

Flash: Carrie Schneider
December 6, 2014–March 14, 2015

Sarah is reading Zora Neale Hurston. She turns the page and her hand goes automatically to her face where she unthinkingly fidgets with her mouth. I take in the rise and fall of her breathing, visible beneath a cool white blouse, preparing myself for the moment when she finishes the first page. She is a fast reader—she bends the cover and pages of the book back as her gaze moves to the top of the next. I take in the scene. I watch her eyes in profile, darting back and forth, blinking. Her head is propped and

perfectly still, chin to chest, as she reclines against a serape-slung mustard couch. Birds twitter and a siren wails in the distance. Summer. Surely she is unaware that a singular coil of hair has escaped the bun atop her head, a harmless little joke meant just for my own pleasure. Where is she coming from? Has she been out there today, in the distant commotion of the street? Her right hand fingers the edge of the page anticipating the next turn.



above: Molly reading Fanny Howe (*The Winter Sun: Notes on a Vocation*, 2009), detail
interior: Flávia reading Clarice Lispector (*Clarice na Cabeceira*, pub. 2009), detail
cover: Abigail reading Angela Davis (*An Autobiography*, 1974), detail

This portrait is one of what will amount to 100 similar arrangements filmed and photographed by the artist Carrie Schneider. Sarah’s entire scene is scarcely longer than two minutes, and as in each case is determined by the pace of the subject’s reading. As soon as Sarah turns the page of her book, we are let into Rebecca’s home where our next subject is doing the same. The subjects who are named in Schneider’s *Reading Women* are double: the friends who have agreed to participate, identified by first name only, and the authors they have chosen, from Sylvia Plath and Virginia Woolf and Roseanne Barr, to Angela Davis, Patti Smith, and Joan Didion. The artist filmed each woman for two hours and later chose scenes that depict their most engrossed moments.¹ Here they are presented to us, presumably at their most vulnerable, naked from any self-consciousness. The experience of watching each one feels as private as being absorbed in a text. She reads words, and I read her.

Drawn from the artist’s own social group as demanded by the intimacy of the project, these portraits amount to an index of an artistic community. While the ages of the participants range from 19 to 76 and include musicians, writers, dancers, a graphic designer, a structural engineer, and a lawyer, the majority of women pictured are in their 20s, 30s, and early 40s, and many of them—like Schneider herself—are practicing visual artists.²

Notes

- Schneider remarks that she finds her subjects “most disarmed” about 30–40 minutes into a sitting. Conversation with the artist, July 2014.
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Carrie Schneider (born in 1979 in Chicago, Illinois) is a New York-based photographer and filmmaker. Her work has been featured in solo exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Finnish Museum of Photography, Helsinki; Galleri KiT/Trondheim Academy of Art, Norway; and Gallery Kalhama & Piippo, Helsinki. Her work has been included in group exhibitions and screenings at the Haggerty Museum, Milwaukee; The Kitchen, New York; Dumbo Arts Center, Brooklyn; Columbia College, Chicago; Artspace, New Haven; Kunsthal Charlottenborg Copenhagen, Denmark; and as part of the 2011 Pittsburgh Biennial at The Andy Warhol Museum.

Artists Dana DeGiulio, Cauleen Smith, and Molly Zuckerman-Hartung are here, contemporary art curator Naomi Beckwith, too. Artistic concerns are also made visible in the artists whose writings many of these women select, including those of Moyra Davey, Miranda July, Adrian Piper, and Yvonne Rainer.

The pictured subjects are collaborators, having agreed to perform in this way for Schneider’s cameras, and affording us the voyeuristic pleasure of watching them. They make careful selections in self presentation that include not only a title and author, but also clothing, a place in their home, a pose, and in some cases, background music. What are we meant to deduce about Elizabeth who reads a text about site-specificity while lying on a wicker couch in a peach-colored t-shirt, or Bianca who leans a small book of poetry against her crossed knee? We are indeed given a volume of details about these subjects. However, just as we are denied access to the complex narratives they are experiencing in their reading, the frame of each portrait is also limited. In this way, *Reading Women* offers a complicated picture of premeditated, highly determined situations that are cut through with true moments of self possession often only achieved in solitude.

