Jessie Tarbox Beals
American, born Canada. 1870–1942

**Untitled** 1908
Platinum print

Amanda Ross-Ho
American, born 1975

**Invisible Ink** 2010
Two chromogenic prints

Hear from the artist about the many layers that went into making this work. Enter the number on moma.org/audio.

Louise Lawler
American, born 1947

**Sappho and Patriarch** 1984
Silver dye bleach print

Lorna Simpson
American, born 1960

**Details** 1996
Twenty-one photogravures
Silvia Kolbowski  
Argentine, born 1953  
**Model Pleasure III** 1983  
Eight gelatin silver prints and four chromogenic color prints, originally in black artist frames  
Acquired through the generosity of Helen Kornblum in honor of Roxana Marcoci and Committee on Photography Fund, 2014

Ruth Orkin  
American, 1921–1985  
**American Girl in Italy** 1951  
Gelatin silver print

Laurie Simmons  
American, born 1949  
**Three Red Petit-Fours** 1990  
Chromogenic print

Ruth Orkin  
American, 1921–1985  
**Jimmy the Storyteller** 1947  
Six gelatin silver prints
Frances Benjamin Johnston
American, 1864–1952

*Penmanship Class* 1899
Platinum print

Jeanne Dunning
American, born 1960

*Leaking* 1994
Two silver dye bleach prints (diptych)

Sharon Lockhart
American, born 1964

*Untitled* 2010
Chromogenic print

Josephine Pryde
British, born 1967

*Far Horizons Draw No Nearer IV* 2002
Gelatin silver print

Exhibition Title
2022 Helen Kornblum

White labels

Dana Ostrander
Lola Álvarez Bravo
Mexican, 1907–1993

Frida Kahlo  c. 1945
Gelatin silver print

Carrie Mae Weems
American, born 1953

Untitled (Woman and daughter with makeup), from The Kitchen Table Series 1990
Gelatin silver print

Hear from the artist about the intertwined themes of race, love, and power in her Kitchen Table Series. Enter the number on moma.org/audio.

338 English Only
In this work Lawler set her viewfinder on two sculptures in a darkened gallery at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut. In the resulting image a towering Sappho is overshadowed both literally and figuratively by the stern and spotlighted bust of a male elder in the background. Through her careful framing, Lawler reveals how museum display can reinforce inequalities, even inadvertently, and invites us to reevaluate the art institution as a space in which identities and gender roles are in play—a space of ongoing ideological construction.
Susan Meiselas
American, born 1948

**TOP:**
*Traditional Mask Used in the Popular Insurrection, Monimbo, Nicaragua 1978*

**BOTTOM:**
*A Funeral Procession in Jinotepe for Assassinated Student Leaders. Demonstrators Carry a Photograph of Arlen Siu, an FSLN Guerrilla Fighter Killed in the Mountains Three Years Earlier 1978*

Chromogenic prints

Cara Romero
Native American (Chemehuevi), born 1977

*Wakeah, from the series First American Girl 2018*
Inkjet print

Join the artist in looking closely at this photograph and its message of empowerment. Enter the number on moma.org/audio.

337  English Only
Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie
Native American (Seminole-Muscogee-Diné [Navajo]), born 1954

**Vanna Brown, Azteca Style** 1990
Photocollage, printed 2021

Discover how this artwork holds a mirror up to society. Enter the number on moma.org/audio.

334 English Only

Barbara Probst
German, born 1964

**Exposure #78, NYC, Collister and Hubert St., 06.22.10, 7:56 p.m.** 2010
Two inkjet prints (diptych)

Learn more from the artist about the relationship between these two images. Enter the number on moma.org/audio.

339 English Only
Meridel Rubenstein
American, born 1948

TOP:

**Fatman with Edith**  1993
Helen Kornblum explores the ways war and weaponry inform this photo. Enter the number on moma.org/audio.

