



Sachfotografie, Schokoladen-Mischmaschine,  
1927–1928  
Fotografie: Hans Finsler  
Auftrag: Most Schokoladenfabriken, Halle (Saale), DE  
Material/Technik: Fotopapier, s/w-Fotografie  
36.5 × 30 cm  
Eigentum: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK

Hans Finsler (1891–1972) made a rapid ascent in his career as a photographer. An art historian, he became a photography instructor at the Burg Giebichenstein Kunstgewerbeschule in Halle in 1927, only shortly after starting there with still-life photography as an autodidact. He received his first commission from the chocolate maker Most.

In the 1920s, photography was increasingly taking the place of illustration in advertising, with the result that commercial work became a lucrative field of activity for many photographers. As an industrial and product photographer, Hans Finsler sought to produce unemotional yet visually attractive images. Examples of this are the photographs he made for the Most company in Halle, one of the largest chocolate makers in Germany at that time. As a representative of the New Photography movement, Finsler was committed to developing an independent photographic language rather than simply learning from arts like painting. Jan Tschichold considered his image of the chocolate mixing machine in particular to be on a par with fine art: “With the extreme contrasts of black and white and the variety of gray tones, an effect has been produced that

surpasses the colorfulness of many paintings or drawings.” Finsler’s aesthetic ideal also included capturing movement, which resulted from the summation of light and time and showed itself in the blurriness of the flowing mass of chocolate, the inflowing sugar, and the machine’s rotating parts. The photograph was displayed at the Kunstgewerbemuseum Zürich in 1929 as part of Finsler’s contribution to the traveling exhibition *Film und Foto*—perhaps the most important exhibit of avant-garde photography of that decade. That same year, Finsler applied for the position of director of the newly founded photography course at the Kunstgewerbeschule Zürich, whose reputation and international fame he shaped from 1932 to 1958. (Andres Janser)

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