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The Museum of Modern Art

CINDY SHERMAN: THE COMPLETE UNTITLED FILM STILLS GOES ON VIEW AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART THIS MONTH

First Chance to See MoMA's Recent Acquisition

June 26-September 2, 1997

The complete set of Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills*, the landmark series of photographs created from 1977 to 1980, will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art from June 26 through September 2, 1997. Widely regarded as one of the most original and influential achievements in the art of the past two decades, the photographs comprise a lively and imaginative catalogue of female roles derived from the movies, all played by Sherman herself. This will be the first viewing at MoMA of the 69 black-and-white photographs, purchased by the Museum in December 1995, and only the second time the series has been exhibited in its entirety. The exhibition is organized by Peter Galassi, Chief Curator, Department of Photography, and is sponsored by Madonna.

In each photograph Sherman (American, b. 1954) appears in a different guise: the ingenue, the sex kitten, the hardened film-noir heroine, the sophisticate. Together, the pictures deftly encapsulate a fictional culture of femininity whose artificiality is made all the more salient by the viewer's knowledge that Sherman herself plays every role. Because of the ways in which the photographs interact with one another, the series is most powerful when seen as a whole.

According to Mr. Galassi, "From the viewpoint of both photographic and broader artistic traditions, Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* is a landmark body of work. The series is so full of originality, wit, and intelligence that nearly two decades later its force is still fresh and its meaning still contested. Sherman's singular talent and sensibility crystallized popularly held concerns in the culture as a whole—about the role of the mass media in our lives and about the ways in which we shape our personal identities. The Museum's purchase ensures that this influential series will be preserved in its entirety in a single public collection."

In 1977 Sherman began the *Untitled Film Stills*, conceiving the first six pictures as a group for which she impersonated a single actress in various roles. That experiment soon blossomed into an expansive survey of feminine roles based loosely on film imagery from the 1940s through the 1960s.

A tour of the exhibition and a fully illustrated catalogue are currently being planned.

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