

Our Selves Photographs by Women Artists from Helen Kornblum

How have women artists used photography as a tool of resistance? As a way of unsettling established narratives? As a means of unfixing the canon?

Our Selves brings images that span more than one hundred years of photography into dialogue with each other. All of them were made by women artists who have responded to asymmetrical systems of power and have reframed gender and subjectivity in the process. Modernist artists in the first half of the twentieth century interrogated the politics of the gaze and explored new forms of address in portraiture, documentary images, and advertising; contemporary artists have highlighted the intersections of women's rights, diasporic histories, and Indigenous sovereignty through oblique fabulation, queer language, and performative actions.

The exhibition, which reflects the generosity of the collector Helen Kornblum, is not a chronological history of women photographers, nor is it a historical account of feminist photography. Rather, *Our Selves* presents specific constellations of works and ideas that are guided by obscured and omitted legacies. It is an invitation to look at pictures through a contemporary feminist lens; it declares the capacity of women to assert their political motivations; it proposes unexpected connections that mount a challenge to convention. By showing these works together, *Our Selves* affirms the powerful words of artist Carrie Mae Weems: "In one way or another, my work endlessly explodes the limits of tradition. I'm determined to find new models to live by. Aren't you?"

Organized by Roxana Marcoci, The David Dechman Senior Curator, with Dana Ostrander and Caitlin Ryan, Curatorial Assistants, Department of Photography.

Unless otherwise noted, all works in this exhibition are Gift from Helen Kornblum in honor of Roxana Marcoci.

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We invite you to explore the accompanying publication, *Our Selves: Photographs by Women Artists*, which is available in the Museum Store.

For related content, programs, and audio, visit moma.org/ourselves. #OurSelves

Explore the story behind the works in this exhibition with the collector who made it possible. Enter the number on moma.org/audio.



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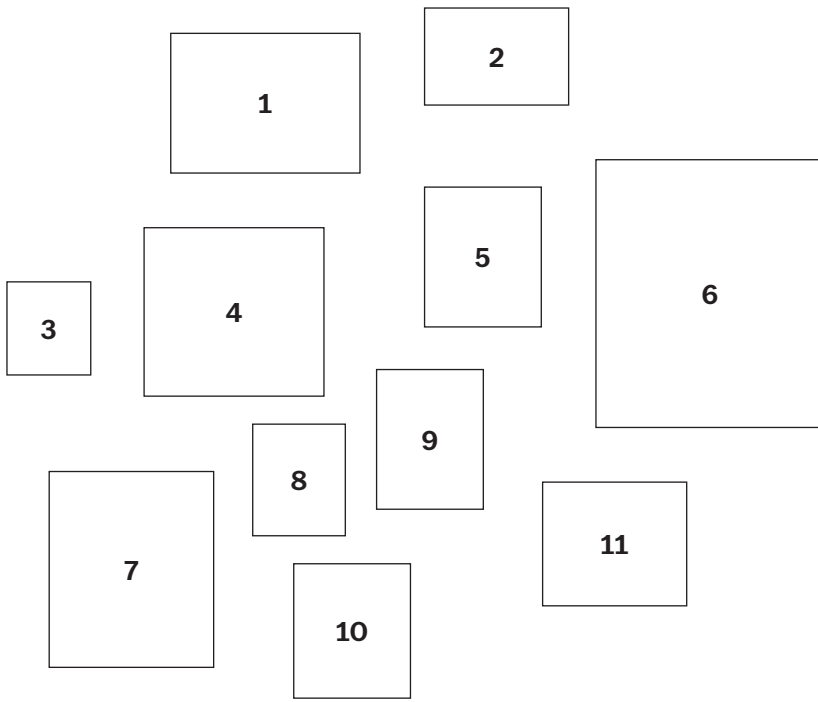
On this wall:

Justine Kurland

American, born 1969

Bathers 1998

Chromogenic print



1 **Alma Lavenson**
American, 1897–1989
Self-Portrait 1932
Gelatin silver print

2 **Lotte Jacobi**
American, born Germany.
1896–1990
Head of a Dancer 1929
Gelatin silver print

3 **Margrethe Mather**
American, 1885–1952
Buffie Johnson 1933
Gelatin silver print

4 **Rosemarie Trockel**
German, born 1952
From a French Magazine 2005
Chromogenic print

5 **Tatiana Parcero**
Mexican, born 1967
Interior Cartography #35 1996
Chromogenic print and acetate

Consider how this photograph blurs the boundary between private and public. Enter the number on moma.org/audio.

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6 **Lorie Novak**
American, born 1954
Self Portraits 1987
Chromogenic print

7 **Germaine Krull**
Dutch, born Germany.
1897–1985
The Hands of the Actress Jenny Burnay c. 1930
Gelatin silver print

8 **Claude Cahun (Lucy Schwob)**
French, 1894–1954
M.R.M. (Sex) c. 1929–30
Gelatin silver print
Hear from writer Juliet Jacques about the life and work of Claude Cahun. Enter the number on moma.org/audio.

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9 **Gertrud Arndt**
German, 1903–2000
Untitled (Masked self-portrait, Dessau) 1930
Gelatin silver print

10 **Lola Álvarez Bravo**
Mexican, 1907–1993
Frida Kahlo c. 1945
Gelatin silver print

11 **Lucia Moholy**
British, born Bohemia (now Czech Republic). 1894–1989
Frau Finsler 1926
Gelatin silver print

The dancers, actresses, painters, weavers, and—of course—photographers in these portraits share a commitment to creative expression, one shared by the artists who made them. The approaches are as diverse as the artists' geographical contexts. In a photomontage Cahun, in France, explored a shifting, malleable personhood and gender identity. Álvarez Bravo, in Mexico, took intimate and revealing portraits of her fellow artists. Jacobi, in Germany, conveyed the elegance and drama of ballet in the sweeping brim of Niura Norskaya's hat. The variety of methods used to produce these images, and the clichés and stereotypes they counter, illuminate the contested terrain of portraits by women artists.