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See a Photographer's Escape From Men

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Photographer Marianna Rothen started modeling at age 15, working with designers like Marc Jacobs, Balenciaga, and Yves Saint Laurent throughout her 17-year career in the fashion industry. As a hobby, she also began taking photographs; at one point, she realized her images created an alternate reality in which men didn't exist. Her first solo exhibition, on view now at Steven Kasher Gallery in New York, examines the complexities of this concept.

"Marianna Rothen: Shadows In Paradise" was curated by Cassandra Johnson and designed to revisit and reframe characters from Rothen's first monograph *Snow and Rose & Other Tales*, published in 2014. Those women looked exuberant in a world without men, but here, in her "Shadows" photographs, the fantasy is more complicated: Her female subjects find that men and maleness still lurk within the culture they consume, even if no men are physically present — in newspaper headlines, on the back of magazine covers, in paintings on a wall. Rothen, other models, and her friends stage melancholic scenes in the photographs, looking introspectively at their reflections in mirrors or staring off into the distance. Each woman grapples with her self-perception.

Rothen described the images as a response to her own upbringing, in which her mother was the family's caregiver while her father worked. "Although my mother would never admit it, there was such a sorrow in that," she told *Vogue*. "[I was] trying to find ways to break out of that, and not to repeat those things." Her technique involves capturing the pictures digitally and photographing them again with Polaroid film for a vintage, cinematic feel. Click ahead to see photos from the exhibition, on view until April 15 and also showcased in an accompanying book.