

an open minded
look at fashion
photography

by

duane howard



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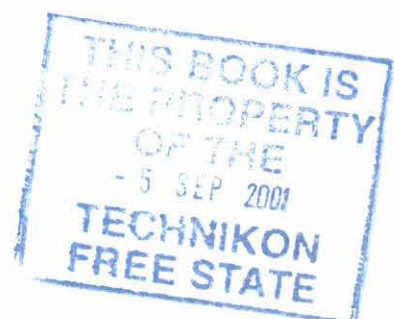
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A Mini-Thesis
for the Subject of Viscom III
for the Department of Photography

Faculty Human Sciences
Technicon Free State

November 1999



I hereby declare that the work contained in this mini-thesis is my own independent work and that all sources consulted or cited have been indicated in full.

Signature: 

Date: 29/10/19

dedicated
to
danie

CONTENTS

PAGE

List of Illustrations

ii

Introduction

1

MASTERS IN FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY

Baron de Meyer

2

Richard Avedon

3

Irving Penn

4

David Bailey

5

Sarah Moon

6

Cecil Beaton

7

William Klein

8

GREAT PHOTOGRAPHERS

diane arbus

9

Jan Saudek

10

Robert Mapplethorpe

11

DISCUSSION OF AUTOR'S WORK

13

AUTHOR'S WORK

15

GALLERY A

19

GALLERY B

29

CONCLUSION

40

BIBLIOGRAPHY

41

List of Illustrations

Gallery A

Figure 1: Cecil Beaton

Figure 2: Richard Avedon

Figure 3: Richard Avedon

Figure 4: Irving Penn

Figure 5: Irving Penn

Figure 6: David Bailey

Figure 7: William Klein

Figure 8: William Klein

Figure 9: Robert Mapplethorpe

Gallery B

Plate 1 - 11

Introduction

This script is divided up into four sections. The first section covers some of the pioneers of fashion photography as well as a few other photographers which helped develop the photographers style, not necessarily through their work but through their interpretation of the subject.

The third and fourth sections contain the images of the famous photographers as well as the authors own work, these two sections are divided into Gallery A and Gallery B.



MASTERS IN FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY

BARON DE MEYER

De Meyer was a frenchman who moved to London and started making a name for himself.

Being one of the photographers who founded the Photo-Secessionist movement and exhibiting his work at the Linked Ring, the "291" gallery and the Stieglitz "Camerawork" included him as one of the photographers who took photography to a higher level of art.

His pictures defined elegance to a general audience at the very moment when the privileged aristocratic and creative world Baron de Meyer portrayed and inhabited was being swept away by seismic economic and political shifts, the most devastating of which was the Great War.

He began working for Vanity Fair as First Staff Photographer, photographing celebrities. He Meyer then moved on to Vogue where he changed the contrivertial style of fashion photography, sacrificing the detail of the clothing and concentrating more on the mood and the style of the photograph. After shooting for Vogue De Meyer then moved to Harpers Bazaar.

RICHARD AVERDON

Richard Avedon was a portrait photographer. He first started with imagery of his of family, these included images of his sister {who withdrew, and died in a mental institution}, his mother and father, his wife and their son and his sons - all about a dream of building a happy family amid the denial of past unhappiness.

In 1979 Avedon started to photograph strangers while traveling in the west, going to truck stops, stockyards or walking through the crowds at a fair, looking for faces that he wanted to photograph he had a clearly structured project in which his subjects had to find their place. As his work progressed, the portraits began to reveal connections of all kinds - psychological, sociological, physical, familial - among people who had never met.

Richard Avedon never wanted disciplines, strategies, a silent theater, an attempt to achieve illusion to seem as though they were planned. Everything embodied in the photograph must seem to have just simply happened, that the person in the portrait was always there, was never told to stand there, was never encouraged to hide his hands, and in the end was never even in the presence of a photographer.

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IRVING PENN

Penn was born in 1917. He is probably best known for his beauty portraits which he took while working for Vogue.

He first came into the fashion industry when he began assisting Alexander Liderman who was already an established photographer for Vogue magazine. After Penn realised that the other photographers were not taking his ideas seriously he went on his own and produced some of Vogue's best beauty shots. His work was always sharp, professional, direct and in good taste portraying women to elegant and feminine.

Although Penn was best known for his fashion he was involved in portraiture, and still life.

DAVID BAILEY

Bailey was born in London in 1938 and from a child was taken by nature. His first shot that that he took was of a sparrows nest in the family barn, he was very influenced by the Walt Disney and Nature films which he watched.

He left school at the age of fifteen and went out to look for work, after having numerous jobs he was called up to do service at the Royal Air Force, during which time he opened up to the possibilities photography had to offer. He was fortunate enough to be situated in an area which had access to many photographic magazines.

After the completion of his service he found work with John French which he stayed with for eleven months. While working with French he did some of his own work for Daily Express, Womens Own, Flair, Vanity Fair, Daily Mirror and Sunday Pictorial, after working for French to work at Studio Five where he included Man About Town and Max Factor as clients.

David Bailey along with Brian Duffy and Terence Donovan were dubbed the "*Terrible Three*" by Keith Waterhouse, although Bailey was the only to stay in the public eye.

Bailey usually shoots on 4"x5" but always takes a 35mm as a backup camera. He uses Fujion lenses because they are good for soft, colourful beauty shots. He never manipulates his photographs in the darkroom and almost never crops his work.

SARAH MOON

Sarah got into fashion photography through being a model, and assisting photographers during the shoots.

She began taking her fellow models and photographing them, and soon after began doing work for magazines like Nova and Sunday Times. Her dreamy, fantasy like style was unique portraying the models as children holding on to their dreams. Sarah's style had an impressionistic feel, which was prominent grain, the use of blur, reflections and filters. The texture and detail of the clothing was for her far less as important as the mood which she wanted created.

Sarah did the Pirelli Calendar in 1972 and did much work for Vogue and Harper's Bazaar. The equipment which she used was only tungsten and daylight, she never used flash, she also only used 35mm format.

CECIL BEATON

Beaton's work was exquisite yet quite bizarre. He was influenced by many things such as surrealism, contemporary stage design, Hollywood films and the Neo-Romantic movement.

