

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

VIA FRANCESCO CRISPI 16

00187 ROME ITALY

HOURS:

SUMMER HOURS:

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Tuesday – Saturday: 10:30am–7:00pm and by appointment

Monday – Friday: 10:30am – 7:00pm and by appointment



CINDY SHERMAN

Sunday, 7 June – Saturday, 19 September 2009

Opening reception for the artist: June 7th, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm

I think they are the most realistic characters I have done. I completely empathised with them. They could be me. That's what was really scary, how easy it was to make myself look like that.

--Cindy Sherman

Gagosian Gallery will present a series of new photographs by Cindy Sherman.

Working as her own model for more than thirty years, Sherman has endlessly transformed herself to address the complexities of identity through photographs, which she fully controls as author, director, and stylist. A consummate performer, Sherman captures every possible distortion of her face and body on camera, drastically manipulating her weight or shape, coaxing the most nuanced expressions from her supple features, and refining every detail, from fingernails to props. Over time she has assumed a myriad of identities, from fraught adolescent to suburban housewife to social vamp to Renaissance aristocrat, claiming as her own the vast range of social and psychological spaces that women have inhabited throughout history.

Sherman's latest photographs depict wealthy middle-aged American women, past their prime physically but at the height of their social powers, protected by their sartorial armor yet utterly exposed by the camera -- and our scrutiny. These savage portrayals suggest a disconcerting liminal space between fiction and reality where pathos rules. Expensively attired, expertly coiffed and made-up, and framed by the elaborate architectural or landscape settings of their privileged lives, these carefully constructed women begin to crumble under the camera's impassive gaze. At first glance, each of them is projected from a vantage of comfort and success, rendered on a scale that recalls the impressive portraits commissioned by wealthy patrons during the Renaissance. But the enlarged scale has a cruelly adverse effect, drawing attention to their every imperfection -- the age-spots, the wrinkles, the sagging skin, and ill-fitting, sometimes garish clothes. Moreover, on closer scrutiny the backgrounds reveal themselves to be separate from the characters that they frame, shot elsewhere and after the fact, then added digitally to complete -- and at the same time, undermine -- the composition.

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Untitled (#470) wears a red satin dress, slashed at the neck. Her face is crusted in dry make-up, her bloodshot eyes are ringed in black kohl, and her eyebrows drawn heavily in permanent surprise. The most poignant detail is her Spanish fan, intended to impart a coquettish flair to the ensemble; but clutched in her coarse, taloned hand it merely casts an ugly shadow. *Untitled* (#476) poses with a lapdog against a tastefully decorated domestic interior with dark wood paneling and a seascape painting, dressed in an elegant evening gown and pearls. The silvery fur of the pet – which turns out to be a stuffed toy – matches her own hair shade. *Untitled* (#468), a matron in slacks, cardigan and fur jacket, accessorized with white gloves and designer scarf, stands with her arms crossed in front of an Empire-style apartment building. Her red-rimmed eyes, protruding teeth and brightly rouged cheeks spoil an otherwise conservative and carefully put-together look. *Untitled* (#473) is swathed in fur with bobbed hair and garish makeup, surrounded by a sort of lurid mandala. Composed like a mall-studio portrait, this photograph draws explicit attention to the newly layered artifice of Sherman's technique, while embracing popular conventions and processes in digital photography.

Cindy Sherman lives and works in New York. Her work has been the subject of countless major international exhibitions including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (1997) traveling to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague, Centro Cultural de Belém, Lisbon, Musée d'art Contemporain de Bordeaux, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, and Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (1997-2000); the Serpentine Gallery, London and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (2003), and the Jeu de Paume, Paris (2006), traveling to Kunsthauus Bregenz, Austria, Louisiana Museum for Moderne Kunst, Denmark, and Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin (2006-2007).

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