

GALERIE EVA PRESENHUBER



CHUCK NANNY
SANS TITRE



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1992

Set of 336 inkjet prints, framed

Edition 2/3 + 1 AP

Image, each 41 x 27.5 cm / 16 1/8 x 10 7/8 in

Frame, each 42 x 29 cm / 16 1/2 x 11 3/8 in

NANNE54351

190'000 USD

CHUCK NANNEY

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Chuck Nanney gathered a large collection of secondhand and vintage clothing that functions as a repository of stories, affects, and desires. In a series of photographic self-portraits, we find all the poses, hand gestures, and hairstyles associated with a fashion model. The artist's taste for cross-dressing goes back to his childhood: "When Chuck Nanney was a young boy, he and his brother Dennis invented a game for themselves called 'Dennis and Chuck.' In the game, they were themselves as adults, but Chuck was 'Chuck's wife'—a cross between Honey West, the 1960s TV detective, and Emma Peele from *The Avengers*." The tension in this work is the product of a multiplication of the personality—a clash of heterogenous subjectivities. A print dress in 1970s acid colors is worn with a beard; a classic black suit over a white turtleneck with hair down and feet bare. This work does not address the passage from one identity to another (man to woman); it is about relinquishing a fixed identity, inverting the convention of the "bearded lady" and presenting the man as an object. By playing the man-object, Nanney upsets sartorial, social, and cultural codes. Nanney's man-object presents the intimate body as a challenge to the subject. The subject that no longer believes in its image, its desire, its self-command, and autonomy—the subject that sheds the skin of its subjectivity for other people's clothes, gestures, and culture. Nanney said, "I have always had a fantasy of a man dressing as a woman and then over that dressing back as a man, or rather a woman dressing as a man and then over that dressing back as a woman." But does this not mimic the way we are in everyday life? No matter what we wear or how we present ourselves to one another, our second skin is little more than adaptation at best and camouflage at worst.

Clothes cannot break the man or break the woman. The fact is we are constrained by our clothing, and this affects our demeanor and how we conduct ourselves. Freedom of thought suffers as well, not only because clothes can affect mood and mood influences mental ability, but because fashion leads us to "the exterior world." Connecting what we wear with who we are means assuming we are human, that we can know at first glance who someone is. We create our identity and get attention and acceptance from others through clothing. This may go on throughout a lifetime: Look at me. Include me. Accept me. Love me. And yet, somehow, the "me" disappears as one becomes a type—interchangeable with so many others—and is typecast. We are repeatedly assigned the same part to play, familiar to the point that it becomes "second nature," to the point where there may be nothing natural left in one's behavior. We offer ourselves to others, though not always successfully. Such is the tyranny of appearance.



















































