BOTTOM:

**Penitente**  1982
Palladium prints

“Dance photography,” German photographer Rudolph wrote in 1929, is “the representation of the movement of the dancer in picture form, that means the dancer dances during the shooting.” To capture the spirit of dance in a still frame, she contended, the photographer must imagine herself as the performer, anticipating the flow of motion. Rudolph and other interwar photographers sought inventive ways to picture the freedom of moving bodies and affirm the expressive agency of women. Through engaging with dance as a reflection of society and culture, these photographs advance different utopian and progressive models of community.
In the 1980s and early 1990s, many artists explored the interrelated histories of colonialism and patriarchy in Latin America. Through what she called “emotive anthropology,” Yampolsky engaged directly with the lives of Indigenous Mazahua women in the State of Mexico rather than simply snapping photographs; similarly, Garduño’s intimate portraiture meditates on the adaptations of ancient cultural rituals in contemporary life, with the figures of women of Indigenous heritage at the center. Ritual was central to Mendieta’s practice, too: she incorporated Mesoamerican goddess archetypes into photographically documented performances that she described as “a dialogue between the landscape and the female body.”

To create the works in her Exposures series, Probst used radio-wave transmission to simultaneously release the shutters of multiple cameras and thus capture a single scene from different distances and perspectives. The resulting images challenge the idea that a photograph presents an objective view of reality. “The substance of the series,” Probst has said, “exists not in the individual image, but rather in the interrelations between the images. . . . The viewer is invited to travel through the space they mark out, to take on different points of view and to see [themselves] looking.”
Throughout the twentieth century, photographers transformed perceptions of the natural world through different kinds of photographic technology and techniques. Cunningham, Noskowski, and Lavenson, all members of the California-based Group f/64, used stark lighting and close-up framing to render the patterns and textures of botanical forms. Bernhard photographed seashells, discovering, as she put it, “forms so complex and weird as to exceed human imagination,” while Morgan superimposed images to suggest what she called the “invisible urges” underlying the life cycles of plants.

Opie has noted of her intimate portraits that “even though I don’t believe that there is a true essence of a person, I do believe there is something that they see within themselves that I end up capturing.” Here, Angela Scheirl, a filmmaker and part of Opie’s LGBTQ community, sports a navy blue suit and short hair and has a commanding gaze. Scheirl eventually took the first name Hans, leaving the work’s title outdated but also emphasizing the flexibility of gender expression and its mutability over time. Unlike a traditional portrait, which fixes or freezes identity, this is a portrait of becoming.
In this image, one of twenty in Weems’s Kitchen Table Series, the artist sits at the head of a table, applying makeup with the help of a small vanity mirror. Next to her, a young girl looking at her own reflection puts on lipstick in a parallel gesture. The tender scene illustrates one of the ways in which gender is learned and performed, while also celebrating the private subjectivity, beauty, and inner lives of Black women. Asked why she appears as a protagonist in her work, Weems responded, “I use myself simply as a vehicle for approaching the question of power.”

Romero’s First American Girl series—whose title nods to the popular doll brand—counters overgeneralized pop-culture representations of Native Americans with authentic detail. Wakeah shows Wakeah Jhane, a Comanche-Blackfeet-Kiowa ledger artist and dancer, wearing buckskin dance regalia that asserts the specificity of her Native culture, the artistry of regional handicraft traditions, and the creative power of Native women. The image’s diorama-style arrangement evokes the ways in which photography has presented Indigenous people as anthropological specimens. Romero, a citizen of the Chemehuevi Indian Tribe, shows the vibrancy of contemporary Indigenous lives, in contrast to the colonial narratives that have become all too familiar.
What appears to be a serene domestic interior—the artist’s niece working on a jigsaw puzzle—contains allusions to darker histories. Hanging on the wall is a colonial-era map of the Maine coastline, and the puzzle reproduces a painting by Winslow Homer, whose iconic seascapes portrayed New England as an idyllic land “discovered” by hardy explorers. Homer’s work did not acknowledge the deadly wars fought over the territory, nor the near annihilation of the Wabanaki people, the region’s Indigenous inhabitants. With these subtle and uneasy cues, Lockhart demonstrates the ways in which the comforts of home can be built on unseen histories of territorial expansion and forced relocation.

