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## ARTS

# 'See Me Clearly' photography exhibit celebrates women at Paul Paletti Gallery

By [LISA HORNING](#) | September 4, 2018 11:00 am



"Self-Portrait in a Biplane" by Ann Noggle will be at the Paul Paletti Gallery as part of "See Me Clearly," an exhibit celebrating women.

Women have played a large part in photography since its beginning as photographers, subjects and muses. The [Paul](#)

[Paletti Gallery](#) will showcase women's influence in photography starting Thursday, Sept. 6, with "See Me Clearly."

"It's a very women-centric show in that women are the central theme, but it actually has a lot of different themes," said Paletti, owner of the gallery. "There are women as photographers, women as models, women as muses, as partners, and in some cases, activists. There are a lot of different stories. The differences and complexities make it very broad."

Paletti got the idea for the show from a friend.

"My friend Debbie Skaggs, who used to be with Kentucky Museum of Art + Craft, came up with the title and idea for the show," he said. "But it made a lot of sense. I have a lot of photos in my collection that I could draw on to celebrate a lot of these stories with explanations. It draws on things that are going on."



Margaret Bourke-White documented Louisville's 1937 flood. | Wikimedia Commons.

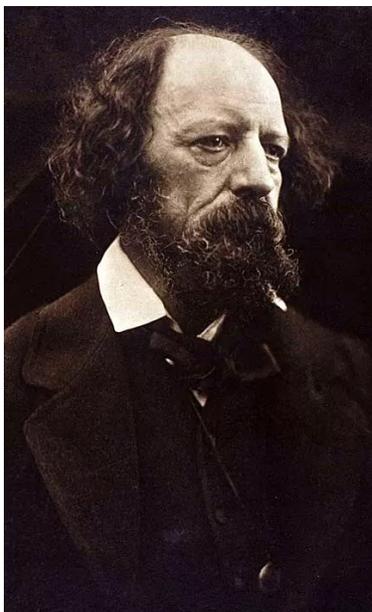
Some of the women featured in the show have historical significance, such as [Margaret Bourke-White](#), an American documentary photographer who pushed boundaries and blasted through barriers. She had the first cover of Life magazine and was the first woman photographer allowed into the Soviet Union to document its Five-Year Plan.

Bourke-White photographed the training of Nazi officers in 1931, a time when the Germans weren't allowed to have a

standing army, according to the Treaty of Versailles.

“She went everywhere,” Paletti said. “It was dangerous — there were a number of situations in which she barely escaped. She was quite something.”

The show will also have one image by [Julia Margaret Cameron](#), who was given a camera by her daughter in 1864 when she was 48. Her photography shows what can be done despite an arduous process.



Alfred Lord Tennyson,  
a portrait by Julia  
Margaret Cameron in  
1869 | Wikimedia  
Commons

“This wasn’t a Kodak point-and-shoot,” Paletti said. “This was a tripod-mounted camera and glass plate negatives. You had to coat the glass plates yourself with a sticky substance called [collodion](#), dip it in a solution of silver iodine then put it in the camera place holder, take it out to your camera, which you’ve already set up, make the photograph, then get it back into the darkroom and develop it all before the plate dried out (about 15 minutes).

“It was the dominant photographic process from the 1850s to about 1875,” he continued. “It wasn’t an easy process. You really had to be dedicated to it.”

Cameron became one of the best-known and successful portraitists of her time, which was an unusual feat for a woman. During her career, she made portraits of many famous people, such as Charles Darwin and Alfred Lord Tennyson, many of them dressed as fictional characters.

**Ann Noggle** also will be featured. She was a pilot in World War II, though women weren't allowed in combat. She helped train the male pilots. After that, she became a crop duster, then photographer, and ended up teaching fine art photography at the University of New Mexico.

"She had a very interesting and distinctive vision," Paletti said. "She did a lot of photos of older people, including herself. She also did a series of self-portraits after she had a face-lift surgery. I don't have that in this show. "

The show also showcases the art of some more modern women. One of those is **Francesca Woodman**, a fine art photographer who made portraits of herself, often nude. She killed herself at age 23 and was featured in a documentary, "[The Woodmans](#)," in 2010.

"(Her photos are) really haunting," Paletti said. "Just in the last 10 or 15 years, her work has come to the forefront, and it's very powerful."



## A detail of "Self-Portrait, Self-Timer" by Francesca Woodman

Another modern photographer in the show is [Lynn Geesaman](#), who shoots photos in nature and gardens in soft focus.

"In a sense, it's romantic, very carefully structured," Paletti said. "You can see a lot of formality in what she does and a real sense of beauty. Her work became popular in the 1990s, at a time when beauty was really out of vogue. She was definitely going against the grain in what you'd see in fine art photography. But her work was absolutely exquisite."

Paletti said that because the show is so large and he has so many photos he'd like to include, it will evolve. He plans to rotate some of the photos in and out of the show so that when

visitors come back a second time, they won't see all the same things.

He also would like to have some panel discussions or walk-around events with some women's voices, but those haven't been scheduled yet.

"See Me Clearly: Women Photographers/Women Photographed" opens Thursday and runs through Dec. 31. An opening reception will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. on Thursday. The Paul Paletti Gallery is located at 713 E. Market St.

## **LISA HORNUNG**

Lisa Hornung a native of Louisville and has worked in local media for more than 15 years as a writer and editor. Before that she worked as a writer, editor and photographer for community newspapers in Kansas, Ohio and Kentucky. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Georgia, and after a 20-year career in journalism, she obtained a master's degree in history from Eastern Kentucky University in 2016.



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