

Review: What They Saw: Historical Photobooks by Women, 1843-1999

by Russet Lederman and Olga Yatskevich. 10x10 Photobooks, November 2021. 352 p. ill. ISBN 978-0-578-93213-2 (pbk.), \$85.00. <https://10x10photobooks.org/what-they-saw-historical-photobooks-by-women-publication/>

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This volume is a follow-up project to *How We See: Photobooks by Women*, first published in 2018 by 10x10 Photobooks, a nonprofit organization founded in 2012 to foster engagement with the global photobook community. *How We See: Photobooks by Women* focused on 100 contemporary photobooks by female photographers published between 2000 and 2018 as well as lists of historically significant photobooks by women. In *What They Saw: Historical Photobooks by Women, 1843-1999*, these lists have been expanded and the focus is on both unknown and well-known photobooks made by women during this 150-year period.

Interestingly, the editors have taken an extremely wide-ranging view of what defines a photobook and have included individual albums, maquettes, zines, and artist's books to foster a more inclusive understanding of the standard photobook. The editors also contend that the burgeoning area of study, photobook history, needs to be "unwritten" as it is currently predominately written by men focusing on publications by men, and therefore is "overly subjective, inaccurate, and riddled with omissions." This project seeks to be more equitable by comparison. Both publications are part of a project that also includes a touring reading room and series of public programming to engage a global public. Upcoming reading room venues include the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia Library

in Madrid in February and Boston Athenaeum in March. The New York Public Library and Enter Enter in Amsterdam featured the reading room in 2022.

The book itself contains eleven essays written by different authors in addition to the introduction by the editors. In addition to the essays, book descriptions are included that range from short paragraphs to mini annotated bibliographies. Details in the description include the photographer, title, publishers, year of publication, size, edition number, number of pages, cover type, language of the text and author. Reproduction images – spanning full size pages to quarter sized and smaller – of the included books are generously provided throughout the 350-page volume in tandem with the book descriptions; fullspread images give a more thorough understanding of the photobook and provide additional context. A list of books on photography by women follows as does an index of names and illustration credits. This award-winning title is highly recommend for art libraries, museums, and institutions that support art history, history of the book studies, and photography programs.