



**Barbara Astman**

Canadian, born United States, 1950

***Carol Performing Lilac Tricks* 1974**

Photograph on fabric mounted on satin border of lace and cloth flowers

64.8 x 87.6 cm

Purchase, 1975

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Smell is an invisible time machine—in an instant the past becomes present. Photographs can have the same effect. Lilacs carry Barbara Astman home at once. Each May, her hometown of Rochester, New York, is overwhelmed by the fragrance of lilacs emanating from parks and yards. Transplanted to Toronto's downtown as a young artist, Astman rummaged through the jam-packed textile stores of Spadina Avenue seeking inspiration. She also chose to mine her own life to reimagine depictions of young women. Astman's photo-linen image of her younger sister, Carol, with a mouthful of real lilacs is framed in a thick wreath of fabric lilacs and a border of black lace, all bought in her new neighbourhood. At once mournful and exuberant, Carol is performing lilac tricks of both innocence and decadence.