



Patty Carroll

# Anonymous Women



**Galerie XII**  
**Los Angeles**

# **Introduction to Patty Carroll**

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Los Angeles

## About

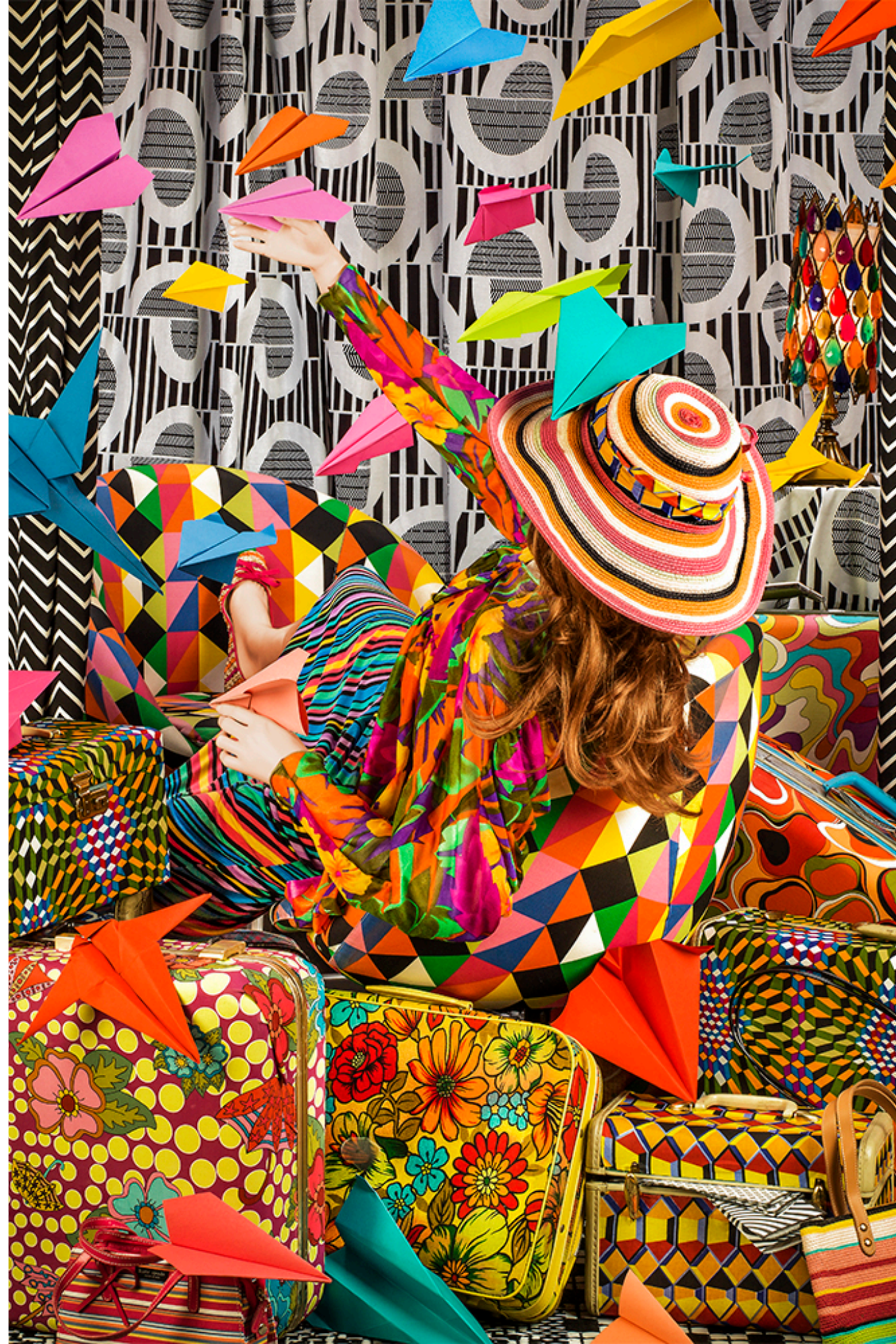
Patty Carroll has been known for her use of highly intense, saturated color photographs since the 1970's.

### Anonymous Women: Demise

Anonymous Women: The subject is the conflation of woman and home. The woman is camouflaged among her domestic objects, activities, and obsessions. The still-life narratives comment on the mania of collecting, accumulating, and decorating a home. In this series, the woman becomes a victim of her home and is crushed by her own possessions or activities, leading to her demise, with scenes of heartbreaking mishaps and horror!

Growing up in suburban Chicago provides the basis of my work, and I continually address myths of perfection and illusion. I am photographically creating worlds that critique and satirize claustrophobic expectations that women continue to embrace, in spite of contemporary life and careers.

