Cindy Sherman

1975–1993

TEXT BY *Rosalind Krauss*
WITH AN ESSAY BY NORMAN BRYSON

RIZZOLI
NEW YORK

Cindy Sherman is unquestionably one of the most significant artists working today. Her career and her art embody two of the most important developments in art of the last decade: the impact of postmodern thinking on the art world and the rise of photography and its mass-media techniques as a powerful means of expression for fine artists.

In this first presentation of the artist's complete work, leading contemporary art historian Rosalind Krauss reviews Cindy Sherman's remarkable series of photographic works—in which the artist has notoriously assumed various roles, from B-movie starlet to Old Master model—and the enormous influence these works have had on feminist thinking and on current dialogues about the strategies of contemporary art in general. Almost perversely, Krauss argues, Sherman's unsettling attempts to dissect the formation and perception of images have turned her artworks—and herself—into icons for feminists' and others' agendas. Krauss explores in depth the various approaches to Sherman's work taken by philosophers and art historians and asks if they have not often lost sight of the imagery itself—or, more specifically, the way the images are constructed.

Examining Sherman's use of photographic techniques, from camera angles (the famed Centerfolds series, for example) to specific styles of lighting, Krauss suggests that the meanings of Sherman's work can best be derived from her constructive methods and their aesthetic and philosophical ramifications and carefully builds to the notion of Sherman as an artist engaged in a dialogue most particularly with art itself.

In a further essay, Norman Bryson, internationally known for his pioneering theories on the semiotics of looking, explores Sherman's most recent, horror-show images of mannequins (known as the Sex Pictures) and identifies their place in her continued out-of-body investigations. Along with a bibliography and chronology, more than 200 illustrations (140 in color), including numerous unpublished works, represent Sherman's complete career to date.

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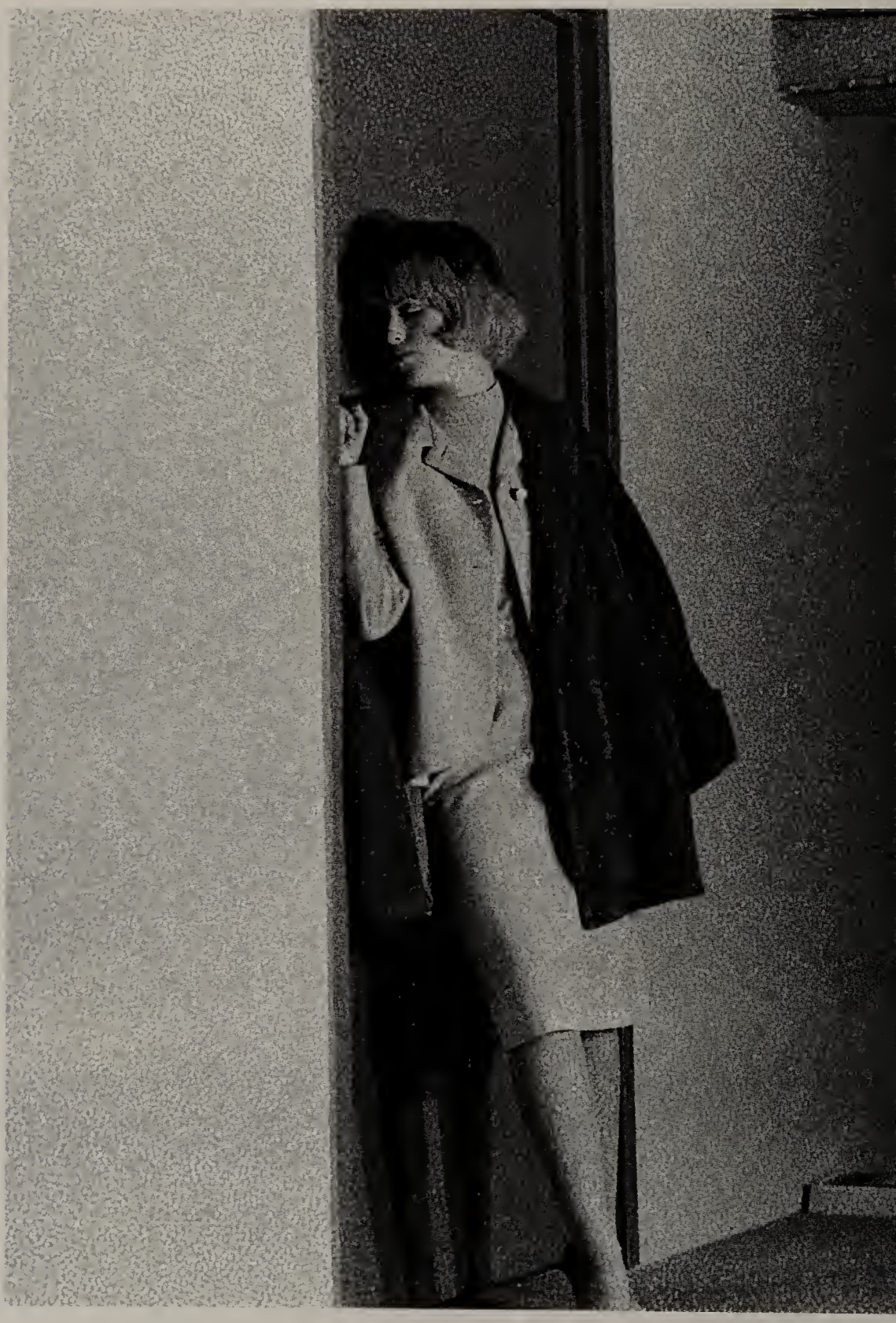

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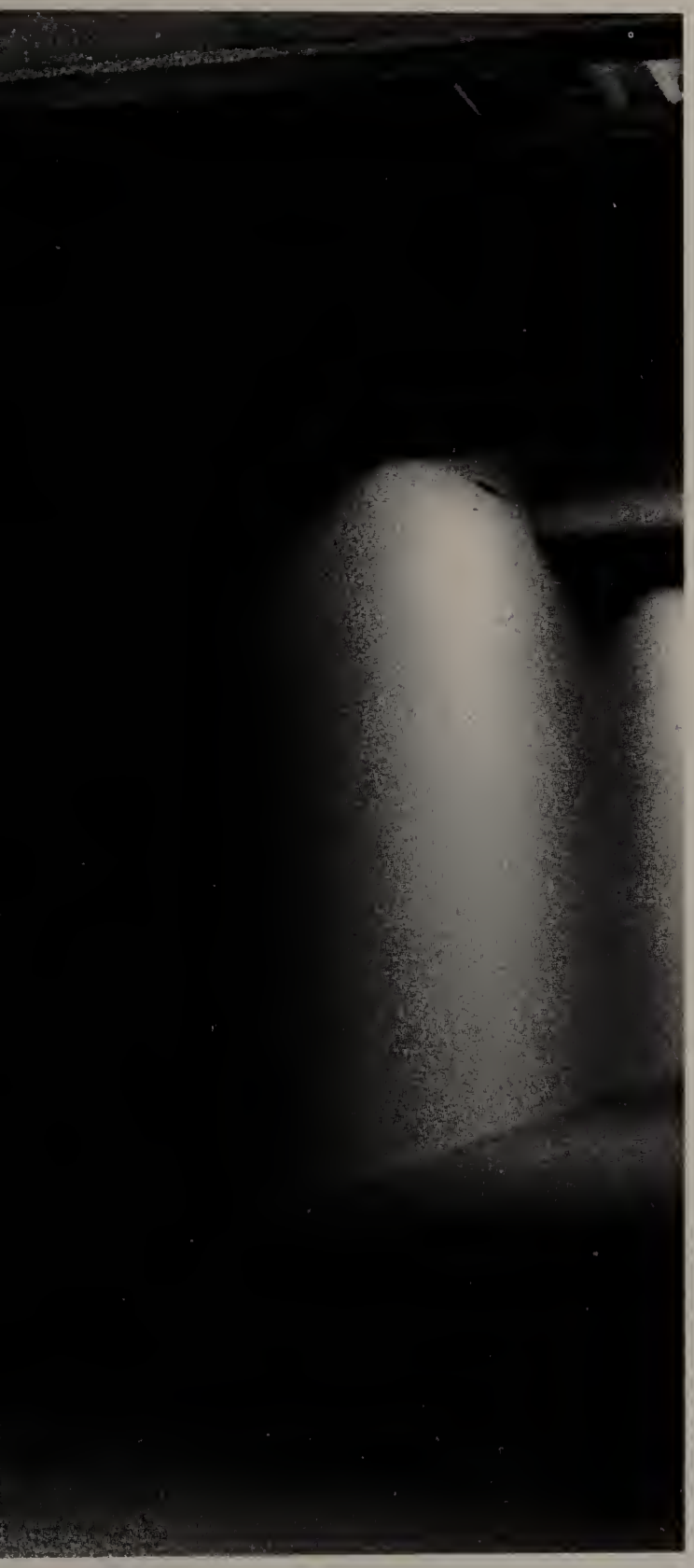

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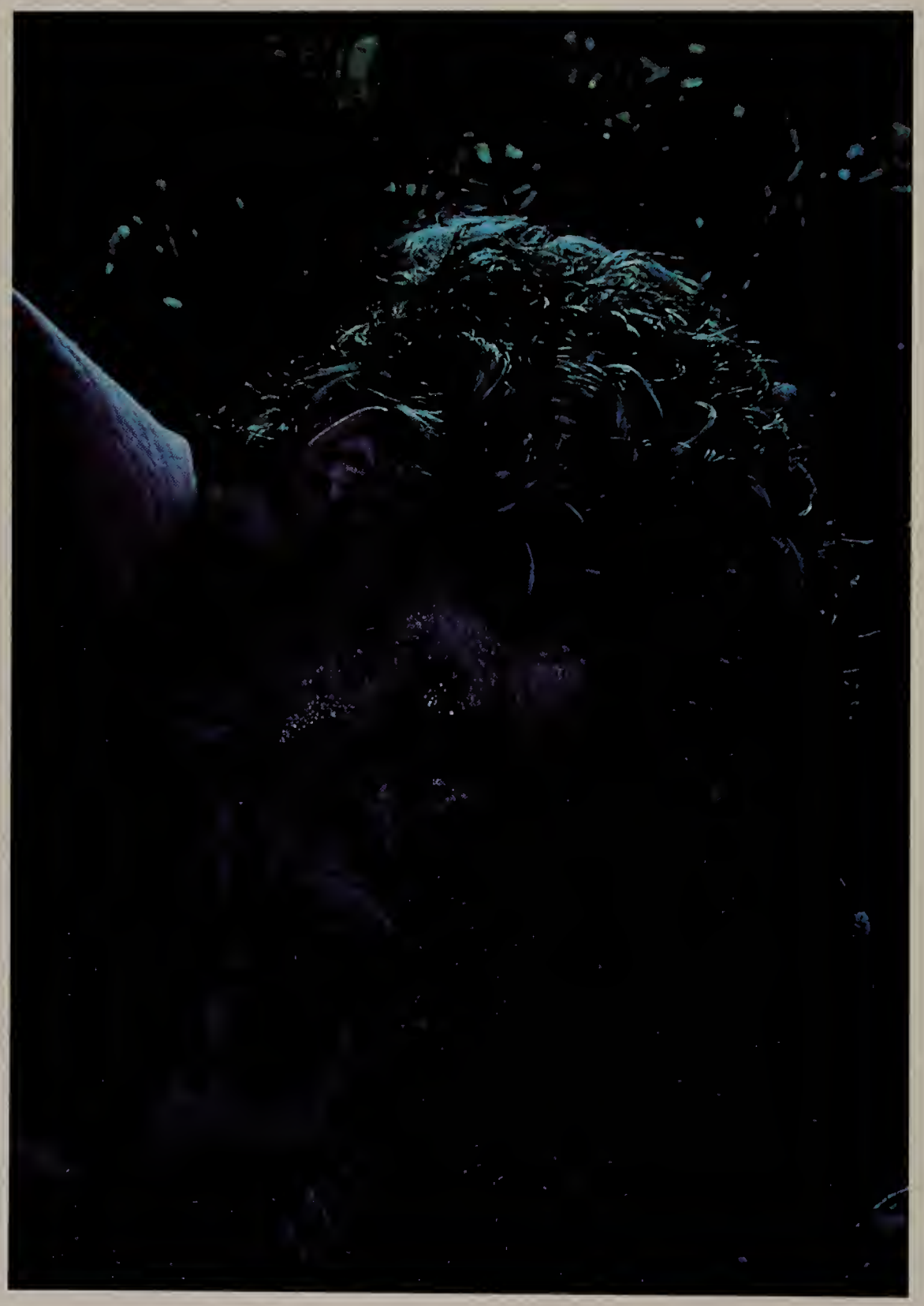

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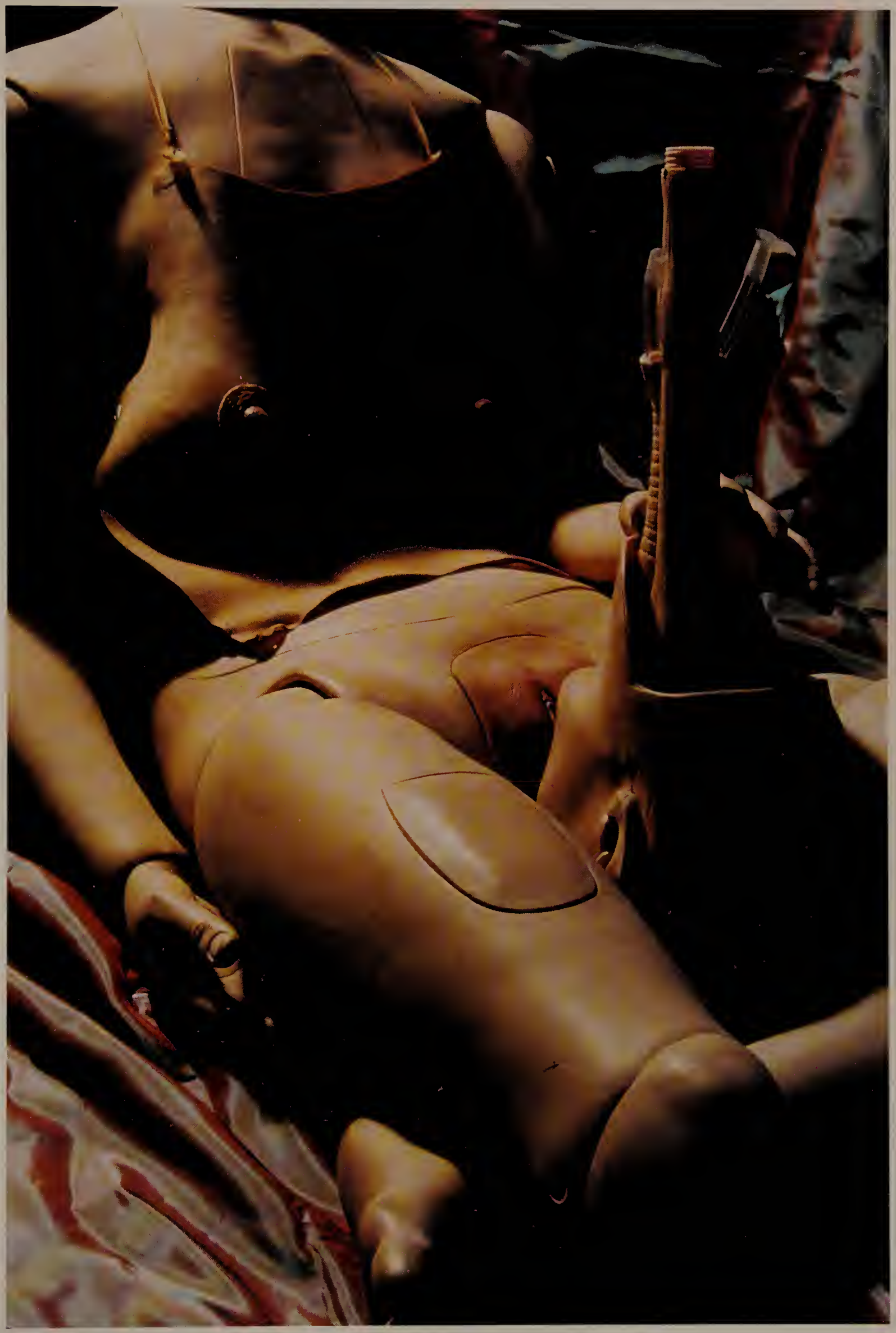

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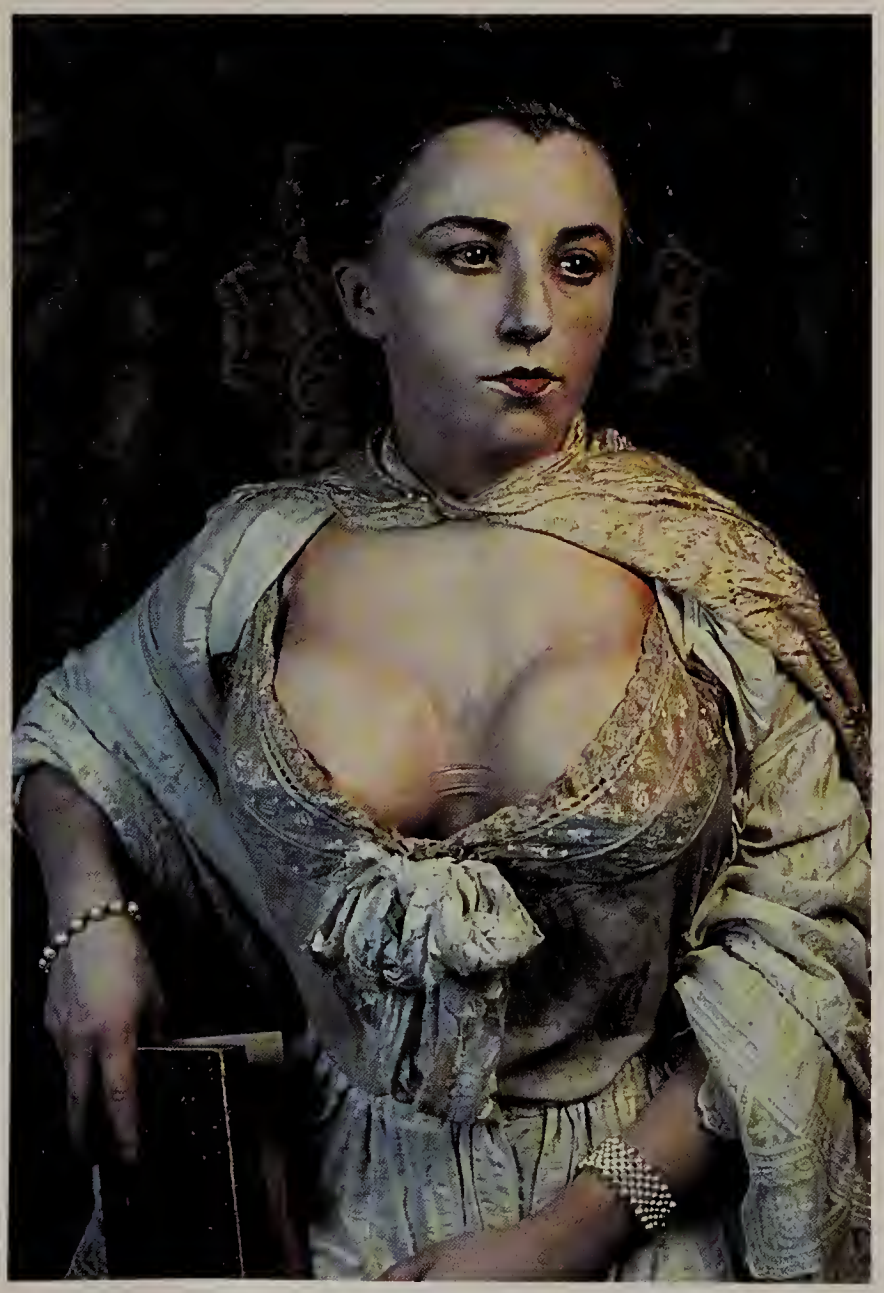


Untitled, # 183, 1988

PLATES

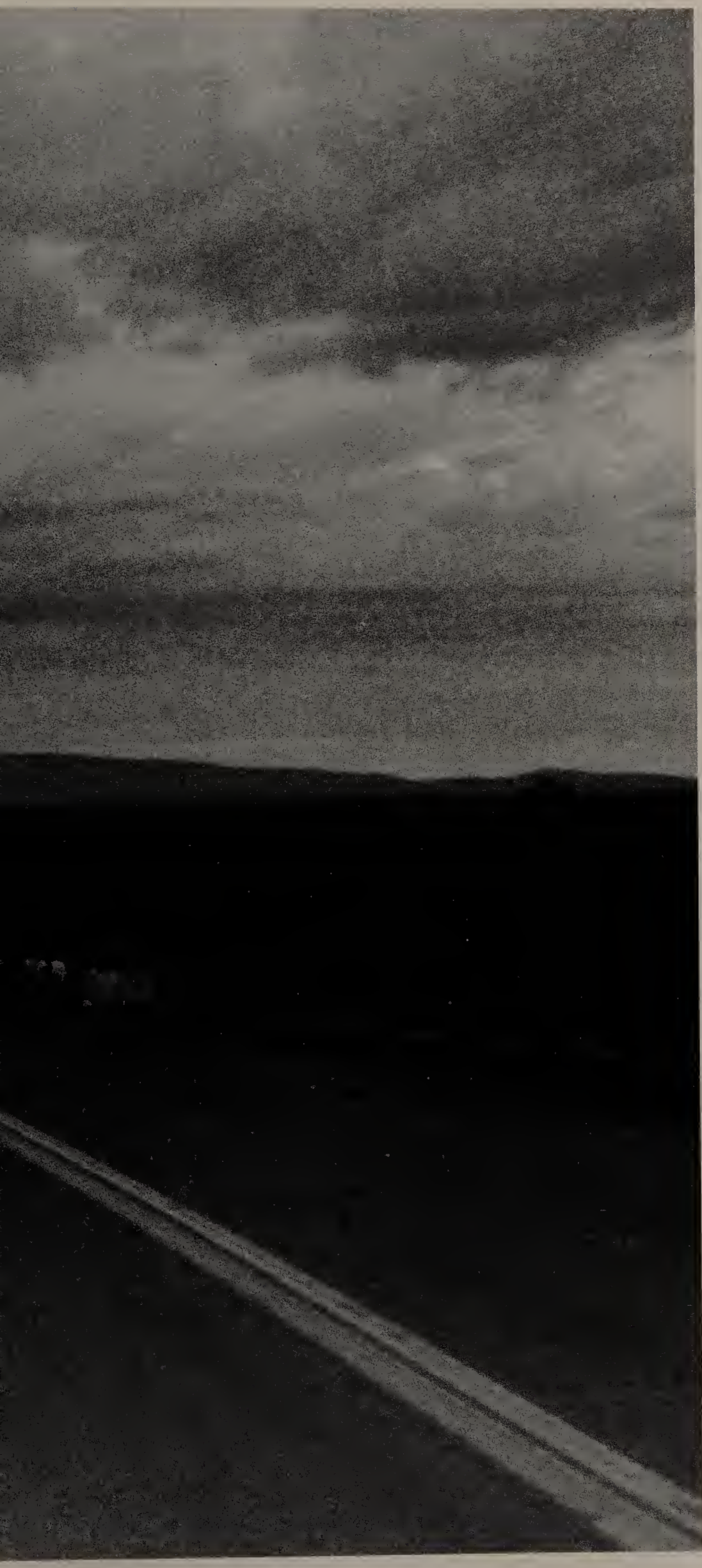
1975—1980

BLACK & WHITE

10.

Untitled, A, B, C, D, 1975

Untitled Film Still, # 7, 1978



13.

Untitled Film Still, # 48, 1979

Untitled Film Still, # 38, 1979

Untitled Film Still, # 5, 1977

16.

Untitled Film Still, # 54, 1980

1. Film Stills

SOME PEOPLE HAVE TOLD ME THEY REMEMBER THE MOVIE THAT ONE OF MY IMAGES IS DERIVED FROM, BUT IN FACT I HAD NO FILM IN MIND AT ALL.[1]

Cindy Sherman

Here is a curious story: an art critic writes an account of Cindy Sherman presenting her work to an art-school audience. She shows slides of her Untitled Film Stills—the black-and-white photographs in which as both director and actress she projects a range of 1950s screen images—and next to each, he reports, she presents stills from the movie on which her images were based. What emerges through this comparison, he says, is that "virtually every detail seemed to be accounted for: right down to the buttons on the blouses, the cropping of the image, even the depth of field of the camera."[2]

Although he is upset by what this comparison reveals about the slavishness of Sherman's procedure—the stroke-for-stroke meticulousness of the copy, so to speak—he is certain that what Sherman is after in any case is a recognition of the original, although not as a source waiting to be replicated, but rather as a memory waiting to be summoned. So he speaks about the viewer of the normally unaccompanied Sherman Still "starting to recall the original film image." And, he says, "if it wasn't the actual film" the viewer recalled, "then it was an ad for it; and if not that, then it was a picture from a review in a newspaper."

On its face this story is amazing. Because in a Sherman Film Still there is no "original." Not in the "actual film," nor in a publicity shot or "ad," nor in any other published "picture." The condition of Sherman's work in the Film Stills—and part of their point, we could say—is the simulacral nature of what they contain, the condition of being a copy *without* an original.

The structure of the simulacrum, along with Sherman's exploration of it, is clearly something that needs to be examined. But even before doing so, it is worth staying with the story of the slide show and its putative unveiling of an "original," which is to say the story's blatant, screaming, *Rashomon*-like, mis-recognition.

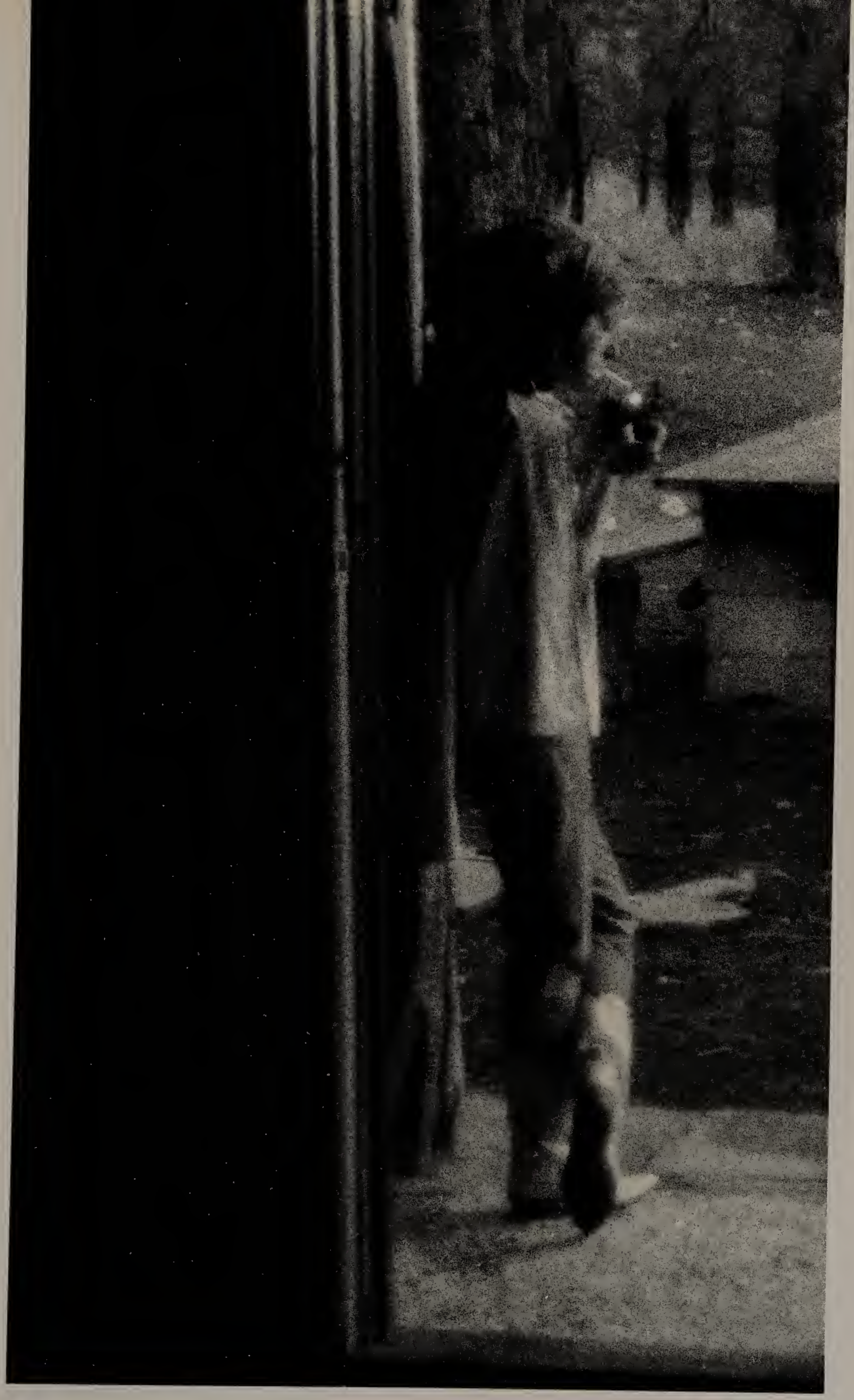
Did Sherman ever show real movie stills next to her own work? And if so, to what end? Since her own images manage to project an array of stereotypical Hollywood or New Wave heroines, along with the very atmospheres through which they are cast—the *film noir*'s hard-bitten denizen of the night, one of Hitchcock's plucky but vulnerable career girls, the B-movie's small-town innocent swamped by Metropolis, a New Wave vehicle of alienated despair—and yet do all of this from a kind of intense, generalized memory, what would a comparison of, say, a still from a Douglas Sirk film and a Cindy Sherman Film Still mean? Could it indicate that the sense that the two images intersect—no matter how distant their actual details might be—derives from the way *both* Sherman and Sirk (in

1. Lisbet Nilson, "Q & A. Cindy Sherman," *American Photographer* (September 1983), p. 77.

2. Richard Rhodes, "Cindy Sherman's 'Film Stills,'" *Parachute* (September 1982).

18.

Untitled Film Still, # 52, 1979



Untitled Film Still, # 61, 1979

addition to Sirk's actress) are each imaginatively focused on a remembered fantasy—the *same* remembered fantasy—of a character who is "herself" not only fictional, but, like Emma Bovary, the creature as well of fiction, a character woven from the tissue of all the romances she has ever consumed? Could it mean that with the stereotypes projected by these fictions, with regard to the creatures of this fantasized romance, could it mean that these boxes-within-boxes of seeming "memory" always produce what appears to be an authentic copy, even though there is no "real" original to be found? So that Sirk's copy and Sherman's copy uncannily overlap like two searchlights probing through the night toward the same vaguely perceived target? Let's speculate that this is why Sherman would show her own image alongside, say, Sirk's.

But why would the critic mis-recognize the comparison, designating one a copy and the other an original: Sherman, the artist, copying the "real" of the Hollywood film? Roland Barthes, the French structuralist critic, would have a word with which to explain this strange hallucination, and that word would be *myth*. The art critic who "saw" the comparison as replication—Untitled Film Still = image taken from real film—was in the grip of myth, consuming it, Barthes would say.

Barthes would, of course, be using the term *myth* in a somewhat limited, rather technical way. And if it is useful to explain how he deploys the term, it's because myth is also what Sherman herself is analyzing and projecting in Untitled Film Stills. Although not as a myth-consumer, like the critic; but rather as a mythographer, like Barthes—a demystifier of myth, a de-myth-ifier.

To consume a myth is to buy a package along with the salesman's pitch. The salesman's pitch names it, and the buyer, never looking under the hood, accepts the name, is satisfied (or suckered) by the pitch. The somewhat more technical analysis involves the terms signified and signifier, form and content. In Barthes's explanation of myth, it goes like this: a schoolchild reads in a Latin grammar book, *quia ego nominor leo.*[3] The signifiers of this string of words are the letters—the material component through which each sign (as here, each word) is made up; the signified is the lion and its name—the idea that is articulated by the units cut out by the signifiers: "because my name is lion." At the level of the individual sign the relation between signifier (letter) and signified (idea) and their conjunction would be represented as: Sd/Sr = Sign.

But this sign, or string of signs, is found in a grammar book and thus "because my name is lion" is not left at what could be called the denotational level, where it is pointing to lions, to their habitats, or to their strength, as in, let us say, "If I have taken the prey from my weaker fellow animals, it is, among other reasons, because my name is lion." Rather the Latin phrase is being used as an example, a mere instance of the grammatical agreement between subject and predicate. And as such an instance, the richness of the sign—the lion, its strength, its habitat—is itself divided from within. And a second layer, parasitical on the first meaning, is installed.

This second layer is formal; it is the subject/predicate structure of the sentence, in which grammatical agreement is at stake—*any* instance of agreement, lions, snakes, butterflies, no matter. This formal layer constituting the phrase as "mere" example

3. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), pp. 109–159.

Untitled Film Still, # 6, 1977

Untitled Film Still, # 43, 1979

Untitled Film Still, # 49, 1979

is thus empty. But it preys on the fullness of the layer of the sentence understood as meaning. And Barthes's argument is that for myth to work, it *must* prey on the richness of the "instance."

So what is myth? Myth is depoliticized speech. Myth is ideology. Myth is the act of draining history out of signs and reconstructing these signs instead as "instances"; in particular, instances of universal truths or of natural law, of things that have no history, no specific embeddedness, no territory of contestation. Myth steals into the heart of the sign to convert the historical into the "natural"—something that is uncontested, that is simply "the way things are." In the case of "because my name is lion," the myth is the combination of meaning and form into the content that reads: "this is the principle of agreement in Latin." But beyond that, the mythical content conveys the importance of order and regularity that is the structure of Latin, as well as one's sense, as reader, of belonging to a system of schooling in which many children like oneself are also learning this principle, and the idea that this principle is addressed to oneself, meant for oneself: "See! This is what 'grammatical agreement' looks like." This is what Barthes calls the *interpellant* aspect of mythical speech.[4] It is addressed to its readers, calling out to them, asking them to see and agree to the way this example confirms this principle, at one and the same time fading before the principle's authority—"this is just an example"—and filling that authority with a kind of subservient but needed specificity—"See! Nature is brimming with just the thing this means: 'because my name is lion.'"

The more famous example Barthes uses in his analysis of mythical speech is closer to Sherman's Film Stills, since it is not composed of letters and words but of a photograph and its depictions. A magazine cover of *Paris Match* shows a black soldier giving the French salute. The photograph—as physical object, with its brute areas of dark and light—is the signifier; the depicted elements through which we assign meaning to those lights and shadows are the signified. They combine into the sign: a black soldier giving the French salute. That combination then becomes the support for the mythical content, which is not just a message about French Imperialism—"France is a global nation; there are black subjects who also serve it"—but a message about its supposed *naturalness*, as the signified of the first order of the mythic support is called up as an example to fill up and instance its mythic contention: "Imperialism is not oppressive; it is natural, because we are all one humanity; you see! examples of how it works and the loyalty it engages can be found everywhere, anywhere, for example, in this photograph where a black soldier gives the French salute." The "you see!" part of the message is, of course, the interpellant part. It is the myth summoning its consumer to grasp the meaningfulness of the first order sign—the photograph-as-signified—and then to project his or her conviction in that unitary, simple meaning into the more complex, hazy, insinuating level of the contents of the myth.

But back to Sherman and the *Rashomon*-factor: the critic sitting there in the darkened auditorium of the School of Visual Arts, looking at a set of slide comparisons and believing something about their replicative relationship, believing this to be the case because, after all, Sherman's work, he is certain, takes us back in any event to the real film we ostensibly remember. What is crucial here is that he has bought the saleman's pitch but never thought to look under the hood. He has taken the first order sign as a composite,

4. Barthes, *Mythologies*, p. 125.

26.

Untitled Film Still, # 20, 1978

Untitled Film Still, # 17, 1978

Untitled Film Stills, #18 and #19, 1978

a signifier and signified already congealed into a finished meaning—actress X in film Y—and he has completed the mythical content. Here it would be something like: Cindy Sherman is an artist and artists imitate reality (Universal Truth No. 1), doing so through their own sensibilities, thus adding something of themselves to it (Universal Truth No. 2). The formula he arrives at was penned by Emile Zola. It goes: Art is important; it gives us a piece of nature seen through a temperament. Nature in the Sherman case would be of a somewhat technological kind, namely, the original film role, which Sherman would pass through the temperament of her own memory and projection; she would externalize this observed and felt bit of the world, and her work of art—the externalization of these emotions—would be her expression, with which we as viewers can empathize. Art = Emotion relayed through nature. That's the myth, and that's why the critic has to produce—no matter through what process of self-deception or hallucination—the "original," the bit of nature, the filmic heroine in her role. That's what it's like to be a myth-consumer. To buy the pitch. To fail to look under the hood.

What, then, is under the hood?

What is always under the hood is the signifier, the material whose very articulation conditions the signified. And further, working away under the hood, either *on* or *with* the signifier, is the effort perhaps to limit the possibility that it might produce a multiplicity of unstable signifieds and promote a "sliding," or blurring among them or, on the other hand, to do the reverse and welcome or even facilitate such sliding. Limitation is the work of realism in novels and films: to every signifier, one and only one signified.[5] Conversely, sliding and proliferation of meanings have always interested the anti-realist (what used to be called the *avant-garde*) artist.[6]

Work on the signifier is perfectly available for observation in Sherman's Untitled Film Stills. Take the group of images that includes #21, #22, and #23 (pages 29–31). Sherman wears the same costume, a dark, tailored suit with a white collar and a small, straw cloche pulled over a mop of short blond curls. But everything else changes from one still to the next: in the first, #21, the register is close-up taken at a low angle; in the second, #22, a long-shot posits the character amidst a complication of architectural detail and the cross-fire of sun and shadow; in the last, #23, the figure is framed in a medium-shot at the far right side of the image against the darkened emptiness of an undefined city street and flattened by the use of a wide-angle lens. And with each reframing and each new depth-of-field and each new condition of luminosity, "the character" transmogrifies, moving from type to type and from movie to movie. From #21 and the Hitchcock heroine to #23 and the hardened, *film noir* dame, there is no "acting" involved.[7] Almost every single bit of the character, which is to say of each of the three different characters, is a function only of work on the signifier: the various things that in film make up a photographic style.