“It was a beautiful day when I decided that I would take responsibility to reinterpret images of Native peoples,” Tsinhnahjinnie, a Seminole-Muscogee-Diné (Navajo) artist, has said. In Vanna Brown, Azteca Style, she has wittily recast Wheel of Fortune game-show star Vanna White as an Indigenous woman, a satirical choice that highlights the invisibility of Native Americans in the mass media and the stereotypes that are routinely employed when they do appear. In contradicting these fictions, which are rooted in America’s colonial history, her work claims visual sovereignty and self-determination for Indigenous people—the right to decide how they are represented.
Contemporary photographers seeking to record political and economic hardships often found a model in documentary photographs from the 1930s and ‘40s. When Noggle organized her groundbreaking exhibition *Women of Photography* in 1975, she selected Dorr’s Depression-era photographs for inclusion. Noggle’s staged portraits of retired women Air Force pilots, made during the 1980s, were likely inspired by Dorr’s intimate, carefully composed portraits of friends (on view in the vitrine). Similarly, Mark’s images of impoverished youth, such as Tiny, a homeless sex worker in Seattle, are patterned on Bourke-White’s powerful yet sensitive images of disenfranchised workers.

Meiselas’s photographs reveal a nation in turmoil. Taken in Nicaragua in 1978, shortly before the revolt of the socialist Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) ended the brutal forty-year authoritarian rule of the Somoza family, they trace the evolution of a popular resistance among student groups and indigenous communities. Meiselas, one of the few photojournalists documenting the conflict, mostly used color film for these images. She later reflected that “the vibrancy and optimism of the resistance, as well as the physical feel of the place, came through better in color.”
Germaine Krull
Dutch, born Germany. 1897–1985
Photographs in “Nudisme,” special issue, Jazz: L’actualité intellectuelle (1931)
Editor: Carlo Rim
Publisher: Louis Querelle, Paris

Silvia Kolbowski
Argentine, born 1953
Photographs in Difference: On Representation and Sexuality, by Kate Linker 1984
Publisher: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York
The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

Meridel Rubenstein
American, born 1948
Ellen Zweig
American, born 1947
Critical Mass 1993
Publisher: The Museum of Fine Arts, Museum of New Mexico
The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

Laura Gilpin
American, 1881–1979
The Enduring Navaho 1968
Publisher: University of Texas Press, Austin
The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York
Susan Meiselas
American, born 1948

Publisher: Pantheon Books, New York
The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

Nell Dorr
American, 1893–1988

*Mother and Child* 1954
Publisher: Harper & Brothers, New York and London
The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

Margaret Bourke-White
American, 1904–1971

*You Have Seen Their Faces*, with text by Erskine Caldwell 1937
Publisher: Modern Age Books, New York
The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

Ruth Orkin
American, 1921–1985

*Jimmy Tells About Kitty and the King*
photographs in *LIFE*, vol. 31, no. 22 (November 26, 1951)
Publisher: Time, Inc., New York
Imogen Cunningham
American, 1883–1976
Photograph in Catalogue for the Cornish School c. 1935
Publisher: The Cornish School, Seattle

Mariana Yampolsky
Mexican, born United States. 1925–2002
Mazahua 1993
Publisher: Instituto Mexiquense de Cultura, Gobierno del Estado de México, Toluca
The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

Susan Meiselas
American, born 1948
Carnival Strippers 1976
Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York
The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

Hear an excerpt from Carnival Strippers. Enter the number on moma.org/audio.

Imogen Cunningham
American, 1883–1976
Three Harps 1935
Gelatin silver print
Lotte Jacobi
American, born Germany, 1896–1990

Ursula Johanna Richter
German, 1886–1946

Charlotte Rudolph
German, 1896–1983

Photographs in Der künstlerische Tanz (The Artistic Dance) c. 1934

Publisher: Haus Neuerburg GmbH, Merzig, Germany


Susan Meiselas
American, born 1948

Tentful of Marks, Tunbridge, Vermont, from the series Carnival Strippers 1974

Gelatin silver print, printed c. 2000

The artist reflects on the intersections of feminism, performance, and personal identity. Enter the number on moma.org/audio.

