The Complete *Untitled Film Stills*

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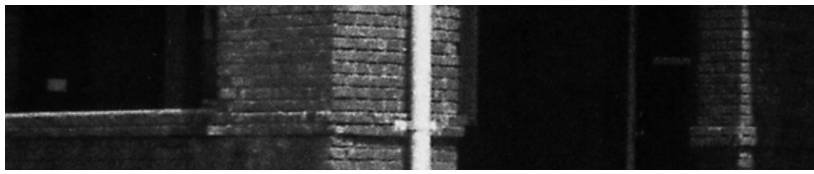
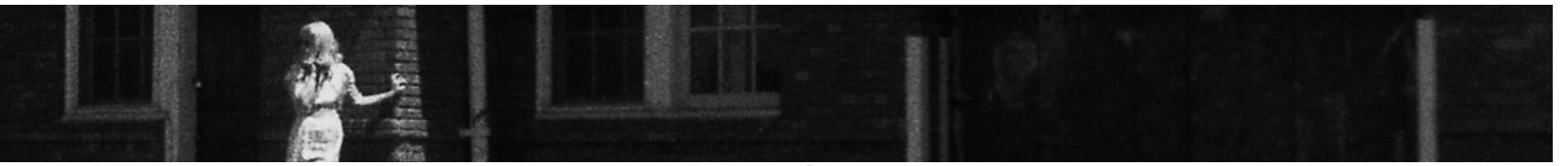


The Museum of Modern Art, New York

The Complete *Untitled Film Stills*



Cindy Sherman

Cindy Sherman *The Making of*

Untitled

I was always glued to the television when I was a kid, and I loved movies. There was one show, *The Million Dollar Movie*, that played the same film over and over every night for a week, so you could really know it by heart. I remember stumbling across a bizarre futuristic film that was made up of nothing but still images except for one of the final scenes, which moved: it was Chris Marker's *La Jetée*, which must have been on PBS when I was a teenager. I didn't know it was meant to be science fiction, it was just very weird. Another time I had to go with my parents to a

dinner party and wound up watching TV in the basement, eating my little dinner alone watching Hitchcock's *Rear Window* while the adults partied upstairs. I loved all those vignettes Jimmy Stewart watches in the windows around him—you don't know much about any of those characters so you try to fill in the pieces of their lives.

SUNY Buffalo had a great film department (I went to the State College at Buffalo, which confuses a lot of people). For a time I worked for Paul Sharits, the experimental filmmaker. I became familiar with a lot of the filmmakers who came through, or lived locally, and saw a ton of films. I took a couple of introductory film courses and one of the films I made was a three-minute animation of myself as a paper doll that comes to life.

Painting was still the big thing, but I was less and less interested in it even though I started out in that department; I was into conceptual, Minimal, performance, body art, film—alternatives. In the mid-'70s the art world didn't seem to me as macho as it began to feel in the later '70s and early '80s, but maybe that's because there were artist role models around like Lynda Benglis, Eleanor Antin, and Hannah Wilke. Just the fact that they had a presence made a difference.

In Buffalo I lived at Hallwalls, an alternative space started by Robert [Longo] and our friend Charlie Clough. It was part of an old foundry and ice factory—a great brick building that had been divided up into studios. It was a communal place, a lot of artists lived there. The three of us lived upstairs from the gallery and when people came to check out the art they'd often come up. Visiting artists would stay there too. I'm a private person so it was a little difficult for me sometimes, but we all got along very well. My room was at the far end so I was off on my own.

A gang of artists would converge there to watch *Saturday Night Live* or *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman.* I'd be in my studio making up a character and then go out in character to join the party. I'd have put in all this energy into the makeup and I'd think, Why waste it. There's a photo of me as Lucille Ball from that time (fig. 1): I had a wig that reminded me of her hairstyle. Michael Zwack had a photo booth in his studio and I went down and documented her there. So

1. The Lucy photo-booth shot, 1975

well before the Film Stills I was already using myself in the work, becoming characters, though sometimes I hadn't even thought of how to document them—it was like sketching, I'd play with makeup for a while just to see where it took me.

Just before I came to New York I was making cutouts, elaborate paper dolls that I'd assemble into narrative tableaux. I'd dress as different female and male characters, pose, photograph myself, print the photo at the scale it was to be in the tableau, cut out the figure, and use it in little scenarios (fig. 2). There was a leading actress, a leading man, a director—generic characters from a Hollywood murder mystery. It was like storyboarding a movie; in fact I'd gotten the idea from my introductory film course. I'd been making these things for a while but I was bothered by them: I thought this work was too feminine, with the dolls and the cutting, it seemed contrived and girlie. Even the fact that it looked like dolls bothered me, and it was also very labor-intensive. I knew I wanted to go on making little narratives, but without using other people. I wanted to work alone; I wanted a controlled situation in my studio. What I didn't know was exactly how it was all going to come together.

. Cutouts from *The Play of Selves*, 1976

Then when I moved to New York, in the summer of 1977, Robert and I happened to stop by David Salle's studio. The guys were doing their macho-art-talk thing, so I got bored and started wandering around, snooping. David worked for some kind of magazine that used photographs in a storyboard format, like a photo comic book or novella, and I remember seeing piles of the photographs scattered around; I don't know if he was doing the layout or what. They were quasi—soft porn, cheesecakey things and it was hard to figure out what was going on in any of them, they were totally ambiguous and I just loved that. This kind of imagery would solve my problem of trying to imply a story without involving other people, just suggesting them outside the frame: something clicked.

It was the summer of Sam, the summer of the blackout—I barely knew my way around the city and I was in culture shock. It was intimidating and I was afraid to leave the house. I was still trying to figure out what I was doing here, how I was going to make a living. One thing I thought I could do was be a makeup artist and sell makeup at Macy's,

which I actually tried to do—I got a job instead as an assistant-assistant buyer, which I hated and quit after one day.

Right away Helene Winer invited me to be the part-time receptionist at Artists Space, where she was the director. Artists Space was great for getting a feeling for what was going on in the New York art world. I got to know who everyone was, even if I didn't always get to meet them. The cross-section of art, music, film, the mix-up of all of that. . . the alternative gallery scene—it was a perfect way for me to get into the art world. It forced me to get out and about, to stop being so neurotic. It must have helped me focus my thoughts, too, because it was in the fall that I shot the first roll of Film Stills.

It didn't take long, it was just one roll of film. I took a couple of photos here and there, in the bathroom, in the hallway. ... I put six pieces from that roll in a group show at Hallwalls in December. After that I lost track of the negatives, I never knew what happened to them, they just sort of disappeared ... so for years after, when I wanted a copy of one of them, I'd rephotograph the photograph. Maybe ten or fifteen years later someone at Hallwalls got in touch with me, saying, We've found this roll of film we think is yours.

I didn't want to title the photographs because it would spoil the ambiguity, so when Metro Pictures opened (started by Helene and her childhood friend Janelle Reiring), in 1980, the gallery assigned numbers. The numbering basically went by year, but then it got mixed up as it became totally arbitrary, applied purely for purposes of identification. The numbers went up more or less to #65, then jumped to #81 because I added a few more after shooting the color rear-screen projection series. Periodically I'd go back, edit some out, and add others, four of which became #81 through #84. On the long-lost original contact sheet there was one I'd always meant to add, so it has now become the seventieth film still. In keeping with the arbitrary numbering, however, it is #62.

At first I wanted to do a group of imaginary stills all from the same actress's career, so in those first six photographs the hair doesn't change all that much—I think I made her a blond because that seemed very actressy and perhaps because I still had brown hair. I really didn't know what I was doing at the time, I was playing. I tried to make her look older in some, more of an ingenue in others, and older-trying-hard-to-look-younger in others. I didn't think about what each movie was about, I focused on the different ages and looks of the same character.

At that point I wasn't expecting the series to continue, but some time in the next year I decided it would. I also decided to go after a variety of character types and bought more wigs. Whenever I install any of the Film Stills in a group, or order them in this book for example, I try to destroy any sense of a continuum; I want all the characters to look different. When I see two blonds together I get nervous that they look too much alike.

