
Known mostly for her publications devoted to Japanese art (e.g., Who’s Who in Modern Japanese Prints), Frances Blakemore was a successful American artist living in Tokyo during some of the most tumultuous periods of Japan’s modern history. Blakemore began teaching and creating art in Tokyo in 1935, leaving only from 1940 to 1945 and returning again to a devastated post-war Tokyo; she persevered, launching her successful Fran-Nell Gallery in the city in the 1960s. Independent scholar Morioka here writes an engaging biography of the artist/teacher/gallery owner sprinkled with Blakemore’s own letters and essays and profusely and beautifully accompanied by images of Blakemore’s woodcuts, paintings, and illustrations. This publication accomplishes two important feats: it shines a light on an artist who does not make it into any of the traditional biographical indexes, and, perhaps more important, it opens a window into the art world of pre- and postwar Japan as seen through the eyes of an expatriate immersed in the culture. Recommended for 20th-century American art collections.—Kraig Binkowski, Yale Ctr. for British Art, New Haven, CT


This book of photographs celebrates the female body in all of its shapes, sizes, and ages (19–95). A collaborative project between Olson—a commercial and fine art photographer with a journalism degree from the University of Oregon—and the 54 women she portrays, it features nudies lovingly documented in proud yet modest classical poses. Olson’s sepia-toned photographs are accompanied by excerpts from interviews conducted with each woman as part of the author’s Body Image project. Each woman speaks in a distinctive, heartfelt voice to feelings of beauty, self-image, and evolving levels of self-comfort, be she fat or thin, young or elderly, frail or robust. Maya Angelou’s poem “Phenomenal Woman” empowers further the women’s words. Of interest to larger public libraries.—Nancy B. Turner, Syracuse Univ. Lib., NY


Perry (art history, Open Univ.) reveals the haunts of Covent Gardens and Drury Lane in 18th-century Georgian London to provide a complex view of women on the stage in a society torn between the notion of uplifting performances and the perception that the theater was a “lower-class carnival.” Celebrated actresses such as Sarah Siddons, Mrs. Robinson, and Kitty Fisher were represented by equally celebrated portrait painters including Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Lawrence, and Thomas Gainsborough, and their relationship established a visual connection between the theater and the arts. The society and the stage were reflected in humorous, scathing caricature by noted illustrators of the day, such as James Gilray, whose print La Belle Assemblee depicted an overweight actress in competition with members of Parliament. Running throughout the book are the ongoing themes of “flirtation” and “coquette,” which are given multifaceted definition in the portrayal of this stratified society. A fascinating angle on this historical period, with a plethora of illustrations, many in color, this book satisfies all scholarly requirements while still being a good read. It is highly recommended for women's...