

# Kunstmuseum Bern

«An Enormously Tiny Bit of a Lot»

**Meret Oppenheim - Retrospective**

June 2 until October 8, 2006

## Meret Oppenheim 1913 -1985

1913	Born October 6 in Berlin Charlottenburg, the daughter of the Hamburg doctor Erich Alphons Oppenheim and Eva Wenger from Switzerland. Sister Kristin is born in 1915 and in 1919 her brother Burkhard. Childhood spent in Basle, Delémont, Steinen in southern Germany and Carona in Ticino.
1927	Her father introduces her to the theories of C. G. Jung. She begins to write down her own dreams.
1930	She creates the collage <i>Das Schulheft (The exercise book)</i> in which she makes the equation, $x = \text{rabbit}$ . This equation demonstrates her antipathy to numbers and to school. Many drawings are completed.
1932	Meret decides to become an artist and moves to Paris with her friend the painter and dancer Irène Zurkinden who is four years older. Sporadic attendance at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière.
1933	She frequents the circle around André Breton, Marcel Duchamp and Max Ernst. Contributes to the <i>Salon des Surindépendants</i> . Man Ray's nude photographs of Meret Oppenheim are made in the printing studio of Louis Marcoussis.
1936	She attempts to earn money with fashion and jewellery designs, for instance, bracelets of fur-covered metal tubing. The well-known objects <i>Déjeuner en fourrure (Breakfast in fur)</i> und <i>Ma gouvernante - my nurse - mein Kindermädchen</i> are made. First solo exhibition in the Galerie Marguerite Schulthess in Basle.
1937	She is part of a group exhibition of the surrealists. A long-lasting crisis begins which will persist until 1954. She produces work but then destroys it or leaves it unfinished.

1938	Attends the Gewerbeschule Basle where, amongst other things, she learns the art of restoration. Finds entry to the <i>Gruppe 33</i> as well as to the artists' union <i>Allianz</i> .
1945	She meets the businessman Wolfgang La Roche and marries him four years later. They move to Bern and subsequently to Thun, Oberhofen and Hünibach. With the help of Arnold Rüdlinger, the then director of the Kunsthalle, Meret Oppenheim slowly gains admittance to the Bernese art scene.
1954	Her crisis passes and she moves into her own studio in Bern.
1958	An intense period of creativity begins. She often has recourse to the sketches, designs and ideas from her time in Paris.
1959	She invites people to a <i>Frühlingsfest (Spring celebration)</i> where the guests are served food on the body of a naked woman. Some months later, the <i>Frühlingsfest</i> is repeated in the Galerie Cordier in Paris on the occasion of the exhibition <i>Exposition InteRnatiOnale de Surréalisme</i> .
1967	Retrospective in Moderna Museet in Stockholm. In December Wolfgang La Roche dies after a lingering illness.
1972	From now on she works alternately in Paris and Bern.
1974/75	Travelling exhibition to the museums of Solothurn, Winterthur and Duisburg. Awarded the Kunstpreis of the city of Basle. Holds a much-noted lecture on the topic of the "female artist".
1982	Grosser Preis of the city of Berlin. Participation at the <i>documenta 7</i> in Kassel.
1983	Inauguration of her fountain on the Waisenhausplatz which is soon the subject of controversy. In October, an exhibition in the Kunsthalle Bern, then another in the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.
1985	She works on a sculpture for a fountain in the Jardins de l'ancienne école polytechnique in Paris. On November 15, the day of the appearance of her book <i>Caroline</i> with poems and etchings, Meret Oppenheim dies of a heart attack. She is buried in Carona in the family grave.

**Exhibition:** June 2 – October 8, 2006 **Opening times:** Wed – Sun 10am – 5pm | Tues 10am – 9pm | Mon closed **Public tours:** Tuesday, 7pm and Sunday 11am  
**Supporting programme:** see flyer or go to [www.kunstmuseumbern.ch](http://www.kunstmuseumbern.ch)

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