Beaton was hired to work for Vogue in 1926, and worked for them for fifty years. During this time Beaton was forced to adapt to the changing styles which influenced the fashion industry. In 1939 when World War II broke out, people forgot about fashion to an extent, it became in-expensive and a lot less glamorous fashion was more work orientated, with shoots advertising uniforms and worker's clothing. Beaton was not only a fashion photographer but also became well known for his Landscape, Travel, and Portraiture photography.

WILLIAM KLEIN

Klein was a painter and graphic designer who took up photography. Even though he was limited in his knowledge of cameras it did not stop him from giving Vogue a whole new style, Vogue magazine's post-war history.

He signed to join with Vogue in 1955, and therefore was forced to move from Paris to New York. After Experimenting with the effects of different lenses and made his mark at Vogue, he began documenting New York and published some very important documentary books.

Klein's photographs were harsh and violent but a great hit nevertheless.

Nobody had seen work like Klein's during the fifties.

GREAT PHOTOGRAPHERS

Diane Arbus

Diane Arbus's favorite thing was to go where she had never been before. Everything was an adventure for her, even small things like a taxi or bus drive was an adventure for her. She used to love going into people's homes, she felt that the camera was a license that put people at ease.

Diane wanted to photograph everyone, but because she could obviously not photograph everyone in the world she decided to concentrate on specific groups of people which were different to the norm. People go through life dreading they'll have a traumatic experience, while "freaks" were born with their trauma and because of this she saw them as aristocrats. One of the biggest things that intrigued her about these people was most of the freaks did not like the freaks who were suffering from a different disorder.

Diane did not only do photography, she also used to paint in high school, but she did not enjoy it that much because everyone always used to compliment her on how good she was, which stopped her from carrying on with it after school.

She often saw the camera to be a nuisance in a way. She found it to be detrimental to do a thing one way, while the camera does the opposite. She never had a photograph come out the way that she wanted it to, it always came out better or worse. Diane also did not like arranging her photographs, she preferred photographing things as they were and arranging herself to suit the photo.

JAN SAUDEK

Jan Saudek was a Czechoslovakian factory worker with an extreme passion for photography. All of the equipment which Jan used was of a primitive type, he never cared much about technical aspects. He photographed about five cloud scenes and used them over in all of his work. Because colour photography was not yet around he handpainted his images, which worked far better anyway, giving his images a true feeling of art. He used to subtly manipulate the colours to suit his *'Theater of Life.'*

Inside a small cellar which had only one window was where Jan lived and also photographed most of his images, Jan found very little attraction in travel, the exotic or picturesque of far off places, to photograph every day life was too much for him in his cellar was where he was in his element. He believed photography was an epic puppet-show full of lies and deceit and endless traumas, and so that is how he photographed. He seemed very fascinated with the beauty as well as the ugliness (more so the ugliness) of humans, and always tried to emphasize the one or the other. He never saw woman as being sexual, but photographed as he said *'Portraits of the Sole.'*

Jan Saudek published a book called *'The Ogre'*, even as talented as he was his work was never shown in his country.



ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE

Robert Mapplethorpe's work over the last two decades reveals a strong and consistent vision that strives for perfection and balance in subject and form. Mapplethorpe studied art at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, where he specialised in doing paintings, drawings and sculpture. Although Mapplethorpe liked to experiment with different mediums he had not yet taken any of his own photographs. He rather began exploring with making art with torn pages from books and magazines.

Mapplethorpe was heavily influenced by people such as Andy Warhol and Man Ray. The concepts that interested Mapplethorpe through most of his career were things like sexuality, eroticism, sadomasochism, religion which came from his catholic upbringing, and most of all was objectifying his images, Mapplethorpe's aim was to produce an object and not just a photograph.

It was in the early 1970's when Mapplethorpe took his first photographs, he got hold of a mass-marketed Polaroid camera. It was the perfect device for Mapplethorpe to adapt. He was not a "photographer", he did not think of himself as a "Photographer," and he did not want to become a photographer either. He merely wanted to use his own image to cut up to produce his "objects" instead of using images out of magazines. His first images were all self-portraits, he found it better to do things on his own to enable him to experiment.

Soon after Mapplethorpe started becoming better known and became close with other celebrities which he used in his images, his other subjects included shoes, self-portraits, genitalia, transvestites and flowers.

Mapplethorpe saw flowers as the sexual organs of plants. In all of Mapplethorpe's photographs of flowers, the flowers are no longer a growing member of the plant, but dissevered from them, their provisional status emphasised, their duration on suffrance, in bowls and vases, with one exception: Tulips, 1983 which were still growing from bulbs. His flowers were always shot to imply indoors and away from nature, but the flowers were always perfect no fallen petals, and always engorged with liquids. In none of his images of the penis is it ever erect, but the flower is always so, it's erethism undeterred "by any natural thung" {Yeats: certainly said to Byzantium, unlike Robin, his greatest rival in the adoration of "bodily shape," Mapplethorpe saw only the fulfilled, perfect physique as his subject, his satisfaction}.

Discussion of authors' Work

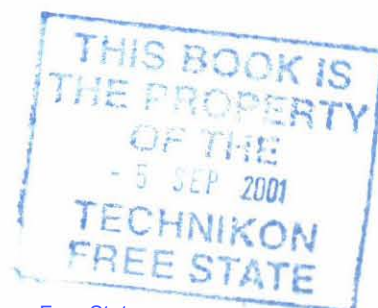
The last thing that I want to have happen to my work, is for it to just be another photo in a magazine which is forgotten as the page is turned. Many people seem to be satisfied with producing a nice sellable image, but when a client comes to me one day I want to be able to do what he wants and more.

The only way to produce such unique images is to keep in touch with all types of art forms, from sculpture and painting to architecture and film.

Camera Equipment

Most of my work is produced with a Pentax K1000 and a Pentax 50mm lens. Although a 50mm lens is a bit of a no-no when shooting fashion, I find it very versatile and it keeps things simple. I also have a Nikon FE 2 and a 135mm lens, I only believe in shooting with fixed lenses. A zoom lens is nice because of the number of lenses you've got in one, but it is impossible to get the same quality and depth of field.

I like to shoot on all kinds of films and play around with them as much as possible. As soon as I found out that you are not to push colour film, I took Fuji Provia 400 and pushed it to four stops and cross processed it and got amazing results. The film that I usually work with are Fuji Reala (for accurate colours) and then Fuji Sensia 100 and 400 cross-processed, for Black and White I shoot with FP4, HP5, SFX and for a different effect Kodak Infra-red.