I was mostly going for the look of European as opposed to Hollywood types. Some of the characters were consciously influenced, for example #13 by Brigitte Bardot. But she's more of a Bardot type than a Bardot copy. When I look at #16, I think of Jeanne Moreau, though I'm not sure I had her specifically in mind while shooting. (She was a huge influence, as was Simone Signoret, who I think that character also reminds me of.) Others were Sophia Loren inspired, in her more earthy roles like *Two Women* (#35). And of course Anna Magnani was somewhere in there. I definitely wasn't into the rhinestones-and-furs kind of actress, Jayne Mansfield and people like that—I wanted the film to seem obscure and European.

I had friends who worked at Barnes & Noble who would bring home cheap film books. Barnes & Noble had millions of books about the movies—whole books on Garbo, Eastern European films, silent films, horror films, film fads. These books were my textbooks, my research. And of course I was only interested in the pictures.

I liked the Hitchcock look, Antonioni, Neorealist stuff. What I didn't want were pictures showing strong emotion. In a lot of movie photos the actors look cute, impish, alluring, distraught, frightened, tough, etc., but what I was interested in was when they were almost expressionless. Which was rare to see; in film stills there's a lot of overacting because they're trying to sell the movie. The movie isn't necessarily funny or happy, but in those publicity photos, if there's one character, she's smiling. It was in European film stills that I'd find women who were more neutral, and maybe the original films were harder to figure out as well. I found that more mysterious. I looked for it consciously; I didn't want to ham it up, and I knew that if I acted too happy, or too sad, or scared—if the emotional quotient was too high—the photograph would seem campy.

The one I call the "crying girl" (#27) is one of the few that has real strong emotion, although her face is blank. It's as though she'd just finished crying, were so cried out that she had no tears left. Neither this image nor any other was related to things happening in my personal life—I wasn't upset. I think it goes back to a silent film I made in college, just a little thing, where I set up a one-way mirror in front of the camera so that I was facing the camera but looking into a mirror. I was looking at my reflection saying, "I hate you, I hate you," while crying. It looked so cool on screen, this crying face. I've always liked that piece but it was totally staged. Regardless of whether I was re-creating something that really happened or not, objectifying it this way was plenty cathartic.

None of the Film Still characters was a particular stretch because I never knew what I was setting out to do—it wasn't like I had these visions in my head that I had to realize. Some of the photographs are meant to be a solitary woman and some are meant to allude to another person outside the frame. The most elaborate setup of the whole bunch, the one where I tried hardest to make it look like there really was someone else there, is #14. In the lower-

left foreground of the picture there's a card table, which is reflected in a mirror beyond; in the mirror you see smoke rising up, as if someone just outside the frame were smoking a cigarette.

Some of the women in the outdoor shots could be alone, or being watched or followed—the shots I would choose were always the ones in-between the action. These women are on their way to wherever the action is (or to their doom) … or have just come from a confrontation (or a tryst).

I'm not sure if I was yet aware of the fact that in most early films, women who don't follow the accepted order of marriage and family, who are strong, rebellious characters, are either killed off in the script or see the light and become tamed, joining a nunnery or something. Usually they die. I think I must have been unconsciously drawn to those types of characters.

I know I was not consciously aware of this thing the "male gaze." It was the way I was shooting, the mimicry of the style of black and white grade-Z motion pictures that produced the self-consciousness of these characters, not my knowledge of feminist theory.

I suppose unconsciously, or semiconsciously at best, I was wrestling with some sort of turmoil of my own about understanding women. The characters weren't dummies; they weren't just airhead actresses. They were women struggling with something but I didn't know what. The clothes make them seem a certain way, but then you look at their expression, however slight it may be, and wonder if maybe "they" are not what the clothes are communicating. I wasn't working with a raised "awareness," but I definitely felt that the characters were questioning something—perhaps being forced into a certain role. At the same time, those roles are in a film: the women aren't being lifelike, they're acting. There are so many levels of artifice. I liked that whole jumble of ambiguity.

I shot one roll of film that was all men, but it didn't work out. I guess I wasn't really in touch with my masculine side; at any rate, it was too hard for me to tap into—I couldn't find the right ambivalence. The photographs looked like drag, which wasn't what I wanted. In some of them I'm trying to be this tough guy wearing sunglasses and holding a cigarette, it looks kind of stupid (fig. 3). And it was hard to think of more than a few stereotypes—the stereotypes were already a cliche. I was probably thinking, We all know about men,

3. Macho man Film Still wanna-be, 1978

I don't need to research men's roles in the movies, we're already inundated with them. While "women's movies" have become another genre (chickflicks).

(I'd successfully portrayed men before this series, however. In #33, there's a woman sitting on a bed. On the bed table in the background there's a photograph of a man; that's me from a roll of film I shot based around doctors' and nurses' headshots.)

Throughout the series I would shoot in my living space, which was also my studio. At first I lived on John and South Street; all the interiors up until 1979 were shot there. Then I was in a little place on Fulton, where all the others are from (except the ones on location). I'd drape fabric over the bed to disguise it, or I'd hang curtains in the background to hide my tiny darkroom. I tried to think of ways to make the loft look like it could be other places—perhaps a hotel room, or the lobby of some kind of apartment building, even though it was just my funky loft, which certainly didn't have a lobby. In #5 I have the edge of a chair on one side, and I propped a pillow on it, and a blanket over the pillow, to make it look like there might be someone sitting in that chair to whom I was reading the letter. The ideas weren't really that inventive, just basic.

The lighting in the whole series was also extremely basic. I rarely used a flash, and still don't. I just had some cheap lightbulbs screwed into clip lights on crappy old tripods—I think I used two. That was my source of light, along with whatever existing light there was.

I wanted those first six shots to look cheesy so I deliberately used warmer chemicals in the darkroom to make the film reticulate, which gives it a sort of crackling, grainy look. I didn't care much about the print quality; the photographs were supposed to look like they cost fifty cents, so needless to say I wasn't using the zone system for perfect exposure. One reason I was interested in photography was to get away from the preciousness of the art object. A paradoxical result, much to my subsequent printers' chagrin, is that many of the pieces are very tricky to print, with a lot of burning, dodging, and so on. But for me those effects were serendipitous. Back then I was doing the printing myself, and I didn't mind spending hours in the darkroom working away at revealing what I wanted from the negatives. Oddly enough, I still tried to capture some kind of mood that I suppose only a decent print can have. But they were far from perfect negatives.

I was fascinated with the look of the '40s, '50s, and '60s, from when I was growing up and before. In Buffalo I'd bought lots of clothes from thrift stores, partly because thrift stores were what I could afford, partly because I didn't like anything in regular stores anyway. I was at such odds with the way things were style-wise in the mid-'70s—the braless, makeup-free, natural-everything, muumuu look, which was quite contrary to '60s girdles, pointy bras, false eyelashes, stilettos, etc. I hated the memory of how it

had felt to wear sanitary-napkin garters, stockings with a girdle—in the fifth grade, for God's sake—and to sleep with soup-can rollers on my head, but I loved the idea of these things as curious artifacts.

So I began to work up costumes out of thrift-store clothes. (Or hand-me-downs of a kind: in #11 I'm wearing my mother's wedding dress.) Back in college I'd started to wear them as regular clothes. I'd also go to openings in character; once I went as a pregnant woman. Another time I turned into Rose Scalisi, an invention of Robert's and a couple of his friends'. She was obviously a takeoff on Duchamp's Rrose Sélavy, and kind of their mascot. They'd christened an old manikin head in her name and I became that head. I still have it and use it for focusing, setting it on a tripod as my stand-in.

In New York I continued the dressing-up-in-public thing just a few times. I went to some parties in character: once I was a checkout girl, other times just in a more general disguise. It was great to feel incognito at an event where I felt awkward. Then I was in a show at Artists Space that Janelle curated while I was working there. It was the first time I showed what there was of the Film Stills as a larger group. Most were in a plastic flip book that was on the reception desk, but four of them had been blown up to poster size. We'd also agreed that I would occasionally come to work in character.

