

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS

Annadale-on-Hudson

Anne Collier

CCS BARD HESSEL MUSEUM

Bard College Campus

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Woman with a Camera (Dptych), 2008, is one of the works you first encounter as you enter Anne Collier's first major museum exhibition, which encompasses ten years of powerful didactic photography. The illustrious diptych succinctly embodies Collier's enthusiasm for iconic image-making and conveys her photographic authority and commanding appropriation. Lifted from Irvin Kershner's film *Eyes of Laura Mars* (1978), the work's black-and-white print on the left depicts a 35-mm camera pressed against film star Faye Dunaway's eye. The work's second image, on the right, is printed in color and pictures Dunaway staring directly at her subject over the camera's body, not through its viewfinder. As with all the works that make up Collier's extensive "Woman with a Camera" series (2006–), there is an obvious inversion of female objectification evoked historically by the entitlement of the male gaze. Yet the exertion of gender politics that acts as a thread throughout her work is a mere subtext to the cultural power afforded to blunt and emblematic image-making, an authority Collier wields with aplomb.



View of "Anne Collier," 2014.

The same can be said of *First Person*, 2009, *Introduction, Fear, Anger, Despair, Guilt, Hope, Joy, Love, Conclusion*, 2002–2014, *My Goals for One Year*, 2007, and *Spiritual Warfare*, 2006, all centrally composed images of found self-help artifacts: audio tapes, questionnaires, worksheets, and personality checklists. Although each item that Collier documents was designed to address messy emotional states, the photographs are undemonstrative. Taking as a model the contrivances of the Pictures Generation, Collier's appropriation strategies are dispassionate but never disinterested. Always clinical in their formal presentation, the prints can range in temper from witty to cruel. Yet pleasingly Collier's authoritative aesthetic stands in static opposition to a post-Internet aesthetic and its colloquial speed of production. Unlike *Laura Mars*, Collier's photographic aptitude comes from the fact that the artist never holds a camera up to her eye.

— Michelle Grabner