Discussion of authors' Work

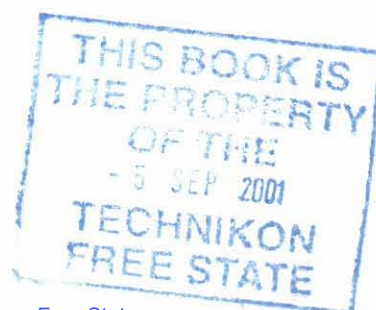
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Models

I do not like working with Bloemfontein models. The experiences I have had with them is that they are all stiff and stuck on the typical poses that they are taught and cannot do anything but these poses. The models I like to use are freinds of mine who are relaxed around me. I do not prefere working with male or female "modles" I enjoy both equally and find them both evanly versitile. You obviously must select your model according to the look you want, but a good model shood be able to change according to the look and still make the shoot a success.

Location/Studio and Props

A good location can change what would be a medeocer Photograph into something much better, a building with strong shapes an colours for example can give a nice graffic feel while a dark broken down house can create an image with a nice dramatic mood.

I like working in the studio where I have complete control over the lighting and no interferance by the whether. It is always "safer" to photograph in the studio when working for a client, you are always basically garenteed of producing satisfactory work.

Even though I like keeping things as simple as possible with as little make up, lighting and props as possible, (people often tend to over do it with little "extras") it does often help to us props here and there to just finish things off.

Authors Work

Plate 1: This image was done in the studio with one big soft box from above and two white reflectors from below to eliminate any unwanted shadows. This was one of my first fashion shots, all I was going for was simple but successful lighting with the result of a plain clean image. I chose the green backdrop in order to create a contrast from the blue shirt. It was shot on Fuji Reala on a Mamia 67.

Plate 2: These images were not successful in terms with achieving what I wanted, but never the less still a nice image. I used one light from the top left-hand side and another on the background, resulting in selective area's being lit while the others are left silhouetted. I also had the "model" rub oil on his skin in order to get more shine on the lit area's. I used a Pentax K1000 with a Pentax 135mm lens in order to ensure no distortion, and I shot on FP4.

Plate 3: This image was actually for the girls graduation and was a total flop. Due to the terrible lighting conditions all the images came out with terrible camera shake, and although it ruined the other images I found this one in the pack and loved it. Without the blur I don't think the image would have done much for me, but with it it gives a nice feeling of movement; it almost looks as if he just grabbed her and swept her off her feet. This image was shot in late afternoon with a Pentax K1000 with a 50mm lens on Fuji Sensia 100.

Plate 4: Here I was going for a 70's look with a dramatic kind of feel. I wanted a lot of emotion, some sad and lonely and others more close and loving. The result for me was very successful, the images I achieved were what was in my mind. With the photo on the left I used three lights, one spot on the girl at the back another spot on the guy in the front and then one normal light behind the backdrop, with the second image I kept the one light on the background and then used a big soft box from above for more even lighting. The images were taken on a Pentax K1000 with a 50mm lens on Fuji Sensia 100 cross-processed.

Plate 5: This photo was taken at night in a friend's house which had no electricity, the only lighting which was used were the candles and a gas lamp giving the images the mood I was seeking. The image was done on Fuji 1600 in order to get the necessary grain, and it was taken with a Pentax K1000 with a 50mm lens.

Plate 6: This image was actually taken in between photographing a still life at a friend's house; and his younger brother came along desperately wanting a photo of himself in his new clothes, so I told him to stand by the nearest window and placed a white piece of paper next to him to reflect light back onto his face, I then quickly took one frame to get rid of him so I could get back to my still life. Although it was only one quick shot I knew it would be a good one and I did not need to take any more. The photo was captured on my friend's Minolta camera with a 35 - 70mm zoom lens on Ilford SFX.

Plate 7: When taking these images I wanted to create something that makes the viewer think a little. I again used dramatic lighting covered with gels to add to the eerie feel which I wanted to achieve, although the masks in the images is what really make the images work. They were taken in a studio with a Nikon FE2 with a 50mm lens on Fuji Sensia 100 cross-processed to achieve slightly different colours.

Plate 8: These are my favourite of all my images. They were taken on location in an old abandoned church on Kodak Infra-red film. The images I had in mind were moody high contrast images with the Infra-red grain, but after placing the model in front of the windows the images in my mind changed, I then had the model loosen the dress and used the light to emphasize the contours of her body. The shoot was done with a Nikon FE2 with a 50mm lens. I did not use a red filter on the images in order to lessen the contrast.

Plate 9: These photographs were done in a friend's house with two studio flashes, both slightly behind the "model", one from the left side and the other from the right-hand side. I used the walls in such a way as to create a more graphic feel. I wanted an image which was dramatic as well as graphic. I then added a little colour with Adobe Photoshop. The images were taken on a Nikon FE2 with a 50mm lens on SFX film.

Plate 10: This was a total disappointment, the "model" and I spent most of the time on the hair and makeup for the shoot and I placed gels over the lights to try to emphasize the different colours, but when I saw the images I realised that the gels I used were far too strong and had taken colour away from the images. I really wanted something different from these images so I went crazy with the photo's, crumbled, folded, scratched and sewed burnt string into them. After which I then re-photographed them with a Pentax K1000 and a 50mm lens on to Fuji Sensia 100 cross-processed.

Plate 11: These Images were captured on a video camera during the shoot of Plate 7 with the same dramatic lighting, mainly one from bellow and one from the side. Then I played back the video and photographed from the T.V. screen. They were captured with a Nikon FE2 with a 50mm lens onto Fuji Sensia 100.



