

# CINDY SHERMAN



Cover Image  
*Untitled Film Still #21*

**TEACHERS' STUDY GUIDE**  
**FALL 2019**

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The exhibition will include the complete Untitled Film Stills, a series of 70 black-and-white photographs using Sherman herself as the model, and aimed at subverting stereotypes of women in media and planting the seeds of all later work development.

# Vancouver Art Gallery

## Teachers' Guide for School Programs

Cindy Sherman (b. 1954) is one of the most important and influential artists working today. This major exhibition explores the development of Sherman's work from the beginning of her career in the mid-1970s to the present day. Sherman photographs herself in the guises of various fictitious characters using makeup, props, prosthetics, wigs and costumes, and is inspired by a range of cultural sources including film, advertising and fashion. Through these photographs of characters, Cindy Sherman raises questions about the meaning of appearances in our image-based society.

### Dear Teacher:

This guide will assist you in preparing for your class tour of the exhibition Cindy Sherman. It also provides follow-up activities to facilitate discussion after your visit to the Gallery. Engaging in the suggested activities before and after your visit will reinforce ideas generated by the tour and build continuity between the Gallery experience and your ongoing work in the classroom. Most activities require few materials and can be adapted easily to the age, grade level and needs of your students. Underlined words in this guide are defined in the Vocabulary section.

#### **The tour of Cindy Sherman has three main goals:**

1. To introduce students to a broad range of work created by Cindy Sherman in the past forty years,
2. To consider key themes within the exhibition including image and identity, transformation, disguise, celebrity and popular culture,
3. To explore individual artworks in terms of ideas, materials, techniques and inspiration.

## THE EXHIBITION

### Cindy Sherman

"I am trying to make other people recognize something of themselves rather than me."  
—Cindy Sherman<sup>1</sup>

Cindy Sherman is Canada's first retrospective of the American performance art and photography pioneer Cindy Sherman in more than twenty years. In collaboration with London's National Portrait Gallery, the exhibition features more than 170 works by the acclaimed artist, including a number of works from the Vancouver Art Gallery's permanent collection, rarely seen photographs and showcasing selections from every major photographic series Sherman has produced. Although it is always Sherman who appears in the photographs, the works are not self-portraits. Sherman is performing roles captured in photographs that explore outward appearances, how we construct our identity and our persistence to attach meaning to how other people look. Sherman is fascinated with the nature of stereotypes and the relationship between appearance and reality. Except for a general introduction to each series, the exhibition doesn't explain Sherman's photographs. And since she does not title her work, instead just giving each photograph a progressive number, her work presents an invitation to the viewer to look deeper at the photographs and to ask Why this persona? Why do these characters look the way they do? What is their story?—thereby letting viewers make up their own minds about what they think it all means.

The tour does not focus on images containing nudity, but students may see some images of the nude body as they walk through this exhibition. It can be helpful to talk with students beforehand about images of the nude in art, and to encourage them to examine their own responses to the work and to think about why an artist might choose to include a nude body in a work of art.

## Land Acknowledgment

Cindy Sherman takes place on the unceded territories of the **xʷməθkʷəy̓əm** (Musqueam), **Sḵwxwú7mesh** (Squamish) and **səlilwətaɬ** (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, who have never surrendered their rights and title to their lands and waters.

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<sup>1</sup> John Waters, "A Conversation with Cindy Sherman," in Cindy Sherman, edited by Eva Respini (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2012), 69.

## **PREPARING YOUR STUDENTS: Nudes in Art**

A good place to begin is simply to inform students that some of the works of art they will see when they visit the Gallery will contain images of nude bodies. People who visit the Gallery have all kinds of different responses to these images. Some people laugh, others feel embarrassed or uncomfortable. All of these responses are normal. But why? Why is the body so humorous and/or embarrassing? Ask the students whether they fall into hysterical laughter when they are in the shower or bath. Probably not. Part of the surprise of seeing a nude figure in a museum is just that: we are accustomed to our unclothed bodies only in private. To see one in public is a shock. Artists know this too. In showing the nude body, they remind us that the body can mean many things.

