

# 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 sœurs* 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 sœurs* (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 sœurs*, Éditions des Femmes, 1976.

Portrait  
Thomas Walther.

74



*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.

