Bully
2010

Color video projection, with sound, 7 min., 55 sec.
Courtesy Fly Film; Maureen Paley, London;
Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles;
and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Since 1996 Wearing has cast professional actors in her videos in addition to working with nonactors. Her interest in the methods and effects of dramatic acting extend naturally from her examinations into the everyday performance of public life. On stage, emotional authenticity can be scripted and rehearsed, and actors often redirect personal experiences to express a character's truth. At the same time, victims of trauma sometimes recount their stories as though reading a script. This paradoxical relationship between acted and actual reality underlies many of Wearing's works, including her feature-length film *Self Made* (2010).

The video *Bully* is set in a Method-acting workshop. In this piece a man named James reenacts a scene from his youth where he was the victim of bullying. Casting his fellow actors as bystanders, bullies, and himself, he attempts to represent his experience as realistically as possible. Wearing documents this process, observing as the lines between director and actor erode and the scene builds toward a moment of reckoning and catharsis.

Family History
2006

Two-channel color video installation, with sound; one channel projected, 35 min., 32 sec.; one channel on monitor, transferred from 16 mm film, 2 min., 52 sec.
Produced by Film and Video Umbrella, London
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Wearing has often noted the impact of television on her practice, citing the medium's flexibility and participatory nature. Of particular importance to her was the 1974 series *The Family*, an early fly-on-the-wall documentary that chronicled the daily lives of the Wilkinses, a "typical" working-class family from Reading, England. Wearing reflects on this influence in *Family History*, a video installation that focuses on Heather Wilkins, the youngest daughter on *The Family*.

For this piece Wearing staged a fake daytime television program in which talk show host Trisha Goddard interviews Wilkins, now a forty-seven-year-old woman, about the experience of having her private life made public on TV. The program is projected in a screening room that viewers enter through a brightly colored vestibule featuring a vintage light fixture and a small monitor that plays a video of a young girl—a stand-in for the artist—watching *The Family* in a 1970s-era living room. In this way Wearing suggests the complex processes of exposure, identification, and validation that, with the advent of reality television and social media, have become ever-present aspects of cultural life.

2 into 1
1997

Color video, with sound, 4 min., 30 sec.
Collection of Naomi Milgrom, Australia

In *2 into 1* Wearing uncovers the complex love-hate dynamic between a mother and her twin eleven-year-old boys. In a form of media-induced ventriloquism, a dark-haired woman lip-synchs words spoken by one or the other of her children as they take turns describing her. Then the scene shifts to the blond boys, who alternately voice their mother's comments about each of them. Their lip-synching operates as a kind of vocal masking, suggestive of how children's brutal honesty becomes suppressed in adulthood, even as childhood experience continues to inform adult identity.

A Woman Called Theresa

1998

Series of seven diptychs, two chromogenic prints each
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Works from left to right:

Theresa and Mick
Theresa and Seamus
Theresa and Ben
Theresa and George
Theresa and Chris
Theresa and Ali
Theresa and Gerry

In the late 1990s Wearing created several works with a group of London street drinkers, exploring the intense relationships that can form between members of an impromptu family bound together by addiction. In her series *A Woman Called Theresa*, Wearing photographed one of the drinkers, Theresa, with seven different male lovers in their bedrooms and then accompanied each image with the man's handwritten remarks about her. These commentaries observe their subject with a mix of emotions, coming together to form a multifaceted portrait that reveals—and conceals—as much about the writers as about Theresa herself.

Nancy Gregory
2002

Color video, with sound, 2 min., continuous loop
Collection of Adam Sender, Florida

Nancy Gregory marks the first time Wearing adopted the role of a family member on camera. In this short, looping video, she meticulously remakes a snapshot that her mother took of Wearing's aged, housebound maternal grandmother, who had fallen asleep while taking fresh air in her yard. Wearing is shown slumped in a wheelchair, her face completely obscured by a beribboned straw hat, in a precise restaging of the original picture. The scene is indiscernible as a moving image except for the scant fronds that lightly sway in the breeze and a couple of idly circling insects. Audio of chirping birds, an airplane passing overhead, and an emergency-vehicle siren convey a sense of the world passing by her grandmother, who sits as motionless as a cemetery monument.

