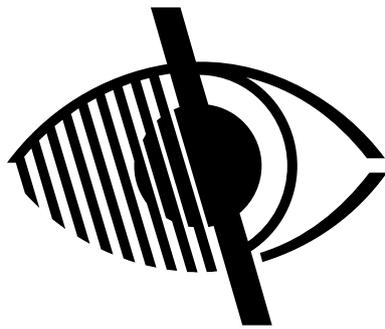


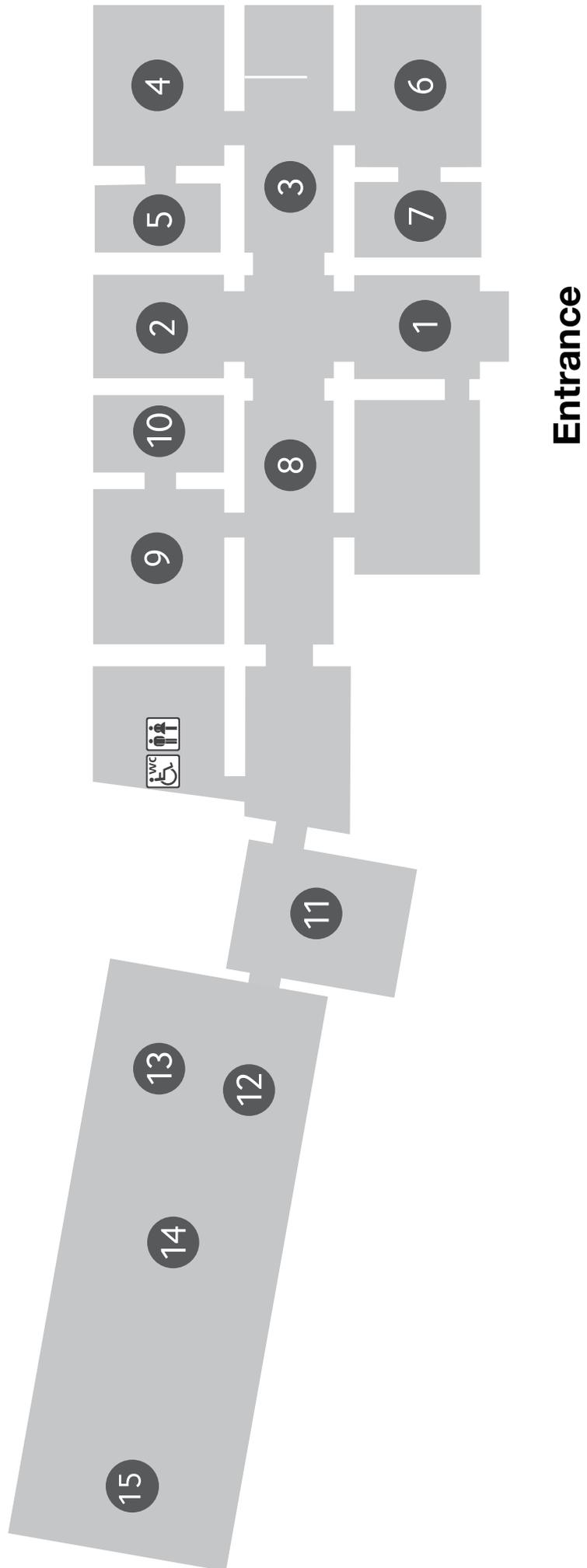
Cindy Sherman



Access Guide

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Untitled #602
2019

Dye sublimation metal print
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures

Introduction

This exhibition surveys the work of Cindy Sherman, one of the world's leading contemporary artists. Using make-up, wigs, costumes and other means to transform her appearance, Sherman photographs herself acting the roles of numerous fictional characters. Her images of these personae incorporate references to modern culture, notably cinema, television, magazines and fashion.

By creating enigmatic appearances from various sources, her work critiques our image-saturated society and raises questions about the meanings we assign to the things we see.