Gallery A

Cecil Beaton

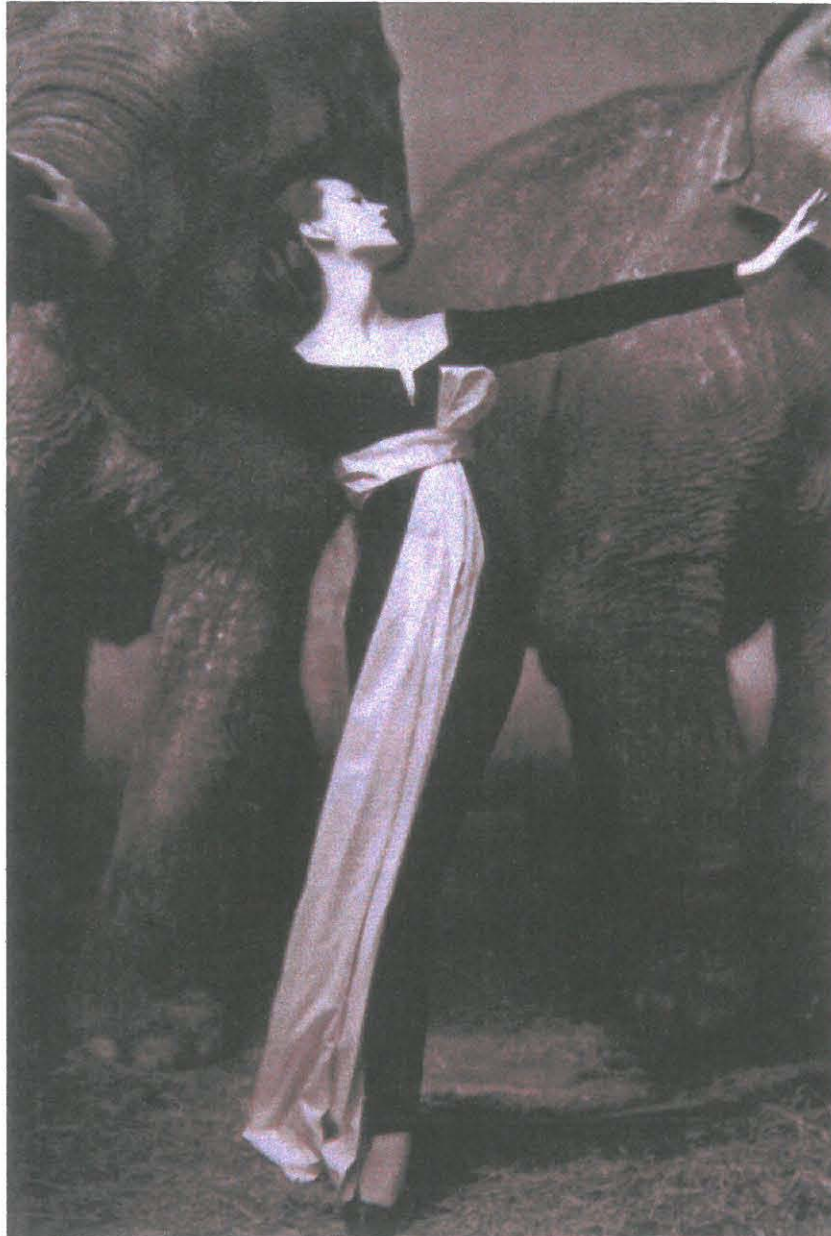


Richard Avedon



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Richard Avedon



Irving Penn



Irving Penn



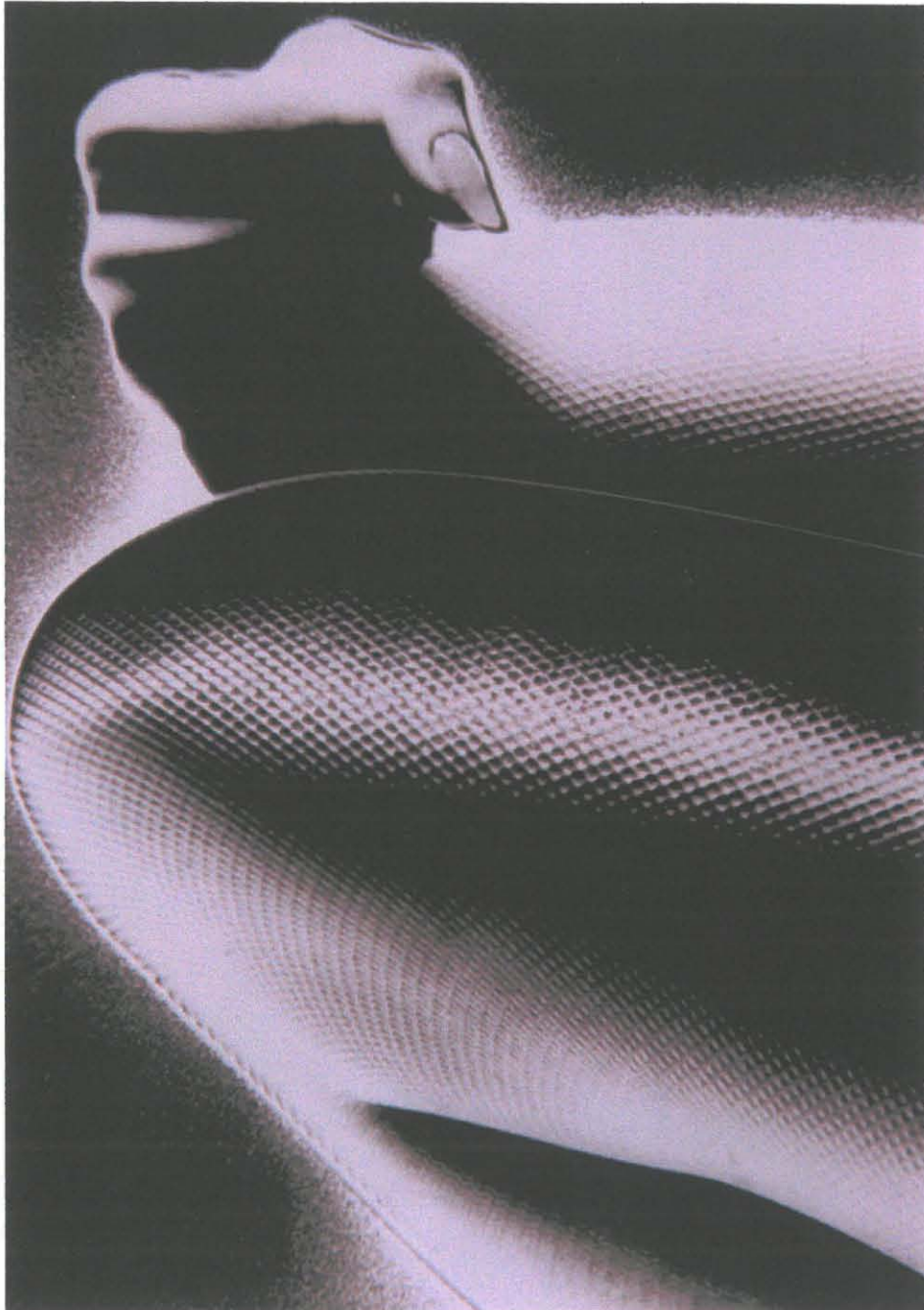
David Bailey