My Polaroid Years

1988–2005

148 dye fusion transfer prints (Polaroids)
Tony Podesta Collection, Washington, D.C.

In the late 1980s, when Wearing started making Polaroids of herself, she was in art school and the photographs served as a sort of visual diary—a way to try on looks and moods and identities, and see how she liked them, as the director of her own image. They were a tool of self-creation through the quotidian masquerade of makeup, wigs, and costume. In 2016 Wearing gathered some of these personal Polaroid snaps dating from 1988 to 2005—essentially up until the demise of the photographic technology with the arrival of cell phone cameras. Presented in a vitrine as relics of a bygone era, *My Polaroid Years* has prophetic resonance with today's selfie culture.

We Are Here
2014

Color video projection, with sound, 21 min.
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Signs that say what you want them to say and not Signs that say what someone else wants you to say
1992–93

Chromogenic prints, mounted on aluminum
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Crowd
2012

Color video for framed flat-screen monitor, silent,
15 min., continuous loop
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Fear and Loathing
2014

Two-channel color video, with sound, 45 min., 45 sec.
Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Self-Portrait
1985

Oil on board
Thomson Family Collection, Minneapolis

Me: Me
1991

Gelatin silver bromide print, mounted on aluminum
Tony Podesta Collection, Washington, D.C.

60 Minutes Silence

1996

Color video projection, with sound, 60 min.
Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London

60 Minutes Silence depicts a feat of endurance in which twenty-six individuals attempt to pose for the camera for one hour. This act refers, in part, to the long exposure times of early photography, and indeed, the piece appears at first to be a generic group portrait of a London police squad. In fact, the video's subjects are not officers at all but rather civilians in costume. Wearing's focus in this work is the symbolic power of the uniform: how it can cast a diverse group of people under a singular identity that imposes real social and physical restrictions. It is not a coincidence that the constraints in the video—silence and stillness—are commonly used by police. But as the minutes tick by and participants grow increasingly uncomfortable, individual characteristics peek through the uniformity, revealing that all systems of control ultimately have their limits.

Your Views
2013 –

Color video, with sound, 162 min., 40 sec.
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Your Views is a web-based film project in which Wearing invites participants to submit a brief video of a curtain or shade opening to reveal the view from their window. The artist likens this action to drawing the curtain on a theater stage or opening the shutter of a camera, and considers each view submitted to be a refracted portrait of the person who shot it. Eight years into the project, Wearing continues to accept submissions with the goal of featuring at least one clip from every nation on earth. As a result, *Your Views* expresses a sense of togetherness across both space and time, as the repetition of a simple gesture reveals a breadth of difference and similarity in people's lives around the world—an act that has become all the more poignant as the COVID-19 pandemic has induced a new sense of global synchronicity.

Submit your own view at yourviewsfilm.com.

Fear and Loathing
2014

Two-channel color video, with sound, 45 min., 45 sec.
Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Dancing in Peckham

1994

Color video, with sound, 25 min.
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Gift, Tracy and Gary Mezzatesta 2017.50

Dancing in Peckham documents a rare public performance by Wearing, and marks her first appearance as the subject of her own artwork. Inspired by a woman the artist observed feverishly dancing at a jazz concert, Wearing videotaped herself in a shopping center in South London, where she danced for a half hour to music held only in her own mind. Her silent choreography touches on emotions ranging from blissful reverie to mania; passing shoppers regard her performance with a mix of suspicion and apathy. In this way *Dancing in Peckham* highlights the fragile norms by which society distinguishes psychic interiority from public self-presentation, paying homage to those who dare to step outside such conventions.

Courage Calls to Courage Everywhere

2018

Polyurethane resin and acrylic paint on granite base with styrene and waterslide decals
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Wearing's most prominent public work to date is a sculpture commemorating Millicent Fawcett (1847–1929), one of England's most famous suffragists. Erected on the centenary of the year women won the right to vote in the United Kingdom, this is the first monument dedicated to a woman, and also the first by a woman, to be commissioned for London's Parliament Square. Fawcett was selected as this work's subject through an online petition that garnered more than 74,000 signatures—a process that hearkens to Fawcett's tireless fight for a more equal, participatory society. Wearing honors this democratic impulse by etching the sculpture's base with images of fifty-nine women and men who also fought for women's suffrage.
In Fawcett's hands she places a banner that reads, "Courage calls to courage everywhere," nodding to her own series *Signs that say what you want them to say and not Signs that say what someone else wants you to say* (1992–93), and highlighting the importance of the collective voice in achieving social change.

