Visions of Beauty: Arnold Genthe and the Art of Photography
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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2014
6:00 – 8:00 PM

GERMAN HISTORICAL INSTITUTE
1607 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE NW
WASHINGTON DC 20009

One of the leading American photographers of the early twentieth century, Arnold Genthe (1869-1942) devoted much of his career and professional work to recording and spreading the “gospel of beauty.” Born in a prominent intellectual family in Germany and with a doctorate in philology, Genthe was deeply influenced by the tradition of German aesthetics as well as by studies of Chinese and Japanese philosophy and art. His intellectual pursuits, intricately intertwined with his youthful aspiration to become an artist, informed his entire photographic work and career.

Operated by a philosopher-artist, Genthe’s camera saw beauty as indelible from and most powerfully explicated through movement. Albeit fleeting and difficult to capture, beauty-as-movement would gloriously appear even in the seemingly ordinary and mundane settings: a gathering of people at the market place, children crossing the street, the smile of a sitter caught unawares by the camera, or the gracious gesture of a dancer. Genthe’s exceptional technique and ability to relate beauty-as-movement resulted in momentous and pioneering photographic work and numerous publications on both dance and everyday street life.

Drawing on a minute portion from a vast archival collection, this exhibition explores some of Genthe’s late-nineteenth to early-twentieth century visions of beauty.

6:00 PM RECEPTION
6:30 PM DANCE PERFORMANCE AND LECTURE