

Art Now L.A.
April 5, 2021

Cindy Sherman
Tapestries
Favoring the Surreal in Favor of the Real

Sprueth Magers
February 16 - May 1, 2021

by Jody Zellen



Cindy Sherman has been creating self-portraits since the 1970s. At first these were small black and white images in which she embodied stereotypical roles culled from film stills. She later posed for the camera recreating images from art history or dressing up in myriad guises becoming both women (and men) of varying ages from a wide range of social stratas. While still continuing to make large-scale photographic images, Sherman has recently begun to contribute to Instagram ([#cindysherman](#)) where she has more than 300,000 followers. For Instagram, she indulges in more playful and obvious image manipulations using face-altering filters, often performing for the camera in surprising and unsettling ways.

Because Instagram originals are low resolution that would pixelate if greatly enlarged, Sherman decided to forgo making them into large-scale photographs and turned to creating tapestries (fabricated in Belgium), her first venture into a non-photographic medium. In the tapestries, the different colored pixels are translated into the “*warp and weft of thread.*” Gone is the crispness of the printed photograph in favor of the soft, muted, melded palette of the fabric.

On view are nine untitled works, dated 2019 and 2020, each approximately nine feet tall by seven feet wide. In these aggressive and bombastic larger than life-sized images Sherman as usual takes on the identity of different characters— a bearded, tousled- haired boy; an aging beauty; a distorted nymph— evoking a range of emotions and references. The pieces are simultaneously grotesque, beautiful and astonishing. In one tapestry she becomes a determined and focused young woman with large round glasses who wears a blue smock with a blue dotted bow in her long curly hair. In another, she tilts her face against her hands as if to suggest an endearing “gosh, me.” Her long brown hair flows down below her shoulders in a 60’s bob. The red tones of her ruddy cheeks and lush lips are exaggerated by the texture of the weave, becoming rough, jagged areas of color. It is hard to discern if this is an image of pleasure or pain.

The purple face in *Untitled* (2020) stares out from in front of a mountainous landscape depicting the setting sun and its orange glow. The woman in the picture wears a white shirt with pink markings swirled by an Instagram filter. She has dark painted eyebrows and overly made-up eyes that are open wide. Her buck teeth protrude from her open red lips. Her expression

suggests she is unaware that she is no great beauty as she snaps this selfie. The splotchiness and off color of the image is enhanced by the woven fabric, transforming the photographic image into something tactile and unexpected.

The purple face in *Untitled* (2020) stares out from in front of a mountainous landscape depicting the setting sun and its orange glow. The woman in the picture wears a white shirt with pink markings swirled by an Instagram filter. She has dark painted eyebrows and overly made-up eyes that are open wide. Her buck teeth protrude from her open red lips. Her expression suggests she is unaware that she is no great beauty as she snaps this selfie. The splotchiness and off color of the image is enhanced by the woven fabric, transforming the photographic image into something tactile and unexpected.

<https://artnowla.com/2021/04/05/cindy-sherman-tapestries/>