Craig
2012

Painted bronze on marble base with aluminum plaque
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Terri
2011

Painted bronze on marble base with aluminum plaque
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Gervais
2010

Painted bronze with aluminum plaque
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Self-Portrait as My Grandfather George Gregory
2006

Framed gelatin silver bromide print
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Purchased with funds provided by the Photographs Council

Self-Portrait as My Grandmother Nancy Gregory
2006

Framed gelatin silver bromide print
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Purchased with funds provided by the Photographs Council

Sacha and Mum

1996

Black-and-white video projection, with sound,
4 min., 30 sec.
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,
Purchased with funds contributed by the International
Director's Council and Executive Committee
Members: Eli Broad, Elaine Terner Cooper, Ronnie
Heyman, J. Tomilson Hill, Dakis Joannou, Barbara
Lane, Robert Mnuchin, Peter Norton, Thomas
Walther, and Ginny Williams 97.4571

Wearing's first video to feature professional actors, *Sacha and Mum* explores the complex, contradictory nature of a mother-daughter relationship. It depicts a young woman who repeatedly covers her face with a towel as she engages in a physical altercation with a matronly older woman. Shot in an unprepossessing bedroom, the videotape speeds up and slows, lurches forward and back. The figures' interaction expresses a shifting dynamic of power and affect that suggests, at some moments, a domineering, irrational mother and her defensive daughter and, at others, a disturbed child and a protective parent. In this dreamlike piece Wearing visualizes the emotional impact of the traumatic memories her confessional subjects narrate—what goes on behind closed doors—and the instability of memory itself.

Self-Portrait as My Uncle Bryan Gregory
2003

Framed chromogenic print
Heather Podesta Collection

Self-Portrait as My Mother Jean Gregory
2003

Framed gelatin silver bromide print
Heather Podesta Collection

Self-Portrait as My Sister Jane Wearing
2003

Framed chromogenic print
Heather Podesta Collection

Self-Portrait at Three Years Old
2004

Framed chromogenic print
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,
Purchased with funds contributed by the International Director's Council and Executive Committee Members: Ruth Baum, Edythe Broad, Elaine Terner Cooper, Dimitris Daskalopoulos, Harry David, Gail May Engelberg, Shirley Fiterman, Nicki Harris, Dakis Joannou, Rachel Lehmann, Linda Macklowe, Peter Norton, Tonino Perna, Elizabeth Richebourg Rea, Mortimer D. A. Sackler, Simonetta Seragnoli, David Teiger, Ginny Williams, and Elliot K. Wolk, and Sustaining Members: Tiqui Atencio, Linda Fischbach, Beatrice Habermann, Miryam Knutson, and Cargill and Donna MacMillan; with additional funds contributed by the Photography Committee 2004.125

Self-Portrait as My Father Brian Wearing
2003

Framed gelatin silver bromide print
Heather Podesta Collection

Self-Portrait as My Brother Richard Wearing
2003

Framed chromogenic print
Heather Podesta Collection

Self-Portrait at 17 Years Old
2003

Framed chromogenic print
Heather Podesta Collection

Self-Portrait
2000

Framed chromogenic print
Collection of Sherry and Joel Mallin, New York

Everyone
2014

Lightbox
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

A Real Birmingham Family
2015

Bronze on granite base
Collection of Maureen Paley

A Typical Trentino Family
2008

Bronze on marble base with metal plaque
Courtesy the artist

A Real Danish Family
2017

Painted bronze on granite base
Collection of Maureen Paley

Snapshot
2005

Seven-channel color and black-and-white video installation for framed flat-screen monitors, with sound, 6 min., 55 sec.
Private collection

Snapshot extends the process of historical re-creation Wearing began in the *Family Album* series (2003–06) by reimagining old photographs as short, looping films. Each of the seven videos in the work is set in a different decade of the twentieth century, and features a female subject of a different age. As viewers scan from left to right, they witness a cycle of life as well as a condensed history of self-presentation through vernacular photography. This act of time travel culminates in the installation's dual soundtrack. While the ambient sound of the violin played by the girl in the leftmost video draws viewers into the past, a second track—available on nearby handsets—features a monologue in which an elderly woman recounts feelings of frustration, anger, and loneliness. Giving voice to these feelings, her anonymous confession makes visible a universal experience that is too often erased from public view.