I'd already done that at least once (fig. 4): I'd be working on a character at home, then realize I had to get to work and decide to go in costume. The characters—a nurse, a frumpy secretary—only appeared a few times: it was too strange leaving the gallery to go home and being on the streets of the city as a character other than myself. I felt vulnerable; I thought, If I look weird I'll attract weirdoes. So that was that.

But I loved performance art, the idea of performing; I saw a lot of it and briefly toyed with it myself, once while I lived in Buffalo, once after I left. Both were collaborations, which was when I quickly realized I hated collaborating—I wanted to work alone, because otherwise I acquiesce too easily.

I'd always secretly loved makeup though. I remember once taking an early train into Manhattan with my girlfriends for a day of fake shopping (which was trying on clothes without buying anything), I must have been a preteen. I didn't have any makeup then so

4. The secretary at Artists Space, 1977.
Photograph: Helene Winer.
Courtesy Artists Space Limited Editions

I used poster paint, which eventually caked off my eyes and face. I'll never forget hiding my face from my mother when I left the house that morning.

So under the *au naturel,* hippy ideology of my college days, I could once again play guilt-free with makeup—like with paint, I suppose. Early on I'd done several series where I'd used makeup much more theatrically than in the Film Stills, shading the planes of my face with eye shadow to alter the shape. I didn't experiment as much in the Film Stills, except with the character I call the "battered woman" (#30), another of the more emotional pictures. I tried to give her a fat lip and a black eye. Beyond her I was experimenting with makeup in a more traditional way: trying to look either more or less made up, fair or dark, or from different decades. I wasn't trying to make the women look older or haggard or tired or thinner or fatter or anything like that. I was inexperienced with makeup then, I thought that just by putting on some eyebrow pencil I was going to look so "different." And the only times I used makeup on my body were to draw in cleavage.

By the mid-'70s I was feeling more of a love-hate thing toward makeup, an ambivalence. It was artificial glamour, and it was kind of a no-no because it wasn't PC in those days. That was beginning to change by the late '70s, though, with disco and punk. I didn't wear much makeup myself except in character. I cut my hair really short and bleached it—it was about looking androgynous. Plus it made it easier to wear the wigs.

I didn't think of what I was doing as political: to me it was a way to make the best out of what I liked to do privately, which was dress up. Even when I was very young, I'd always had a trunkful of someone's discarded prom dresses, so I guess I just kept going. I didn't think in terms of trying to look good; playing with my nieces we would tape up our faces to look like hideous monsters. It wasn't about dressing up to look like mom, or Doris Day, it was just fun to look different. It had nothing to do with dissatisfaction, or fantasizing about being another person; it was instinctive.

As the series progressed I would make lists of things I thought were missing to round out the group. I made lists of what kinds of shot (full figure, close-up, etc.) and location I wanted to use. When I needed more outdoor shots I made notes whenever I was going around town, of certain archways, stairs, or architectural details that would be good backgrounds.

Besides working in my studio and on these planned outdoor shoots, whenever I was traveling I'd turn it into a work trip, buying costumes and wigs at the local thrift stores and bringing my camera and tripod with me. In 1979 I went to visit my friend Nancy Dwyer in Los Angeles for a week or two when she was house-sitting a fantastic house that had an amazing art collection. I took #50 there.

While almost all of the interior shots were done with a tripod, many of the exterior ones were handheld since

other people were taking the photos. The first time was when I went out to Robert's parents' summer home on Long Island and couldn't set up the tripod in the sand, so I just handed the camera to Robert and asked him to take the picture.

We'd drive around in Robert's van while I'd be on the lookout for a good location. I'd change in the back and then hand him the camera. Sometimes I'd figure out a plan of going to places A, B, C, and D, as well as of what characters I'd do in each place. We shot a group of pictures by London Terrace in Chelsea and some by the decrepit piers on the West Side, the ones that have since become the Chelsea Piers. We did the "city girl" pictures way down near Battery Park, at the very end of Broadway. A bunch of pictures were shot at and around the World Trade Center, and across the street from it under the colonnade of an older building; I don't know if that building's still standing.

The shots at the World Trade Center don't look like the World Trade Center unless you knew the towers well and could recognize the windows in the background. In some of the pictures I was in the shrubbery in those planters they had on the promenades facing the water—you just see me sitting in bushes, pretending to be out in the woods somewhere. I wasn't trying to make photographs of Manhattan; I wanted the pictures to be mysterious, and to look like unidentifiable locations. So I used types of building that looked as if they could be anywhere—just like I used to make my studio look like hotel rooms.

It's funny now to think how completely comfortable I felt changing in public and doing these miniperformances (fig. 5). In those days people were still typical New Yorkers who'd just ignore some weirdo in costume on the street. For shooting we'd have to wait until the location was pedestrian free, but we weren't always successful (#65).

A shoot with Helene, in 1980, took place all downtown. We might even have gone by foot from Artists Space, where both of us were still working at the time. I was fascinated by downtown then and I knew it pretty well since at that time Fulton Street was the farthest north I'd lived. It was deserted after 5 P.M., which was great—all those winding old narrow streets to myself. (This was before the opening of the South Street Seaport, which changed things but on the other hand was good because finally there was a place to get some interesting fast food.) I remember seeing so many secretaries in the streets, who then all wore high heels; it was right before the transit strike of '80, which was when they started wearing sneakers with their suits

5. Changing from one character to another at the foot of Tower Two of the World Trade Center, 1980. Photograph: Robert Longo

Everyone in the art world wore black then—absolutely everyone, especially since punk was so in. It was weird. I didn't want to blend into the art world so I wore my vintage ski pants and little '50s fur-trimmed rubbers over my low heels. I think by the early '80s the all-black thing had crossed over to the mainstream and I finally gave in too.

I would direct Robert or Helene by saying, "Stand over here, I'll walk down the street, and you take a few shots of me." Robert had a lot of ideas too; he would move around me. In those days I didn't take many shots of any one scene, partly because of my own naïveté and partly because what I was going after was so basic. Generally I didn't take more than six shots of any one character or scene. I was also being thrifty with film—I didn't want to waste a whole roll on just one character.

A friend of mine from Buffalo, Diane Bertolo, also shot some pictures while she was visiting. I think she happened to be there when I was making up and I asked her to document it. With Diane I did this character who was kind of different from the rest of the group—more like Olivia de Havilland in *The Snake Pit,* where a woman's been locked up in a loony bin and maybe she doesn't belong there but she's going crazy anyway because that's where she is. That group (#26, #27b, #28, #29) was made on Fulton Street. We shot in the stairwell, hallway, and bathroom-down-the-hall around my tiny space. I'm wearing a nightgown and a wild sort of wig—I'd decided, I think because of the squalid look of the place, that this woman should be like an escaped or imprisoned mental patient.

My father ("Charlie Sherman," as it said on the badge that he wore to my openings) took some pictures too, when I was on vacation with my parents in Arizona in 1979. I had brought my equipment with me, such as it was, and I would set up the camera and yell at him when to shoot. I liked watching my father in the face of what I was doing. I had a flash, which I used a couple of times for fill-in (for example in #48): I would tell my father to hold the flash up in the air and flash it while the camera was open for a few seconds. Out there I wanted to be farther away from the camera, I didn't want to compete with the landscape. You can see something similar in #42, with the church, where again I'm trying to make use of the western environment: I liked being smaller in the picture and having the scenery take over.

During one of the shoots with my father I had just bought a telephoto lens and was setting it up for the first time. Its weight made the camera droop on the tripod, pointing at the ground, and when he raised it up again it went out of focus—which is why #38, of a character wading through a stream, is blurred, like a Pictorialist photograph. I liked it like that. I love chance: in #40 I'm playing with a little cat that just wandered by, it's the only shot with the cat. #41 is one of the surviving pictures from four rolls of film that I accidentally screwed up in the

darkroom when the top of the film can floated off in the developing bath; that's why it has that hazy look. #39 is the same. I lost a lot of pictures but it was worth the accidents.

