

BEING SEEN

Recent Acquisitions from The Ringling Photography Collection

OPENS APR 19



Zanele Muholi (South African, born 1972), *Misiwe IV, Bijlmer, Amsterdam* from the series *Somnyama Ngonyama, Hail the Dark Lioness*, 2017. © Zanele Muholi. SN11594.1

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Curated from The Ringling's photography collection, this exhibition features works by photographers who examine the complexities of identity and the staging of selfhood. Consisting primarily of self-portraits and portraits of empowered subjects, these works explore personal agency at the intersection of politics and the female body. Many of the artists in the exhibition are recognized as leading voices in contemporary art and offer diverse perspectives on issues surrounding power, sexuality, and self-representation. Each photograph presents a unique invitation to renew the dialogue on the authority of the gaze in the twentieth-first century.

Among the highlights of the exhibition are recent additions to the Museum's permanent collection of works by contemporary artists, including Zanele Muholi, Deana Lawson, and Rania Matar. Works by Muholi, a South African visual activist who advocates for the black LGBTQ+ community, from her series of bold self-portraits *Somnyama Ngonyama, Hail the Dark Lioness*, will be featured. In these images, Muholi embraces and intensifies their blackness, provoking the viewer to acknowledge South Africa's political history and recognize the presence of queer black identity. Deana Lawson's sensational tableaux reenact and elevate the nuances of her generation's black experience while centering on expressions of intimacy and female-centric desire. Even though Lawson's subjects are often depicted in domestic interiors or everyday moments, her work captures the complexities of their psyches as they appear confident and vulnerable simultaneously. Lebanese-Palestinian-American artist Rania Matar's project *A Girl in Her Room* presents moving portraits of young women in the US and in Lebanon. Matar's project is an intimate exploration of the material conditions inside the personal spaces her subjects create for themselves as they navigate from adolescence into adulthood. The viewer is invited to reflect on the markers of difference between these two cultures, but also consider the possibilities of a universally shared female experience.

Being Seen also includes numerous works by significant women photographers from the twentieth century, added to the collection in recent years. This exhibition offers visitors a rare opportunity to explore themes of agency, visibility, and gender through the lens of a broader historical context.

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