



Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation

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During the 1930s and 1940s, women artists associated with the Surrealist movement produced a significant body of self-images that have no equivalent among the works of their male colleagues. While male artists exalted Woman's otherness in fetishized images, women artists explored their own subjective worlds. The self-images of Claude Cahun, Dorothea Tanning, Leonora Carrington, Frida Kahlo, Meret Oppenheim, Remedios Varo, Kay Sage, and others both internalize and challenge conventions for representing femininity, the female body, and female subjectivity. Many of the representational strategies employed by these pioneers continue to resonate in the work of contemporary women artists. The words "Surrealist" and "surrealism" appear frequently in discussions of such contemporary artists as Louise Bourgeois, Ana Mendieta, Cindy Sherman, Francesca Woodman, Kiki Smith, Dorothy Cross, Michiko Kon, and Paula Santiago. This book, which accompanies an exhibition organized by the MIT List Visual Arts Center, explores specific aspects of the relationship between historic and contemporary work in the context of Surrealism. The contributors reexamine art historical assumptions about gender, identity, and intergenerational legacies within modernist and postmodernist frameworks. Questions raised include: how did women in both groups draw from their experiences of gender and sexuality? What do contemporary artistic practices involving the use of body images owe to the earlier examples of both female and male Surrealists? What is the relationship between self-image and self-knowledge? Contributors : Dawn Ades, Whitney Chadwick, Salomon Grimberg, Katy Kline, Helaine Posner, Susan Rubin Suleiman, Dickran Tashjian.

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