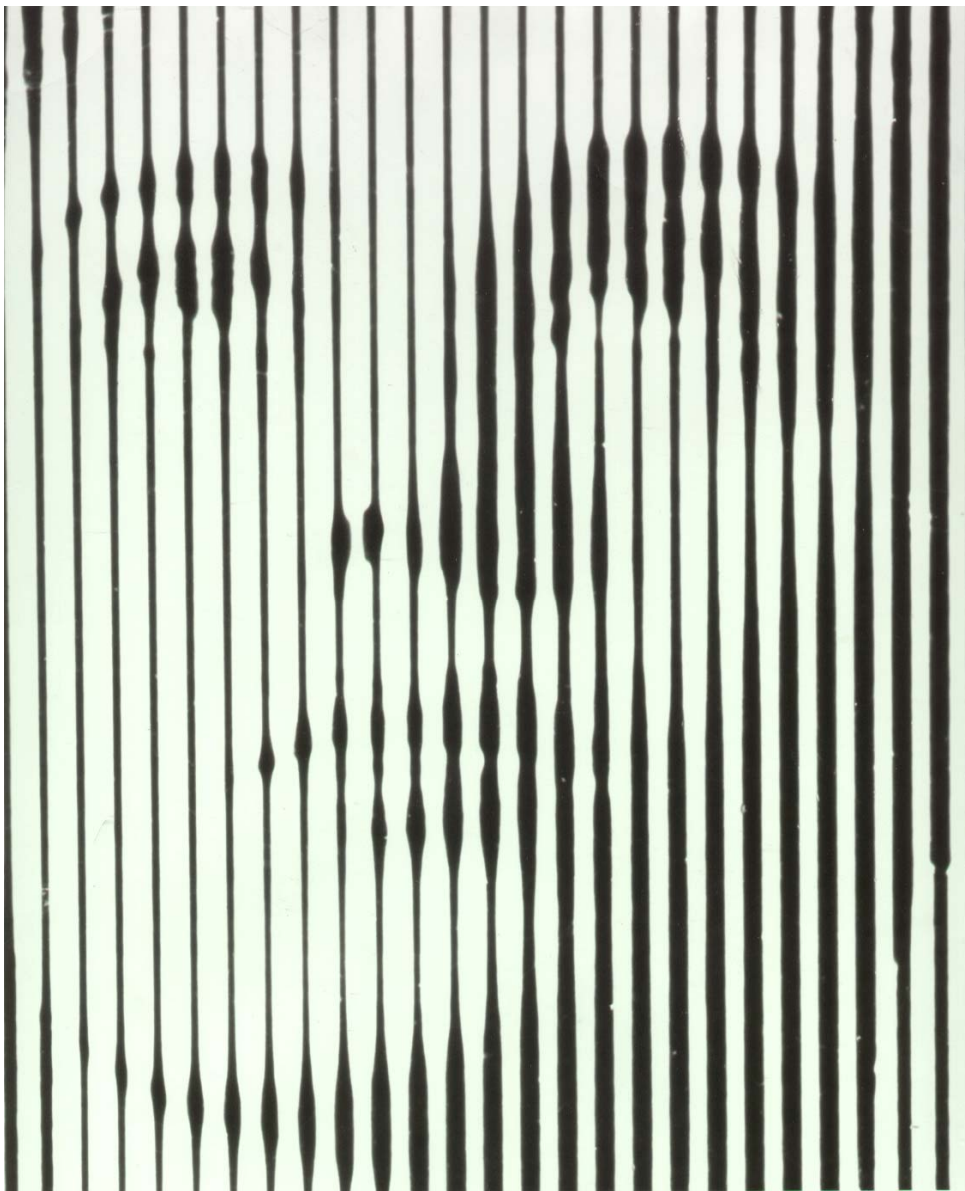




# Xanti Schawinsky

August 25 - October 20, 2007



Optical Structure, 1943



**Press release No 17**

Zürich, June 2007

**Invitation to the Press preview**

**Saturday, August 25, 2007**

**11 am - 5 pm**

ArteF Galerie für Kunstfotografie  
Splügenstrasse 11, 8002 Zürich

**Title**

**Xanti Schawinsky- Swiss Experimental Photography  
Vintage Prints**

**Exhibition**

August 25 - October 20, 2007

ArteF Galerie für Kunstfotografie  
Splügenstrasse 11, 8002 Zürich

**Opening**

August 25, 2007, 11 am – 5 pm

**Opening hours**

Tuesday - Friday, 1 am – 6 pm  
Saturday, 11 am – 4 pm

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## **Xanti Schawinsky- Swiss Experimental Photography Vintage Prints**

**ArteF Fine Art Photography Gallery** is pleased to open the new season with photographs by Xanti Schawinsky (1904-1979), one of the most important Swiss Bauhaus artists. Around 30 vintage black and white images, from various creative periods, amongst them Schawinsky's trademark stage sets, revolutionary photomontages and photograms, are brought together to offer a fascinating insight into the work of an artist who embodied the spirit of Bauhaus all his life, heralded Modernism in Swiss art and laid the foundations for future generations.

