



MARTIN COOPER
PHOTOGRAPHY

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THE I ALTIS

FOR MORE THAN ONE THOUSAND YEARS
ANCIENT GREEK MALES CELEBRATED THE
OLYMPIC GAMES AT THE ALTIΣ A SACRED
SITE AT THE BASE OF MT. OLYMPUS- THE GA
MES WERE A RELIGIOUS RITE PERFORMED
IN THE NUDE & WOMEN WERE BANNED
FROM PARTICIPATING FAILURE TO COMPLY
WAS A CRIME PUNISHABLE BY DEATH- THE
ALTIΣ PORTRAITS OF THE IMMORTALS DE
FIES THE ANCIENT ARCHETYPE TO EXALT
WOMEN TO THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACE IN
THE WORLD- PRESENTED THROUGH THE DI
SCCIPLINE OF CLASSIC PORTRAITURE THE
ALTIΣ IS A PORTAL INTO AN AESTHETIC &
HIGHLY STYLIZED WORLD GLORIFYING
WOMEN- THE PORTRAITS SHOWCASE THE
BEAUTY IN ATHLETICISM & THE PAGEANTRY
OF THE RITUALS THEY WERE DENIED- THRO
UGH THE ATHLETES INNER ABSORPTION &
RELIGIOUS DEVOTION TO HER SPORT
SHE BECOMES THE ULTIMATE PRACTITION
ER- A METAPHOR OF TRANSCENDENCE
INTO THE IMMORTAL-



The Olympics were so intertwined in ancient Greek culture that their calendar was actually based on the passing of a 4-year cycle, known to this day as an Olympiad. All wars were suspended during this period and every traveler's safe passage was guaranteed to and from the Altis, the site of the games. The term '*Altis*' comes from the Greek name for the sacred olive grove where the ancient Olympic games geographically took place. The games were open to all free men from the known Greek world; athletes from the Near East to the north of Africa, southern Europe and into Spain were all represented. It was truly a multi-national affair. There were no gold, silver or bronze medals at the ancient games. Either you won or you lost. Victors received goods of transient value such as fruit or simple wreaths of branches. However, when an athlete won at the games, he was considered almost god-like and revered as an *Immortal*.

By 776 BC, the ancient Greek games were flourishing primarily as religious rituals to honor their gods. This ritual specifically excluded women. Female participation was punishable by death. It would not be until 1900 AD, the first time in western history, that the opportunity opened for women to participate during the modern revival of the Olympic games.

My photographic series, *The Altis: Portraits of the Immortals*, is a project celebrating freedom of expression, civil liberties, and sexual equality, often taken for granted in our contemporary context till now that our nation faces foes who suppress these rights. By setting *The Altis* in the ancient times of the Olympic games, my statement is one that opposes religious and sexual discrimination. Casting the project exclusively with women would have been blasphemy in the eyes of the ancients, but for me it's a tactical use of history for the premise of artistic invention. The freedom to create this body of work without persecution exists as evidence of cultural evolution in our living times.

Martin Cooper



“My photographic series, *The Altis: Portraits of the Immortals*, is a project celebrating freedom of expression, civil liberties, and sexual equality, often taken for granted in our contemporary context till now that our nation faces foes who suppress these rights. By setting *The Altis* in the ancient times of the Olympic games, my statement is one that opposes religious and sexual discrimination. Casting the project exclusively with women would have been blasphemy in the eyes of the ancients, but for me it’s a tactical use of history for the premise of artistic invention. The freedom to create this body of work without persecution exists as evidence of cultural evolution in our living times.”

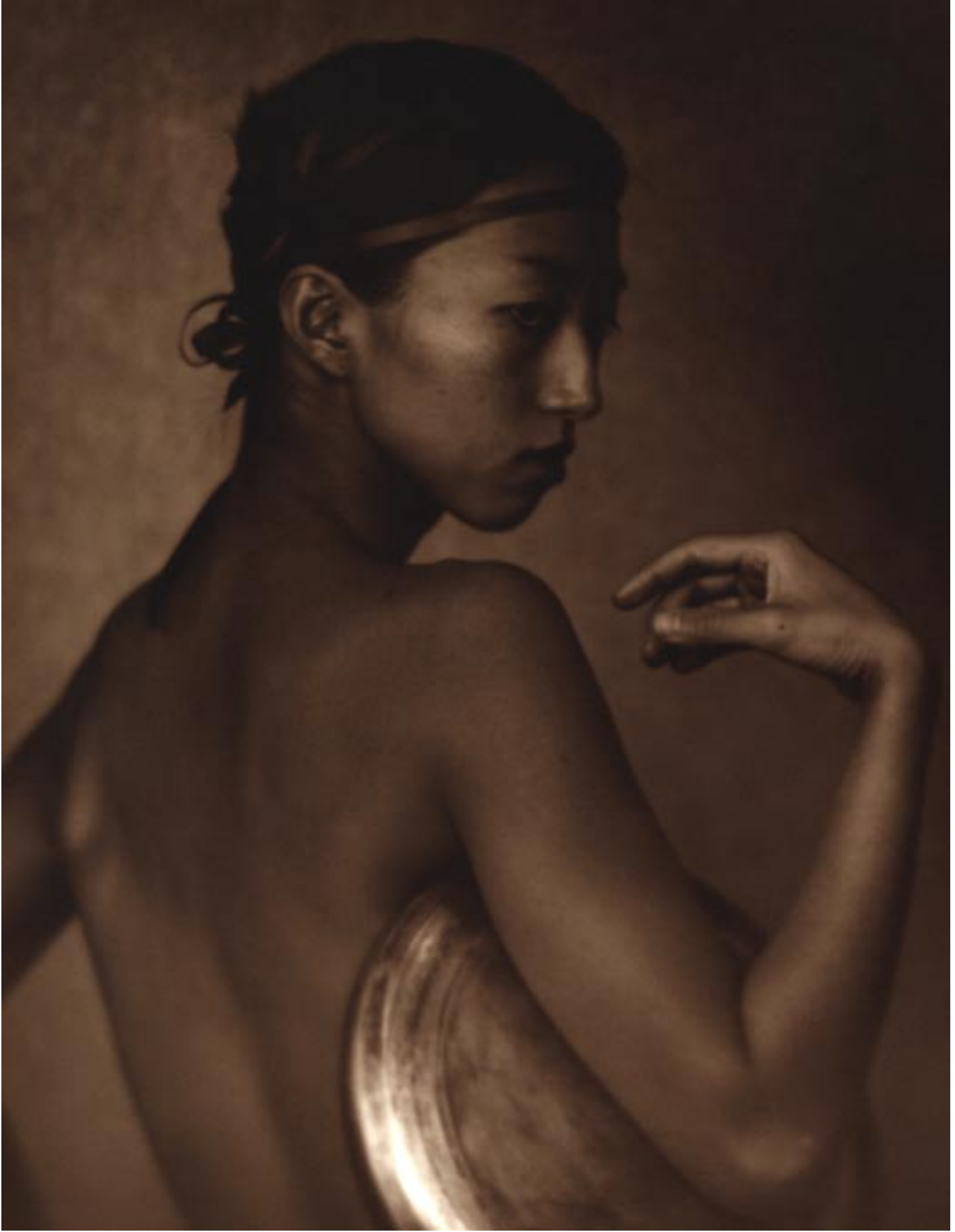
Martin Cooper



Martin Cooper. *Portrait of a Wrestler*, 1999. > Courtesy JHB Gallery +1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Boxer Profile*, 1997. > Courtesy JHB Gallery +1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Portrait of a Diskos Thrower*, 1997. > Courtesy JHB Gallery + 1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Diskos Profile*, 1997. > Courtesy JHB Gallery + I.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *On the Mark*, 1998. > Courtesy JHB Gallery + 1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Portrait of a Runner*, 1998. > Courtesy JHB Gallery +1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Portrait of a Swimmer*, 2000. > Courtesy JHB Gallery + 1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Reflections*, 2000. > Courtesy JHB Gallery + I.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Portrait of a Shot Put Thrower*, 2000. > Courtesy JHB Gallery + 1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *The Throw*, 2000 > Courtesy JHB Gallery +1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Portrait of an Archer*, 1998. > Courtesy JHB Gallery +1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Through the Eye of an Archer*, 1998. >Courtesy JHB Gallery +1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Sipend*, 1998. > Courtesy JHB Gallery + 1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Eucalyptus*, 1998. > Courtesy JHB Gallery + t.212.253.9286



Martin Cooper. *String Peony*, 1999. > Courtesy JHB Gallery + 1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *The Dove*, 1998. >Courtesy JHB Gallery +1.212.255.9286

THE ALTIS

PORTRAITS OF THE IMMORTALS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTIN COOPER

“With their velvety though intense sepia toning, Martin Cooper’s nudes evoke distant and mysterious photographic images of the past. Here and there, a feather, a cord or ribbon strike through the surface in a suffused brilliance against the golden bodies of these undraped goddesses, portrayed in poses we associate with the Olympic athletes of the classical age.

“The Greek games were a religious rite performed in the nude,” Cooper explains, “and women were banned from participating. Failure to comply was a crime punishable by death. ‘The Altis: Portraits of the Immortals’ defies the ancient archetype to exalt women to their rightful place in the world.” In his series The Altis... Martin Cooper simultaneously calls into question the male myth of the Greek athletes while promoting the participatory interests of those individuals on the other side of the gender coin, even while repudiating the pumped-up look of many of today’s female contenders.

If Martin Cooper’s athletes escape the debasement of a nude that bares all, their modesty lies not in the drapery but in reviving the original, the mythic Olympians with their mysterious cognition of death and transcendence. His images rise up from the past to transform the female body into the inscriptions of legends and divinities that rouse our imagination and our memory. Unlike the bodies we encounter in the mass media - flattened into an image of false, homogenous and paradoxically deadened vitality - Cooper’s nudes are loaded, as in the past, with symbolic ambiguity, transfigured to an immortal status after stepping through the shadow of death unshrouded.”

Excerpts from Gigliola Foschi’s
essay for ZOOM magazine, July 2001.



THE ALTIS

PORTRAITS OF THE IMMORTALS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTIN COOPER

“The photography of Martin Cooper is rich in its sources and influences. Unlike many ‘contemporary’ photographers, Cooper chooses to work in a style that has a richness and a historical quality that many, at first glance, might call ‘old-fashioned.’ Nothing could be further from the truth” declares William B. Bodine, Chief Curator of the Columbia Museum of Art, host to *In the Faith of Beauty: Photographs by Martin Cooper*.

Cooper explains, “Reminiscent of Homeric times, I use narrative to explore the human drive that fuels the quest for excellence, now told through the female hero. I think of my photography as complex, multifaceted, and deceptively simple. It’s mixed with both the jeweler’s delicate execution and an element of make-believe. I uphold the tradition of early 20th century photographic masters by hand toning each print to achieve a unique richness, depth and color. Whether it’s a patina of rich sepia, gold, or graphite tones, each is chemically mixed from scratch, using homemade recipes based on 19th and early 20th century formulas.”