I bought a suitcase at a Salvation Army in Phoenix and filled it with wigs and costumes that I found along the way. I thought I was going to find western-inspired clothes, desert or cowboy things, but I couldn't find much that was indigenous to the area. My parents had a station wagon and it was just like with Robert in the van: I'd see some little vista somewhere and I'd ask them to pull over. They didn't mind because we were on vacation, it was a motor trip. Some of the other shots, like #39, were in and around a cabin in Flagstaff where we stayed for about a week.

My niece [Barbara Foster] also took some photos when I was visiting my sister on that same trip, I was hanging out at the pool and I handed her the camera (#45–47). At some point I accidentally loaded a roll of color film, so there's one roll of color shots. I didn't like them at the time because they looked too real, too contemporary. I like them now, perhaps because they've faded and have their own truly vintage color, washed out and purplish.

The "Monument Valley girl," #43, also comes from that trip. A few years later, my mother found a postcard of almost the same shot but with no one sitting in the tree. And #82 was taken in Arizona, again by my father, in a cabin we were renting in Prescott. The camera was on a tripod but I guess my shutter release cord didn't reach as far as I wanted to shoot, so he clicked the shutter. It's cropped—because my father was peering into the frame (fig. 6). I did a lot of severe cropping, which was why I felt OK about giving other people control of the camera: I figured I could always crop down to what I wanted.

Truthfully, I'm a little sick of these pictures—it's hard for me to get excited about them anymore. It's funny to see some of them now. Throughout my life I've tried to keep looking different, so my hair has been all different colors, all lengths and styles. As a result, a lot of these characters look like me in the periods of my life since I shot the Film Stills—perhaps unconsciously I've been following them, or at least their hairstyles. Occasionally I've felt that as I've gotten older I've come to look more like some of them. It's kind of scary—I was always trying to look like older women. (Also people just looked older in the styles of the past.)

6. Uncropped version of #32 showing my father as he took the photo, 1979

I thought I could go on indefinitely with these characters, but by 1980 fashion styles had begun to absorb a lot of the clothes I was using, nostalgia was in, so I started to think the work was looking a little too fashionable. I didn't think about what I was leaving behind; for the most part I really had no clue what other people would come to think of this work.

I knew it was over when I started repeating myself. Robert did one last shoot with me in 1980; I remember looking at the girl with the black scarf (#58) and thinking I was repeating the "city girl" shot (#21): two innocents looking up around the looming city in the background. I thought #58 was the more stereotypical version. That shoot included the same character under the base of the World Trade Center with a suitcase, walking away from the camera (#59), and this for me was the counterpoint to the hitchhiker (#48). I felt I had completed enough characters. I'd used up every bit of furniture and every corner in my apartment. It was time to either move to another loft or move on to new work. So that's when I started experimenting with color.

