



*I was always good at copying things exactly.*

CINDY SHERMAN

**Cindy Sherman**

***Untitled Film Still #65, 1980***

**Gelatin silver print**

**40 x 30 inches**

**Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth,**

**Museum purchase made possible by a grant from The Burnett Foundation**

**Acquired in 1995**

Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* of the 1980s act as amazingly real-looking scenes from old black-and-white movies. The photographs mimic the characters and settings familiar to anyone who has seen them, though they are not based on specific films. Sherman uses herself as the model in all her work, and her image explores different roles that women have played in the movies and in real life. In *Untitled Film Still #65*, Sherman is dressed in a waitress's, maid's, or servant's uniform, and has the look of a young émigré. Other subjects in the black-and-white *Untitled Film Stills* present Sherman dressed as femme fatale, woman in distress, celebrity, "good girl," farm girl, and housewife, among others. In *Untitled Film Still #65*, she pauses, gazing up at the dark archway at the top of the staircase. In many ways, the scene is a precise moment, offering a clear idea of who the woman is and where the scene takes place, but the moments that have occurred before and after the scene (presumably in the movie) are only hinted at. Much of Sherman's photography investigates our relationship to these female stereotypes. Sherman plays on the fact that we are familiar with this "type" of woman, and make a whole set of assumptions about who she is, where she comes from, and how she feels, based solely on the visual clues she has given us. As viewers, we think we know this person, even though she is Sherman herself, mimicking a character from a movie. How we imagine the situation we see, and how we imagine the moments that lead up to this scene and also those that might follow it, is based on how well we know the stereotype of this woman. It is through this woman — and through the photographs and films that create her — that we learn about society and create our own identities.