“Your work is truly an inspiration and how *fortunate* for this world that you continue to infuse us with it.”

elsa kendall
creative director
arena editions

THE ALTIS BALLET



THE ALTIS

BALLET

CHOREOGRAPHED BY REBECCA RICE
COSTUMED BY MARTIN COOPER

>Courtesy Brilliantpictures.com

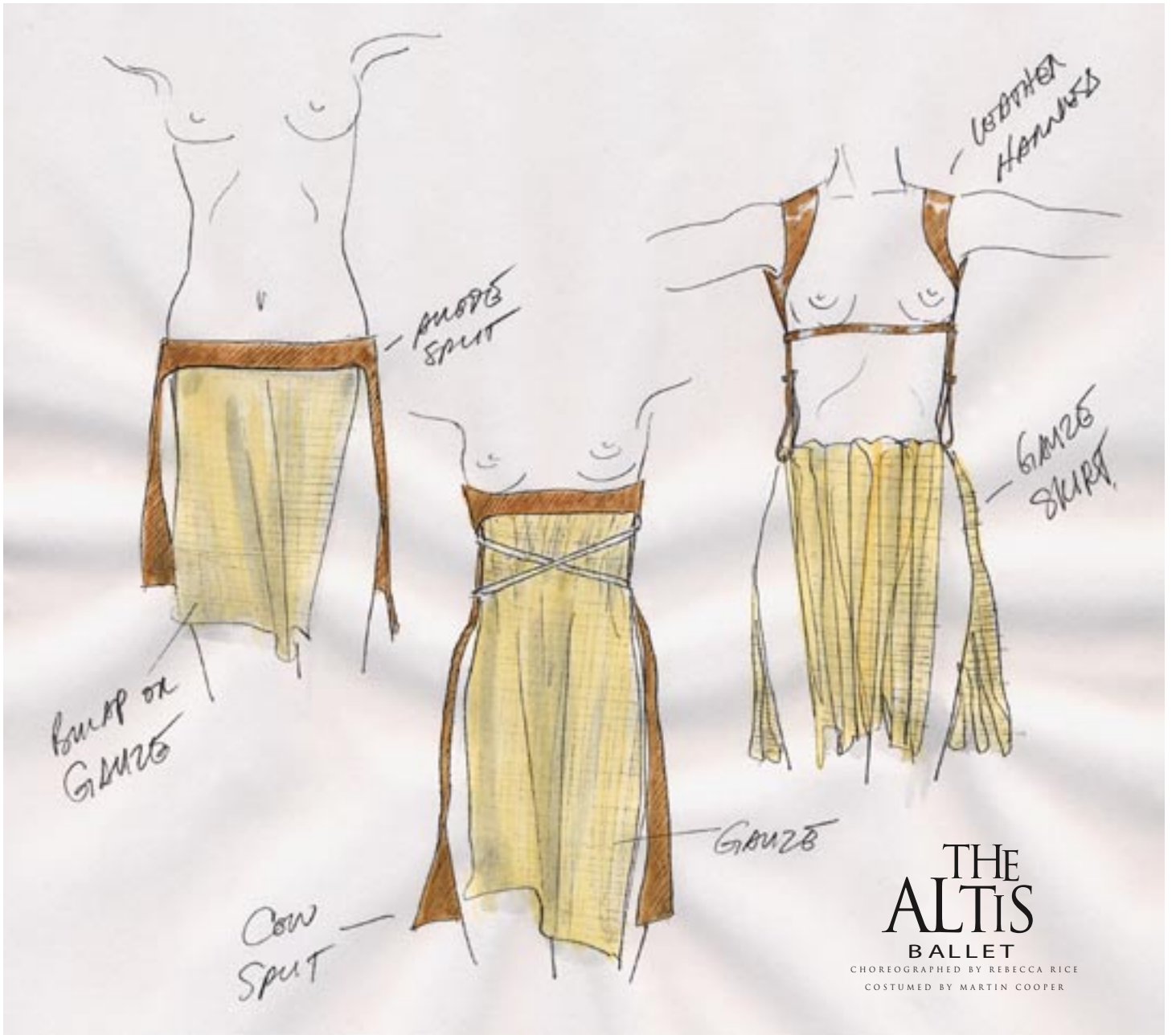
THE
ALTIS
BALLET
CHOREOGRAPHED BY REBECCA RICE
COSTUMED BY MARTIN COOPER

Costume design is, for Cooper, an incredible mixture of theater, fashion and almost the likes of filmmaking. Dance is an important source of inspiration for him, which inspires both his fashion and fine art work. Cooper began costuming when invited to collaborate with choreographer Kevin O'Day (Stuttgart Ballet, Mikhail Baryshnikov's White Oak Dance Project, New York City Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, The Pittsburgh Ballet, The Royal Danish Ballet, Les Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo, etc.) to costume *To Have and To Hold*, which premiered at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago in 1999. Later he costumed *On the Spot* for O'Day that premiered in 2000 on the stage of the Pittsburgh Ballet. Cooper's signature is costuming that utilizes both layered and transparent elements to reveal the structure of the human form beneath.

In 2001, Cooper had a fortuitous meeting with choreographer Rebecca Rice of the Boston Ballet. She was so moved by the strength of his series, *The Altis: Portraits of the Immortals*, that she began creating a ballet directly based on this work. The initial piece was set to 4 dancers and premiered at the Boston Ballet with 4-story visual projections of images from the series as the backdrop to the dance work. Cooper created an entire language of costumes and interchangeable elements that work seamlessly back into the series.

“I created *the altis ballet* as a physical expression of martin’s work. I wanted to show the subtle intensity of his creative vision and celebration of *beauty*, which underlies every aspect of his work.”

