



Auto Focus: The Self-Portrait in Contemporary Photography

By Susan Bright

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Auto Focus features a dazzling array of self-portraits by seventy-five of the world's foremost contemporary photographers. Photography writer and curator Susan Bright provides a clear guide through this significant and dynamic genre, showing how issues of identity—whether national, sexual, racial, personal, or artistic—are key to understanding the work of many of today's leading photographers.

This lavishly illustrated, accessible survey is organized into five thematic chapters: diaristic and autobiographical images; pictures of the body; the use of masks and masquerade; the return to studio portraiture and the photographic album; and performance, both public and private. An informative illustrated introduction explains the history of the photographic self-portrait from the 1840s to the late twentieth century, providing an invaluable context for the recent surge in artists' images of themselves.

From intimate images of introspection and those that consciously challenge notions of ethnicity and sexuality to dramatic, stylized photographs of dreamlike scenarios, *Auto Focus* shows how one of the longest-established artistic genres continues to fascinate artists today.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Susan Bright is a curator and writer. She has contributed to numerous publications and is the author of *Art Photography Now*. In addition to organizing international conferences and seminars on art and photography, she was formerly assistant curator of photographs at the National Portrait Gallery in London, curator at the Association of Photographers, and served as acting director for the MA Photography (Historic and Contemporary) program at Sotheby's Institute of Art, London. Bright's previous exhibitions and catalogs include *Something Out of Nothing*, *How We Are: Photographing Britain*, and *Face of Fashion*. She currently lives and works in New York, where she is a faculty member at the School of Visual Arts.

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