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MUSEUM | FEBRUARY 27, 2019 | CHANDRA NOYES

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Laurie Simmons' Big Career Photographing Little Things



© LAURIE SIMMONS, COURTESY THE ARTIST AND SALON 94 Laurie Simmons, *Yellow Living Room*, 1982

Opening this week at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago is the first major survey of acclaimed photographer Laurie Simmons. Laurie Simmons: Big *Camera/Little Camera* encompasses four decades of her work, including film and sculpture, in addition to her photographs. Known for her close-up images of the world of dolls, Simmons has long used her lens to critique gender roles and idealized visions of American prosperity and domesticity. By making small objects the central focus of her works, Simmons manipulates our sense of scale and of what is important and worthy of artistic attention. In this way, Simmons makes the personal, the small, and the intimate, political objects,

bringing a feminist message to her domestic scenes.

Simmons became interested in photography as a child, and after art school

worked briefly as a photographer for a dollhouse miniature company. This

experience, as well as purchasing a collection of old toys, would shape her

influence our lives. Her Walking and Lying Objects (1987-91) series brought

career. By creating intimate vignettes for these objects and combining

them with other props, Simmons used the toys she recognized from

childhood to explore themes of gender stereotypes and how images

inanimate objects to life via a pair of slender, feminine legs, drawing a

comparison to how the female body is objectified in the media.



MOST READ



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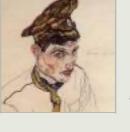
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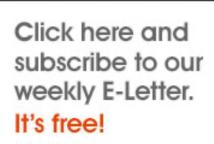
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FEATURES



The Monstrous Feminine in Flora Yukhnovich's Luscious Canvases at the Ashmolean

© LAURIE SIMMONS, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND SALON 94 Laurie Simmons, *Walking House*, 1989



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SCAD Unveils Promenade de Sculptures in Provence



SCAD Museum of Art Celebrating 10th Anniversary



© LAURIE SIMMONS, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND SALON 94

Laurie Simmons, Café of the Inner Mind: Gold Café, 1994

At first, it may be hard to imagine 40 years worth of photographs of dolls

remarkably varied, featuring a wide cast of characters, and eliciting a range

of emotions, from the nostalgic to the humorous, and the sad. Simmons'

props, many of which are on display in this exhibition, have grown just as

she has as an artist. Ventriloquist dummies feature in her photos and the

film *The Music of Regret* (2006, 45 min), which stars Meryl Streep. Recently

Simmons incorporated high-end Japanese sex dolls for the series *The Love*

as being very interesting or ground-breaking, but Simmons' images are

© LAURIE SIMMONS, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND

Simmons has been a major voice in contemporary art photography, and continues to be influential. She continues to explore ideas surrounding gender, including her most recent work for the series *Some New* (2018). Using makeup and costumes, Simmons addresses the way imagemaking is not limited to photographers but is something we as individuals engage in every day as we shape our appearances.

Accompanying the exhibition is a full calendar of film viewings, tours, and aritst talks, including Simmons in conversation with her daughter, writer and activist Cyrus Dunham.

SALON 94 Laurie Simmons, *Some New: Grace (Orange)*, 2018

Laurie Simmons: Big Camera/Little Camera is on view through May 5, 2019.

FIND OUT MORE

Doll (2009-11).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Read more stories from Chandra Noyes

Chandra Noyes is the former Managing Editor for Art & Object.

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Laurie Simmons MCA Chicago photography film

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A Look Back at the Life of Fashion Icon Iris Apfel

When fashion icon Iris Apfel died at 102, she left a legacy of artful living.



7 Artists to Watch at Frieze LA

Here are seven artists to watch at Frieze LA, 2024.



Elton John Sales of Art and Memorabilia Bring in \$20.5 Million

Elton John said goodby to his Atlanta home through a series of eight sales.

ANCIENT ART



The Metropolitan Museum to Return Cambodian Artifacts Tied to Looting

10 Stunning Prehistoric Sculptures from The Met's Collection

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Highlights from The Winter Show 2024

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10 Standout Works from the 2023 Made in L.A. Biennial

WOMEN ARTISTS



10 Fearless Women Artists Throughout History

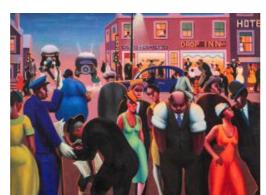
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Video

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The Cabinet of Curiosities & Colonialism

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Jeff Koons Sends

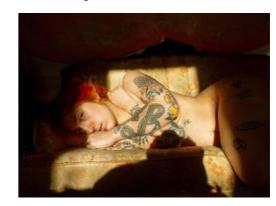
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Events

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