WIEN MUSEUM
PRESSEINFORMATION

Vienna, September 2013

Wien Museum Karlsplatz, Karlsplatz, 1040 Vienna

EDITH TUDOR-HART
IN THE SHADOW OF TYRANNY

An exhibition in cooperation with the National Galleries of Scotland

Press conference:	**Wednesday, 25 September 2013, 10 a.m.**
Opening:	**Wednesday, 25 September 2013, 6.30 p.m.**
Venue:	**Wien Museum Karlsplatz, 1040 Vienna**
Duration:	**5 October 2013 to 12 January 2014**
Opening hours:	**Tuesday to Sunday and public holidays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.**
Press photos:	**www.wienmuseum.at/en/press**

Following Barbara Pflaum, Elfriede Mejchar and Trude Fleischmann, the Wien Museum is once again putting on a solo exhibition dedicated to a great Austrian photographer: Edith Tudor-Hart (1908-1973), also known in the annals of photographic history by her maiden name Edith Suschitzky. She belonged to the group of politically engaged male and female photographers who, from the 1920s onwards, responded to political developments from a socially critical standpoint – both in Austria and in exile in England, where she became an important figure in the Worker Photography Movement. The exhibition, which was previously on show in Edinburgh, is the first ever overview of the work of this in equal measure fascinating and significant artist. It arose out of a cooperation between the National Galleries of Scotland and the Wien Museum and has been curated by Duncan Forbes, the long-standing Senior Curator of Photography at the National Galleries of Scotland and the new Director of the Fotomuseum Winterthur.

Edith Tudor-Hart was born in Vienna in 1908 as Edith Suschitzky and grew up in a social-democratic household; her father ran a workers' bookshop in the Favoriten district of Vienna and a revolutionary publishing house. She had contact with the Communist Party of Austria (KPÖ) and the Communist International already from a young age and both charged her with tasks – with legal party work as well as with intelligence activities. Early on, Tudor-Hart become interested in pedagogy; she completed training in the Montessori method and moved in circles that promoted radical, anti-authoritarian school and education reforms. It was likely the period of study at the Bauhaus in Dessau (1928-1930) that first brought her to photography, even though Tudor-Hart is listed in the archives only as a participant on the famous preparatory course and not as a student in the photography department. Her first pictures were taken in about 1930 and "show a technically accomplished photographer, who explored subjects such as the deprivation of the working class and the reform-oriented culture of Austrian Social Democracy as well as the threat posed by military and fascist forces " (as the historian of photography Anton Holzer has written). At the same time she embarked on a career as a photo journalist for illustrated publications.

It was the period in which, thanks to technological advances, photography in the mass media had gained immensely in importance. From the beginning, Tudor-Hart viewed the camera as a political weapon that could be used to document social injustices; she had little time for the formal experiments of the avant-garde. Photography had ceased to be "an instrument for recording events and became instead the means to bring events about and to influence them. It became a living art form that involved the people" (Edith Tudor-Hart). Her first photo series, published in the magazines *Der Kuckuck, Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung* and *Die Bühne*, include a reportage on the deprived East End of London and a series on everyday life in the Vienna Prater. That she was a Communist and yet was working for a social-democratic publication such as *Der Kuckuck* was down to the fact that the KPÖ played a minimal role in the media (and political) landscape of Austria – in this respect the young photographer had to adapt to the commercial realities of her profession. However, she was also active for the Soviet news agency TASS and, in addition, she continued with her intelligence activities. She was described by a fellow agent as "modest, competent and brave", ready "to give her all for the Soviet cause". This eventually became Edith Tudor-Hart's undoing: when the Austrian government moved against Nazis and Communists, she was arrested without further ado. In the same year she married the English doctor Alexander Tudor-Hart, which allowed her to escape to Great Britain in 1934. "When one views Suschitzky's photographic work from her Vienna years, it becomes clear that already in her early period, she created a comprehensive and freestanding body of work", writes Anton Holzer.

