Exhibitions (Selection)

- 2010:** Irina Ionesco, One Piece Contemporary Art, Roma (Italy)
Sogno svelato, Camera16 contemporary art, Milano (Italy)
Irina Ionesco, Galerie E.G.P, Paris (France)
« *Mise en Scene* », Galerie E.G.P, Paris (France)
- 2009:** NU(E)S, Baudoin Lebon, Paris (France)
- 2009-2010:** "Collection de Gilles Deves", Musée Tavet-Delacour, Pontoise (France)
- 2008:** Musée de l'Elysée, "Controverses: Une Histoire Juridique et Ethique de la Photographique," Lausanne (Switzerland)
- 2007:** Il Corpo Nudo, Museo di Fotografia Contemporanea Ken Damy, Brescia (Italy)
Irina Ionesco and Christine Spengler, Contemporary Photography, Galerie Vivienne, Paris (France)
Kowasa Gallery—L'Eternel Féminin, Barcelona (Spain)
Galerie Baudoin Lebon, Paris (France)
- 2006:** Palais de Tokyo—Ultra Peau, Paris (France)
Biennale Internazionale di Fotografia di Brescia (Italy),
Heart Galerie, LA PHOTO DANS TOUS SES ETATS, Paris (France)
- 2005:** Eva-The Nymph Of Dream, Parco Museum of art and beyond, Tokyo (Japan)
- 2002:** Galleria 70, Milan, (Italy)
- 1996:** Gallery Nikon, Tokyo Gallery Nikon, Osaka
- 1992:** Galerie Nationale, Centre Culturel Français, Prague
Institut du monde Arabe, Paris, France
- 1991:** Bursary Léonard de Vinci: Institut Français de Prague

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Bibliography

Liliacées langoureuses aux parfums d'Arabie (Chêne, 1974)
Femmes sans Tain (B. Letu, 1975)
Litaines pour une amante funèbre (Giorgio Segna/ Ceni Editori, 1976)
Nocturnes (Lustrum Press, 1976)
Le temple aux miroirs (Editions Seghers, 1977)
Irina Ionesco (Publisher: B. Letu, 1979)
Cent Onze photographies érotiques (Editions Obliques/Borderies, 1980)
Le Nu Français - texte de Jacques Laurent, photos de Jeanloup Sieff, Edouard Boubat, Henri Cartier Bresson, Jean-Philippe Charbonnier, Lucien Clergue, Jean Dieuzaide, Robert Doisneau, Anne Garde, **Irina Ionesco**, J.H. Lartigue, Man Ray, Meerson, Michaud et Willy Ronis - Editions Jannink, 1982, Paris (France)
Passions- Irina Ionesco, Michael Lonsdale & Pierre Bourgeade (Le Club Du Livre Secret & Pink Star Editions, 1984)
Les Immortelles (Editions Contrejour, 1991)
Kafka ou le passant de Prague (Koehler/Sand, 1991)
Métamorphose de la Medusa (1995, model Hiromi Koide)
Nudes (Editions Stemmler, 1999)
L'œil de la poupée (Editions Des Femmes, 2004 avec Marie Desjardins)
Le Japon Interdit (Editions Arts Galerie Benchaib, 2004)
Pictorial Self-Wrappers (Editions Des Femmes, 2004)
Irina Ionesco, Eloges de ma fille Eva (Editions Alice Pr, 2005)