

METRO PICTURES

Suhrawardi, Rebecca. "Cindy Sherman Releases Latest Body Of Work In New York While A Major Retrospective Of The Artist Opens In Paris," *Forbes.com* (September 24, 2020).

Forbes



Cindy Sherman Untitled #612, 2019 dye sublimation print 66 x 100 inches 167.6 x 254 cm

While the world is rebounding from the effects of the COVID pandemic, artist Cindy Sherman is emerging from the quarantine enforce with not one but two shows opening across two continents this week, a reminder to us all her status as one of the most important artists working today.

In New York, Sherman is releasing her latest body of work in the form of 10 large-scale untitled photographs at the Metro Pictures gallery which opens Saturday, the 26th (by appointment to account for social distancing). Concurrently, a retrospective of the artist's work opened at Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris on the 23rd of this month.

Sherman's work, which always stars the artist transformed through makeup and costume, is a blend of performance and commentary which constructs and at the same time deconstructs various identities and stereotypes from across society and history. She has examined, embodied, and questioned everyone from clowns to socialites to movie stars.



Cindy Sherman Untitled #609, 2019 dye sublimation print 62 1/2 x 91 1/4 inches 158.8 x 231.8 cm

For the Metro Pictures show, Sherman's eye is focused on androgyny in an exploration of gender set against digitally-manipulated backgrounds from her travels through Bavaria, Shanghai and the UK. While she's mostly portrayed female stereotypes throughout her 4 decade-long career, these new works show the artist depicting male figures in each of the 10 pieces but there is an eerie similarity between the males and females portrayed. They seem almost exactly the same with only slight tweaks in details like makeup, eyebrow shape, or facial hair.

In one image, two people stand side-by-side, one dressed in an animal print coat and the other in a blue sweater with an abstract mountain-like motif, and Sherman makes it impossible to decipher gender at all. There are shadows below and above each of their lips which give both the appearance of facial hair. And while one of the characters is wearing dangling star-shaped earrings in each ear, this sort of adornment is no longer a signifier of gender, nor are the evidence of eyelashes on the same person. This leaves the viewer to wonder: Is this a picture of a woman and man? Are these two men? Are one of these people transgendered? Are both of these people transgendered? Are they a couple? Questions left unanswered, challenging the viewer to reconsider normative concepts around gender.

While her focus historically has been around female characters and stereotypes, this is not the first time she has created pieces erasing gender. In a series called "Doctor and Nurse," she became both male and female in an expression of stereotypical mid-century professions. In the "History Portrait" series, Sherman became both male aristocrats and clergymen.



Cindy Sherman Untitled #611, 2019 dye sublimation print 91 x 107 1/4 inches 231.1 x 272.4 cm

The Metro Pictures show is also the latest in a long history of crossover and collaboration between fashion and art which dates back to Dali and Schiaparelli. In this case, Sherman collaborated with designer Stella McCartney who provided the artist with the clothes she wears in the images.

Meanwhile in Paris, Fondation Louis Vuitton's exhibition brings together 170 works created by Sherman between 1975 and 2020 and includes a wide breath of work from the series Untitled Film Stills, Rear Screen Projections, Fashion, History Portraits, Disasters, Headshots, Clowns, Society Portraits, Murals, and Flappers, as well as new photographs and tapestries. Fondation Louis Vuitton will also present Crossing Views—a selection of works from its collection organized with Cindy Sherman. The Fondation Louis Vuitton show is up until January 3, 2021.