It was just this that Judith Williamson, one of the first feminist writers to embrace Sherman's work, described when she said that in the Untitled Film Stills, "We are constantly forced to recognize a visual style (often you could name the director) simultaneously with a type of femininity. The two cannot be pulled apart. The image suggests that there is a particular kind of femininity in the *woman* we see, whereas in fact the femininity is in the image itself, it *is* the image."[8]

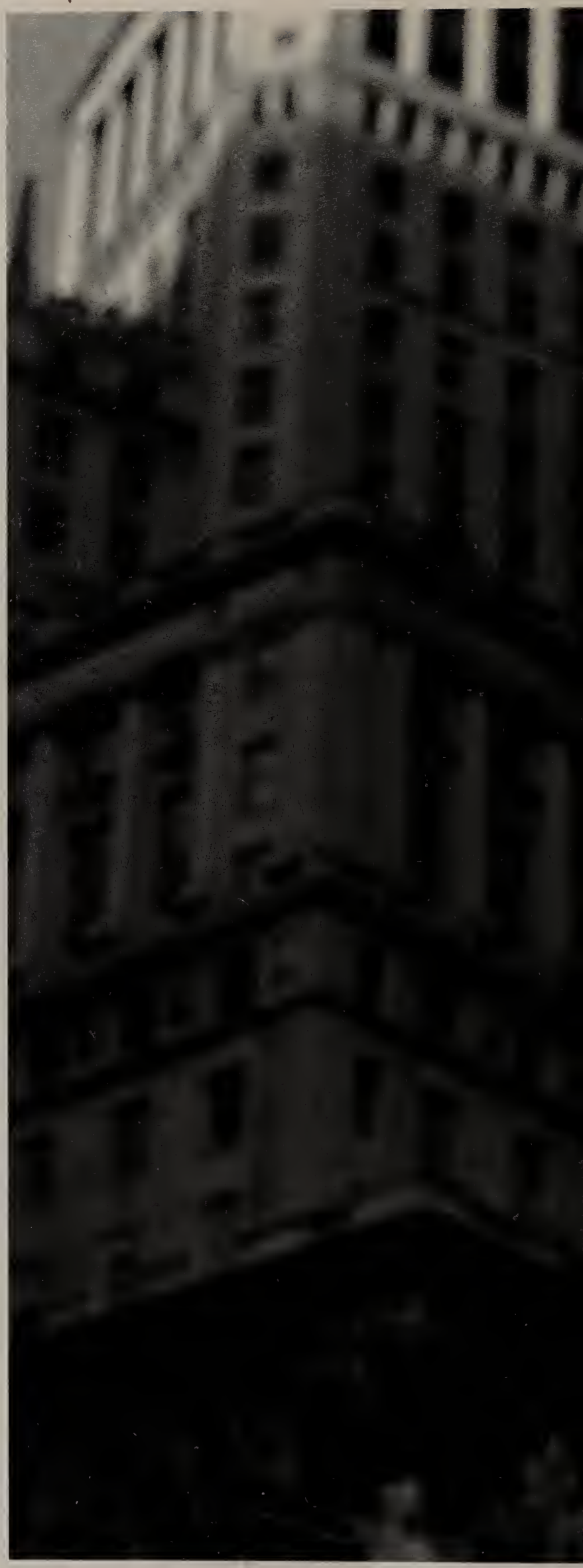
5. Rosalind Coward and John Ellis, *Language and Materialism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), pp. 43–44, 47.

6. In invoking the metaphor of the used car salesman and the buyer who does or doesn't look under the hood, I am perhaps implying that the myth's manipulation of signifiers and signified is somehow concealed. But it is important to emphasize that it is wholly visible, out in the open. As Barthes says: "This is why myth is experienced as innocent speech: not because its intentions are hidden—if they were hidden, they could not be efficacious—but because they are naturalized" (*Mythologies*, p. 131).

7. Another similar series, not sequential in a narrative sense but simply grouped around the same costume—is comprised by STILLS #17–20.

8. Judith Williamson, "Images of 'Woman,'" *Screen*, vol. 24 (November 1983), p. 102; she quotes Jean-Louis Baudry, "The Mask," *Afterimage*, no. 5 (Spring 1974), p. 27.

Untitled Film Still, # 22, 1978



Untitled Film Still, # 23, 1978

Untitled Film Still, # 21, 1978

That there is no free-standing character, so to speak, but only a concatenation of signifiers so that the persona is released—conceived, embodied, established—by the very act of cutting out the signifiers, making "her" a pure function of framing, lighting, distance, camera angle, is what you find when you look under the hood. And Sherman as de-myth-ifier is specifically allowing us, encouraging us to look under the hood. Even as she is also showing us the tremendous temptation to buy into the myth, to accept the signified as finished fact, as free-standing figure, as "character." Thus there is the tendency when speaking of the Film Stills to enumerate their personae, either the roles—"a woman walking down a dark street at night; another, scantily clad, with martini in hand, peering out the sliding glass door of a cheap motel"[9]—or the actresses who project them—Gina Lollabrigida, Monica Viti, Barbara Bel Geddes, Lana Turner. . . .

That neither the roles nor the actresses are free-standing, that all are, within representation, effects—outcomes, functions—of the signifiers that body them forth is what Barthes labored to demonstrate in his extraordinary book *S/Z*, an analysis of the inner workings of literary realism. Showing that each "character" is produced through a concatenation of separate codes—some the signifiers or operators of difference, whether of gender (male/female) or age (young/old) or position (rich/poor); others the operators of references to general knowledge keyed into the text by the merest aside (". . . as in the Arabian Nights"); still others the operators of the puzzle that drives the narrative forward towards its Truth (who is? what is?)—Barthes makes clear that when a name finally arrives to refer to or denote a character, that name is buoyed up, carried along, by the underlying babble of the codes.[10] The name is thus the signified—the character—that the author slides onto the codes to produce realism's appearance, in which for every name there is a referent, a denotation, a unified empirical fact. What is being masked is that the name, rather than pointing to a primary entity in the "real," is an effect of the vast already-written, already-heard, already-read of the codes; it, the denotation, is merely the last of these codes to be slipped into place. The consumer of realist fiction, however, buys the pitch and believes in the "character," believes in the substance of the person from whom all the rest seems to follow as a set of necessary attributes—believes, that is, in the myth.

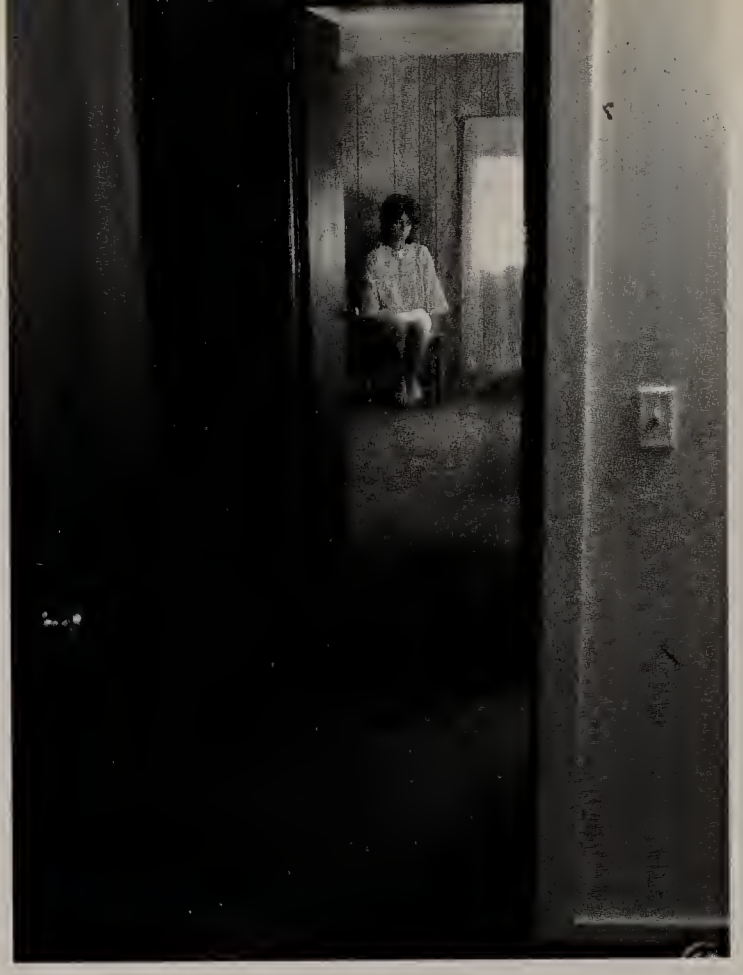
In 1981, when Sherman had her first one-person exhibition, there was a small group of critics who were prepared to receive work that focused on the media production of reality and the disappearance of the artist's "persona" behind the mask of the stereotype. For this reason, these critics welcomed the vehicle Sherman was using because photography was itself the very medium of the image world's production of the stereotype, and so photography, shorn of its associations to the "fine print" and dragging its relations to mass-culture behind it, breached the walls of the art world in a revolution that belonged to Sherman's artistic generation. Barthes's own vaunted notion of "the death of the author" had informed the universe of this critical dialogue, and Sherman, an artist who had come to New York in 1977 directly from majoring in art at SUNY, Buffalo, could be seen to address the very issues Barthes raised in his "mythology." But this initial reception, forged in the pages of little art magazines, soon paled in the face of a larger, more massive enthusiasm for the young artist's work. And it is in that massive, popular-press embrace, that Sherman, the de-myth-ifier, is reconsumed as myth.

9. Lisa Phillips, *Cindy Sherman* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1987), p. 14.

10. Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974): "What gives the illusion that the sum is supplemented by a precious remainder (something like *individuality*, in that, qualitative and ineffable, it may escape the vulgar bookkeeping of compositional characters) is the Proper Name, the difference completed by what is *proper* to it. The proper name enables the person to exist outside the semes, whose sum nonetheless constitutes it entirely" (p. 191).

Untitled Film Still, # 27, 1979

Untitled Film Still, # 40, 1979



Most of these later critics who have written about the Untitled Film Stills acknowledge that Sherman is manipulating stereotypes and that though these are being relayed through a generalized matrix of filmic portrayals and projections, there is of course no real film, no "original," to which any one of them is actually referring. So the myth-consumer of my opening anecdote is something of an exception and in that sense a straw man. And yet we have not far to look to find other versions of myth-consumption, or the direct connection to the signified-as-instance.

One form of this that can be found in the mountainous literature on Sherman's work is to assume that each of these signifieds is being offered as an instance of Sherman's own deeper self—the artist (as in Universal Truth No. 2, above) becoming the vehicle through which the fullness of humanity might be both projected and embraced in all its aspects. Peter Schjeldahl, for example, understands the individual Film Still's signified to be Sherman's "fantasy of herself in a certain role, redolent usually of some movie memory," with all the different characters resonating together to form the totality of the artist's selfhood in her oracular role as "our" representative:

> Sherman's special genius has been to locate the oracle not in the "out there" of media bombardment but in the "in here" of her own partly conditioned, partly original mind—a dense, rich sediment of half-remembered, half-dreamed image tones and fragments. . . . She has mined this sediment for ideas, creating an array of new, transpersonal images that spark across the gap between self and culture.[11]

The mythic content Schjeldahl then consumes from these instances of the self-as-oracle is that it is in the nature of the artist to organize "messages that seem to tell us our nature and our fate."

11. *Cindy Sherman*, Whitney Museum, p. 8.

Untitled Film Still, # 82, 1979

Untitled Film Still, # 3, 1977

Untitled Film Still, # 63, 1980

Untitled Film Still, # 32, 1979

40.

Untitled Film Still, #16, 1978

Another, more subtle form of myth-consumption, continuing to buy into the "character," is to see the multiplicity of these roles as various forms of what Arthur Danto seems to like to call "The Girl." He provides his own roll call of these variants: The Girl in Trouble, The Girl Detective, The Girl We Left Behind, Daddy's Brave Girl, Somebody's Stenographer, Girl Friday, The Girl Next Door, The Whore with the Golden Heart. . . . But his point is that "the Girl is an allegory for something deeper and darker, in the mythic unconscious of everyone, regardless of sex. . . . Each of the stills is about The Girl in Trouble, but in the aggregate they touch the myth we each carry out of childhood, of danger, love and security that defines the human condition."[12] Although Danto turns here to the term *myth*, he uses it not in the manner of the de-myth-ifier, but as the unsuspicious myth-consumer: buying into the signified of every variant of The Girl, as an instance of the myth that there is a shared fantasy, or what he himself provides by way of mythic content as "the common cultural mind."

. . . IT IS NECESSARY TO FLY IN THE FACE OF SHERMAN'S OWN EXPRESSSLY NON-, EVEN ANTI-, THEORETICAL STANCE.[13]

Laura Mulvey

Not surprisingly, given the fact that Sherman's Untitled Film Stills focus exclusively on women, on the roles women play in films, on the nature of those roles as pre-set, congealed, cultural clichés—hence their designation as "stereotype"—and, by implication, on the pall that the real-world pressure to fill these roles casts over the fates of individual women, feminist writers have embraced Sherman's art, seeing it as "inseparable from the analyses—-and the challenge—of feminist work on representation." But even as they have done so, they have been disgusted by its consumption as myth. For such consumption, they point out, inverts the terms of Sherman's work, taking the very thing she is holding up for critical inspection and transposing it into the grounds of praise.[14]

Arguing that there is, however, a logic—no matter how perverse —behind such a transposition, feminist photography critic Abigail Solomon-Godeau sees a mechanism at work there to re-cut Sherman's art by exchanging what is dismissed as the narrow, somewhat threadbare cloth of feminist investigation for the more noble garments that drape the artist who addresses "the common cultural mind." This, she reasons, is necessary to the art world's promotion of Sherman to the status of major artist, and as such is something incompatible with a feminist understanding of her enterprise. Therefore, as an apparatus of promotion (in both the media and museums) has supplanted other kinds of writing about Sherman, the mythical reading of the meaning of her work has followed. And thus it is no accident that Danto, for example, would need to recast the import of the Film Stills by insisting that they "are not in my view merely feminist parables."[15]

But it must be said that within feminism itself the import of the Stills has also been recast. For if Judith Williamson's early treatment of the Film Stills had appeared under the title "Images of Woman," Solomon-Godeau eight years later transposes this to "woman-as-image," and signals to the reader the importance of this distinction.[16]

12. Arthur Danto, *Untitled Film Stills: Cindy Sherman* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), p. 14.

13. Laura Mulvey, "A Phantasmagoria of the Female Body: The Work of Cindy Sherman," *New Left Review*, no. 188 (July/August 1991), p. 137.

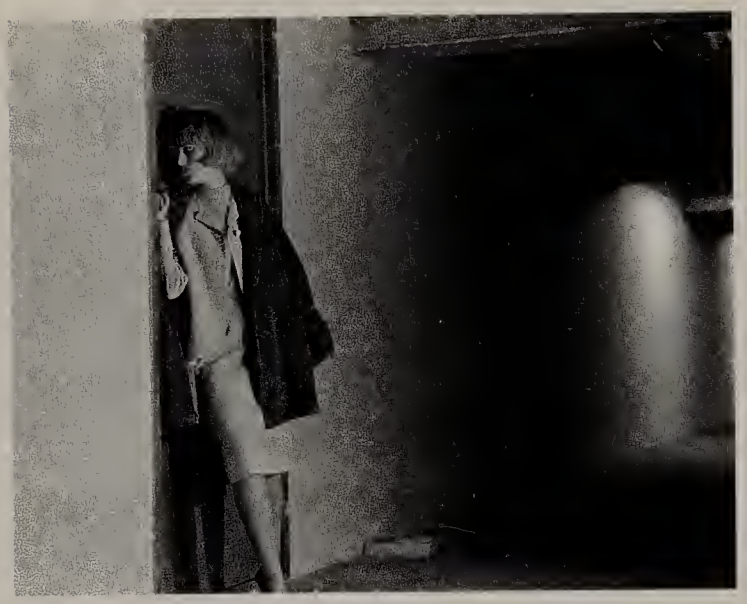
14. Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Suitable for Framing: The Critical Recasting of Cindy Sherman," *Parkett*, no. 29 (1991), p. 112.

15. Danto, *Untitled Film Stills*, p. 14.

16. Solomon-Godeau, p. 115.

Untitled Film Still, # 35, 1979

Untitled Film Still, # 57, 1980



Indeed, almost two decades of work on the place of woman within representation has put this shift into effect, so that a whole domain of discourse no longer conceives of stereotype as a kind of mass-media mistake, a set of cheap costumes women might put on or cast aside. Rather stereotype—itself rebaptized now as "masquerade," and here understood as a psychoanalytic term—is thought of as the phenomenon to which all women are submitted both inside and outside representation, so that as far as femininity goes, there is nothing *but* costume. Representation itself—films, advertisements, novels, etc. —would thus be part of a far more absolute set of mechanisms by which characters are constructed: constructed equally in life as in film, or rather, equally in film because as in life. And in this logic woman is nothing but masquerade, nothing but image. Feminist filmmaker and theorist Laura Mulvey has described this shift:

> The initial idea that images contributed to women's alienation from their bodies and from their sexuality, with an attendant hope of liberation and recuperation, gave way to theories of representation as symptom and signifier of the way problems posed by sexual difference under patriarchy could be displaced onto the feminine.[17]

It was Mulvey's own 1975 text, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," that most formatively set out that latter argument, in which woman is constructed as spectacle and symptom, becoming the passive object of a male gaze. Which is to say that in her essay a relation is set up among three terms: (1) the observation that there are gender distinctions between the roles that men and women play in films—males being the agents of the narrative's action; females being the passive objects or targets of that narrative, often interrupting the (masculine) action by the stasis of a moment of formal (feminine) opulence; (2) the conception that there is a gender assignment for the viewers of films, one that is unrelentingly male since the very situation of filmic viewing is structured as voyeuristic and fetishistic, its source of pleasure being essentially an eroticization of fetishism—"the determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly," she writes; (3) that these assignments of role are a function of the psychic underpinnings of all men and women, since they reflect the truths about the unconscious construction of gendered identity that psychoanalysis has brought to light: "Woman . . . stands in patriarchal culture as signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command, by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning."[18]

17. Mulvey, "Phantasmagoria," p. 139.

18. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* (1975); republished in Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1989), p. 15.

Untitled Film Still, # 4, 1977

Untitled Film Still, # 34, 1979

Untitled Film Still, # 47, 1979

48.

Untitled Film Still, # 25, 1978

In that last sentence, which slides from the domain of filmic representations to the universal condition of how "woman stands in patriarchal culture," there are packed a large number of theoretical assumptions that knot together around concepts about the unconscious, castration, and the import of structural linguistics for psychoanalysis. Insofar as Sherman's work is implicated in those assumptions and the analysis about woman-as-image that flows from them—the Film Stills, for example, repeatedly presented as either a text to be explained by this analysis and/or a consequence of it—it is necessary to unpack these assumptions, no matter how schematically.

The psychic economy that drives men to activity and speech and women to passivity and silence is an economy that also separates looking from being looked at, spectator from spectacle. And that economy is organized, according to this reading of psychoanalysis, around castration anxiety, which is to say in terms of an event through which the child is made aware of sexual difference and, in one and the same moment, socialized by being subordinated to parental law. And if difference and the law converge in a single psychic configuration, they do so in relation to a visual event in which the possibility of absence is verified in the body of the "castrated" mother, the woman from whose genitals the phallus can be seen to be absent.[19] Siding with the paternal law, the child chooses speech, for which the master signifier is now the emblem of difference itself: the phallic signifier, the signifier as phallus.

It is in this sense that Mulvey refers to the male as maker of meaning in contrast to woman as bearer of meaning, a bearer now because the lack she is seen as manifesting on her own body, insofar as it sets up the phallus as signifier—which is to say a differential function through which the play of meaning now operates—this lack is necessary to the social system of order and sense to which Mulvey gives, following Jacques Lacan, the name Symbolic.[20] Thus she writes, "An idea of woman stands as linchpin to the system: it is her lack that produces the phallus as a symbolic presence, it is her desire to make good the lack that the phallus signifies."[21]

19. The sequence of texts in which Freud develops this scenario begins with "Infantile Genital Organization of the Libido" (1923), "The passing of the Oedipus-Complex" (1924), and "Female Sexuality", (1931). In the 1925 essay, "Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Differences between the Sexes," the scenario takes a different form, for it stresses the sense in which meaning does not arise in the presence of the visual field but is only retrojected on it as a result of a verbal prohibition: "When a little boy first catches sight of a girl's genital region, he begins by showing irresolution and lack of interest; he sees nothing or disowns what he has seen. . . . It is not until later, when some threat of castration has obtained a hold upon him, that the observation becomes important to him: if he then recollects or repeats it, it arouses a terrible storm of emotion in him and forces him to believe in the reality of the threat."

20. In their introductory essays, Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose present the development from the scenic event described by Freud to its subsequent semiological elaboration by Lacan: *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne*, eds. Juliet Michell and Jacqueline Rose (New York: Norton, 1982).

21. Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure," p. 14.

Untitled Film Still, # 10, 1978

50.

Untitled Film Still, # 30, 1979

Untitled Film Still, # 9, 1978

If the economy of sexual difference sets up a division of labor in relation to language, it also produces a separation of roles, it is argued, in relation to vision. On the one hand cinematic pleasure is scopophilic, voyeuristic: it wants to see and to control its objects of sight—but at a distance, protected by its own remove in the dark and at a point of vantage that perspective triangulates for it, the occupant of this point guaranteed, through this visually unified position of control, a sense of its own (phallic) mastery. On the other hand this pleasure is put in jeopardy by the very image of the woman it wishes to master insofar as that woman is marked as well as the bearer of the threat of castration. Thus it is necessary for this spectator to convoke the psychic mechanism of denial, for which the classic psychoanalytic instance is fetishism: the male child entering a perversion in which he sees the proof of sexual difference but continues nonetheless to believe in the woman as "whole," not-castrated: the phallic mother. The fetish constructed through this mechanism of denial thus restores to her body what is known to be "missing."

If film works constantly to re-create woman as a symptom of man's castration anxiety—thus silencing her—it also works, and here even harder, to situate her as eroticized fetish: the image of lack papered over, the emblem of wholeness restored. Woman is in this sense skewered in place as an image that simultaneously establishes her as other than man—the Truth that it is he who possesses the phallus—and at the same time the fetishized image of the whole body from which nothing is missing.

Stephen Heath describes this visual scenario from the point of view of the gazing male subject—"Everything turns on the castration complex and the central phallus, its visibility and the spectacle of lack; the subject, as Lacan puts it at one point, 'looks at itself in its sexual member'"—and then for the consequences for the woman secured as spectacle:

> What the voyeur seeks, poses, is not the phallus on the body of the other but its absence as the definition of the mastering presence, the security, of his position, his seeing, his phallus; the desire is for the other to be spectacle not subject, or only the subject of that same desire, its exact echo. . . . Fetishism too, which often involves the scopophilic drive, has its scenario of the spectacle of castration; and where what is at stake is not to assert that the woman has the penis-phallus but to believe in the intact, to hold that the woman is not castrated, that nothing is lost, that his representation, and of him, works. Always, from voyeurism to fetishism, the eroticization of castration.[22]

It is with this theoretical armature in place, then, that Laura Mulvey herself looks at the Film Stills, understanding them to be rehearsing this structure of the male gaze, of the voyeurist constructing the woman in endless repetitions of her vulnerability and his control: "The camera looks; it 'captures' the female character in a parody of different voyeurisms. It intrudes into moments in which she is unguarded, sometimes undressed, absorbed into her own world in the privacy of her own environment. Or it witnesses a moment in which her guard drops as she is suddenly startled by a presence, unseen and off-screen, watching her."[23]

22. Stephen Heath, "Difference," *Screen*, no. 19 (Autumn 1978), p. 89.

23. Mulvey, "Phantasmagoria," p. 141.

Untitled Film Still, # 37, 1979

54.

Untitled Film Still, # 11, 1978

Untitled Film Still, # 83, 1980

Untitled Film Stills, #39, 1979; #81, 1978; and #36, 1979

Edgar Degas, *Posed Ballerina*. Positive and negative versions, c.1895. Bibliothèque nationale, Paris.

And yet, we could say, it is this very theoretical armature that operates in such a description to put a mythic reading of the Untitled Film Stills in place, one that is not taking the trouble, indeed, to look under the hood. Judith Williamson had seen the constructed filmic role emerge in the Stills as a consequence of the signifiers through which any filmic image must be built—"the two cannot be pulled apart," she had written; Laura Mulvey, on the other hand, is buying into a signified-as-instance, a congealed sign, the semantic totality that reads "woman-as-image," or again, "woman as object of the male gaze."

Sherman, of course, has a whole repertory of women being watched. From the very outset of her project, in Untitled Film Still, #2, of 1977, she set up the sign of the unseen intruder. A young girl draped in a towel stands before her bathroom mirror, touching her shoulder and following her own gesture in its reflected image. A door jam to the left of the frame places the "viewer" outside this room. But what is far more significant is that this viewer is constructed as a hidden watcher by means of the signifier that reads as graininess, a diffusion of the image that constructs the signified—the concept of distance —a severing of the psychic space of the watcher from that of the watched and of the camera's concomitant construction of the watcher for whom it is proxy. In Untitled Film Still, #39, of 1979, it is not so much the grain of the emulsion that establishes the voyeuristic remove, with its sense that one is stealing up on the woman, as it is a kind of nimbus that washes around the frame of the image, repeating in the register of light the sense of barrier that the door frame constructs in the world of physical objects.

But in Untitled Film Still, #81, of 1978, there is a remarkably sharp depth of field, so that such /distance/ is gone, despite the fact that doorways are once again an obtrusive part of the image, implying that the viewer is gazing at the woman from outside the space she occupies. As in the other cases, the woman appears to be in a bathroom and once again she is scantily dressed, wearing only a thin nightgown. Yet the continuity established by the focal length of the lens creates an unimpeachable sense that her look at herself in the mirror reaches past her reflection to include the viewer as well. Which is to say that as opposed to the idea of /distance/, there is here the signified /connection/, and what is further cut out as the signified at the level of narrative is a woman chatting to someone (perhaps another woman) in the room outside her bathroom as she is preparing for bed.

The narrative impact of these images tends to submerge the elements through which the situation is constructed, elements such as depth-of-field, grain, light, etc., which, it would seem, are too easy to dismiss as merely "formal" integers, whereas they function as signifiers crucial to the semantic effect. That Sherman is concentrated on these aspects is made very palpable in the one Film Still that seems inexplicable within the series as a whole: Untitled Film Still, #36, of 1979. Of all the Film Stills this one is so severely backlit that nothing can be seen of the character's face and almost nothing of her body beyond its silhouette. Standing in front of a curtain through which the powerful backlighting is dramatically diffused, she extends one of her arms upward, almost out of the frame; the other bends to grasp the elbow of the first in what could be a gesture of washing but remains radically ambiguous. As pattern, her body reads black on the white of the ground, and her garments—the bodice of her slip and the stiffened film of a crinoline—parted slightly from her

Untitled Film Still, # 2, 1977

58.

Untitled Film Still, # 50, 1979

60.

Untitled Film Still, # 46, 1979

body, create the only area of modulation or middle tone in the image. To a far greater degree than almost any other in the series, this work is deprived of narrative implication.

A few months prior to the making of this Film Still, an image—or rather two images—remarkably like it were published: two photographs by Edgar Degas (page 56) of a ballerina dressed in a low-cut bodice, her skirt a diaphanous crinoline, standing in front of a luminous curtain and reaching with one arm upward, her other arm bent inward at the elbow. These photographs, published by a critic who just a few months later would launch Sherman in an essay called "Pictures," an article providing the first serious critical context for her work (Sherman's first solo exhibition was still one year away), are related to one another through an extraordinary ambiguity with regard to light.[24] For having solarized the negative of his photograph to create reversals between negative and positive areas within the image, Degas then created both a negative and a positive print. And the dark/light reversals that arise from this treatment constitute the dancer as a phantom whose existence can be located nowhere. As the critic Douglas Crimp described:

> In the print in which the right arm and torso of the dancer appears to be normally positive, the shadow of the arm on the wall she grasps appears as a streak of light. Her face, also apparently in shadow, and her "dark" hair are registered as light. At this point, obviously, language begins to fail. How can we any longer speak of light and dark? How can we speak of a white shadow? a dark highlight? a translucent shoulder blade? When light and dark, transparency and opacity, are reversed, when negative becomes positive and positive, negative, the referents of our descriptive language are dissolved. We are left with a language germane only to the photographic, in which the manipulation of light generates its own, exclusive logic.[25]

And in the publication of the twinned Degas photographs, the same dancer turns to confront her own mirror image as, flipped from negative to positive, she is also flipped left and right. Folded in a way almost impossible to imagine around the axis of her own body, that body is folded as well around a ghostly condition of luminosity that produces it now as solid, now as if in X ray.

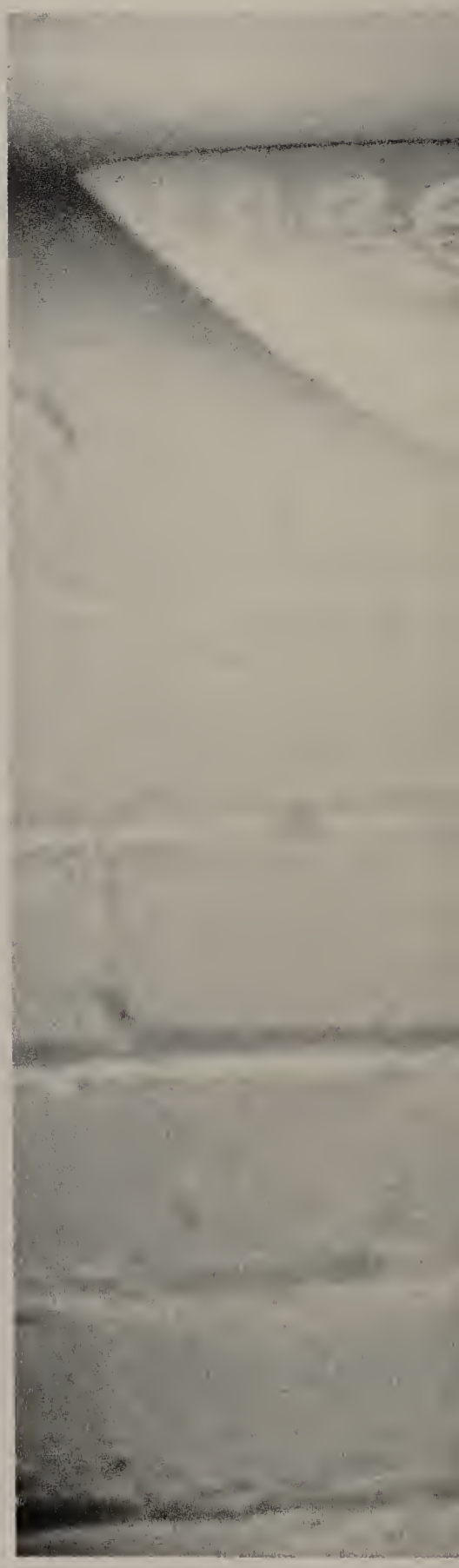
Sherman's Untitled Film Still, #36, has the aura of this impossibly folded Degas dancer, turning in a light that has no focus, and indeed no possible external point of view. Perhaps in its condition of being *hors série* the Film Still was addressed, imaginatively, to Crimp; but such an address has nothing in it of the theorization of "the male gaze" and the psycho-politics of sadistic control.

If anything, it may have been a personal form of acknowledgment of the importance of the emergent discourse on postmodernism—within which Crimp was a significant voice—a critical discourse that would recognize her work so quickly and make a place for it in which it and the effect of certain newly adopted critical terms—"death of the author," "simulacrum"—would soon become synonymous.

Further, as we will see, the kind of backlighting in Untitled Film Still, #36, and all that it does to fragment the gaze, will emerge as a crucial element—or signifier—in Sherman's work of the early 1980s. But that is to anticipate somewhat, getting ahead of our story.

24. *Pictures* was the title of an exhibition organized in the fall of 1977 by Douglas Crimp for Artists' Space, New York, which focused on work structured around the issue of replication—work which thereby could bring notions of representation into question. The five artists included Troy Brauntuch, Jack Goldstein, Sherrie Levine, Robert Longo, and Philip Smith. Crimp's connection to these issues continued and issued in an essay that enlarged the circle of "pictures" artists to include Cindy Sherman. See, Douglas Crimp, "Pictures," *October*, no. 8 (Spring 1979), pp. 75–88.

25. Douglas Crimp, "A Note on Degas's Photographs," *October*, no. 5 (Summer 1978), p. 99.



62.

Untitled Film Still, # 33, 1979

Untitled Film Still, # 53, 1980

Untitled Film Still, # 27B, 1979

Untitled Film Still, # 15, 1978

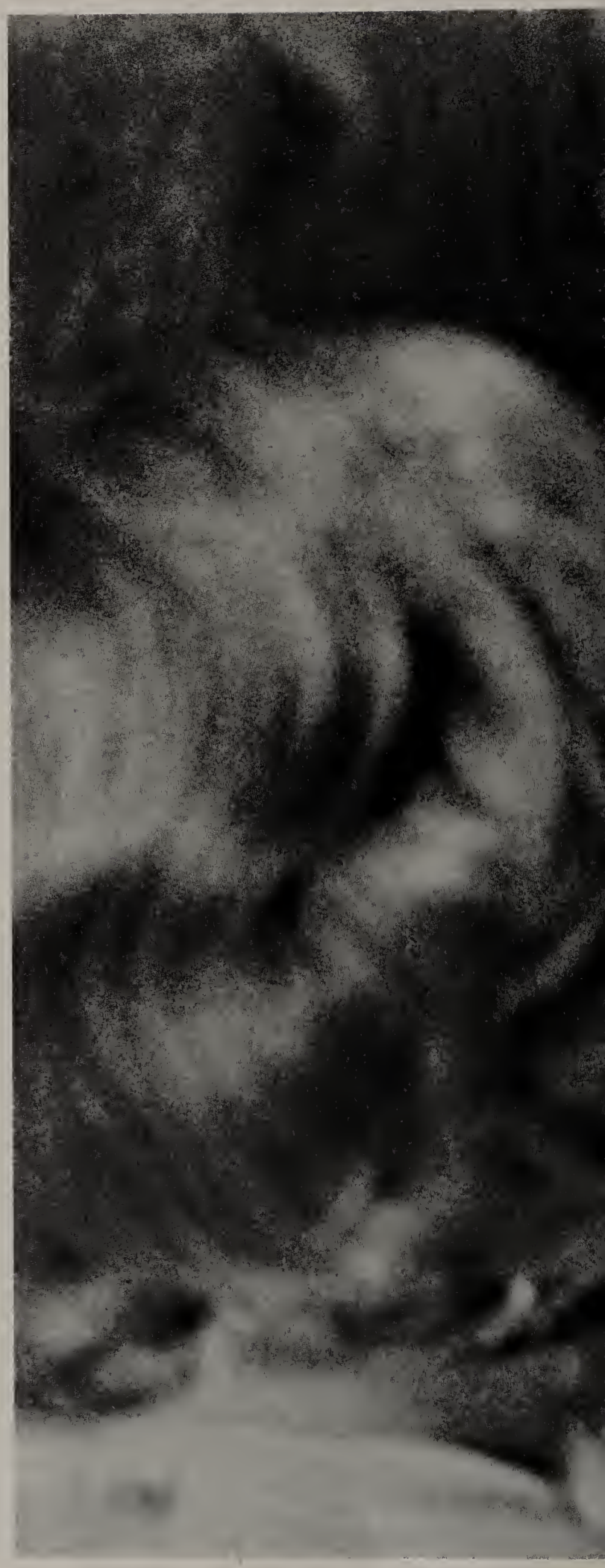
Untitled Film Still, # 8, 1978

Untitled Film Still, # 14, 1978

Untitled Film Still, # 13, 1978

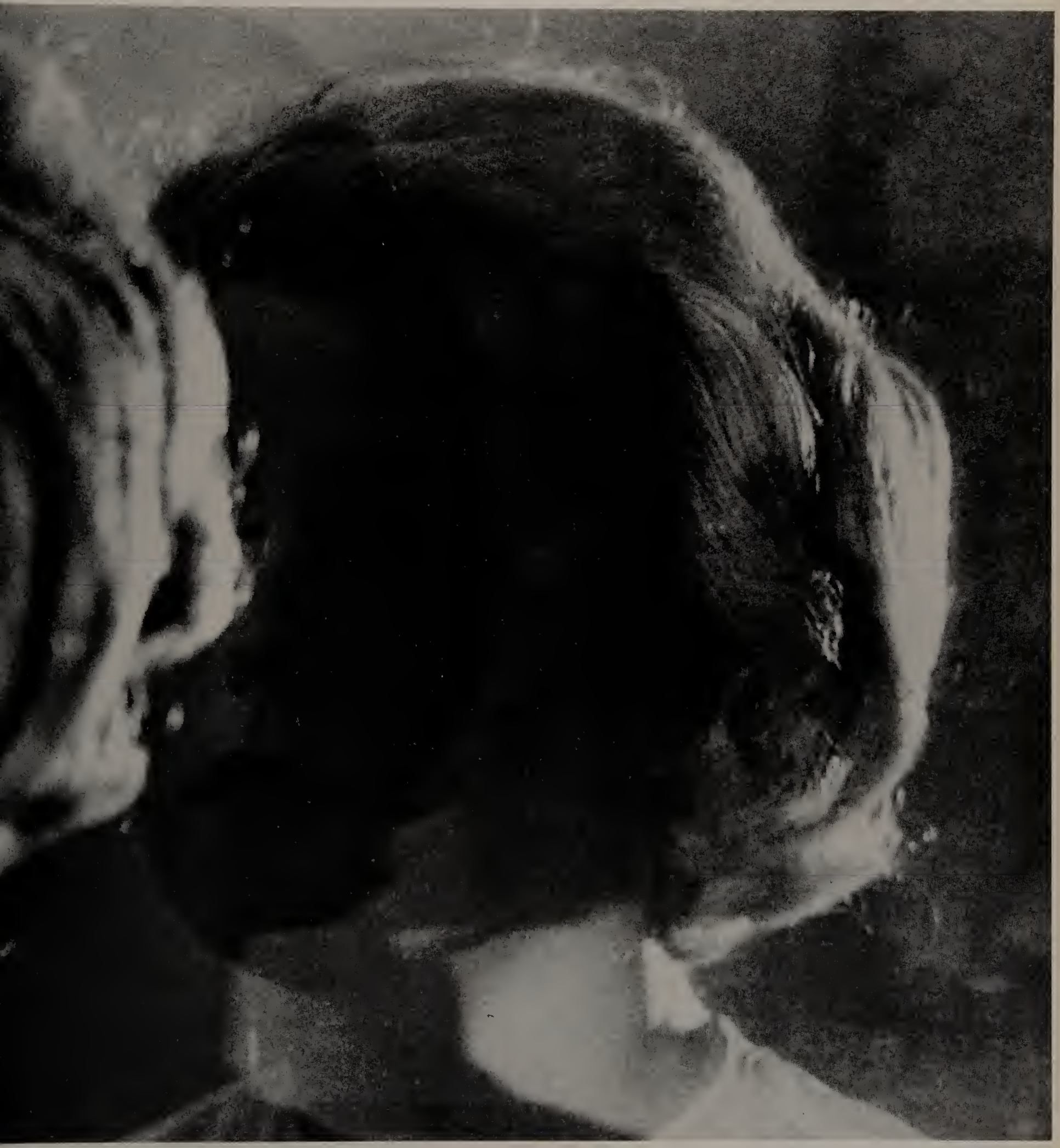

FLAGSTAFF

Untitled Film Still, # 44, 1979



72.

