

**DISRUPTIVE**  
**PERSPECTIVES**  
October 12-December 22  
Museum of Contemporary Photography



October 12 - December 22, 2017

**MoCP**  
Museum of  
Contemporary Photography

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By its very nature, photography is a medium of exclusion. Bound by four edges, photographs crop out portions of the world, and reduce the boundless complexity of lived experience to a two-dimensional illusion. For marginalized populations, exclusion from the omnipresence of visual culture is not merely defined by what appears in one photograph or another. An abundance of exclusion—an existence that is largely outside of the frame—has the power to delegitimize one's identity in the public sphere and have a profound impact on their lived experience.

Until recently, gender and sexuality resided in the popular consciousness as stable, binary concepts. Beginning in the late 1960s, there was a marked uptick in public expressions of alternative narratives that coalesced around activist communities. Artists including Eleanor Antin, Joan E. Biren (JEB), Nan Goldin, Gran Fury, Peter Hujar, Zoe Leonard, Robert Mapplethorpe, and Catherine Opie created artworks, as well as billboards, leaflets, and postcards that forcefully inserted new visualizations of identity, sexuality, and human rights into public discourse. Set against a body of imagery found in visual culture that overwhelmingly reinforced prevailing social norms, the works made by these artists aggressively countered ideologies enshrined in the existing visual record.

A new generation of photographers, many of whom are represented in the exhibition *Disruptive Perspectives*, continue to carve out new ways of envisioning gender, identity, relationships, and selfhood, bringing further nuance to the groundwork laid by their predecessors. Using a medium that is resolutely still, they paradoxically find strategies to explore the idea that identity and often gender itself do not exist as biologically fixed realities, but are rather adaptable expressions negotiated over time and along a spectrum of possibilities. Combating narrow-minded presentations, their works engage critically with the power of photography to render the intricacies of identity, as they challenge the ways audiences—both individuals and groups—imagine individuality and intimacy.

Working in a moment of complexity—when the spectrum of identities is broadening, becoming more visible and accepted, yet equal rights for all remains elusive in experience—these artists are navigating a space between validity and obscurity with pronounced sensitivity. Their works lay bare aspects of their private lives and those of their subjects, and in that willingness, invite our empathetic attention. At turns triumphant and at other moments sorrowful or distressing, the artworks included in *Disruptive Perspectives* present gender and sexuality as a panoply of possible variations—reflecting the ongoing complex influences of self, other, and image.

-Allison Grant and Nadine Wietlisbach



COVER  
Laurence Rasti, *Untitled* from "There are No Homosexuals in Iran" series, 2014-2016

TOP AND BOTTOM  
Zackary Drucker and Rhys Ernst, *Relationship #11 (Palindromes)*, 2008  
Jess T. Dugan, *Duchess Milan, 69*, Los Angeles, CA, 2017