

The Indestructible Lee Miller

Written and presented by Antony Penrose, her son and biographer.

From an early age Lee Miller learned the chances life brought needed her skilful and courageous adaptation to make them work for her. Born 1907 in America, she morphed from a young artist to a top fashion model. In Paris she became a surrealist photographer also shooting fashion for American Vogue. Back in New York she had a highly successful studio but left to marry an Egyptian and become a photographer of that land. At the outbreak of WW2 she arrived in London, returning to fashion photography for Vogue and later became their war correspondent with the US Army in Europe. Her final career was as a surrealist gourmet cook in her last home, Farleys House in Sussex. Her life was filled with passion, heartbreak and high drama. Her secret in moving forward was to grab her chances with both hands. It made her indestructible in the sense that today her work is the subject of many books, TV documentaries, international exhibitions and now a major movie titled LEE, starring Kate Winslet as Lee Miller.

1. Originally created for the exhibition *The Indestructible Lee Miller. Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA 2015*
2. Contains highly disturbing images of the holocaust, war and its consequences

Lee Miller exhibition at the Tate Britain 2nd October 2025 – 15th February 2026

With the most extensive retrospective of her photography yet staged in the UK, Tate Britain celebrates [Lee Miller](#) as one of the 20th century's most urgent artistic voices.

First exposed to a camera by working in front of it, Miller was one of the most sought-after models of the late 1920s. She quickly stepped behind the lens, becoming a leading figure in the avant-garde scenes in New York, Paris, London and Cairo.

The exhibition will showcase Miller's extraordinary career, from her participation in French surrealism to her fashion and war photography. Exploring her artistic collaborations, the exhibition will also shed light on lesser-known sides of her practice, such as her remarkable images of the Egyptian landscape in the 1930s. With around 250 vintage and modern prints, including those never previously displayed, the exhibition reveals Miller's poetic vision and fearless spirit.

Determined to forge her own path, she later commented, 'It was a matter of getting out on a damn limb and sawing it off behind you.'

Lee Miller is supported by the Lee Miller Exhibition Supporters Circle, Tate International Council, Tate Patrons, Tate Photography Acquisitions Committee, Tate Americas Foundation and Tate Members. Lee Miller is organised by Tate Britain in collaboration with the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris and the Art Institute of Chicago.