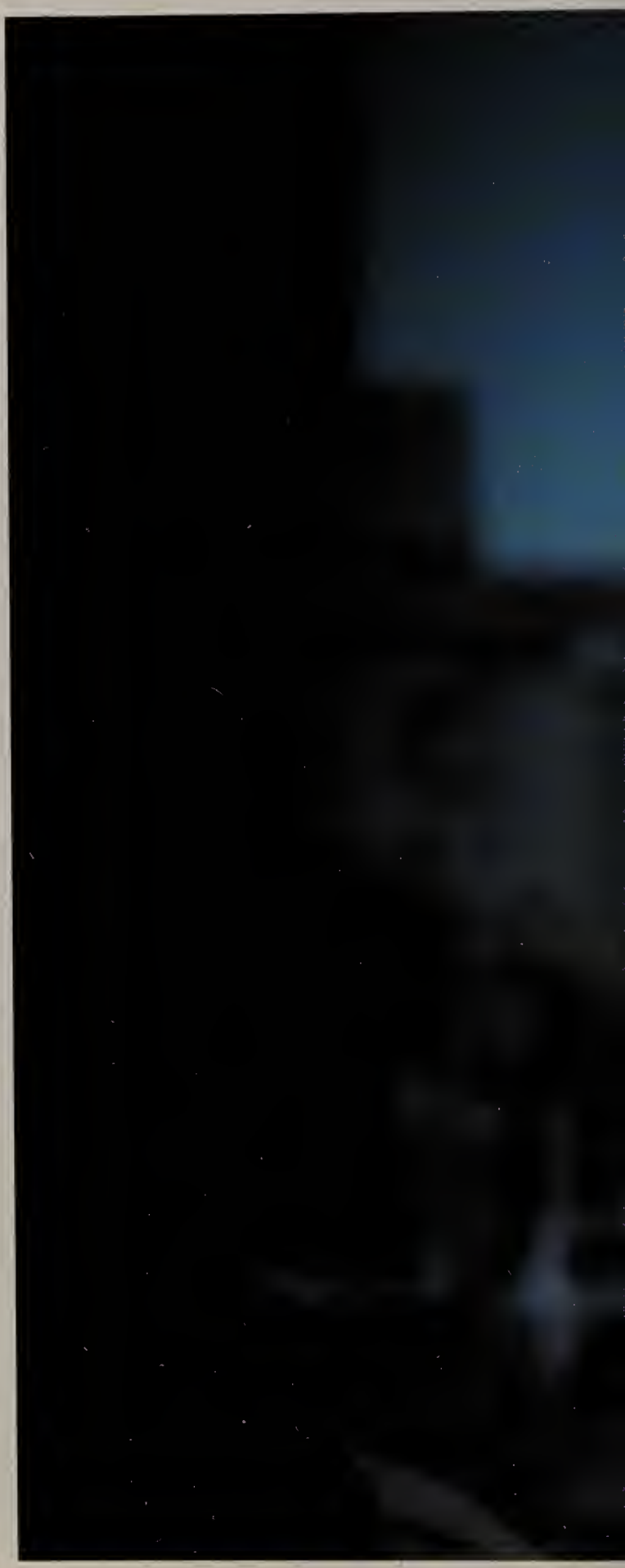
Untitled Film Still, # 60, 1980



Untitled Film Still, # 56, 1980

1980

REAR-SCREEN PROJECTIONS



Untitled, # 68, 1980

Untitled, # 74, 1980

76.

Untitled, # 69, 1980

Untitled, # 70, 1980

78.

Untitled, # 72, 1980

Untitled, # 67, 1980

80.

Untitled, # 66, 1980

Untitled, # 79, 1980

82.

Untitled, # 71, 1980

Untitled, # 76, 1980

1981

CENTERFOLDS

Untitled, # 93, 1981

86.

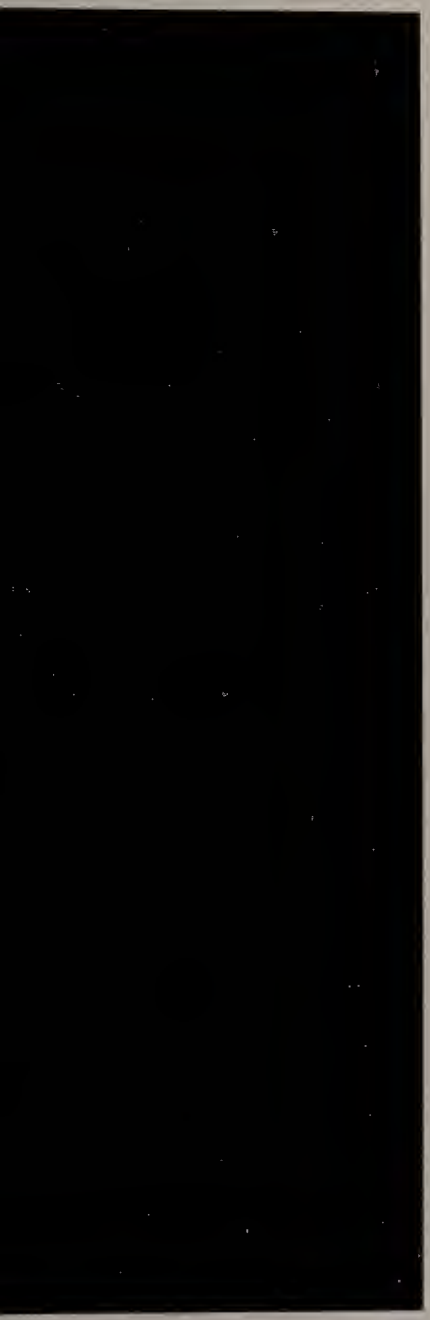
Untitled, # 87, 1981

Untitled, # 92, 1981

2. Centerfolds

THE ONLY THING CINEMASCOPE IS GOOD FOR IS TO FILM SNAKES AND CORPSES.[26]

Jean-Luc Godard



The Untitled Film Stills had been a laboratory for exploring the range of signifiers that go together to produce the look of a given filmic genre or director and thereby to construct a "character," sealing it as the "real" of denotation, which in Barthes's terms, as we've seen, is only the last of the cinematic, connotational codes to be slipped into place. It was from this varied testing ground that Sherman then began to select out a single signifier, so as to concentrate on it.

First, in 1980, this signifier was the special effect of backscreen-projection with its resultant fissure in the image-field: the split it sets up in the experience of density and substance between the three-dimensional character and her flattened, factitious-looking scenic surrounds. Color, which entered Sherman's work at this moment, heightened this distinction.

Then, in 1981, a different signifier, put in place in a series triggered by a commission for a centerfold for *Artforum* magazine, emerged as the central concern.[27] That signifier is point-of-view. And in this group of images that viewpoint, consistent through most of the series and stridently adopted by the camera, is from above, looking down. It is as though the extreme horizontality of the image's format had suggested a corresponding horizontality in the image-field. From being a projection of the viewer looking outward toward a visual field imagined as parallel to the vertical of the upright body of the beholder and his or her plane of vision, the view now slides floorward to declare the field of vision itself as horizontal.

But if this in fact has happened, it has never been registered in the writing that greeted this phase of Sherman's work. Still firmly fixed on the signified, the projected roles—"In several of these, a girl is seen in a state of reverie, daydreaming—we automatically presume since we subliminally recall so many scenes like these from movies and television—about her prospects for romance"[28]—the accounts of the series go straight for the mythic content: Sherman's ability to "get inside her characters"—"What is instantly recognizable in Sherman's new pictures is the universal state of daydream or reverie, the moments of harmless, necessary psychosis that are a recurring mechanism in anyone's mental economy. These are moments when consciousness dissolves back into itself, when wish and reality, personal and collective memory are one and the physical world ceases to exist."[29]

Mulvey, also, focuses on the characters and their interiors: "The young women that Sherman impersonates may be daydreaming about a future romance, or they may be mourning a lost one. They may be waiting, in enforced passivity, for a letter

26. Godard puts this in the mouth of Fritz Lang, in the film *Le Mépris*.

27. Having been so commissioned, Sherman found her submission rejected by *Artforum*'s editor, Ingrid Sischy, who thought that the images she submitted "might be misunderstood." Accordingly neither these, nor Sherman's second idea for the centerfold, the series of herself in a red bathrobe, were published by the magazine.

28. Ken Johnson, "Cindy Sherman and the Anti-Self: An Interpretation of Her Imagery," *Arts* (November 1987), p. 49.

29. Peter Schjeldahl, "Shermanettes," *Art in America* (March 1982), p. 110.

or telephone call. Their eyes gaze into the distance. They are not aware of their clothes, which are sometimes carelessly rumpled, so that, safe alone with their thoughts, their bodies are, slightly, revealed to the viewer." Referring to this effect as "soft-core pastiche" and associating the horizontal format of the images to the shape of a cinemascope screen, Mulvey's reading returns to the woman-as-image question, the construction of the eroticized fetish. "These photographs reiterate the 'to-be-looked-at-ness' of femininity," she writes, pointing to the way the connotations of intimacy both at the level of emotion (daydream, fantasy) and of setting (the bedroom) combine to exude a strong sense of sexuality. And even though the voyeuristic place of the spectator is not marked here, as it has been in the Film Stills, she says, the issue of woman-as-spectacle, woman-as-symptom, has not changed. It has merely been reconditioned to concentrate on the mechanism of masquerade: the posturing projected outward from an empty center. It is in this series, she writes, that the works "start to suggest an interior space, and initiate [Sherman's] exploration inside the masquerade of femininity's interior/exterior binary opposition."[30]

30. Mulvey, "Phantasmagoria," pp. 142–143.

31. Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977), p. 290 (translation modified).

90.

Untitled, # 96, 1981

It was in his essay "The Meaning of the Phallus" that Jacques Lacan had formulated masquerade as this desperate binary, pronouncing: "Paradoxical as this formulation might seem, I would say that it is in order to be the phallus, that is to say, the signifier of the desire of the Other, that a woman will reject an essential part of femininity, namely all its attributes via masquerade."[31] Thus, if femininity is unconsciously constructed —insofar as it is projected as lack, as what is missing and in this sense as symptom of the man—as an essential absence, Lacan describes woman as rejecting that absence, and thus her own "essence," in order to assume the masquerade of wholeness, of the nothing-missing of the fetish. The dance of her "to-be-looked-at-ness" is a veil covering over this nothing, which Lacan elsewhere designates as "not-all"—*pas-tout.*

It is in this same text that Lacan had cautioned that the phallus in being a signifier could not be seen as either a phantasmatic object or a physical organ: "Nor is it as such an object (part, internal, good, bad, etc. . . .) in so far as this term tends to accentuate the reality involved in a relationship. It is even less the organ, penis or clitoris, which it

symbolizes."[32] Instead, as signifier it opposes the signified, and—as in the relationship described by structural linguistics—it "has an active function in determining the effects in which the signifiable appears as submitting to its mark, becoming through that passion the signified."

It is, of course, the human subject who in this sense emerges as "submitting to its mark," emerging as the material through which language itself speaks, "his nature woven by effects in which we can find the structure of language."

Spoken thus by this chain of signifiers, which operate to cut him out as their effect, their signified, the human subject is, then, the subject of this system. In another essay Lacan formulated the rule of this linguistic subject as: $\forall x\ \Phi x$—which reads, *all x is a function of the phallus*, with phallus understood here as the master signifier in the linguistic chain.[33] It is a formulation that announces once again the sense in which the human subject is not its own master but is organized elsewhere, in the place Lacan designates as Other and is occupied by the unconscious, by language, by social law.

But it is also the case that every human subject has an ego, or sense of (autonomous) self, which wants to hold out against that formula and would instead organize itself in other, directly opposing terms: $\exists x\ \Phi x$—which reads, *there is an x that is not a function of the phallus.* This protest is an insistence that there is something that "I really am"—"beneath my surfaces and roles and socializations, beyond my sex and my childhood, away from everything that conspires to keep me from saying what [it is]."[34] For Stephen Melville, writing on Lacanian notions of the subject, the combination (or rather the togetherness-in-opposition) of these two formulations "seems to capture something of the primordial and constitutive alienation that Lacan takes to characterize human being."

32. Ibid., p. 285.

33. These Lacanian "mathemes" appear in *Encore*, Lacan's 1972 Seminar and are published in *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the École Freudienne*, p. 149. Here the mathemes for the female subject are also given: $\exists x\ \Phi x$ (there is no *x* that is not submitted to the phallus); and $\forall x\ \Phi x$ (not all *x* are submitted to the phallus). As Stephen Melville points out, it is from this matheme, which says the "same" thing as does the matheme for the male ego (there is an x that is not submitted to the phallus), but does so indirectly, without the same existential insistence, that Lacan derives the definition of the woman as "not-all": *pas-tout* (see note 34, below, p. 355).

34. Stephen Melville, "Psychoanalysis and the Place of *Jouissance*," *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 13 (Winter 1987), p. 353.

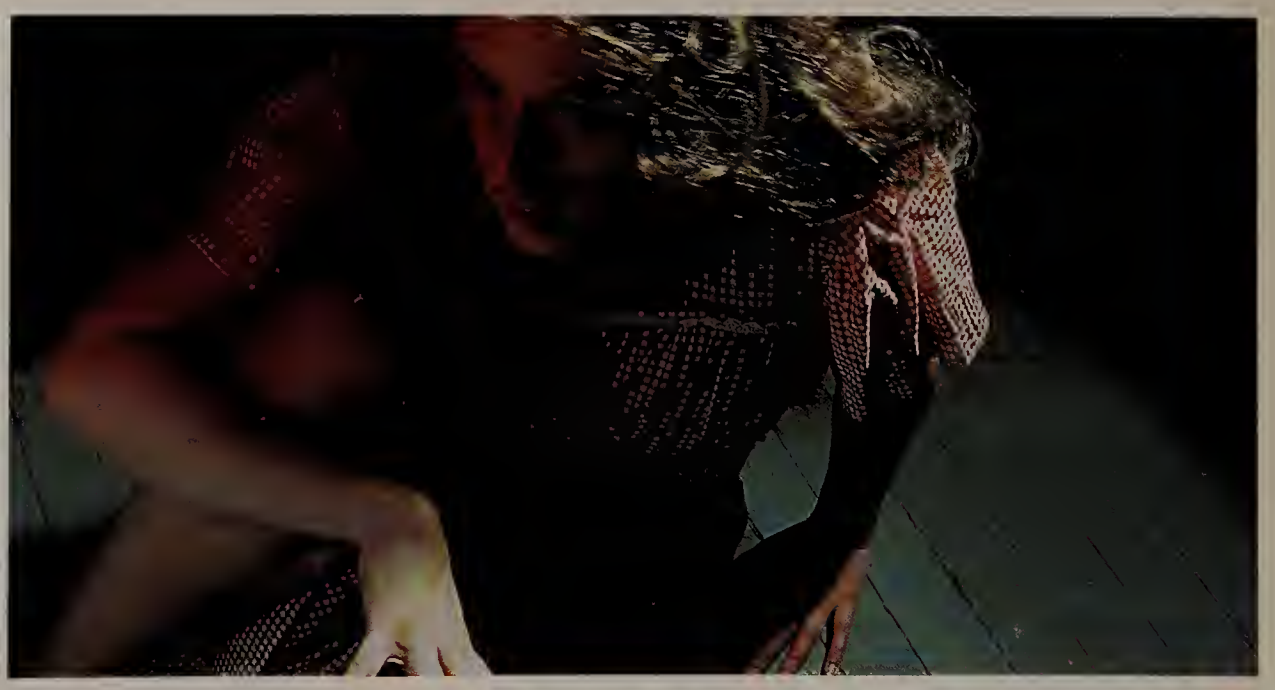
Untitled, # 90, 1981

Now if the ego can insist that "there is an *x*—me!—that is not a function of the phallus," it is because, Lacan argues, that ego has first constituted itself in relation to an image of wholeness, a unitary figure or gestalt, that it has seen in a mirror. And that ego will continue to find instances of wholeness with which to reconstitute the "there is . . ." throughout its existence, one example of which is, of course, the setting up of the woman as fetish, as *pas-tout.* In a certain way this securing of the ego in relation to the confirming instance takes a form that is very like what Barthes had called the interpellant function of myth, the "You see! Here is . . . ." Which is to say that if the subject is no longer the *source* of his own meanings in the field of the symbolic (the chain of signifiers), the very production of meaning generated out there in the field of representation will itself project an image of wholeness (the sign as unit) that will be mirrored back to him as an interpellant fiction. And this will set him up as the unified, although imaginary, recipient of the "You see! . . ."

Now, if I have been rehearsing these theories, so central for the feminist theorization of woman-as-image, it is in order to get a sense of what the mechanisms are that prevent a critic like Mulvey from looking under the hood. It is to be able to speculate on why a certain meaning of the group I will be calling Sherman's "horizontals" would have remained invisible, namely, the one marked /horizontal/.

Yet all we have to do is to focus on the insistent verticalization inscribed by all the metaphors that circulate through the Lacanian universe of the subject —the vertical of the mirror, the vertical of the veil, the vertical of the phallus as instance of wholeness, the vertical of the field of the fetish, the vertical of the plane of beauty—to sense why the horizontal is forced to recede from view when one's eyes are fixed on this theory.

Wherever Sherman's eyes are in relation to this or any theory, they are certainly attuned to the givens of her own field of operations, which is to say both high art and mass media. And in that field vertical and horizontal are exceedingly over-determined. If the vertical is the axis of painting, the axis in which the picture orients itself to the wall, it is also, as we have seen, the axis of the plane of vision. That plane, which the Gestalt psychologists characterize as insistently "fronto-parallel" to the upright body of the viewer, is as well, they tell us, the plane of *Prégnanz*, by which they mean the hanging together or coherence of form. Thus the very drive of vision to formulate form, to project coherence in a mirroring



Untitled, # 85, 1981

of the body's own shape, will already mark even the empty vertical plane as a reflection of that body, heavier at the bottom, lighter at the top, and with a different orientation from right side to left. And conversely any location of form—of shape or of figure—will assume its place in an axis that is imaginatively vertical, even if we confront it on the page of the magazine we hold on our laps or in the tiles of the mosaic that lies under our feet.

Further, this vertical dimension, in being the axis of form, is also the axis of beauty. That is what Freud adds to the Gestaltists' picture: in that period in his evolution when man finally stood up, he left the world of sniffing and pawing, with nose pressed to genitals, and entered the world of vision in which objects were now experienced from a distance. And in this distancing his carnal instincts were *sublimated*, Freud writes, reorganized away from the organ world of the horizontal and into the formal

35. Freud's discussions of man's assumption of an erect posture as the first step toward culture and as making possible a sublimated visuality are in "Civilization and Its Discontents" (1930), *Standard Edition*, vol 21, pp. 99–100; and "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" (1905), *Standard Edition*, vol. 7, pp. 156–157. The Gestalt psychological interpretation of the upright posture is from Erwin Straus, "Born to See, Bound to Behold: Reflections on the Function of Upright Posture in the Aesthetic Attitude," in *The Philosophy of the Body*, ed. Stuart Spicker (New York: Quadrangle, 1970), pp. 334–359.

Untitled, # 86, 1981

world of the vertical, which is to say, of the beautiful.[35]

It was not just modernist painting, which formed part of Sherman's heritage as an artist, that insisted on this verticality—and its effect of sublimation; it was also the media universe of movies and television and advertising that declared it. And these two fields, so seemingly inimical to one another, had a bizarrely complementary relation to this effect of sublimation. If the media's fetish occupied the axis of the vertical, that very axis had itself become the fetish of high art.

During the 1960s and 1970s, however, a series of blows had been struck against this fetish. There were, to take only one example, a group of readings of the work of Jackson Pollock—that work itself a dominant emblem of the sublimatory condition of the vertical, optically conditioned, pictorial field—by means of which Pollock's

painting was defiantly reinterpreted as horizontal. This was true of Andy Warhol's *Oxidation* paintings, through which Warhol read Pollock's dripped pictures as the work of a urinary trace (as though made by a man standing over a supine field and peeing), thus insisting on the way Pollock's canvases are permanently marked by the horizontality of their making. It was also true of Robert Morris's felts and scatter pieces, through which Morris reinterpreted Pollock's enterprise as "anti-form," by which he meant its condition of having yielded to gravity in assuming the axis of the horizontal. It can also be said that it was true of Ed Ruscha's *Liquid Word* pictures, with their reading of the significance of the drip technique as opening onto the dimension of entropy and "base materialism."[36]

If this sequence is invoked here it is to give one a sense of the connotations of the /horizontal/ within the field of the avant-garde of the 1960s and 1970s as certain artists opposed the /vertical/, within which is inscribed all forms of sublimation, whether that be of *the beautiful* or of *the fetish*. It is to see the work already in place on the pictorial signifier once it operates in terms of the failure to resist the pull of gravity, of the pivoting out of the axis of form.

In the "horizontals" Sherman's work is joined to this tradition. That de-sublimation is part of what she is encoding by means of the /horizontal/ will become unmistakably clear by the end of the 1980s with what are sometimes politely referred to as

36. For the argument about Warhol's and Morris's reading of the horizontality of Pollock's mark, see my *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993); for the discussion of Ruscha's *Liquid Words*, see Yve-Alain Bois, "Thermometers Should Last Forever," in *Edward Ruscha: Romance with Liquids* (New York: Rizzoli, 1993).

37. The logic elaborated, for example, by Stephen Heath, slides from the phallus as signifier—as thus a wholly differential, non-positive diacritical mark—to the phallus as form, which is to say gestalt or image. Heath marks this by replacing references to the phallus with the composite "penis-phallus," all the while acknowledging the problems this gives rise to. See, Heath, "Difference," pp. 55, 66, 83, 91.

Untitled, # 88, 1981

Untitled, #91, 1981

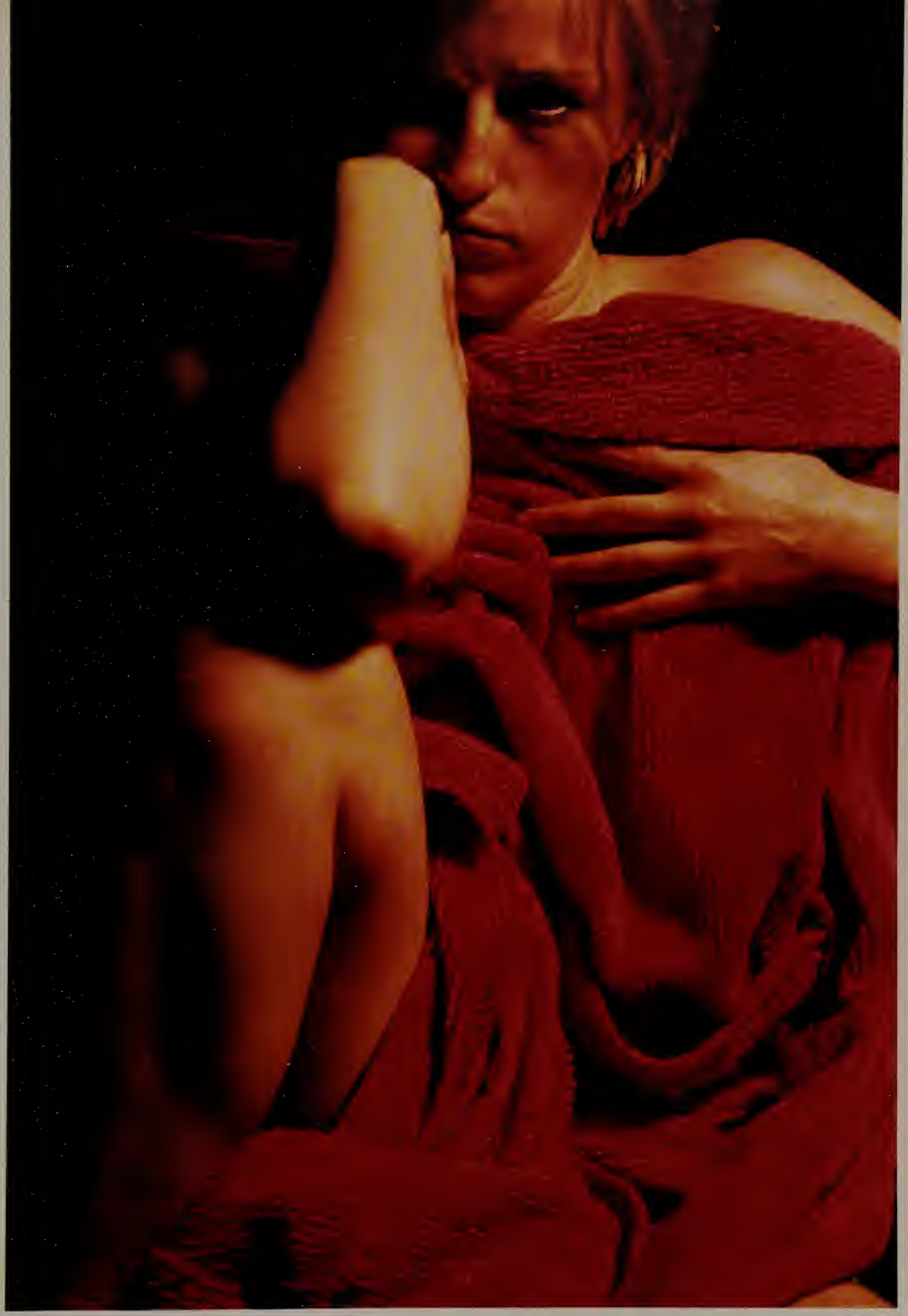
the "bulimia" pictures, images in which the horizontal plane occupied by the point of view is forcibly associated with vomit, mold, and all forms of the excremental—"base materialism," indeed. But in these works of 1981 it is already clear that the view downward is desublimatory. In Untitled, #92 (page 88), the narrative operated by this signifier is not that of "vulnerability" via a pose that is "soft and limp," but rather of animality, the body clenched in a kind of sub-human fixation. And in Untitled, #91, the network of cast shadows that grids the body and face of the woman projects over the image a sense of decay and of death. It is as though something were working against the forces of form and of life, attacking them, dissolving them, disseminating them into the field of the horizontal.

The theory of the "Male Gaze," even as it moves from an analysis of the operations of the representational field—movies, painrings—to generalizations about the structure of human consciousness, has had to blind itself to its own fetishization of the vertical. Which is to say that it has had to blind itself to anything outside the vertical register of the image/form.[37] It is because of this that the theorists of the Gaze repeat, at the level of analysis, the very fixity they are describing as operating the Male Gaze at the level of its social effects. And the symprom of this repetition is the constant submission to the meaning-effect the system generates, a submission to be found, for example, in Mulvey's steady consumption of Sherman's work as myth.

1982

PINK ROBES
COLOR TESTS

Untitled, # 100, 1982



Untitled, # 97, 1982

Untitled, # 99, 1982

Untitled, # 98, 1982

Untitled, #114 and #112, 1982

3. Gleams and Reflections

IN SHORT, THE POINT OF GAZE ALWAYS PARTICIPATES IN THE AMBIGUITY OF THE JEWEL.[38]

Jacques Lacan

In the view of its theorists, the Male Gaze can do its work of continually putting the fetish/form in place even in the absence of any identifiable image. Victor Burgin, for example, argues that the effect of the gestalt's delineation and boundary can be generated by the very surfaces of media artifacts, such as the glossiness of the photographic print, with its high resolution and its glazed finish.

And Mulvey follows Burgin in this argument. For even while she reads the "horizontals" in terms of "the 'to-be-looked-at-ness' of femininity," she also admits that there is a contradiction between the limpness she sees in Sherman's poses—"polar opposites of a popular idea of fetishized femininity (high-heeled and corseted erect, flamboyant and exhibitionist)"—as well as the limpness of the image—"Sherman's use of color and of light and shade merges the female figure and her surroundings into a continuum, without hard edges"—and the sharp definition characteristic of the fetish. But fetishism, she argues, "returns in the formal qualities of the photography. The sense of surface now resides, not in the female figure's attempt to save her face in a masquerade of femininity, but in the model's subordination to, and imbrication with, the texture of the photographic medium itself."[39]

Untitled, #95, 1981

This texture, "in keeping," as Mulvey writes, "with the codes and conventions of commercial photography," is glossiness, the product of a kind of reflective veneer. It is this shiny surface that Burgin had related to the fetishized *glanz*, or gleam, that Freud had described in his essay outlining the unconscious mechanics of the construction of the fetish.[40]

Now while it is true that shininess functions as a certain kind of support for media images—and not just those of photography but even more insistently of backlit advertising panels and film and television screens—it is also true that Sherman performs specific work on this phenomenon. Just as she had taken a horizontal format—borrowed both from centerfold photographs and from cinemascope screens—and worked on it to produce a signifier that (in opposition to the meaning of the /vertical/) would cut out a specific signified —the /horizontal-as-lowness, -as-baseness/—so, here as well, the gleam is submitted to her sustained investigation.

One of the last of the "horizontals," Untitled, #95, had announced this attention to the gleam. It is of a woman sitting upright on a bed (and thus no longer aligned with the horizontal axis of the format), caught in a strong glow of backlighting, so that her hair, now reconfigured as an intensely luminous nimbus, displaces the focus away from her face. As Sherman's work advanced into the 1980s she repeated this kind of

38. Jacques Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan, (New York: Norton, 1978), p. 96.

39. Mulvey, "Phantasmagoria," p. 143.

40. Victor Burgin, "Photography, Fantasy, Function," in *Thinking Photography* (London: MacMillan, 1982), pp. 189–190.

Untitled, # 116, 1982

Untitled, #139, 1984; #110, 1982; and #149, 1985

backlighting, forcing a glow to emerge from the ground of the image, to advance toward the viewer, and thus to disrupt conditions of viewing, producing the figure herself as a kind of blindspot. We find it again, for example, in Untitled, # 139, of 1984.

Although backlighting is a very direct signifier for this sense of a diffracted and dispersed visual field, it is not the only means to produce it. Indeed it could be said that a certain effect of "wild light," the scattering of gleams around the otherwise darkened image as though refracting it through the facets of an elaborate jewel, will also create this corrosive visual dispersal. An early example of such wild light immediately followed the last of the "horizontals," in Untitled, # 110, of 1982, where Sherman concentrated on creating a sense of the completely aleatory quality of the illumination. For while the lighting plunges three-quarters of the field into total blackness, it picks out the arm and draped edge of the figure's garment to create a glowing, knotted complex of near unintelligibility.

Another instance of wild light is Untitled, # 149, where head and upper torso, given in enormous close-up, are plunged into a darkness only violated by the backlit fragments of a bit of hair and one shoulder, and—building the eerie significance of the work—the reflected gleam of a pupil that emerges from the obscurity of the rest of the face like an utterly opaque, black marble.[41] This contrast between the opacity of the figure's look and the quality of light beaming out at the viewer from dispersed parts of the rest of the image, sets up a condition that can be generalized to other parts of this series (which I am calling "gleams and reflections"). It is a condition that I would like, now in my own turn, to use the work of Lacan to illuminate; although unlike the theory of the Male Gaze, this condition of the uncanny gaze, which Lacan qualifies as "the gaze as *objet à*," works against the effects of sublimation.

In setting up the model of this gaze as *objet à*, Lacan specifically contrasts it with the ego-model, itself linked to the vantage point of the perspective diagram, through which the "it's me!" of the subject, escaping from the dispersed condition of the Symbolic (the chain of signifiers) into the unified gestalt of the Imaginary, projects itself as whole. This projection is used in the Male Gaze theory to link the institution of the fetish to the very conditions of vision, understood as mapped by perspective's optical pyramid.

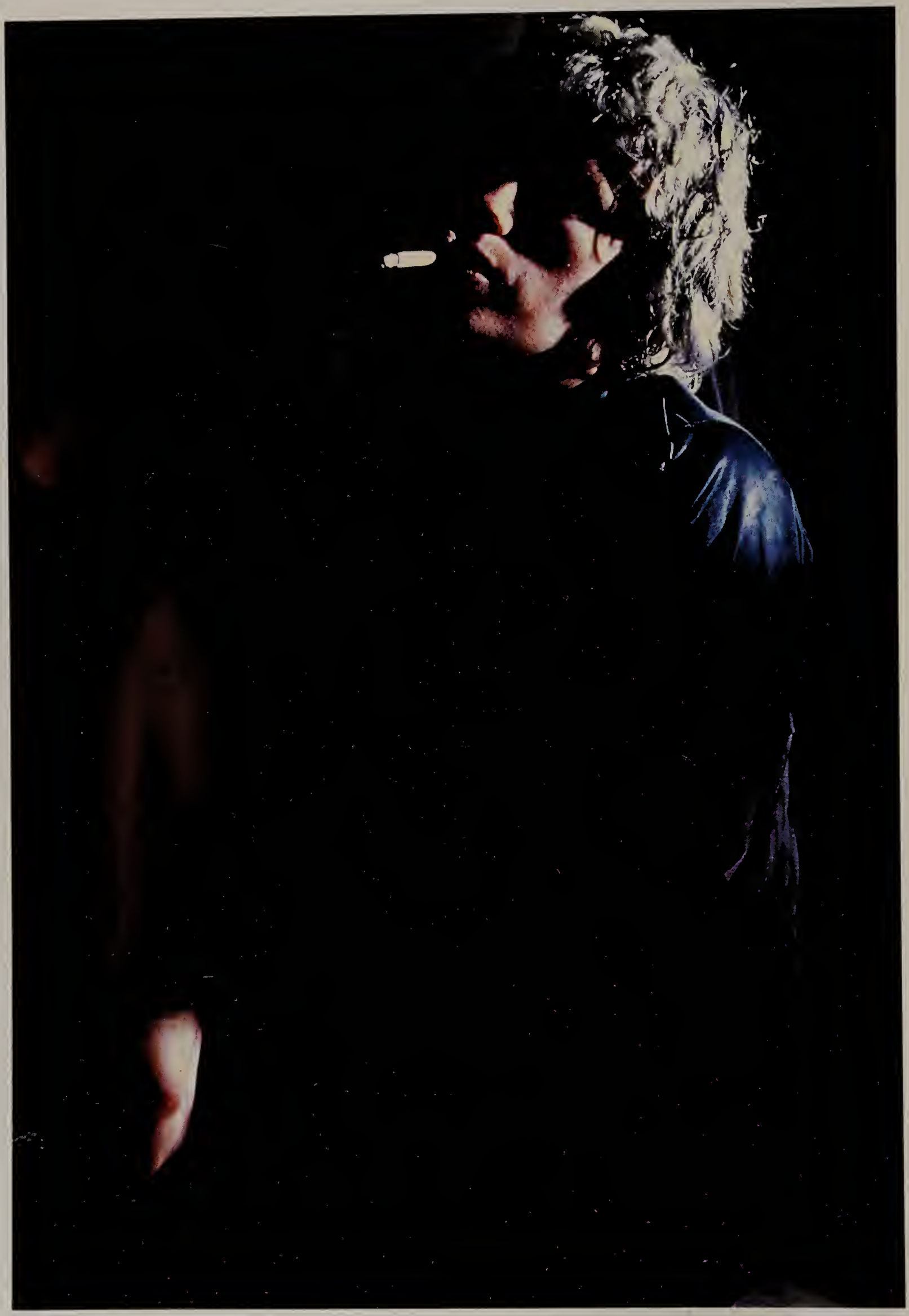
In his four lectures devoted to the question of the gaze, Lacan, however, is intent on restricting this optico-visual model, which he terms "geometral," to the realm of an idealized, abstracted, Cartesian conception of space. In the place of this spatial conception, he wishes to set a more fundamental condition of visuality, namely, that of light. Contrasting this luminous surround to the model of linear perspective, he says that we encounter the visual "not in the straight line, but in the point of light—the point of irradiation, the play of light, fire, the source from which reflections pour forth."[42]

Such an irradiation beaming at the subject from everywhere in space, bathing and surrounding him or her, cannot, then, be assimilated to the mirror image in which a gaze looks back at the subject in an imitation of the single point from which the subject sees himself seeing. Instead, to depict this luminous gaze, which makes of the subject a *speculum mundi*, Lacan turns to the model of animal mimicry, which his old friend Roger Caillois had described back in the 1930s as the effect of space at large on a subject(-insect) who,

41. In two instances of the publication of this work, different "interpretations" of its meaning are registered by means of the different ways the image has been printed. In *Cindy Sherman* (Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 1982) the work's darkness and obscurity is respected; whereas in the Whitney Museum's catalogue for Sherman's retrospective the image has been more highly exposed to force its values upward and thus to reduce its uncanny effect.

