

METRO PICTURES

Fateman, Johanna. "Critics' Picks: Cindy Sherman," *Artforum.com* (May 2016).

ARTFORUM



Cindy Sherman, *Untitled*, 2016, dye sublimation metal print, 44 1/2 x 33 1/2".

In Cindy Sherman's eagerly awaited new show, older women—played by the artist, as always—appear in photographs reminiscent of 1920s Hollywood glamour shots or movie posters. Costumed and posed as younger women might be, these bobbed, finger-waving, and stylishly hatted women with precision-painted eyebrows—think Greta Garbo, Louise Brooks, or Lillian Gish—seem to be reliving their heydays, in color. Or, maybe, this evocative psychological premise is simply a fortuitous byproduct of Sherman's age. She's sixty-two now and continues to work as she has for decades: alone and as a master of all trades, her own model, makeup artist, art director, and stylist.

Shot before a green screen, the photos feature Photoshopped backgrounds, such as hazy skyscrapers, suggestions of wisteria, a length of creased pastel brocade, foreboding skies, digital abstractions, and possibly Athens. These manipulated "sets" throw the artist's hyperdetailed, brazenly unretouched, and unforgivingly lit form into relief. Impasto foundation collects in her fine lines, plows over her real, intact eyebrows, and is not blended past her décolletage. Also, her hands don't look young. This wonderful combination of self-assured "age inappropriateness" and classical Hollywood themes produces moments of campy, ramshackle eroticism, with bluish raccoon eye shadow and red cupid's-bow lips, in tresses à la Mary Pickford with a headband and a sexy loose tunic, perched before a storybook tree (*Untitled*, 2016). But such images are more stately, poignant, or contemplative than funny. One wants to add that Sherman looks great, which she does, but that's never been the point. As she proceeds to use herself as a convenient mannequin for conceptual endeavors, or, alternately, exploit her exceptional gift of chameleonic dexterity, she further illuminates the cultural conditions of the so-called blank slate. In ignoring the unspoken edict to age out of her self-defined project, her work becomes mysterious and confrontational all over again.

519 W 24TH ST NEW YORK, NY 10011 T 212 206 7100 F 212 337 0070
WWW.METROPICTURES.COM GALLERY@METROPICTURES.COM