William Klein



William Klein



Robert Mapplethorpe



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Plate 1

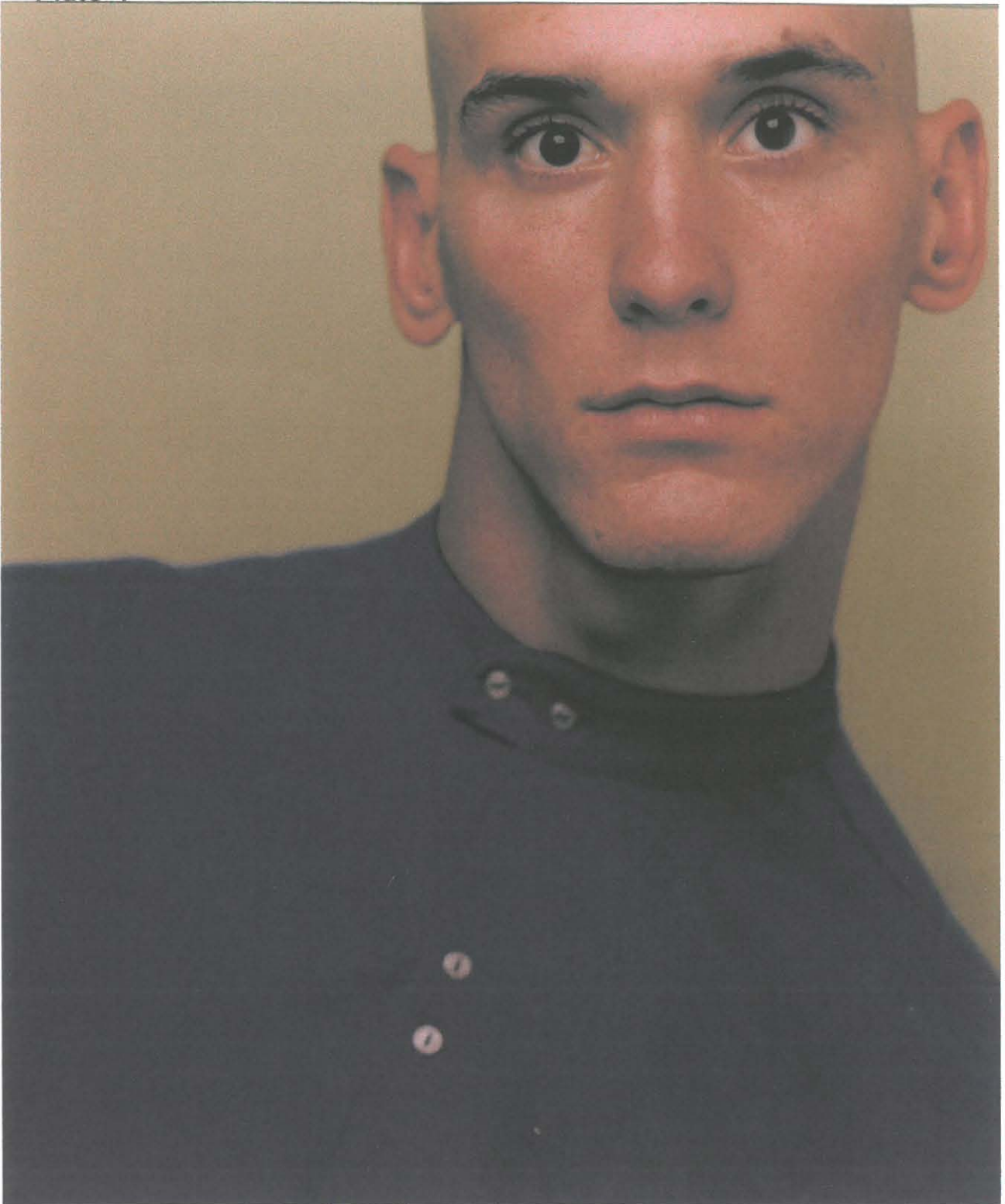


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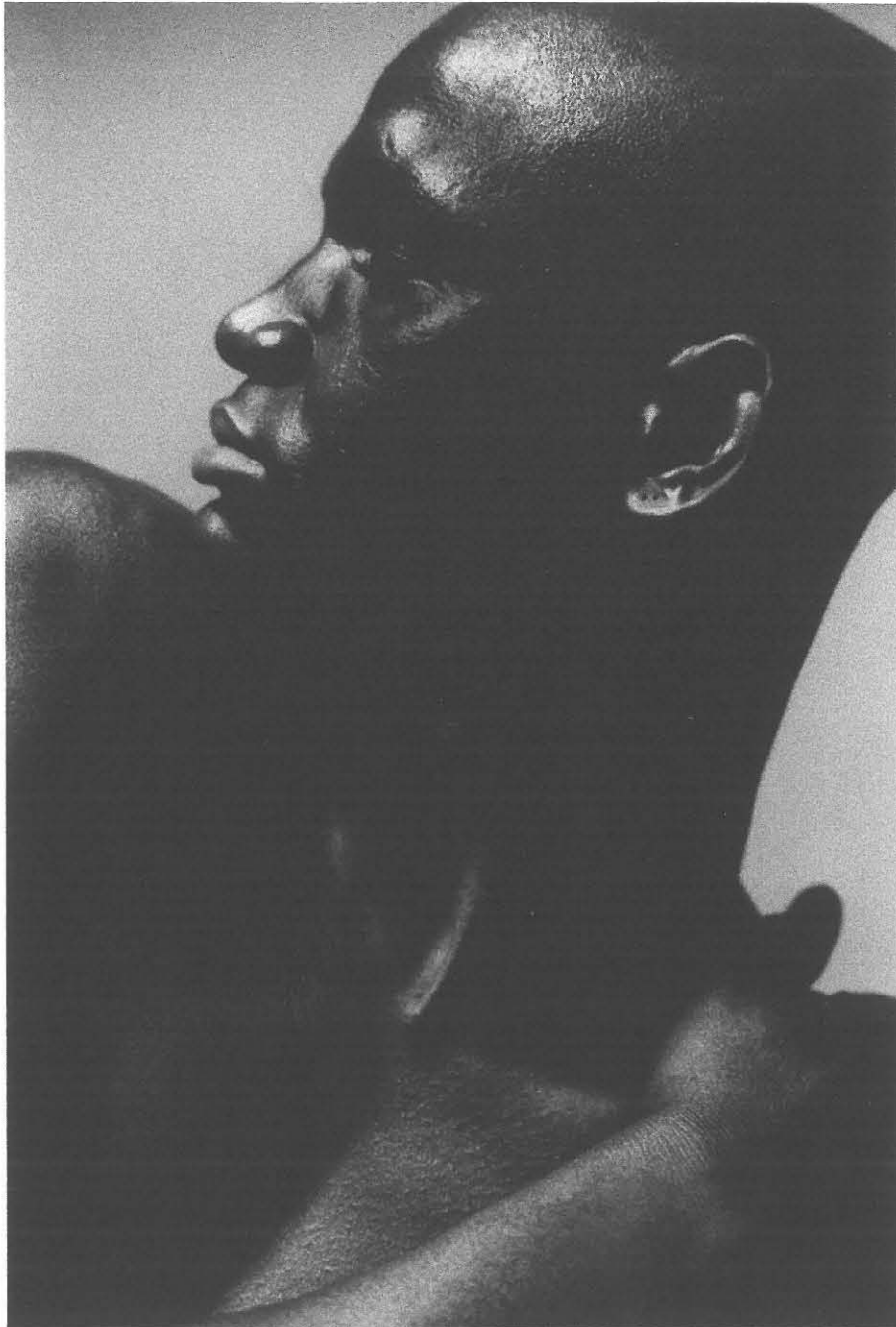