*Patty Carroll*







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# The Project

Patty Carroll: **This project** is about making a home, which is an issue that has obsessed me forever, (it seems) possibly, because as a kid, our family life was difficult and unusual to say the least. I always wanted to have a “perfect” home where everyone got along, was sober, was home for dinner, and had towels from a store, not pilfered from the last motel we stayed in. It was also a source of great dark humor and sarcasm, which I fully embrace now, but not so much as a kid! I spent much of my teen/young adult years trying to sew, which was an incredibly symbolic way of piecing together and re-forming my life the way I wanted it. Fabric played a big part of my frustration of life. Drapery also becomes a symbol in this work for an established, traditional home environment where the décor is considered seriously. After all, a perfect home does not have mismatched furniture and styles. A perfect interior has a matching sofa and drapes! Drapes also close off the outer world and contain life within, as well as the finishing touch to a proper home. The Anonymous Women project began while living in England, where my identity was determined by my domestic position. I found that in a more traditional culture than the United States, one’s domestic status often eclipses one’s professional or personal sense of self. Being known as Mrs. Jones rather than the independent, teacher photographer, Patty Carroll sent me into a small identity crisis. I made photographs of vulnerable, stark heads hiding behind various domestic objects as my initial response to this predicament.

Returning home to live in the USA, we bought a 1950’s ranch house in a suburban area near the beach in northern Indiana. It has the original pink kitchen, which inspired me to return the entire house to its origins, and I proceeded to stalk estate sales, thrift stores, antique malls and occasionally Ebay for the right furnishings. It was like a giant puzzle with pieces scattered everywhere and all I had to do was find them. Simultaneously, my niece was sent to Iraq when the war first began there. She sent home a picture of herself sitting in the desert in her camos, gun in her lap and horribly sunburned. I thought about the irony of women sent to war, the women in Iraq whose homes were being destroyed by our troops, and my own obsession to decorate a house in the ideal way I wanted as a child. It



*Patty Carroll during the Opening of “ Anonymous Women” at Galerie XII LA*

occurred to me that the place of safety and comfort, the home, for most people was a tenuous but essential experience.

The entire Anonymous Women series is about becoming the part of the dwelling itself and experiencing various facets of domesticity. The interior of the home is comforting, but can also camouflage individual identity, especially when the idealized decor becomes an obsession, or indication of position or status. Staying home for some women is a place of power, while others abhor because of its prison-like atmosphere. The “constructed” images in the ongoing series are of home

turned inside out; where things are topsy-turvy and scale is variable. Decoration is out of control, and the woman of the house is lost in her own madness. The “Domestic Demise” stage of the series is when the woman becomes a victim of her own obsessions and activities. She is no longer in control and life is a series of mishaps and mayhem.

As we are all stuck in our homes right now, the work speaks to our frustration – both the dread and joy of home-life right now!



# The Interview

## in conversation: patty carroll on “domestic demise” for aint—bad

**Kyra Schmidt:** I enjoyed delving into this background information, and it has opened my eyes even more to your work. It seems as if this series is very personal (while also incredibly universal). Have you found working through it to be therapeutic?

**Patty Carroll:** Possibly therapeutic because I can make rooms I would never dream of living in, but have the fun of a full size doll house. Nothing in art is as direct as we imagine. Experiences, things, events, places all get jumbled up like in dreams, and come out in some other weird way as artwork!

It may be that all art is therapeutic, in that artists have obsessions about bits stuck in their memories or a far corner of their brain that is unexplainable. After starting to do something related to that niggling bit, the work takes over, and has a life of its own.

**Kyra Schmidt:** It's funny, I wasn't born until the early 90's and yet I feel surprised by how much I can relate to your experiences, description, and some of the images. More in feeling overwhelmed by expectations or the lack thereof for myself as a young female. That being said, I feel like (or would like to hope) that the tide is changing. I am curious, why did you decide to sequence the book from glam to gloom?

**Patty Carroll:** Better than gloom to glam. Nothing ever works that way! We all have glam aspirations at some point in our lives, or at least hope. Nothing turns out exactly as we hope or imagine. It doesn't always end in gloom, but it is always different. Expectations for me were always elusive, but talking about the female experience is perhaps universal.



*Exhibition “Anonymous Women” at Galerie XII LA - March 10 to May 21, 2022*

I think the issue is what are we contributing to the human condition. For some women, running a home and raising children makes a huge impact; the world is a better place with sane, smart and level-headed people. For others, a career is ultimate. No matter what, we all come home to a nest that we make for ourselves to regroup and confirm individual identity.