### **Nudity can be a symbol of:**

- Privacy: The artist observes a very private moment when the person in the artwork is alone or with someone he or she loves.
- Innocence: Many Christian religious images produced over the last five hundred years include images of angel figures as nude babies, and the Christ child is often depicted nude. Like all babies, these figures are innocent, indifferent to their nudity.
- Bravery: When Michelangelo sculpted the famous statue of David, he spoke of David's nudity as a symbol of bravery. David faced a giant without any protection on his body, relying on his faith and his skill to keep him safe.
- Vulnerability: Nudity can represent a lack of defence—a person who has nothing and has nowhere to hide.

### **What are you wearing?**

Another way to approach this topic is to think about clothing instead of nudity. What do clothes tell us about a person? Clothing can send messages about:

- the time in history,
- age and culture,
- wealth and style,
- the wearer's profession,
- stereotypes and expectations.

## ARTIST BACKGROUND

Some artists and art historians suggest that the nude figure is set free from all of the "distracting" information transmitted by what we wear, and becomes just a human being, from any time, place or culture. "I feel I'm anonymous in my work. When I look at the pictures, I never see myself, they aren't self-portraits. Sometimes I disappear."

—Cindy Sherman

Cindy Sherman is a key figure of the "Pictures Generation," a group of American artists who grew up in the '60s and explored the relationship between art, mass media and society in their work. She is a conceptual photographer who doesn't get caught up in the technicalities of photography, but instead focuses on using photography to tell a story and create an image. Inspired by theatrical role playing and traditional portraiture, she uses the camera and her face as a blank canvas, painting it in elaborate makeup and using props, costumes and stage scenery to comment on social role-playing and stereotypes.

Cindy Sherman was born January 19, 1954, in New Jersey. She is the youngest of five children. Due to a large age gap between her and her siblings, she felt like an only child. Sherman loved to play dress-up and has described dressing up as a way to get attention from her older siblings. There is a picture of her at age twelve, dressed up as an old woman, exploring what it might feel like to be an elderly person.

Besides dress-up, Sherman also enjoyed cinema and television when she was young. She spent hours watching television and says she was a "child tv addict."<sup>2</sup> She especially enjoyed a movie showcase program on her local television station called Million Dollar Movie, which ran the same film all week long, twice a day.[Below, in First Impressions, it says the movies were shown twice per day.] She watched the same films over and over, and this exposure provided a visual education for her that she uses in her work as an artist today. One director, Alfred Hitchcock, made a huge impression on her, especially his film Rear Window. Its plot centres on a main character, played by the actor Jimmy Stewart, who is confined to a wheelchair with a broken leg. He passes the time by observing his neighbours in their homes. The film's message, how to make sense of a constantly changing world inhabited by people we only observe, made a lasting impression on her. "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."<sup>3</sup> This idea of filling in the pieces of a character's life is asked of viewers who explore Sherman's art today.

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2 Interview by Xavier Douroux and Franck Gautherot, "A Conversation with Cindy Sherman," in Cindy Sherman exh. Brochure (Galerie Déjà vu, Dijon, 1982), n.p

3 Cindy Sherman, "The Making of Untitled," in Peter Galassi and Cindy Sherman, Cindy Sherman: The Complete Untitled Film Stills (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2003) p. 4.

In 1972, Sherman enrolled at SUNY Buffalo State College as a painting major. She failed the required photography class due to difficulties with the technical side. Later on, however, she took another photography course while at school with Barbara Jo Revelle, who told her to just take pictures and not worry about the technical aspect. No longer preoccupied with technical perfection, Sherman switched her major from painting to photography.