—Joanna Szupinska-Myers,
CMP Curator of Exhibitions

Schneider earned her BFA at Carnegie Mellon University in 2001 and her MFA at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2007. She attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2007 and had a yearlong Fulbright Fellowship at the Kuvataideakatemia Finnish Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki in 2008. *FLASH!* is the first solo presentation of Schneider’s work on the west coast.

Flash! contemporary art series features single works made within the last year and is organized by Joanna Szupinska-Myers at the California Museum of Photography, part of UCR ARTSblock. *Flash: Carrie Schneider* is the seventh project in the series. This presentation was supported in part by an anonymous donor.

UCRIARTSblock

Carrie Schneider, *Reading Women*, 2014
4 hours, HD video with sound, looped
Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago

Abigail reading **Angela Davis** (*An Autobiography*, 1974); Molly reading **Fanny Howe** (*The Winter Sun: Notes on a Vocation*, 2009); Flávia reading **Clarice Lispector** (*Clarice na Cabeceira*, pub. 2009); Vicky reading **Gloria Fuertes** (*Historia de Gloria: Amor, Humor and Desamor* (Letras Hispanicas), 1983); Rebekah reading **Sofia Gubaidulina** (*Concerto for Bassoon and Low Strings*, 1975); Megha reading **Edith Wharton** (*The House of Mirth*, 1905); Hsiao-Jou reading **Fang-Yi Sheu** (*Life Attitude: I’m Not Afraid to be Different*, 2007); Dana reading **Virginia Woolf** (*To the Lighthouse*, 1927); Naomi reading **Adrian Piper** (*Out of Order, Out of Sight, Vol. I: Selected Writings in Meta-Art 1968-1992*, pub. 1999); Sarah reading **Gail Scott** (*My Paris*, 1999); Val reading **Catherine Malabou** (*Changing Difference*, 2009); Nuiko reading **Henriette Renié** (*Trio for Harp, Violin and Cello*, 1910); Sarah reading **Zora Neale Hurston** (*Every Tongue Got to Confess: Negro Folk-Tales from the Gulf States*, pub. 2001); Rebecca reading **Joy Williams** (*State of Grace*, 1974); Cecilia reading **Alejandra Pizarnik** (*Poesía Completa*, pub. 2000); Melissa reading **Tove Jansson** (*A Winter Book, 1968-1996*, pub. 2006); Evan reading **Anne Lamott** (*Traveling Mercies*, 2000); Kim reading **Rebecca Solnit** (*A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, 2005); Sheree reading **Angela Carter** (*Nights at the Circus*, 1984); Cauleen reading **Gwendolyn Brooks** (*Blacks*, pub. 2008); Bianca reading **Sylvia Plath** (*Ariel*, 1965); Kira reading **Mary Shelley** (*Frankenstein*, 1818); Katie reading **Moyra Davey** (*Mother Reader*, 2001); LaToya reading **Isabel Wilkerson** (*The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration*, 2010); Sara reading **Miranda July** (*No One Belongs Here More Than You: Stories*, 2008); Yala reading **Susan Sontag** (*The Volcano Lover*, 1992); Heather reading **Chris Kraus** (*Summer of Hate*, 2012); Whitney reading **Terry Tempest Williams** (*When Women Were Birds: Fifty-four Variations on Voice*, 2012); Molly reading **Roseanne Barr** (*My Lives*, 1994); Alyssa reading **Patti Smith** (*Just Kids*, 2010); Michelle reading **Betty Smith** (*A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, 1943); Rena reading **Zadie Smith** (*White Teeth*, 2000); Vanessa reading **Nathalie Sarraute** (*Portrait d’un Inconnu*, 1948); Juliana reading **Pamela Des Barres** (*I’m with the Band: Confessions of a Groupie*, 1987); Laura reading **Enheduanna** (*Inanna, Lady of Largest Heart: Poems of the Sumerian High Priestess*, 2300 BCE, pub. 2001); Luciana reading **Marosa di Giorgio** (*Rosa Mística: Relatos Eroticos*, 2003); Shannon reading **Aritha Van Herk** (*No Fixed Address*, 1998); Juliana reading **Louisa May Alcott** (*Little Women*, 1868-69); Guille reading **Silvina Ocampo** (*Cuentos Completos I*, 1999); Christine reading **Ruth Wilson Gilmore** (*Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*, 2007); Holly reading **Arundhati Roy** (*God of Small Things*, 1997); Amy reading **Michelle Cliff** (*Abeng*, 1984); Julie reading **Mary Oliver** (*The Leaf And The Cloud: A Poem*, 2001); Michelle reading **Agatha Christie** (*Dumb Witness* (*Poirot Loses a Client*), 1937); Kelly reading **Gabrielle Hamilton** (*Blood, Bones & Butter: The Inadvertent Education*