„my dearest Xanti, I miss you as a friend, as an exhibition artilleryman, as a master of lively competition and as a warm advocate.“

Who was the man, for whom the legendary Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius had so much affection? It was Alexander "Xanti" Schawinsky, who, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, would develop into the most prominent Swiss representative of the Bauhaus movement. As a pupil and later also an assistant of Gropius, he embodied the artistic interdisciplinarianism his mentor strived for and with it the Modernist zeitgeist like no one else. He was simultaneously a choreographer, actor, dancer, musician, painter and graphic designer and not least one of the first representatives of experimental photography. For Schawinsky the avant-gardist, this comparatively new medium was the ideal form of expression for a new perspective.

It encouraged him to broaden his visual experience to territories until then uncharted, and to sound out the limits of what was technically possible at the time. He experimented with new processes like photomontage for example and the photogram (an image of an object created directly onto light-sensitive paper without the help of a camera). Unconventional angles and surprising image compositions penetrate Schawinsky's works. And again and again the close relationship with other creative spheres, above all the theatre, is reflected. In typical "Bauhaus style", using all his skills and means, he always strived for a symphonic effect in the end product, whereby photography becomes a metaphor for the creative, artistic process.



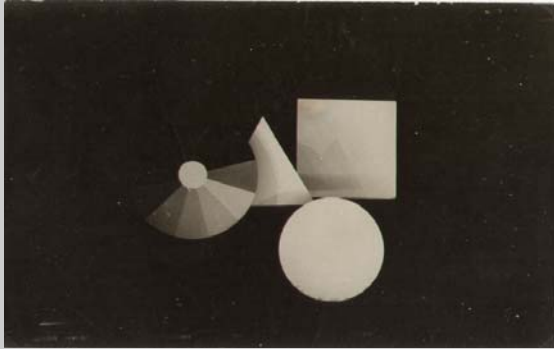
## Biography

Xanti Schawinsky (26 March 1904, Basel, Switzerland - 11 September 1979, Locarno, Switzerland) is usually known either for the activities of his early career, as a young 'enfant terrible' of Bauhaus theatre, or for the work he produced at its close as a respected and mature abstract artist. However these two perspectives ignore his tremendous versatility, and the important role he had to play in bringing Modernist ideas to different parts of the inter-war world.

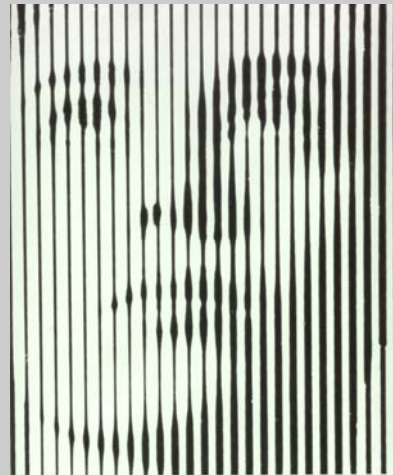
Schawinsky was born in Switzerland, the son of a Polish Jew. His creative nature was obvious from an early age, and in his teens he studied art and music in Zurich, before travelling to Berlin and Cologne to learn about design and architecture. In 1924 he enrolled at the Bauhaus, and became involved in the school's vibrant theatrical scene, also focusing on photography and painting. From the mid 1920s Schawinsky undertook wide range of professional commissions, working as a stage designer, a municipal studio director and a freelance designer. He also returned to the Bauhaus to teach.

In 1933 Germany's growing intolerance forced him to move to Milan, where he spent several years producing commercial graphic design, principally for the typewriter company Olivetti. An invitation to join the progressive Black Mountain College brought him to the USA in 1936. He spent two years at Black Mountain introducing Bauhaus ideas to his American students, before moving to New York to take up freelance design and pursue painting – an activity which absorbed almost all of his attention in his final years. As innovative in commercial art as he was in his unpaid pieces, Schawinsky's work demonstrated the huge creative power of the inter-war meeting of art and industry.

Biography: V&A Museum, London



Form and Color. Black Mountain College, 1936



Optical Structure, 1943



(Statue of Liberty, New York), 1943



Weather Resistant, 1944

Texts / pictures are on the enclosed CD-ROM.  
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