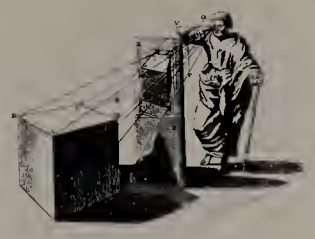
42. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 94.

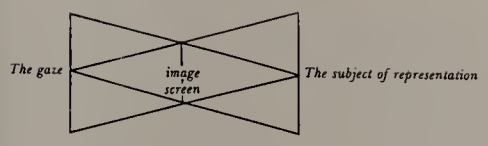
Untitled, # 103, 1982



108.

Untitled, # 113, 1982





The visual cone. From B. Taylor, *New Principles of Linear Perspective* (London, 1715).

Diagram from Jacques Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (New York, 1977).

yielding to the force of this space's generalized gaze, loses its own organic boundaries and merges with its surrounds in an almost psychotic act of imitation.[43] Making itself into a kind of shapeless camouflage, this mimetic subject now becomes a part of the "picture" of space in general: "It becomes a stain, it becomes a picture, it is inscribed in the picture," Lacan insists.[44] But if Caillois had been describing animal behavior, Lacan elaborates this effect for the human subject as well. Telling an anecdote about himself being caught in an indefinable beam of light reflected off a sardine can, Lacan draws the conclusion:

> I am taking the structure at the level of the subject here, and it reflects something that is already to be found in the natural relation that the eye inscribes with regard to light. I am not simply that punctiform being located at the geometral point from which the perspective is grasped. No doubt, in the depths of my eye, the picture is painted. The picture, certainly, in my eye. But I, I am in the picture.[45]

The sliding back and forth between Caillois's insect and Lacan's "I" in this discussion of mimicry is important to what Lacan wants to get at by this notion of Gaze. For Caillois had insisted that the insect cannot be shown to assume its camouflage for purposes of adaptation—and thus what could be seen as coming from an intentional, subjective ground (no matter how instinctual or unconscious)—but simply as matter flowing into other matter, a mere body yielding to the call of space. Lacan joins this same position when he says, "Mimicry reveals something insofar as it is distinct from what might be called an *itself* that is behind," which is to say, distinct from a subjective ground of the subject.[46] Rather, we pass into the "picture" as mere "stain," which is to say as physical matter, as body. And here Lacan also refers to Merleau-Ponty's position in *The Phenomenology of Perception* that our relation to space, insofar as it makes us the target of a gaze constituted by the free-floating luminousity that surrounds us—a light that catches us in its beam from behind our backs as well as from in front of our faces—founds our perception not in the transparency of a conceptual grasp of space (as in the "geometral") but in the thickness and density of the body that simply intercepts the light.[47]

It is in this sense that to be "in the picture" is not to feel interpolated by society's *meaning*—"It's me!"—is not to feel, that is, whole; it is to feel dispersed, subject to a picture organized not by form but by formlessness. The desire awakened by the impossibility of occupying all those multiple points of the luminous projection of the gaze is a desire that founds the subject in the realization of a point of view that is withheld, one(s) that he or she cannot occupy. And it is the very fragmentation of that "point" of view that prevents this invisible, unlocatable gaze from being the site of coherence, meaning, unity, gestalt, eidos. Desire is thus not mapped here as the desire for form, and thus for sublimation (the vertical, the gestalt, the law); desire is modeled in terms of a transgression against form. It is the force invested in desublimation.[48]

Nowhere is the notion of having become "the picture" more searingly evoked than in Sherman's Untitled, # 167, where the camouflage-effect is in full flower. The figure, now absorbed and dispersed within the background, can be picked out only by a few remnants still barely visible in the mottled surface of the darkened detritus that

43. See Roger Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," *October*, no. 31 (Winter 1984).

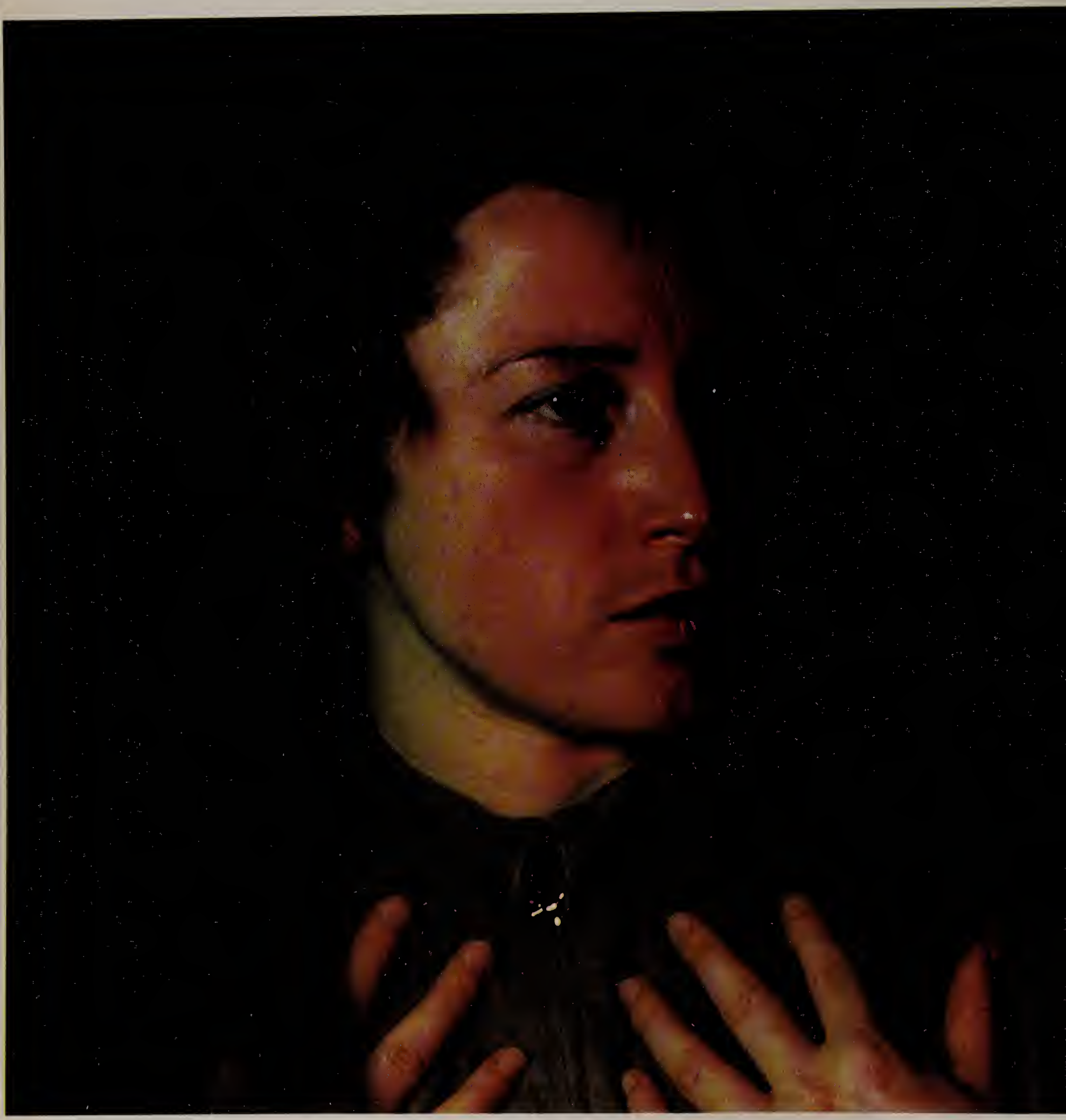
44. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 99.

45. Ibid., p. 96.

46. Ibid., p. 99. Joan Copjec's essay, "The Orthopsychic Subject: Film Theory and the Reception of Lacan," is an extremely important analysis of the distinction between film theory's "male gaze" and Lacan's "gaze as *objet à*." Her understanding of this point in Lacan's argument diverges from mine, however, since she interprets the "itself" not as the subjectivity of the mimetic entity but as a kind of in-itself that might lie behind the picture and which Lacan is, of course, refusing. But Lacan's use of *lui-même* rather than, for example, *en-soi*, makes her reading rather difficult. See, Joan Copjec, "The Orthopsychic Subject," *October*, no. 49 (Summer 1989), pp. 69–70.

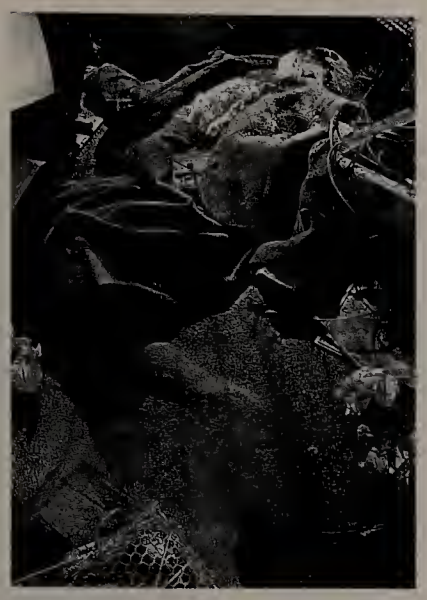
47. Ibid., p. 97.

48. That this function of the unlocatable gaze already conditions the subject's visual dimension in the same pattern of splitting, with the Imaginary already pre-figuring the Symbolic, is articulated as: "Here too, we should not be too hasty in introducing some kind of inter-subjectivity. Whenever we are dealing with initiation, we should be very careful not to think too quickly of the other who is being imitated. To imitate is no doubt to reproduce an image. But at bottom, it is, for the subject, to be inserted in a function whose exercise grasps it" (p. 100). Jacqueline Rose addresses this visual, Imaginary pre-figuration of the symbolic, stressing its beginning in the rivalrous, aggressive aspects of Lacan's description of the Mirror Stage; see, Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (London: Verso, 1986), pp. 181–182, 188, 192–194.



110.

Untitled, # 109, 1982



Untitled, #167, 1986; #168, 1987; and #176, 1987

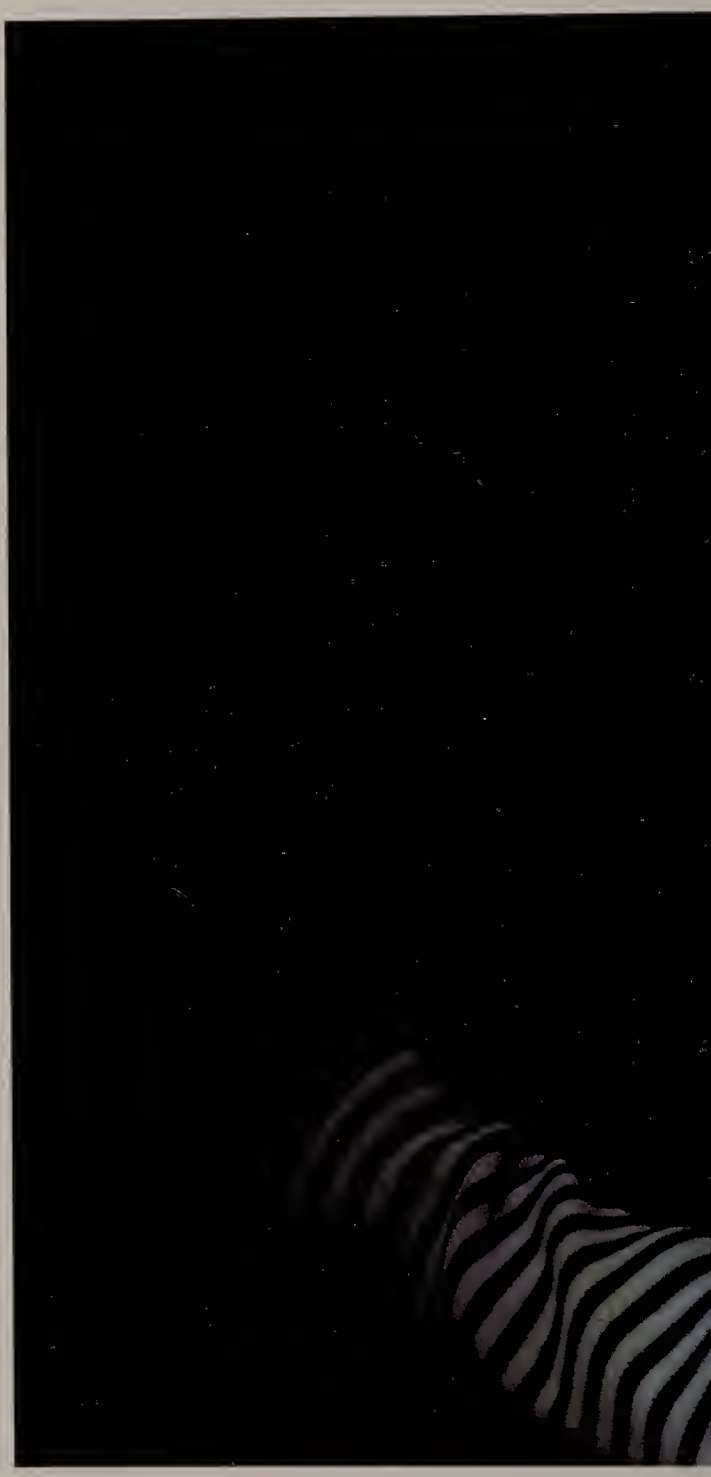
fills the image. We make out the tip of a nose, the emergence of a finger with painted nail, the detached grimace of a set of teeth. Horizontalized, the view downward mapped by the image puts the signifier of the dissolution of the gestalt in place. But as it reaches the bottom edge of the image, the spectator's view encounters a gaze that projects toward it from within this matrix of near-invisibility. Reflected in the tiny mirror of a discarded compact, this gaze cannot be identified with any source in the image. Instead it seems to join all the other gleams and reflected points of light in the image to constellate the signifier for the /unlocatable/, and thus for the transgression of the gestalt.

Throughout the late 1980s Sherman continued to figure this field of the unlocatable gaze by means of her "gleams and reflections." And now the bouncing light of these opaquely slippery, arborescent signifiers is more consistently married to the /horizontal/, both combining in a drive towards the desublimation of the image. In Untitled, # 168, a glowing but imageless television screen joins the repertory of gleams. In Untitled, # 176, the refractive surface of water sparkling upward to meet the downwardly focused view of the spectator projects the multiple points of light with all the ambiguity of the jewel that produces not the beautiful of sublimation but the formless pulsation of desire.

Untitled, # 108, 1982

1983—1984

FASHION



Untitled, # 119, 1983

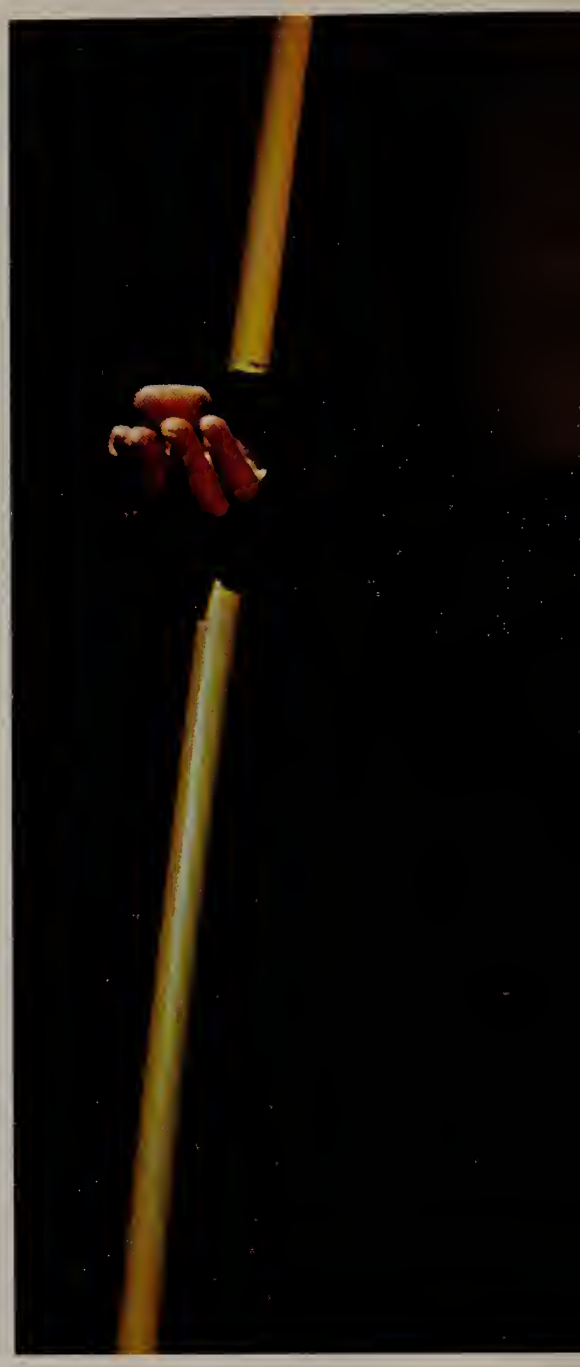
Untitled, # 122, 1983

Untitled, # 121, 1983

116.

Untitled, # 120, 1983

Untitled, # 118, 1983



Untitled, # 131, 1983

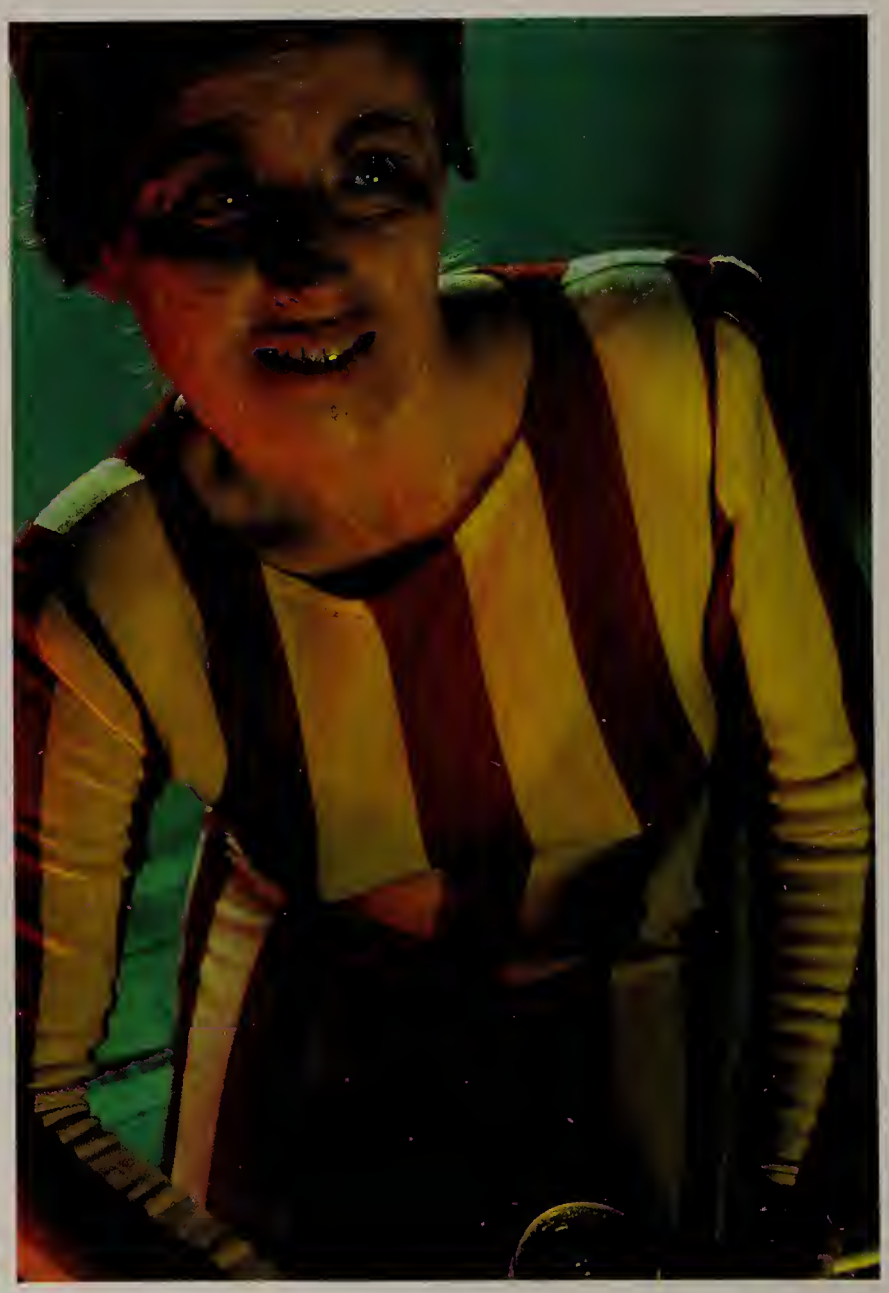
Untitled, # 125 and # 129, 1983

Untitled, # 117, 1983

Untitled, # 123, 1983

Untitled, # 137, 1984

Untitled, # 138, 1984



Untitled, # 136, # 132, and # 133, 1984

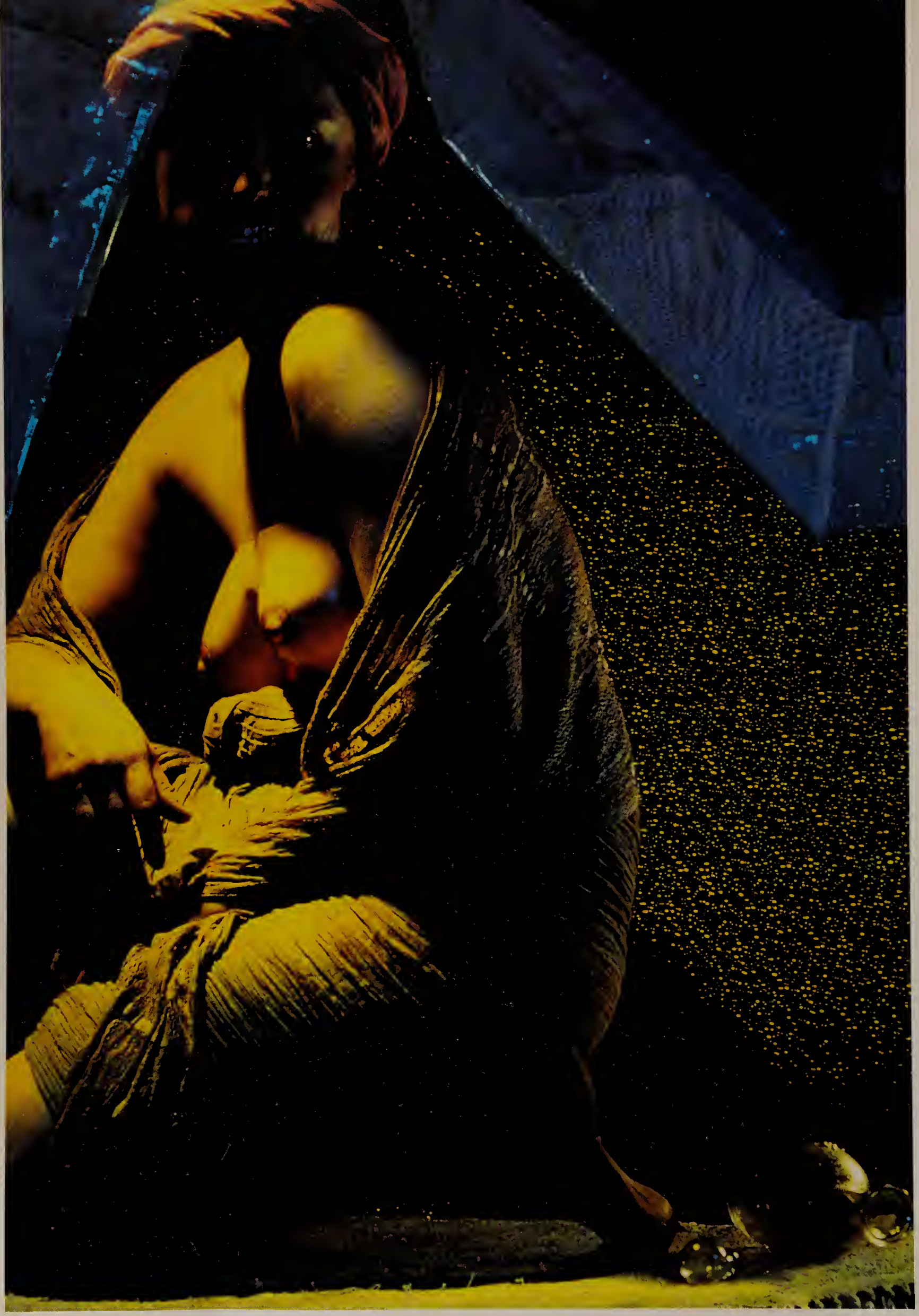
1985—1989

DISASTERS
FAIRY TALES

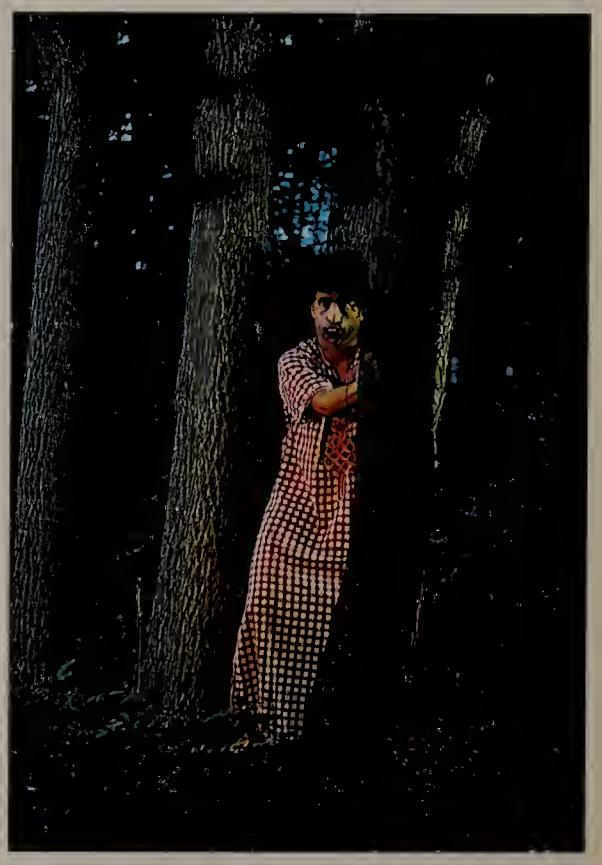
Untitled, # 147, 1985

Untitled, # 152, 1985

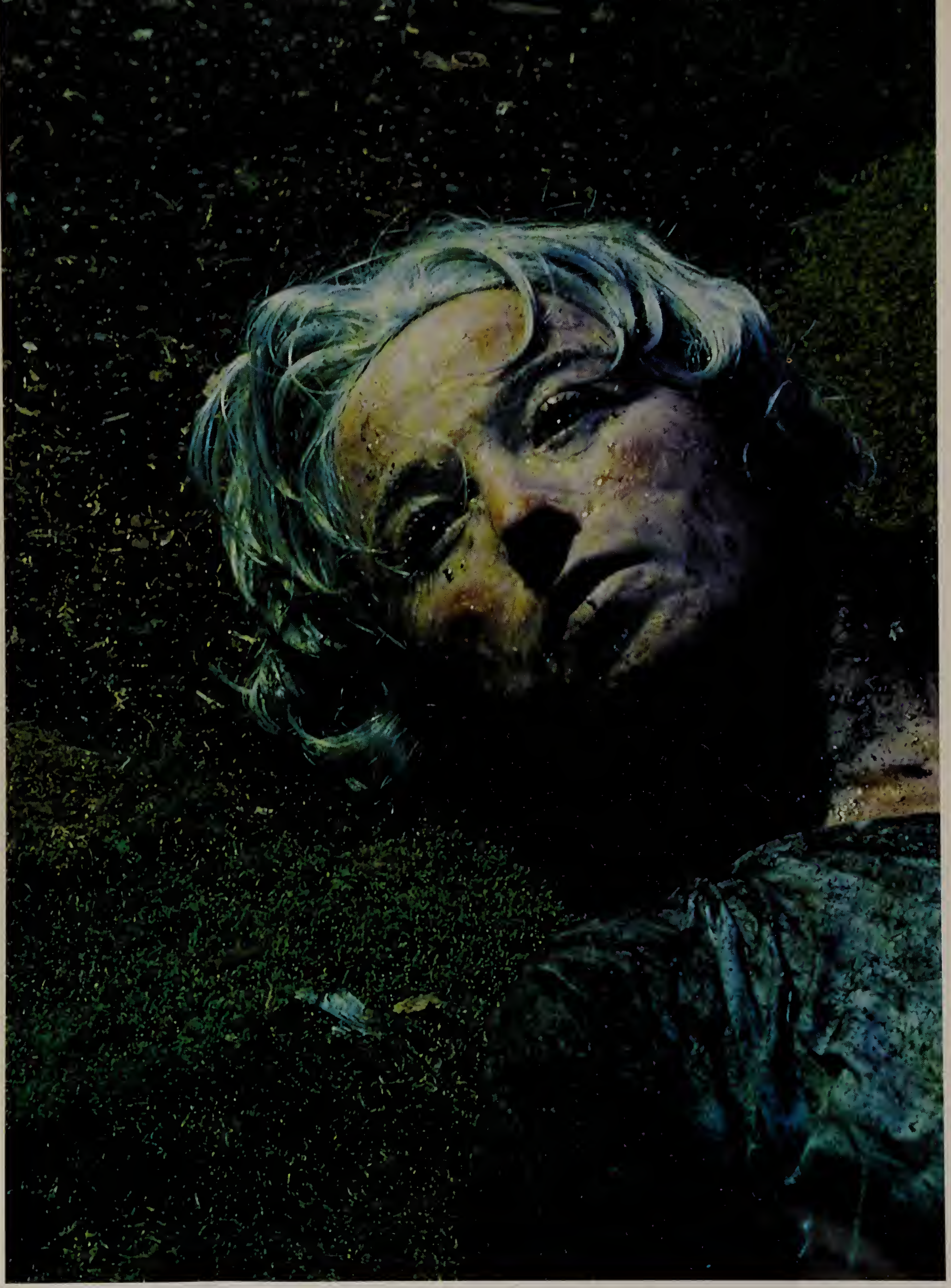
Untitled, # 142, 1985



Untitled, # 146, 1985



Untitled, # 189, 1989, and # 165, 1986



Untitled, # 153, 1985, and # 188, 1989

Untitled, # 150, 1985

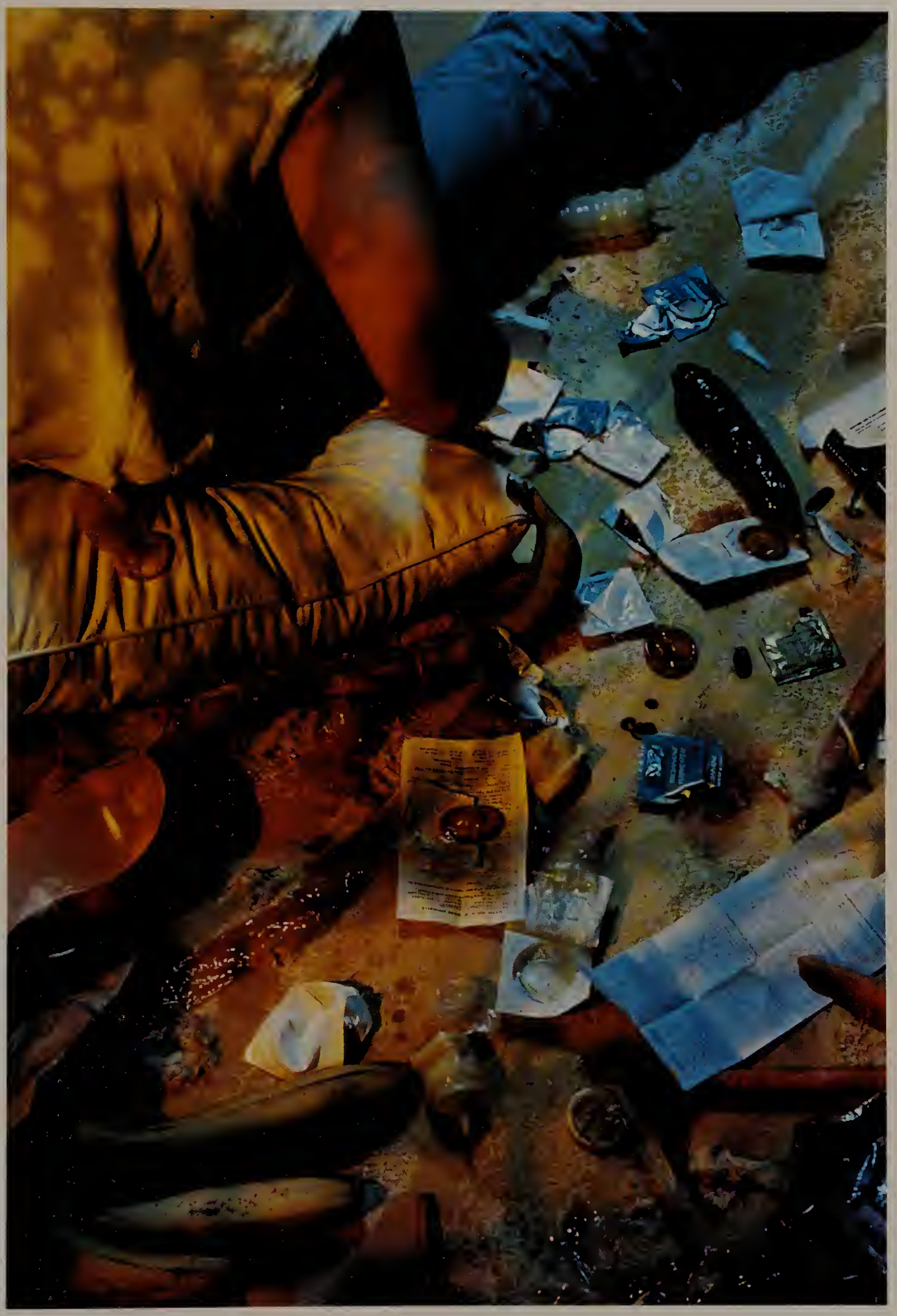
Untitled, # 155, 1985, and # 172, 1987

Untitled, # 160, 1986

Untitled, # 170, 1987

Untitled, # 167, 1986

Untitled, # 141, 1985



Untitled, # 179, 1987

144.

Untitled, # 140, 1985

Untitled, # 168, 1987

Untitled, # 173, 1987

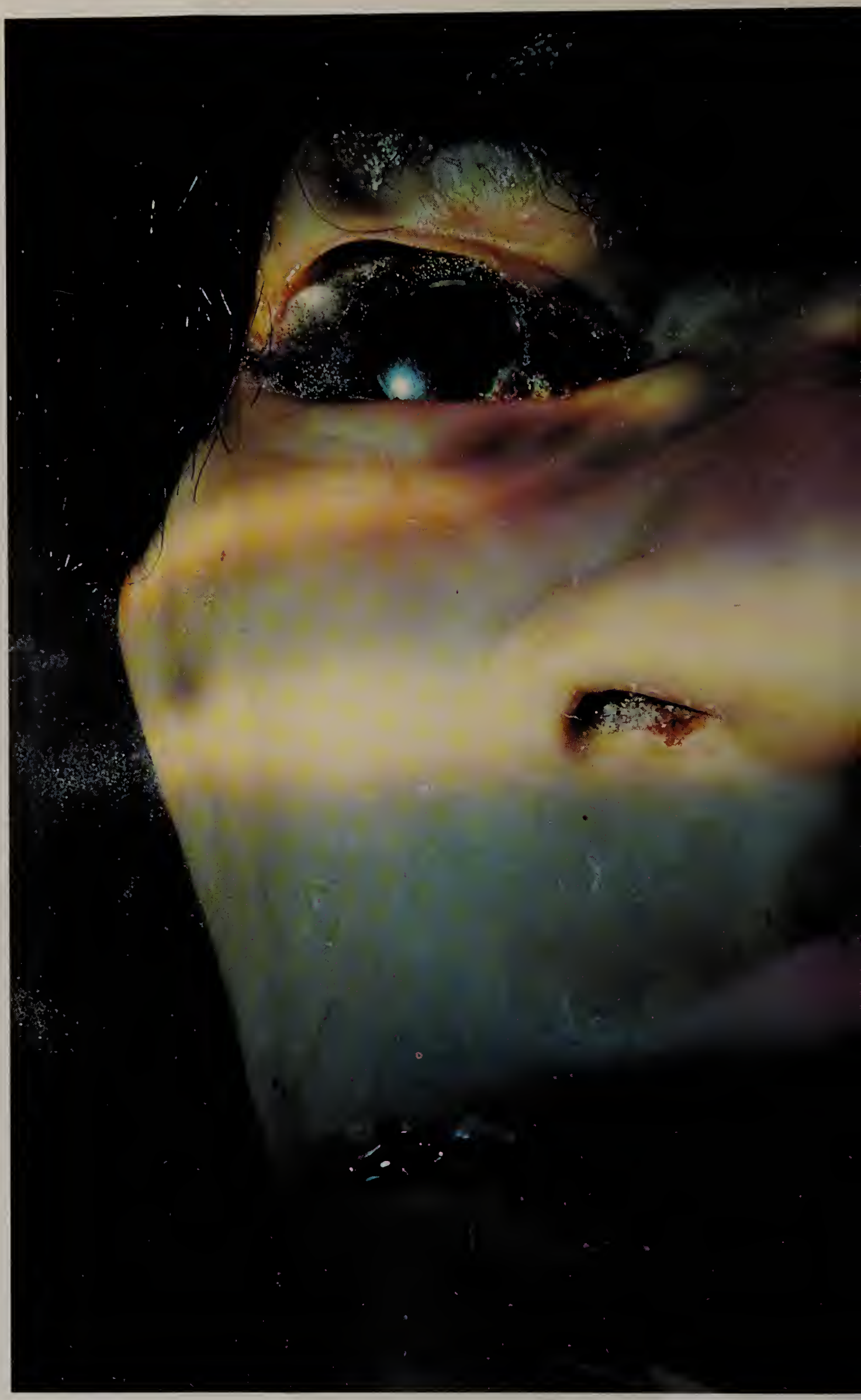
148.

