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ART SY

The Women Photographers Redefining Surrealism for the 21st Century

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At first glance, Hannah Whitaker's graphic photographs appear like collages. Layering colors, shapes, images, and silhouettes, she builds her compositions skillfully, but leaves room for the slight imperfections that reveal the nature of her process.

All of Whitaker's images are created in-camera, taking multiple exposures of a single sheet of large-format film. The meticulous approach requires extensive planning: Whitaker shoots through cut paper placed inside the 4x5 camera and masks parts of the film as she goes. "If you think of every hole or section of an image as being a separate screen you can start to imagine how complicated it can be," Whitaker told *Time* in 2016. "A single sheet of film can become several days of shooting."

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Whitaker's images form delightful patterns, referencing the textiles of Anni Albers or the quilters of Gee's Bend, and are often redolent of 1980s graphic design. She reveals striking silhouettes of arms, faces, legs, and breasts in works like *Dimensions* (2019) and *Five Hands 2* (2017). The exacting nature of her work is belied by its playfulness, toying with the illusory nature of the photographic surface.