Plate 3



Plate 4

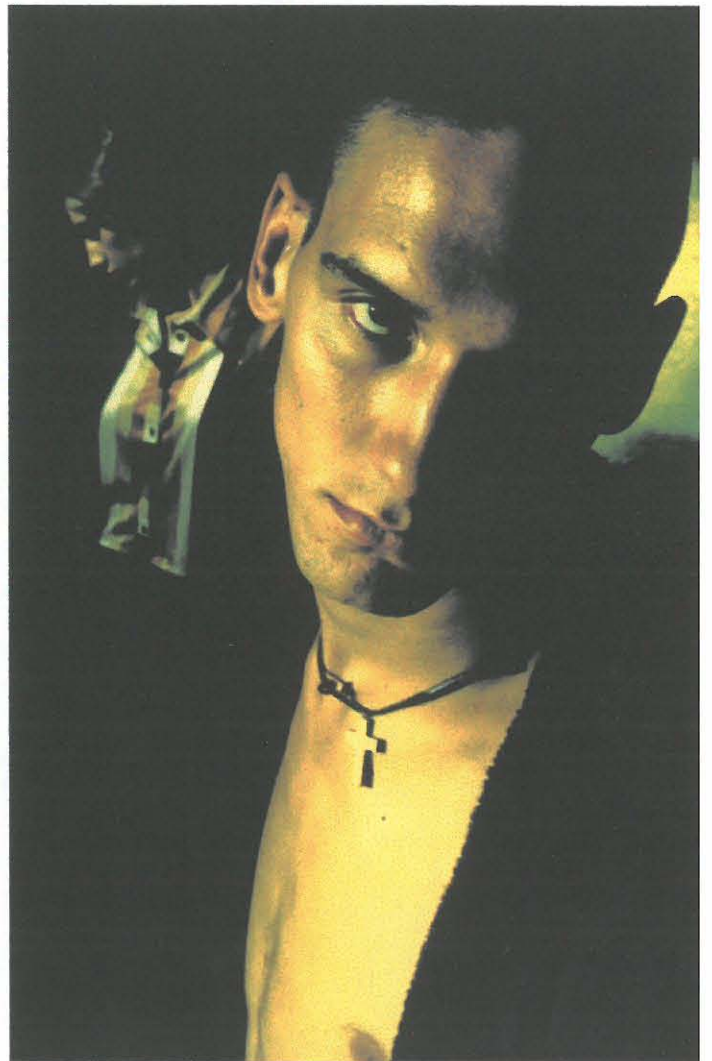
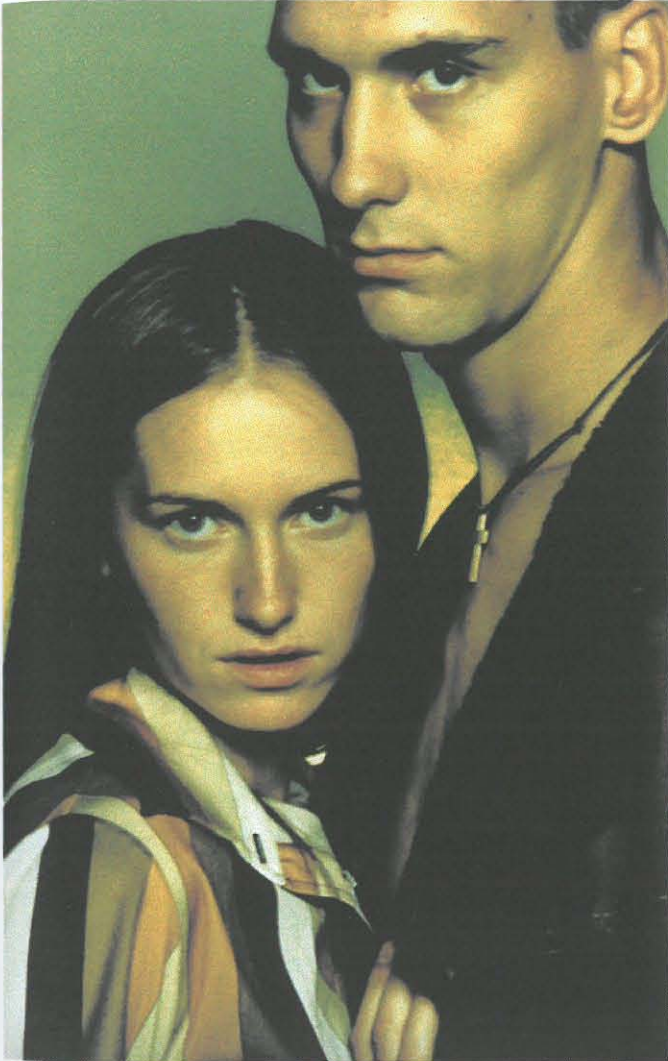


