

REFLECTIONS ON A WOMAN IN A MIRROR

September 20, 2009

by Moira Roth

*dedicated to Karen LeCocq, Laura Meyer and all the artists in A Studio of
Their Own*



1. The Scene, Fresno, 2009

Elegantly dressed,
she stares into the large mirror
--lace curtains framing it on either side--
while holding a small silver mirror
in her hand.

A mirror within a mirror.

Reflections within reflections.

With ceremonious focus
and
never glancing at the audience members
--who stand behind her,
some mesmerized,
some chatting among themselves—

she stares at herself in the mirror.



photograph by Genevieve Walker, Fresno, 2009

Stares,
begins to make up

Stares,
pats cream on her face

Stares,
makes up her eyes

Stares,
puts rouge on her cheeks

Stares,
powders her neck

Stares,
tilts her head

Stares.

On the vanity table
in front of her
are two glowing candles in elegant glass holders
and
photographs
--including one of herself in 1972--
silver and glass objects
an evening purse
white lace gloves
and a feathered fan.



photograph by Genevieve Walker, Fresno, 2009

II. The Video, Los Angeles, 1972

On a nearby wooden pedestal
in the Fresno gallery
is a monitor



photograph by Genevieve Walker, Fresno, 2009

showing
a video of Karen LeCocq's same performance,



photograph by Lloyd Hamrol, Los Angeles, 1972

Lea's Room,
a collaboration between Karen LeCocq and Nancy Youdelman,
created
forty years before
in Womanhouse in Los Angeles
in 1972.

She is
in 2009



photograph by Genevieve Walker, Fresno, 2009

surprisingly similar
to her 1972 self.



photograph by Lloyd Hamrol, Los Angeles, 1972

III. Reflections, Fresno, 2009

I stand to the side of her performance,
watching Karen LeCocq
wondering to myself
what is on her mind
and in her mind's eye.

Is she in another world?

And if so, which?

In the world of Colette's novel ?

Womanhouse in 1972?

Or
musing
as an older woman of around sixty
about her younger self?

I shift
to a new spot
to observe,
and
suddenly see
in the mirror
the reflections of audience members,
some old, some young,
intermingling with that of Karen LeCocq.

What is on their minds
As they watch, I wonder?

Should I join them in the mirror?

Shall I too
be reflected
and reflect?

IV. Colette, Lea and Cheri, Paris, 1920

Are there reflections
In the mirror
of the convoluted love story
between Lea, the older courtesan, and Cheri,
her young lover,
that so astonished
Colette's readers
when her novel was published in Paris
In 1920?

Did the younger and the older Colette
Compare notes?



Colette, 1907



Colette, 1951

V. Unfolding Tales & Reflections

Tales & Reflections, 1920

Tales & Reflections, 1972

Tales & Reflections, 2009

Tales & Reflections on love?

Tales & Reflections on age?

Tales & Reflections on death?

Tales & Reflections on beauty?

A tale of a woman's reflections in a mirror?

Many tales of many women?

Tales & Reflections

by all the artists



installation photographs by Nancy Youdelman, Fresno, 2009



installation photographs by Nancy Youdelman, Fresno, 2009

who took part
in
A Studio of Their Own: The Legacy of the Fresno Feminist Art Experiment
in
2009.



installation photographs by Nancy Yodelman, Fresno, 2009

*Note: during the performance by Karen LeCocq of *Lea's Room* (Artists' Reception Party at *A Studio of Their Own: The Legacy of the Fresno Feminist Art Experiment*, Conley Art Gallery, Fresno State, CA, Thursday, September 17, 2009), I took quick handwritten notes about my responses, and today I have edited these and added to the text. I should stress, however, that the reflections in this text has been profoundly affected by the work and thinking of all the artists in *A Studio of Their Own* exhibition, the accompanying symposium, and the essays by Laura Meyer and Faith Wilding in the exhibition's catalog.*

Moira Roth, September 20, 2009, Berkeley