Laura Gilpin
American, 1881–1979

Navajo Weaver 1933

Platinum print
Yva (Else Ernestine Neuländer)
German, 1900–1942

Photographs in *Gebrauchsgraphik: Monatschrift zur Förderung künstlerischer Reklame (International Advertising Art: Monthly Magazine for Promoting Art in Advertising)*, vol. 8, no. 11 (November 1931)

Editor: H. K. Frenzel
Publisher: Phönix Illustrationsdruck und Verlag, Berlin


Ruth Bernhard
American, born Germany. 1905–2006

Photographs in *The Studio*, vol. 137, no. 674 (May 1949)

Publisher: National Magazine Co., London

The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

Margaret Watkins
Canadian, 1884–1969

*Untitled (Still Life with Mirrors and Windows, NYC)* 1927
Gelatin silver print

Margaret Watkins
Canadian, 1884–1969

Photographs in *House & Garden*, vol. 52, no. 3 (September 1927)

Publisher: Conde Nast Publications, New York
Imogen Cunningham
American, 1883–1976
Photograph in Catalogue for the Cornish School c. 1935
Publisher: The Cornish School, Seattle

Photojournalism provided a vital source of income for women photographers who worked in a documentary mode. In 1937 Bourke-White, a staff photographer for publications Fortune and LIFE, made a visual survey of rural communities in the Depression-era American South. Orkin’s series on a young storyteller named Jimmy brought her national attention. After appearing in Look and LIFE magazines, it was selected for inclusion in MoMA’s 1955 exhibition The Family of Man. Contemporary photographers such as Meiselas, a member of the Magnum Photos cooperative, have expanded the possibilities of photojournalism through personal investment in the communities and events they document.

By the 1930s, the nature of women’s work had been shifting for decades, from domestic to commercial labor. Gilpin’s images of Diné (Navajo) women weaving textiles for the tourist market were made at a time when professional employment in photography had only recently been opened to women. Some women started businesses during the 1940s, including Edith Warner, shown in Rubenstein’s contemporary photographs, who ran a tearoom in New Mexico for both Indigenous clientele and the scientists developing the atom bomb nearby. In many affluent families, however, childcare remained a woman’s primary responsibility, as is depicted in Mother and Child, Dorr’s book of portraits.
In the rapidly transforming publishing ecosystem of the 1920s and ‘30s, modernist photographers portrayed the female figure in new and different ways. Krull’s nudes and hand studies, reproduced in Jazz magazine, frame poses and gestures as a kind of performance. Rudolph’s and Jacobi’s pictures of the dancer Greta Palucca, widely circulated in magazines and books, capture a sense of physical freedom. Cunningham conveyed the visual rhythm of a harpist’s strumming hands through triple exposure. Bernhard transformed seashells into anatomical forms through diffuse, ethereal lighting effects. Techniques such as fragmentation, movement, light, and collage, made nontraditional representations of femininity possible.

Between the World Wars, photographers created new consumer desires through images for the illustrated press, such as Yva’s alluring fashion studies that modeled the edgy modern sensibility of the New Woman. The media’s use of the female figure was also serious subject for critique. In a 1930 counter-memoir, Cahun explored modes of self-presentation that defied the mass media’s typical depiction of women as figures merely meant to catch the eye of male viewers. In the 1970s and 1980s, Conceptual artists such as Silvia Kolbowski continued to challenge the clichés of “ideal,” pleasure-producing femininity, combining, as Cahun did, image and text.
Claude Cahun (Lucy Schwob)
French, 1894–1954

Marcel Moore (Suzanne Malherbe)
French, 1892–1972

Aveux non avenus (Disavowels or Cancelled Confessions) 1930
Illustrated book with photogravures
Publisher: Éditions du Carrefour, Paris
The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York

Ruth Bernhard
American, born Germany. 1905–2006

Photographs in The Studio, vol. 137, no. 674 (May 1949)
Publisher: National Magazine Co., London
The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York