Plate 5



Plate 6



Plate 7

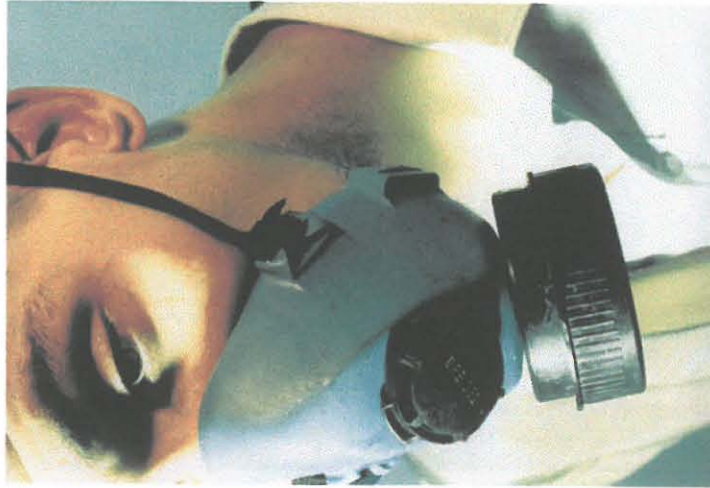


Plate 8

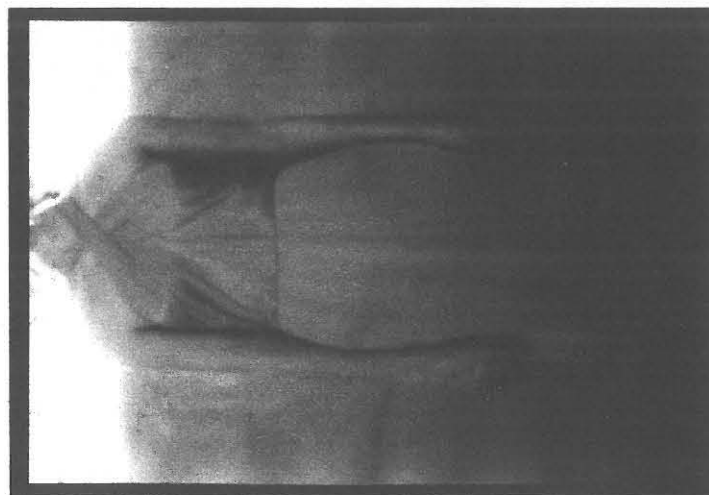
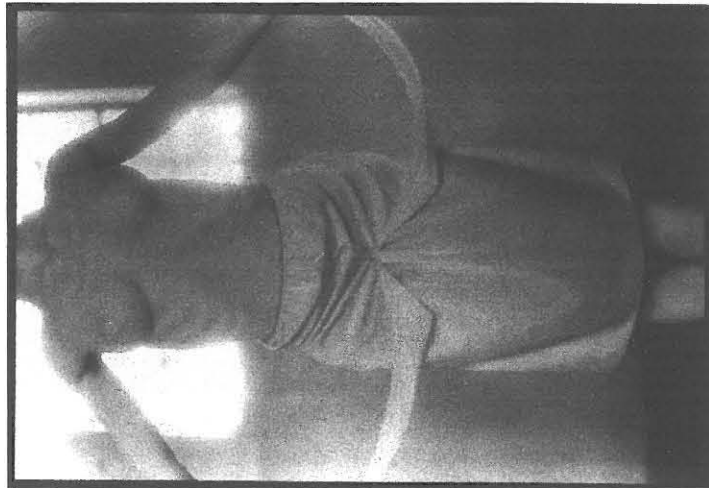


Plate 9

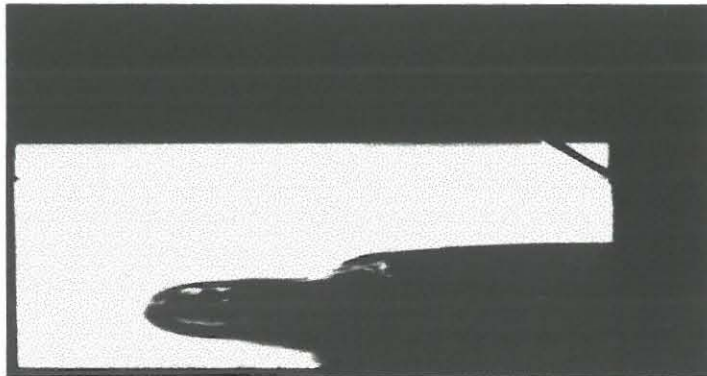
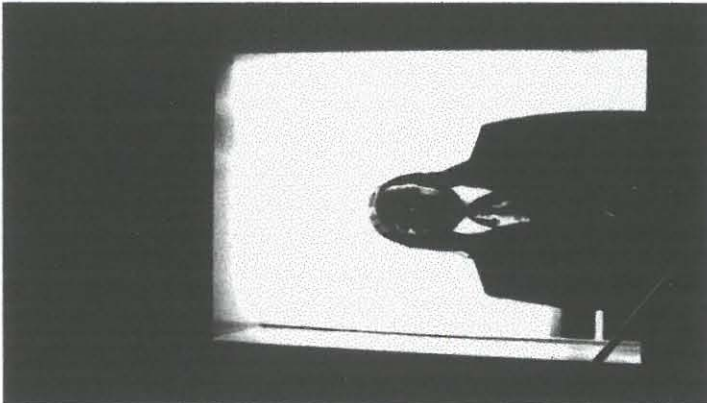
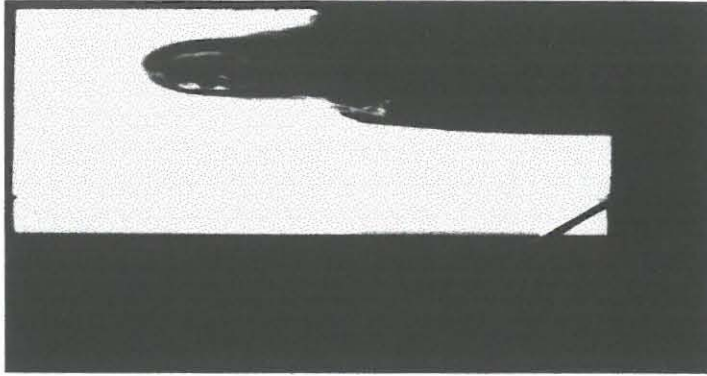