Among the miners in Wales

In exile, Edith Tudor-Hart's photographs took on a sharper socially critical edge. She went with her husband to South Wales, where he practised as a doctor in the coal mining region. The economic crisis had hit heavy industry and mining in northern England particularly hard and in many small towns and villages, nine out of ten men were unemployed. The photos from the mining and shipbuilding region of Tyneside also tell of crippling economic hardship and social decline. With her pictures, Tudor-Hart clearly stood out from the mainstream of British photography, characterised at that time by a bourgeois, somewhat sweet and sentimental aesthetic. Her photos are impressive for the quality of the dialogue with those portrayed and the social context is always visible and tangible. "The women, children and workers photographed by her seem less objectified and, to some extent at least, are placed in a better position to represent themselves", writes Duncan Forbes, curator of the exhibition.
During the slight economic recovery of the mid-1930s, Tudor-Hart was able to build up a photo studio in London: "Edith Tudor-Hart – Modern Photography" it said on her headed paper. She specialised in portraiture and was also able to obtain some advertising work, for example for the toy manufacturer Abbatt Toys. In addition, she supplied photos to new British illustrated publications, including the magazine *Lilliput* and the popular paper *Picture Post,* as well as to government departments such as the British Ministry of Education. For her, working for the traditional papers of Fleet Street was, however, not an option. Alongside the equally consistent and nuanced workers' photography, Tudor-Hart concentrated on work with children, especially after the Second World War, and in this she could call on a wide network of contacts. These included the Austrian paediatrician and curative educator Karl König as well as Anna Freud and Donald Winnicott, two of the leading protagonists of child psychoanalysis. She was concerned with issues of child welfare, heath and education and received commissions from agencies such as the *British Medical Association, Mencap* and the *National Baby Welfare Council.* In contrast to the static, studio-based portrait photography customary at the time, Tudor-Hart showed families and especially children as natural and lively.

After the Second World War and with the onset of the Cold War, Tudor-Hart's personal situation worsened as she was still active as a low-level Soviet agent. In 1951, shortly after the Soviet spy Kim Philby was interrogated for the first time, she destroyed most of her photos as well as many negatives out of fear of prosecution. "Her life as a partisan for the Soviet cause ended with her a defeated and demoralised woman", writes Duncan Forbes. She stopped publishing photos at the end of the 1950s, presumably at the request of the British secret services. Despite being questioned numerous times she was never arrested. Edith Tudor-Hart lived out her final years until her death in 1973 as an antiques dealer in Brighton.

That her photographic work was rediscovered is thanks to her brother, the photographer and cameraman Wolfgang Suschitzky. He saved a number of negatives from destruction and, in 2004, presented his sister's photographic archive to the Scottish National Galleries. This exhibition and catalogue make Edith Tudor-Hart's exceptional work accessible to a wider public for the first time. The exhibition was on show at the National Galleries of Scotland in Edinburgh in spring 2013 and, after its run at the Wien Museum, will also be on display in Berlin. For the first time, it offers an overview of Tudor-Hart's work from her years in both Vienna and England; many of the photos have never been seen before. Furthermore, the first comprehensive work on this great Austrian artist is being published on the occasion of this exhibition.

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Admission:	Adults: €8, reduced €6 (senior citizens, Vienna Card, Ö1-Club, disabled persons, students up to age 27, apprentices, persons performing military or community service, groups of 10 or more) Children and young people up to age 19 – free entry! Every first Sunday of the month for all visitors – free entry!
Visitor Information:	Tel. (+43 1) 505 87 47-85173, www.wienmuseum.at; e-mail: service@wienmuseum.at
Guided tours:	Sunday and public holidays, 3 p.m. Advance booking for groups: Tel (+43 1) 505 87 47- 85180
Curators:	Duncan Forbes, Frauke Kreutler (Wien Museum)
Exhibition Design:	Checo Sterneck
Graphic Design:	Fuhrer, Vienna
Catalogue:	Edith Tudor-Hart. Im Schatten der Diktaturen (German) Edith Tudor-Hart. In the Shadow of Tyranny (English), Ed.: Duncan Forbes for the Wien Museum, Hatje Cantz Verlag, 152 pages, EUR 24,-

Main Wien Museum sponsor: Wiener Stadtwerke

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