Harper's Bazaar 2016-18

In 2016, Sherman was commissioned by the celebrated fashion magazine *Harper's Bazaar* to create a new series of photographs for publication. Responding to that commission, Sherman photographed herself wearing outfits by Prada, J.W.Anderson, Marc Jacobs, Miu Miu, Gucci and Chanel. She augmented these costumes with make-up, wigs and digitally created backgrounds to create invented characters, which she characterised as 'street-style stars'. Her photographs gently lampoon a contemporary trend associated with fashion shows, which are attended by individuals whose ostentatious dress and exaggerated behaviour rival the main spectacle for attention. Nick-naming the phenomenon 'project twirl', Sherman explained: 'I just loved the description of these people, these characters who go to the fashion shows – and *twirl*'.

Sherman's collaborations with fashion are long-standing. Since 1983, she has worked with Dianne Benson, Dorothy Bis, *Harper's Bazaar* (for the first time, in 1993), Comme des Garçons and *Vogue Paris*. Characteristically, her fashion photographs mock the self-regard associated with haute-couture. However, the fashion photographs have a further significance, which they share with her work as a whole. As Sherman has observed, 'I want there to be hints of narrative everywhere in the image so that people can make up their own stories about them.'

Untitled #588
2016 / 2018

Dye sublimation metal print
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures

Untitled #587
2016 / 2018

Dye sublimation metal print
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures

Flappers 2016-18

In 2016, Sherman commenced a series of photographs inspired by the look of a distant age. Adopting hairstyles, make-up and fashions worn by women in the 1920s, she created several different characters, which she has described as 'flappers'. That term refers to a generation of young women which emerged after the First World War, whose appearance and behaviour flouted convention. Characterised by conspicuous make-up, bobbed hairstyles and smoking in public, they conveyed an impression of liberated sensuality that contrasted with earlier norms of femininity.

In the USA, the flapper style was popularised in cinema and Sherman's photographs suggest actresses belonging to the era of silent films. However, there are other layers of ambiguity. The characters are evidently older women, perhaps Hollywood grandes dames attempting to reclaim the appearance of youth for publicity shots. Alongside these fading stars, one photograph uses digital technology to portray Sherman in four different roles. These multiple personae suggest sisters, evoking the 1920s vogue for family acts in the entertainment industry. The theme of actresses is an appropriate metaphor for Sherman's own art, throughout which the artist appears in a succession of fictitious roles.

Untitled #574
2016

Dye sublimation metal print
Collection of Michael Young

Untitled #567
2016

Dye sublimation metal print
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures

Untitled #577
2016

Dye sublimation metal print
Pinault Collection

Untitled #580
2016

Dye sublimation metal print
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures

Untitled #578
2016

Dye sublimation metal print
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures

Early work 1975-77

Most of the works shown here were created while Sherman was an art student at the State University College at Buffalo, which she attended from 1972 to 1976. At the outset, her fascination with transforming her own appearance focused mainly on her face. In *Untitled #479* 1975, the process of change is made explicit in a succession of twenty-three images that traces the progressive manipulation of her own features. In *Untitled A-E* 1975, her concern is less with alteration than creating images of fully formed alter-egos, an important development that characterises all her later work.

Subsequently, Sherman's focus shifted to her entire body. Her animated film *Doll Clothes* 1975 shows her as a cut-out doll that comes to life; in *Unhappy Hooker* 1976 she plays the part of a prostitute waiting for a client. Both films show Sherman's interest in investing her work with an implied narrative, and in *Murder Mystery* 1976 she created a fictional play in which she acted all the characters. *Line-Up* 1977 was made after Sherman graduated and shortly before she left Buffalo for New York in summer 1977. Originally comprising thirty-five characters wearing strange make-up, masks, wigs and costumes, the series confirmed the chameleon-like character of Sherman's art.

Untitled A-E
1975

Sherman's early interest in showing the process of transformation led to portraits of invented characters, whose illusory appearance is complete. In 1975, she photographed herself in numerous different roles, both female and male. Subsequently, she selected five portraits from this wider activity to create the present work. Here, an exaggerated use of make-up generates these personae but also emphasises the illusion involved. Sherman's aim is not simply to create a deceptive appearance but, rather, to draw attention to the deceptive nature of appearance. From the outset, the presence of artifice is made clear.