The Complete Untitled Film Stills

#4, 1977

#7, 1978

#20, 1978

#32, 1979

#10, 1978


Colonial Poul
EXTRA L
FRESH GRADE A EGGS

#64, 1980

#15, 1978

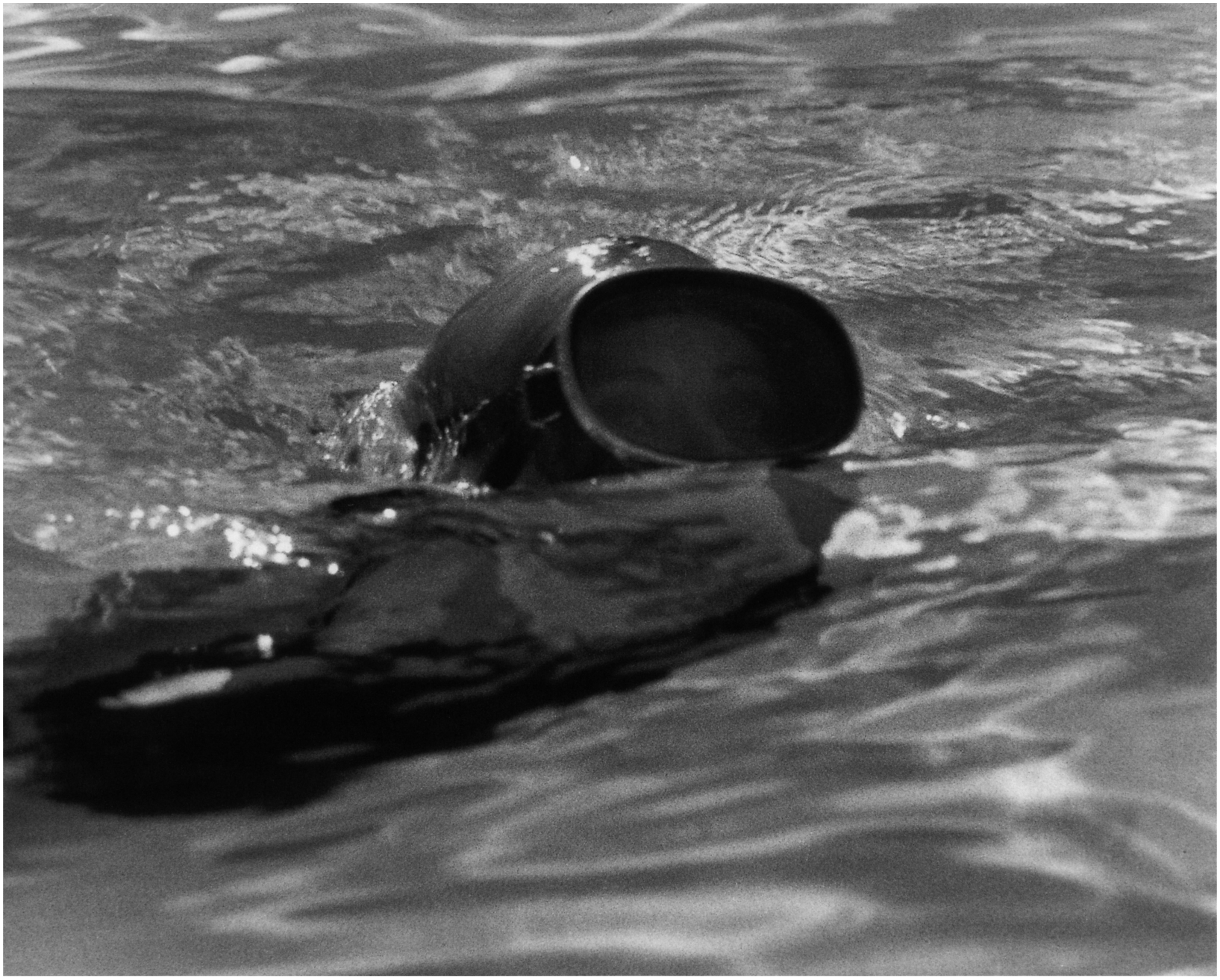
#28, 1979


508

#21, 1978

#41, 1979

#46, 1979



#59, 1980

#11, 1978

#55, 1980

#83, 1980

#56, 1980

#9, 1978

#42, 1979

#18, 1978


545

#5, 1977

#38, 1979

#14, 1978

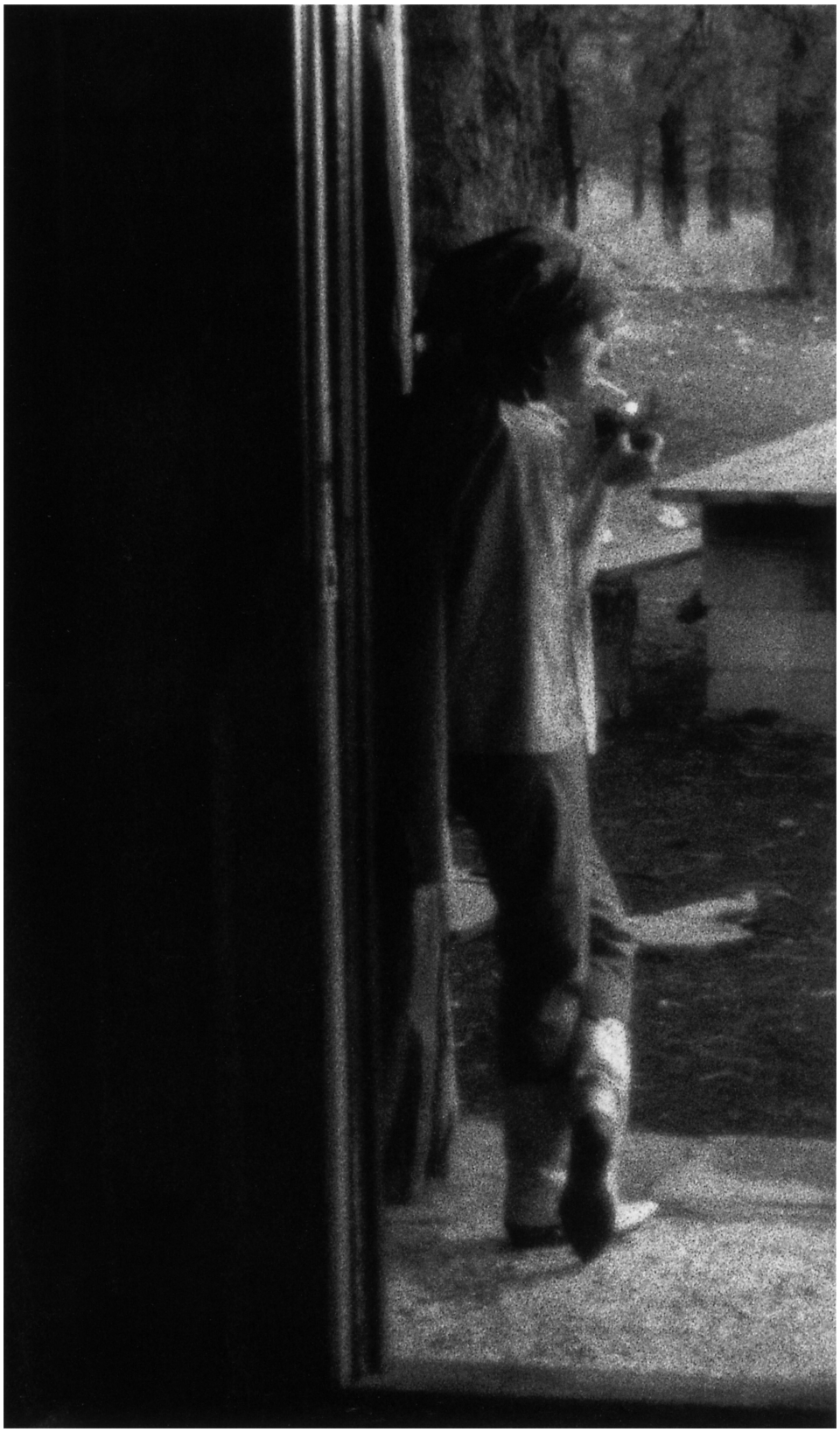
#47, 1979

#82, 1980

#17, 1978

#52, 1979

#61, 1979



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#3, 1977


hoyy

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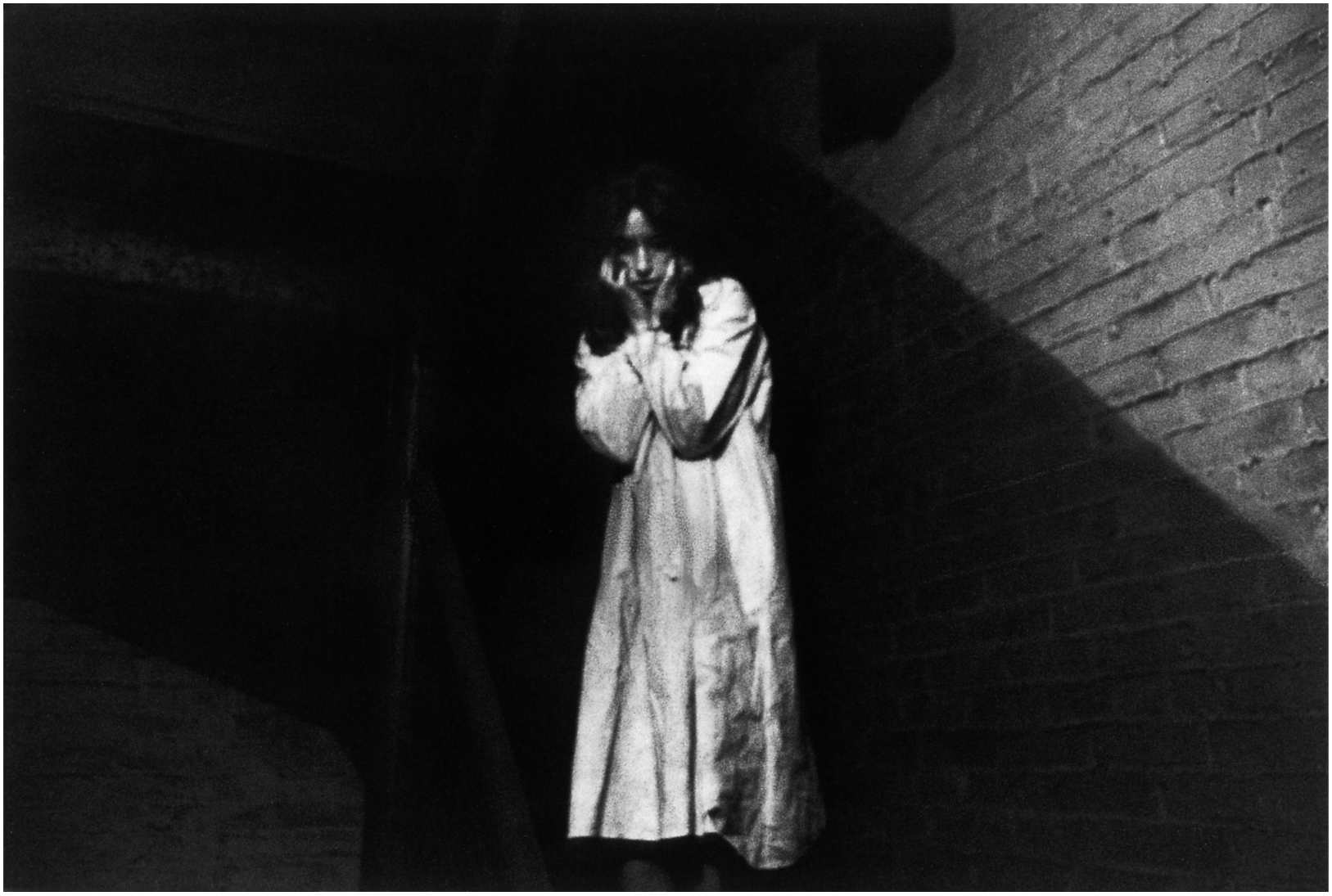

