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LEARNING GUIDE

## LEARNING GUIDE

### SOCIAL ORDER: WOMEN PHOTOGRAPHERS FROM IRAN, INDIA AND AFGHANISTAN

#### ABOUT

Women have had a significant impact in the history of photography. Dating back to the earliest days of photography, particularly in portraiture, women have challenged, shaped and gifted us with innovative perspectives on the modern woman.

The modern woman is and will always be an ever-changing definition. We can observe the evolution of the modern woman as early as the 19th century to present day. Margaret Bourke-White was one of the first to make an impact as a photographer for LIFE magazine, Julia Margaret Cameron challenged the standards of portraiture set by men of her time, Sally Mann gave the world controversial perspectives of her children, and most notably, Cindy Sherman's conceptual self-portraits have positioned her as one of the most important contemporary artists living today.



This exhibition focuses on five contemporary women photographers from Iran, India, and Afghanistan whose work explores the role of women in the context of cultural constructs, religion, censorship and the media.

#### CRITICAL THINKING

The photographs in this exhibition evoke similar underlying messages about women in the home, family and marriage.

**Q.** What similarities do you find through observing these photographs? Physically? Subliminally?

**Q.** Shadi Ghadirian states, "My pictures became a mirror reflecting on how I felt: stuck between tradition and modernity."

Whether they are portraying traditional or modern views on the role of women in their cultures, are these artists successful in doing so? What elements of the photographs make this effective? Give an example.

**Q.** Priya Kambli comes to terms with the effects of migration and displacement through her photographs. In her photograph titled Muma and Me, how does Kambli arrange her subjects and photographs to portray this displacement?



Priya Kambli, Mumma and Me

## COMPARE/CONTRAST

### 1. Art = Values

You cannot discuss art without discussing values. Historically art has touched on values such as home and family, the individual and society, nature and the environment, war and peace, beauty and ugliness, violence and love. These are all examples of how art explores values.

What values are explored in any of these bodies of work?

2. Shadi Ghadirian and Annu Palakunnathu Matthew both use similar processes to juxtapose modern day imagery with more traditional photographic aesthetics. Why do you think they have chosen this approach? Is it successful in bringing about differences between the modern woman and outdated perspectives?

How would you compare the woman of the 19th century to these artists' depictions of the modern woman?



Annu Palakunnathu Matthew

3. Washington has a rich Native American history. Major groups or tribes of local native peoples include the Suquamish, Duwamish, Nisqually, Snoqualmie, and Muckleshoot (Ilalkoamish, Stuckamish, and Skopamish) tribes. How do these images engage the viewer to appreciate and recognize the cultural diversity in Washington?

## ACTIVITY

How do you view the roles of women in the United States? What about within your own life?



Manjari Sharma



Gazelle Samizay