Untitled, # 177, 1987

Untitled, # 239, 1987

150.

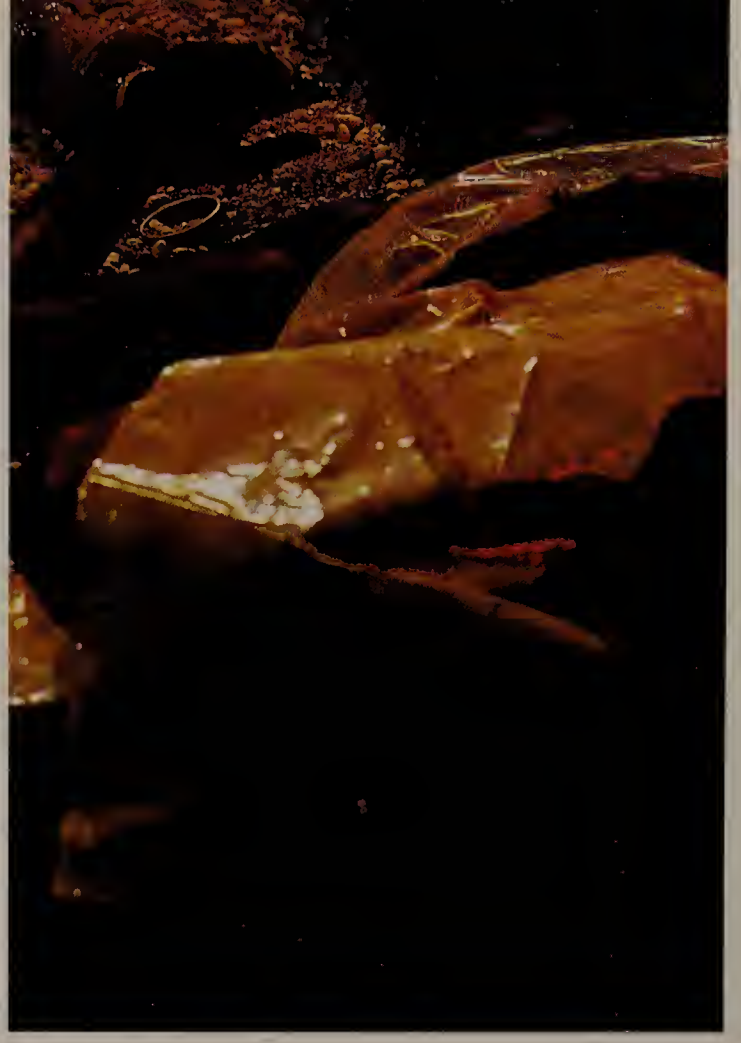
Untitled, # 238, 1987, and # 145, 1985



Untitled, # 180, 1987

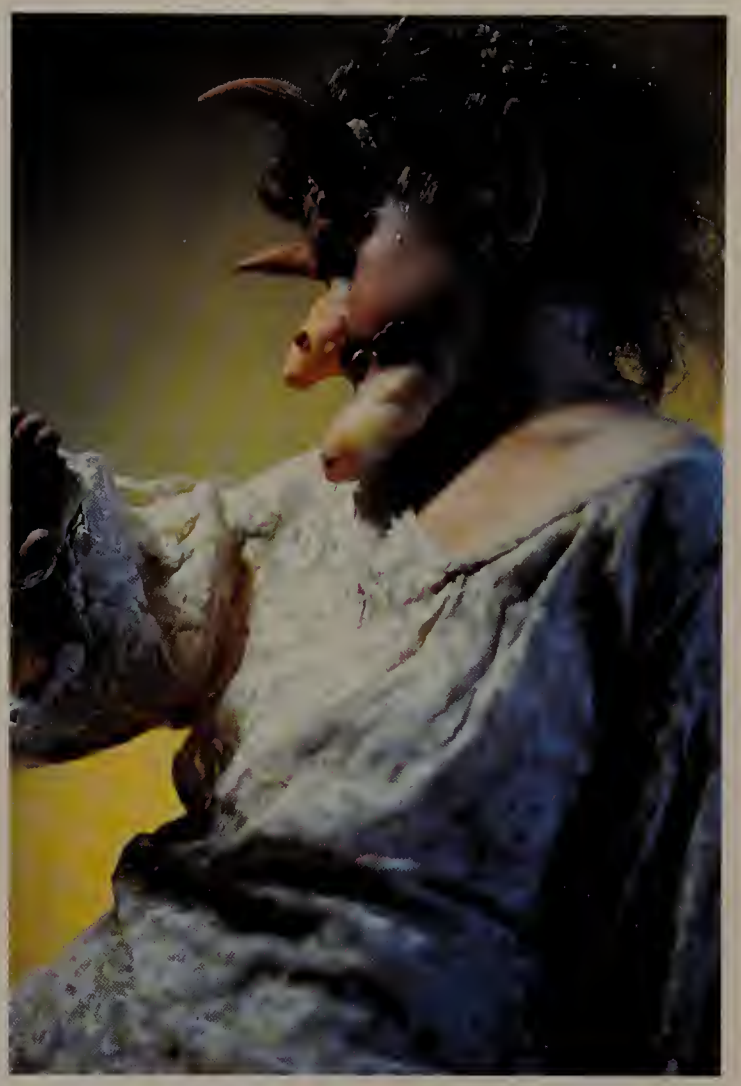
154.

Untitled, # 156, 1985



Untitled, # 186, 1989, and # 149, 1985

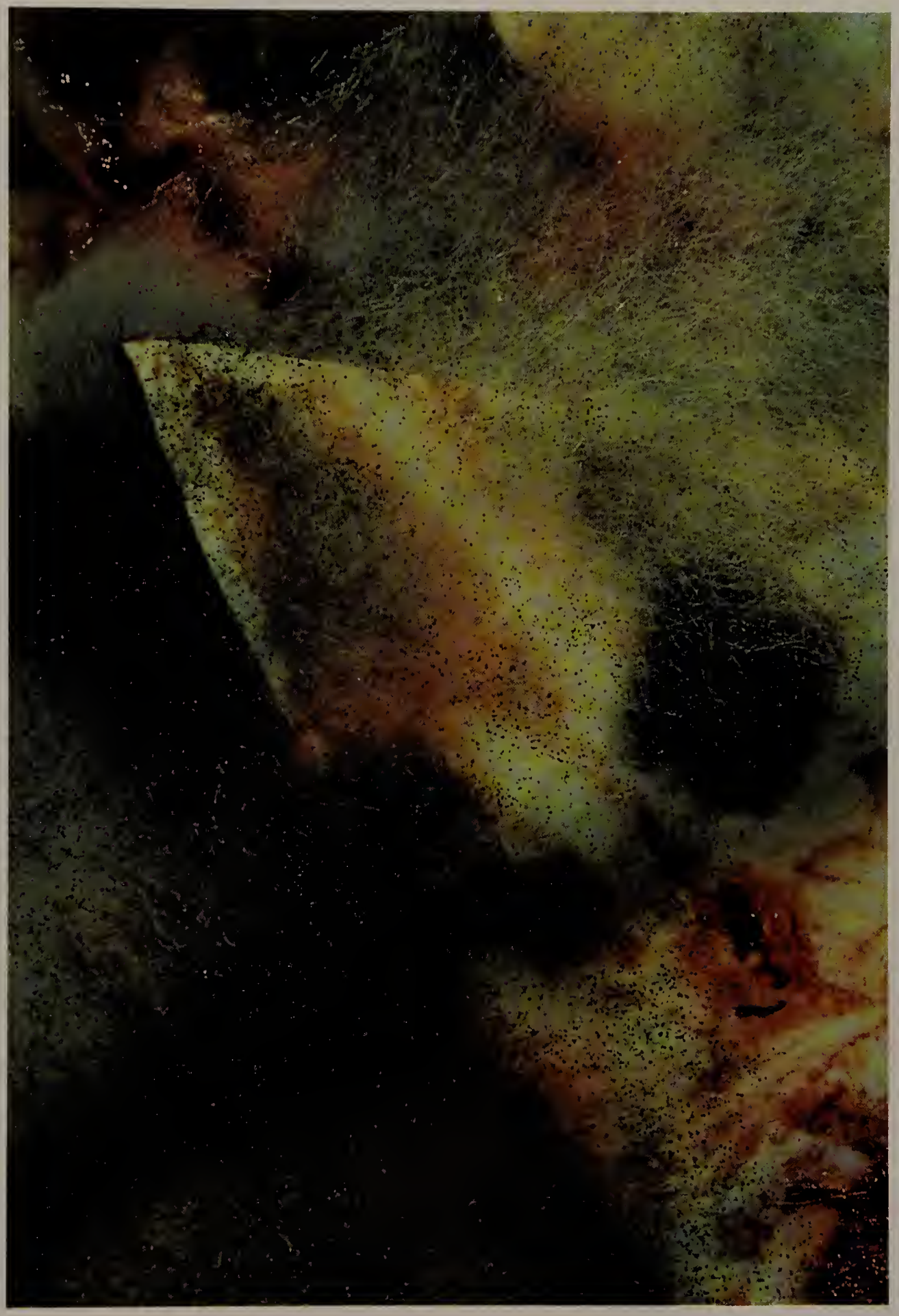
Untitled, # 190, 1989



Untitled, # 157, 1986

158.

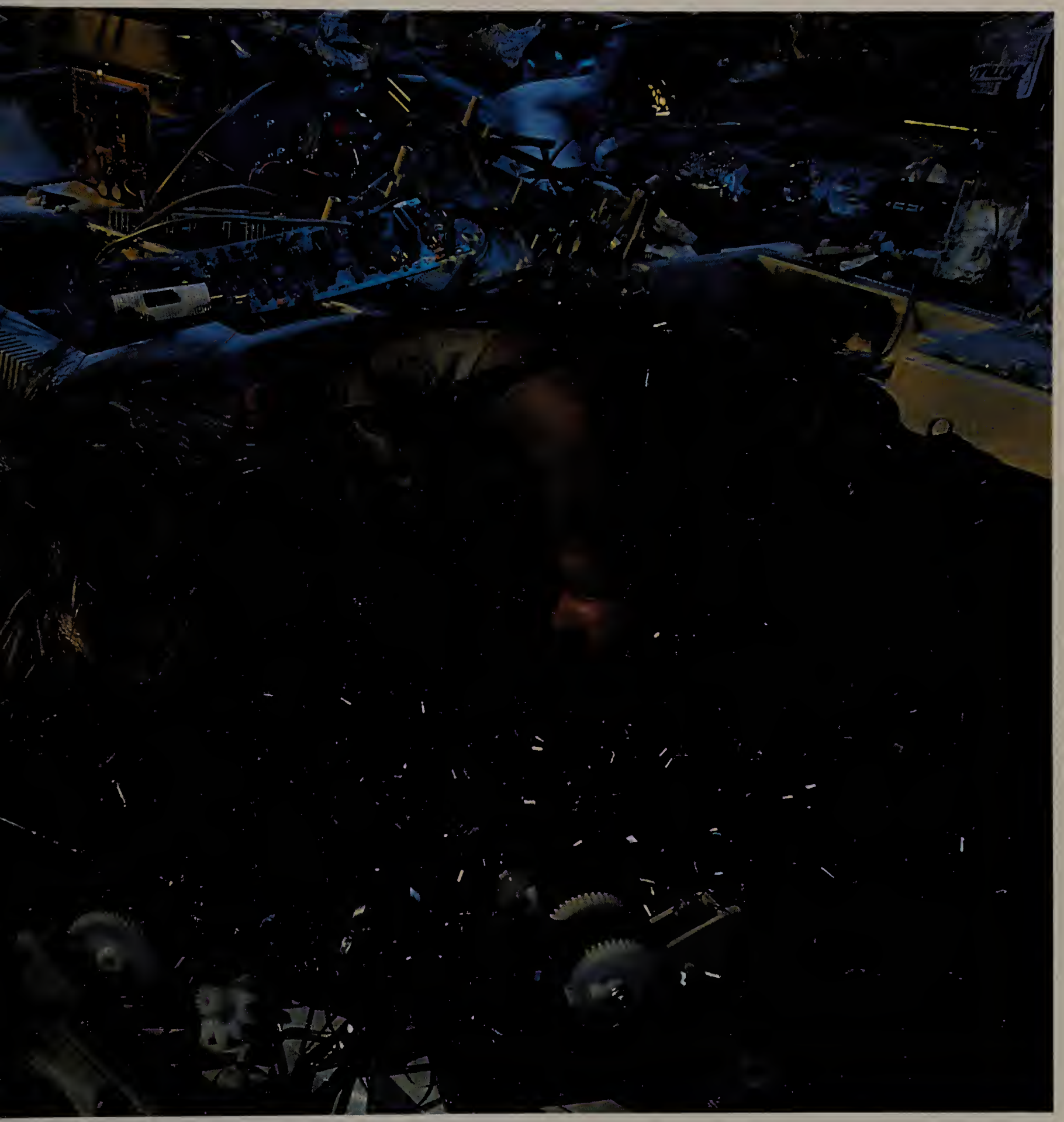
Untitled, # 187, 1989



Untitled, # 236, 1987

160.

Untitled, # 235, 1987



Untitled, # 184, 1988

Untitled, # 175, 1987

Untitled, # 143, 1985

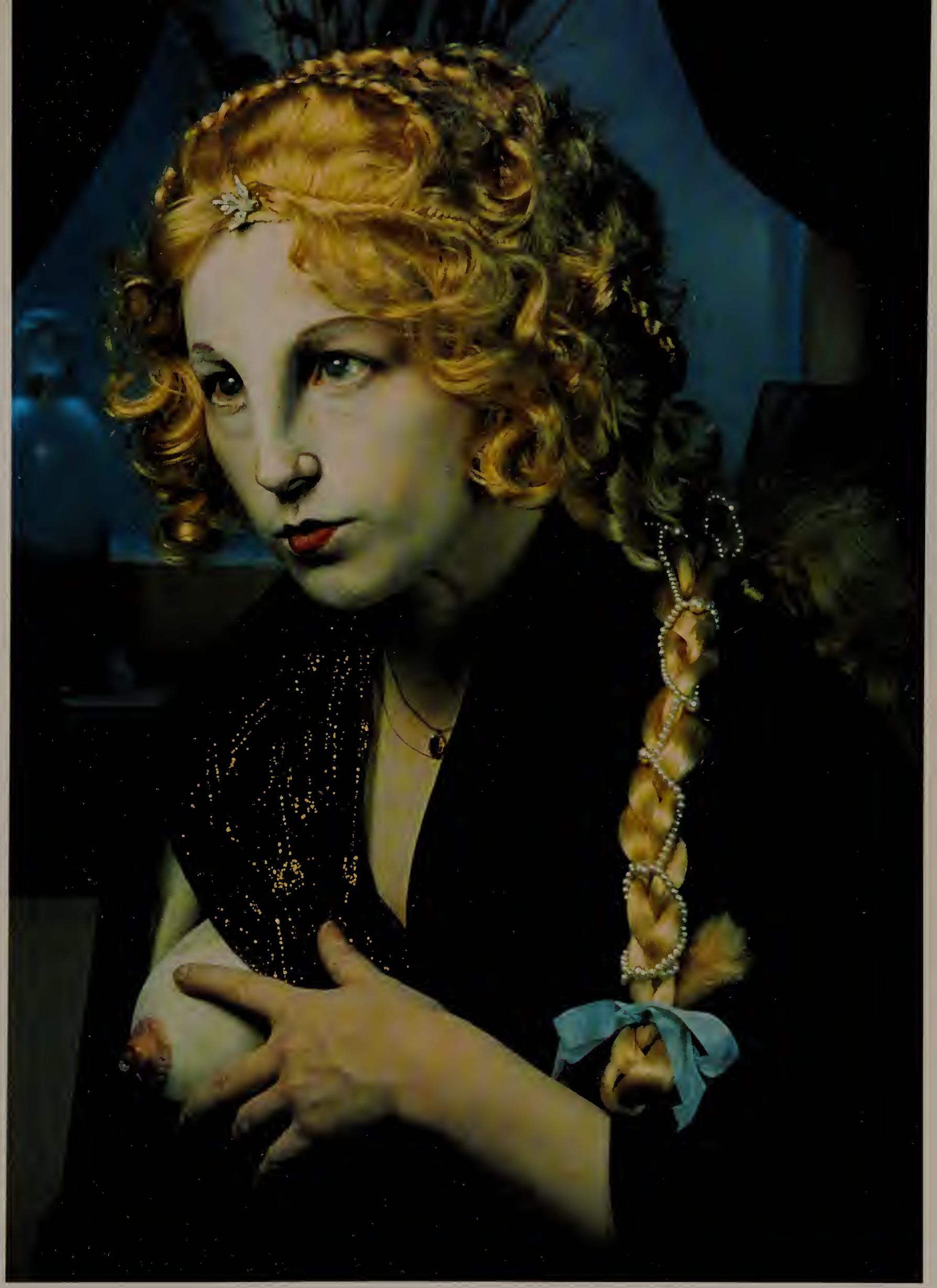
Untitled, # 191, 1989

1988—1990

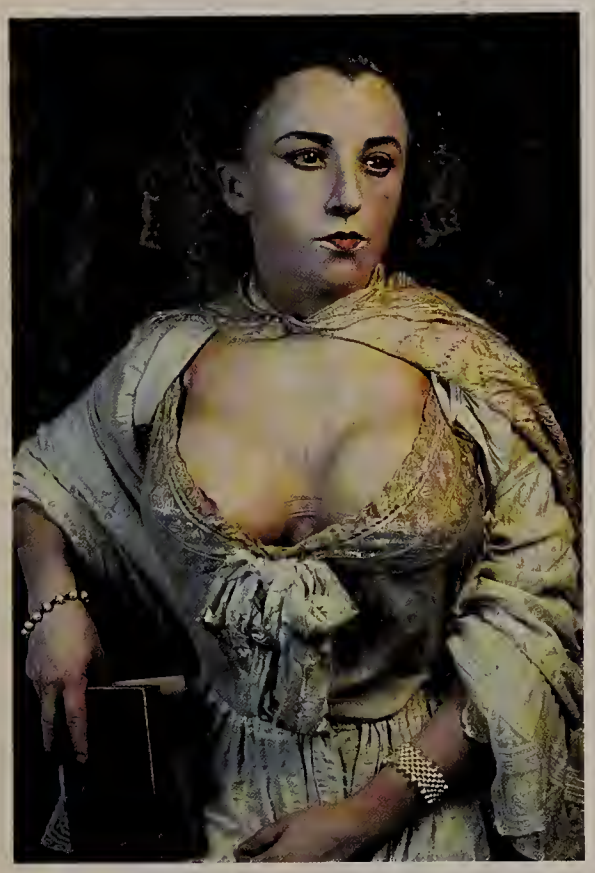
HISTORY PORTRAITS

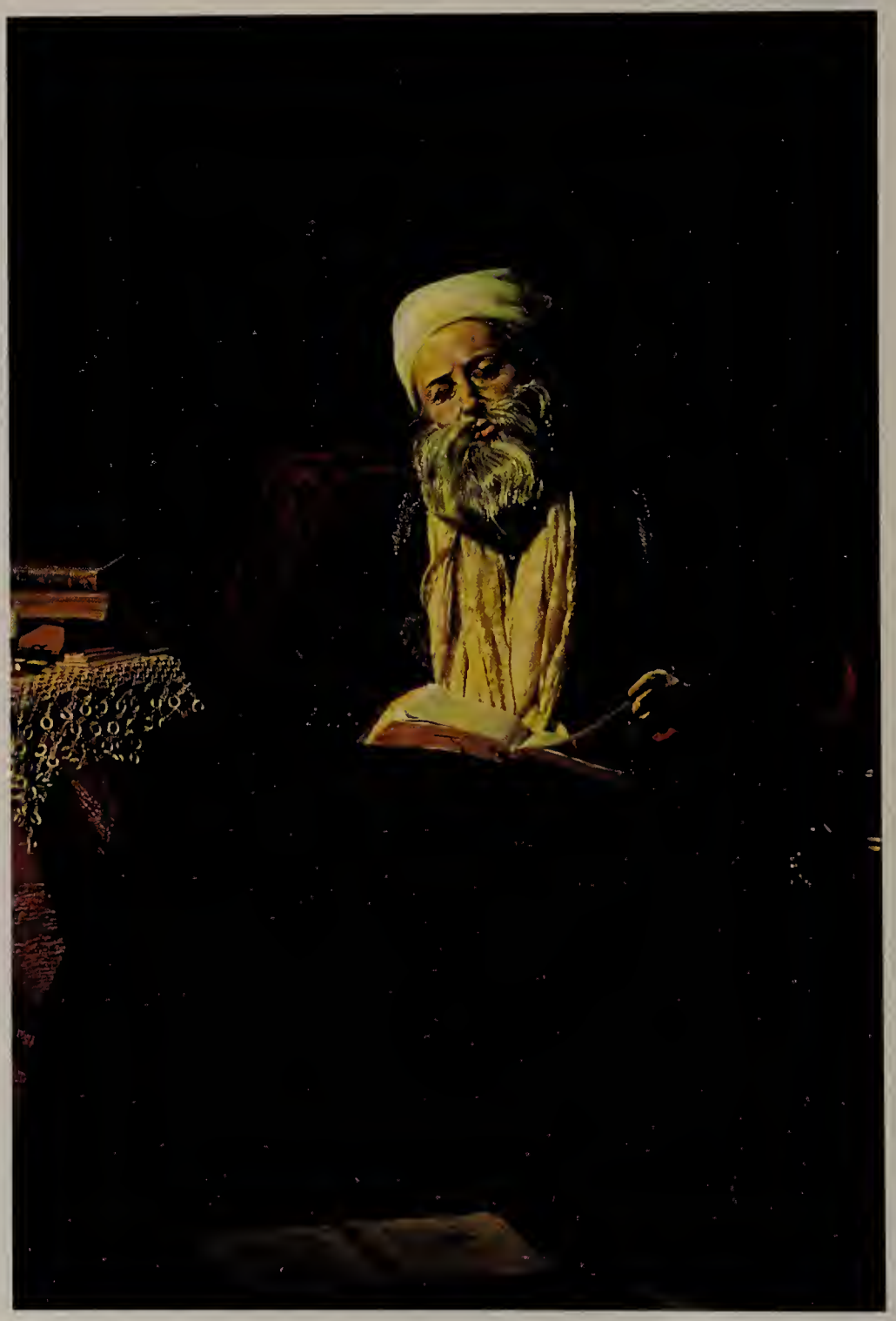
166.

Untitled, # 219, 1990



Untitled, # 225, 1990



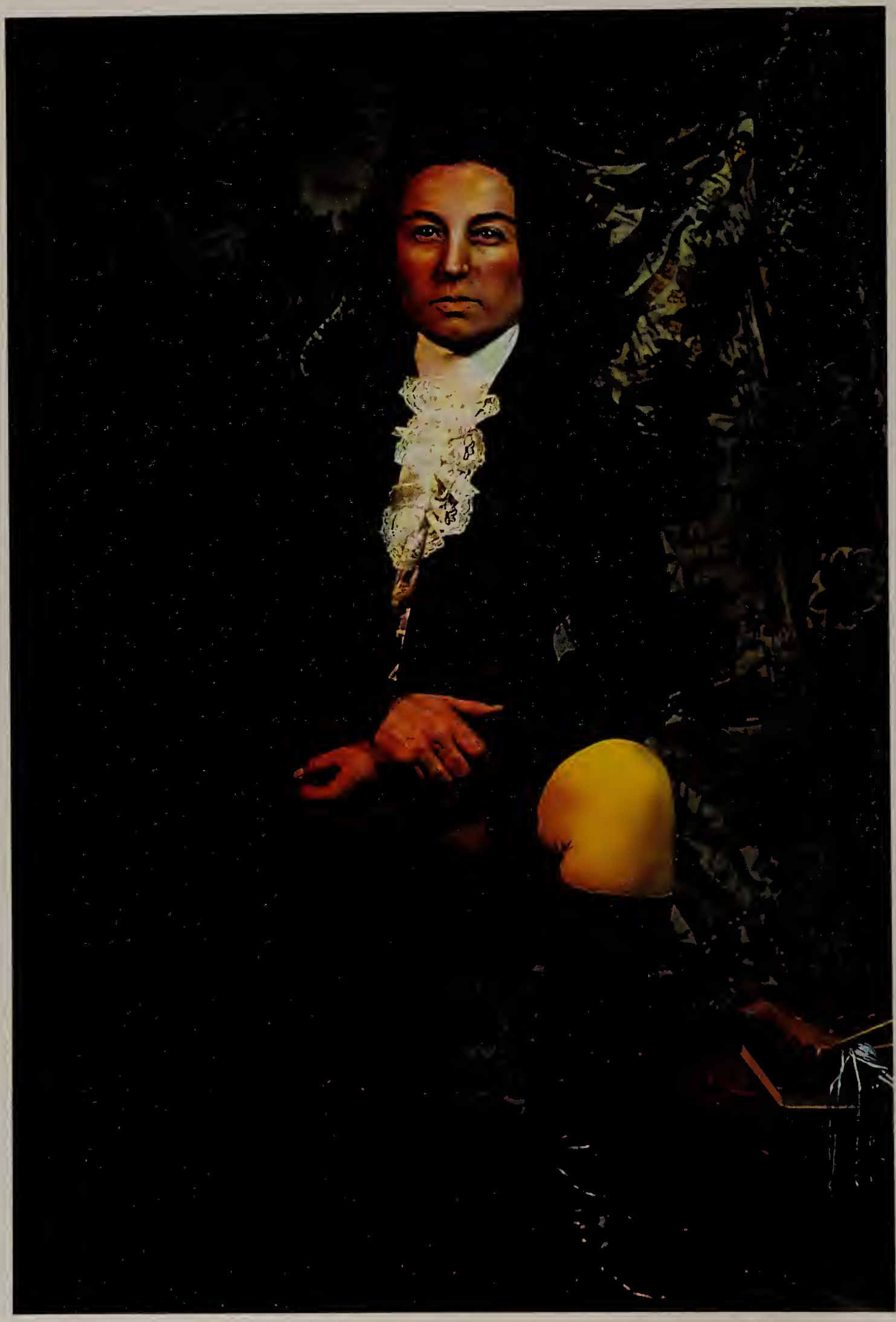


168.

Untitled, # 183, 1988, and # 227, 1990

169.

Untitled, # 209, 1989



170.

Untitled, # 196, 1989

Untitled, # 205, 1989

172.

Untitled, # 204, 1989

4. History Portraits

THE CORE OF [LEONARDO'S] NATURE, AND THE SECRET OF IT, WOULD APPEAR TO BE THAT AFTER HIS CURIOSITY HAD BEEN ACTIVATED IN INFANCY IN THE SERVICE OF SEXUAL INTERESTS HE SUCCEEDED IN SUBLIMATING THE GREATER PART OF HIS LIBIDO INTO AN URGE FOR RESEARCH.[49]

Sigmund Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci*

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. *Madame Moitessier.* 1856. National Gallery, London. Erich Lessing/Art Resource, New York.

In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* Freud speaks of the sexual instincts of children as relentlessly and repetitively driving them toward what they want to know but dare not ask; what they want to see but dare not uncover behind the garments that conceal it. This drive, which is sexual, does not cause pleasure for the child, but to the contrary, unpleasure "in view of the direction of the subject's development." Therefore to ward off this unpleasure, a defense against the drive sets in, in the form of disgust, shame, and morality. This defense Freud calls reaction-formation.

But parallel to this is another defense against the force of the drive, namely, that of sublimation. This occurs when the drive is forced to change its course by shifting its object. Thus the sexual instinct can be "diverted ('sublimated') in the direction of art, if its interest can be shifted away from the genitals onto the shape of the body as a whole." This shift is, as we know, away from the libidinal and onto the beautiful of form.[50]

In 1989 and 1990 Sherman turned her own attention to Art, which is to say, firmly and steadily towards the most overt and pronounced version of the scene of sublimation. (The very term *high* that explicitly or implicity modifies *art*, announces this sublimatory effect as having had its origin in a gesture of raising one's eyes to the plane of the vertical and of thereby acceding to the field of the gestalt.) Sherman's History Portraits revel in forming again and again the signifiers of the Form that high art celebrates, signifiers of verticality meshing with signifiers of the wholeness of the gestalt.

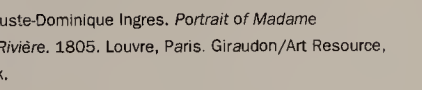
Premier among these, of course, is the signifier constellated by the frame. For the frame is what produces the boundary of the work of art as something secreted away from ordinary space-at-large, thereby securing the work of art's autonomy; and at the same time the frame's contour echoes the conditions of boundary and closure that are the very foundations of form.

Sometimes the frame enters the field of the aesthetic image through nothing more complex than the black background that cushions and cradles the figure, emphasizing its shape by contrast, a shape that in its turn is often constructed as a set of miniaturized echoes of the larger, enclosing frame. These internalized echoes might appear in the encircling oval formed by the figure's arms, meeting in a gesture of self-embrace. Or they may be the result of the U of a bodice that frames the head and upper torso, or the encircling O of a turban that frames the face. Sometimes the frame is projected by more scenographic

49. Sigmund Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*, trans. Alan Tyson (New York: Norton, 1964), pp. 30–31.

50. Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962), pp. 22 and 44.

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. *Portrait of Madame Sennones*. 1814–1816. Musée des Beaux Arts, Nantes. Giraudon/Art Resource, New York.



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. *Portrait of Madame Philbert Rivière*. 1805. Louvre, Paris. Giraudon/Art Resource, New York.

elements: painted curtains that part to make a space for the figure, or even the depiction of an actual frame behind the figure—the ornate frame of a mirror, perhaps, in which the figure can now be doubly enfolded, first by the actual frame of the painting as a whole, and second by the depicted frame that captures and embraces the figure's double.

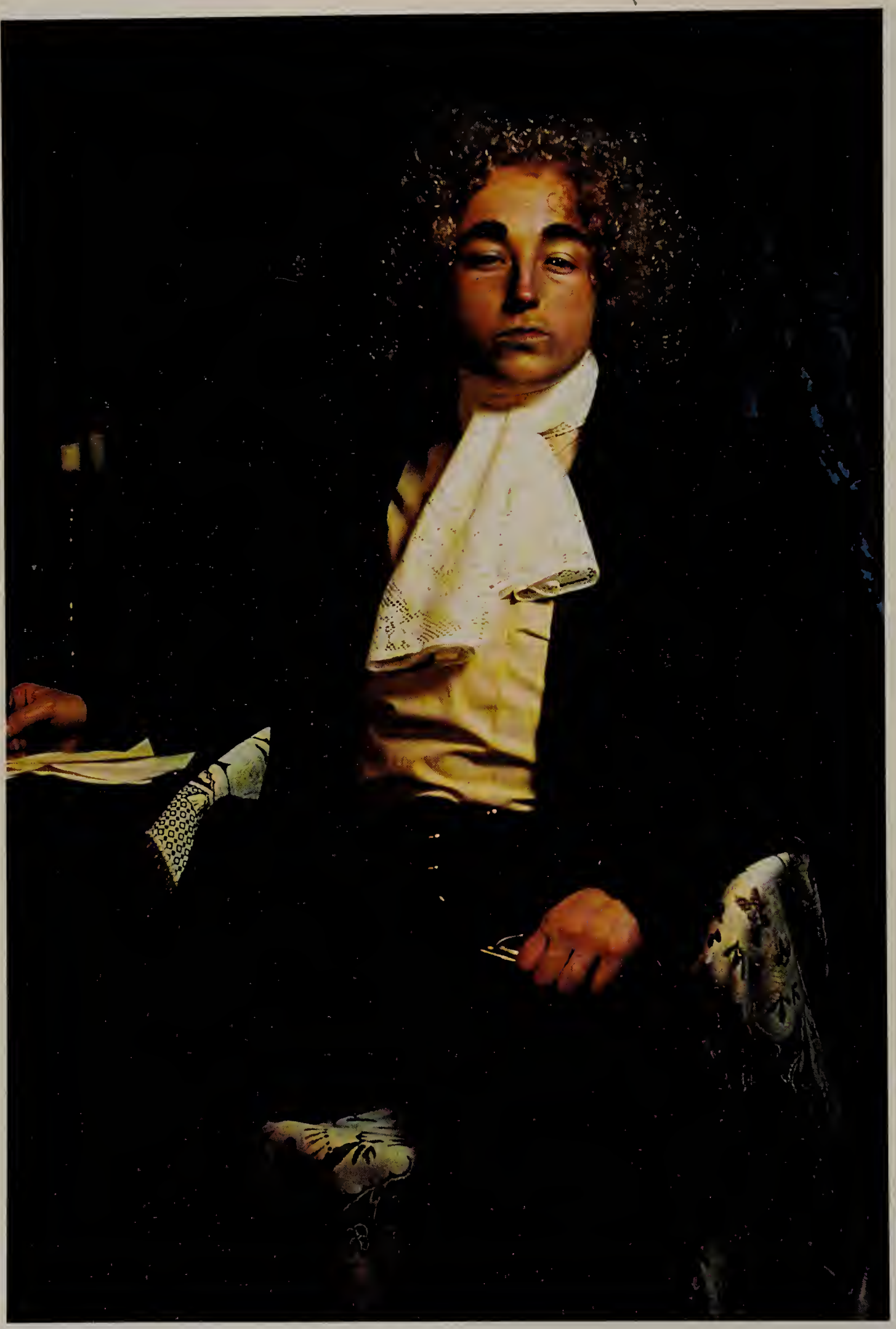
Two of the very famous History Portrait images that Sherman stages represent the extremes of these possibilities, from most simple to most elaborate. Her version of *La Fornarina*, Giulio Romano's portrait of Raphael's mistress (Untitled, # 205), presents us with the first alternative, while her strangely composite projection of several of Ingres's most celebrated sitters—Madame Rivière, Madame de Senonnes, and Madame Moitessier (Untitled, # 204)—confronts us with the second. In this last the signifiers of internal framing are piled one upon the other, as drapery, gesture, and mirror encircle the projected body in a giddy enactment of frames-within-frames.

Further, another rather disturbing signifier enters this theater of the /vertical/ to point to still one more meaning of *high* in the conception of high art. This signifier, a function of the way these History Portrait sitters are constructed by Sherman thanks to fake body parts that are strapped onto her torso or applied to her head, marks the surface of the image as a mask or veil, one that can supposedly be removed, pushed aside, seen behind. In their very detachability, these elements point thus to the hermeneutic dimension of the work of art: the idea that it possesses an inner truth or meaning to which the interpreter might penetrate. In being a hermeneutic object the work of art thus occupies the "high" position, not as vertical to horizontal but as ideal to material, or as mind to body.

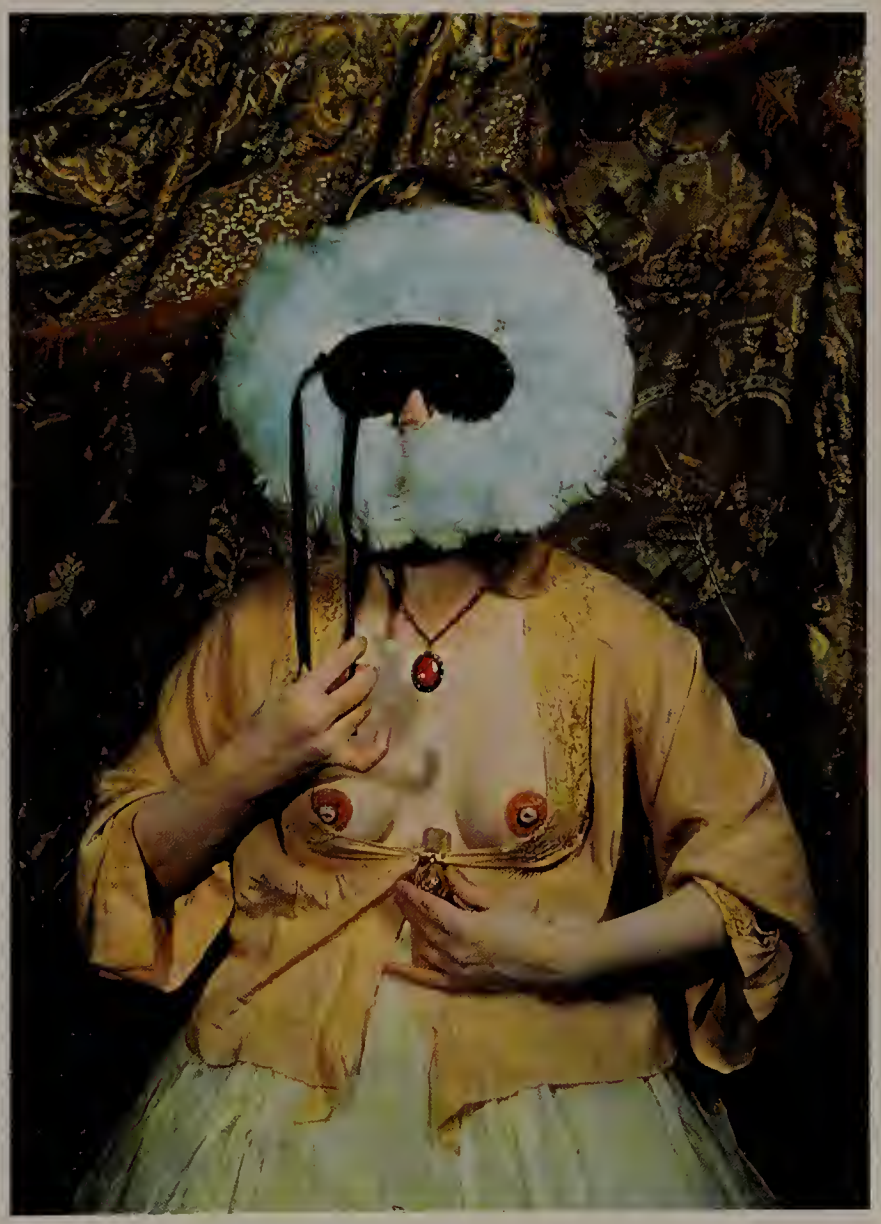
And yet it is also because of the obviousness of the condition of these body parts as prostheses that they work against the conception of the veil with its hidden Truth at the very same time that they burrow into the /vertical/ to oppose and topple it. Conniving against the sublimatory energy of Art, the body parts constitute signifiers that mark a yield to gravity, both because of the weight of the physical elements they model and the sense they promote of these pendulous forms already sliding down the surface of the body. In this capacity they elaborate the field of a desublimatory, horizontal axis that erodes the façade of the vertical, bearing witness to the fact that behind that façade there lies not the transparency of Truth, of meaning, but the opacity of the body's matter, which is to say, the formless.