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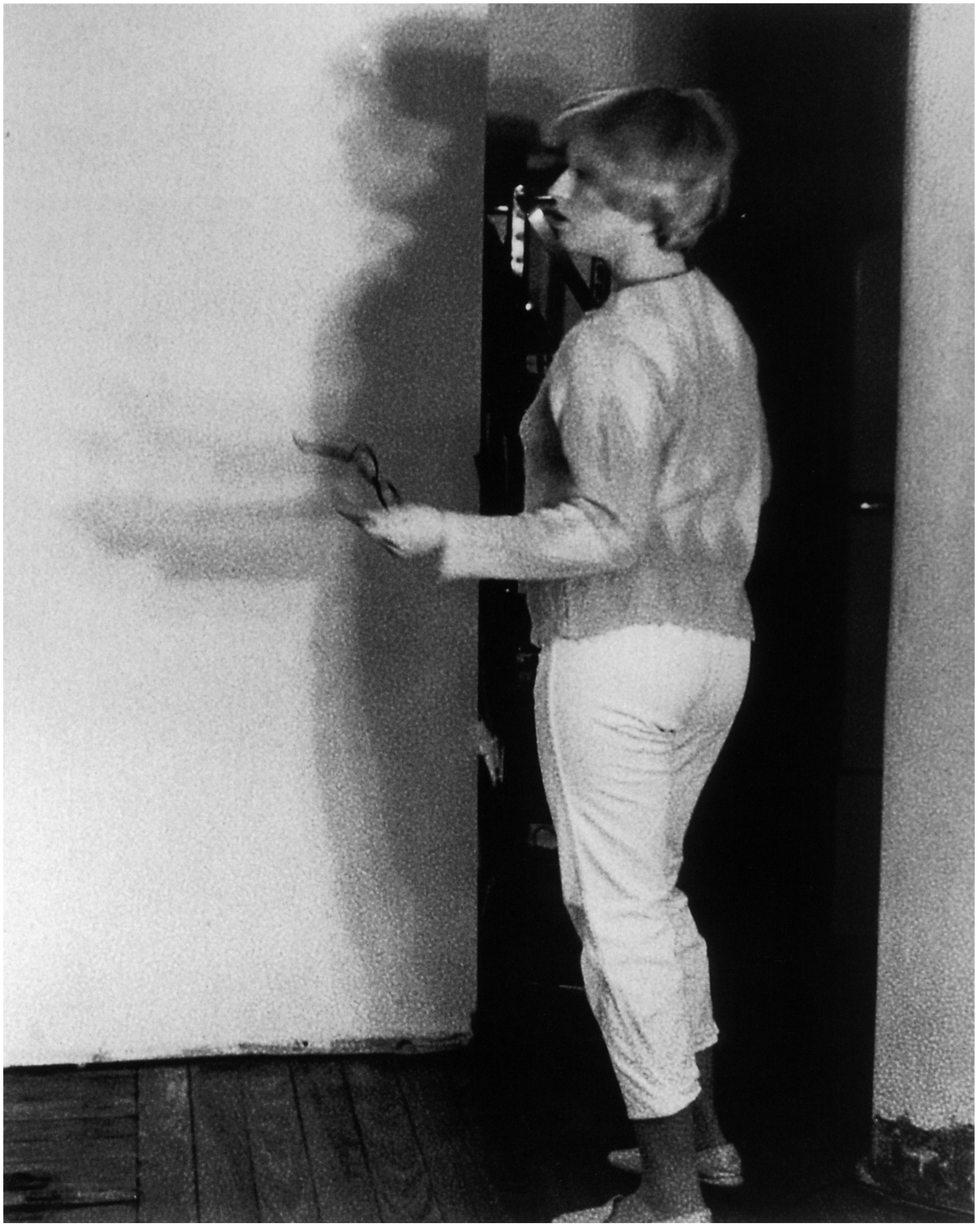
#30, 1979

#1, 1977



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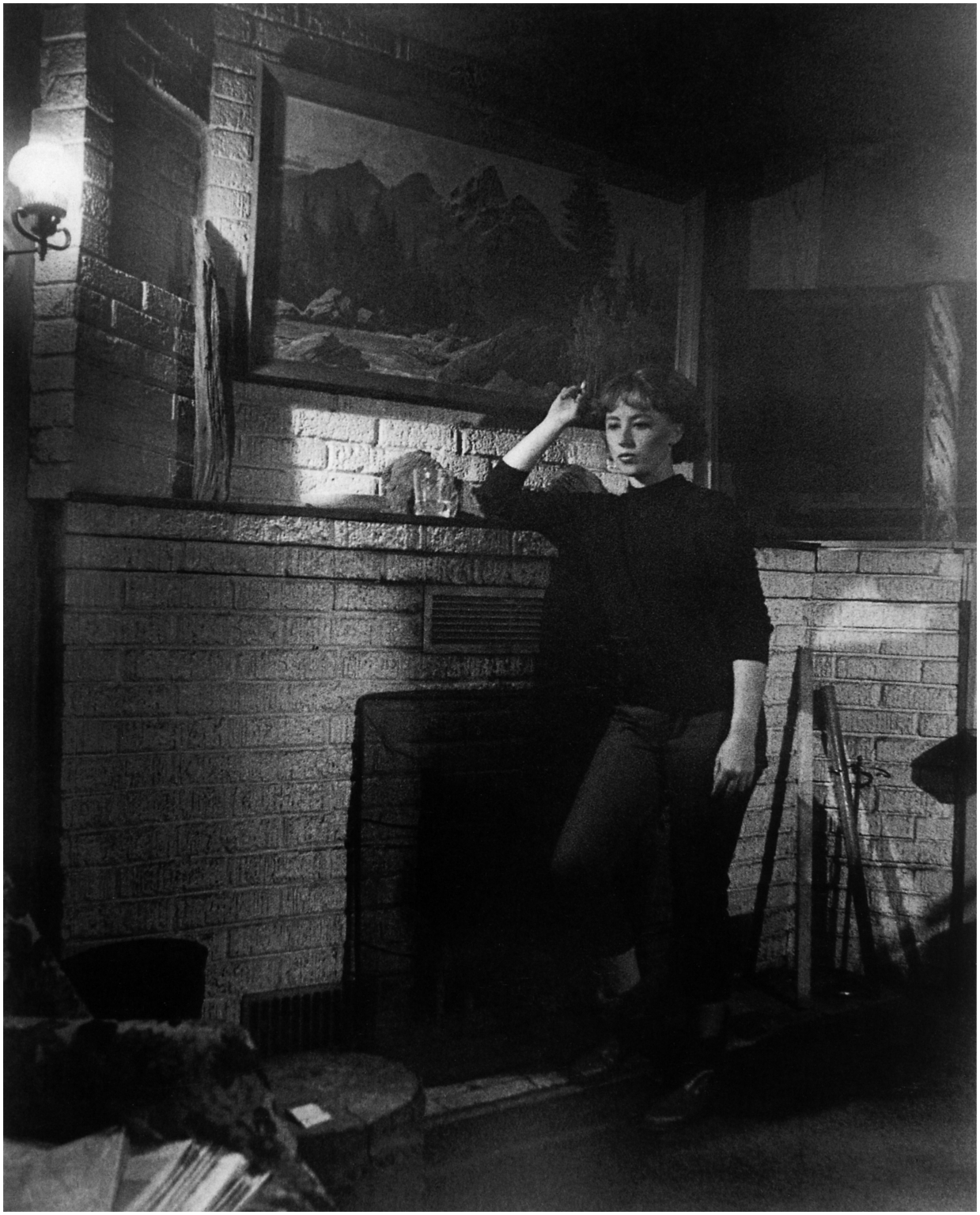

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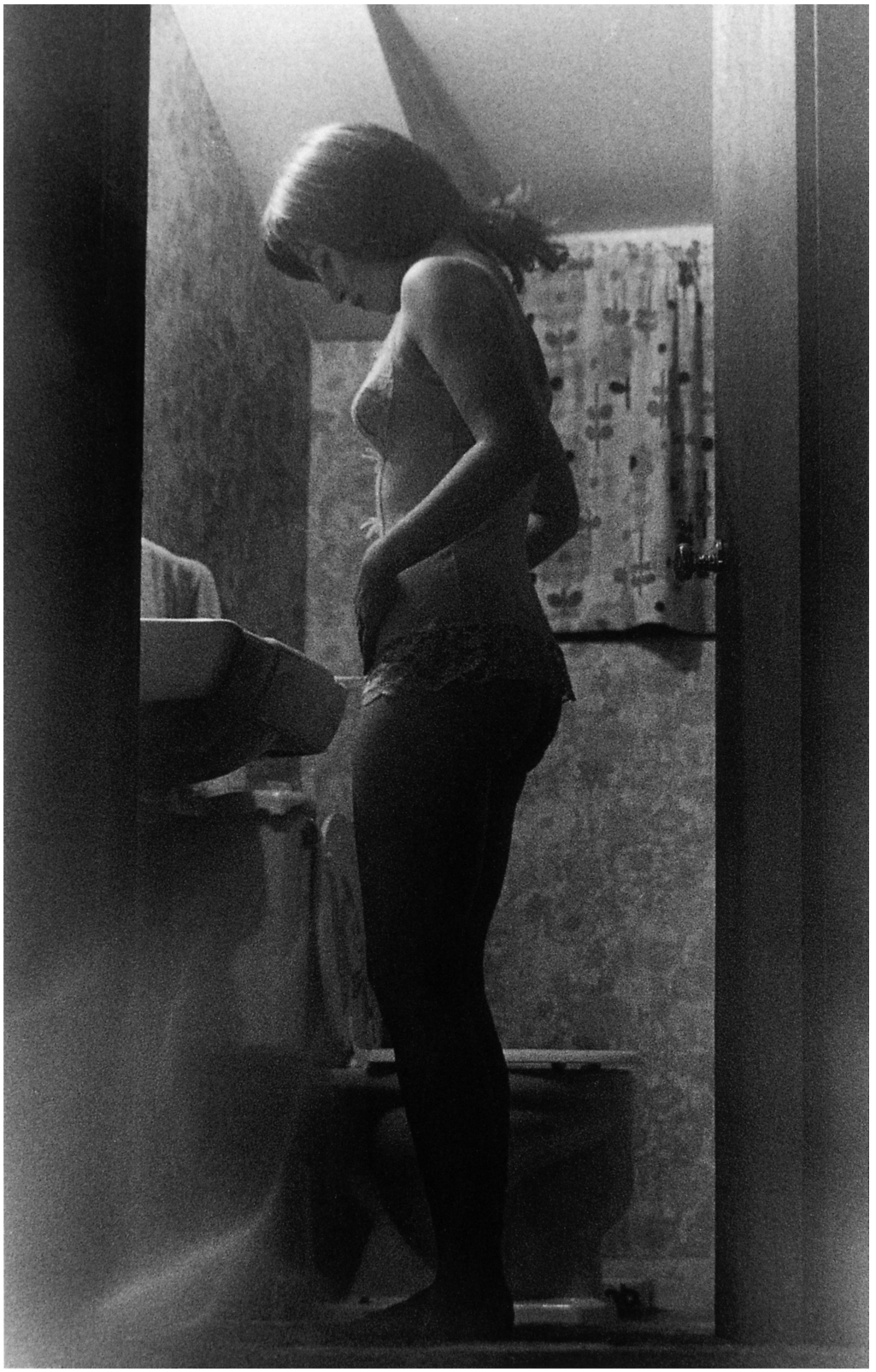