5 gelatin silver prints
Private Collection

Untitled (Murder Mystery People)
1976 / 2000

During the early formative phase of Sherman's work, her interests developed beyond creating the look of invented characters to acting in fictitious roles. The performative aspect of her work gained ground in *Murder Mystery*, in which she wrote the plot of an 82-scene play involving thirteen characters. Resembling the cast of a 1940s crime drama, the stock characters include a detective, a butler, maid and other suspects. Sherman photographed herself performing all these parts, and when it was first exhibited the work comprised cut-outs that were pasted directly onto a wall. The subsequent version, shown here, preserves portraits of these characters.

17 gelatin silver prints
Laura and Barry Townsley, London

Untitled #479

1975

This is a rare instance of Sherman revealing the process of transforming her appearance. Reading from top left to bottom right, Sherman begins the sequence with a character wearing glasses who resembles the artist herself. This character is then unclothed in order to prepare her for the start of the middle, transitional, phase in which white paint is applied to her face. The progressive addition of make-up results in the creation of a new, vamp-like character. Collectively, the sequence focuses on the manipulation of surface appearances to convey an illusion of changed identity; this would be the central theme of Sherman's art.

Set of 23 hand-coloured gelatin prints
Dorothy and Peter Waladt

Air Shutter Release Fashions

1975

This work was the result of a student assignment to address an uncomfortable subject. Sherman's response is notable for the way it contains in embryo the essential characteristics of her later mature practice. In photographing herself naked, she made her own body the work's central focus; and by wrapping the cable of the camera release around her torso and limbs, she suggests various items of costume, albeit in outline only. As a result, the images reveal the way that Sherman depersonalises her own figure and invests it with artifice; at the same time, they expose the means by which this transformation is achieved.

17 black and white photographs

Collection the artist, courtesy Metro Pictures

Untitled (Line-Up)

1977 / 2011

In the original 1977 version of this work, a group of thirty-five photographs reprised Sherman's interest in showing a process of transformation. The sequence began with the artist wearing a white costume and no make-up; undergoing cosmetic adjustments and progressive changes in costume; ending with a figure dressed entirely in black. Masks, strange pantomime outfits and different headgear formed elements in that process. In this later version, Sherman selected twelve stages which do not follow the original sequence. Instead, they form a line-up comprising a range of self-contained characters whose eccentric appearance and confrontational attitude emphasise the idea of performance.

12 gelatin silver prints

Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris

I Hate You, 1975

Untitled (Doll Clothes), 1975

Unhappy Hooker, 1976

These three student films demonstrate Sherman exploring different approaches to the notion of performance. I Hate You presents the artist, without make-up, mouthing the words 'I hate you' and eventually shedding tears. Shown in close-up, the film has considerable emotional force, but whether the situation is real or acted is ambiguous. By contrast, Doll Clothes exposes the artifice inherent in Sherman's performance, which depicts her as a cut-out doll that dresses up. Unhappy Hooker is an acting role; Sherman plays a character she describes as 'an unattractive prostitute that nobody finds appealing'. Her costume is an early instance of Sherman's interest in 1920s flapper style.

Untitled Film Stills 1977-80

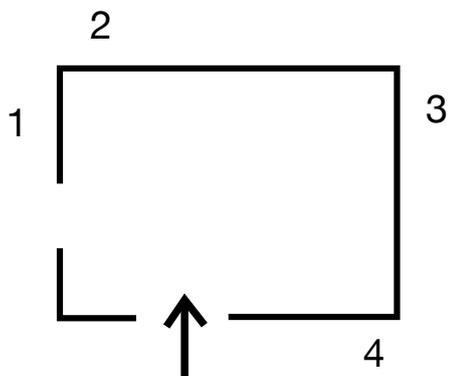
This room contains the *Untitled Film Stills*, the series of photographs that Sherman commenced shortly after she moved to New York in summer 1977. Sherman's fascination with changing her own appearance in order to create fictitious personae was now combined with her wish to create images in which there is an implied but unspecified narrative. The resulting photographs resemble shots taken on film sets as advertisements for cinematic features. Imitating the style of film stills, Sherman appears as a succession of characters in dramatic situations that hint at stories. Deliberately ambiguous, the photographs engage the viewer by inviting individual interpretation.

