

Bloc Bloc Bloc to The Phillips

The African Art exhibit includes well-known photographs by Man Ray

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When it comes to art in DC, we usually steer toward the free exhibits, like the ones at the [Smithsonian](#). But in the case of the "[Man Ray, African Art and the Modernist Lens](#)" exhibit at The Phillips Collection, exceptions must be made.

Perhaps best known as an avant-garde photographer, Ray used harsh lighting to up the surrealist ante of his pictures, making the masks, especially, seem primeval and frightening, according to the [Washington Examiner](#). The curator behind the exhibit, Wendy Grossman, told the Examiner that she sees it all as Ray's sense of mischief at work.

We like mischief. Sounds much more fun than the [Phillips' description](#) or its [video for the exhibit on YouTube](#):

The exhibition reveals photography's complex engagement with African art by exploring African art in the context of American modernism and the [Harlem](#) Renaissance, surrealism, and the worlds of high fashion and popular culture, at the same time as it investigates issues of race, gender, and colonialism during the modernist era.

Of course, although Man Ray's work dominates the show, it's not all about the man immortalized in an obscure [OMD song](#). Photos by [James L. Allen](#), Cecil Beaton, [Walker Evans](#), and Alfred Stieglitz are also included in the mix.

Then there's the "Lights! Camera! Action! The Drama of Man Ray's Photographs" event on Jan. 7, where you can pick up facts about the artist to make your next date think you're cultured and listen to live jazz at the same time. And did we mention the cash bar?

Tickets are \$12, or \$10 for students, and free for those 18 and under, available online via [Ticketmaster](#).

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