



Gillian Wearing and Claude Cahun: Behind the Mask, Another Mask

Sarah Howgate

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This beautifully illustrated book draws together for the first time the self-portraits of French surrealist artist Claude Cahun (1894-1954) and British contemporary artist Gillian Wearing (b. 1963). Although they were born almost a century apart, their work shares similar themes--gender, identity, masquerade, and performance.

In 2015, Sarah Howgate traveled with Wearing to the island of Jersey, in the English Channel, where Cahun lived and worked until her death, and where her archive is housed. In examining Cahun's photographic self-portraits, Wearing was struck by the remarkable parallels with her own explorations of the self-image through photography. Cahun was a contemporary of André Breton and Man Ray, but her work was rarely exhibited during her lifetime. Wearing, who has exhibited extensively and is a recipient of Britain's prestigious Turner Prize, was no stranger to Cahun's work when she made the trip to Jersey--her 2012 self-portrait, *Me as Cahun Holding a Mask of My Face*, is a reconstruction of Cahun's iconic *Self-Portrait*, made in 1927. In this book, Howgate examines the self-portrait work of both artists, investigating how their cultural, historical, political, and personal contexts have affected their interpretations of similar themes.

Gillian Wearing and Claude Cahun features stunning reproductions of more than one hundred key works, presented thematically by artistic evolution, performance, masquerade, and memento mori. The book also includes new "collaborations" by Wearing with Cahun, a revealing interview with Wearing by Howgate, and an illuminating essay on Cahun by writer and curator Dawn Ades.

Exhibition schedule:

National Portrait Gallery, London

March 9-May 29, 2017

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