

On Feminism

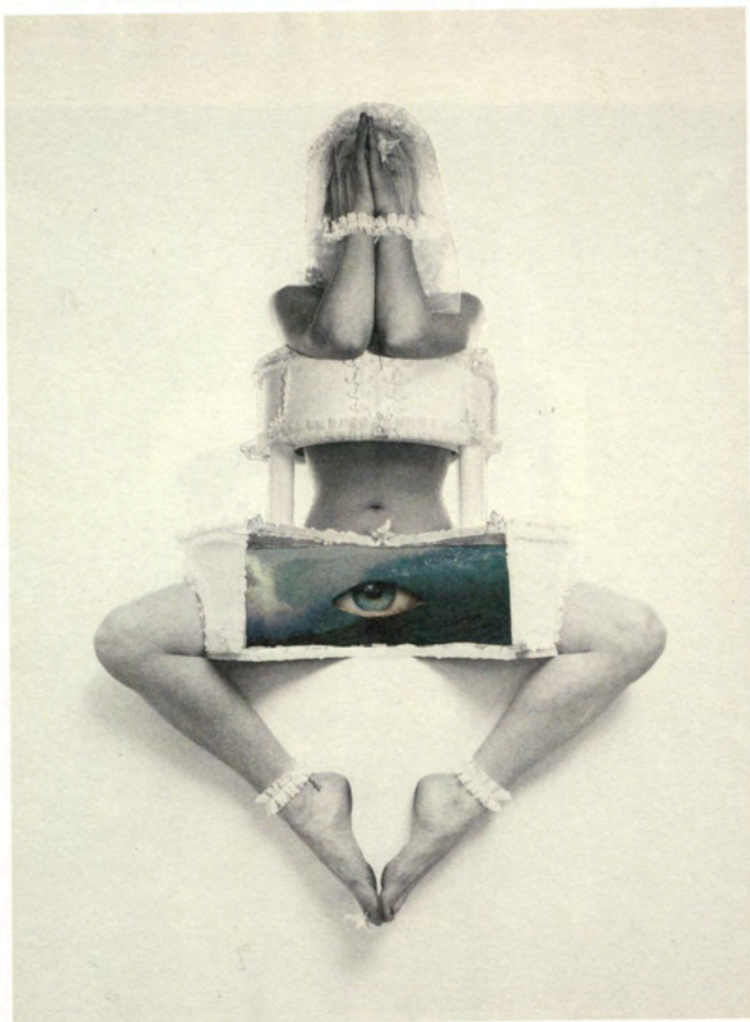
In the 1970s, as the struggle for gender equality transformed the United States and Europe, pioneering women artists pushed to reframe the female body

The Feminist Avant-Garde

Nancy Princenthal

It seems that it's time, once again, to consider the naked truths revealed by second-wave feminist art. In 2007, a year of women in the arts was spearheaded by *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, a traveling exhibition of women's art from the 1970s organized by Connie Butler for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. That year also saw *Global Feminisms*, at the Brooklyn Museum, and the Museum of Modern Art's two-day symposium "The Feminist Future." Traveling since 2010, the exhibition *Feminist Avant-Garde of the 1970s: Works from the Sammlung Verbund, Vienna* returns to the achievements of that formative decade. An assembly of photo-based work by thirty-four artists, the exhibition was organized by Gabriele Schor, who is also editor of the accompanying publication discussed here (its other primary authors are Mechtild Widrich and Merle Radtke; there are numerous additional contributors of shorter texts). Schor's aim, she writes, is simply to "draw the connection between the concepts of 'feminism' and 'avant-garde'" — that is, to challenge the idea that at the leading edge of culture there is always a battalion of men.

Lynn Hershman Leason,
Roberta Construction
Chart #1, 1975
© the artist



from top left:
Penny Slinger, *ICU, Eye Sea You, I See You*, 1973;
Cindy Sherman, *Magic Time*, 1975; Lynda Benglis,
***SELF*, 1970-76;** Ana
Mendieta, *Untitled (Glass on Body Imprints)*, 1972
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