



Making a Life in Photography

Rollie McKenna

Jessica D. Brier

Mary-Kay Lombino

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- Accompanies a major exhibition at the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center at Vassar College February 17 – June 2, 2024
- Only retrospective on the photography of Rollie McKenna in print
- Includes iconic portraits of artists and writers, including W. H. Auden, Elizabeth Bishop, Alexander Calder, Truman Capote, T. S. Eliot, Laura Gilpin, Henry Moore, Sylvia Plath, Ezra Pound, Anne Sexton, Dylan Thomas, and Eudora Welty

Making a Life in Photography: Rollie McKenna is the first career survey of prolific American photographer Rosalie (Rollie) Thorne McKenna (1918–2003). After graduating from Vassar College in 1940, McKenna worked independently as a sought-after architectural and portrait photographer, making unique yet underrecognised contributions to American modernism and documentary photography. McKenna's work was published in numerous books and magazines including *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Fortune*. The Museum of Modern Art's 1955 landmark exhibition *Latin American Modernism Since 1945* featured her architectural photographs. She made iconic portraits of artists and writers, including W. H. Auden, Elizabeth Bishop, Alexander Calder, Truman Capote, T. S. Eliot, Laura Gilpin, Henry Moore, Sylvia Plath, Ezra Pound, Anne Sexton, Dylan Thomas, and Eudora Welty. McKenna's story as a queer woman would be lost if not for her dedication to preserving her own legacy. She embraced photography to explore the complexities of human experience — including her own.

Jessica D. Brier, Curator of Photography at the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, is a specialist in American and European modernism, photography history, and design history.

Mary-Kay Lombino, Deputy Director and Emily Hargroves Fisher '57 and Richard B. Fisher Curator, has overseen the modern and contemporary art and photography collections, exhibitions, and publications at the Loeb Art Center for over fifteen years.

