

SPRÜTH MAGERS BERLIN LONDON

Cindy Sherman

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Sprüth Magers London april 16 - may 27 2009

Sprüth Magers London is delighted to present Cindy Sherman's first UK exhibition since 2007. The colour photographs assembled are selected from a new series which develops Sherman's longstanding investigation into notions of gender, beauty and self-fashioning, and reveal a particular concern to probe experiences and representations of aging. Working as her own model for more than 30 years, Sherman has developed an extraordinary relationship with her camera, and her audience, capturing herself in a range of guises and personas which are by turn alarming and amusing, distasteful and poignant. A remarkable performer, subtle distortions of her face and body are captured on camera, leaving the artist unrecognizable as she deftly alters her features, and brazenly manipulates her surroundings.

To create her photographs, Sherman shoots alone in her studio, assuming multiple roles as author, director, make-up artist, hairstylist, wardrobe mistress, and of course, model. The idea and experience of getting dressed up and putting on a show is central to Sherman's practice, yet Sherman is also careful to closely manage the detail of each performance. Every bulge of flesh, strand of hair, rouged cheek or wrinkled brow is deliberately orchestrated to construct a vividly real yet curiously inscrutable character. The tension between pathos and alienation which Sherman's figures evoke in the viewer are heightened by the contexts in which they appear, always obviously staged and cleverly apposite. Her creations are photographed in front of a green screen, and then digitally inserted onto backgrounds which are shot and manipulated separately, scenarios which elaborate and complicate the narrative constructed by Sherman's garb and gaze.

Each of the women who feature in Sherman's new exhibition share an acute consciousness of glamour and social hierarchy, which is both disquietingly flagrant and sardonically relevant to contemporary obsessions with image and status. In one photograph (Untitled #466, 2008) the elegant and leisured affectation of a society dame poised in her cloistered manor is subtly undermined by the detail of Sherman's performance; the stockinged feet wedged in to cheap plastic shoes do not speak of the same pride or superiority as her character's haughty glare.

In another work from the series, a woman distinguished by the shimmering and infernal scarlet tones of her dress, lipstick and whites of her eyes stares out boldly, almost intrusively, at the viewer. Similarly installed against an aristocratic backdrop, the fearsome and ugly figure of Untitled #470 exemplifies the ambivalent amalgam of fragility, defiance and faded glamour which animates the scenes and personas created by Sherman in this new body of work. It is ultimately impossible to fix any stable narrative in these works; different levels of pretence and authenticity operate and interact to complicate any straightforward reading of

Sherman's characters, or the stories they might tell the viewer.

Cindy Sherman's work has been widely collected and exhibited by major museums throughout the world since 1980. Major solo exhibitions include the Serpentine Gallery, London and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in 2003, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1998, and MoMA in New York in 1997. She was also the subject of an important retrospective in 2006 which travelled from the Jeu de Paume in Paris, to the Kunsthaus in Bregenz, Austria, the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebæk, Denmark, and Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin. She has been the recipient of a number of major awards over the course of her career, including the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship in 1983 and the MacArthur fellowship in 1995. Her new body of work has been exhibited at Metro Pictures in New York and Sprüth Magers Berlin, before coming to London. Cindy Sherman lives and works in New York.

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Visitor Information

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Opening hours: Tuesday Saturday, 10am-6pm, and by appointment

Admission: Free

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