

ERICA LENNARD

WOMEN. SISTERS

Erica Lennard

Born 1950 in New York, United States.
Lives and works in San Francisco, United States.

After studying at the San Francisco Art Institute,
Erica Lennard moved to Paris in 1973.

In 1976, she exhibited at Galerie Agathe
Gaillard and published *Les femmes,
les soeurs* with Éditions des Femmes.
She then turned her focus to fashion
and portrait photography, working
for magazines such as *Elle* and *Marie
Claire*. Her interest later extended
to European gardens, leading to the
publication of *Classic Gardens* in 1982.
She subsequently travelled to Japan,
China, Cambodia, India, and Egypt.

The author of fourteen books, she has devoted
much of her work to gardens as well as artists'
and writers' homes.



"Elizabeth and I are sisters. We are all sisters," wrote
Erica Lennard in the epigraph to *Les femmes, les soeurs* (1976).
This book unfolds as an epistolary exchange between a poem
written by Elizabeth and portraits of her, as well as of their
friends. The deep bond uniting Erica Lennard and her subjects
imbues the images with a palpable tenderness.

This contemplative and dreamlike ode places her work under
the sign of sisterhood, giving form to a notion
now embraced by a new generation of feminists.
This exhibition revisits, for the first time,
the story of this seminal work—from its inception
to its reception—drawing on previously unseen
archival materials.

Erica Lennard grew up in Berkeley, California,
in the midst of student protests and the vibrant
counterculture of the hippie movement. She attended the
San Francisco Art Institute before settling in Paris in 1973.
Employing techniques of blur and overexposure, she explored,
in particular, the genre of the photographic nude, which was
then experiencing a surge in popularity. Alongside her sister,
she frequented the Rencontres d'Arles, where workshops
dedicated to this form enjoyed considerable success.
Breaking away from dominant visual conventions, Lennard
chose not to photograph passive, objectified models, but rather
collaborated with her sister and friends—inviting them to
subvert the codes of seduction.

This intimacy opens the door to self-reflection and a celebration
of the bonds between women. In her afterword, writer and
filmmaker Marguerite Duras evokes a "dizzying harmony, found
in disparity itself." The title she once imagined for her novel
The Lover—"the absolute photograph"—could equally well capture
the ambitions of her younger counterpart. The dialogue between
word and image underpins both their respective bodies of work
and continued to inform Lennard's artistic path, which includes
several volumes on gardens and writers' homes, as well as
portraits of actresses such as Jeanne Moreau, Delphine Seyrig,
and Charlotte Rampling.

Clara Bouveresse

Venue
Espace Van Gogh.

Curator
Clara Bouveresse.
Framing
Circad, Paris.

Publications
*Erica Lennard. Avec toi
et seule*, Actes Sud, 2025;
*Erica Lennard, Les femmes,
les soeurs*, Éditions
des Femmes, 1976.

Portrait
Thomas Walther.



Elizabeth, Neauphle-le-Château, fall 1972.
Courtesy of the artist / La Galerie Rouge
(for all photographs).



Above
Elizabeth, California, winter 1973.

Ci-contre
Elizabeth, Paris, winter 1974.

