



SoHo Women Artists, 1978

History Lessons

This monumental group portrait by artist and activist **May Stevens (1924–2019)** portrays her with neighbors and art-world colleagues. Here, Stevens references the recent history of the feminist art movement and the women advocating for social change.

Take a closer look

The artist used individual photographs of her friends to compose this work. She wanted to show them as individuals as well as part of a professional community. Note shifts in light, shadow, and scale that indicate different source material for each figure.

Who knew?

Stevens honors inspirational predecessors. Louise Bourgeois (1911–2010), also in the museum's collection, models one of her bulbous sculptures. Background text and skirt reference Steven's 1976 portrait of Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1656), one of many historical women rediscovered by feminists.

May Stevens, *SoHo Women Artists*, 1978; Acrylic on canvas, 78 x 142 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Museum purchase: The Lois Pollard Price Acquisition Fund; © May Stevens and Ryan Lee Gallery, New York