rebecca rice
choreographer
boston ballet



THE
ALTIS

BALLET

CHOREOGRAPHED BY REBECCA RICE

COSTUMED BY MARTIN COOPER



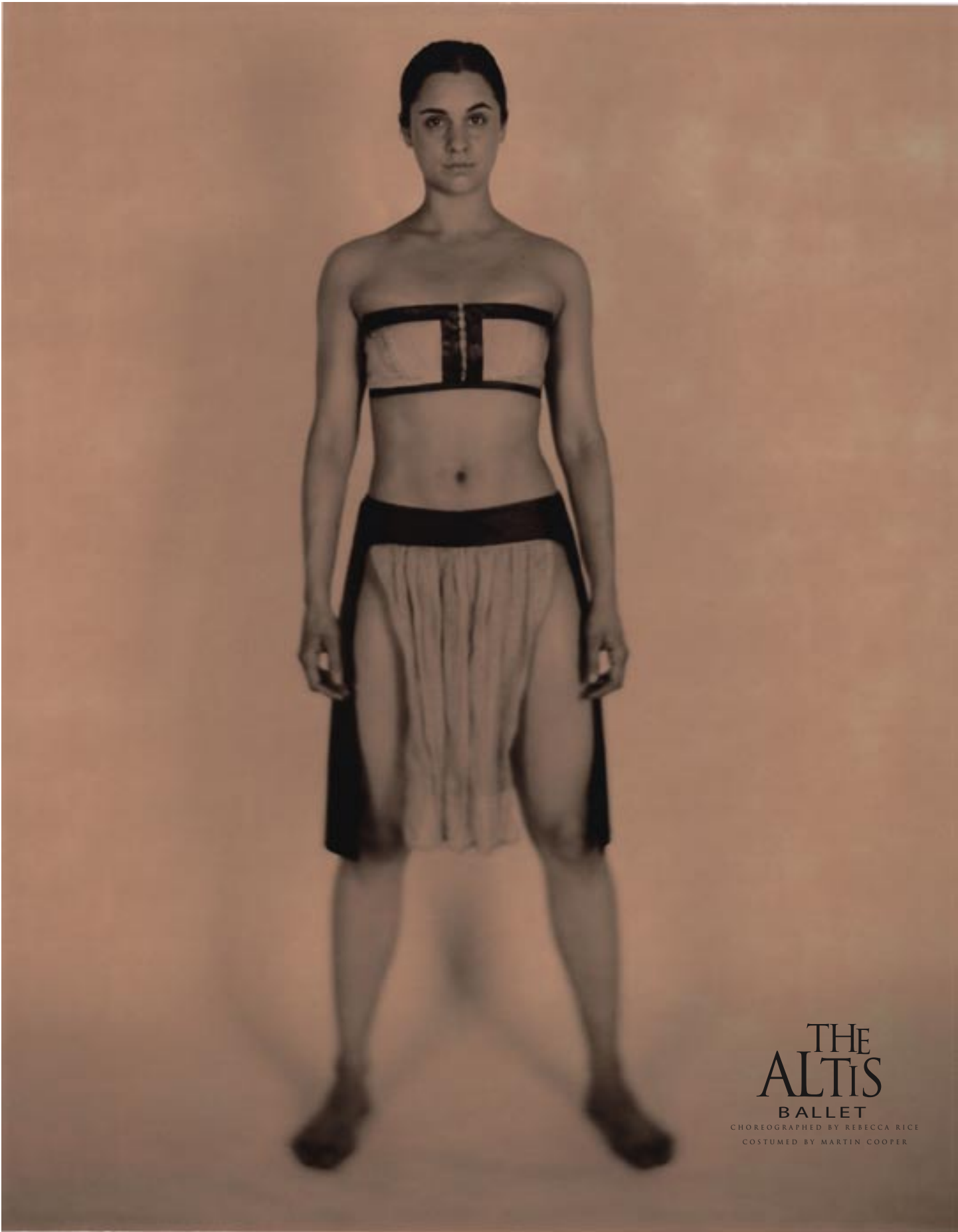
THE
ALTIS
BALLET

CHOREOGRAPHED BY REBECCA RICE
COSTUMED BY MARTIN COOPER



THE
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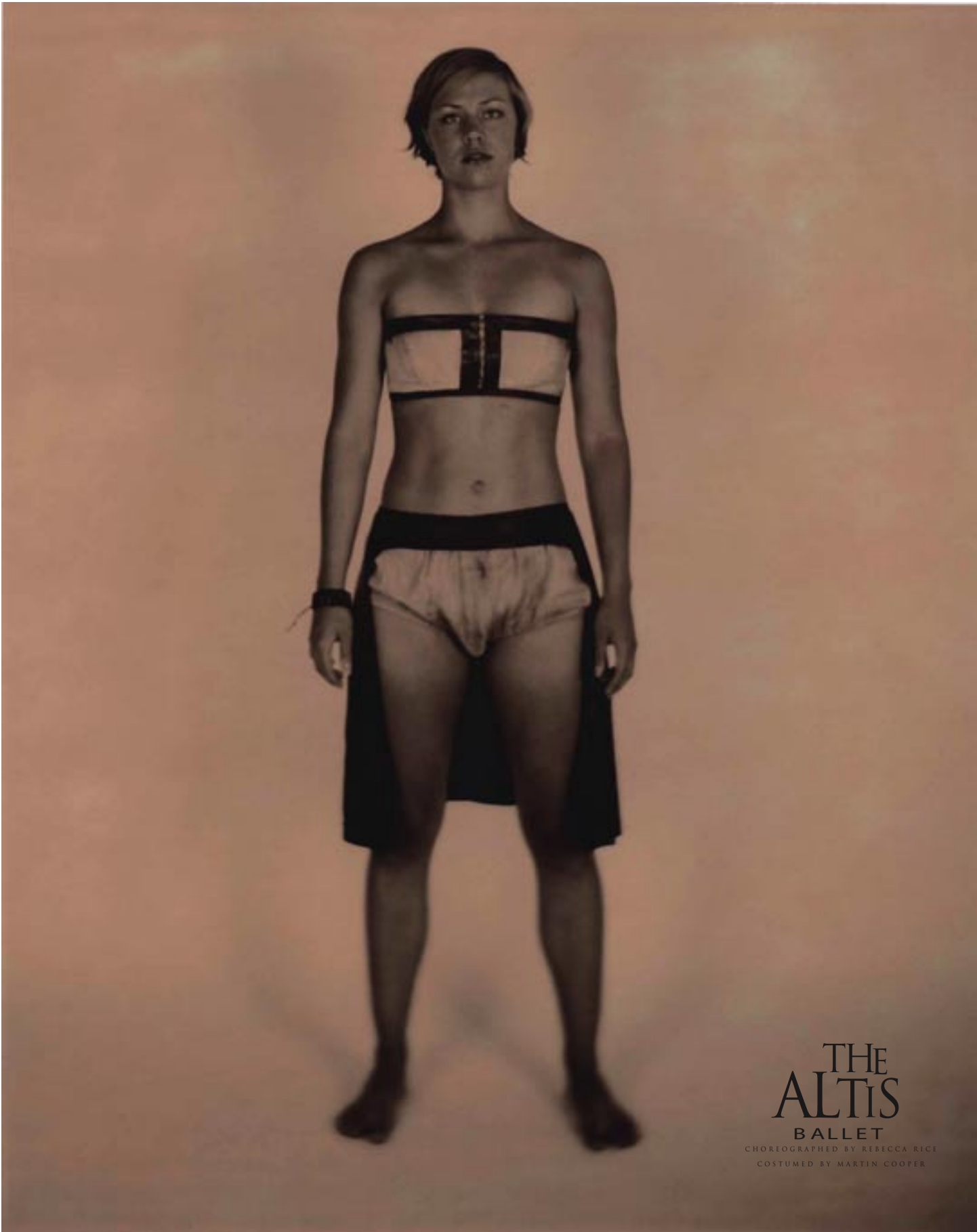


THE
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BALLET

CHOREOGRAPHED BY REBECCA RICE
COSTUMED BY MARTIN COOPER

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THE
ALTIS
BALLET

CHOREOGRAPHED BY REBECCA RICE
COSTUMED BY MARTIN COOPER

THE ALMAGEST



THE ALMAGEST constellations of the zodiac

In the approximate year 150 AD, an Alexandrian astronomer named Claudius Ptolemaeus (better known as Ptolemy) produced the Almagest.

The Almagest is a book of mathematical astronomy. It collated the astronomical knowledge of the ancient world, and contains a star catalogue of 1,025 stars. Ptolemy divided these stars into 48 constellations: 12 of the Zodiac, 21 north of the Zodiac, 15 south of the Zodiac.

Modern astronomy lists 88 constellations of which Ptolemy's 48 are incorporated. This body of work is inspired by Ptolemy's Almagest, and focuses on the band of constellations known as the Zodiac.



Martin Cooper. *Leo*, 1997. >Courtesy JHB Gallery +1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Virgo*, 1997. > Courtesy JHB Gallery +1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Taurus*, 1997. >Courtesy JHB Gallery +1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Pisces*, 1997. > Courtesy JHB Gallery + 1.212.255.9286

BOTANICALS



BOTANICALS

Martin's homage to beauty is embodied in this ongoing work in progress, *Botanicals*. While these studies of flora are reminiscent of 19th-century illustrated books, they differ from those studies by taking on a figurative and human-like quality. Moreover, there is a sense of graceful choreography in the composition, and the surfaces are labored until it emits a glow from within. These botanicals arrest and captivate us, and if we follow our instincts, we can take joy in their intimate and euphoric world.



Martin Cooper. *Japanese Magnolia*, 1995. > Courtesy JHB Gallery + 1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Calla Lily, No. 1*, 1995. > Courtesy JHB Gallery + 1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Chrysanthemum*, No. 1, 1995. > Courtesy JHB Gallery +1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Lotus Blossom and Bud*, 1995. > Courtesy JHB Gallery + 1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Parrot Tulip*, 1995. >Courtesy JHB Gallery + 1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Queen Anne's Lace Positive*, 1995. >Courtesy JHB Gallery + 1.212.255.9286



Martin Cooper. *Peony, No. 2*, 1995. > Courtesy JHB Gallery + 1.212.255.9286

MARTIN **V** COOPER

MARTIN COOPER



In the heart of Martin Cooper, you will find the essence of a man whose creative focus has propelled artists and designers throughout history. He is an accomplished clothing designer, costumer and fine artist. Three chapters, one life.

As Vice President of Design for Burberry, Cooper oversees the creation of the brand's core businesses: rainwear and outerwear. Cooper has been instrumental in infusing Burberry's rich heritage into sleek modern collectables for men and women. He has been part of the Burberry group for over a decade. Cooper currently serves as an active member of the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA).

As a fine artist, Cooper's photography has taken him into such diverse worlds as astronomy and ancient sport, always using the human form to express ideas that redefine the tradition of the genre. His photography has been both published and exhibited internationally, and heavily collected by the aficionados of the art and fashion worlds, including Beth Rudin Dewoody, Henry Buhl, The Polaroid Collections, The Columbia Museum of Art, David Mitchell, Andrew Lauren and Banana Republic. Most recently, Bergdorf Goodman, the preeminent retailer of "*all things luxury*," acquired numerous works that can be viewed on the store's second floor. Cooper is a member of the prestigious Royal Photographic Society in England.

As a costumer, Cooper's signature resembles contemporary clothing that utilizes both layered and transparent elements to reveal the structure of the human form beneath. Cooper began costuming when invited to collaborate with choreographer Kevin O'Day (Stuttgart Ballet, Mikhail Baryshnikov's White Oak Dance Project, New York City Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, The Pittsburgh Ballet, etc.) to costume *To Have and To Hold*, which premiered at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago in 1999. Later he costumed *On the Spot* for O'Day that premiered in 2000 on the stage of the Pittsburgh Ballet.

In 2001, Cooper had a fortuitous meeting with choreographer Rebecca Rice of the Boston Ballet. She was so moved by the strength of his photographic series, *The Altis: Portraits of the Immortals* (a body of work loosely inspired by the ancient Olympic games), that she created a ballet directly based on it. Cooper created an entire language of costumes and interchangeable elements that work seamlessly back into the series as fine art. The initial piece was set to 4 dancers and premiered at the Boston Ballet with 4-story visual projections of images from the series as the backdrop to the dance work.

Cooper, a Magna Cum Laude graduate of the Parsons School of Design, has served as a member of Parsons' Board of Governors and on the President's Board of Alumni Advisors for the New School University. In 1992, Cooper established OrchisArts, his not-for-profit studio that makes contributions primarily to breast cancer organizations that focus on patient's care & welfare. Cooper's work can be viewed at www.martincooperphoto.com.

MARTIN COOPER

EDUCATION B.F.A., The Parsons School of Design, 1987

ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- 2003 *The Altis: Portraits of the Immortals; photographs | drawings | costumes*, Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, Cambridge, MA
- 2002 *Botanicals*, Cose Belle, Southampton, NY
The Altis: Portraits of the Immortals, Media Gallery, Boston, MA
- 2001 *Botanicals*, room styled by Dara Caponigro, Homer, NY
Botanicals, Panopticon Gallery, Waltham, MA
- 2000 *The Altis: Portraits of the Immortals*, Le Bureau des Esprits, Milan, Italy
In the Faith of Beauty: Photographs by Martin Cooper, The Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, SC
The Altis: Portraits of the Immortals, Nikolai Fine Art, New York City, NY

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2005 *BLOOM, BLOOM*, Sag Harbor, NY
- 2001 Art Chicago with Nikolai Fine Art, Chicago, IL
The Armory Show with Nikolai Fine Art, New York, NY
Miami International Exposition with Nikolai Fine Art, Miami, FL
- 2000 San Francisco International Fine Art Fair with Nikolai Fine Art, San Francisco, CA
Jane Corkin Gallery, *Sports Illustrated*, Toronto, Canada
Miami International Exposition with Nikolai Fine Art, Miami, Florida
- 1999 The New York Photography Fair with Nikolai Fine Art, New York, NY
- 1997 *Summer Group Show*, Jackson Fine Art, Atlanta, GA
The New York Academy of Art, New York, NY
photo.soho (Biennale), New York, NY
- 1995 Photo Santa Fe, Santa Fe, NM

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Henry Buhl, New York, NY
Banana Republic, Houston, TX
Berdorf Goodman, New York, NY
The Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, SC
Beth Rudin Dewoody, New York, NY
Andrew Lauren, New York, NY
David Mitchell, Washington, DC
Suzette and David Morris, Palm Beach, FL
The Polaroid Collection, Cambridge, MA
Manny Ramirez, Boston, MA
Allan C. Schwartz, New York, NY
Marc Wilson, New York, NY

BOARDS AND MEMBERSHIPS

The Board of Governors, The Parsons School of Design
Casting For Recovery
Fashion Targets Breast Cancer
The Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA)
The President's Board of Alumni Advisors, The New School University
The Royal Photographic Society, England