Sherman began the series by photographing herself in her living space and studio, using basic props. Later, she had herself photographed in various outdoor locations in order to create a wider range of characters and contexts. Throughout, Sherman used fashions belonging to the 1940s – 1960s, styles that linked with her interest in European cinema, low-budget American films from the 1940s and 1950s, as well as films by Alfred Hitchcock. Seeking a 'neutral' look, her aim was to create 'almost expressionless' images in unidentifiable locations, whose meaning is open to speculation.

70 gelatin silver prints

Exhibition prints, courtesy the artist, Metro Pictures and Sprüth Magers

A key is available to pick up in this room.



Walls shown clockwise from left

Section 1

#12 #15 #19
#03 #40 #46

Section 2

#38 #20 #62 #61 #21 #63 #26 #13 #49 #29 #83 #50 #48 #35
#24 #82 #42 #84 #27BB #34 #59 #31 #64 #06 #54 #02 #52 #57

Section 3

#55 #58 #37 #56 #43 #27 #28 #30 #51 #44
#81 #47 #33 #36 #25 #45 #41 #01 #18 #07

Section 4

#17 #23 #65 #53 #11 #60 #04 #10
#32 #14 #09 #39 #05 #22 #16 #08

Dye sublimation metal print
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures

Cover Girls 1976

The Cover Girls series was completed shortly after Sherman graduated from art school and while she was still living in Buffalo.

This is the first exhibition of the entire series since November 1976, when the photographs were originally displayed on the inside of the top deck of a bus.

The series comprises five separate works, each consisting of three 'covers' of women's magazines, namely: Cosmopolitan, Vogue, Family Circle, Redbook and Mademoiselle. In each group of three, the first image is an original cover featuring the face of a model; the second shows Sherman whose features have been transformed by make-up to resemble the original model; in the third cover, Sherman retains the impersonation but adopts a 'goofy face', which mocks the appearance of the original.

The Cover Girls is an early manifestation of Sherman's appropriation of imagery derived from the mass-media, in this case magazines.

By replicating a pre-existing image, her work quotes the style of the original; in the Vogue cover, for example, Sherman draws attention to Jerry Hall's make up, which she copies exactly. However, by parodying Hall's expression, Sherman emphasises the artificial nature of the original image, which seeks to convey an impression of glamorous sophistication.

Cover Girl (Vogue)
1976 / 2011

3 Gelatin silver prints
Private Collection, Paris

Cover Girl (Cosmopolitan)
1976 / 2011

3 Gelatin silver prints
Barbara and Richard S. Lane

Cover Girl (Mademoiselle)
1975 / 2011

3 Gelatin silver prints
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures

Cover Girl (Redbook)
1975 / 2011

3 Gelatin silver prints
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures

Cover Girl (Family Circle)
1975 / 2011

3 Gelatin silver prints
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures

Rear Screen Projections and Centerfolds 1980-81

During the early 1980s, there were several important developments in Sherman's art. The *Rear Screen Projections* were made in colour and incorporated two cinematic techniques, namely the use of close-ups and the device of presenting her characters against a projected backdrop. The effect is to deepen the impression of ambiguity. Shown in close-up, there is a concentration on Sherman's cosmetically altered features, in particular her gaze, which seems responsive to some unspecified situation. As a result, her acting has greater psychological depth, but any sense of realism is contradicted by the artificial-looking settings.

The *Centerfolds* series that followed in 1981 was the result of a commission from *Artforum* magazine, which eventually declined to publish the images. The works' horizontal format has a cinematic aspect but also refers to the centrefold spreads of men's magazines. However, instead of depicting sensuous female models, Sherman presents herself as a succession of vulnerable-looking women. Once more using close-ups, she intensified her subjects' psychological presence while creating situations that appear mysterious. Subverting the centrefold convention, Sherman – in her own words – replaced a 'titillating image' with one that 'might be intruding on someone's private pain, sadness or reverie'.