Plate 10

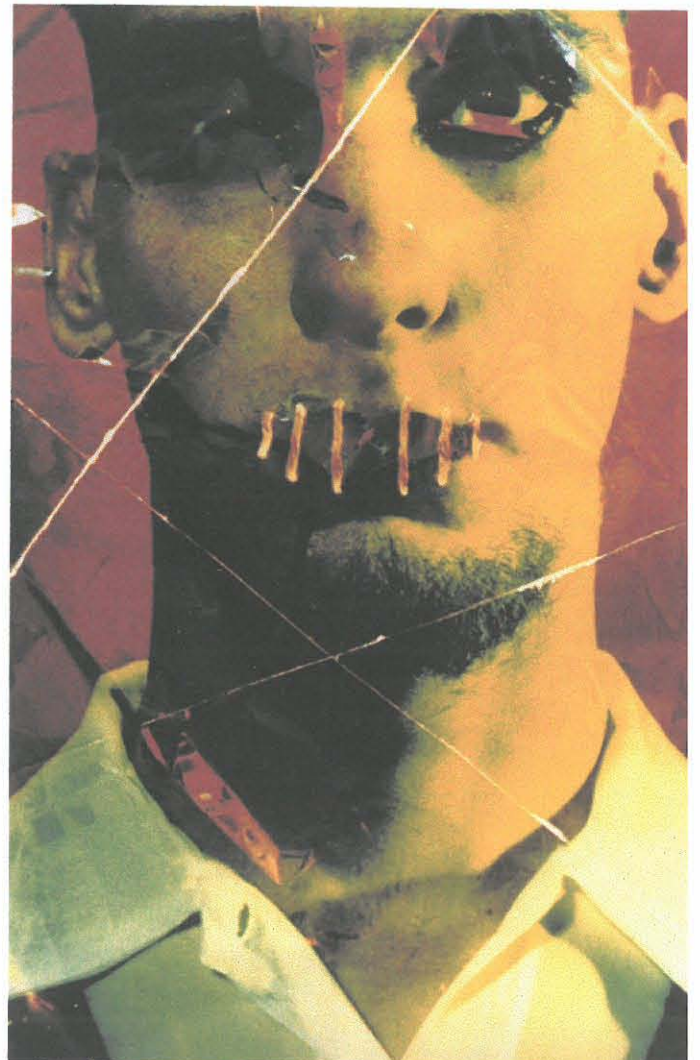
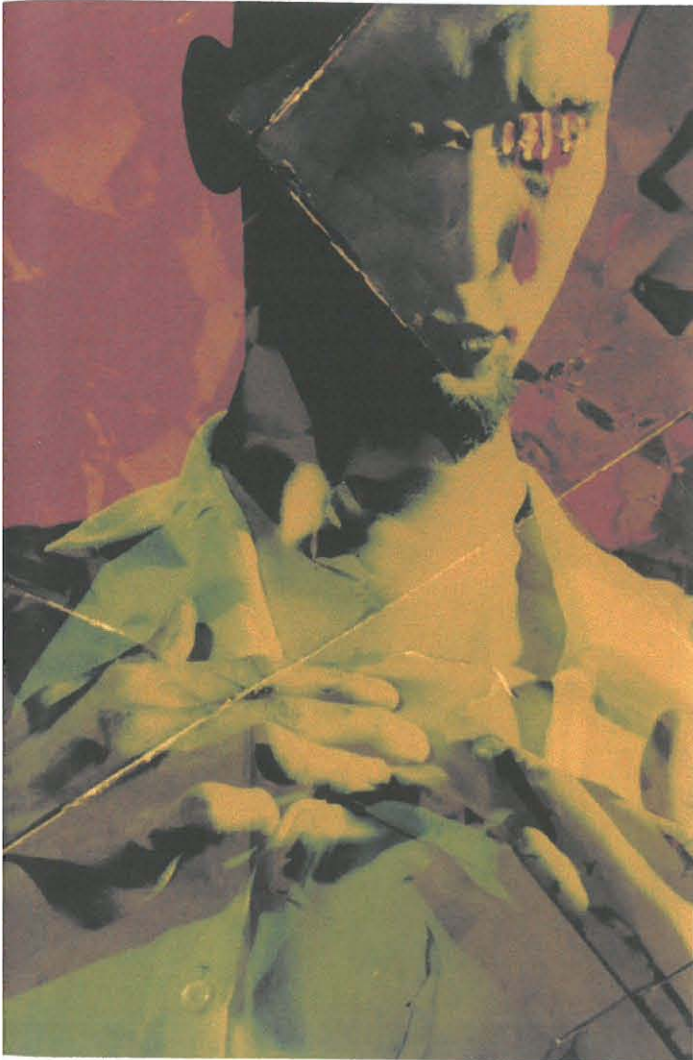
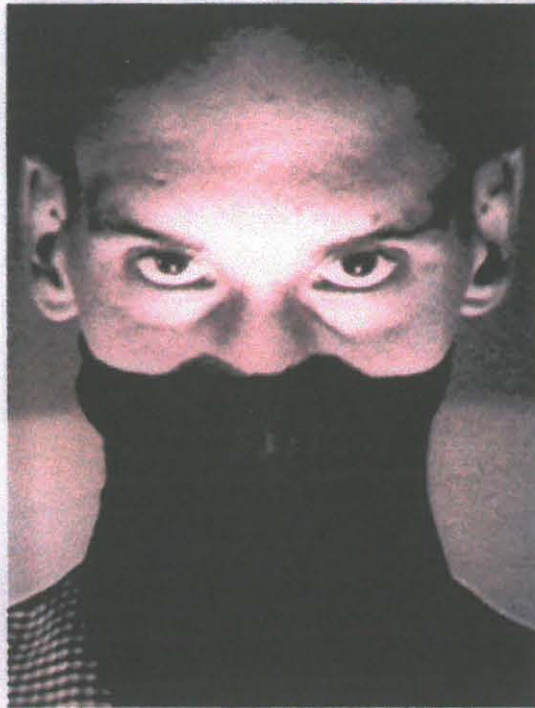


Plate 11



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CONCLUSION

I feel I am on my way to develop my own style and am pleased with the results thus far. I do however realise that I still have much to learn, but I am greatly looking forward to the life of being a fashion photographer.

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