

Galerie Buchholz

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Moyra Davey
Justine Kurland
Shala Miller
Alix Cléo Roubaud
Carla Williams
Francesca Woodman

Forks & Spoons, curated by m.d.

19 April - 18 May 2024

My preference for looking at photographs is always within books: recent passions are for the artist-books of Justine Kurland and Shala Miller, and a posthumous publication of Alix Cléo Roubaud. Viewing these works, and the ways the artists use their bodies and their words, inevitably led to Francesca Woodman, and her talismanic monograph of 1986.

There are some uncanny parallels between Woodman and Roubaud. Both young women were working in the same era - the late 70s and early 80s, framing their own bodies and using seriality, repetition, and long exposures to blur motion. Both were invested in darkroom manipulations of the print. They favored similar, baroque interiors and sartorial flourishes, and performed for the camera enactments of seduction and desire. Sadly, they shared an intensity in their affective lives as well, cut short by suicide and suicidal behavior both.

I see the gestures of their photographs, especially the unabashed pleasures and provocations of the body and its fetishistic details, manifesting in Kurland and Miller, though the later have queered the scenario, and positioned women as primary viewers of the work. I feel a certain awe when I look at what my two younger contemporaries have achieved, specifically an approach towards the female body free of the inhibitions that burdened artists of my generation.

All four artists are also poets, wordsmiths - keepers of diaries, writers of letters, essays and plays. Shala Miller's *Tender Noted* brings together a multitude of these genres.

Carla Williams came to my attention via her 2023 book *Tender*, with the film project *Forks & Spoons* already well formed. In the mid to late 80s she was staging portrait photographs with many antecedents, but in particular she cites the unlikely triad of Cindy Sherman, Mike and Doug Starn, and Anne Noggle. Shot in beautiful light, using her own body, Williams's photographs contain all the fascination a view camera can deliver; with a passing nod to Pictures Generation concepts, she made her work knowingly, and for a tiny audience. She was not interested in the art world.

My reenactments of the photographs of each artist have been mostly dutiful; predictably I only succeeded when I was able, mostly by accident, to leave them behind, decrepitude be damned.*

- Moyra Davey

*(see Anne Noggle's iconic book, *The Saga of the Fallen Flesh*).

Galerie Buchholz is proud to announce an exhibition with the premiere of Moyra Davey's film *Forks & Spoons*, centering around the work of Justine Kurland, Shala Miller, Alix Cléo Roubaud, Carla Williams, and Francesca Woodman. Alongside her film, Davey has curated a selection of these artists' photographs.

Moyra Davey (1958, Toronto) lives and works in New York. This is Davey's fifth exhibition with Galerie Buchholz, and second in our New York location. Recent solo exhibitions and screenings include "Horse Opera" at the Berlin International Film Festival (2023), an eleven-part film series at Museum of Modern Art, New York (2022), "Les fervents" at Concordia University, Montreal (2022), "My Saints" at Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover (2021), "The Faithful" at National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (2020), "Lanak/ Obras/ Works" at Artium Museoa, Vitoria-Gasteiz (2020), "Scotiabank Photography Award: Moyra Davey" at Ryerson Image Centre, Toronto (2019), and "Hell Notes" at Kunstverein Bielefeld (2018) and Portikus, Frankfurt (2017). Recent group exhibitions include the 2024 Quebec Biennial, "Her Voice – Echoes of Chantal Akerman" at Fotomuseum Antwerp (2023), "Trust Me" at Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2023), "Exposed" at Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2023), "No One Is Bored" at Hessel Museum of Art, New York (2022), "Working Thought" at Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh (2022), "Send me an Image" at C/O Foundation, Berlin (2021), "Exhibition as Image", at 80WSE, New York (2021), "Understudies: I, Myself Will Exhibit Nothing" at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2021), and "New Time: Art and Feminisms in the 21st Century" at Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley (2021). Recent publications include *Index Cards* (2020, Fitzcarraldo Editions / New Directions).

Justine Kurland (1969, Warsaw, New York) lives and works in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include "Girl Pictures" at Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford (2023) and "SCUMB Manifesto" at Watershed art & ecology, Chicago (2023). Recent two person exhibitions include "Bonds of Love" (with Moyra Davey) at delpire & co, Paris (2023) and "Two Worlds: Illusion & Document" with Bruce Kurland at University of Buffalo, New York (2022).

Shala Miller (1993, Cleveland) lives and works in New York. Recent two-person and group exhibitions include "Shala Miller & Malcolm Peacock" at Artists Space, New York (2023); "If We Never Get Better" at Tilt Center for the Contemporary Image, Philadelphia (2022); "Black Melancholia" at Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York (2022); "Beneath Tongues" at Swiss Institute, New York (2022); and "Moveable Image" at Academy Art Museum, Easton, Maryland (2022). Work in this exhibition is included in Miller's 2022 publication *Tender Noted* (Wendy's Subway).

Alix Cléo Roubaud (b. 1952, Mexico - d. 1983, Paris) was a photographer and writer. Prior to her death at the age of thirty-one, Roubaud created a rich body of photographic and literary work. Roubaud was the subject of the 2014 exhibition "Alix Cléo Roubaud: Photographies" at the Bibliothèque nationale de France and "Si quelque chose noir & autres photographies" at Centre International de Poésie Marseille; collections include Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris; and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, among others. Her journal was posthumously published by Éditions du Seuil in 1984.

Carla Williams (1965, Los Angeles) lives and works in New Orleans, Louisiana. Williams is a photography historian, writer, editor, and artist. Williams recently published *Tender* (TBW Books, 2023), a monograph of photographs taken from 1984-1999.

Francesca Woodman was born in Denver, Colorado in 1958 and died in New York in 1981. Collections include Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and Tate, London, among others. Exhibitions include "Photographic Work" at Hunter College Art Gallery, New York (1986, traveled to Wellesley College Museum, MA, and other institutions through 1988); "Photographische Arbeiten" at Shedhalle, Zurich (1992, traveled through 1993); Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris (1998, traveled through 2002); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2011-12, traveled to Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 2012); and "On Being an Angel" at Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2015, traveled through 2020).

Concurrent with this exhibition, Sylph Editions has published an English translation of Hélène Giannecchini's *Alix Cléo Roubaud: a portrait in fragments* (2014, Éditions du Seuil). Moyra Davey will join Giannecchini in conversation at Galerie Buchholz for a launch event on May 1 at 7pm.

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