Cindy Sherman has always been interested in experimenting with different identities. Her goal is not to impersonate particular people but to invent characters that are completely made up. She responds to the world surrounding her with both humour and criticism, appropriating images from advertising, film, television and magazines for her art. She works in series, typically photographing herself in a range of costumes. How does one series end and another begin? "There is usually a moment where I say, 'I've had enough of this, I'm sick of it.' Or I feel like I've started to repeat myself within a series."<sup>4</sup>

Sherman works alone in her studio and does everything by herself, picking out the costumes, finding the props, designing the makeup, fixing the lighting and, of course, using herself as the model. In the beginning she didn't have the money to hire people to help her, but now she prefers to work alone. Each photograph is a private performance for herself. She works intuitively, and none of her images are about her. But they are her: for Sherman they are characters and should not be considered self-portraits. It's about painting the characters on her face to highlight how we all put on different faces throughout our lives, even different faces throughout the day. There are hints of narrative in her photographs so viewers can make up their own stories about the characters in the pictures.

Sherman has received just about every award available to an American artist. In 1995, she was the recipient of one of the prestigious MacArthur Fellowships, popularly known as the "Genius Awards," and she has represented her country twice at the Venice Biennale.

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<sup>4</sup> Interview by Kenneth Baker, "Cindy Sherman: Interview with a Chameleon" (Sightlines, November 1, 2012), n.p.

## **PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: About the Artist (intermediate/secondary students)**

### **Objective:**

Students explore the life of Cindy Sherman, and her artistic practice, photography series and achievements.

### **Materials:**

- Access to the Internet
- Access to library for art books on the artist
- Artist Information Sheet and Student Worksheet (p.7)
- Writing materials

### **Process:**

1. Divide the class into small groups. Give each group one of the categories from the Information Sheet. (p.7)
2. Give each student a copy of the Student Worksheet (p.8) and ask them to consider what they need to find out to complete their section. Have them conduct research using the Internet, either at home or at school.
3. Ask each group to find and describe a piece of work by the artist and add it into the space provided on the Worksheet.
4. Have each group present their information while the rest of the students fill in their worksheets.

### **Conclusion:**

Discuss the following:

What were some of the most interesting things that students learned or discovered?

Which photograph are students curious about seeing in the exhibition?

In what ways does Sherman's work connect to or resonate with students' lives?

What else are students interested in finding out about the artist?



# ARTIST INFORMATION SHEET:

## Cindy Sherman

### Her life

- Born in Glen Ridge, New Jersey, in 1954
- As a child enjoyed cinema, television and dressing up
- Lives and works in New York
- One of the most influential and important artists working today

### Her practice/process

- Uses herself as a model in all her photographs
- Works alone and is the photographer, costumer, makeup artist, hair stylist and set designer in all her work
- Takes inspiration from many sources, including film, television, magazines, fashion and advertising
- In her intuitive process, she tests ideas that pop into her head using costumes and props until she finds a promising character to explore and ultimately photograph
- Works are untitled, but series are given nicknames such as Flappers and Untitled Film Stills

### Selections from her photography series to explore

- Untitled Film Stills: resembled PHOTOGRAPHS taken on film sets as advertisements for films
- Rear Screen Projections: incorporates two film techniques, use of close-ups and projected backdrops
- Fashion: questions and makes fun of fashion photography by having characters wear designer-label clothing but appear absurd and comical.
- Society Portraits: addresses issues of age and social status
- Chanel series/Murals: each series uses Photoshop to manipulate photographs
- Flappers: inspired by the 1920s, when young women's hairstyles and behaviour went against how society felt women should dress and act

### Achievements

- Among the most significant artists of the Pictures Generation
- Recipient of MacArthur Fellowship, referred to as the "Genius Award"
- Considered one of the most influential artists of her generation
- Has represented the United States in four Venice Biennales
- Her works have been collected by numerous museums around the world
- Honorary doctorate degree from the Royal College of Art, London

## STUDENT WORKSHEET: Cindy Sherman

<b>Personal Information</b>	
<b>Art Process/Practice</b>	
<b>Photography Series</b>	
<b>Achievements</b>	
<b>An Artwork: Title and Description</b>	

## PRE-POST VISIT ACTIVITY: That's me! (younger ages)

### Objective

Create a photo scrapbook to better understand the meaning of changing identity and appearance.