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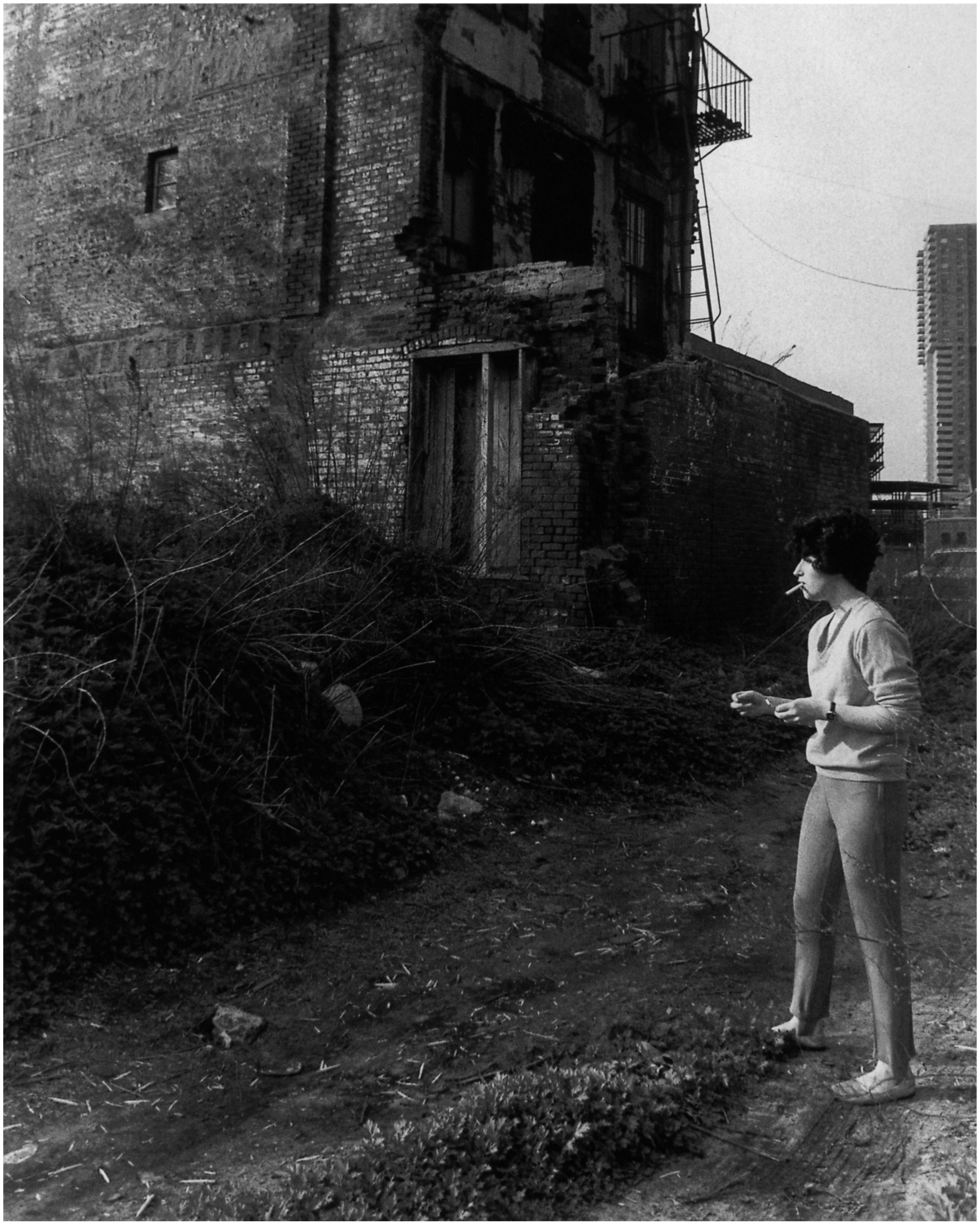

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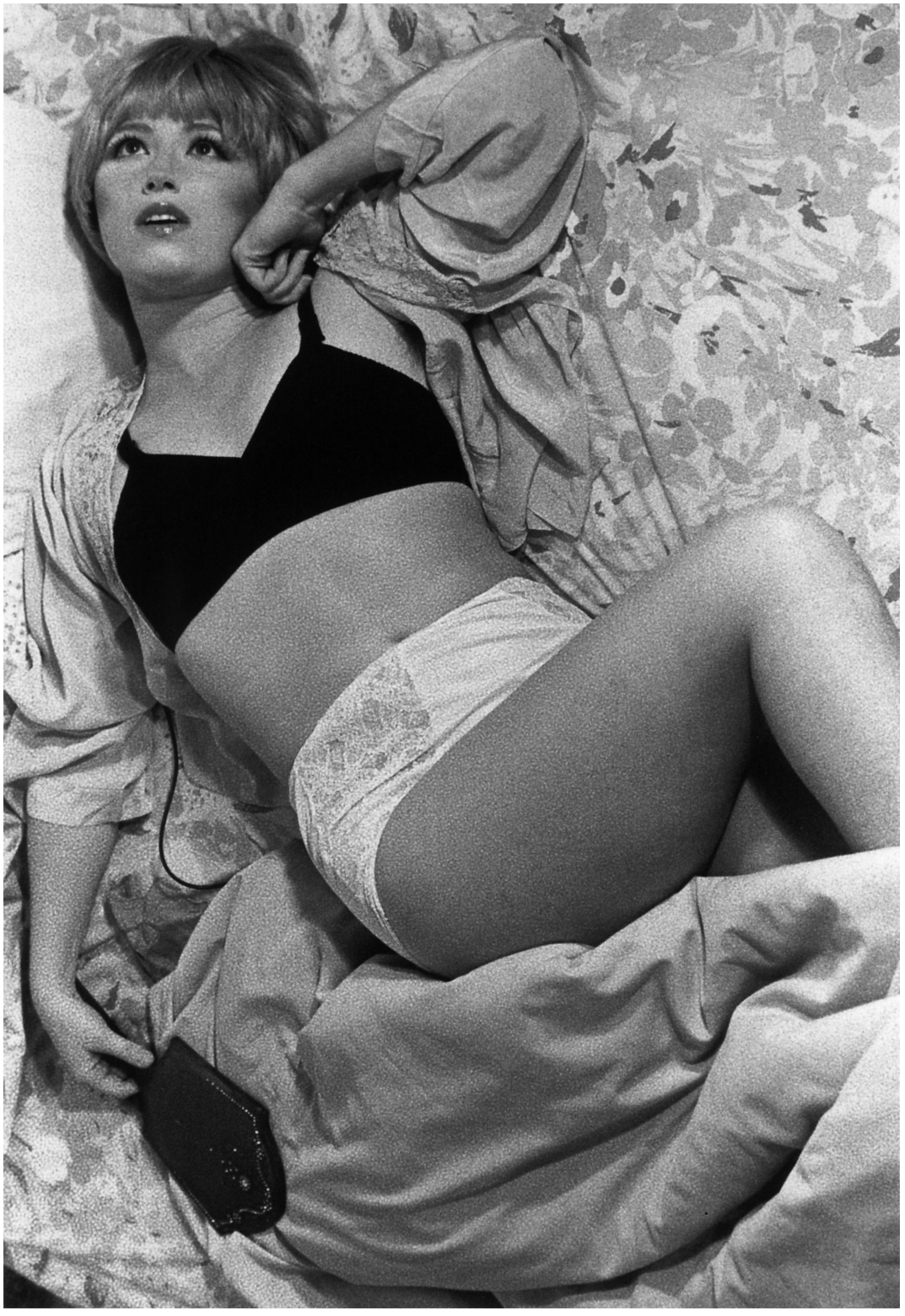

