

# ARTnews

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## Jean Moral

### GITTERMAN

During the 1920s and '30s, Jean Moral was involved with and influenced by the avant-gardist New Vision photographers in Paris. Experimenting with the most innovative techniques of the period—montage, multiple negatives, solarized prints—Moral applied them to his commercial and personal projects. His fashion spreads regularly appeared in *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Photographie* and on the cover of *VU* magazine. But his career became a casualty of World War II. Retreating from photography and Paris, he eventually wound up in Switzerland, where he died, in 1999.

Fortunately, Moral left behind a cache of prints that was assembled posthumously by Christian Bouqueret, author of *Jean Moral, l'oeil capteur* (Marvel, 1999), the only book on this photographer who certainly deserves more attention than he has received.

Among the 35 vintage prints inaugurating this new gallery, many demonstrated Moral's remarkable skill at photomontage, especially evident in his night views of Paris and London. A movie marquee advertising a Greta Garbo flick bestows a ghostly presence on a busy street in an untitled 1934 cityscape. The lights from three signs—the Empire Theater, the Star, and Russell's "Lowest Prices on the West End"—flicker like a starry constellation in *Londres la nuit* (1934). These works seamlessly assembled an amalgam of reflections, double exposures, and illuminations, transforming the dank cities into mystical metropolises. While some of his other works were fascinating, they paled in comparison with those of André Kertész and Man Ray. Nevertheless, Moral's work adds to the rich palette of the history of photography.

—Barbara Pollack



Jean Moral,  
*Londres la nuit*, 1934,  
vintage gelatin  
silver print,  
11 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 9".  
Gitterman.