

**MoMA PRESENTS EXHIBITION COVERING CINDY SHERMAN'S CAREER,
FROM THE 1970s TO THE PRESENT**

Exhibition Includes the American Premiere of Sherman's 2010 Photographic Mural

Cindy Sherman

February 26—June 11, 2012

The Joan and Preston Robert Tisch Exhibition Gallery, sixth floor

NEW YORK, February 21, 2012—The Museum of Modern Art presents the exhibition ***Cindy Sherman***, a retrospective tracing the groundbreaking artist's career from the mid-1970s to the present, from February 26 to June 11, 2012. The exhibition brings together 171 key photographs from the artist's significant series—including the complete "Untitled Film Stills" (1977–80), the critically acclaimed centerfolds (1981), and the celebrated history portraits (1988–90)—plus examples from all of her most important bodies of work, ranging from her fashion photography of the early 1980s to the breakthrough sex pictures of 1992 to her 2003–04 clowns and monumental society portraits from 2008. In addition, the exhibition features the American premiere of her 2010 photographic mural. An exhibition of films drawn from MoMA's collection selected by Sherman will also be presented in the Museum's theaters in April. *Cindy Sherman* is organized by Eva Respini, Associate Curator, with Lucy Gallun, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Photography, The Museum of Modern Art.

Cindy Sherman is widely considered to be one of the most important and influential artists of our time and her work is the unchallenged cornerstone of post-modern photography. Masquerading as a myriad of characters in front of her own camera, Sherman creates invented personas and tableaux that examine the construction of identity, the nature of representation, and the artifice of photography. Her works speak to an increasingly image-saturated world, drawing on the unlimited supply of visual material provided by movies, television, magazines, the Internet, and art history.

Ms. Respini says, "To create her photographs, Sherman works unassisted in her studio and assumes multiple roles as photographer, model, art director, make-up artist, hairdresser, and stylist. Whether portraying a career girl or a blond bombshell, a fashion victim or a clown, a French aristocrat or a society lady of a certain age, for over 35 years this relentlessly adventurous artist has created an eloquent and provocative body of work that resonates deeply with our visual culture."

The American premiere of Sherman's recent photographic mural (2010) will be installed outside the galleries on the sixth floor. The mural represents the artist's first foray into transforming space through site-specific fictive environments. In the mural Sherman transforms her face via digital means, exaggerating her features through Photoshop by elongating her nose,

narrowing her eyes, or creating smaller lips. The characters, who sport an odd mix of costumes and are taken from daily life, are elevated to larger-than-life status and tower over the viewer. Set against a decorative toile backdrop, her characters seem like protagonists from their own carnivalesque worlds, where fantasy and reality merge. The emphasis on new work presents an opportunity for reassessment in light of the latest developments in Sherman's oeuvre.

Entering the galleries, the exhibition strays from a chronological narrative typical of retrospectives, and groups photographs thematically to create new and surprising juxtapositions and to suggest common threads across several series. A gallery devoted to her work made for the fashion industry brings together commissions from 1983 to 2011. Sherman's interest in the construction of femininity and mass circulation of images informs much of the work that takes fashion as its subject, illustrating not only a fascination with fashion images but also a critical stance against what they represent. A gallery exploring themes of the grotesque focuses on bodies of work from the mid-1980s through the mid-1990s, including disasters (1986–89) and sex pictures (1992). Sherman's investigation of macabre narratives followed a trajectory of the physical disintegration of the body, and features prosthetic parts as a stand-in for the human body. A gallery devoted to Sherman's exploration of myth, carnival, and fairy tales pairs works from her 2003 clowns with her 1985 fairy tales series. These theatrical pictures revel in their own artificiality, with menacing characters and fantastical narratives.

Galleries devoted to single bodies of work are interspersed among the thematic rooms. Sherman's seminal series the "Untitled Film Stills," comprising 70 black-and-white photographs made between 1977 and 1980, are presented in their entirety (the complete series is in MoMA's collection). Made to look like publicity pictures taken on movie sets, the "Untitled Film Stills" read like an encyclopedic roster of female roles inspired by 1950s and 1960s Hollywood, film noir, B movies, and European art-house films. While the characters and scenarios may seem familiar, Sherman's "Stills" are entirely fictitious. Her characters represent deeply embedded clichés (career girl, bombshell, girl on the run, housewife, and so on) and rely on the persistence of recognizable manufactured stereotypes that loom large in the cultural imagination.