Untitled #74
1980

Chromogenic print
Victoria and Albert Museum

Untitled #66
1980

Chromogenic print
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver Art Gallery Major
Purchase and Acquisition Funds

Untitled #68
1980

Chromogenic print
Marieluse Hessel Collection, Hessel Museum of Art, Center for
Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

Untitled #90
1981

Chromogenic print
Exhibition print, courtesy the artist, Metro Pictures and
Sprüth Magers

Untitled #88
1981

Chromogenic print
Neda Young, New York

Untitled #94
1981

Chromogenic print
Collection the artist, courtesy Metro Pictures

Untitled #96
1981

Chromogenic print
Exhibition print; Courtesy of the artist, Metro Pictures,
and Sprüth Magers

Untitled #92
1981

Chromogenic print
Collection of Cynthia and Abe Steinberger

Untitled #76
1980

Chromogenic print
Collection the artist, courtesy Metro Pictures

Untitled #72
1980

Chromogenic print
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver Art Gallery Major
Purchase and Acquisition Funds

Pink Robes and Color Studies 1981-2

In 1982, Sherman created two separate series that share certain characteristics. Both groups employ a vertical format that contains a tightly-cropped image of the artist projecting an enigmatic presence within a minimal context.

In *Pink Robes*, Sherman apparently departed from her usual practice. In place of cosmetics, costumes and props, she appears instead wearing little make-up and covered only by a pink bathrobe. Also in defiance of her previous practice, she stares straight at the camera. Some critics saw the candid nature of these image as depicting 'the real Cindy'. In fact, Sherman was enacting another role. She imagined a nude model resting between shots, and suggested a guarded psychology that is usually absent in pin-up photographs.

In *Color Studies*, Sherman reverted to disguise but her aim was again to evoke her characters' complex, if inscrutable, mind-set. Drawing 'closer to real life', she suggests ordinary women in unremarkable settings. Although their appearance and situation are understated, the characters seem preoccupied, the result of what Sherman described as 'more inner acting'. In that way, while all these images avoid overt drama, Sherman's performance subtly implies a psychological backstory whose nature is concealed by a veneer of appearance.

Untitled #113

1982

Chromogenic print

Nancy & Leonard Amoroso

Untitled #97

1982

Chromogenic print

Tate, purchased 1983

Untitled #98

1982

Chromogenic print

Tate, purchased 1983

Untitled #99

1982

Chromogenic print

Tate, purchased 1983

Untitled #100
1982

Chromogenic print
Tate, purchased 1983

Untitled #114
1982

Chromogenic print
Marielise Hessel Collection, Hessel Museum of Art, Center for
Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

Untitled #102
1982

Chromogenic print
Neda Young, New York

Fashion 1983-84

The two series of *Fashion* photographs that Sherman made in 1983-84 strike a harsher note in their criticism of contemporary culture. In 1983, she was commissioned by the New York boutique owner Dianne Benson to produce photographs for advertisements featuring clothes by Jean Paul Gaultier and Comme des Garçons. Sherman responded by creating images that parody fashion photography. While her invented characters wear stylish designer-label clothes, they appear neurotic and absurd. In an unusual display of scorn, Sherman explained, 'I'm disgusted with how people get themselves to look beautiful...I was trying to make fun of fashion.'

As that observation suggests, Sherman's target was the idea that fashionable clothes can impart elegance, glamour and sophistication. Her images expose that notion as illusory and suggest that fashion conveys an appearance only. In 1984, she took that denunciation further. Commissioned by the French fashion company Dorothee Bis to provide photographs for *Vogue Paris* magazine, she created images of characters wearing designer clothes that deliberately appear 'really ugly'. Contradicting the purpose of their outfits, the women seem depressed and dishevelled. Although Sherman's images imply that fashion produces a veneer, she has continued to be commissioned by its purveyors who, it seems, acknowledge the illusion.