**Kyra Schmidt:** Is there semblance behind the use of mannequins over human models?

**Patty Carroll:** The switch was made mostly for technical reasons. The later work with so many objects was so elaborate to set up, we could not ask a person to stand still so long! All of the drapery pictures were made with live

women, but now the pictures take several days, if not weeks to assemble and shoot. We have tried to make the mannequins (for the most part) look like a real human being, but in some cases, we can use her parts in strange ways that add to the complication of the scene. I do wish I had a mannequin that looked real, but would bend everywhere and not be so stiff!

However, as the work progressed, more of the figure was seen, so the ideal mannequin also became like the ideal woman, living in her ideal house, but everything has gone wrong. I like the idea of destroying myths.



# Biography

Patty Carroll has been known for her use of highly intense, saturated color photographs since the 1970's. After teaching photography for many years, she delights viewers with her playful critique of home and excess in "Anonymous Women" a 4-part series of studio installations made for the camera, addressing women and their complicated relationships with domesticity. The photographs are exhibited in large scale and previous iterations were published as a monograph, *Anonymous Women*, in 2017 with Daylight Books. The recent chapter of the ongoing series is a new monograph *Domestic Demise*, published in 2020 by Aint-Bad Books. The series has been exhibited internationally, has won multiple awards, and acknowledged as one of Photolucida's "Top 50" in 2014 and in 2017, and has been featured in prestigious blogs and international magazines such as the Huffington Post, the BJP in Britain, and NYT LensBlog, Washington Post Insight, Vanity Fair, Italia and many others.

Grants/Prizes include Artist Fellowship, Illinois Arts Council, 2003, and 2020, Grand Prize winner in "Herstory" with See Me, 2019, and Grand Prize Winner of Don't Take Pictures, 2020.

Selected one-person museum exhibits include: Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Royal Photographic Society, Bath, England, The State of Illinois Gallery and Museum, Blue Star Art Space, San Antonio, TX, White Box Museum, Beijing, China, Northern Illinois University Art Museum, Chicago Cultural Center, The Museum of Photographic Arts, Tampa, FL, The Albrecht-Kemper Museum, St. Joe, MO, The Baldwin Photographic Gallery at MTSU in Murphreesboro, TN, and the Zheijhang Museum of Art, Hangzhou, China,

Artist Residences include: Akiyoshidai Arts Village, Japan, Anderson Ranch, Colorado, Texas A&M University, Columbia College, Chicago, and at Studios Inc. in Kansas City, MO.

Work included in many public and private collections, including: The Art Institute of Chicago, MOMA, MOCP, MCA, The Sandor Photography Collection, The Kansas City Collection, The Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, The Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, and The Ruttenberg Foundation among others.