### Discussion

When Cindy Sherman was eight or nine years old, she created a photo album filled with pictures of herself. She titled this personal memoir *The Cindy Book*. "When I'd look through [boxes of family photos], I'd always ask my mother 'Which one is me?' I guess it became interesting to me to pick myself out of a group of people."<sup>1</sup> There are 26 photographs of Sherman in the book, charting her changing appearance as she grows from an infant to a pre-teen. In some she is participating in various activities with family and friends, and in others she is alone. The memoir is evidence that even at a young age, Cindy Sherman was fascinated with her changing everyday appearance. And as she changed and grew, so did her identity and appearance.

She stopped adding to the album in her early teens, but rediscovered the book while in art school and decided to finish it. She did so by adding the words "that's me," and sometimes circled an image of herself in the pictures. Sherman also changed her handwriting to reflect her different ages, as if it too were changing and growing in appearance like Sherman. By using a comma at the end of each statement of "that's me," instead of a period, she seems to acknowledge that her identity and appearance are constantly changing.

In the repeated phrase "that's me," there is also a suggestion of wonder and searching, as if the phrase could also be a question: "This is me and yet this is also me?" In 2009 Sherman acknowledged the effort she was making when she was young to understand such puzzles: "The book came out of this search. I was ten years old—of course, at the time I didn't think of it as art, I was just trying to find out who I was in my little world."<sup>2</sup>

While *The Cindy Book* reflects the concerns of a young child in understanding her identity and appearance, there is also a wider human implication that affects us all. Who am I?

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1 Text by Paul Moorhouse, Cindy Sherman exhibition catalog (National Portrait Gallery, London, 2019), p. 14

2 Interview by Rachel Wetzler, "I'm trying to erase myself": an interview with Cindy Sherman (Apollo. The International Art Magazine), n.p.

## **Materials**

- Paper
- Glue
- Stapler
- Scissors
- Pencils or markers
- 3 or 4 copies of photographs of students from different ages

## **Process**

1. Have students discuss The Cindy Book (11). Ask them what they see. How does Cindy Sherman's image change in the pictures? Why do you think she has circled herself in some of them? What do you notice about the words she has written? Why do you think her handwriting changes throughout the memoir? How many different identities do you see as Sherman is growing up? Student? Daughter? Sister? Friend?
2. Gather some photographs of yourself from different years. You can print them from the computer.
3. Cut out the photographs and arrange them on pieces of paper. You can put more than one on a page, or you may decide to use only one photograph on each page.
4. Create a composition you are pleased with and glue your pictures down. How will you decide to identify yourself in these pictures? Will you add words? Identities?
5. Create a title for your book and design a cover.
6. Staple your book together when finished. Share with the class.

## **Conclusion**

1. Ask students: What did you notice about your appearance over the years? How did it change?
2. How many different identities can you point out? Were you surprised to see how many identities can all still be you? Why do you think this is?



A Cindy Book  
(pg. 4, 5)



A Cindy Book  
(pg. 10, 11)



A Cindy Book  
(pg. 8, 9)



A Cindy Book  
(pg. 12)

## **PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: Movie Press Kit for Untitled Film Stills (all levels)**

### **Objective:**

Students create a movie title and story summary based on a photograph from Cindy Sherman's Untitled Film Stills series.

### **Discussion:**

Shortly after moving to New York in late 1977, Cindy Sherman began to create Untitled Film Stills, a photographic series that launched her career and established her reputation as a leading artist of the Pictures Generation. A collection of 70 individual black-and-white images, the series recalls publicity shots for films during the 1950s and 60s.