Untitled #133
1983-84

Chromogenic print
Collection of Michael Young

Untitled #122
1983

Chromogenic print
Exhibition print; Courtesy of the artist, Metro Pictures, and Sprüth
Magers

Untitled #137
1984

Chromogenic print
Philadelphia Museum of Art: Purchased with the Alice Newton Osborn
Fund, 1985

Untitled #131
1983

Chromogenic print
Collection the artist, courtesy Metro Pictures

History Portraits 1988-90

Towards the end of the 1980s, Sherman's exploration of the styles and conventions of contemporary culture paused. During a two-year period that included a couple of months spent living in Rome, she turned her attention to the visual language of Old Master paintings.

Employing an extravagant range of prosthetics (including false noses, breasts and skull caps) in combination with make-up, wigs and costumes, she made over thirty portraits of women and, unusually, a large number of men. Her subjects included aristocrats, ladies of leisure and even a Madonna and Child in compositions that explicitly recall styles of portraiture belonging to various periods, from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century. As with the earlier *Film Stills*, in the main she was not concerned to imitate particular models but, rather, to evoke a general sense of the genre she had in mind. There are, however, notable exceptions. *Untitled #204*, for example, closely resembles Ingres's celebrated portrait of *Madame Moitessier* of 1856, on loan from the National Gallery, London.

The artifice inherent in Sherman's practice is now conspicuous, not least in her use of deliberately unconvincing prosthetics. This parodies the look of historical portraiture and also raises questions about the presence of illusion in images of people.

Untitled #204
1989

Chromogenic print, 2014
Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of the Arons Family Foundation
in memory of Edna S. Beron, 1996

Untitled #206
1989

Chromogenic print
Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris

Untitled #225
1990

Chromogenic print,
Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation, on permanent loan to the Öffentliche
Kunstsammlung Basel

Untitled #209
1989

Chromogenic print
Collection Glenn and Amanda Fuhrman NY, Courtesy the FLAG
Art Foundation

Untitled #210
1989

Chromogenic print,
Rachel and Jean-Pierre Lehmann Collection

Untitled #205
1989

Chromogenic print,
Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris

Untitled #221
1990

Chromogenic print,
Ringier Collection, Switzerland

Madame Moitessier
By Jean-Auguste-Dominique
Ingres, 1856

Ingres's celebrated portrait of Madame Moitessier combines a detailed treatment of fabric, jewels and setting with a graceful, stylised pose, which recalls classical models. Sherman's photographic portrait of an apparently similar, but invented, character is hung in this room. In common with Ingres, Sherman conveys an impression of sumptuous elegance through the sitter's pose, jewels and fabric; but the inclusion of a piece of graph paper in the mirror frame alerts us to the artifice of the image. This raises a question: if Sherman's portrait is deceptive, to what extent is the appearance of Ingres's model truthful, and how far also an invention?

Oil on canvas
The National Gallery, London. Bought, 1936

Fairy Tales 1985

From the mid-1980s, the view of modern society advanced by Sherman's work became darker. Extending the implications of delusion and madness in the earlier *Fashion* series, in the *Fairy Tales* her imagery became nightmarish and grotesque. She now began to incorporate prosthetics in the creation of tableaux that depict the artist acting out an involvement in fantastic and macabre situations. The source of these images is partly children's fairy tales, which traditionally involve references to evil characters and monsters. At the same time, Sherman's photographs also bring to mind the style of contemporary science-fiction films, horror movies and low-budget thrillers.

In some of these images Sherman appears as the victim of some dire event; in others, she appears sinister or threatening. Collectively, the series conveys an abject atmosphere that elides childhood fears with the visual language of adult media. Referring to the violent themes that since the 1970s have increasingly featured in cinema and television drama, these works invite questions about whether the media reflects or incites elements of depravity in the contemporary world. Sherman's use of artifice distances her images from these media sources. Even so, the *Fairy Tales* hold up a mirror to the inescapable fact that such dark forces exist.

