

Lillian Bassman

(1917-2012)



By Riley Gunderson



“Mistress of the Darkroom”



- Graphic designer, art director, painter, and photographer
- Best known for her photographic style
- One of the most influential fashion photographers in the 1900s
- Was working as a graphic designer in the 40s when her photography was discovered by Richard Avedon

Why She Was Famous

- Bold, moody, elegant fashion photography
- High-contrast black and white images of high-society women, models, and actresses
- Worked mostly within lingerie fashion
- Gave Harper's Bazaar the elegant reputation they are so well-known for today



Her Artistic Process

- Used bleaching, dodging and burning, and selective focus to make her images appear less life-like
- Would use tissue paper to diffuse the light and create softer effects
- Would blow smoke between the enlarger and the paper to diffuse the light as well
- Took out parts of the lens to create softness as well
- Aimed to “take the hardness out of photography”



Her Later Career



- She grew to dislike fashion photography and destroyed most of her film in 1971
- Continued to take photographs but only for her personal practice
- Later on, she revisited the few images she saved and reworked them in digital softwares
- Her work became regarded as high art rather than for commercial print





<http://blog.daum.net/sooy0098>



Works Cited

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