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LOOK AT THIS

A Re-Examination of the Nude



From left: Joseph Maida's "Nude" (2015) and "Nude" (2017). Courtesy of the artist and Convoke

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It was in a Borders in Philadelphia in the mid-1990s that the New York-based photographer Joseph Maida first came across a monograph filled with female nudes shot by Lee Friedlander, a catalog of the artist's 1991 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. Friedlander had made art's oldest subject somehow alien — witnessed up close, expanses of skin became strange landscapes interrupted by the mundane *mise-en-scènes* of domestic spaces: lamps, coffee cups and mismatched bedspreads. Decades after he discovered them, "Friedlander's nudes continued to haunt me, thrill me, challenge me and disturb me," Maida writes in the introduction to "A Third Look," a new monograph of his own work. In its style and title, a reference to Friedlander's 2013 book "A Second Look," it's a paean to its source of inspiration — Maida even used a 35 mm camera with a wide-angle lens, as Friedlander did. But Maida deployed that tool to examine the male form, and to play with perceptions of gender. In one image, a manicured hand grips a hairy leg; in another, a penis disappears between thighs. As the artist and Maida's former student Zackary Drucker writes in the foreword, the viewer may have the "uncanny experience of double-taking, thinking, 'Is that a woman?' Clearly they are not ... or are they?" Our urge to assign labels is as much the subject of these complex images as the nudes themselves. \$65, convoke.nyc.