of a Reluctant Chef, 2011); Maria reading **Antonia Palacios** (*Ana Isabel, Una Niña Decente*, 1949); Peggy reading **MFK Fisher** (*The Art of Eating*, 1954); Courey reading **Flannery O’Connor** (*The Complete Stories*, pub. 1971); Deirdre reading **Patricia Highsmith** (*Little Tales of Misogyny*, 1974); Corinne reading **Marilynne Robinson** (*Housekeeping*, 1980); Aura reading **Maarit Verronen** (*Pimeästä Maasta*, 1995); Antonia reading **Simone de Beauvoir** (*A Very Easy Death*, 1964); Brett reading **Rebecca Solnit** (*Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, 2001); Claire reading **Laura Mullen** (*Was O*, 2012); Claire reading **Lauren Berlant** (*Cruel Optimism*, 2011); Diana reading **Anne Carson** (*Autobiography of Red*, 1999); Elizabeth reading **Lucy Lippard** (*The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society*, 1998); Drea reading **Jane Austen** (*Pride and Prejudice*, 1813); Francesca reading **Rachel Haidu** (*The Absence of Work: Marcel Broodthaers 1964-1976*, 2010); Jessie reading **Téa Obrecht** (*The Tiger’s Wife*, 2011); Katherine reading **Luce Irigaray** (*Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 1980); Karine reading **Marie Darrieussecq** (*Il faut beaucoup aimer les hommes*, 2013); Marie reading **Jette A. Kaarsbøl** (*Den Lukkede Bog*, 2003); Marjolaine reading **Virginie Despentes** (*Apocalypse bébé*, 2010); Rachel reading **Joan Didion** (*Democracy*, 1984); Sara reading **Oriana Fallaci** (*A Man*, 1979); Sofia reading **Marguerite Duras** (*L’Amour*, 1971); Tiffany reading **Ying-Tai Lung** (*Big River, Big Sea: Untold Stories of 1949*, 2009); Phyllis reading **Maya Angelou** (*Letter to My Daughter*, 2008); Anna reading **Susan Stewart** (*On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, 1984); Diana reading **Joan Didion** (*Miami*, 1987); Olivia reading **Claire Parnet** (*Dialogues II with Gilles Deleuze*, 1977); Felecia reading **Malala Yousafzai** (*I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*, 2013); Christy reading **Elaine Scarry** (*On Beauty and Being Just*, 2001); Dawn reading **Carrie Lambert-Beatty** (*Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s*, 2008); Dominique reading **Sharon Louden** (*Living and Sustaining a Creative Life: Essays by 40 Working Artists*, 2013); Emily reading **Lydia Davis** (*Almost no memory*, 1997); Patricia reading **M. NourbeSe Philip** (*Zong!*, 2008); Holly reading **Yvonne Rainer** (*Feelings are Facts: A Life*, 2006); Eneida reading **Emily Raboteau** (*Searching for Zion*, 2014); Julie reading **Charlotte Brontë** (*Jane Eyre*, 1847); Jessica reading **Annie Dillard** (*Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, 1974); Kendra reading **Toni Morrison** (*Beloved*, 1987); Samina reading **Jhumpa Lahiri** (*Unaccustomed Earth*, 2008); Monique reading **Grace Coddington** (*Grace: A Memoir*, 2012); Julie reading **Angela Y. Davis** (*Women, Race and Class*, 1981); Sara reading **Rachel Carson** (*Silent Spring*, 1962); Jessica reading **Mindy Kaling** (*Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me?*, 2012); Emily reading **Margaret Atwood** (*The Handmaid’s Tale*, 1985); Kendra reading **Virginia Woolf** (*The Waves*, 1931); Lori reading **Shellie Fleming** (*Never Concluded... Half Erased: Lessons in forgetting and RE-membering*, 2013)