

Personalities: Fantasy and Identity in Photography and New Media

January 18 – April 19, 2015

Palm Springs Art Museum in Palm Desert, The Galen

Members Only Events

Saturday, January 17

Private Preview and Exhibition Walk-through for
President's Circle Members, Sponsors, and Special Invited Guests
4:30 p.m.

Special Presentation for Members
5:30-8 p.m.

Reception
6-8 p.m.



Image credit: Marina Abramovic, *The Kitchen V, Carrying the Milk*, 2009, color video projection on DVD with sound, edition 5/5, 12 minutes, 43 seconds loop; dimensions variable with projection, museum purchase with funds provided by the Collectors Forum, © Marina Abramović

To my knowledge, Mara may be further editing this text.

Using the diverse aesthetic traditions of portraiture as points of departure, this exhibition explores the representational power of photography from its origins in the nineteenth century to its digital forms in the present. Drawing from the museum's permanent collection as well as from loans, *Personalities* emphasizes the unique characteristics of the photographic image to shape both the identity of a photographed sitter and a viewer's sense of a subject's persona. This exhibition examines how the careful art of the portrait can dive deep into an individual's soul, but can also be manipulated to create personalities that exist beyond the realms of the real.

From the moment it was invented, photography was a source of popular fascination for its ability to offer extraordinary representational accuracy. Yet photographers and sitters alike knew modifications could be made. Even in its earliest examples, photography was a potent tool that could alter the identity of a sitter, giving the subject status, beauty, fame, or the appearance of power. This exhibition starts with modern portraits by August Sander and Edward Steichen, and considers Hollywood glamour photography that transformed average women and men into starlets and beacons of masculinity, as by George Hurrell and Michael Childers. From the 1960s on, Lewis Morley, Diane Arbus, and Arthur Tress brought a raw vision to documentary photographs that existed between fantasy and reality. By the end of the century, conceptual approaches by Cindy Sherman, among others, made visible the medium's ability to make fictions look like truth. Contemporary work draws from these aesthetic histories, sometimes using digital formats. Work by Marina Abramović, Zoe Crosher, Katy Grannan, Tomoko Sawada, and Wang Qingsong, reveal identities to be unstable and rooted as much in history and social expectations as in personal self-imagining.

This exhibition is organized by the Palm Springs Art Museum and is funded in part by the museum's Contemporary Art Council.