

arts

JANUARY 1979
Volume 53 No. 5

CINDY SHERMAN Artists Space

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Cindy Sherman, Film Still, 1978.
Courtesy Artists Space.

CINDY SHERMAN

Cindy Sherman deserves special mention as an artist because she is one of the few who still seems to understand that "it's all a question of aesthetics." She makes photographs, using herself as a model, that transform her "natural" image. She makes better photographic transformations than Lucas Samaras, and she uses her vanity on a much more profound level, creating each time an original image. Sherman has a respect for her own beauty that an artist such as Lynda Benglis, who has also used herself in photographic transformations, does not. Even though Benglis' advertisements are her greatest works of art, it's unfortunate that she doesn't take into account, as does Sherman, that aesthetics can transform personal vanity, our desire for glamour, into a shared experience that we call beauty.

I know that these photographs of Sherman's are supposed to be seen as "ironic" statements on the American lifestyle; at the beach, in the kitchen, in the library, at the motel, we always see a beautiful glamorous woman, but irony doesn't explain the aesthetic value of these images, nor the potency of the created image. There are some people who still insist that beauty and desirability are separate qualities, and that, consequently, Kant's notion of disinterested aesthetic experience is a fiction. But I have learned from my experience of art that we can be most detached and objective in our aesthetic judgments because we stand in the "eye of the hurricane." We make aesthetic judgments not out of innocence, but because our lack of innocence is so deep. (Artists Space, September 23-October 28)