Actual film stills were photographs taken on film sets as advertisements for cinematic features. Many of the photographers were unknown, and the photographs were used as free fan handouts or sent along in press kits. When Sherman first produced the series, she sold the photographs for fifty dollars to reference the "throw away" quality.

Cindy Sherman began the series by photographing herself in her apartment and studio, using basic props. She directed her friends to photograph her in scenes set outdoors, but whether or not she was the one to release the camera's shutter, she is considered the author of the photographs.

The fictional scenes were always staged for the camera, and Sherman so convincingly recreated film publicity shots that many viewers believe they can identify the scenes from actual movies, even though all the photographs are completely made up from the artist's own imagination.

All of the photographic situations hint at stories but are deliberately vague, inviting viewers to create their own interpretations of what is happening within the photograph, based on their own experiences with movies they have seen

**Materials:**

- Paper
- Pencils or pens
- Reference photographs

**Process:**

1. Discuss the photographs of Cindy Sherman's Untitled Film Stills series found on page 15. What do the students see? How has Sherman created suspense? What do the images have in common? What sparks students' imagination to create a story?
2. Have each student choose one of the photographs that interests them. What do they know about the character in the artwork? What do they see that makes them say that? What do they think could be the story of the character?
3. Ask students to create a press kit for the movie still. What is the title of the film? Ask the students to create a summary or story for the film that makes the class want to go and see it.
4. Display students' movie titles and summaries under the corresponding photographs.

**Conclusion:**

1. Have each student show the Sherman photograph from Untitled Film Stills they used for inspiration and share their movie title and summary.
2. Was it easier or more difficult than they expected to create a title and summary to go with the photograph?
3. Were movie titles and summaries inspired by the same photographs similar or different? What are the students' thoughts as to why?
4. What were some things students took into consideration while planning and writing their work?

## PROJECT EXTENSION: Untitled Film Stills (secondary students)

### Discussion

Untitled Film Stills (pg. 15) explores what it means to be under the gaze of others. Sherman's work is critical of the toxic environment the male gaze has created for women. By turning the camera on herself in a series of fantasy Hollywood roles and poses, Sherman meant to expose and embarrass "Old Hollywood": "My 'stills' were about fakeness of role-playing as well as contempt for the domineering 'male' audience who would mistakenly read the images as sexy."<sup>1</sup> Sherman is also making us think about our own participation in the way media packages female stereotypes and understands fighting these stereotypes cannot simply be defeated because they are exposed in a photographic art series. Exposure is a start, but it takes much more conversation, education and careful looking to expose the myth of prevailing Western cultural stereotypes of women, that they are here for the pleasure of the male gaze.

### Materials

- Magazines
- Internet
- Phone cameras (optional)

### Process

1. Have students find current advertisements and movie posters featuring women.
2. How are women presented in these images? Whose gaze do students feel they are created for? Have things changed in Hollywood since Sherman created the Untitled Film Stills series in the late 1980s? If not, how would students change these images?
3. Working in groups, have students recreate their found images to change the Hollywood stereotype of women.

### Conclusion

Discuss how students chose to change the female image in their photographs.

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<sup>1</sup> Siegel, Jeanne, "Cindy Sherman" (1998). Interview, excerpted from Jansen, HW, and Jansen, Anthony F., History of Art. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1997.



## CINDY SHERMAN: Untitled Film Stills



*Untitled Film Still #56*



*Untitled Film Still #21*



*Untitled Film Still #21*



*Untitled Film Still #48*



*Untitled Film Still #54*

## PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: First Impressions (all levels)

### Objective:

Students create character portraits, each transforming into someone they have observed from afar.