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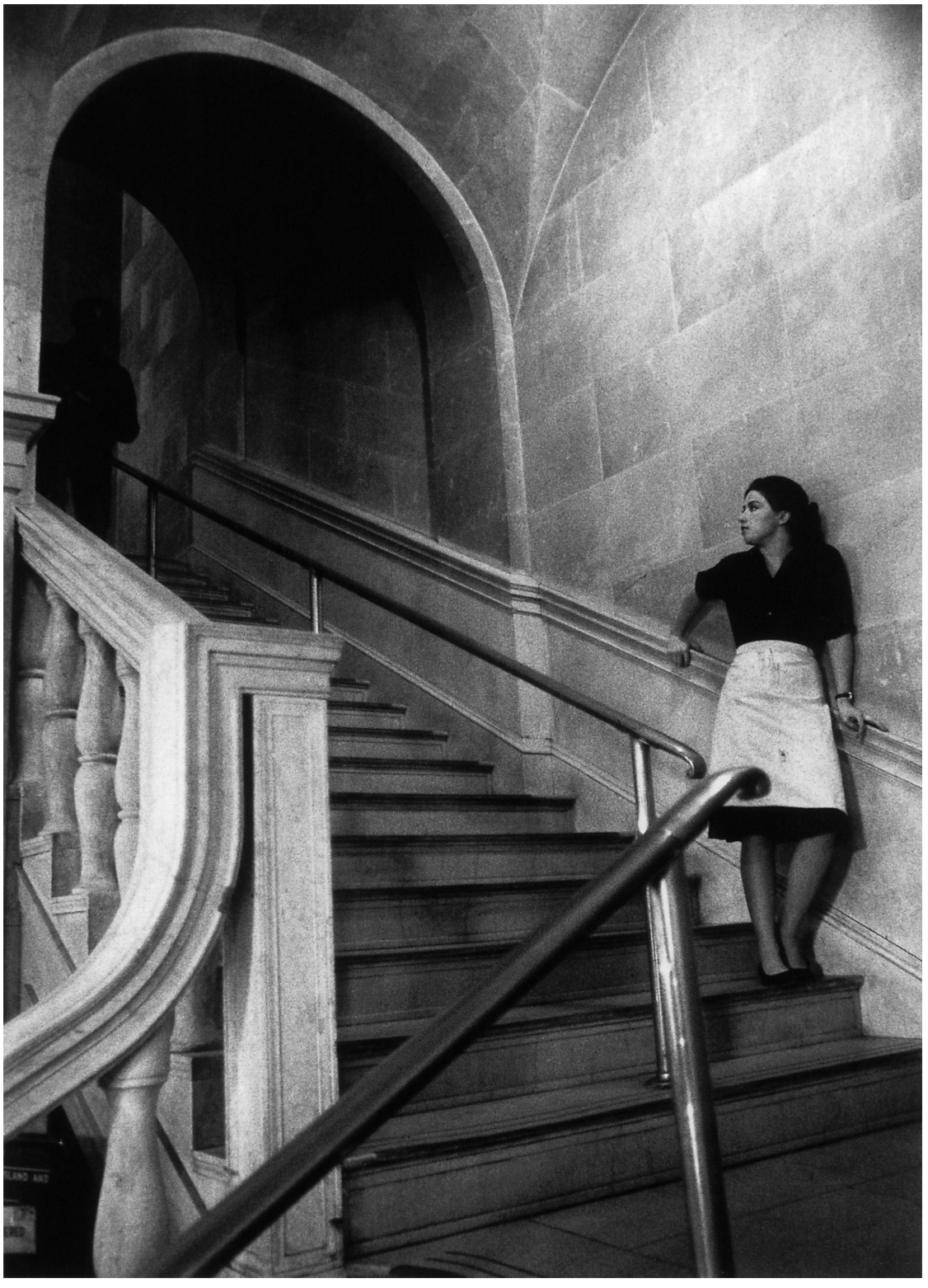

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I would like to thank Peter Galassi, David Frankel, Pascale Willi, Marc Sapir, and The Museum of Modern Art; Margaret Lee and Susan Jennings, my invaluable assistants; Charlie Griffin, printer extraordinaire; and Janelle Reiring, Helene Winer, and Metro Pictures for making this book possible;

To Robert Longo, Helene Winer, Charles Sherman, Barbara Foster, and Diane Bertolo for camera patrol;

And to Betsy Berne and Paul H-O for feedback, editing support, and enduring this with a smile.

—Cindy Sherman

Artist's Acknowledgments

In December 1995, The Museum of Modern Art acquired all sixty-nine of Cindy Sherman's Untitled Film Stills (together with several other works in color). The Museum recognized not only that the Film Stills series is a landmark in the art of its time but also that it is best understood and experienced as a single, seamless work of art. The central motive of the acquisition was to ensure that the complete series would be preserved intact in a single public institution. The Museum shared that goal with Sherman and with Janelle Reiring and Helene Winer at Metro Pictures, the New York gallery that has faithfully represented the artist since 1980. The Museum is deeply grateful to all three, and to the following individuals and funds whose generous contributions made the acquisition possible:

Jo Carole and Ronald Lauder
in memory of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd
in memory of Eugene M. Schwartz
Peter Norton
Sid R. Bass
Barbara and Eugene Schwartz
in honor of Jo Carole and Ronald Lauder
Grace M. Mayer Fund
Anonymous Purchase Fund
General Photography Fund

Made between 1977 and 1980, the Untitled Film Stills are here reproduced in their entirety for the first time, in a sequence determined by the artist. In the process of working on the book, Sherman decided to add one photograph to the series: #65, 1977 (p. 155). Thus the complete series now numbers seventy. Sherman has kindly given a print of the additional photograph to the Museum.

We are particularly grateful to Cindy Sherman for the care and thought and time she has devoted to preparing this book and its introduction.

Great thanks are owed as well to David Frankel, who edited the book and helped Cindy Sherman to craft her introduction; to Pascale Willi, who designed the book; and to Marc Sapir, who supervised its production.

—Glenn D. Lowry
Director
—Peter Galassi
Chief Curator, Department of Photography

Afterword

Colophon

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All of the Untitled Film Stills are gelatin silver prints. Whether vertical or horizontal, they range from 5 1/2" (14 cm) to 7 9/16" (19.2 cm) in the short dimension and from 8 7/16" (21.4 cm) to 9 1/2" (24.1 cm) in the long dimension

Cover: Cindy Sherman. Untitled Film Still #58 (detail). 1980. See p. 133.
Title page: Cindy Sherman. Untitled Film Still #44 (detail). 1979. See p. 81

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