Untitled #156
1985

Chromogenic print,
Collection of Cynthia and Abe Steinberger

Untitled #140
1985

Chromogenic print,
Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris

Untitled #145
1985

Chromogenic print,
Collection Frank and Nina Moore

Untitled #143
1985

Chromogenic print,
Collection of Michael Young

Untitled #165
1985

Chromogenic print,
Loaned by Simon Doonan and Jonathan Adler

Untitled #216
1989

Chromogenic print
Courtesy Metro Pictures

The Studio

This part of the exhibition evokes Sherman's studio, using photographs of her work space in which a range of materials and source images can be seen.

Sherman lives and works in New York and her studio practice is essentially solitary. The mass media and modern culture generally have always fascinated her, and magazines, the internet and other sources provide a rich fund of ideas. Often, the look or style of certain images or objects may be a starting point for the creation of invented characters, which she develops using make-up and costumes bought or hired for particular roles. In addition to cosmetics and clothes, wigs, prosthetics and various props feed the growth of these personae. The process of evolving a character is completed when Sherman feels ready to photograph herself in role, thus creating a portrait of whatever imaginary 'stranger' she confronts in a full-length mirror that stands alongside her camera. Recently, Sherman has used digital technology to manipulate her photographed appearance and also to create illusionistic backdrops.

Collectively, these elements contribute to the formation of an extraordinary body of work in which dressing up, the use of make-up, photography and astute social commentary are essential aspects, and the creation and critiquing of appearances its vital themes.

Please note there is free-standing furniture in this space.

Masks, Head Shots, Clowns, Balenciaga 1994-2008

From the mid-1990s, Sherman's involvement with transforming her own appearance was developed in several series that foreground the presence of masks.

In the *Masks*, Sherman presented a succession of close-ups of faces whose features appear entirely artificial and inscrutable, subverting the notion that a person's facial appearance can be read for clues regarding identity and other personal attributes. The *Head Shots* series marked Sherman's return as an actress performing for the camera. Sherman imagined out-of-work actors posing for publicity shots in order to secure roles. Their cosmetic efforts to appear youthful and glamorous are evidently hopeless. These characters' fabrication of appearances has evident parallels with Sherman's own artistic practice.

Sherman's use of make-up and costumes to create false identities found an effective metaphor in the *Clowns* series, in which the characters' use of masks is obvious and has a sinister aspect. In the portrait of an aging fashion doyenne belonging to the *Balenciaga* series, the artifice of haute couture is exposed by a character whose appearance is manifestly a deception.

Untitled #323

1996

Cibachrome print

Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris

Untitled #316

1996

Cibachrome print

MJS collection (Paris)

Untitled #317

1995

Cibachrome print

Private Collection

Untitled #324

1996

Cibachrome print

Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris

Untitled #415
2004

Chromogenic print
Collection of Roberta M. Amon

Untitled #413
2003

Chromogenic print
Neda Young, New York

Untitled #424
2004

Chromogenic print
Private collection

Untitled #352
2000

Chromogenic print
Collection Metro Pictures

Untitled #353
2000

Chromogenic print
Collection the artist, courtesy Metro Pictures

Untitled #400
2000

Chromogenic print
Private Collection, Switzerland

Untitled #359
2000

Chromogenic print
Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation, on permanent loan to the Öffentliche
Kunstsammlung Basel

Untitled #399
2000

Chromogenic print
Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris

Sex Pictures, Fashion and Surrealist Pictures 1992-96

During the 1990s, Sherman's critique of imagery found in modern society proceeded in new directions. Her attention now turned to pornography and its explicit depictions of sexuality; Sherman was absent in the series that ensued. In *Sex Pictures*, she appropriated the look of pornographic images but instead of creating erotically charged pictures, she used dolls, prosthetics and other props to create scenarios involving dehumanised figures that appear absurd, abject and devoid of sensuality. Deliberately artificial-looking, Sherman's images debunk the conventions of pornography, and ridicule its visual language as a sham that conceals a striking emptiness.