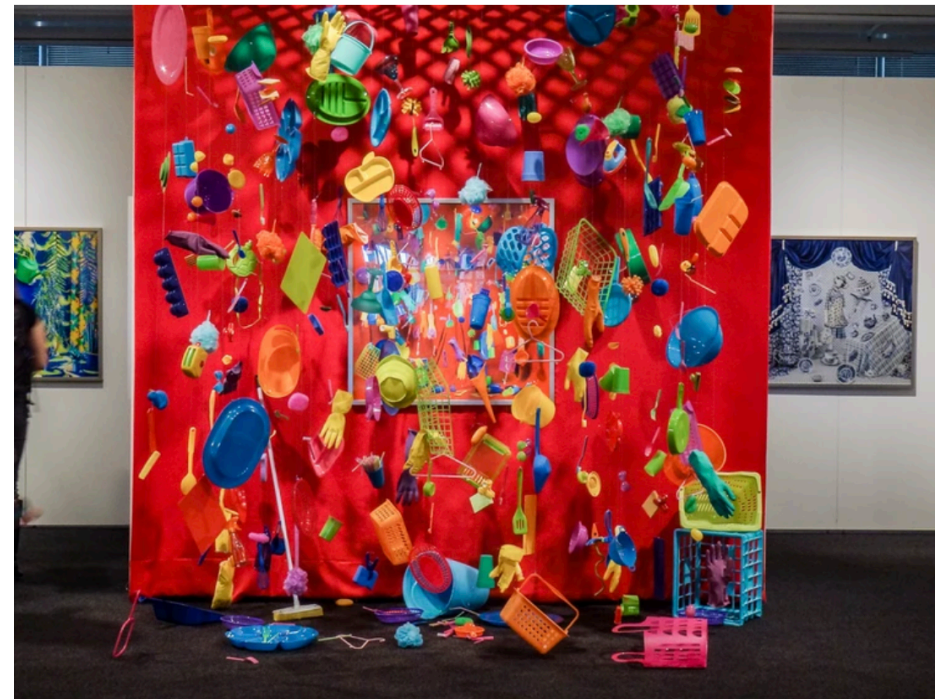


# ANONYMOUS WOMEN: INSTALLATION



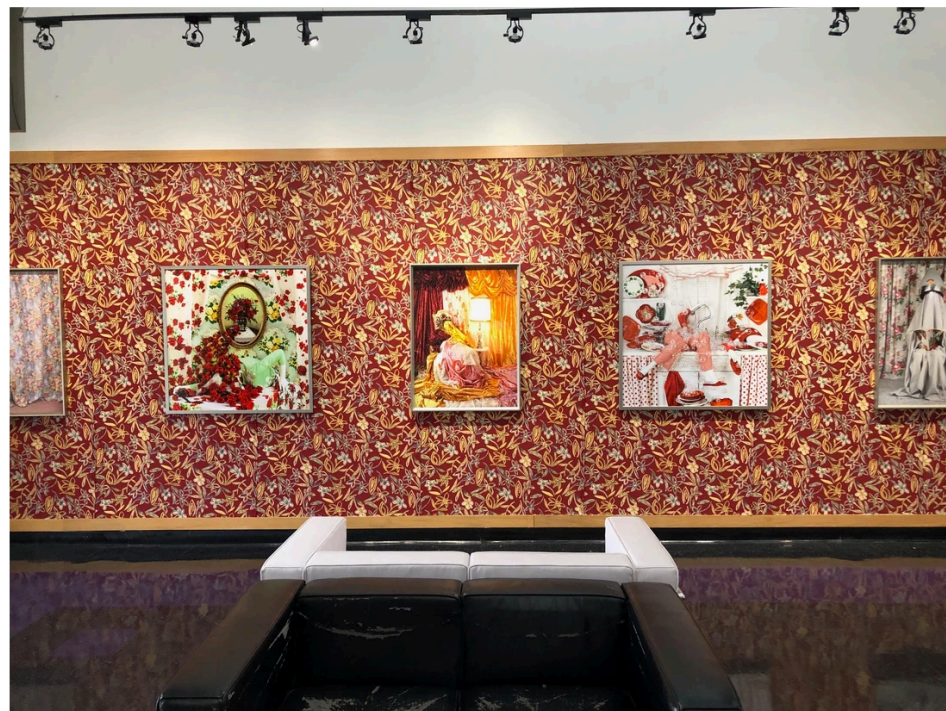
## Plastic House

Texas A&M University  
Wright Gallery, 2017



## Plastic House

Texas A&M University  
Wright Gallery, 2017



## Anonymous Woman

Hendrix College, 2019



## Anonymous Woman

Hendrix College, 2019



# ANONYMOUS WOMAN: INSTALLATION



## Anonymous Woman

Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, 2018



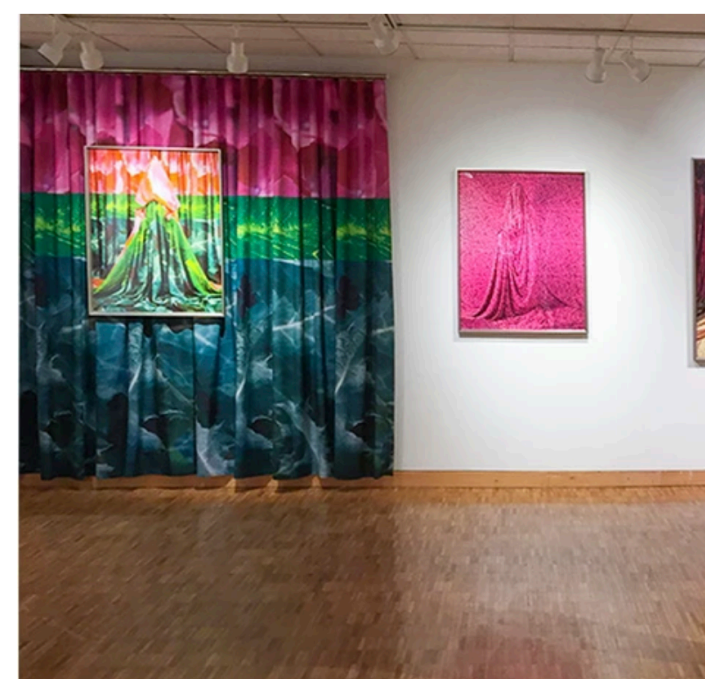
## Anonymous Woman

Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, 2018



## Anonymous Woman

Northwestern University  
Dittmar Gallery, 2019



## Anonymous Woman

Northwestern University  
Dittmar Gallery, 2019



# ANONYMOUS WOMAN: INSTALLATION



**Anonymous Woman: Draped Domestic Bliss**  
Zheijhang Museum, 2015



**Anonymous Woman: Reconstructed**



**Anonymous Woman: Draped**  
Chicago Cultural Center, 2015



Anonymous Woman video installation at Baldwin Gallery, 2019.



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## **Contact**

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**FREE PARKING**