### Discussion

As a child, Cindy Sherman had an early fascination with cinema. Television came of age when she was young, and she confesses that she was a "TV addict." She loved movies and enjoyed a television show on her local station called Million Dollar Movie. The show played the same movie twice a day for an entire week, so she could really get to know the film by heart. This became her first visual education that she used in her art.

She watched all kinds of horror movies, including Japanese horror movies. She watched some of these movies with a friend who was a couple of years younger than she was. The friend remarked that she found the films scary, and Sherman remembers telling her, "It's OK, they are all fake."<sup>1</sup>

One film that stands out is Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*. In the movie, the main character, a news photographer, is confined to a wheelchair after breaking his leg. For entertainment he spies on his neighbours through their windows in the apartment next door. To pass the time, he envisions what their lives must be like and makes up stories about them based on their appearances. Watch the movie trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5L2YQnShIk>.

Like the main character of *Rear Window*, the instinct to fill in the story about people based on first impressions remains the central motivating force of Sherman's work. The film frames what confronts everyone daily, how to make sense of a constantly changing world inhabited by people who we don't know and whose lives are private to us. We are left with just their appearances to make assumptions about who they are, how they live, and what is important to them. When you make an assumption about someone, either positive or negative, based on first impressions and appearance, it is called stereotyping.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview by Tim Adams, "Cindy Sherman: 'Why am I in these photos?'" (The Guardian, July 3, 2016), n.p

Cindy Sherman is not impersonating real people in her artwork but instead is creating characters based on people she sees on the street, in advertisements, magazines, television, film and social media. She creates these images and gives us clues to make decisions on what stereotypes we think these characters are, based solely on their appearance. However, when we look more closely at the images, we realize that our first assumptions may not be true. Similarly, our first impressions of people based solely on appearance change as we get to know them better.

## **Materials**

- Camera
- Clothing, props brought from home
- Paper
- Pencils

## **Process**

1. As a class, watch the trailer for *Rear Window* linked in discussion. Notice the different stereotypes given to the characters living in the apartments. What did you see that creates these stereotypes? (optional)
2. As a class, look at the three works provided of characters created by Cindy Sherman.\*
3. Ask students: What is a character? Discuss. A character is a representation of a person in a narrative or dramatic work of art (such as a novel, play or film). Character, particularly when enacted by an actor in the theatre or cinema, involves "the illusion of being a human person." How has Cindy Sherman evoked character in these artworks?
4. What is your first impression of these characters? What do you see that makes you say that? Who are they? What do you think their life might be like? What do you see that makes you say that? How would you identify them if they were characters in an apartment window of Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*?
5. What is a character? Discuss. A character is a representation of a person in a narrative or dramatic work of art (such as a novel, play or film). Character, particularly when enacted by an actor in the theatre or cinema, involves "the illusion of being a human person." How has Cindy Sherman evoked character in these artworks? What do you think their life might be like?
6. What is character revelation? Discuss. The components of character revelation that are part of a good portrait will contain at least one element that reveals the subject's personality: an object, unique mannerisms or any of the other features or traits that form the individual nature of the person. What elements has Cindy Sherman added to the artwork to create character revelation?
7. Ask students what character they would like to create for their artwork. Remember, Cindy Sherman is not impersonating real people, but characters based on real people she has observed.

8. List 5 important factors for students to consider when composing character revelation for their artwork.
9. Have students bring items from home to help bring their characters to life. Have them think about gestures they can mimic to reinforce their character's personality, camera angle and lighting.
10. Have students create a photograph of their characters with clues for the class to identify characters and their stories.
11. Have students share their character photographs with the class.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Display photographs in the classroom.
2. Discuss first impressions of who these characters are, based on appearance.
3. Was it easy to create a photograph of a character?
4. Ask students what they enjoyed most about the process. What did they enjoy least?
5. How are the artworks similar and different?
6. How did props, costumes and mannerisms help you transform into your character?
7. What did students learn from the process?
8. Did everyone stereotype the characters the same way? Why or why not?
9. Do the images make you rethink images you see? For example, images in magazines, on television, on social media, at the movies or in advertising? If so, how?