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2003 Joslin, Russell. *Martin Cooper*, SHOTS 79, Minneapolis, MN, March 2003, pps.14- 17, b&w ills.
- 2002 Shade, Roderick N. and Jorge S. Arango. *Harlem Style: Designing for the New Urban Aesthetic*, p.68, Stuart, Tabori & Chang, New York, NY; color ill.
 ----. *Martin Cooper - Exhibition at Cose Belle*, Arts & Living Section, Southampton Press, Southampton, NY, b&w ill.
 ----. *Martin Cooper Botanicals*, Hamptons, Cottages and Gardens, Bridgehampton, NY, color ill.
 ----. Polaroid International Photography, Issue 23 – *The Body*, Cambridge, MA, color ill.
 ----. Advertisement for Homer, Elle Décor, New York, NY, May, color ill.
 ----. Fashion Designer Cynthia Steffe quotes Martin Cooper's Botanicals among her 10 favorite things, Elle Décor, New York, NY, pg. 170; April, color ill.
 ----. *Martin Cooper*, Players, People on the Move, Savoy Magazine, New York, NY, February, p.61; color ill.
 Sharpe, Sonja A. Review, The Altis Ballet by Rebecca Rice, MIT's The Tech, Cambridge, MA, April 23
 Kaufman, Hayley. Living| Arts section, The Boston Globe, Boston, MA, January 25, b&w ill.
 Bale, Theodore. *a Dance of Olympic Women*, Arts & Entertainment, The Boston Herald, Boston, MA, January 15
 ----. *Super Cooper*, STUFF@night Magazine, Boston, MA, January 15- 28, color ills.
 ----. *Martin Cooper- Exhibition at Media Gallery*, The Improper Bostonian- Boston, MA, Dec/ Jan 2002, color ill.
- 2001 Watson, Brigit. *Spotlight, Fall Gallery Preview, The Altis, Portraits of The Immortals*, South End News, Boston, MA, September 6, b&w ill.
 Foschi, Gigliola. *Martin Cooper*, ZOOM, Milan, Italy, July/August, pps.50-56, color ills.
 Cunningham , Bill. *Creative Spirit Award, Pratt Institute; The New York Times; Sunday Styles*, New York, NY, b&w ill.
- 2000 Hitchcock, Barbara. *Emerging Bodies: Nudes from the Polaroid Collections*, Edition Stemmler, Germany, color ills.
 Cooper, Martin. *Martin Cooper*, View Camera Magazine, September/October, pps.32- 38, San Francisco, CA, b&w and color ills.
 Ford, Timothy. *Style Matters, a Designer Profile*, Code Magazine, Los Angeles, CA, November, pps. 42- 44, color ills.
 Day, Jeffrey. *After a Life in Fashion, a Designer Turns Eye to Art*, Arts & Entertainment, The State Newspaper, Columbia, SC, September 24, b&w and color ills.
 Haynie, Rachel. *Fashion Designer Comes Home*, Star Newspaper, September 28, Columbia, SC, b&w ill.
 ----. *In the Faith of Beauty*, The State Newspaper, September 15, Columbia, SC
 Kazakov, Rafaelo. *Martin Cooper*, The New York Art World, New York, NY, March, b&w ill.
 Boos, Michele. *Martin Cooper*, Art Tribune, Vol.1- No.3, New York, NY, March- April, pps. 22-23, color ills.
 ----. *Martin Cooper*, Portfolio, New York Contemporary Art Report, New York, NY, color ills.
 ----. *Martin Cooper*, Portfolio, New York Arts, April, Vol.5 No.4, pp. 50 & 52, New York, NY, b&w ill.
- 1997 ----. Portfolio, *Nudes*, La Fotografia, color ills.
 ----. Portfolio, *New Talent Photography I*, Graphis, color ill.
 ----. Portfolio, *Best of Photography Annual*, Photographer's Forum

AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

- 2001 The Creative Spirit Award for Design Excellence, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY
- 1999 Polaroid Fellowship, The Polaroid Corporation, Watham, MA
- 1986 The Norman Norell Award for Academic and Creative Excellence, The Parsons School of Design, New York, NY

PUBLIC LECTURES

- 2000 *The Altis, Portraits of The Immortals*, The Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, SC
- 1996 The South Carolina Governors School for the Arts, Greenville, SC
- 1989 The South Carolina Governors School for the Arts, Greenville, SC
- 1987- Parsons School of Design, New York, NY

TELEVISION & RADIO

- 2004 Fine Living Network; *Sheila Bridges: Designer Living*; The Coopers, New York NY
- 2002 WLIU (radio interview) with Bonnie Grice, Southampton, New York
- 2001 Metro Channel (interview), New York, NY
- 2000 WIS-TV (interview), Columbia, SC
- 1998 Style Channel, *New Attitudes* (interview), New York, NY
- 1996 The South Carolina Educational Television documentary on The South Carolina Governors School for the Arts' alumni, Greenville, SC

COSTUMING

- 2003 Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, *Indigo*, Choreographed by Rebecca Rice
- 2002 Media Gallery; *The Altis*, a ballet, Choreographed by Rebecca Rice, preformed by the Boston Ballet dancers
- 2000 The Pittsburgh Ballet; *On the Spot*; Choreographed by Kevin O'Day
- 1999 Hubbard Street Dance Chicago; *To Have and to Hold*; Choreographed by Kevin O'Day

TEACHING

- 1991- Senior Critic; BFA Fashion Design; Parsons School of Design, New York, NY
- 1990 Moore College of Art; Philadelphia, PA



MARTIN COOPER

Martin Cooper founded OrchisArts in 1992 as a not-for-profit studio to make contributions primarily to breast cancer organizations that focus on patient's care & welfare. OrchisArts has made contributions to the Big Bam Foundation, a local New York City organization. Their events have contributed to such groups as SHARE, a self-help organization for women, as well as to The Pink Ribbon Project, which provides screenings for women without health insurance. OrchisArts has also supported The Caring House Foundation. Prototyped after the successful Ronald McDonald cancer homes, it provides free room and board to cancer patients and their families during treatment and convalescence from chemotherapy and surgery. These moneys are generated from Martin Cooper's print sales in addition to fundraiser events that are synchronized in conjunction with his exhibitions. In addition to the above, OrchisArts donates to Casting for Recovery, headquartered in Vermont. It is a unique organization that teaches breast cancer survivors the art of fly-fishing as a part of their physical and mental therapy.

Since 2000, Martin Cooper and OrchisArts has charitably donated over \$22,000 to these organizations:

Casting for Recovery
Bailey House
The Caring House Foundation
The Big Bam
Free Arts for Abused Children
The New York Girls Club
Robin Hood Foundation
Ace Partnerships
The New York Academy of Art
Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foudation
New Yorkers for Children

VI
PRESS

EMERGING BODIES

NUDES FROM THE
POLAROID COLLECTIONS

Edited by
Barbara Hitchcock

Introduction by
Andy Grundberg

EDITION STEMMLE



Marvin Cooper
The Feather Fan, from the A16 Series, 1998
Toned gelatin silver photograph
Polaroid Positive/Negative 4 x 5 film Type 55



Martin Cooper
Dishes People, from the Atlas Series, 1997
Toned gelatin silver photograph
Polaroid Positive/Negative 4x5 film Type 55



Martin Cooper
Strong Feathers, from the Atlas Series, 1998
Toned gelatin silver photograph
Polaroid Positive/Negative 4x5 film Type 55

MARTIN COOPER



MARTIN COOPER SHOTS 79

SHOTS 79



SHOTS 79

MARTIN COOPER



Portrait of a Woman
Cigarettes about 1941, 2000
Cigarettes about 1941, Portrait of a Woman
Cigarettes about 1941, 2000



VIEW GAMERA

THE JOURNAL OF LARGE-FORMAT PHOTOGRAPHY

SELF-PUBLISHING WITH NORMAN CARVER, RAY MCSAVANEY,
RON ROSENSTOCK, AND DENNIS DARLING
AN INTERVIEW WITH RYSZARD HOROWITZ

MARTIN COOPER PORTFOLIO

TRIPTYCH VISION, ARCHIVAL ADVANCES, AND WESTON LIGHT METERS



MARTIN COOPER

WHEN STEVE SODERBERG ASKED US TO WRITE AN ARTICLE describing my photographic process, I wanted no time and jumped at the opportunity. I know some photographers are extremely reluctant to discuss their technique in fear of it being copied. There's no reason to be afraid. I'm a professional. I know that given the same materials, each artist's unique vision is interpreted and recorded on film differently.

This article documents the "birth" of a collaboration. In it I will share my process, from inspiration and research, pre-visualization, stabilization, editing models, my studio set-up and clearing Polacoid T55 print film, so ultimately pleasing and honoring my images. I am an artist who does not believe photo-technical issues are the most viable and direct method to obtain the image I always the best method by far.

A PORTFOLIO

Photographs and Text

by Martin Cooper

INSPIRATION & RESEARCH

I work in the style of the "pictorial narrative" or storytelling. Each project begins with a prolonged period of research, where I absorb myth, culture, and civilization. Then, seamlessly, they are blended to create a new visual language that becomes complex and multifaceted, yet deceptively simple. Quite by accident, I started *The Albic Portraits of the Amazons* about 3½ years ago while shooting portraits with a childhood friend. The project originally was to be an ode to our friendship, as we have known each other since we were four. My wife, in her brilliance, reflected that the images had a very "Olympian" feeling about them, and it clicked for me that there was far more to the project than I had originally realized.

The result is the culmination of over three years work and research, supported by interviews with anthropologists and historians of Greek antiquity and the ancient Olympic games. The subject matter of *The Albic* is both classical and contemporary; its inspiration being loosely based on these ancient games. Albic comes from the Greek name for the actual sacred olive grove where the original Olympic games took place. The games were a religious rite performed in the male and women were banned from attending—refusing to comply was a crime punishable by death. The intent was not to academically repli-

cate the ancient games, but rather to present a unique and contemporary document of an athletic and highly stylized world, glorifying women and athletes. I hope to pave the way for a classical revival of the male by empowering the female spirit through strength and beauty.

PRE-VISUALIZING

The process of using the view camera makes pre-visualization a necessary part of my work. I sketch and storyboard each image I want to make and save them in my "Sequence Book." It's called the Sequence Book because it collates by like things (providing sequence) and documents the entire pre- and post-visual history of a particular image. I make copious notes on many of the sketches, noting mood, choices, backgrounds, and props (see fig. 1, Sequence sketch). These sketches serve as a starting point and are never ridged. I sketch each athlete's figure-type a particular way that reflects how I'm visualizing her in the shot, and then I retrofit an actual model into the sketch. I share the sketches from the Sequence Book with the models so we are on the same "visual page" when the shoot starts. My pre-visualization techniques further extend into the shoot by working with National T55 print film. We can act direct on the fly by analyzing the Polaroids against the sketch.

CASTING MODELS

I admit, I've been blessed with great fortune in finding and working with truly unique women. I believe very much in fate and know when the right model walks through my studio door, she's been brought to me for a reason. Contrary to what many photographers, I prefer to work with the same models over and over. This way they learn to create the imagery with me, and they ultimately "become" the imagery.

PART 1: THE PHONE INTERVIEW

I have quite a screening process for prospective models. I first place a "Models Wanted" ad in the Village Voice, a New York paper. My address, "Photographer casting female dancers to play athletes in line-art photography project. No reply required." It's best to be up-front on any reality issues. I also tolerate during the phone interview, as some models don't read the ad to the end. I explain in detail the nature of the project and what "roles" I'm looking to cast (i.e., runner, boxer, archer, etc.). Each "athlete" is cast into the project according to her body type. For example, the physique required of a boxer would greatly differ from that of a rhythmic gymnast. I



quickly explain how I work: my studio, the 4x5 camera, and the unique properties of Polaroid T55 and T665 pin film.

I shoot exclusively with Polaroid T55 and T665 pin film mainly for its uniquely smooth and velvet-like quality. However, by using Polaroid film there is an added bonus: it creates an "exclusive" experience between the model and myself. In 23 seconds after the exposure is taken, I pool the film apart and we can instantly make decisions on lighting, the stage of props, or the pose (see portrait of an Archer, 1998). She is able to see what I see and we "share" the images together as a cooperative partnership. It is an invaluable pre-visualization tool, and a confidence builder for the model.

Lastly I explain to them that my profession is actually that of a clothing designer, not a photographer. I produce work for the pure joy of it. All of my models respectively have other careers as well and are involved in the project by choice, not obligation. I look for a strong sense of creative and commitment from a model. Although all of my models are paid, money is usually an insignificant factor for them.

