



Untitled Film Stills

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Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Stills," a series of 69 black-and-white photographs created between 1977 and 1980, is widely seen as one of the most original and influential achievements in recent art. Witty, provocative and searching, this lively catalogue of female roles inspired by the movies crystallizes widespread concerns in our culture, examining the ways we shape our personal identities and the role of the mass media in our lives. Sherman began making these pictures in 1977 when she was 23 years old.

Untitled Film Stills Details

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From Reader Review Untitled Film Stills for online ebook

Kendylus Roboticus says

I love her art

Emily Kramer says

The best part about Cindy is that when she was stealing the male gaze from under patriarchy's stinky feet, she was just dressing up and taking pictures of herself to have a good time. Brilliant!

Jim Sullivan says

A top ten favorite. Sets the stage for all the incredible work that followed.

Sonja Sweterlitsch says

A great series of photographs by a very interesting artist.

Joe says

LUV HUH.

'nuff said.

Ok, but seriously, for years I've been a fan of Sherman's Untitled Film Stills but could only find a handful of of them - most notably stills #7 and #14 which have become the iconic stills from this series.

If you don't know what these are then here's the rub: from 1977 to 1980 Cindy Sherman took b&w self portrait photographs of herself dressed as different "characters" from imaginary films.

The result is an ambiguous film "still" that proves the age old adage of a picture is worth a thousand words:

Why does the young girl have a black eye? Who is the blonde girl waiting for on the side of the road? How did the glamorous housewife spill her groceries and who is she looking at? Is the girdle clad starlet drunkenly staggering out of her bedroom or is she angry at the paparazzi?

These are some of the questions the photos will have you asking yourself.

Finally some one has decided to put the complete collection of films stills together into one coffee table book - some of which I've never seen before - and what a treat. It's a true feast for the eyes.

Christopher McQuain says

****1/2

Jesse says

Previously, I had only stumbled across examples of Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Stills" individually--a cluster in the Tate Modern, a stray posting on an internet blog, etc. But here they all are, an expansive body of work grouped together and arranged by Sherman herself for maximum impact--and what an impact it has! This might as well be called a short story collection as much as an art book, for each turn of the page presents not only a dramatic black and white photograph but a story without words. And each story presented--in one a blowsy brunette in her underwear and sunglasses, clutching a martini and viciously confronting the camera, in yet another a blonde wrapped up in a dark trenchcoat, nervously navigating her way through a darkened street, all recognizably Sherman yet somehow not quite her either--present the potential for *endless* variations, interpretations, ponderings and conjectures. A book meant to be pulled out often to be admired and puzzled over--it's a shame I have to return it back to the library.

Erwin Blonde says

While studying photography and film at the art academy, Cindy Sherman was one of these topics, especially the film stills. Sherman is one of a kind in the photography world. I always tried to imagine how she pulled it off, she must be a kind of lonely genius. (in my imagination).
My own stage is the street and I kind of dislike studio work, that might be the reason why I have great admiration for Sherman's work.

Laura says

I want this book.

Becca Becca says

I love the way Cindy Sherman brings an element of stage/theater/acting to photography and the elaborate storytelling she weaves into each of her photos.

When I studied her in a photography class I found it interesting that she would often dress in characters she had created during her normal life. Apparently she had an office secretary character that she dressed up as when she went to work. She had invented some elaborate story and character analysis of this office secretary as well. Apparently she would also go to parties in various costumes and all the conversations she had at the party would be in character.

Very inventive and creative.

Shawn says

this book is indulgent and luscious. this book does justice to the brilliance of sherman's art without being saccharine about it.

Yula Reigna says

Fascinating.

Thomas says

A very important and relevant book. Cindy Sherman's pictures perfectly illustrate stereotypical female roles which are still omnipresent in today's society. I would have loved more text and description of the pictures in the book though.

David Rothwell says

I used this book as a reference for my thesis, in which I wanted to convey any meaning and similarity between occidental and oriental feminine culture within visual art. What I found with Cindy Sherman's work was that it posed more questions than answers, just like photographers Daido Moriyama and Anders Petersen whose work does ask of the viewer to perceive more questions than answers. All in all, it is photographic monologue that studies the relationship between the viewer of the cinematograph and visual references within our own lives.

Paul says

Easily one of the best dozen or so photobooks ever published. Essentially perfect; a very good idea executed in a series of photos that is completely effective on every level.

The most interesting bit, to me, is that she even succeeds with the male gaze / feminism / representation / etc. angle, something that is incredibly difficult to do in an interesting or subtle way (as evidenced by the work of literally all photographers influenced by Sherman). With *Film Stills*, the subtext is there if you're looking for it, but she doesn't let the work suffer in order to get across a political point; as Sherman put it, to her eternal credit, "The work is what it is and hopefully it's seen as feminist work, or feminist-advised work, but I'm not going to go around espousing theoretical bullshit about feminist stuff."

Theory has become infinitely more prevalent in MFA student photoland in the past three decades, to the

obvious detriment of the photography itself; Sherman remains one of the very best examples of how to combine theory and content in the best possible way.