It is as though Sherman's own earlier work with the /horizontal/ has now led her back to the vertical, sublimated image, but only to disbelieve it. Greeting the vertical axis with total skepticism, the History Portraits work to dis-corroborate it, to deflate it, to stand in the way of its interpellant effect.

Untitled, # 222, 1990



Untitled, # 201, 1989



Untitled, # 198, 1989

178.

Untitled, # 223, 1990

Untitled, # 213, 1989

Untitled, # 197, 1989

Untitled, # 194, 1989

Untitled, # 199, 1989

Untitled, # 224, 1990

Untitled, # 228, 1990

Untitled, # 211 and # 206, 1989

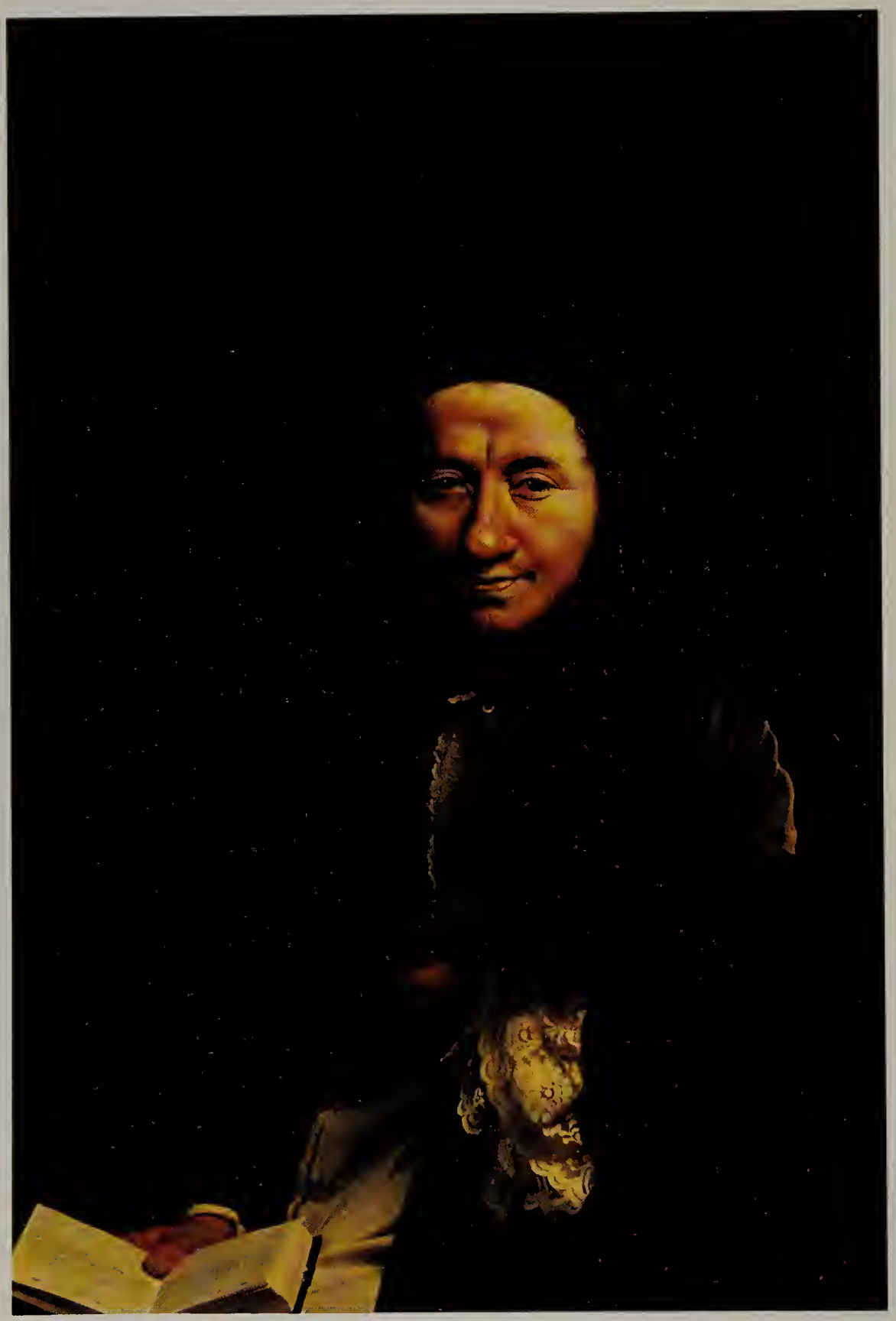
Untitled, # 210, 1989

Untitled, # 221, 1990

188.

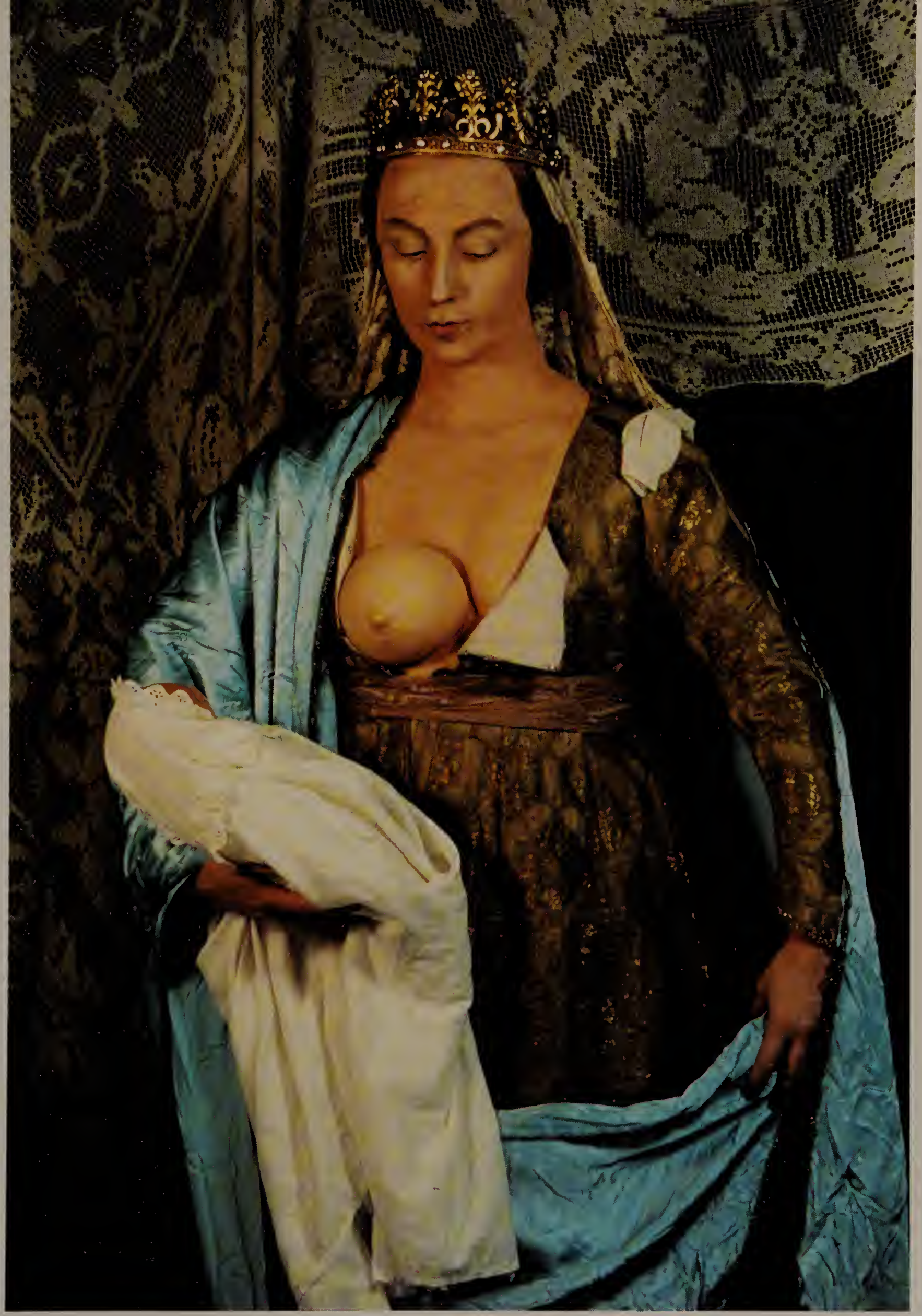
Untitled, # 215, 1989

Untitled, #193, 1989



190.

Untitled, # 218, 1990



Untitled, #216, 1989

5. Disgust

HOWEVER, EVEN THIS BEDROCK—THE VOMIT AND THE BLOOD FOR INSTANCE—RETURNS TO CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE: THAT IS, TO THE DIFFICULTY OF THE BODY, AND ABOVE ALL THE FEMALE BODY, WHILE IT IS SUBJECTED TO THE ICONS AND NARRATIVES OF FETISHISM.[51]

Laura Mulvey

Nothing, it would seem, could be less alike than Sherman's impersonation of various Raphaels and Davids and Ingres and the series she worked on over roughly the same time period (1987–1991), to which various descriptive rubrics have been given, among them "bulimia" and "vomit," although since to these materials one would have to add mold, rot, blood, and other unnameable substances, perhaps one should stick to "disgust." And yet the notion of the veil can operate for both series: either in the manner of a hermeneutics of the work of art, as described above; or, for the bulimia pictures, in the manner of what Mulvey has called the "phantasmagoria of the female body."

Indeed, as has often been pointed out, the female body itself has been made to serve as a metaphor for hermeneutics, which is to say, as the Truth to which one might penetrate upon lifting the veil of the work: Wisdom, Nature, Love, all those meanings to which analysis reaches as it seeks the meaning behind the surface flood of incident, all of them are culturally coded as feminine. But Mulvey's "phantasmagoria" recasts this Truth into its psychoanalytic dimension and shows it as yet one more avatar of fetishism. For the truth that was sought behind the veil, the truth for which the woman-as-fetish now functions as symptom, is the truth of the wound inflicted by a phantasmic castration. Thus the interior of the female body is projected as a kind of lining of bodily disgust—of blood, of excreta, of mucous membranes. If the woman-as-fetish/image is the cosmetic façade erected against this wound, the imagined penetration of the façade produces a revulsion against the "bodily fluids and wastes that become condensed with the wounded body in the iconography of misogyny." And women themselves, Mulvey points out, participate in this notion of exterior/interior, of veiled and unveiled. Speaking of how women identify with misogynistic revulsion, not only in adopting the cosmetics of the masquerade but in pathologically attempting to expunge the physical marks of the feminine, she says: "The images of decaying food and vomit raise the spectre of the anorexic girl, who tragically acts out the fashion fetish of the female as an eviscerated, cosmetic and artifical construction designed to ward off the 'otherness' hidden in the 'interior.'"[52]

Now, the contrast between interior and exterior, which Mulvey had consumed as the mythic content of Sherman's "horizontals," continues to be the thematics she reads into Sherman's work throughout its progression. Moving from the "horizontals" to the parodistically violent fashion images Sherman made in 1983, Mulvey sees these as a protest

51. Mulvey, "Phantasmagoria," p. 150.

52. Ibid., p. 146.

53. Ibid., p. 148.

54. Ibid., p. 146.

titled, #149, 1985, and #175, 1987

against the smooth, glossy body of the fashion model, a protest registered by a surface that seems to drop away "to reveal a monstrous otherness behind the cosmetic façade." Or, in the subsequent series inspired by fairy tales she sees the revelation of the very stuff of the unconscious that lines the interior: "While the earlier interiority suggested soft, erotic, reverie, these are materializations of anxiety and dread." Finally in the body's disappearance into the spread of waste and detritus from the late 1980s, "the topography of exterior/interior is exhausted," since "these traces represent the end of the road, the secret stuff of bodily fluids that the cosmetic is designed to conceal." With the removal of this final veil and the confrontation of the wound—"the disgust of sexual detritus, decaying food, vomit, slime, menstrual bood, hair" —the fetish fails and with it the very possibility of meaning: "Cindy Sherman traces the abyss or morass that overwhelms the defetishized body, deprived of the fetish's semiotic, reduced to being 'unspeakable' and devoid of significance."[53]

And yet, no sooner is it imagined that the "disgust pictures" have produced the "unspeakable," defetishized body, than that body is reprogrammed as the body of the woman: the mother's body from which the child must separate itself in order to achieve autonomy, a separation founded on feelings of disgust against the unclean and the undifferentiated. Using the post-structuralist theorist Julia Kristeva's term "abjection" for this pre-verbal cut into the amorphous and the continuous in order to erect the boundaries between an inside and an outside, a self and an other, Mulvey writes:

> [The] argument that abjection is central to the recurring image of the "monstrous feminine" in horror movies is also applicable to the monstrous in Sherman. Although her figures materialize the stuff of irrational terror, they also have pathos and could easily be understood in terms of "the monster as victim." . . . The 1987 series suggests that, although both sexes are subject to abjection, it is women who can explore and analyze the phenomenon with greater equanimity, as it is the female body that has come, not exclusively but predominantly, to represent the shudder aroused by liquidity and decay.[54]

At the very moment, then, when the veil is lifted, when the fetish is stripped away, the mythic content of a packaged signified—"the monstrous feminine" —nonetheless rises into place to occupy the vertical field of the image/form. The truth of the wound is thus revealed. Decoded at last, it reads: the truth of the wound.

But under the hood of the image all the signifiers of the "disgust pictures" are at work to desublimate the visual field. Not only the insistent construction of the /horizontal/, but also the sense in which the random glitter of wild light is leering at the viewer to configure the /unlocatable/ work together to produce a displacement of the body "into the picture" and to install it there as *formless*. This is a field without truth, one that resists being organized in order to produce /the wound/ as its signified. And of course its signifiers are at work, as always, completely in the open, ready for inspection, without a safety net or a veil.

The notion of unveiling what is veiled, of penetrating from exterior to interior is hermeneutical of course, but it is also tied to the psychoanalytic

Untitled, #190, 1989, and #235, 1987

distinction between manifest and latent content. The manifest content of a dream, Freud explained, was its secondary revision, its plausible surface meant to paper over its latent thoughts, the ones that needed to be censored or repressed. The secondary revision is a disguise, a concealment, a veil. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud gives as an example dreams of embarassment at appearing in public improperly dressed. These he says are veils that cover over the dreamer's desire for nakedness, a nakedness that would not produce shame.

Jacques Derrida points to this peculiar slippage between the analytic metaphor of the veil removed to reveal the naked truth and the semantic content in which the dreamer dreams of a veil that threatens to reveal his nakedness. He turns to Freud's use of the story of "The Emperor's New Clothes" in this connection. For Freud is illustrating his theory of unveiling the latent contents by revealing that the hidden theme of the fairy tale is the dream of nakedness, which is to say, the dream of veiling/unveiling. Objecting that "The Emperor's New Clothes" is not latently about the dream of nakedness, but manifestly so, and into the bargain about the act of revelation—staged by the child who calls out, "But he's naked!"—that itself performs, within the text, the act of veiling/unveiling, Derrida writes:

> Freud's text is staged when he explains to us that the text, e.g. that of the fairy tale, is an *Einkleidung* [disguise] of the nakedness of the dream of nakedness. What Freud states about secondary revision (Freud's explaining text) is already staged and represented in advance in the text explained (Andersen's fairy tale). This text, *too*, described the scene of analysis, the position of the analyst, the forms of his language, the metaphorico-conceptual structures of what he seeks and what he finds. The locus of one text is in the other.[55]

With this model of the way the form of the inquiry will produce the semantic version, or the thematization, of that very form—veiling/unveiling—as its *answer*, in an act of finding that always finds itself, Derrida looks at Lacan's use of a story by Edgar Allan Poe to illustrate his own psychoanalytic theories of the operations of the signifier. Turning to Lacan's "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter,'" Derrida says: "If the critique of a certain sort of semanticism constitutes an indispensable phase in the elaboration of a theory of the text, the Seminar exemplifies a clear progress beyond any post-Freudian psychoanalytic critique. It takes into account the organization, material as well as formal, of the signifier without throwing itself upon any semantic, not to say thematic, content of the text."[56]

And yet Derrida will progress from this point towards a demonstration that for Lacan, too, despite his insistence on the materiality of the signifier and on its condition as the mere marker or operator of difference—a differential function that cannot accept the assignment of a fixed meaning—his interpretation of Poe's "Purloined Letter" will constantly move toward an unveiling that will find what it seeks in the place where it expects to find it. It will find, that is, that the letter—the phallic signifier—constructs the fetish: "It is, woman, a place unveiled as that of the lack of the penis, as the truth of the phallus, i.e. of castration. The truth of the purloined letter is the truth itself, its meaning is meaning, its law is law, the contract of truth with itself in the logos."[57]

If Lacan wants to show that in Poe's story the incriminating letter, which the minister steals from the queen only to have it ravished from him in turn by Dupin, is the phallus—signifier of the pact that links queen to king, and signifier as well of castration—so that anyone who possesses it is "feminized," this letter-as-phallus, he insists is a signifier, the circulating operator of meaning, cutting out each character in turn as he or she is submitted to its course. But Derrida argues that far from being the mere differential function of structural linguistics, this letter functions, in fact, as a *transcendental* signifier, which is to say as the term in a series whose ideal and idealizing privilege comes from the fact that it makes the series possible. For Lacan insists not only that the letter-as-phallic-signifier is indivisible and indestructible, but that it has a certain and proper place, the two taken together producing the very truth of the letter: that it will always arrive at its destination, namely, on or at the body of the woman.

The slippage Derrida is interested in is thus a version of the same slippage that had occured in "The Emperor's New Clothes." For here the notion of pure difference continually returns to the same signified and the signifying chain with its endless play of signifiers is in fact rooted in place. Thus the analyst is trapped by the very lure of meaningfulness—"it's me!"—that he wishes to analyze. The ideality of the letter-as-phallic-signifier derives from the interpellant system, the one that produces meaning as points of stability between signifiers and signifieds:

> The idealism which resides in [this system] is not a theoretical position of the analyst, it is a structure-effect of *signification* in general, whatever transformations or adjustments are practiced on the space of *semiosis*. It is understandable that Lacan finds this "materiality" "unique": he retains only its ideality. He considers the letter only at the point where, determined (whatever he says about it) by its meaning-content, by the ideality of the message which it "vehiculates," . . . it can circulate, intact, from its place of detachment to the place of its re-attachment, that is to say, to the same place. In fact, this letter does not elude only partition, it eludes movement, it does not change place.[58]

We have seen this before, this result of "the structure-effect of *signification* in general," which the analyst wants to reveal or unveil, but which the analysis itself repeats by continually setting up the fetish—the Truth of the veil/unveiled—in the place of meaning. We have seen this in the analysis of Sherman's art through all types of mythic consumption, including that of the theory of the Male Gaze as production of the eroticized fetish. In all these there is the continual rush towards the signified, the refusal to follow the signifiers, the steady consumption of the mythic production of meaning.

55. Jacques Derrida, "The Purveyor of Truth," *Yale French Studies*, no. 49 (1975), p. 38.

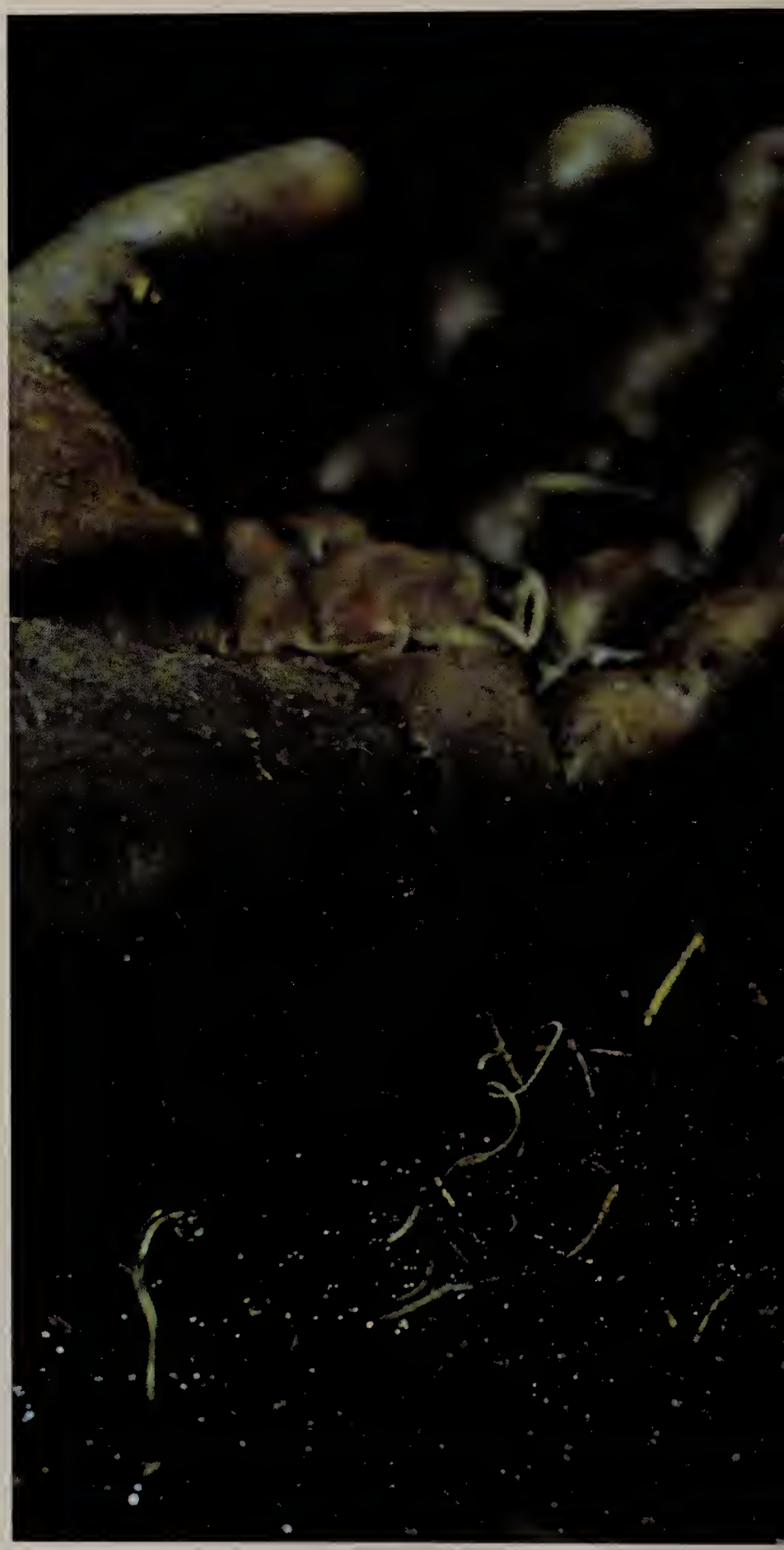
56. Ibid., p. 44.

57. Ibid., p. 60.

58. Ibid., p. 84.

1991

CIVIL WAR



Untitled, # 242, 1991

198.

Untitled, # 240, 1991

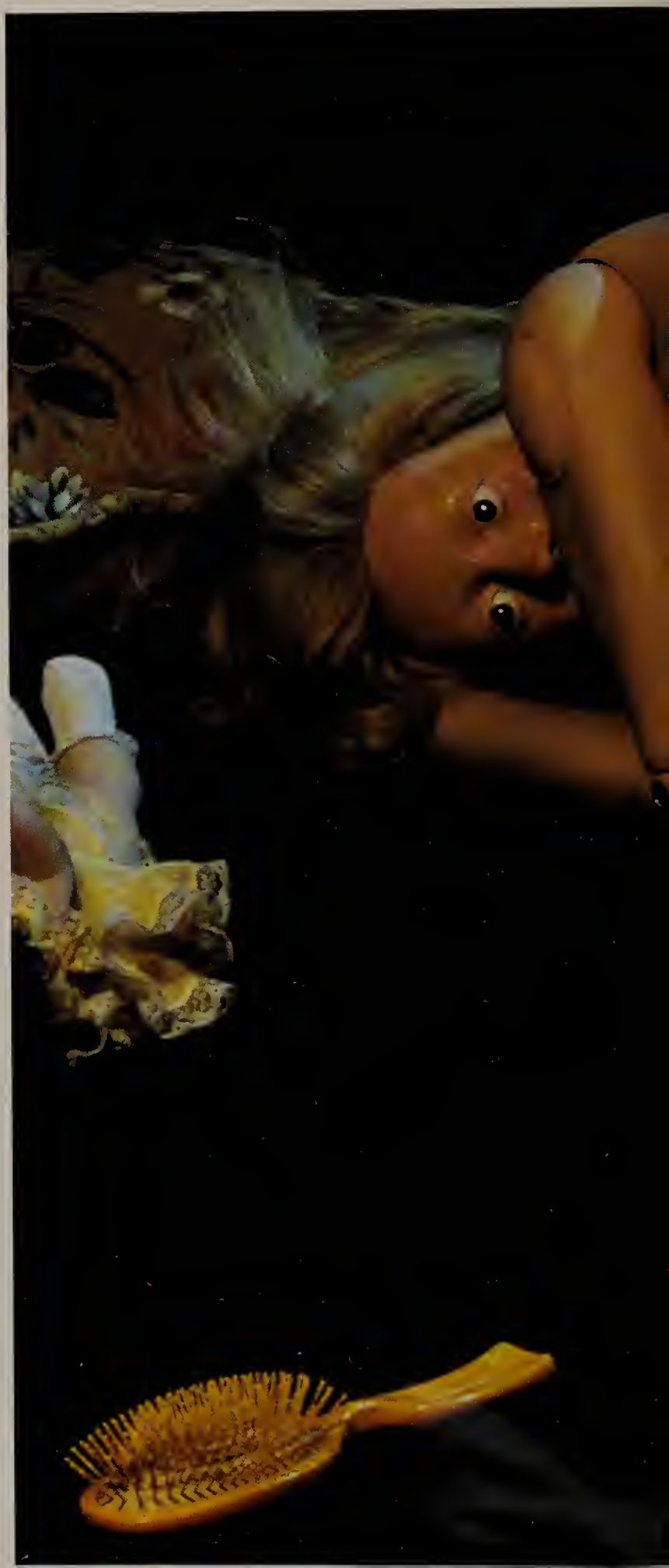
Untitled, # 243, 1991

200.

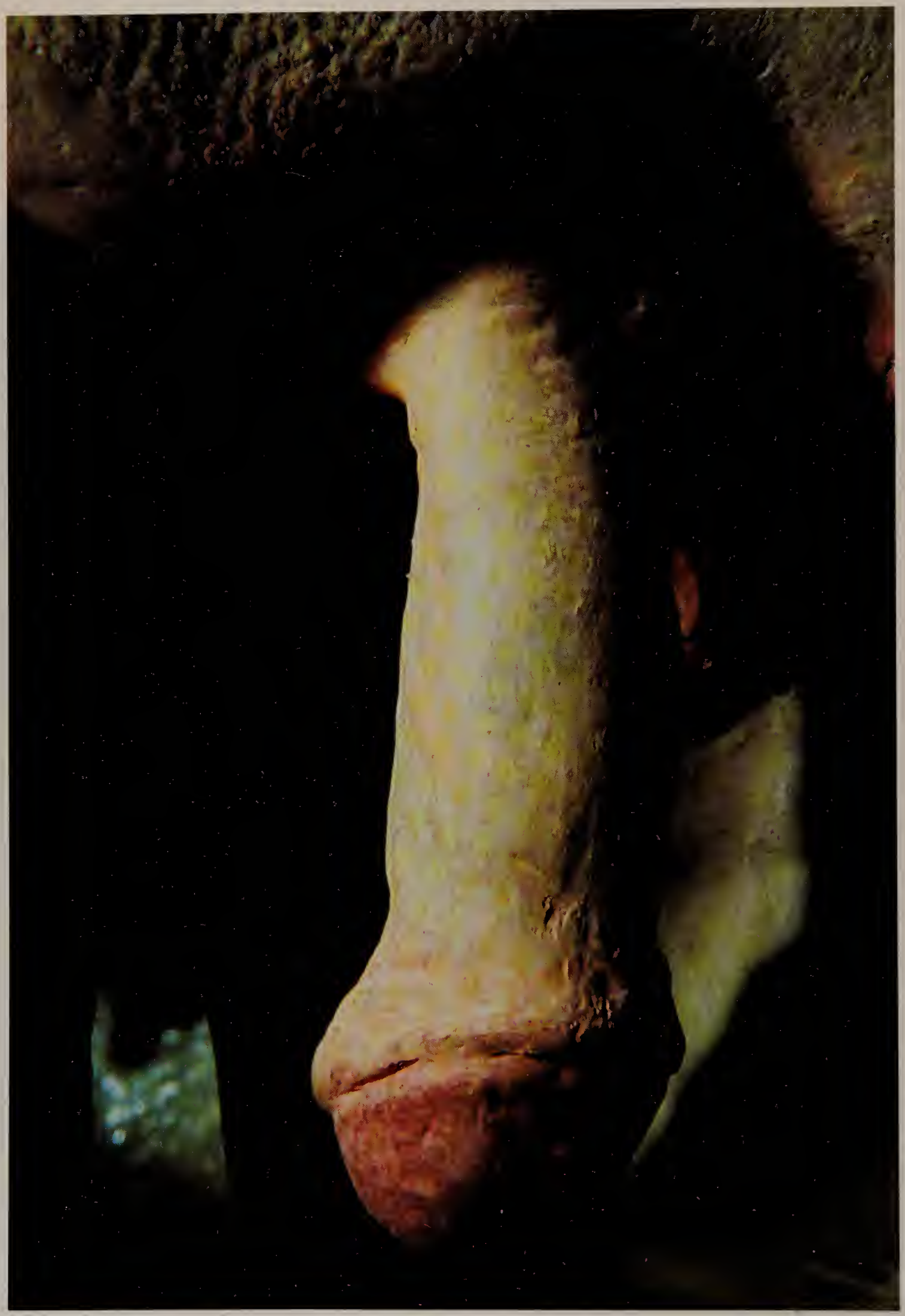
Untitled, # 244, 1991

1992

SEX PICTURES



Untitled, # 255, 1992



204.

Untitled, # 252, 1992

Untitled, # 262, 1992

Untitled, # 258, 1992

6. Sex Pictures

WHEN I DID THOSE HORIZONTAL PICTURES OF ME LYING DOWN, I GOT A LOT OF CRITICISM FOR BEING "ANTI-FEMINIST" AND "TURNING THE CLOCK BACK" BY SHOWING THESE "VICTIMS," AND THESE NEW PICTURES [THE 1985 FAIRY-TALE CHARACTERS] SHOW ME JUST HOW WRONG I THINK THOSE PEOPLE REALLY WERE.[59]

Cindy Sherman

There may have been many reasons why, in the series she made in 1993, Sherman turned away from her own body as support for the image and began to use dolls instead, or more specifically, plastic mannequins acquired from a medical-supplies house. She had spoken in interviews of trying to imagine breaking away from her own constant presence in front of the camera and possibly using models, although she would always end by saying why it didn't seem feasible.[60] Perhaps she finally found a way to make it feasible; perhaps the decision to stage the display of the genitals and the performance of "sexual acts" was in fact a way of forcing her own body out of the image, giving her an excuse to engage a substitute.

But there are many perhapses. Another has to do with how artists locate themselves in a universe of discourse. Some of the criticism of Sherman that has come from feminists who, unlike Mulvey or Solomon-Godeau, see her not as deconstructing the eroticized fetish but as merely reinstalling it—"Her images are successful partly because they do not threaten phallocracy, they reiterate and confirm it"[61]—has focused on Sherman's silence. By calling every one of her works "untitled," they argue, Sherman has taken refuge in a stolid muteness, refusing to speak out on the subject of her art's relation to the issues of domination and submission that are central to feminism. Avoiding interviews as well, it is maintained, Sherman further refuses to take responsibility for the interpretation of her work.

The idea that an artist has a responsibility to come forward with an explicit reading of her or his work seems just as peculiar as the idea that the only way to produce such a reading—should the visual artist wish to do so—would be through words. It is far more usual for artists to construct the interpretive frames within which they are producing and understanding their work by situating themselves in relation to what the critic Mikhail Bakhtin called a discursive horizon. Which is to say that the work an artist makes inevitably enters a field that is structured by other works and their interpretation: the artist can reinforce the dominant interpretation—as when, say, Morris Louis acknowledged the general understanding of Pollock's drip paintings as "optical mirages" by paintings his own series of *Veils*; or the artist can resist, and by implication, critique that interpretation—which was the case of Warhol and Morris when they transgressed the optical, modernist reading and produced their own in the form of the horizontalized, urinary trace on the one hand and "anti-form" on the other.

59. Paul Taylor, "Cindy Sherman," *Flash Art* (October 1985), p. 79.

60. Lisbet Nilson, "Cindy Sherman: Interview," *American Photographer* (September 1983), p. 77.

61. Mira Schor, "From Liberation to Lack," *Heresies*, no. 24 (1989), p. 17.

Hans Bellmer. *La Poupée*. 1938. Private collection, Paris.

Now the same discursive horizon that is encircling Sherman's work, demanding that it either acknowledge or disconfirm its commitments to feminism, has also held up for criticism, much of it virulent, the work of another artist whose major support is the photographic image. This artist is Hans Bellmer, who spent the years 1934 to 1949, that is, from the rise of the Nazi Party through World War II, in Germany making work to which he gave the series title *La Poupée*. Using photographs of dolls that he assembled out of dismountable parts, placing the newly configured body fragments in various situations, mainly domestic, in an early version of installation art, and then disassembling them to start anew, Bellmer has been accused of endlessly staging scenes of rape and of violence on the bodies of women.

It thus would seem, within the present discursive horizon, that the act of choosing to make one's art by means of photographing suggestively positioned dolls is, itself, a decision that speaks volumes. Sherman can continue to call these works "untitled" but they nevertheless produce their own reading through a connection to the *Poupées* of Bellmer.

And this is to say that, among other things, they are a statement of what it means to refuse to an artist the work that he or she has done—which is always work on the signifier—and to rush headlong for the signified, the content, the constructed meaning, which one then proceeds to consume as myth. Bellmer's signifiers are—among other things—doll parts. They are not real bodies and they are not even whole bodies. And these signifiers are operated in a way that allows them to slide along the signifying chain, creating the kind of slippage that is meant, precisely, to blur their meaning, rather than to reify it, or better, to create meaning itelf as blurred.