PART 2: THE STUDIO MEETING

The next step is to meet. A meeting lasts 45 minutes to one hour. I prefer to meet at my Wall Street loft studio so she can see the environment and feel comfortable about its conditions. When she arrives I have her fill out a Model's Application. It's basic information: who are you, where do you live, and how do we get in touch with you. Substantially, having a model fill out a form shows a certain level of seriousness and respect I exhibit toward my work and my process. This whole exercise is to establish professionalism with the model and for her to know the standards I expect in artists. After the model signs and completes the forms, I usually show her a pre-selected group of 15-20 prints from the project. This helps her to see my level of quality and sense of aesthetic and to begin understanding the type of imagery that's incorporated into my work.

Through the use of visuals, I describe and show the model how I work. I explain that the entire project has been storyboarded, so once a model has been cast, we will be shooting against the thumbnails in the Sequence Book.

So there's always an agenda for each shoot; however, it's not case by case, but rather a starting point. To show them how an image is born, I pull a print from the pre-selected pile and show them the corresponding Polaroid and thumbnail sketch from the Sequence Book. In some cases, the final print looks exactly like the sketch, in other cases there are few similarities (see figure 2, Polaroid). They usually end up asking, "So when do we get to see the contacts?" and I explain again that the Polaroids ARE the contacts. Remember, many have never seen a view camera before or short film so I explain the plans and intricacies of the view camera (WYSIWYG but very slow). Because of its slow nature, I can expect to shoot approximately 30 sheets of film in a three-hour sitting.

Top Left—Page from Sequence Book. Bottom Left—Grooms, 1998, unaltered print. Right—Grooms, 1998, normal print.





Portrait of an Archer, 1998



Strong Feathers, 1998

To finalize the meeting, I ask the model if she would like to take her participation to the next step: a test shoot of seven images. I reiterate that each model is cast in the project according to body type and the test shoot gives me all the necessary information needed to complete the process. I show them an example of a test shoot and review the seven shots. Since the test takes five minutes, many models prefer to do it then. Others prefer to reschedule. There is no monetary compensation for the test.

PART 3: THE TEST SHOOT

When the model comes for the test shoot, I show her to the dressing room area, where she elicits (and removes all her jewelry), she walks onto the set. The seven shots are taken with a Polaroid Spectra camera and are full length

front, side, and back. Then again, exactly the same, but cropped from the model's nose to her knees front, side and back. The seventh is the classic *cinquante-cinq* stance, or weight firmly shifted to one hip. The test lasts literally five minutes and by minute three, I have a pretty good idea where they would best fit. While the model's rescheduling I prepare to discuss two topics when she returns: the model release and grooming.

I explain that she "owns" the right to her image and in order for me (the artist) to use her image in a public forum, she must grant me that right. The model release serves as a legal contract between the two parties. I give the model two copies of the release document. One, for her to keep for her records, the other, to date, sign, and return. Once the release has been signed, I can start shooting. There is



On the Mark, 1938

no need to "renew" the release for other sessions. I never, ever check with out a signed release, even if they are friends.

Discussed after the test are hair, make-up, and the removal of body hair (if needed). There are two reasons for this last condition. 1) It is historically accurate that the ancient athletes removed body hair before competing at the games, and 2) most of my images are shot against black velvet and monochromatic film does not record any separation between the black backdrop and the pubic area. It looks like "negative space" and distorts the proportions and balance of the figure. Just seeing the reflection of skin there anchors the figure on the page (see *The Games*, 1999). Models usually have no problem with this condition since they understand its historical reference and how it fits into the aesthetic and visual language of *The Athis*, and that it bears no reference to actuality.

STUDIO SET-UP

Although my home studio is quite comfortable, it boasts a no-left-behind set-up. I shoot with a used Sinar F1 4x5 view camera and Kodak Tri-X film, two Lowell 19' light meter switches so I can dial the lights up or down as needed. They are fitted with Photoflex Silverdome IV soft boxes. My main light is usually powered up 100%, while the fill light is set to 75%. I have a 4'x8' reflective mylar reflector that's placed behind me for the model to see herself. It makes all the difference in the world.

CLEARING POLAROID T55 NEGATIVES

Over the years, I've heard and read several methods about processing Polaroid p15 films. I've seen many articles but I can only share with you what has worked for me (I get perfect negatives every time). First of all, for those of you that have not yet worked with T55 (or T665) films, in my opinion their benefits far outweigh any drawbacks. The only drawback I've experienced is the fragility of the negative. It's extremely thin and they scratch easily. I have three buckets (with cartridges) made specially for clearing the Polaroid negatives (buckets can be purchased through Cousins). Fill the buckets with regular cold water and load the negatives (while shooting) on every other slot of the cartridge starting with the second slot from the inside. If you use the first slot you highly risk scratching the negative on the joining beam. Work your way outward.

When the cartridge is filled, you will need to pour out the reddish-purple liquid produced from the processing gel. Do this only when you're ready to start clearing the negatives. After you pour out the purple liquid, flush the negatives with regular cold tap water for 20 minutes. I place a file, marble *aristoy* on top of the cartridge so it can't flip around in the bucket while the water's swirling. When it's done, I pull each negative out and hand-dry it in my palm to make sure there's no more jelly on the negative by Awt. Just make sure to remove your ring first!

The buckets usually come with a pack of sodium sulfide powder to make the clearing solution. The solution needs sodium sulfide to eat the remaining processing jelly off the negative. The powder never worked for me, instead, I use Permawash by Helco. First, Permawash is a liquid, not a powder, and it dissolves into water instantly. Powder

will not. Second, Permawash contains sodium sulfide and a hardening agent to protect the negative. To make the solution (instructions should all be prepared prior to use. Refer to Permawash directions for further information), I place an empty cartridge in a Rubbermaid (10 liter) bucket and fill it with enough water to cover my fingertip's first knuckle while it's resting on top of the cartridge (approximately seven liters). Remove the empty cartridge and add approximately 4 oz. of Permawash to the water and stir thoroughly. Now, after palm-washing the negatives, place the negative cartridge into your pre-mixable Permawash solution for approximately five minutes with periodic agitation. After five minutes, rinse again in cold running tap water for another 20 minutes.

Lastly you will need to Photofix and hang the negatives. Make sure you clip your negatives on a diagonal for drying. In the winter months (when the temperature is warm and dry) the negatives can cut inward and stick together. Never leave your negatives unattended while drying. It's not worth having done so much hard work, only to get ruined negatives at the very end. Once dry, I place the negatives in Light Impressions' Transview 4.5 sleeves (9513) and catalogue them in my database.

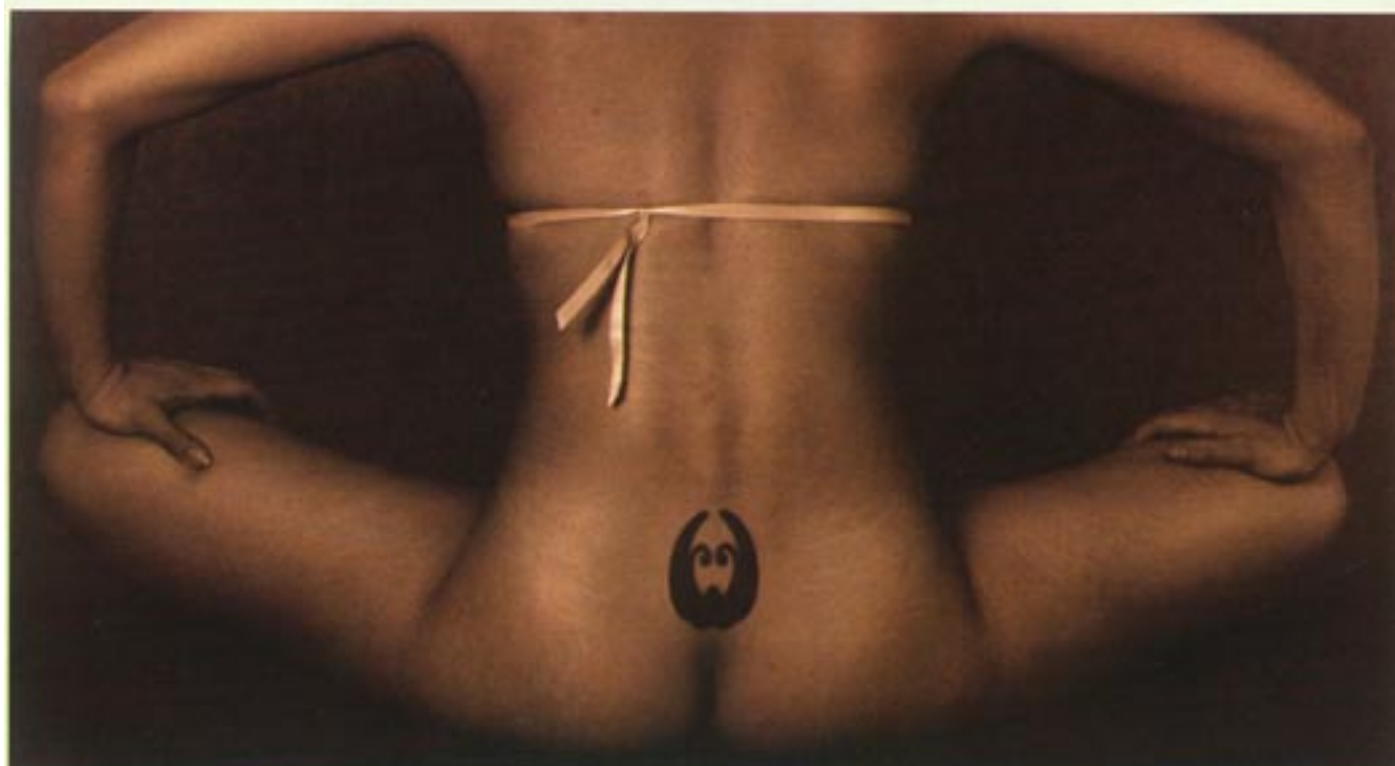
PRINTING AND TONING

In keeping with my collaborative vision, I made the decision many years ago to partner with a printer and toner much in the same way I work with my designer and pattern maker. I believe in working with talented individuals who are at the top of their craft and who not only share my vision but are also able to bring unique qualities to it. The final pieces of my toons are master printer Rob Whitmore and master toner Karen Cramley.

We have shared many ideas over the years about what we love from the past and how to translate it to the present, but with a thoughtfully modern approach. The chemistry of yesterday is fairly similar to today's, for the most part. It is the papers that have changed over the years. Our printing and toning challenge was, "How do you use the same chemistry to achieve a velvety platinum or platinum-grease-like quality, and make it all work on modern papers, in short?" I first worked with labs on printing down the images at least 1 to 1 1/2 stops from normal with low contrast (*The Games*, 1999, Unscored). Our paper of choice has been Agfa matte because it yields exquisite prints.

