



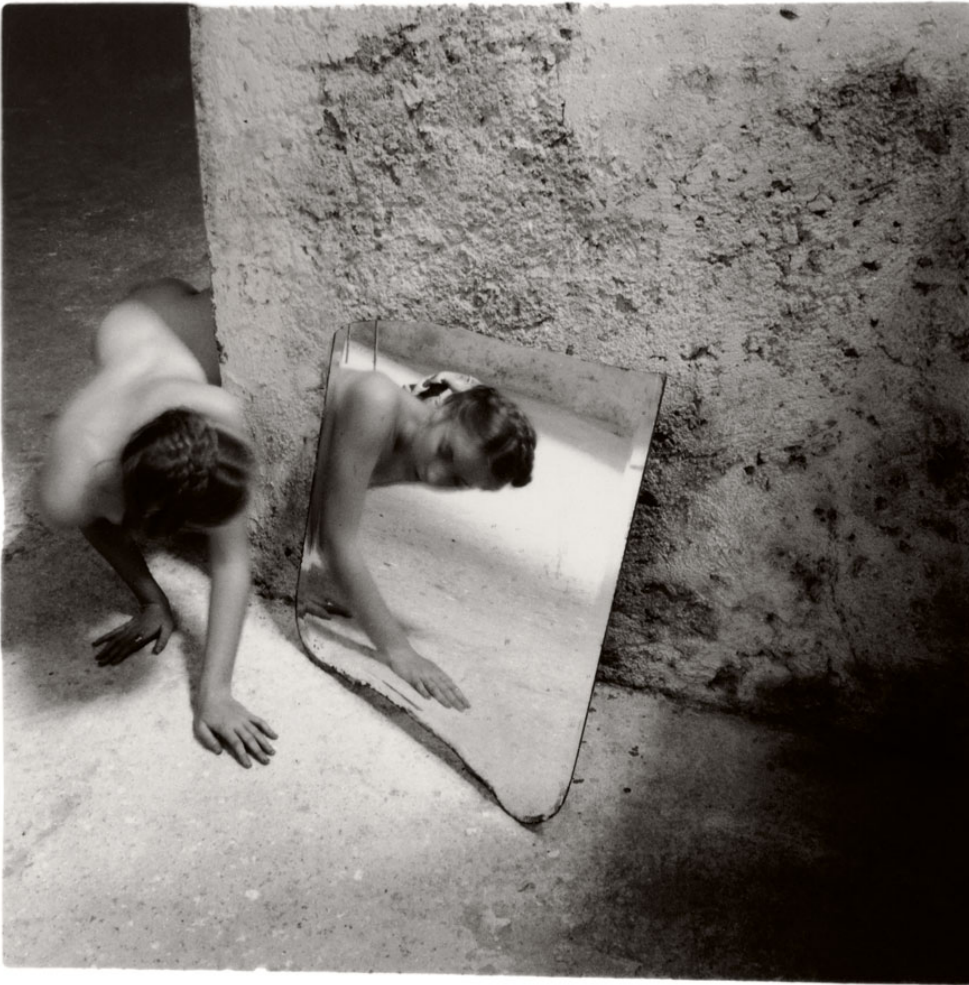
CULTURE DIGEST - 11 NOV 2016

## Feminism Then and Now

The Photographers' Gallery has cleverly paired a show of feminist art by 48 women with an overtly feminist show by a man

BY ELLEN MARA DE WACHTER

With more than 200 works by 48 artists, the encyclopaedic exhibition 'Feminist avant-garde of the 1970s: Works From The Verbund Collection' is divided according to themes of domesticity, sexuality, beauty and masquerade. These works on show at the The Photographers' Gallery, London, are all from the corporate collection of the Austrian electricity company, Verbund, and the exhibition is an object lesson in diligent corporate collecting, featuring all of the key feminist photographers of the 1970s as well as works by many less well-known artists. Iconic works, such as Cindy Sherman's early film still *Untitled (Lucy)* (1975), Ana Mendieta's *Untitled (Glass on Body Imprints-face)* (1972), Martha Rosler's *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975) and Francesca Woodman's dreamy performative self-portraits are installed alongside works by more obscure artists, for instance the Serbian-born Hungarian artist and poet Katalin Ladik, whose intriguing 1978 series 'Blackshave Poems' involved the artist performing an inverted striptease to camera.



Francesca Woodman,  
*Self-deceit #1*, Rome,  
Italy, 1978/79. Courtesy:  
The SAMMLUNG  
VERBUND Collection,  
Vienna © George and  
Betty Woodman, New  
York

The pay gap, social emancipation, reproductive rights, sexual violence and exploitation: it's striking how many of the issues addressed in these works are still burning today. Magazine cuttings and a video about Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz's *In Mourning and In Rage* (1977) show a dramatic performance on the steps of the Los Angeles City Hall, which involved mourning women dressed in stylized 19th century garb lamenting various forms of gender violence and chanting 'In memory of our sisters, we fight back!'



Simon Fujiwara, *Joanne*, 2016. Courtesy FVU and The Photographers' Gallery, London

The Photographers' Gallery has cleverly paired this exhibition of feminist art by 48 women with an overtly feminist show by a man. Simon Fujiwara's *Joanne* (2016) is a video and photographic portrait of Joanne Salley, the artist's secondary school teacher, an impressive polymath who was nonetheless fired from her teaching job and subjected to a scurrilous tabloid media campaign after private topless photographs of her were circulated by her students. Fujiwara's portrait is impressive in the way it gives Salley the space to set out the complexities of her persona and her situation.



<<https://goo.gl/Xlgb3l>>

**'Feminist avant-garde of the 1970s: Works From The Verbund Collection'**

<<http://thephotographersgallery.org.uk/feminist-avant-garde-of-the-1970s>> at The Photographers' Gallery, London, runs until 29 January 2017 before touring throughout 2017-18 to mumok, Vienna, Austria; ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany; The Brno House of Arts, Czech Republic; and Stavanger Art Museum, Stavanger, Norway.

**Simon Fujiwara's 'Joanne'** <<http://thephotographersgallery.org.uk/joanne>> runs until 15 January, 2017.

Main image: Mary Beth Edelson, *Some Living American Women Artists / Last Supper*, 1972.

Courtesy: Balice Hertling, LLC, New York / The SAMMLUNG VERBUND Collection, Vienna © Mary Beth Edelson.

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