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"Elles@centrepompidou" at the Centre Pompidou

Paris

Through Feb. 21, 2011

"Elles@centrepompidou" comprises works, culled from the Pompidou's own collection, created by more than 200 women artists from the early Modernist era to the present day. The exhibition touts itself as the first of its kind at a major national museum, and indeed, it makes one wonder why there have not been more shows devoted to women's contributions to art. Featuring photographs, documents, and films of such celebrated feminist works as the groundbreaking, body-oriented performance piece *Meat Joy* (1964) by Carolee Schneemann and similar pieces by Orlan and Valie Export, "Elles" presents the woman's movement as one of the most crucial political and cultural developments since World War II. Andrea Fraser comments on museums' power hierarchies with her famous performance piece *Museum Highlights* (1989), displayed as a video alongside other institutional critiques by 1980s artists like Louise Lawler. Drawings by the contemporary Chilean artist Sandra Vásquez de la Horra offer a humorous and dark vision of her personal world, marked by violence and carnal desire. Charlotte Perriand and Zaha Hadid round out the exhibition, representing exceptional women in the male-dominated fields of design and architecture. Organized by themes such as the *Activist Body* and *A Room of One's Own*, "Elles" does not attempt to rewrite the history of women's art or to make any grand statements about gender inequalities in the galleries of prominent arts institutions. What it does do is to reveal the extraordinary talents of women artists and celebrate them with flair. – *Katherine Chan*