Karen and I agree to uphold the tradition of early 20th-century photographic masters by hand-toning each print to achieve a particular richness and depth. Karen's unique tones are "alchemically" mixed from brackish, using recipes based on early 20th-century formulas. The work of Stieglitz, Seix-Hen, or the patrons of Mallio's bronze figurines inspires the colorization of my prints (*The Games*, 1999, Toned). Once finished, each print is signed, stamped, dated, numbered, and titled.

Martin Cooper here and words in New York City when he is the President of *Design for Architects*. He is a graduate of the Parsons School of Design and serves on its Board of Governors. An exhibitor of *The Athis: Portraits of the Immigrants* has already begun. First at the Columbia Museum of Art in South Carolina in September, culminating with a final show at the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens, Greece. *The Athis* is being compiled into a monograph.



MARTIN COOPER

Le immagini, virate in un vellutato e intenso color seppia, rievocano lontane e misteriose fotografie del passato. Qua e là una piuma, una corda o un nastro risaltano di un biancore soffuso, accostate e avvolte come sono attorno a corpi femminili nudi, mitici, ritratti in pose simili a quelle degli antichi atleti dei Giochi olimpici. Racconta Martin Cooper, autore di queste immagini, di un mondo antico e misterioso dove gli uomini si confrontano in un rito vietato alle donne, tanto da considerarsi un crimine punito con la morte. Cooper sfida questo divieto archeologico, proponendo un suo legittimo posto nel mondo. In un santuario di Olimpia, il luogo del sacro, il maschio si è accostato al femminile, rifiutandosi però di essere come le donne-eroi i muscoli rigonfi e palati della prestantza atletica maschile. Cooper, tra passato e futuro, si accosta supinamente la loro nudità a quella delle immagini contemporanee, anche dalle immagini di nudo di primo acchito voler al femminile nudi in pose ginniche, realizzate negli anni Trenta da Julius Gross per il movimento naturista dei Wandervögel: subito ci accorgeremo di quanto esse siano lontane sia dalla retorica classicista della Riefenstahl, sia dall'ingenuo vitalismo salutistico di Gross.



With their velvety though intense sepia toning, Martin Cooper's nudes evoke distant and mysterious photographic images of the past. Here and there, a feather, a cord or ribbon strike through the surface in a suffused brilliance against the golden bodies of these undraped goddesses, portrayed in poses we associate with the Olympic athletes of the classical age. "The Greek games were a religious rite performed in the nude," Cooper explains, "and women were banned from participating. Failure to comply was a crime punishable by death. 'The Altis: Portraits of the Immortals' defies the ancient archetype to exalt women to their rightful place in the world." In his series "Altis," which was the Greek name for the sacred wood on Olympia, Martin Cooper simultaneously calls into question the male myth of the Greek athletes while promoting the participatory interests of those individuals on the other side of the gender coin, even while repudiating the pumped-up look of many of today's female contenders.

Inaccessible and ambiguous, suspended between myth and reality, the past and the future, Cooper's fair immortals don't passively expose themselves to the voyeuristic gaze but challenge the viewer on equal footing, emboldened by their own mystification. The sheer strangeness of these images distances them from both those contemporary nudes based in a broadband eroticism as well as from those early 20th-century works to which they allude, at least at first glance. We search for possible sources of inspiration in the women athletes appearing in Leni Riefenstahl's documentary film *Olympia*, or the robust female nudes taken in the 20s by Julius Gross for the Wandervögel naturist movement. But Cooper's work shares little with Riefenstahl's Übermensch agenda or Gross's ingenuous holistics.

Wherein lies the mystery of these images, that conceal themselves from view even as the subjects expose themselves? Let's look for an answer by





Sizing the Marbles, 1996; jian ting paper; Strong Press, 1999



Hidden People, 1997; jian ting paper; The Crown, 1999



Stipend, 1998 from The Altis, Portraits of The Immortals series

Polaroid International Photography Issue 23, **The Body**





ELLE DECOR

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at Home

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H O M E R

939 MADISON AVENUE, NYC, P:212.744.7705 F:212.744.7359

Spotlight

LIVING ARTS

Fall Gallery Preview

In the first of two articles, **Brigid Watson** takes a look at what can be seen in an energized and growing South End arts scene

BY BRIGID WATSON
ARTS WRITER

Fall is traditionally the most electric period in the visual arts exhibition schedule. Many galleries shorten hours or close all together during the lazy summer months, and September signals the reawakening of the gallery scene with a full schedule of openings and open studios to experience.

There are currently 15 exhibition spaces calling the South End home, and there are more than 200 working artists who maintain workspace in this area. This richly developed creative center privileges residents with numerous opportunities to experience many forms of visual art.

The following guide introduces these venues and highlights some of the shows upcoming. These listings are intended to provide a representative sampling and are by no means an all-inclusive, but rather a little something to whet the appetites of area art lovers.

While galleries, studios, and exhibition spaces are dotted throughout the South End, the corner of Harrison and Thayer streets is ground zero. This short block houses several of the most progressive and interesting galleries not just in Boston, but on the East Coast. They regularly show everything from emerging local talent to mid-career New Yorkers and international artists. These galleries coordinate their openings, which makes for a fabulous carnival like atmosphere down there at the warehouse, and the public is strongly encouraged to visit, take in lots of art, wine, and snacks. Check: The next event will be Friday, Sept. 7, 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. The participating galleries include:



ALL STYLES AND METHODS: This fall the South End galleries will be filled with every visual arts style imaginable.

• **The Bernard Taub Gallery, 450 Harrison Ave.** Carl Fudge will be showing new

prints opening Sept. 7. Look for the new paintings of Andrew Rutt in November. The Drawing Show in December will be work culled from the Boston Drawing Project, which is a significant joint project between Taub and James Hull, who runs the well-respected Gallery @ Corner Street.

• **The Genesee Sullivan Gal-**

lery, 47 Thayer.

Peter Coe will exhibit his abstract work that combines painting with plaster molds opening Sept. 7. In Nov. the conceptual work of Charles Colton, who explores usage in portraiture, will be on display. This gallery is also dedicated to showing contemporary ceramics. In December they will exhibit the work of fifth generation ceramic

artist from Japan, Haruko Nakamoto.

• The newly relocated **Albion Skirt gallery** promises to contribute some excitement to the neighborhood. They begin the season and open their new space at 450 Harrison with a group show entitled "What I did this summer..." In October they will present "New Work" by Erik Hanson, who makes drawings and sculptures that are visual expressions of our experience of music. David Bowie, Nancy Sinatra, The Village People and Dusty Springfield have inspired his work. In November they present "Not A Leaf," a traveling exhibition of surrealistic work coming to Boston after stops in Amsterdam, Paris, Ghent and New York.

• **The Little White Box**, formerly of Fort Point Channel, has joined forces with Gallery FX who exhibits student work at 39 Thayer. They begin the season with a show by Karyn Kirk & Wayne Viers, "On The Duff." This will be the first in the "Print/Contemporary" exhibition series that will pair established artists with student artists to create dialogues based on a theme, relationship, &/or interpretation of a specific concept.

• **Clifford Smith Gallery** is unfortunately one of the aforementioned galleries who was still enjoying their summer holiday when we went to press, but they are a gallery of substance and their dominant aesthetic leans heavily towards the conceptual. We hope that they come home from summer vacation refreshed and have a vigorous fall schedule lined up for our viewing pleasure!

• **Media Gallery, 31 Norfolk Avenue.** They open this season on September 11 with the work of Giovanni DeCristis and Karen Dittit with a special exhibition of Harry Fisher's Botanicals. In December they have a Holiday Salon Show which is a benefit Toy Drive for Casa Mirra Vasquez and early in 2002 is The Afro-Benefit for Breast Cancer featuring Martin Cooper's photography (Head Designer for Busherry's in New York) and performances by the Boston Ballet, Choreographed by Rebecca Rice.

South End 'welcome back' guide.....page 14,15

September 6, 2001 [Vol. 22, No. 32]

South End

News

Living Arts

THE BOSTON GLOBE FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 2002



GLOBE PHOTO/AMY NEWMAN

Photographer Martin Cooper's "The Altis: Portraits of the Immortals" is on display at the Media Gallery in Roxbury.

Since then, he hasn't really moved our needle. While we enjoyed him in "The Sixth Sense" and in the underrated "Unbreakable," we fear the quippy, ironic persona that first made Willis a household name is down for the count. Unless, of course, it emerges onstage tonight at **Avalon**, where Willis and his band (yes, band), the **Accelerators**, perform tonight at 7. **Ivan Neville**, son of New Orleans legend Aaron Neville and a renowned bassist in his own right, shares the bill. Tickets \$25.25.

15 Lansdowne St., 617-262-2424. Order tickets by phone at 617-423-6398.

Image maker

Just because you missed last

week's splashy opening reception for "**The Altis: Portraits of the Immortals**" at Roxbury's **Media Gallery** doesn't mean it's too late to take in the show. The moody black-and-white photographs, shot by Burberry head designer **Martin Cooper**, remain on display through Feb. 3. The Media Gallery is open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday through Sunday and by appointment.

31 Norfolk Ave., Roxbury, 617-905-4729 or 617-442-9225.

Events can always be canceled, rescheduled, or sold out; call to confirm. Go! can be reached by e-mail at go@globe.com or by calling 617-929-8257.



star.columbiasc.com

STAR

Columbia's Weekly Newspaper

Fashion designer comes home

By Rachel Haynie

Martin Cooper was developing his eye for design and beauty even while he was growing up in Columbia. His talent has taken him around the world and brought him home.

As a Heathwood Hall student, Cooper went on weekends to clean and straighten his father's dental office, but he often became transported to other lands and cultures by the visual images found in the magazines laying about the reception room. He still reads as many as 30 magazines a month for their design inspiration and photographic teachings.

After continuing to expand his visual language with years of travel, self-study and exposure to the world's best art, The New York-based international fashion designer for London-based Burberry was back in town last weekend. As host of photographic exhibition opening, Cooper celebrated both art and homecoming with family and friends.

He entitled his fine art photography exhibit at the Columbia Museum of Art "In the Faith of Beauty." The name for his Columbia exhibition was taken from the opening line of a poem written in 1995 by Karen Suen, his wife. The poem, *Emergence*, appears as a prologue in the exhibition catalog.

Wandering — to reach Cooper's works — through galleries filled with both pieces from the museum's permanent collection, as well as the lush French paintings on loan from museums in

Amiens, France, is not adequate preparation for viewing his photographs. The contrast is startling.

Upon entering the three small galleries in which Cooper's sepia-like black and white art is displayed, a sense of timelessness pervades. His photographs reflect his reverence for the antiquities, yet his artistic compositions, and his interpretations, are crisply contemporary.

Each of the three galleries contains a different exhibition. One focuses entirely on botanicals. There are 13 exquisitely composed works, mostly done from 1995-1996.

His interest in working with universal icons — things that have a common thread regardless of culture — is readily apparent. The botanicals are one of his ways of achieving such universality.

The other two collections are entitled "The Altis" and "The Almagest." Capturing with his lens the human form in its most natural has contributed to his achievement of the timelessness he sought. Many of the images were pulled from Poloroid negatives.