## CINDY SHERMAN: Characters



*Untitled #577*



*Untitled #72*



*Untitled #588*

## PRE/POST VISIT ACTIVITY: Character Portraits (all levels)

"I feel anonymous in my work. When I look at the pictures, I never see myself, they aren't self-portraits. Sometimes I disappear."

### Objective

Use your face as a blank canvas to paint a new character.

### Materials

- Camera
- Photocopies of students' faces taken on camera
- Oil pastels

### Discussion

Cindy Sherman was an art student at the State University College at Buffalo, New York, from 1972 to 1976. There her fascination with transforming her own appearance focused mainly on her face. *Untitled A, B, C and D*<sup>1</sup> belong to a series of photographs Sherman made while she was studying art at school. She selected five images from the series and randomly labelled them A to E. They were enlarged and reprinted in editions of ten. Sherman has explained the origins of this *Untitled* series:

"These images were from a series of head shots that I made to show the process of turning one character into another. At the time I was merely interested in the use of makeup on a face as paint used on a blank canvas. I was experimenting with several types of characters; i.e., starting with an old person who then gradually became a drag queen. While the original series showed the entire process (about fifty 3"x 5" photos), later I chose a smaller group to make into slightly larger separate pieces. I unintentionally shot them with a very narrow depth of field, leaving only certain parts of the face in focus, which gives some of the features [a] malleable quality. "<sup>2</sup>

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1 Moorhouse, Paul. (2019) *Cindy Sherman*. London, Great Britain.

pg. 33-36: National Portrait Gallery Publications. *Untitled A, B, C and D*

2 Tate. "'Untitled A', Cindy Sherman, 1975." Tate, 1 Jan. 1975, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-works/sherman-untitled-a-p11437>.

## **Process**

1. Have students discuss Cindy Sherman's Untitled A, B, C and D photographs (pg.22). Ask students what they see? What is real and unreal about these photographs? What do you know about the characters in the artworks? What do you see that makes you say that? What stages would you need to go through to make an artwork this way? What could be the stories of these characters? What do you see that makes you say that?
2. Your instructor will take a close-up photograph of your face. Do you want to make a certain facial expression to begin developing your character? Change your hair?
3. An 8.5 x 11" photocopy of your photograph will be given to you.
4. Using oil pastels as makeup, begin to draw over your facial features to change the appearance and create a different character.
5. Share your work when finished.

## **Conclusion**

Ask students: How did drawing on your face change your persona? Was it difficult to create a story of a character using only a close-up of your face? Did facial expressions help create your story? Changing your hairstyle? What would you do differently after finishing this project? What would you do the same way?