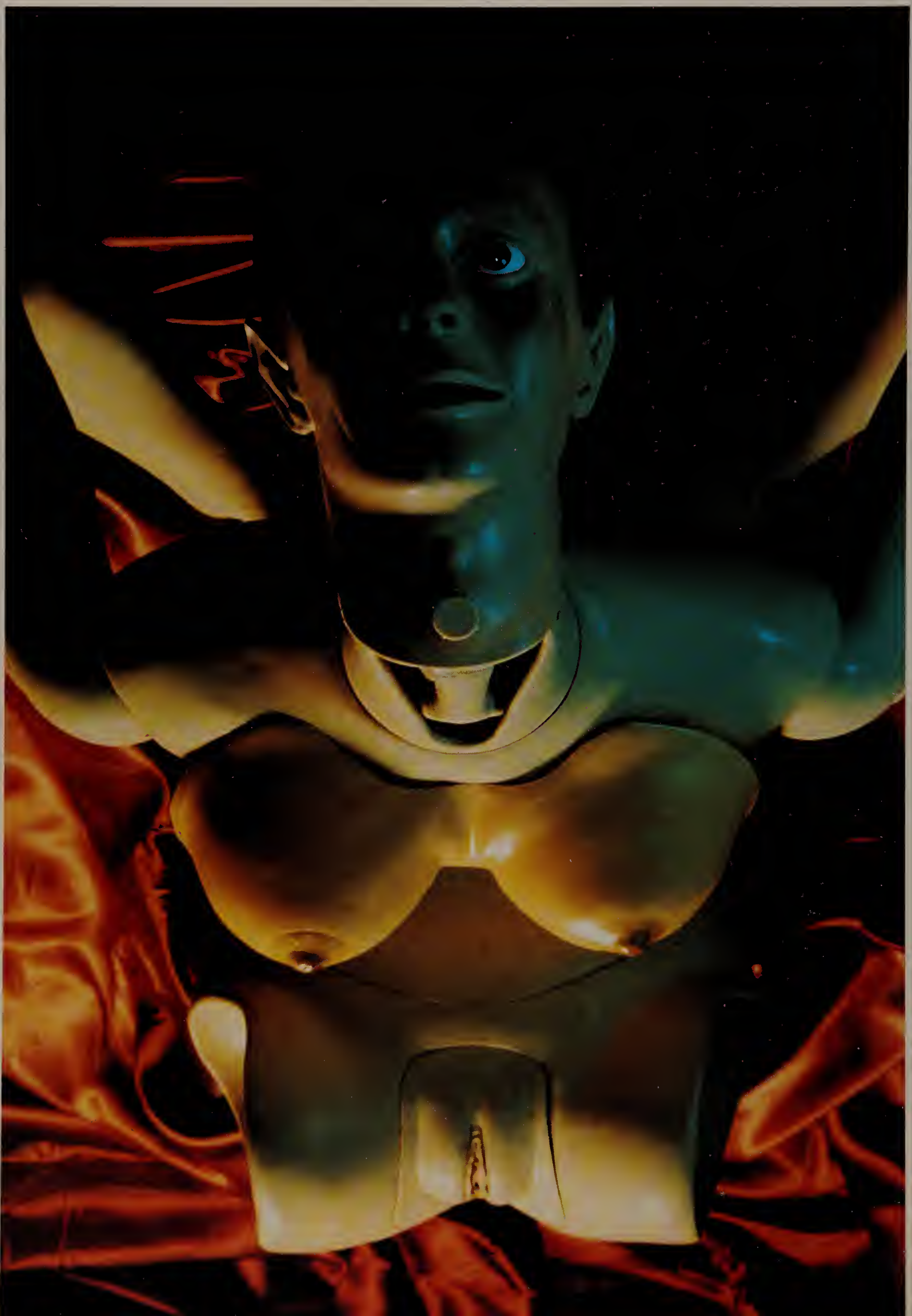
Nowhere is this more evident than in an image of four legs attached around a swivel joint and radiating outward along a hay-strewn ground. Unmistakably swatiska-like in their configuration, these legs present the viewer with a representation that constructs the Nazi emblem in relation to the scenario of the part-object, in which the body is experienced as being threatened and invaded by dismembering objects. As has been pointed out by Hal Foster in his reading of Bellmer's project, the fascist subject's embrace of the perfect body of the trained soldier and of a hardened neoclassicism has itself been read as a defense against its own sense of menace. That fear of invasion—by a group of others who threaten its borders both geographically (Jews, homosexuals, gypsies, Bolsheviks) and psychically (the unconscious, sexuality, the "feminine")—has been seen in its turn as a projection of a fantasized bodily chaos, the result of a ruined ego construction, a chaos against which the fascist subject armors himself, seeking a defense by means of the "metallization of the human body."[62]

Seeing Bellmer's project as one that submits itself to sado-masochistic fantasies in order to explore the convulsive tension between binding and shattering and thus to assume a complicity with the fascist subject "only to expose it most effectively," Foster writes: "For in the *poupées* this fear of the destructive and the defusive is made manifest and reflexive, as is the attempt to overcome it in violence against the feminine other—that is a scandal but also a lesson of the dolls."[63]

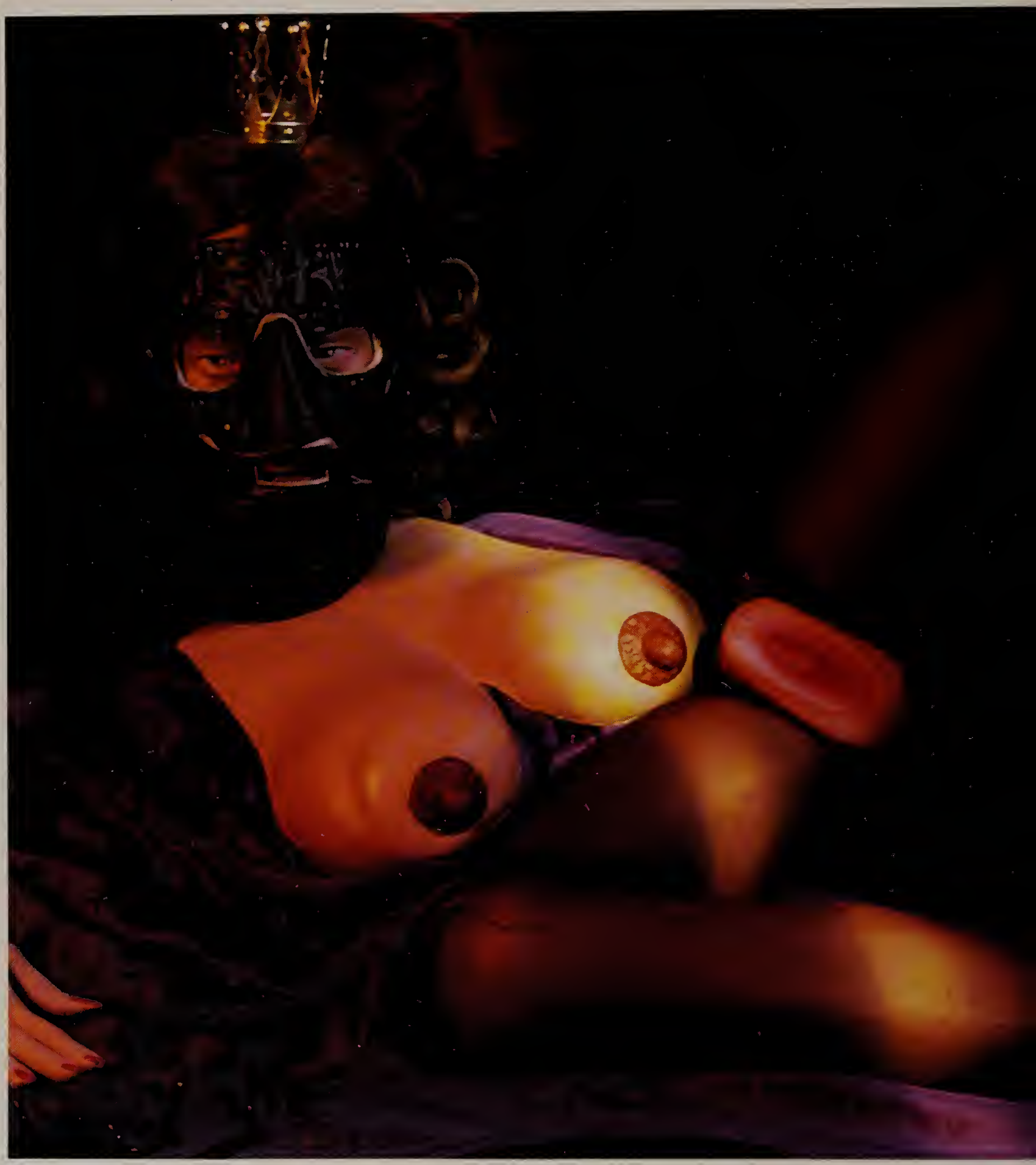
Bellmer, himself the son of a hated authoritarian father who was indeed a Party member and against whom the *poupées* can be seen to stage their most

62. Hal Foster, "Armor Fou," *October*, no. 56 (Spring 1991), p. 86

63. Ibid., p. 96.



Untitled, # 261, 1992



Untitled, # 264, 1992

Untitled, # 259, 1992

flagrant transgression, had written, "If the origin of my work is scandalous, it is because, for me, the world is a scandal." The failure to observe the configuration of the swastika as the ground of reflexiveness from which Bellmer can strike against the father's armor, is a failure that allows the semantic naiveté of a description of the work's signified as a victim of rape.

Just as I would like to think of Sherman in a dialogue with Crimp in the production of Untitled Film Still, #36 (page 56), I imagine her reflecting on Foster's argument in the course of producing Untitled, #263. This is certainly not because I picture her sitting around reading works of criticism. It is rather because she fully inhabits a discursive space vectored by, among other things, her friends. So that many voices circulate within this space, the supports of many arguments and theories, among them those of Hal Foster.

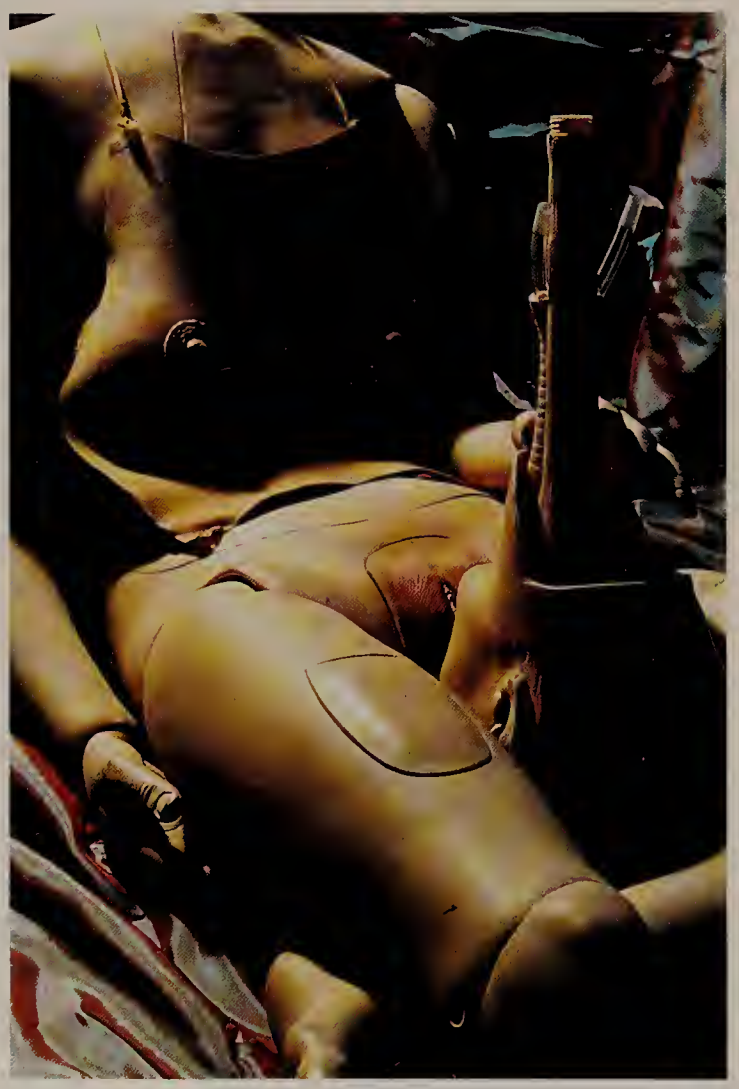
But the coherence of Sherman's work, something that comes out in retrospect as each succeeding series seems to double back and comment on the earlier ones, will probably do as much as anything to interpret these images and resolve these "perhapses." Laura Mulvey comments on this effect of Sherman's retrojective meaning: "The visitor [of a Sherman retrospective exhibition] who reaches the final images and then returns, reversing the order, finds that with the hindsight of what was to come, the early images are transformed."[64]

Thus even as this text is going to press, Sherman is undoubtedly making new work. And in that series, or perhaps the next one, we will encounter signifiers that will cut across the discursive horizon and the plane of the image to reinforce and thus to clarify what is even now going on under the hood.

64. Mulvey, "Phantasmagoria," p. 139.

Untitled, # 263, 1992

Untitled, # 250, 1992



Untitled, # 253, 1992

Untitled, # 257, 1992

215.

Untitled, #157, 1986

House of Wax

NORMAN BRYSON

A first image, from the late nineteenth century. Visitors coming into the Musée Grévin in Paris must have felt it was rather like making their entrance to an embassy ball or the Opéra. The large antechamber, a plush salon in the style of Louis XV with a magnificent central chandelier and mock-rococo panel paintings on the walls, led to the first tableau, *Le Foyer de la Danse.*[1] Here a life-sized mannequin of the great star Mme Rose Caron, in the costume she had worn for the ballet *Faust*, was seen taking her curtain call center-stage, surrounded by a host of other, lesser stars whom enthusiasts would have recognized as Mlle Sandrini (as Cleopatra), Mlle Chabot (as Psyche), Mlle Invernizzi (as the queen of Nubia). Passing on, visitors came to an installation showing the recent reception of the tsar and tsarina on board the French vessel *Marengo* at Cronstadt in 1891, with a large cast of assorted admirals, naval officers, and cabinet ministers greeting the imperial entourage. The next scene commemorated the Paris Exposition of 1889, including a display of the sensational dancers from Java in authentic costume and the replica of an entire street in Cairo, complete with gesticulating merchants before their shop fronts, café boys, and beggars.

From the Cairo street it was a few paces to the next, even more exotic waxwork scene: the "Human Sacrifices at Dahomey," in which the native king Behanzin, surrounded by his wives, was shown ordering the ritual death of one of his slaves (reconstructed from eyewitness accounts). In the episodes that followed, the horrors banished to Africa moved rather closer to home, gravitating toward the historical trauma of the French Revolution: Louis XVI, in prison with Marie Antoinette, being shown by the Revolutionary mob the severed head of the Princesse de Lamballe (in a gory blonde wig); the political martyr Marat in his bath, his leprous skin condition perfectly captured in wax, with Charlotte Corday about to plunge the dagger home; and, not to forget, death's-head effigies of the politicians Bailly, Robespierre, and Mirabeau.

Spectators were now prepared for the Musée Grévin's main attraction. Descending to a lower level (*les souterrains*), they first reached the torture chamber, with executioner, rack, and assorted implements of pain; then, a display of an actual guillotine, alongside "an execution by electricity in New York." Next came a narrative tableau in several episodes showing a bank robbery (the young guard fatally stabbed in the chest), the murderer's arrest, trial, last meal, and finally (just before the exit) his climb up the scaffold ("*Une seconde plus tard, il aura expié son forfait et payé son tribut à la justice des hommes*").[2]

From the glittering stage at the Opéra to the body mangled and mutilated, from the image-theater of a world already rapidly transforming into the society of spectacle down the stairs to the body on the rack—what kind of sequence is this, so sudden, so quick to move from allure to abjection? What is the relation between the body of glamour, the visual repertoire of beauty, and the chamber of horrors, chamber of the body in humiliation, the body excoriated in pain?

A second image, from David Lynch's *Wild at Heart*—or rather two images (the ones I can't seem to shake from my memory): the face of a man being held as the barrel of a colossal elephant gun is placed, just out of sight, against the back of his head; and the repeated close-up of a cigarette being lit and turning into a tornado of fire.

What is the nature of the transition, in the postmodern image universe, that seems to go in one move from everything-is-representation to the body-as-horror? From the proposition that what is real is the simulacrum to the collapse of the simulacrum in a Sadeian meltdown? From the Untitled Film Stills to Cindy Sherman's present take on the body as house of horrors and house of wax?

* * *

One crucial difference between the waxwork museum and the Untitled Film Stills concerns the kind of representational regime within which each operates. The waxwork museum is among other things an extreme product of the post-Renaissance aesthetic of representation as the duplicate of a physically stable referent, a body that stands before it as its original: "Faithful reproduction of nature and respect for truth down to the last details, such are the principles that preside over the execution of every work at the Musée Grévin."[3] The body is presumed simply to exist out there in the world, and then through the skill of the copyist its forms are faithfully repeated in the wax. With the Untitled Film Stills

1. This account of the museum is taken from the *Catalogue Illustré: Musée Grévin*, 98th edition (Paris, n.d.). The museum opened its doors in June 1882.

2. *Catalogue Illustré*, p.44.

3. *Catalogue illustré*, p.2.

this structure of representation is precisely reversed: the nominal referent exists only by means of representation and the complex cultural codes it activates.

Sherman alters her image so radically from picture to picture that it becomes impossible to locate the consistent term that ought to bind the series together; the body disappears into its representations. Or rather, what in a common-sense way we take to be the body, this given thing, is elaborated across the series in such a way that it appears to have been worked by the codes and conventions of representation to a point of saturation; the body is modeled by those codes as completely as the wax is modeled by the Musée Grévin's craftsmen. Sherman convinces the viewer that her various images are indeed different presences, but that "behind" those there stands no central core of identity. The sense of identity—of each image as bodying forth a different presence—becomes manifestly a product of a manipulation of the complex social codes of appearance, a pure surface.

Which is to say that identity—the interior depths supposed to stand behind or within the surface of appearance—is only an identity-effect, the semi-hallucinatory transformation of a material surface into imaginary profundity. Alter the lighting, focus, or grain of the print, and there are immediate consequences in the sense of "identity" being fabricated. Sherman exposes the material underpinnings of identity-production, not only the theatrical codes of costume and gesture, but the photographic codes that come to join them. If graininess in the print makes the figure seem different (distanced or mysterious or disfigured), that proves beyond a doubt that what we had taken to be the source of the presence to which we respond—the figure, the referent, with its/her inwardness and depth—actually emanates from the materiality of the signifying work, from the photographic paper and the way it has been processed, from the apparatus of representation itself.

The "constructionist" view of the body—that the body is not an anatomical constant but a historical variable, a social construction—ought by rights to be serene. If the body consists only in and through its representations, across all the discourses in which it is invoked (medical, aesthetic, erotic, sartorial, legal, historical), if it truly evaporates into representation, becoming weightless, losing its old opacity and density, then in a sense the body should cease to be any kind of problem, for anyone. Entirely subsumed into the sphere of cultural work, indeed apparently becoming the principal arena of cultural activity, it sheds at last its primitive character and is fully assimilated and civilized. In this sense the constructionist attitude consummates the whole project of making the body disappear that characterizes the Enlightenment. As J. S. Mill wrote: "It is in keeping as far as possible out of sight, not only actual pain, but all that can be offensive or disagreeable to the most sensitive persons, that refinement exists."[4] From the eighteenth century on, practices in which the body possessed any kind of insistence are designated barbarous and hidden from view: executions can no longer be conducted before the crowd and vanish behind prison gates; animals are not to be killed in courtyards by local butchers but in abattoirs on the outskirts of the city where noone goes; the display of meat as something frankly carved up from an actual beast (viz. the Mercato Centrale in Florence, to this day), with a head, with internal organs, with a recognizable cadaverous form, is rethought so that meat can cease to appear as recently living flesh and becomes instead a hygienic, quasi-industrial product obtained who knows where or

how; urination in public view is thought unbearable and the venerable *pissoirs* are torn down; the dying, no longer spending their last days and hours at home with their families and friends, their death continuous with the rest of their life and with their surroundings, but instead are sequestered behind white walls and hospital screens.[5]

And further down the line, in our own time, the body will be made to disappear entirely: said to consist solely in its representations, it will eventually be viewed as never having existed any other way. For Foucault, the body's history is that of its construction through the myriad discourses that act to produce the body "positively," i.e. for the first time. It is by virtue of being built by culture that the body comes to be an object of historical inquiry, that it comes to exist at all. And in Foucault the agency of its sublimation is discourse-as-sight: the medical gaze that penetrates past the barrier of skin to the body's secret interior, probing every recess with panoptic clarity, mapping and charting, claiming this newfound land as the last outpost of the discursive empire. The medical gaze—and photography: it is through the photograph that the last taxonomies will be made, of the criminal and deviant physiognomies, the superior and inferior ethnic groups, eventually of entire populations. It is photography that will, in the hands of the authorities, illuminate and set down for the record even the grizzliest murder and finally enable the announcement to be generally circulated that the body has at last been caught within representation's net: it is only representations, always was.

Yet the constructionist understanding of the body has always had a problem with—pain. Wittgenstein's interest in the existence of pain is emblematic of what can happen once it is granted that everything that exists, exists in discourse ("The limits of my language are the limits of my world"). When meaning is identified with cultural convention, when it arises only in the interactive space between persons and is no longer to be located in anyone's head, paradoxically the body returns with an urgency it never before possessed. For pain marks the threshold at which the signifying contract and the language games that compose social reality come up against some kind of absolute limit: there is no *sign* I can exchange for my pain, it cannot be channeled into words (only cries), it exists beyond my powers to represent it before others. Others, in turn, who know of me only through what I can do and be within the world of representation I share with them, are unable know this pain of mine, which belongs to me alone and cannot be converted into signifying currency of any kind. At the very moment when the claim is eventually staked that the body is built exclusively in and as representations, instead of the body's becoming weightless, translucent, illuminated through and through by the pure light of discursive reason, the body instead establishes itself as discourse's unpassable limit.

What therefore comes into play is the reverse of the body's subsumption into discourse: the perception of the body as symbolically recalcitrant, as underground resistance from the boundary of the discursive empire. The discourse that officially carries the body off—abduction as much as subsumption—stumbles, falters, as it is experienced as running up against something that eludes the contractual exchange of signifiers: a density, a gravity, a standing-outside of discourse; an ecstasy of the body as that which cannot, will not, be sublimated into signifying space. Henceforth the body is exactly the place where

4. Cit. Thomas Laquer, "Clio Looks at Corporal Politics," in *Corporal Politics* (Cambridge: MIT, List Visual Arts Center, 1992), p. 14.

5. Thomas Laqueur, ibid.

Untitled, #175, 1987

something *falls out* of the signifying order—or cannot get inside it. At once residue and resistance, it becomes that which cannot be symbolized: the site, in fact, of the real.

The body is everything that cannot be turned into representation, and for this reason is never directly recognizable: if, in our minds, we were to picture this body-outside-discourse, it would not *resemble* a body at all, since the body-as-resemblance is precisely that into which it may not be converted. Even depictions of the body in abjection only approximate what is at stake here, substituting the mere forms of the horrible for what is essentially incommensurable with form, is *informe*. Language can only point toward this aspect of the body, cannot grasp its fleshiness and dampness, its excess beyond signification. As Lacan described the throat of Freud's patient Irma:

> The flesh one never sees, the foundation of things, the other side of the head, of the face, the secretory glands par excellence, the flesh from which everything exudes, at the very heart of mystery, the flesh in as much as it is suffering, is formless, in as much as its form in itself is something which provokes anxiety.[6]

Like language, visual representation can only find analogues and comparants for this body: it is *like* this or that (Untitled, #175, of 1987, and Untitled, #157, of 1986). At the edges of representation or behind it hovers a body you will know about only because these inadequate stand-ins, which are there simply to mark a limit or boundary to representation, are able to conjure up a penumbra of something lying beyond representability. The penumbra indicates that discourse-as-sight cannot quite detect this region or bring it into focus. Yet insofar as the spectator has the sense that sight is not able comfortably to scan the penumbra (the gaze bouncing off from the image, like an arrow hitting a shield), a certain nausea arises that unmistakably announces the advent of the real. Not because the image shows this or that horrible thing—the repellent appearance of the image's content is only a momentary obstacle to discourse, since as soon as the discourses of horror move in on their target, they at once neutralize it and absorb it back inside the repertoire of the conventions. On the contrary, the object of horror (of *enjoyment*) shown in the picture will always be inadequate to the affective charge it carries with it: the horror is never *in* the representation, but around it, like a glow or a scent. In the Sex Pictures series, Sherman manages to play with exactly this gap between the body as the ecstasy-of-discourse and that body's inadequate stand-ins on the representational stage. Hence their comedy of the macabre, their gallows humor: the medical-student mannequins and body parts and Halloween masks and prostheses cannot live up to, cannot *match*, the affect they induce. But in a sense the horror object need not even aim to be adequate, since it is only a decoy, not the real thing, only a herald of the real, a warning that horror is in the air.

Once the world is declared to have become representation, and the real drops out of the system, the cultural sphere should be at peace, orbiting in the serene spaces of virtual reality. But the surprising consequence of the conversion of reality into spectacle is its obverse: a tremulous sensitivity to the real, an acute awareness of the moments when the virtual reality is disturbed, when it comes up against and hits that which it has notionally expelled from its system. Precisely because the system of discursive representation is supposed

to have embraced everything there is, the body included, the subject's brushes with the real have a force they never possessed prior to the totalization of representation into "reality." Like a magnet held to a television screen, the encounters with the real cause the entire image to buckle. To the subject of the world-as-representation (or commodity/spectacle) the approach of the real induces a special kind of fear that may, historically, be something new in the world: an anxiety or nausea that is the unlooked-for spin-off from the system's own success.

The primary action of the real is never, of course, to appear: when it dons a form (monster, alien, vampire, corpse), it is already safely within the space of the representational. The action of the real is simply that it moves close, moves *too* close. The hard nucleus of that which resists symbolization comes toward the subject as a curvature in the space of representation itself, as a dread that infiltrates the image and seems to shimmer outside and behind it.

Perhaps this is what subtends the strain of Gothic Revival in the postmodern, whose key practitioners are (for me, at least) Sherman, David Lynch, and Joel-Peter Witkin. The structure on which each thinks about the image and the body is less the sign than the *symptom.* The symptom is what stands permanently on the threshold of symbolization but cannot cross over; it is a cyphered message, on the verge of passing into signification and culture yet permanently held back, as a bodily cryptogram. What makes it recognizable (insofar as this is possible) is its affect of dread, as the whole edifice of personal and cultural intelligibility is shaken by what it has excluded—the object-cause of the subject's fear and desire. Strictly speaking, the affect of panic that comes with the overproximity or imminence of the real is about all that can be known here, since what induces the dread is precisely unnameable. Certainly its locus is the body, but not the body that emerges in Foucault, the Enlightenment product of discipline, knowledge, and technique. What the theory of the disciplinary body passes over in methodological silence is the body precisely as the disciplinary's stumbling block, the dense and wayward Thing that escapes absorption into the panoptic theater of power. Dark, hidden, it is the price that is paid for the very idea of the body as disciplined and tamed; its monstrosity is that of all the amorphous secretions that fall back into the subject as rejects from the disciplinary arena.

Which is already to speak of its *necessity* to the symbolic order. The structure of the symptom is only partially understood if we think of it as the true speech of the body, welling up from inside it and hammering at the door of culture. Rather it is the whole mass of residues created as waste products from the theater of the cultural imaginary, where the subject assumes and internalizes its repertoire of sanctioned and conventional appearances. It comes into being *with* and *out of* that theater of representations. And the greater the scope and range of the imaginary theater (the closer the latter comes to making the declaration that "everything that exists has been absorbed into culture and symbolization"), the greater the menace that the symptom poses to the subject's internal stability. Its core is an elementary axiom, incapable of further elaboration: simply that "something has gone wrong with the body." Hence the emphasis, which with Witkin ventures into the terrain of the abominable —farther than even Sherman or Lynch—of the body as *unfathomably* afflicted.[7] With Lynch, the bodies of the stars in the main plot ("normal," even glamourized) are shunted aside as

6. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 154–155.

7. See *Joel-Peter Witkin* (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1983); *Joel-Peter Witkin* (Pasadena: Twelvetree Press, 1985); *Joel-Peter Witkin: Forty Photographs* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1985); Joel-Peter Witkin, *Gods of Earth and Heaven* (Altadena: Twelvetree Press, 1989); and especially *Masterpieces of Medical Photography: Selections from the Burns Archive*, ed. J.-P. Witkin (Pasadena: Twelvetree Press, 1987).

Untitled Film Still, #48, 1979, and Untitled #274, 1992

figures from a lower narrative level invade the screen, bringing with them the de-formation of the wholesome bodily outline enjoyed by the principal characters: in *Dune*, the Witkinesque figures of barely-functioning bodies decomposing from the unknown diseases of the planetary future; in *Wild at Heart*, the central image of the body exploded, its disconnected parts flying up into the sky or carried off by a dog or on the point of facial obliteration (the elephant gun behind the head).

In both Lynch's and Sherman's work what intensifies the symptom's dread is that nothing from the available "reality" seems strong enough to ward off or drive back the fearful incursion from the real. In a classical order of representation (like that of the Musée Grévin), based on the two terms *original*::*copy*, the representation of horror —however ghastly—was never any more than a phantom or a temporary nightmare, since no matter how bad the dream one could always wake up and shift away from the unsettling zone of representation back to the safe haven of a real world and a waking state. But in the postmodern visual regime, built around the idea of the breakdown of the classical opposition between real and copy and on the absorption of reality within representation, there is no space outside of the theater of representation into which the subject might run. An apparently enclosed order, representation now has no exit point, no fire escape. Its space is like that of the Tibetan *bardo*, a zone in which after death the subject is said to witness the playing-out of all of its fantasies of desire and fear, but from a viewpoint of total entrapment and inability to swerve away from the object-cause of dread. In the Untitled Film Stills all that remains of a reality largely swallowed up inside representation is narrative and visual shards from old cinema genres (*film noir*, Hitchcock, New Wave, Neo-Realism, etc). None of these flimsy screens has the force to keep at bay the advance of the real toward the subject (the same can be said of Lynch: the quotations from older cinema—from musicals, road-movies, comedies, science fiction—serve only to weaken still further the narrative space, leaving it powerless before the real's encroachment).[8]

Two images from Sherman, a song of innocence and one of experience, Untitled Film Still, #48, of 1979, and Untitled, #274, of 1992. They could hardly be more different. At what point did Sherman go over to the dark side? Turning back the pages of the "complete works," one sees with hindsight that despite the earlier image's optimism, its upbeat quality of "setting out" (one might recall the title of a review from 1983: "Here's Looking at You, Kid"),[9] the symptomatic structure is already fully in place: the first proposition, that the real is now being thoroughly assimilated into representation (in this case, across the codes of cinema); and the second, its consequence, that this very absorption secretes at its edges an atmosphere of dread, off-screen and at the fringes of the representation, a fear *for* and *of* the body at the very moment of its sublimation or disappearance into the representational theater. In the later image (Untitled, #274) the real moves in much closer, and Sherman's own body has physically vanished from the scene, sign of its assumption into the visual equivalent to the "social text," the image stream. What reemerges from that very disappearance is everything about the body that the image stream throws out in order to maintain the ideas of the body as socialized, clean, representable: the body's material density, its internal drives and pulsions, the convulsiveness of its pain and pleasure, the thickness of its enjoyment.

Which in a sense was what the Musée Grévin was already exploring a century earlier, in the context of a society as yet only halfway toward a thoroughgoing conversion of reality into spectacle. Elsewhere in Paris, in the Salon, were to be found the official representations of the body, the academic idealizations by the Gérômes, the Bouguereaus, the Carolus Durans, Cabanels, Viberts. In the margins of the official culture stood the waxworks, still pretending to be respectable and correct, still bowing to the higher powers of religion and national history (the Pope, Napoleon, the tsar of Russia). But all these are presented as simulacra, in some sense entering into an emergent modern image-stream, while a staircase leads abruptly down to everything that exceeds the acceptable repertoire of images: murder, torture, electrocution, with the state in its guise of pure violence (guillotine, electric chair) and the civil subject addressed as a kind of bundle of darkly desiring flesh. With Sherman we see the same (or a related) culture one century later. The stakes are higher, and representation is in the process of putting the finishing touches to its colonization of the real. At its margins, coeval with that colonizing project and consequent upon it, stands the symptomatic body of pain and pleasure, of *enjoyment*. The movement from the ideal to the abject is now a single sweep, an arc: the trajectory, indeed, of Sherman's career to date.

8. See Slavoj Zizek, *Enjoy Your Symptom! Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 129.

9. Waldemar Januszczak, "Here's Looking at You, Kid," *Guardian*, May 19, 1983.

Untitled, MPf, 1980

Complete List of Works

Untitled, A
1975
b/w
20 × 16"
edition of 10
p. 10.

Untitled, B
1975
b/w
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edition of 10
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Untitled, C
1975
b/w
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Untitled, D
1975
b/w
20 × 16"
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Untitled, E
1975
b/w
20 × 16"
edition of 10

Untitled Film Still, # 1
1977
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
40 × 30"
edition of 3

Untitled Film Still, # 2
1977
b/w
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edition of 10
40 × 30"
edition of 3
p. 57.

Untitled Film Still, # 3
1977
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
16 × 20"
edition of 3
30 × 40"
edition of 3
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Untitled Film Still, # 4
1977
b/w
8 × 10"
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edition of 1
30 × 40"
edition of 3
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Untitled Film Still, # 5
1977
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
16 × 20"
edition of 3
30 × 40"
edition of 3
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Untitled Film Still, # 6
1977
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
40 × 30"
edition of 3
p. 21.

Untitled Film Still, # 7
1978
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
20 × 16"
edition of 1
40 × 30"
edition of 3
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Untitled Film Still, # 8
1978
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
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Untitled Film Still, # 9
1978
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edition of 10
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edition of 3
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Untitled Film Still, # 10
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b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
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edition of 3
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Untitled Film Still, # 11
1978
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
16 × 20"
edition of 1
30 × 40"
edition of 3
p. 54.

Untitled Film Still, # 12
1978
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3

Untitled Film Still, # 13
1978
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
20 × 16"
edition of 1
40 × 30"
edition of 3
p. 69.

Untitled Film Still, # 14
1978
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
40 × 30"
edition of 3
p. 68.

Untitled Film Still, # 15
1978
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
20 × 16"
edition of 1
40 × 30"
edition of 3
p. 65.

Untitled Film Still, # 16
1978
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
20 × 16"
edition of 1
40 × 30"
edition of 3
p. 40.

Untitled Film Still, # 17
1978
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
p. 27.

Untitled Film Still, # 18
1978
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
16 × 20"
edition of 3
30 × 40"
edition of 3
p. 28.

Untitled Film Still, # 19
1978
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
p. 28.

Untitled, MPc, 1983, and # 246, 1987

Untitled Film Still, # 20
1978
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
p. 26.

Untitled Film Still, # 21
1978
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
16 × 20"
edition of 3
30 × 40"
edition of 3
pp. 30–31.

Untitled Film Still, # 22
1978
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
p. 29.

Untitled Film Still, # 23
1978
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
p. 30.

Untitled Film Still, # 24
1978
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3

Untitled Film Still, # 25
1978
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
16 × 20"
edition of 3
30 × 40"
edition of 3
p. 48.

Untitled Film Still, # 26
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3

Untitled Film Still, # 27
1979
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
20 × 16"
edition of 1
40 × 30"
edition of 3
p. 33.

Untitled Film Still, # 27B
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
p. 64.

Untitled Film Still, # 28
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3

Untitled Film Still, # 29
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3

Untitled Film Still, # 30
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
p. 50.

Untitled Film Still, # 31
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3

Untitled Film Still, # 32
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
16 × 20"
edition of 3
30 × 40"
edition of 3
pp. 38–39.

Untitled Film Still, # 33
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
p. 62

Untitled Film Still, # 34
1979
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
40 × 30"
edition of 3
p. 45.

Untitled Film Still, # 35
1979
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
20 × 16"
edition of 1
40 × 30"
edition of 3.
p. 42.

Untitled Film Still, # 36
1979
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
40 × 30"
edition of 3
p. 56.

Untitled Film Still, # 37
1979
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
20 × 16"
edition of 1
40 × 30"
edition of 3
p. 53.

Untitled Film Still, # 38
1979
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
40 × 30"
edition of 3
p. 14.

Untitled Film Still, # 39
1979
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
40 × 30"
edition of 3
p. 56.

Untitled Film Still, # 40
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
pp. 34–35.

Untitled Film Still, # 41
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3

Untitled Film Still, # 42
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3

Untitled, # 247, 1987

Untitled Film Still, # 43
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
pp. 22–23.

Untitled Film Still, # 44
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
16 × 20"
edition of 1
30 × 40"
edition of 3
pp. 70–71.

Untitled Film Still, # 45
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
16 × 20"
edition of 3
30 × 40"
edition of 3

Untitled Film Still, # 46
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
p. 60.

Untitled Film Still, # 47
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
16 × 20"
edition of 1
30 × 40"
edition of 3
pp. 46–47.

Untitled Film Still, # 48
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
16 × 20"
edition of 3
30 × 40"
edition of 3
pp. 12–13, 222.

Untitled Film Still, # 49
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
pp. 24–25.

Untitled Film Still, # 50
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
16 × 20"
edition of 1
30 × 40"
edition of 3
pp. 58–59.

Untitled Film Still, # 51
1979
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
40 × 30"
edition of 3

Untitled Film Still, # 52
1979
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
p. 18.

Untitled Film Still, # 53
1980
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
pp. 62–63.

Untitled Film Still, # 54
1980
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
16 × 20"
edition of 1
30 × 40"
edition of 3
pp. 16–17.

Untitled Film Still, # 55
1980
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3

Untitled Film Still, # 56
1980
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
pp. 72–73.

Untitled Film Still, # 57
1980
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
p. 43.

Untitled Film Still, # 58
1980
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3

Untitled Film Still, # 59
1980
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3

Untitled Film Still, # 60
1980
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
40 × 30"
edition of 3
p. 72.

Untitled Film Still, # 61
1979
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
40 × 30"
edition of 3
p. 19.

Untitled Film Still, # 62
1978
color
24 × 20"
edition of 10

Untitled Film Still, # 63
1980
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
p. 38.

Untitled Film Still, # 64
1980
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3

Untitled Film Still, # 65
1980
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
40 × 30"
edition of 3

Untitled, # 66
1980
color
20 × 24"
edition of 5
pp. 80–81.

Untitled, # 67
1980
color
20 × 24"
edition of 5
pp. 78–79.

Untitled, # 68
1980
color
20 × 24"
edition of 5
p. 74.

Untitled, # 69
1980
color
20 × 24"
edition of 5
pp. 76–77.

Untitled, MPb, 1982

Untitled, # 70
1980
color
20 × 24"
edition of 5
pp. 4–5, 77.

Untitled, # 71
1980
color
20 × 24"
edition of 5
p. 82.

Untitled, # 72
1980
color
20 × 24"
edition of 5
p. 78.

Untitled, # 74
1980
color
20 × 24"
edition of 5
pp. 74–75.

Untitled, # 75
1980
color
20 × 24"
edition of 5

Untitled, # 76
1980
color
20 × 24"
edition of 5
pp. 82–83.

Untitled, # 77
1980
color
20 × 24"
edition of 5

Untitled, # 78
1980
color
20 × 24"
edition of 5
p. 239.

Untitled, # 79
1980
color
20 × 24"
edition of 5
p. 81.

Untitled, # 80
1980
color
20 × 24"
edition of 5

Untitled Film Still, # 81
1978
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
40 × 30"
edition of 3
p. 56.

Untitled Film Still, # 82
1979
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 10
40 × 30"
edition of 3
p. 36.

Untitled Film Still, # 83
1980
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3
p. 55.

Untitled Film Still, # 84
1978
b/w
8 × 10"
edition of 10
30 × 40"
edition of 3

Untitled, # 85
1981
color
24 × 48"
edition of 10
p. 93.

Untitled, # 86
1981
color
24 × 48"
edition of 10
pp. 94–95.

Untitled, # 87
1981
color
24 × 48"
edition of 10
pp. 86–87.

Untitled, # 88
1981
color
24 × 48"
edition of 10
pp. 96–97.

Untitled, # 89
1981
color
24 × 48"
edition of 10

Untitled, # 90
1981
color
24 × 48"
edition of 10
p. 92.

Untitled, # 91
1981
color
24 × 48"
edition of 10
p. 97

Untitled, # 92
1981
color
24 × 48"
edition of 10
pp. 88–89.

Untitled, # 93
1981
color
24 × 48"
edition of 10
pp. 84–85.

Untitled, # 94
1981
color
24 × 48"
edition of 10
p. 229.

Untitled, # 95
1981
color
24 × 48"
edition of 10
p. 104.