The darker-than-sepia backgrounds are soft cloaks upon which the artist lays down his images, pulling from those depths chic, clean lines adorned only with the simplest of embellishments. Every element in every photograph is simultaneously straightforward in its intended recognition, and symbolically loaded with metaphors from eons of history and mythology.

The Altis series employs the 12 zodiac signs as symbols



Martin Cooper and his wife Karen Suen Cooper at the opening of the designer and photography artist's new exhibition showing now at the Columbia Museum of Art.

from astronomy, going back to Ptolemy in 150 A.D. The human forms within these photographs share their filmed frames with some singular and stark element symbolizing the astrological signs.

Perhaps most timely is The Almagest series that captures photographically the tradition of the ancient games, but giving it a New Millennium update. Cooper's forms are female, and the ancient games forbade female participation. In each frame Cooper has awarded the athlete with some prize, or symbol, of her meritorious attainment. He revealed in the layers of research he conducted to determine what element

would best symbolize an appropriate prize for each Olympic event.

He has said his photography is influenced, more indirectly than directly, by the antiquities. In a conversation leading to the arrangement of the show, he told Bill Bodine that the American photographers Edward Steichen, Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Weston, and Edward Curtis were among those whose works he admired. He also referred to world-renowned painters and sculptors, revealing his depth and breadth of artistic knowledge.

The show will be up through November 19.



The Southampton Press

press.com

THURSDAY, AUGUST 1, 2002

Arts & Living

The Southampton Press

ARTS & LIVING

An exhibit featuring the photography of Martin Cooper will open with a reception at **Cose Belle** on Jobs Lane in Southampton on Friday, August 2, from 6 to 8 p.m.

The show, "Botanicals," is the presentation of the JHB Gallery in New York and contains many of Mr. Cooper's still-life photographs of exotic flowers and plants.

The gallery is open Monday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6

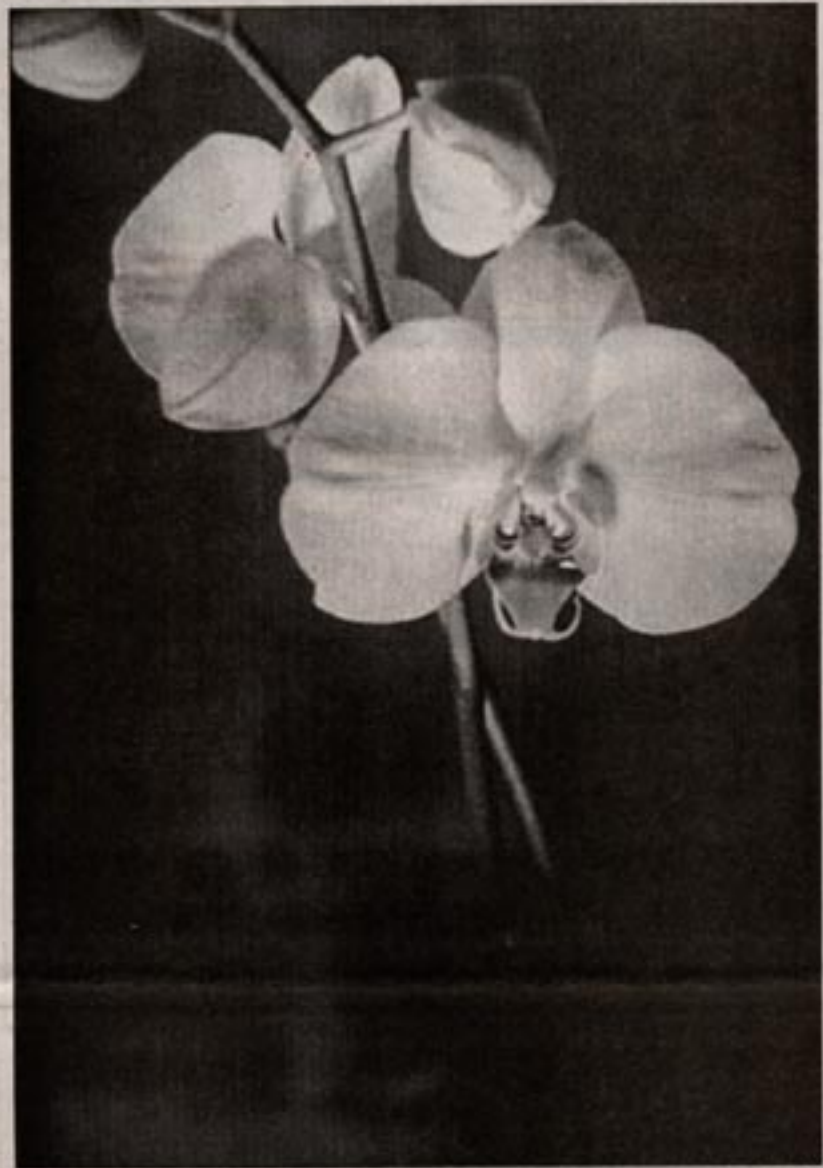
p.m. featuring photography by Ngo, Oliver Peterson and Tara Israel.

For more information, call 283-5628.

The **Mark Humphrey Gallery** on Main Street in Southampton is currently featuring the work of Blair Seagram in an ongoing solo show. The exhibit features panoramic photography of East End scenes.

For more information, call 283-3113.

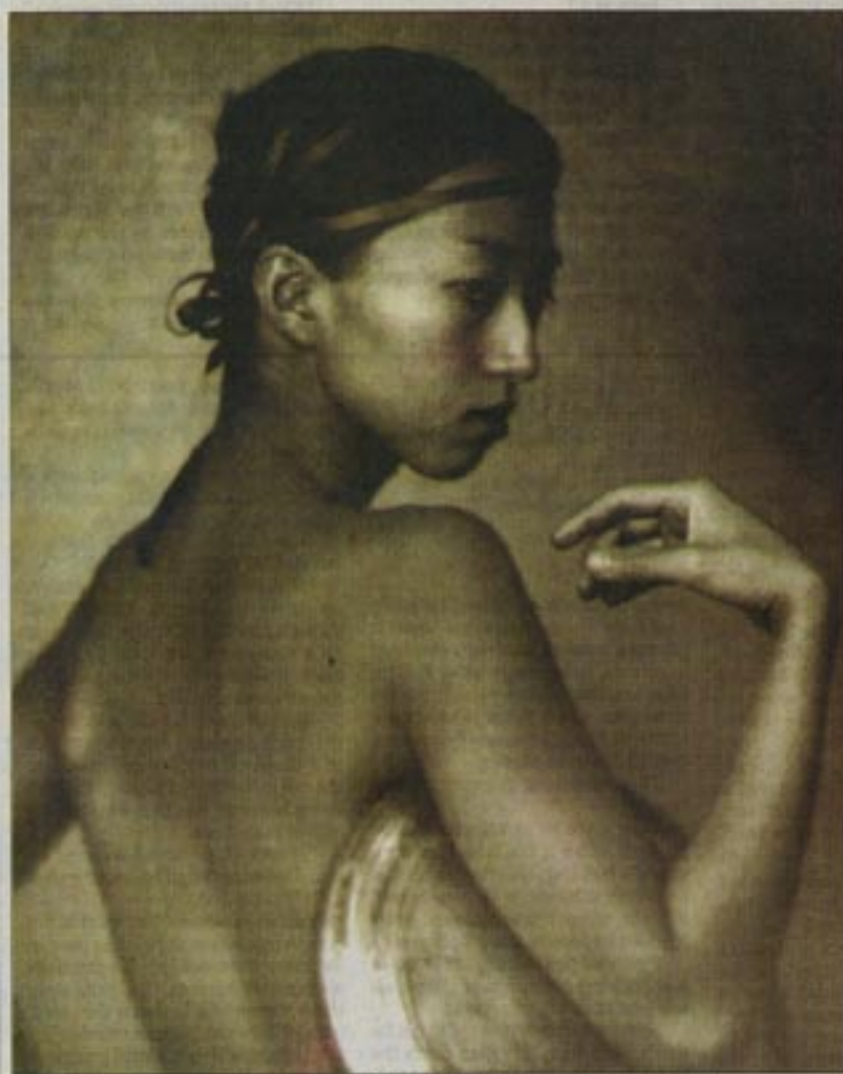
The **Elaine Benson Gallery** and



"Orchis" and other photographs by Martin Cooper will be on display in the "Botanicals" show at Cose Belle in Southampton until August 15.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2000 • SECTION F



'Discus Thrower'

After a life in fashion, designer turns eye to art

MARTIN COOPER COMES FROM A LONG LINE of men of science. His father is a dentist, so are both his brothers, so was his grandfather.

"When all the boys in school were taking science, he was 'No, no, no. No doctoring for me,'" said his father, Noble Cooper Sr.

"That's the way he always put it."

The Columbia native is a fashion designer by profession, earning his living as vice president for Burberry, North America, and more recently, an artist.

"Clearly I am in my own world," Martin Cooper said.

For the last eight years he has been a fine art photographer, showing a remarkable insight for someone so new to the medium. He says he's not terribly proficient. But ironically, it is the technical achievements of his painstakingly hand-toned photos of nudes and florals that first catch the eye.

A closer look shows that while the technique is there, so is the content.



'Lotus Blossom'



Cooper

SEE COOPER PAGE F2

Coming back home

Martin Cooper decided as a kid that he wouldn't be following the family tradition of dentistry. Successful as a fashion designer, he's now making his mark as a photographer.

The New York Times
Sunday Styles

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, APRIL 29, 2001



April 24. The Black Alumni of Pratt's dinner-dance at the Waldorf-Astoria raised \$460,000 for its scholarship fund; 420 guests attended.

20. 7:38: From left, **EMIL WILBEKIN**, an honoree; **SHAHARA AHMAD-LLEWELLYN** (standing); **IMAN**; **RENAULD WHITE**; and **ALVA CHIN**.

21. 6:25: **DWIGHT JOHNSON**, a founder of the group, with **SYLVIA RHONE**, an honoree.

22. 7:33: **GEORGE KALINSKY**, an honoree, and his wife, **JUNE**.

23. 7:40: From left, **KAREN COOPER** with her husband, **MARTIN**, who was an honoree, with **THOMAS F. SCHUTTE**, the president of Pratt.

24. 7:42: From left, **IAN SCHRAGER**, the hotelier, and **PHILIPPE STARCK**, the interior designer, who was also an honoree.



EVENING HOURS 23

Bill Cunningham

WWD THURSDAY



CFDA Inducts 15

NEW YORK — The Council of Fashion Designers of America inducted 15 new members on Wednesday, electing a more selective group than in recent years to reflect its mission of improving the esteem of the overall organization.

Among the women's designers elected were Ralph Rucci, who has shown two recent couture collections in Paris in addition to his American ready-to-wear collection; Rick Owens, who won a Perry Ellis Award for women's wear in 2002; and an emerging group of talents: Magda Berliner, Pierrot designer Pierre Carrilero, Maria Cornejo from Zero and Liliana Casabal of Morgane Le Fay. More specialized designers such as Liz Lange, who focuses on maternity wear, and Gilles Mendel of J. Mendel, who has expanded his family's fur collection into ready-to-wear, were also endorsed as members during a board meeting.