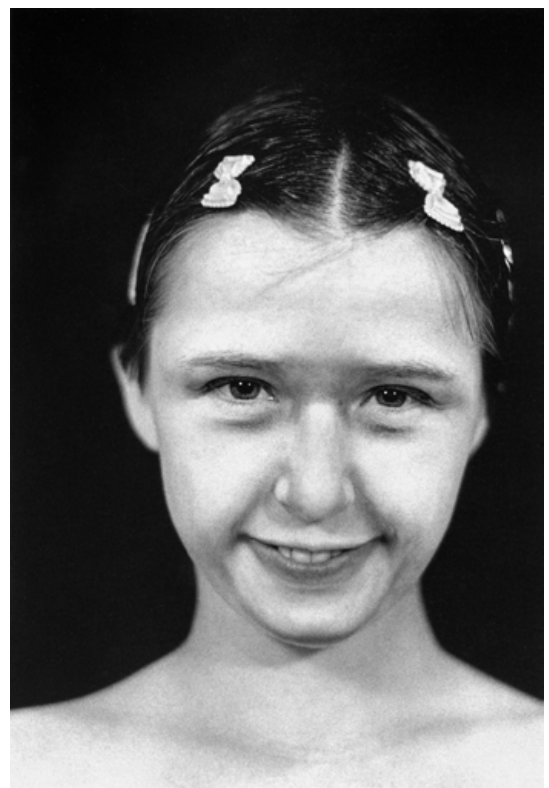
*Untitled A*



*Untitled B*



*Untitled C*



*Untitled D*



## STUDENT SAMPLE



# VOCABULARY

**appearance:** the way someone, or something, looks.

**appropriate:** take or make use of without authority or right.

**artistic practice:** the way an artist goes about doing their work. Practice can include influences, ideas, materials, tools and skills.

**Bohemian:** a person living an unconventional life.

**character:** a person in a play, story, novel, etc.; or a role played by an actor.

**collaboration:** working with someone to produce or create something.

**conceptual photography:** photography that illustrates an idea. The photographer tries to write a story in the viewer's head with a single image, which can easily be interpreted in many different ways by each person who sees it.

**gaze:** an intent look from a particular point of view.

**guise:** a style of dress, outward appearance.

**identity:** who you are, the way you think about yourself, the way you are viewed by the world and the characteristics that define you.

**impersonate:** mimic the appearance, manner, etc., of a person, to act the part.

**intuitive:** instinctive knowing, without the use of rational processes.

**narrative:** art that tells a story.

**performance art:** an artwork created through actions performed by the artist or other participants, which may be live, recorded or photographed, spontaneous or scripted.

**persona:** the aspects of yourself that you present to the world; the image you want to present or the role that an actor or author assumes.

**photography:** the process or practice of creating a photograph, an image produced by the action of light on a light-sensitive material.

**Pictures Generation:** a range of painters and photographers active during the 1970s and '80s whose work made use of images appropriated from mass culture.

**pioneer:** to do something that no one has done before.

**plot:** the main story of a narrative.

**portraiture:** representation of a particular person.

**self-portrait:** a portrait of the artist by the artist.

**series:** a number of things, events or people of a similar kind or related nature coming one after another.

**stereotype:** a general perception of first impressions and assumptions. Stereotypes can be positive or negative.

**theatrical role-playing:** an exercise that allows an actor to step into the shoes of another character.

**unceded:** a term for a relationship between the Canadian state and some Indigenous people when no treaties have been established between the state and those people. In general, "unceded" is a way of describing a relationship to the land.

# RESOURCES

## Books

Morehouse, Paul. Cindy Sherman, National Portrait Gallery, 2019.

## Magazine Articles

<http://www.artnews.com/2012/02/14/the-cindy-sherman-effect/>

<https://www.1843magazine.com/features/cindy-sherman-the-person-behind-the-personas>

<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-cindy-sherman-review-20160609-snap-htmlstory.html>

<https://www.anothermag.com/art-photography/8610/lessons-we-can-learn-from-cindy-sherman>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/24/arts/design/cindy-sherman-at-museum-of-modern-art.html>

<https://www.theartstory.org/artist/sherman-cindy/>

<https://www.dazeddigital.com/art-photography/article/45039/1/things-you-might-not-know-cindy-sherman-national-portrait-gallery-paul-moorhouse>

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/jul/03/cindy-sherman-interview-retrospective-motivation>

<https://art21.org/read/cindy-sherman-it-began-with-madame-de-pompadour/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/jun/30/cindy-sherman-national-portrait-gallery-review-a-lifetime-of-making-herself-up>

<https://walkerart.org/magazine/cindy-sherman-walker-art-center>

<https://www.cnn.com/style/article/cindy-sherman-national-gallery-exhibition/index.html>

<https://www.thoughtco.com/cindy-sherman-biography-4174868>

<https://www.apollo-magazine.com/cindy-sherman-interview/>

## Definitions

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms>

[kids.britannica.com](https://kids.britannica.com)

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