



I was trying to respond to a number of issues: woman's subjectivity, woman's capacity to revel in her body, and woman's construction of herself, and her own image.

CARRIE MAE WEEMS

Carrie Mae Weems

Untitled (Kitchen Table Series), 1990

Gelatin silver print

27 1/4 x 27 inches

Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth,

Museum purchase made possible by a grant from The Burnett Foundation

Acquired in 1995

Carrie Mae Weems' *Kitchen Table* series presents an African American woman engaging in the activities that take place around the kitchen table. Weems is the photographer and the model for the work, and she uses herself to give us glimpses of a woman's life. Weems's work comes out of a response to early feminist discussions. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, some women artists attempted to use the female body to create a definition of a universal woman, or "collective woman." In response, many women criticized their efforts' focus on white, Western, bourgeois women which excluded women of color or women from other countries or classes. In Weems's work, we see an African American woman, presumably a working woman who lives in a small apartment. A text panel (one of a series that can be displayed with the photographs) accompanies the photographs and tells a story in the woman's voice, written in black American slang. In *Untitled (Woman Playing Solitaire)*, Weems shows us a quiet moment in the woman's life, where she has surrounded herself with the things that give her pleasure – chocolates, a glass of wine, cigarettes, a nightgown, and a deck of cards for playing solitaire. The card game reflects the woman's emotions in this scene; she is alone, enjoying a relaxed moment, unburdened by work or family. Displayed as a group, the photographs have a "film still" quality, as if they are offering us moments from a story created to tell us about the life of this woman. And in fact, Weems's work reveals much about this woman, where she came from, who she is now, and how her sex, race, and class are not only the details of her life, but also the story she creates.