Martin Cooper, vice president of design of U.S. outerwear for Burberry, who has worked for the company for nearly a decade, was inducted for his contributions to the brand's transformation into a luxury goods house.

Amy Chan, Karen Suen Cooper, Erica Courtney and Kazuko were inducted for their work in

accessories and jewelry, while Chris Serluco of N.Y. Based and Sean Combs of Sean John were elected for men's wear, bringing the total membership of the organization to 263.

"It is a diverse group, but it's very strong in that these people deserve to be here," said Peter Arnold, executive director of the CFDA. "We scaled back the number of new members to reinforce the idea that it's not a group you automatically join. It's meant to mean something special to become a member."

Prior groups have included about 20 to 25 initiates, and this year, more than 75 designers either applied or were invited to apply for membership, Arnold said. An advisory group of editors, retailers and stylists are consulted on potential members, who are then recommended by a membership committee chaired by Robert Lee Morris and composed of John Bartlett, Jeffrey Banks, Jeff Mahshie of Chaiken, Cynthia Steffe, Yeohlee, Kate Spade and Katrin Zimmermann of Exovo.

For the third consecutive year, the organization will celebrate the new members with a party, this time on Sept. 4 and hosted by Reed Krakoff, president and executive creative director of Coach, and a CFDA board member.

Event Planner & Date Book

From Westhampton to Montauk, our guide to upcoming events in the Hamptons.

HCG & G

Hamptons Cottages and Gardens



ART OPENING

MARTIN COOPER: 'BOTANICALS'

Photographer Martin Cooper invites the viewer to take pleasure from the intimate world of flowers. His split-toned, closely shot photographs of flora seek to capture the sculptural beauty and structure of each species. The results are reminiscent of illustrated books from the 19th century, though Cooper believes they differ from those studies by taking on a more figurative, human-like quality.

Reception Fri., Aug. 2 (6pm-8pm). Exhibit through Aug. 15; Cose Belle, Southampton (631) 283-7564

➔ Martin Cooper
Nikolai Fine Art

By RAFAELO KAZAKOV

Art photographers rarely admit it, but their work is to a large extent defined by subject matter. (As a rule of thumb, a mediocre picture of a sunset is usually duller than a middle-of-the-road image of a unicorn.) Thus, a photographer who chooses nudes as his genre is up against a formidable challenge; the unclothed body already has a grand tradition in creative photography, not to mention all fine art media.

Martin Cooper's photographs are partially inspired by the spirit of the ancient Olympic Games, where women were barred as both participants and spectators. Cooper "rectifies" this historical slight by creating a portfolio of nudes that depicts fictitious female Olympic Champions. The nudity is not gratuitous, since the original male Olympic Athletes also performed completely or partially nude.

Cooper's women athletes stand proud, formal and strong; adorned by a discus, hoop or a wreath, against plain studio backgrounds. These black and white prints are toned in varying degrees of sepia and golden hues, and employ low-key lighting, leaving their subjects' faces partially or completely hidden. The result is a collection of sinewy torsos which glow with a somber sculptural radiance.

A composite mental image emerges from these 15 photographs of women, whose nudity is an emblem of strength and prowess. Cooper manages to eliminate all vestiges of sensuality in the treatment of his young female models, as they emerge as icons of feminine strength.

The canon of nude art photography that involves the female body tends to present her as an object of aesthetic and sensual enjoyment, tailored for a male audience. This situation has not surprisingly lead to the objectification of the female body, as a projection of male desire.

In this selection of photographs, Cooper takes the road less travelled, and characterizes women



Martin Cooper *Through the Eye of an Archer*, 1997. Unique, toned silver print, made from polaroid negative 14x14 inches
Courtesy: Nikolai Fine Art, New York

without resorting to clichés. In the process thereof, he pays homage to the giants who have gone before us; Edward Weston, Alfred Stieglitz and especially Frantisek Dtrikol. One image, *Rhythmic Gymnastics: Arch*, 1988, looks like a direct quote from Dtrikol's work. The toning of these photographs imparts a dated look, which further strengthens the reference to these masters from the 20th Century.



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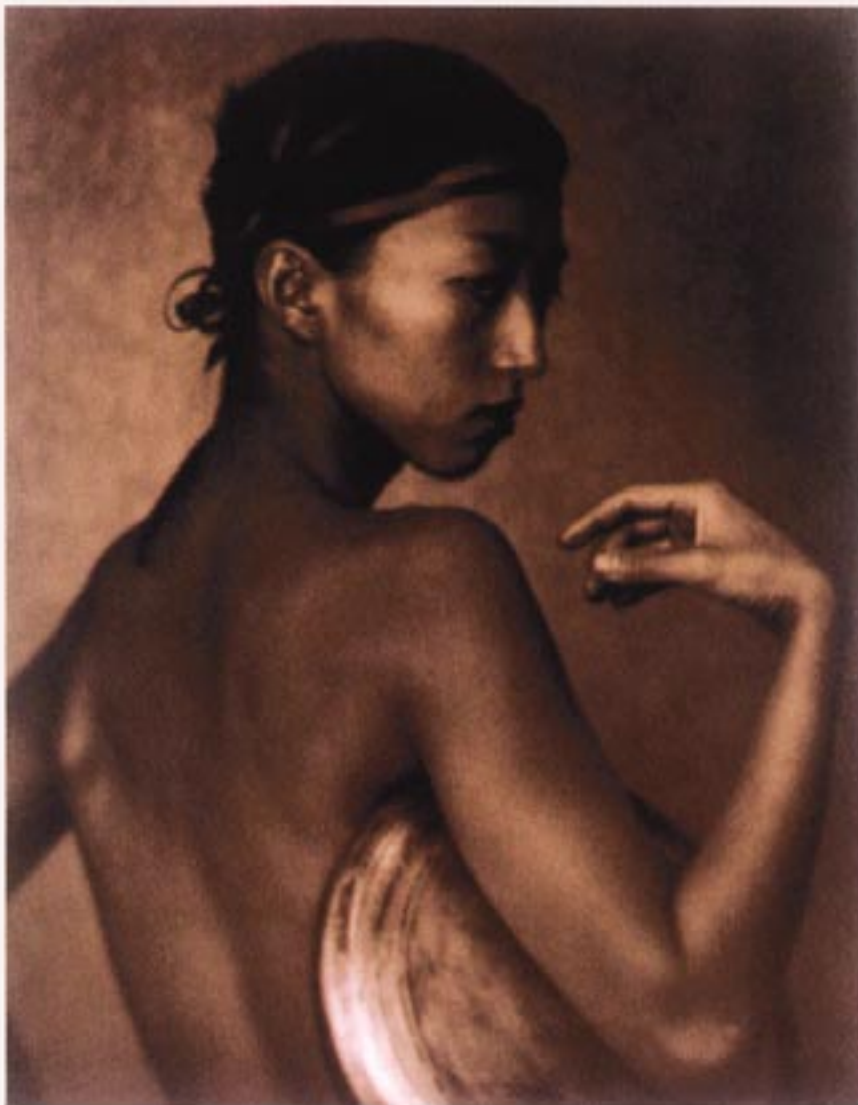
The Altis

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1999, Nikolai Fine Art, New York
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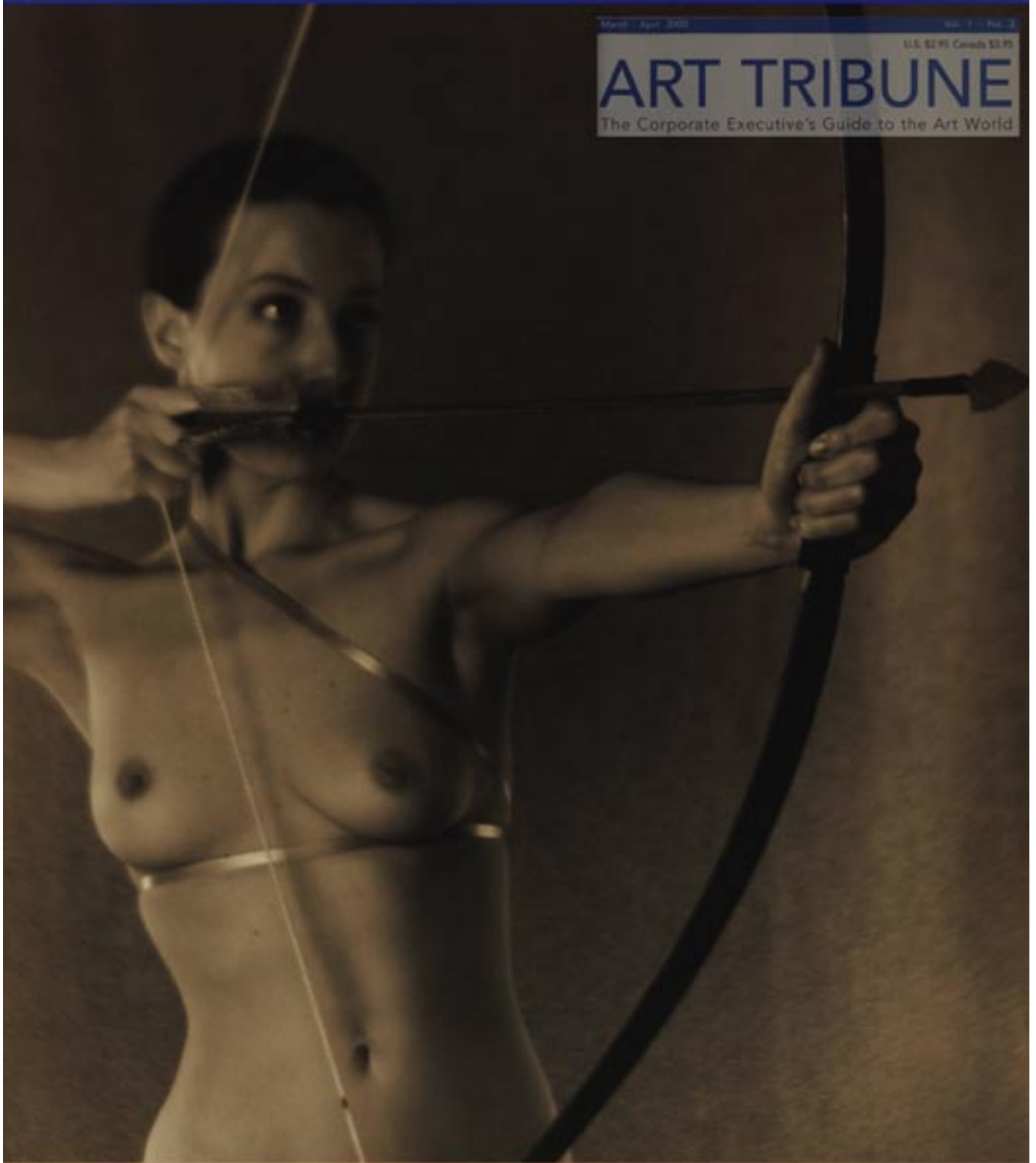


Photo by Garry Winogrand, 1968

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