



MARCH 2008

Framing a Face



VISIT THE BMA

and see *Lotte's Eye* as well as 150 other superb photographs in the special exhibition *Looking through the Lens: Photography 1900-1960* on view March 16-June 8, 2008.

Lotte's Eye, 1928 Max Burchartz

Suppose you were Lotte, a young girl in a dark hat, who stood in front of a white wall and posed for a photographer.

- Would you be surprised to find that only half of your face appeared in the picture?
- Would you think that the photographer aimed his camera wrong?
- Would you wonder why he hadn't asked you to move over into the free space on the right so that more of your face would show?

Perhaps the photographer would explain that when he looked through his camera's viewfinder, he saw *all* of Lotte's face and *all* of her hat and plenty of wall space on both sides. Then perhaps he shifted his viewfinder slightly to the right, so that only half of Lotte's face would show.

Or maybe the photographer didn't even consider dividing Lotte's face in half until *after* he took a picture of her full face. He might have looked at his film and decided to crop the picture, dividing Lotte's face right down the middle, eliminating her chin, shortening her forehead, and pulling us up very close so that we focus on the curve of her lip, the roundness of her nostril, and her enormous eye that returns our stare.

In either case, the photographer used his camera as a tool to take us by surprise and grab our attention. By framing Lotte's face exactly as he wished, he invites us to view Lotte's face through his own eyes and participate in the pleasures of what some people call "camera-seeing."

Challenge for Students

- Make a cardboard viewfinder and use it to look at faces at various distances. Decide how you would frame them.
- Find the face of a person in a magazine. Crop it to change its effect.
- Make a photocopy of *Lotte's Eye* and then complete the face by drawing the left side.

Print the image on page 2 for your students.

Max Burchartz. *Lotte's Eye*. c. 1928. The Baltimore Museum of Art: Purchase with exchange funds from the Edward Joseph Gallagher III Memorial Collection; and partial gift of George H. Dalsheimer, BMA 1988.247. ©2008 Max Burchartz/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

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Landre@artbma.org

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