

News Release

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National Portrait Gallery Unveils Cindy Sherman's First Major UK Retrospective

Exhibition includes complete Untitled Film Stills series, rarely exhibited early photographs and films, and a new work on public display for the first time



Image Credit: Cindy Sherman with her work **Untitled (Murder Mystery People)**, 1976/2000, on display in *Cindy Sherman*, National Portrait Gallery London. Photograph by Alastair Fyfe Photography

***Cindy Sherman*, National Portrait Gallery, London 27 June – 15 September 2019**

Cindy Sherman's groundbreaking series, *Untitled Film Stills*, 1977-80, has gone on public display for the first time in the UK in a major new retrospective of the artist's work at the National Portrait Gallery, London. Opening on Thursday 27 June, *Cindy Sherman* explores the development of the artist's work from the mid-1970s to the present day, including rarely exhibited photographs and films created while Sherman was an art student at the State University College at Buffalo from 1972 to 1976, and a new work *Untitled #602* created in 2019 from a collaboration with Stella McCartney. The exhibition features over 190 works from international public and private collections, as well as a recreation of Sherman's studio in New York, providing an unprecedented insight into the artist's working processes.



Image credits: **Untitled Film Still #21** by Cindy Sherman, 1978. **Untitled Film Still #15** by Cindy Sherman, 1978. Both courtesy of the artist and Metro Pictures, New York

Widely regarded as one of the world's leading contemporary artists, Cindy Sherman, (b. 1954), first gained widespread critical recognition for *Untitled Film Stills*, the series that she commenced shortly after moving to New York in 1977. Comprising 70 images, the work was the artist's first major artistic statement and defined her approach. With Sherman herself as model wearing a range of costumes and hairstyles, her black and white images captured the look of 1950s and 60s Hollywood, film noir, B movies and European art-house films. Building on that layer of artifice, the fictional situations she created were photographed in a way that recalls the conventions of yesterday's cinema. As a result, each photograph depicts its subject, namely the artist, refracted through a layer of artifice - a veneer of representation.



Image Credit: **Untitled #602** by Cindy Sherman, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Metro Pictures, New York

The exhibition includes all five of Sherman's *Cover Girl* series, completed shortly after she graduated from art school, displayed together for the first time since November 1976 when they were exhibited on the inside of the top deck of a bus. Other key works are shown from the artist's most important series including Rear Screen Projections, Centrefolds, History Portraits, Fairy Tales, Fashion, Flappers, Sex Pictures, Masks, Headshots, Clowns and Society Portraits. The exhibition also features a digital version of *A Cindy Book*, a private album of family photographs that Sherman began compiling when she was around eight or nine years old, which has never been seen before, revealing an early fascination with her own changing appearance.



Image credit: **Cover Girl (Vogue)** by Cindy Sherman, 1976 / 2011. Courtesy of the artist and Metro Pictures, New York
 Please note this is one work. All three covers must be shown together, as above

Cindy Sherman focuses on the artist's manipulation of her own appearance and her deployment of material derived from a range of cultural sources in order to create imaginary portraits that explore the tension between façade and identity. Sherman is famous for her use of make-up, costumes, props and prosthetics to create complex and ambiguous photographic images. Taking a quotation from Alfred Hitchcock's 1954 film, *Rear Window*, which Sherman has cited as an important influence: 'Tell me everything you saw and what you think it means' as its central theme, the exhibition will examine in detail Sherman's rich and varied visual language - which draws on cinema, television, advertising and fashion.

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director, National Portrait Gallery, London, says: 'We are delighted to be opening this major new retrospective, spanning over 40 years of work by one of the most influential and important artists of our time, whose photographs now appear more relevant and prescient than ever in an era of social media and selfies. The exhibition is an exciting proposition for the National Portrait Gallery, placing key works from Sherman's most important series within the context of portraiture to explore the often complex and ambiguous relationship between appearance and reality, challenging our notion of what a portrait can be.'

Paul Moorhouse, Curator, *Cindy Sherman*, says: 'Cindy Sherman's art is completely distinctive. By inventing fictitious characters and photographing herself in imaginary situations, she inhabits a world of pure appearance. No other artist interrogates the illusions presented by modern culture in such a penetrating way - or scrutinises so tellingly the façades that people adopt. Probing the elusive connection between appearance and meaning, her work explores contemporary life – and with sharp observation exposes its deceptions.'

Lisa Mcgeough, co-head of International, Wells Fargo says: 'As part of Wells Fargo's communities mandate, we are delighted that our sponsorship allows British and international visitors to view Sherman's seminal series and newer portraits.'

Cindy Sherman is curated by Paul Moorhouse, independent curator and writer, formerly Senior Curator of 20th Century Portraits and Head of Displays (Victorian to Contemporary) at the National Portrait Gallery, whose exhibitions include *Howard Hodgkin: Absent Friends* (2017), *Giacometti – Pure Presence* (2016), *The Great War in Portraits* (2014), *The Queen: Art and Image* (2012), *Gerhard Richter Portraits* (2009) and *Pop Art Portraits* (2007). He is the author of *Cindy Sherman*, published by Phaidon in 2014.

Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated publication considering Cindy Sherman's oeuvre through the lens of portraiture. Featuring key examples of her work - it explores the mercurial relationship between appearance and reality. Price £35, available in Gallery shops and online.

Cindy Sherman

27 June – 15 September 2019 at the National Portrait Gallery, London www.npg.org.uk

Tickets: £18-20, £17-19 (concessions)

Off peak prices Monday-Thursday

£5 tickets for under 25s on Fridays and concessions on Monday-Wednesday mornings (10.00-11.00)

Free for Members and Patrons

npg.org.uk/CindySherman

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The exhibition will tour to the Vancouver Art Gallery in Canada from October 2019 to February 2020.

For further press information please contact:

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