

Lee Miller | *Performance of a Lifetime*

23 January – 25 February 2026



Lee Miller, *Irmgard Seefried Opera singer, singing an aria from 'Madame Butterfly', 1945.*
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Lee Miller, *Model [Elizabeth Cowell] wearing Digby Morton Suit, 1941.*
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Lyndsey Ingram Gallery presents *Lee Miller: Performance of a Lifetime*, a focused exhibition of photographs by the trailblazing American artist, timed to coincide with her major retrospective at Tate Britain.

On view from 23 January- 25 February 2026 at 20 Bourdon Street, curated by Clara Zevi, and organised in collaboration with the Lee Miller Archives, the exhibition examines the pivotal role of theatre, staging, and performance throughout Miller's practice- from her arrival in Paris in 1930 to the end of the Second World War.

Sales will directly support the conservation of Lee Miller's photographs and the founding of a charity to preserve Farleys, Lee Miller and Roland Penrose's home.

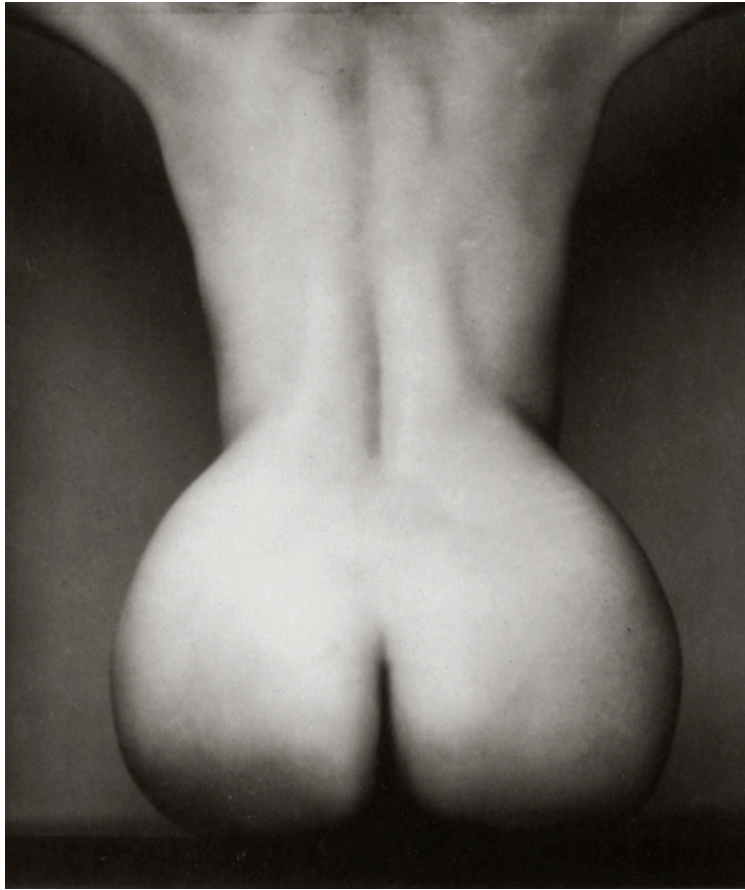
Miller's father was an amateur photographer, and she often posed for him. However, her path into the arts truly began in 1925, when—after several expulsions from school—her parents sent the 18-year-old by ship to Paris to pursue a less formal education in European arts and culture. It was here that she declared her intention to become an artist, enrolling at L'Ecole Medgyes pour la Technique du Théâtre to study stage design. Whether conceived as a means to remain in Paris during the rise of Surrealism or as an early signal of her interest in artifice, Miller's training in theatre permeated her photographic vision for decades. Her images, whether experiments in Surrealism or frontline reportage carry an unmistakable sense of choreography and drama.

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Lyndsey Ingram
20 Bourdon Street
London W1K 3PL

T. +44 (0)20 7629 8849
E. info@lyndseyingram.com
W. lyndseyingram.com

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Lee Miller, *Untitled Nude back (thought to be Noma Rathner), Paris, 1930.*
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For *Performance of a Lifetime*, photographs are presented in pairs, each coupling two seemingly unrelated subjects unified by theatrical tension and formal echoes. A line of ATS (Auxiliary Territorial Service) women silhouetted by a searchlight is set against an early commercial photograph of mirrored perfume bottles; a crisp 1932 profile self-portrait resonates with Miller's harrowing 1945 image of Regina Lisso, the daughter of Leipzig's deputy mayor, photographed shortly after her suicide as Allied forces advanced. In the *Vogue* text accompanying the image, Miller remarked on the teenager's "extraordinarily pretty teeth," a chilling detail that underscores her ability to fuse observation with narrative.

The earliest work in the show, a c.1930 nude made while Miller was Man Ray's collaborator and romantic partner, reveals her early command of lighting, with musculature rendered as delicately as graphite. Several photographs originally published in *British Vogue* will also be presented, including *High Fashion*, in which a model wearing a fur trimmed suit looks down on a globe as though assessing the world order.

To mark the exhibition, the Lee Miller Archives will debut and release a newly printed photograph of opera singer Irmgard Seefried, captured performing amid the bombed ruins of Vienna's State Opera House, a poignant encapsulation of Miller's lifelong fascination with performance, even in extremes.

About Farleys:

Farleys is the Sussex farmhouse where Lee Miller lived with her husband, art historian and ICA co-founder Roland Penrose, from 1949 until her death. It is also where the Lee Miller Archives are held and conserved. The house, gardens and gallery are open to the public for tours from April to October.

About Clara Zevi:

Clara Zevi is an art historian and art consultant working on impactful fundraising projects. She is the founder and director of Artists Support, an initiative that helps artists and estates raise money and awareness for the causes and charities they love.

Lee Miller: Performance of a Lifetime is open to the public at Lyndsey Ingram, 20 Bourdon Street, London W1K 3PL every Monday to Friday between the 23 January – 25 February 2026 from 10am until 6pm.

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For press inquiries please contact Jo Brooks at job@jb-pr.com
For any further information please contact info@lyndseyingram.com or call +44 (0) 207 629 8849.