Other series presented in depth include Sherman's 1981 series of 12-color photographs known as the centerfolds. Originally commissioned by *Artforum* magazine, these send-ups of men's erotic magazine centerfolds depict characters in a variety of emotional states, ranging from terrified to heartbroken to melancholic. With this series, Sherman plays into the male conditioning of looking at photographs of exposed women, but she turns this on its head by taking on the roles of both (assumed) male photographer and female pinup. The history portraits investigate the relationships between painter and model, and are featured in depth in the exhibition. These theatrical portraits borrow from a number of art historical periods, from Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, and Neoclassical. This free-association sampling creates an illusion of familiarity, but not with any one specific era or style (just as the "Untitled Film Stills" evoke generic types, not particular films). The subjects (for the first time, many are men) include aristocrats, Madonna and

child, clergymen, women of leisure, and milkmaids, who pose with props, elaborate costumes, and obvious prostheses.

Sherman has explored the experience of aging in a youth- and status-obsessed society with several bodies of work made since 2000. For her headshots from 2000–2002 (sometimes called Hollywood/Hamptons), the artist conceived a cast of characters of would-be or has-been actors (in reality secretaries, housewives, or gardeners) posing for headshots to get an acting job. With this series, Sherman underscores the transformative qualities of makeup, hair, expression, and pose, and the recognition of certain stereotypes as powerful transmitters of cultural clichés. Her monumental 2008 society portraits feature women “of a certain age” from the top echelons of society who struggle with today’s impossible standards of beauty. The psychological weight of these pictures comes through in the unrelenting honesty of the description of aging and the small details that belie the attempt to project a certain appearance. In the infinite possibilities of the mutability of identity, these pictures stand out for their ability to be at once provocative, disparaging, empathetic, and mysterious.

SPONSORSHIP:

Major support for the exhibition is provided by Agnes Gund, Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G. Farley, The Modern Women’s Fund, and The William Randolph Hearst Endowment Fund.

Additional funding is provided by The Broad Art Foundation, David Dechman and Michel Mercure, Robert B. Menschel, Allison and Neil Rubler, Richard and Laura Salomon, The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, Glenstone, Michèle Gerber Klein, Richard and Heidi Rieger, Ann and Mel Schaffer, and The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art.

EXHIBITION TOUR:

Cindy Sherman will travel to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (July 14–October 7, 2012); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (November 10, 2012–February 17, 2013); and Dallas Museum of Art (March 17–June 9, 2013).

PUBLICATION:

Cindy Sherman is accompanied by a publication that presents the stunning range of work produced by the artist during her 35-year career. Lavishly illustrated with more than 180 works (some never before published), the book highlights all of Sherman’s major series. Printed in Italy by Trifoglio SRL using its new AREAW4 printing process—which yields especially vibrant blues, purples, yellows, and oranges, not possible in conventional offset printing—the book reproduces the artist’s work with astonishing color fidelity. In the plate section, Sherman’s photographs are grouped thematically to suggest the common threads that run through multiple series. An introductory essay by the exhibition’s curator, Eva Respini, presents an overview of Sherman’s career and investigates some of the dominant themes in her work, while also exploring the theoretical discourse that has surrounded it from the very beginning. A contribution by art historian Johanna Burton offers a critical reexamination of Sherman’s work in light of her recent series, and a conversation between Sherman and filmmaker John Waters provides an enlightening view into the artist’s process. 9 ½ x 12”, 264 pages, 255 illustrations. Price: \$40.00 (paperback); \$60.00 (hardcover). Available at the MoMA Stores and online at MoMAStore.org. Available to the trade through ARTBOOK | D.A.P in the United States and Canada, and through Thames & Hudson outside North America. The publication will also be available in French (available from Éditions

Hazan), German (available from Schirmer/Mosel), and Spanish (available from La Fábrica Editorial).