The *Fashion* series and *Surrealist Pictures* extended Sherman's engagement with images of individuals who appear dehumanised. Continuing her use of dolls and artificial body parts, these components were combined in fantastic arrangements that subvert conventional anatomy. The sources of these photographs may be traced to Surrealist art, notably that of Hans Bellmer (1902-75) who used dolls to explore sexual fantasy and erotic representations of women. Her images are also a response to contemporary culture and its obsessions with refashioning human appearance. Deliberately provocative, Sherman's faux portraits allude to a world unconstrained by the limits of rationality or taste.

Untitled #253

1992

Chromogenic print

Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris

Untitled #302

1994

Chromogenic print

Neda Young, New York

Untitled #307

1994

Cibachrome print

Rachel and Jean-Pierre Lehmann Collection

Untitled #250

1992

Chromogenic print

Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris

Untitled #304
1994

Chromogenic print
The Broad Art Foundation

Untitled #255
1992

Chromogenic print
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Sandra L. Simpson

Untitled #303
1994

Azo dye print
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Sandra Simpson

Society Portraits 2008

In the *Society Portraits*, Sherman addressed issues of age and social status. The mature women depicted in these imposing portraits are confronting their advancing years and, as her masquerade in each image suggests, are resorting to cosmetic strategies to sustain an illusion of youthfulness. Despite make-up and evident recourse to surgery, the difficulty of maintaining a look that conforms to social expectations has a desperate aspect. Faced with that forlorn prospect, these characters appear equally obsessed with maintaining an alternative illusion, that of sophistication, wealth and poise. Using digital technology, Sherman depicts the women against elaborate backdrops that are intended to convey an impression of affluence and refinement.

While their youth and elevated status have a veneered quality, there is a further suggestion that beneath these surface attributes further insecurities lurk. The women's haughty demeanour betrays self-absorption but also personal doubt, so that their appearance strikes a false note. In these portraits Sherman sails close to the wind, for their style evokes an echelon of the art-collecting world. Though penetrating, they nevertheless have a compassionate aspect in confronting an issue that affects everyone, including the artist herself, who observed: 'it's especially scary when I see myself in these older women'.

Untitled #459
2007/2008

Chromogenic print,
Collection of Michael Young

Untitled #475
2008

Chromogenic print,
The Broad Art Foundation

Untitled #477
2008

Chromogenic print,
Collection of Carla Emil and Rich Silverstein

Untitled #474
2008

Chromogenic print,
Collection of Cynthia and Abe Steinberger

Untitled #465
2000

Chromogenic print,
Courtesy the Artist and Metro Pictures

Untitled #466
2008

Chromogenic print,
Courtesy the artist and David Roberts Collection, London

Untitled #476
2008

Chromogenic print,
Collection of Pamela and Arthur Sanders

Chanel 2010/12 and Murals 2010/19

In 2010, Sherman began making portraits of imaginary characters on a much larger scale, setting these personae within unfamiliar landscapes using digital technology. A striking aspect of these developments was her creation of statuesque figures placed directly on the wall, resembling murals. Depicting herself wearing strange costumes, her characters' features and the abstracted landscapes they occupy were manipulated using Photoshop. The effect is to monumentalise Sherman's fabrication of artificial appearances, expanding a theme present in her work from the outset. Confronting these imposing images, the viewer is drawn more fully into a fictional world.

In the *Chanel* series, Sherman also employed Photoshop to create manipulated photographs. In these images, she is shown wearing Chanel fashions, a look that is decidedly at odds with the wild and rugged outdoor landscapes that she appears to occupy. Sherman's delight in performance here finds an enhanced, virtual context in which the real and the apparent are merged and indistinguishable. In that respect, these works remain true to the ethos of 'dressing up' that Sherman formed as a child, while delving further into the mysteries of appearance that her art has always explored.

Untitled #540
2010 / 2012

Chromogenic print,
Pinault Collection

Untitled #549
2010

Pigment print of Photo Tex adhesive fabric
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures

Untitled #546
2010 / 2012

Chromogenic print,
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures

Untitled #545
2010 / 2012

Chromogenic print,
Pinault Collection