Photographer: David Scherman
Born 1916

Reflections

Why is this such an effective picture? What does it signify to you?

What do you think ‘Lee’ Miller was thinking when she had this picture taken?

How do you think you would have felt if you had, like ‘Lee’ Miller and David Scherman, witnessed the Nazi concentration camps?

Why do you think that Lee Miller travelled with a man, David Scherman, throughout much of the Second World War?

Photograph: Lee Miller in Hitler’s Bathtub
Munich, Germany
1945

Contextual information

‘Lee’ Miller lived a colourful life from her birth in New York in 1907 until her death 70 years later in East Sussex, UK.

Her early life was characterised by photography, with her often being used as a model for her father Theodore’s amateur photography. This led her into the world of modelling, and a chance encounter with the publisher of Vogue, who stopped her from walking in front of a car in 1927, launched her career. She later moved into the world of photography, although throughout the 1930s this meant getting involved in the Surrealist scene, beginning a relationship with the surrealist painter Man Ray.

Later in the 30s she married an Egyptian businessman, but later moved to the UK where she met Roland Penrose. Living in Hampstead at the time of the blitz, she became the photographic correspondent for Vogue. She photographed the blitz, as well as the aftermath of D Day and the horror of the concentration camps at Dachau and Buchenwald. There is a very famous shot of her, taken by Life photographer David Scherman, in the bathtub of Adolf Hitler in Munich, in the days following the end of the war and Hitler’s death.

Her later life took on a darker hue as she suffered from clinical depression, possibly brought on in some way by what she saw in the concentration camps. She died in 1977 from cancer.