RELATED EXHIBITION:

Carte Blanche: Cindy Sherman

April 2–10, 2012

The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1

Carte Blanche: Cindy Sherman is presented in conjunction with the retrospective exhibition *Cindy Sherman*. Film—the common cultural language of our era—has had a profound influence on Sherman and is an inspiration for much of her work. Belonging to the first generation of Americans raised on television, Sherman was fully steeped in mass-media culture, and she recalls watching films such as *Rear Window* and *La Jetée*. In college in the mid-1970s, she immersed herself in film, studying under the avant-garde filmmaker Paul Sharits and experimenting with the medium of film alongside making photographs.

For *Carte Blanche*, Sherman has selected films from MoMA's collection, including *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (Tobe Hooper, 1974), *La Jetée* (Chris Marker, 1962), *Shadows* (John Cassavetes, 1959), *The Fearless Vampire Killers* (Roman Polanski, 1964), and *Meshes of the Afternoon* (Maya Deren, 1943). Ranging from camp to horror to classic art films, Sherman's choices reflect the artist's diverse interests and influences. *Carte Blanche* includes additional films on loan to MoMA, and has provided the opportunity for the Museum to acquire films for the collection. As the "Curator's Choice," one screening features Sherman's 1976 short film *Doll Clothes*, followed by her feature film *Office Killer* (1997), which draws on the horror genre well represented in Sherman's choices for *Carte Blanche*. The exhibition is organized by Eva Respini, Associate Curator, with Lucy Gallun, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Photography, in collaboration with the Department of Film, The Museum of Modern Art.

PUBLIC PROGRAM:

Cindy Sherman: Circle of Influence

March 26, 2012, 6:00 p.m.

The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2

This panel discussion features artists working in a variety of mediums as they explore Cindy Sherman's influence on contemporary art practice, including issues such as feminism and identity. Participants include painters George Condo and Elizabeth Peyton, and video and performance artist Kalup Linzy. Moderated by Eva Respini, Associate Curator, Department of Photography, The Museum of Modern Art, and organizer of the retrospective exhibition *Cindy Sherman*.

Tickets (\$10; members and Corporate Members \$8; students, seniors, and staff of other museums \$5) can be purchased at the lobby information desk, at the film desk, or in the Education and Research Building, and are available on MoMA.org.

This program is made possible by the Anna Marie and Robert F. Shapiro Seminar and Lecture Endowment Fund established by Jeanne and Robert Savitt, A. Andrew Shaprio, and Robert F. Shapiro, Jr.

WEBSITE:

Accompanying *Cindy Sherman* is a comprehensive website, www.MoMA.org/cindysherman, featuring the complete selection of images that appear in the exhibition. MoMA also commissioned exclusive video content for the site—short clips of artists, film makers, art historians, and cultural critics speaking about their favorite work by Sherman. Confirmed participants include artists

Marilyn Minter, Marina Abramović, and Robert Longo; Vanity Fair editor Ingrid Sischy; gallerist Helene Winer; art historian and critic Douglas Crimp; curator Eva Respini; and Director of The Museum of Modern Art, Glenn Lowry. The diversity of participants will underscore the many facets of Sherman's work.

AUDIO GUIDE:

An audio program accompanying the exhibition features commentary by curator Eva Respini and curatorial assistant Lucy Gallun, as well as audio clips of Cindy Sherman discussing her work. It is available at the Museum free of charge, courtesy of Bloomberg; on MoMA.org/wifi; and as a podcast on MoMA.org/audio or on iTunes. MoMA Audio is a collaboration between The Museum of Modern Art and Acoustiguide, Inc. Available in English only.

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For downloadable high-resolution images, register at MoMA.org/press

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019, (212) 708-9400, **MoMA.org**

Hours: Wednesday through Monday, 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Friday, 10:30 a.m.–8:00 p.m. Closed Tuesday.

Museum Admission: \$25 adults; \$18 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$14 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs). Tickets can be purchase online at a reduced rate of: \$22.50 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Target Free Friday Nights 4:00–8:00 p.m.

Film Admission: \$12 adults; \$10 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$8 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)