Untitled, # 96
1981
color
24 × 48"
edition of 10
pp. 90–91.

Untitled, # 97
1982
color
45 × 30"
edition of 10
p. 99.

Untitled, # 98
1982
color
45 × 30"
edition of 10
p. 101.

Untitled, # 99
1982
color
45 × 30"
edition of 10
p. 100.

Untitled, # 100
1982
color
45 × 30"
edition of 10
p. 98.

Untitled, # 101
1982
color
41 × 30"
edition of 10

Untitled, # 102
1981
color
49 × 24"
edition of 10
p. 230.

Untitled, MPa, 1979, # 212, 1989, and # 231, 1987

Untitled, # 103
1982
color
30 × 19 3/4"
edition of 10
p. 107

Untitled, # 104
1982
color
30 × 19 3/4"
edition of 10

Untitled, # 105
1982
color
30 × 19 3/4"
edition of 10

Untitled, # 106
1982
color
38 × 24"
edition of 10

Untitled, # 107
1982
color
38 × 24"
edition of 10
p. 236.

Untitled, # 108
1982
color
36 × 36"
edition of 10
p. 111.

Untitled, # 109
1982
color
36 × 36"
edition of 10
p. 110.

Untitled, # 110
1982
color
45 1/4 × 30"
edition of 10
p. 106.

Untitled, # 111
1982
color
45 1/4 × 30"
edition of 10

Untitled, # 112
1982
color
45 1/4 × 30"
edition of 10
p. 103.

Untitled, # 113
1982
color
45 1/4 × 30"
edition of 10
p. 108.

Untitled, # 114
1982
color
49 × 30"
edition of 10
p. 102.

Untitled, # 115
1982
color
45 1/4 × 30"
edition of 10

Untitled, # 116
1982
color
45 1/4 × 30"
edition of 10
p. 105.

Untitled, # 117
1983
color
24 1/2 × 34 3/4"
edition of 18
70 × 46 1/2"
unique
p. 120.

Untitled, # 118
1983
color
34 1/2 × 23 1/4"
edition of 18
80 3/4 × 56 3/4"
unique
p. 117.

Untitled, # 119
1983
color
17 1/2 × 36"
edition of 18
45 1/2 × 94"
unique
pp. 112–113.

Untitled, # 120
1983
color
34 1/2 × 21 3/4"
edition of 18
75 × 45 1/2"
unique
p. 116.

Untitled, # 121
1983
color
35 × 21 1/4"
edition of 18
73 1/2 × 45 1/2"
unique
p. 115.

Untitled, # 122
1983
color
35 1/4 × 21 1/4"
edition of 18
74 1/2 × 45 3/4"
unique
p. 114.

Untitled, # 123
1983
color
35 × 24 1/2"
edition of 18
64 1/2 × 44 1/4"
unique
p. 121.

Untitled, # 124
1983
color
24 1/2 × 33"
edition of 18
45 × 57"
unique

Untitled, # 125
1983
color
19 1/4 × 36"
edition of 18
44 1/2 × 84"
unique
pp. 118–119.

Untitled, # 126
1983
color
34 1/2 × 22 1/2"
edition of 18
83 × 59"
unique

Untitled, # 127
1983
color
70 × 46 1/2"
unique
p. 120.

Untitled, # 128
1983
color
36 1/4 × 23 1/4"
edition of 18
68 1/4 × 45 1/4"
unique

Untitled, # 129
1983
color
34 3/4 × 23 1/2"
edition of 18
67 × 45"
unique
p. 119.

Untitled, # 130
1983
color
34 1/2 × 24"
edition of 18
67 1/2 × 45 1/2"
unique
p. 234.

Untitled, # 131
1983
color
34 3/4 × 16 1/2"
edition of 18
94 3/4 × 45 1/4"
unique
pp. 1, 118.

Untitled, # 94, 1981

Untitled, # 132
1984
color
69 × 47"
edition of 5
p. 124.

Untitled, # 133
1984
color
71 1/4 × 47 1/2"
edition of 5
p. 125.

Untitled, # 134
1984
color
70 1/2 × 47 3/4"
edition of 5

Untitled, # 135
1984
color
69 3/4 × 47 3/4"
edition of 5

Untitled, # 136
1984
color
72 × 47 1/2"
edition of 5
p. 124.

Untitled, # 137
1984
color
70 1/2 × 47 3/4"
edition of 5
p. 122.

Untitled, # 138
1984
color
71 × 48 1/2"
edition of 5
p. 123.

Untitled, # 139
1984
color
71 × 48 1/2"
edition of 5
p. 106.

Untitled, # 140
1985
color
72 1/2 × 49 3/8"
edition of 6
pp. 6, 144.

Untitled, # 141
1985
color
72 1/2 × 49 1/2"
edition of 6
p. 142.

Untitled, # 142
1985
color
48 × 72"
edition of 6
p. 129.

Untitled, # 143
1985
color
51 3/4 × 49 3/8"
edition of 6
p. 164.

Untitled, # 145
1985
color
72 1/2 × 49 1/2"
edition of 6
p. 151.

Untitled, # 146
1985
color
72 1/2 × 49 3/8"
edition of 6
p. 130.

Untitled, # 147
1985
color
49 1/2 × 72 1/2"
edition of 6
pp. 126–127.

Untitled, # 148
1985
color
72 1/2 × 49 3/8"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 149
1985
color
72 1/2 × 49 1/4"
edition of 6
pp. 106, 155, 193.

Untitled, # 150
1985
color
49 1/2 × 66 3/4"
edition of 6
pp. 134–135.

Untitled, # 151
1985
color
72 1/2 × 49 1/2"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 152
1985
color
72 1/2 × 49 3/8"
edition of 6
p. 128.

Untitled, # 153
1985
color
67 1/4 × 49 1/2"
edition of 6
p. 132.

Untitled, # 154
1985
color
72 1/2 × 49 3/8"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 155
1985
color
72 1/2 × 49 1/4"
edition of 6
p. 136.

Untitled, # 156
1985
color
49 1/2 × 72 1/2"
edition of 6
p. 154.

Untitled, # 157
1986
color
60 × 40"
edition of 6
pp. 157, 216.

Untitled, # 158
1986
color
60 × 40"
edition of 6
p. 237.

Untitled, # 159
1984
color
42 7/8 × 28 5/8"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 160
1986
color
50 1/8 × 33 3/8"
edition of 6
p. 138.

Untitled, # 161
1986
color
35 1/2 × 23"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 162
1986
color
30 1/4 × 29"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 163
1987
color
45 × 28 1/2"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 164
1986
color
23 5/8 × 35 3/4"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 165
1986
color
35 1/2 × 23 5/8"
edition of 6
p. 131.

Untitled, # 102, 1981, and # 256, 1992

Untitled, # 166
1987
color
59 1/4 × 35 1/4"
edition of 6
p. 233.

Untitled, # 167
1986
color
60 × 90"
edition of 6
pp. 111, 140–141.

Untitled, # 168
1987
color
85 × 60"
edition of 6
pp. 111, 145.

Untitled, # 169
1987
color
49 × 69"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 170
1987
color
70 1/2 × 47 1/2"
edition of 6
p. 139.

Untitled, # 171
1987
color
47 1/2 × 71"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 172
1987
color
71 1/2 × 47 1/2"
edition of 6
p. 137.

Untitled, # 173
1986
color
60 × 90"
edition of 6
pp. 146–147.

Untitled, # 174
1987
color
71 x 47 1/2"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 175
1987
color
47 1/2 × 71 1/2"
edition of 6
pp. 162–163, 193, 220.

Untitled, # 176
1987
color
71 1/2 × 47 1/2"
edition of 6
p. 111.

Untitled, # 177
1987
color
47 1/3 × 71 1/3"
edition of 6
p. 148.

Untitled, # 178
1987
color
71 × 47 3/4"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 179
1987
color
71 1/2 × 47 1/2"
edition of 6
p. 143.

Untitled, # 180
1987
color
96 × 120"
(two parts, each 96 × 60")
edition of 6
pp. 152–153.

Untitled, # 181
1987
color
72 × 96"
(two parts, each 72 × 48")
edition of 6

Untitled, # 182
1987
color
96 × 60"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 183
1988
color
42 1/2 × 28 1/2"
edition of 6
p. 8, 168.

Untitled, # 184
1988
color
59 1/4 × 89 1/4"
edition of 6
pp. 160–161.

Untitled, # 185
1988
color
62 1/4 × 41 1/4"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 186
1989
color
44 3/4 × 29 1/4"
edition of 6
p. 155.

Untitled, # 187
1989
color
71 × 46 1/2"
edition of 6
p. 158.

Untitled, # 188
1989
color
43 1/4 × 65"
edition of 6
p. 133.

Untitled, # 189
1989
color
31 1/4 × 46 "
edition of 6
p. 131.

Untitled, # 190
1989
color
92 1/2 × 71"
(two parts, each 46 1/4 × 71")
edition of 6
pp. 156, 194.

Untitled, # 191
1989
color
90 × 60"
edition of 6
p. 165.

Untitled, # 192
1989
color
65 × 44"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 193
1989
color
48 7/8 × 41 15/16"
edition of 6
p. 189.

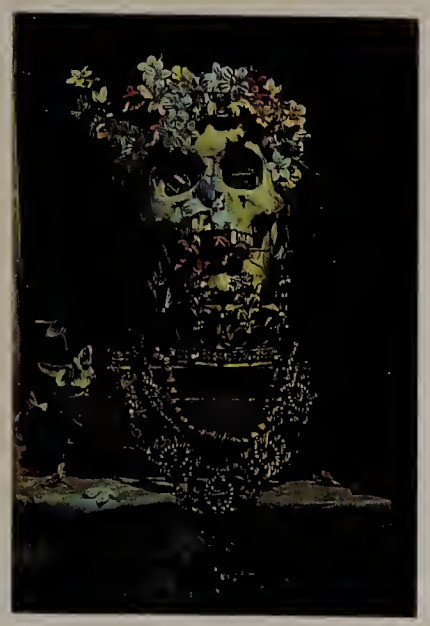
Untitled, # 194
1989
color
41 15/16 × 27 7/8"
edition of 6
p. 181.

Untitled, # 195
1989
color
29 15/16 × 13 15/16"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 196
1989
color
66 11/16 × 43 15/16"
edition of 6
p. 170.

Untitled, # 197
1989
color
30 15/16 × 20 7/8"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 198
1989
color
38 3/8 × 27 7/8"
edition of 6
p. 177.



Untitled, # 272, 1992

Untitled, # 199
1989
color
24 15/16 × 18"
edition of 6
p. 182.

Untitled, # 200
1989
color
30 15/16 × 20 7/8"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 201
1989
color
52 7/8 × 35 7/8"
edition of 6
p. 176.

Untitled, # 203
1989
color
53 × 38"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 204
1989
color
59 3/4 × 53 1/4"
edition of 6
p. 172.

Untitled, # 205
1989
color
53 1/2 × 40 1/4"
edition of 6
p. 171.

Untitled, # 206
1989
color
67 1/2 × 45"
edition of 6
p. 185.

Untitled, # 207
1989
color
65 1/2 × 49 1/2"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 208
1989
color
42 × 30"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 209
1989
color
57 × 41"
edition of 6
p. 169.

Untitled, # 210
1989
color
67 × 45"
edition of 6
p. 186.

Untitled, # 211
1989
color
37 × 31" (with frame)
edition of 6
p. 185.

Untitled, # 212
1989
color
33 × 24"
edition of 6
p. 228.

Untitled, # 213
1989
color
41 1/2 × 33
edition of 6
p. 179.

Untitled, # 214
1989
color
29 1/2 × 24" (with frame)
edition of 6
p. 235.

Untitled, # 215
1989
color
74 1/4 × 51"
edition of 6
p. 188.

Untitled, # 216
1989
color
87 × 56"
edition of 6
p. 191.

Untitled, # 217
1984/1990
color
51 × 34"
edition of 12
p. 238.

Untitled, # 218
1990
color
66 × 42"
edition of 6
p. 190.

Untitled, # 219
1990
color
65 × 40"
edition of 6
p. 166.

Untitled, # 220
1990
color
64 × 40"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 221
1990
color
48 × 30"
edition of 6
p. 187.

Untitled, # 222
1990
color
60 × 44"
edition of 6
p. 175.

Untitled, # 223
1990
color
58 × 42"
edition of 6
p. 178.

Untitled, # 224
1990
color
48 × 38"
edition of 6
p. 183.

Untitled, # 225
1990
color
48 × 33"
edition of 6
p. 167.

Untitled, # 226
1990
color
48 × 30"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 227
1990
color
77 × 50"
edition of 6
p. 168.

Untitled, # 228
1990
color
82 × 48"
edition of 6
p. 184.

Untitled, # 229
1987/1991
color
32 1/2 × 48"
edition of 3
49 1/4 × 75 1/4"
edition of 3
p. 237.

Untitled, # 230
1987/1991
color
55 × 38"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 231
1987/1991
color
31 1/2 × 41"
edition of 6
p. 228.

Untitled, # 232
1987/1991
color
26 1/2 × 38"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 276, 1993

Untitled, # 233
1987/1991
color
33 1/4 × 47 1/4"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 234
1987/1990
color
90 × 60"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 235
1987/1990
color
90 × 60"
edition of 6
pp. 160, 194.

Untitled, # 236
1987/1990
color
90 × 60"
edition of 6
p. 159.

Untitled, # 237
1987/1990
color
90 × 60"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 238
1987/1990
color
90 × 60"
edition of 6
p. 150.

Untitled, # 239
1987/1990
color
90 × 60"
edition of 6
p. 149.

Untitled, # 240
1991
color
47 × 70"
edition of 6
p. 198.

Untitled, 241
1991
color
47 × 70"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 242
1991
color
47 × 70"
edition of 6
pp. 196–197.

Untitled, # 243
1991
color
47 × 70"
edition of 6
pp. 198–199.

Untitled, # 244
1991
color
47 × 70"
edition of 6
pp. 200–201.

Untitled, # 245
1991
color
47 × 70"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 246
1987/1991
color
26 × 38 3/4"
edition of 6
p. 225.

Untitled, # 247
1987/1991
color
35 1/2 × 53"
edition of 6
p. 226.

Untitled, # 248
1987/1991
color
39 1/4 × 59 1/4"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 249
1987/1991
color
53 × 35 1/2"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 250
1992
color
50 × 75"
edition of 6
p. 213.

Untitled, # 251
1992
color
68 × 45"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 252
1992
color
75 × 50"
edition of 6
p. 204.

Untitled, # 253
1992
color
75 × 50"
edition of 6
pp. 7, 212.

Untitled, # 254
1992
color
68 × 45"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 255
1992
color
45 × 68"
edition of 6
pp. 202–203.

Untitled, # 256
1992
color
68 × 45"
edition of 6
p. 230.

Untitled, # 257
1992
color
68 × 45"
edition of 6
p. 215.

Untitled, # 258
1992
color
68 × 45"
edition of 6
p. 206.

Untitled, # 259
1992
color
60 × 40"
edition of 6
p. 211.

Untitled, # 260
1992
color
68 × 45"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 261
1992
color
68 × 45"
edition of 6
p. 209.

Untitled, # 262
1992
color
75 × 60"
edition of 6
p. 205.

Untitled, # 263
1992
color
40 × 60"
edition of 6
p. 214.

Untitled, # 264
1992
color
50 × 75"
edition of 6
pp. 210–211.

Untitled, # 265
1992
color
26 1/2 × 40"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 266
1992
color
26 1/2 × 40"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 267
1992
color
26 1/2 × 40"
edition of 6
p. 234.

Untitled, # 268
1992
color
26 1/2 × 40"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 269
1992
color
26 1/2 × 40"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 270
1992
color
26 1/2 × 40
edition of 6

Untitled, # 271
1992
color
26 1/2 × 40"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 272
1992
color
26 1/2 × 40"
edition of 6
p. 231.

Untitled, # 166, 1987

Untitled, # 273
1992
color
26 1/2 × 40"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 274
1992
color
26 1/2 × 40"
edition of 6
p. 222.

Untitled, # 275
1993
color
63 1/4 × 88"
edition of 6

Untitled, # 276
1993
color
edition of 6
p. 232.

Untitled, MPa
1979
b/w
10 × 8"
edition of 100
p. 228.

Untitled, MPb
1982
color
20 × 16"
edition of 125
p. 227.

Untitled, MPc
1983
color
20 × 16"
edition of 125
p. 225.

Untitled, MPd
1975
b/w
16 1/4 × 11 1/4"
edition of 125

Untitled, MPe
1985
color
20 × 16"
edition of 125

Untitled, MPf
1980/1987
b/w
two prints, each 7 1/2 × 5 1/2"
edition of 125
p. 224.

Untitled, MPg
1987
color
11 3/4 × 8"
edition of 125

Untitled, MPh
1990
color
20 × 16"

Untitled, # 267, 1992, and # 130, 1983

Biography

Born January 19, 1954, in Glen Ridge, New Jersey
Attended State University College at Buffalo, New York (B.A. 1976)
Moved to New York City 1977

Selected One-Person Exhibitions

1979
Hallwalls, Buffalo, New York

1980
Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston
The Kitchen, New York
Metro Pictures, New York

1981
Metro Pictures, New York
Saman Gallery, Genoa, Italy
Young/Hoffman Gallery, Chicago

1982
Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris
Larry Gagosian Gallery, Los Angeles
Metro Pictures, New York
The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; (1982–1984) Gewad, Ghent, Belgium; Watershed Gallery, Bristol, England; John Hansard Gallery, University of Southampton, England; Palais Stutterheim, Erlangen, West Germany; Haus am Waldsee, West Berlin; Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva; Sonja Henie-Niels Onstadt Foundation, Copenhagen; Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark
Texas Gallery, Houston

1983
Fine Arts Center Gallery, State University of New York at Stonybrook; Zilkha Gallery, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut
Galerie Schellmann & Kluser, Munich
Metro Pictures, New York
Musée d'Art et d'Industrie, Saint-Etienne, France
Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago
The St. Louis Art Museum

1984
Akron Art Museum; (1984–1986) Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Des Moines Art Center; The Baltimore Museum of Art
Laforet Museum, Tokyo
Monika Sprüth Galerie, Cologne
Seibu Gallery of Contemporary Art, Tokyo

1985
Metro Pictures, New York
Westfalischer Kunstverein, Münster, West Germany

1986
Galerie Crousel-Hussenot, Pari
The New Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut
Portland Art Museum, Oregon
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford

1987
Hoffman Borman Gallery, Los Angeles
Metro Pictures, New York
Provinciaal Museum, Hasselt, Belgium
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; The Dallas Museum of Art

1988
Galeria Comicos, Lisbon
Galleria Lia Rumma, Naples
La Máquina Española, Madrid
Monika Sprüth Galerie, Cologne

1989
Galerie Crousel-Robelin, Paris
Galerie Der Wiener Sezession, Vienna
Galerie Pierre Hubert, Geneva
Metro Pictures, New York
National Art Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand; Waikato Museum of Art and History, New Zealand

1990
Kunst-Station St. Peter, Cologne
Linda Cathcart Gallery, Santa Monica
Metro Pictures, New York
Monika Sprüth Galerie, Cologne
Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan
University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley

1991
Basel Kunsthalle, Switzerland; Staatsgalerie Moderner Kunst, Munich; The Whitechapel Gallery, London
Milwaukee Art Museum; Center for the Fine Arts, Miami; The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis
Saatchi Collection, London
Studio Guenzani, Milan

1992
Galerie Six Friedrich, Munich
Linda Cathcart Gallery, Santa Monica
Metro Pictures, New York
Monika Sprüth Galerie, Cologne
Museo de Monterrey, Mexico

1993
Galerie Ascan Crone, Hamburg
Galerie Ghislaine Hussenot, Paris
Galleri Susanne Ottesen, Copenhagen
Tel Aviv Museum of Art
Texas Gallery, Houston

Selected Group Exhibitions

1976
Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo
"Hallwalls," Artists' Space, New York

1977
Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo

1978
"Four Artists," Artists' Space, New York

1979
"Re-figuration," Max Protetch Gallery, New York

1980
"Ils se disent peintres, ils se disent photographes," Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris
"Likely Stories," Castelli Graphics, New York
"Opening Group Exhibition," Metro Pictures, New York

1981
"Autoportraits," Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
"Body Language: Figurative Aspects of Recent Art," Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge; (1982–1983) Fort Worth Art Museum; University of South Florida, Tampa; Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati
"Erweiterte Fotografie," 5. Wiener Internationale Biennale, Vienna Secession
"Il Gergo Inquieto," Museo Sant'Agostino, Genoa, Italy
"Photo," Metro Pictures, New York
"Young Americans," Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio

1982
"Art and the Media," The Renaissance Society, University of Chicago
Biennale, Venice
"Body Language," Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge
Documenta 7, Kassel, West Germany
"Eight Artists: The Anxious Edge," Walker Art Center, Minneapolis
"The Image Scavengers: Photography," Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia

Untitled, # 214, 1989

"Lichtbildnisse: The Portrait in Photography," Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn
"New Figuration in America," Milwaukee Art Museum
"20th Century Photographs from the Museum of Modern Art," Seibu Museum of Art, Tokyo; University of Hawaii Art Gallery, Honolulu
"Urban Kisses," Institute of Contemporary Art, London

1983

"Back to the U.S.A.," Kunstmuseum Lucerne; (1983–1984) Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn; Wurttembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart
Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
"Big Pictures by Contemporary Photographers," The Museum of Modern Art, New York
"Directions 1983," Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.
"Drawings Photographs," Leo Castelli Gallery, New York
"The New Art," The Tate Gallery, London

1984

"Alibis," Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
"Color Photographs: Recent Acquisitions," The Museum of Modern Art, New York
"Content: A Contemporary Focus, 1974–1984," Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.
"The Heroic Figure," Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; (1984–1985) Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, Memphis; Alexandria Museum, Alexandria, Louisiana; The Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara
"La narrativa internacional de hoy," Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City; (1985) P.S. 1, New York
"Private Symbol: Social Metaphor," Fifth Biennale of Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
"Umgang mit der Aura," Stadtische Galerie Regensburg, West Germany.

1985

"Anniottanta," Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderna Bologna, Italy
"Autoportrait à l'époque de la photographie," Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne; Wurttembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart
Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
Carnegie International, Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh
"Eau de Cologne," Monika Sprüth Galerie, Cologne
"New York '85," ARCA Centre d'Art Contemporain, Marseille
"Self-Portrait," The Museum of Modern Art, New York

1986

"Altered Egos: Samaras, Sherman, Wegman," Phoenix Art Museum
"The American Exhibition," The Art Institute of Chicago
"Art and Its Double: A New York Perspective," Fundacio Caixa de Pensions, Barcelona, and La Caixa de Pensions, Madrid
"Eve and the Future," Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg
"Individuals: A Selected History of Contemporary Art, 1945–1986," Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
"Jenny Holzer/Cindy Sherman," The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati
"La Magie de l'image," Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montreal
"Prospect '86," Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt
"Staging the Self: Self-Portrait Photography 1840s–1980s," National Portrait Gallery, London; Plymouth Arts Centre; John Hansard Gallery, University of Southampton; Ikon Gallery, Birmingham
"Stills: Cinema and Video Transformed," Seattle Art Museum

1987

"Avant-Garde in the Eighties," Los Angeles County Museum of Art
"L'Epoque, la mode, la morale, la passion: Aspects de l'art d'aujourd'hui, 1977–1987," Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
"Implosion: A Postmodern Perspective," Moderna Museet, Stockholm
"Photography and Art: Interaction since 1946," Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Queens Museum, New York; Des Moines Art Center, Iowa
"This Is Not a Photograph: Twenty Years of Large-Scale Photography, 1966–1986," The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida; The Akron Art Museum, Ohio; The Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia

1988

"Matris," Malmo Konsthall, Sweden
"Presi Per Incantamento," Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea di Milano, Milan
Studio Guenzani, Milan (two-person exhibition with Louise Lawler)
"Visions/Revisions: Contemporary Representation," Marlborough Gallery, New York

1989

"The Art of Photography: 1839–1989," The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Ministry of Culture of the Soviet Union; Royal Academy of Arts, London
"Bilderstreit," Mense Rhineside Halls, Cologne
"A Forest of Signs: Art in the Crisis of Representation," The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
"Image World: Art and Media Culture," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
"Invention and Continuity in Contemporary Photography," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
"Making Their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream, 1970–85," Cincinnati Art Museum; New Orleans Museum of Art; Denver Art Museum; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia
"Moscow—Vienna—New York," The Vienna Festival, Vienna
"Peinture Cinéma Peinture," Centre de la Vielle Charité, Musée de Marseille
"The Photographer's Eye: A Selection by Chris Kellep," Victoria and Albert Museum, London
"The Photography of Invention: American Pictures of the 1980s," National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.
"Photography Now," The Victoria and Albert Museum, London
"Surrogate Selves," The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.
"Tenir l'Image à distance," Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montreal
"Three Decades: The Oliver Hoffman Collection," Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago

1990

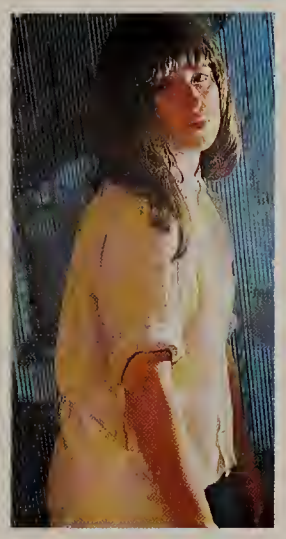
"Affinities and Intuitions: The Gerald S. Elliot Collection of Contemporary Art," The Art Institute of Chicago
"The Art of Photography: 1839–1989," Sezon Museum of Art, Tokyo
"Culture and Commentary," Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.
"The Decade Show," The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, The New Museum, and The Studio Museum of Harlem, New York
"Energies," The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
"Figuring the Body," Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
"Fotografie," Galerie Max Hetzler, Cologne
"Louise Lawler, Cindy Sherman, Laurie Simmons," Metro Pictures, New York
"Photography until Now," The Museum of Modern Art, New York
"The Readymade Boomerang," The Eighth Biennale of Sydney, Australia
"To Be and Not to Be," Centre d'Art Santa Monica, Barcelona

1991

"Adam and Eve," The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, Japan
"Art & Art," Castello di Rivoli, Turin
Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
"Carroll Dunham, Mike Kelley, Cindy Sherman," Metro Pictures, New York
"Devil on the Stairs: Looking Back on the Eighties," Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, California
"Displacements," Atlantic Center for Contemporary Art, Las Palmas, Canary Islands
"Metropolis," Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin
"Places with a Past: New Site-Specific Art in Charleston," Spoleto Festival, Charleston, South Carolina
"Un Visage Découvert, Fondation Cartier, Jouy-en-Josas, France

1992

"American Art of the 80s," Museo d'Arte Sezione Contemporanea, Trent, Italy
"Ars Pro Domo," Museum Ludwig, Cologne
"Dirty Data. Schürmann Sammlung," Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen
"Imagenes de Guerra," Centro Cultural Arte Contemporanea, Mexico City
"More Than Photography," The Museum of Modern Art, New York



Untitled, # 107, 1982

"Périls et Colères," Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux
"Pleasures and Terrors of Domestic Comfort," The Museum of Modern Art, New York
"Post Human," Musée d'Art Contemporain, Pully/Lausanne, Switzerland; Castello di Rivoli, Turin; Deste Foundation, Athens; Deichtorhallen, Hamburg; Israel Museum, Jerusalem
"Selected Works from the Early Eighties," K-raum Daxer, Munich
"Spiellholle. Asthetik und Gewalt," Akademie der Kunst und Wissenschaften, Frankfurt; Grazer Kunstverein, Graz, Austria; Galerie Sylvana Lorenz, Paris

1993

"American Art of This Century," Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin; Royal Academy of Arts, London
Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
"Louise Lawler, Cindy Sherman, Laurie Simmons," Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo; Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki
Sonsbeek '93, Gemeentemuseum, Arnhem, Netherlands

Selected Bibliography

1978

Four Artists, Artists' Space, New York (ex. cat.).

1979

"Cindy Sherman: Recent Pictures," *Sun & Moon*, Fall, pp. 129–136.
Crimp, Douglas, "Pictures," *October* 8, Spring, pp. 75–88.
Tatransky, Valentine, "Cindy Sherman, Artists' Space," *Arts Magazine*, January.

1980

Bishop, Joseph, "Desperate Character," *Real Life Magazine*, Summer, pp. 8–10.
Cindy Sherman: Photographs, essay by Linda Cathcart, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston.
Grundberg, Andy, "Lies for the Eyes," *Soho News*, December 17.
Ils se disent peintres, ils se disent photographes, essay by Michel Nuridsany, ARC/Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris (ex. cat.).
Lifson, Ben, "Masquerading," *Village Voice*, March 31.
Owens, Craig, "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism, Part 2," *October* 13, Summer, pp. 59–80.
Solomon-Godeau, Abigail, "Sexual Difference: Both Sides of the Camera," *CEPA Quarterly*, Spring/Summer, pp. 17–24.
Tatransky, Valentine, "Cindy Sherman," *Arts Magazine*, June.

1981

Celant, Germano, *Inespressionismo americano* (cover), Bonini Editore.
"Cindy Sherman: Making Pictures for the Camera," essay by Douglas Crimp, *Young Americans*, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio (ex. cat.).
Crimp, Douglas, "The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism," *October* 15, Winter, pp. 99–102.
Flood, Richard, "Cindy Sherman, Metro Pictures," *Artforum*, March, p. 80.
Grundberg, Andy, "Cindy Sherman: A Playful and Political Post Modernist," *New York Times*, November 22.
Klein, Michael, "Cindy Sherman," *Arts Magazine*, March, p. 5.
Smith, Roberta, "Art," *Village Voice*, November 18.
Zelavansky, Lynn, "Cindy Sherman, Metro Pictures," *Flash Art*, March/April.

1982

Alive Magazine, New York, September/October, pp. 20–25.
Anxious Edge, essay by Lisa Lyons, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (ex. cat.).
Autoportraits Photographiques, Centre Pompidou-Edition ofs Herscher, Paris (ex. cat.).
Ballerini, Julia, "Artificiality and Artifice: The Portraits of Diane Arbus and Cindy Sherman," *Center Quarterly*, Catskill Center for Photography, Fall.
Body Language, essay by Roberta Smith, Committee for the Visual Arts, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge (ex. cat.).
Cindy Sherman, essay by Els Barents, The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, and Schirmer/Mosel, Munich (ex. cat.).
Cindy Sherman, Déjà Vu, Dijon, France (ex. cat.).
"Cindy Sherman," *File Magazine* (six-page portfolio), Spring, pp. 22–27.
"Cindy Sherman Untitled Film Stills" (six-page portfolio), *Paris Review*, no. 82, pp. 133–139.
Documenta 7, vols. 1 & 2, Kassel, West Germany (ex. cat.)
Foster, Hal, "New York Art: Seven Types of Ambiguity"; Rosalind Krauss, "Reflecting on Post-Modernism"; Rosetta Brooks, "New York: Heroic City," *Brand New York*, a special issue of *The Literary Review*, London.
Gambrell, Jamey, "Cindy Sherman, Metro Pictures," *Artforum*, February, pp. 85–86.
Glueck, Grace, "Cindy Sherman," *New York Times*, October 22.
Handy, Ellen, "Cindy Sherman, Metro Pictures," *Arts Magazine*, December, p. 33.
Howell, John, and Shelley Rice, "Cindy Sherman's Seductive Surfaces," *Alive Magazine*, New York, September/October, pp. 20–25.
Image Scavengers: Photography, essay by Paula Marincola, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (ex. cat.).
Knight, Christopher, "Photographer with an Eye on Herself," *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, October 10, p. E5.
Larsen, Kay, "Art," *New York*, November 8.
Linker, Kate, "Melodramatic Tactics," *Artforum*, September, pp. 30–32.
New Figuration in America, essays by Russell Bowman and Peter Schjeldahl, Milwaukee Art Museum (ex. cat.)
Rhodes, Richard, "Cindy Sherman's 'Film Stills'," *Parachute*, September/October/November, pp. 4–7, cover.
Ristorcelli, Jacques, and Paul Pouvreau, "Les Autoportraits de Cindy Sherman," *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Paris, February, pp. 13–14.
Schjeldahl, Peter, "Shermanettes," *Art in America*, March, pp. 110–111.
Schlatter, Christian, "De l'Avant-garde, avant toute chose," *Vogue*, Paris, October, p. 88.
Squires, Carol, "The Difference between Fibs and Fictions," *Village Voice*, November 2, p. 82.
20th Century Photographs from the Museum of Modern Art, John Szarkowski, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and Seibu Museum, Tokyo (ex. cat.).

1983

Back to the U.S.A., essay by Klaus Honnef, Kunstmuseum Lucerne and Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn (ex. cat.).
Biennial Exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (ex. cat.).
Cindy Sherman, essay by Christian Caujolle, Musée d'Art et d'Industrie, Saint-Etienne, France (ex. cat.).
Cindy Sherman, essay by Thom Thompson, Art Gallery, Fine Arts Center, State University of New York at Stonybrook.
Currents 20. Cindy Sherman, essay by Jack Cowart, St. Louis Art Museum (ex. cat.).
Damsker, Matt, "Portrait of an Artist," *Hartford Courant*, January 16, pp. 4–5.
Directions 1983, essay by Phyllis Rosenzweig, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C. (ex. cat.).
"Ein Star der Ungedrehten Filme," *Der Spiegel*, January 24, pp. 162–163.
Goldberg, Roselee, "Post-TV Art," *Portfolio*, July/August, pp. 76–79.
Goldberg, Vicki, "Portrait of a Photographer as a Young Artist," *New York Times*, October 23.
Hapgood, Susan, "Cindy Sherman/Metro Pictures," *Flash Art*, January, p. 63.
Honnef, Klaus, "Cindy Sherman," *Kunstforum*, Cologne, April, pp. 105–121.
Lescaze, Lee, "Making Faces: A Photographer Dresses Up for Success," *Wall Street Journal*, November 15, p. 32.
Lichtenstein, Therese, "Cindy Sherman," *Arts Magazine*, January, p. 3.
Linker, Kate, "Cindy Sherman, Metro Pictures," *Artforum*, January, p. 79.
Marzorati, Gerald, "Imitation of Life", *Artnews*, September, pp. 78–87, cover.
Nilson, Lisbet, "Cindy Sherman: Interview," *American Photographer*, September, pp. 70–77.
"Openings: Cindy Sherman," *Esquire*, July, p. 115.
"Scene Stealers," *Life*, May, pp. 10–16.
Schjeldahl, Peter, "Falling in Style: The New Art and Our Discontents," *Vanity Fair*, March, pp. 115–116, 252.
Smith, Roberta, "Art," *Village Voice*, November 29, p. 119.
"Special Report: Cindy Sherman," *Art Vivant*, Tokyo, no. 10.
Starenko, Michael, "What's an Artist to Do? A Short History of Postmodernism and Photography," *Afterimage*, January, pp. 4–5.

Untitled, # 158, 1986, and # 229, 1987

Williamson, Judith, "Images of 'Woman'—The Photographs of Cindy Sherman" (cover), *Screen*, London, November/December, pp. 102–116.

Zelavansky, Lynn, "Cindy Sherman, Metro Pictures," *Artnews*, January, pp. 145–146.

1984

Alibis, essays by Bernard Blistene et al., Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (ex. cat.).

"The Best of the New Generation: Men and Women under Forty Who Are Changing America," *Esquire*, December, p. 142.

"Books, Books, Books: Cindy Sherman," *Artforum*, December, p. 74.

Camera Mainichi 1984, Tokyo (portfolio of photographs), April, pp. 14–32.

"Cindy Sherman," *Camera Austria*, 15/16, pp. 40–49.

Cindy Sherman, essays by Peter Schjeldahl and I. Michael Danoff, Pantheon Books, New York (ex. cat.).

Cindy Sherman, Laforet Museum, Tokyo (ex. cat.).

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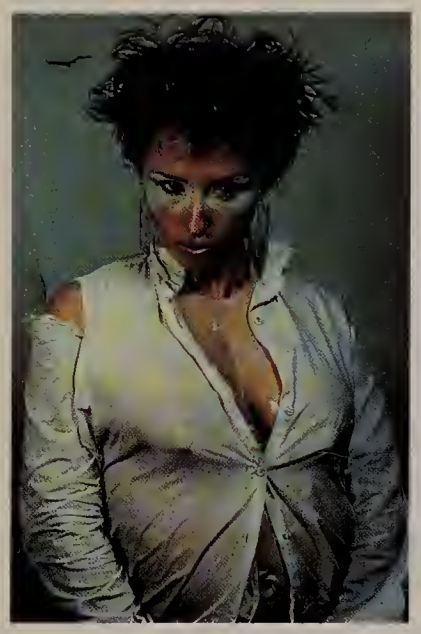

Untitled, 1990

Museum and Public Collections

Akron Art Museum
Albright-Knox Art Gallery; Buffalo
Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Art Gallery of Ontario, Ottawa
The Art Institute of Chicago
The Australian National Gallery, Canberra
The Baltimore Museum of Art
The Brooklyn Museum
Burchfield Art Center, Buffalo
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
The Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia
The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.
The Dallas Museum of Fine Arts
Des Moines Art Center
Eli Broad Family Foundation, Los Angeles
Everson Museum, Syracuse
George Eastman House, Rochester, New York
Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo
Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge
The High Museum, Atlanta
John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
The Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark
Madison Art Center, Wisconsin
Malmo Konsthall, Sweden
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Milwaukee Art Museum
Moderna Museet, Stockholm
Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, Massachusetts
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montreal
Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam
Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany
Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago
Museum of Contemporary Art, Wright State University, Dayton
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Portland Art Museum, Oregon
Power Gallery of Contemporary Art, University of Sydney, Australia
Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia
Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, Netherlands
Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts
Saatchi Collection, London
The St. Louis Art Museum
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Sprengel Museum, Hannover
The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
Tamayo Museum, Mexico City
Tampa Museum of Art
The Tate Gallery, London
Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography
University Art Gallery, SUNY, Binghamton
University of Kentucky Art Museum, Lexington
The Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven

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