Me as Meret Oppenheim

2019

Framed gelatin silver bromide print
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

In *Me as Meret Oppenheim* the mirror reflection of Wearing as the Swiss Surrealist artist (1913–1985) is fractured into a polymorphic vision of self. Best known for her canonical *Object* (1936), a fur-lined teacup, saucer, and spoon, Oppenheim was also a model and muse for Man Ray, a modernist photographer who recorded Marcel Duchamp's performances as his feminine alter ego, Rrose Sélavy. While Wearing's long-standing love for Surrealism would naturally draw her to Oppenheim's work in painting and sculpture, her masked self-portrait of the artist, with its enigmatic image and monochrome tonality, invokes the history of Surrealist photography. However, *Me as Meret Oppenheim* does not re-create an existing image but rather imagines the results of a collaboration between Oppenheim and Man Ray mediated by Wearing.

Me as Madame and Monsieur Duchamp

2018

Two framed gelatin silver bromide prints
Thomson Family Collection, Minneapolis

Me as Madame and Monsieur Duchamp is a punning double self-portrait of the progenitor of conceptualism, French artist Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968). In this piece Wearing transforms herself into both halves of a married couple: one image shows Wearing as Duchamp dressed in suit and tie; the other, Wearing as Duchamp in drag as his famous alter ego and brand spokeswoman, Rrose Sélavy, whose name is a play on the French phrase *Eros, c'est la vie*, or "Eros, such is life." Madame's and monsieur's photographs are set in a giant locket, a nod to Duchamp's readymade artworks, which he created by transforming everyday objects into nonfunctional conceptual art through simple recontextualization. In the oversize trinket, Mr. and Mrs. Duchamp mirror each other, casting masculinity and femininity as two sides of the same coin.

Me as Eva Hesse

2019

Framed chromogenic print
Collection of Tamar Efrat, New York

In *Me as Eva Hesse* the American sculptor's face is loosely framed by a square opening in the netted rope she is holding up, as she seemingly adjusts one of her Post-Minimalist sculptures. This self-portrait as Hesse (1936–1970) is the first in Wearing's *Spiritual Family* series to feature an artist primarily known for making three-dimensional work, as well as a rare color photograph, which accentuates the two artists' uncanny physical resemblance.

By the time Wearing created *Me as Eva Hesse*, sculpture had become an increasingly important part of her own practice, having begun, in 2008, to make commemorative statues of families and everyday heroes, many of them women. Wearing's homage here seems based more on her admiration for Hesse's expressive corporeal abstraction than any formal similarities between their oeuvres. Yet by framing Hesse with hemp cord, Wearing constructs a metaphor for the circular reading of an artist's work through her identity, and her identity through her work.

Me as O'Keeffe

2018

Framed gelatin silver bromide print
Collection of Carla Emil and Rich Silverstein

In 2018 Wearing embarked on a new group of *Spiritual Family* self-portraits as iconic women artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, starting with Georgia O'Keeffe (1887–1986) and continuing on to Eva Hesse, Meret Oppenheim, and Julia Margaret Cameron. In *Me as O'Keeffe* the American painter is a commanding androgynous presence. She seems especially lifelike and contemporary in her simple, white button-up shirt, sleeves rolled, and with hands in pockets, though the black-and-white format links Wearing's image to the history of modernist photography. O'Keeffe's pose and the moody clouds in the background quote the photographs of Alfred Stieglitz, O'Keeffe's partner in life and art. The rolling hills and leafy sprigs in Wearing's rendition obliquely recall O'Keeffe's paintings grounded in nature. Through this layering of antecedents, *Me as O'Keeffe* visualizes the collaborative process that resulted in Stieglitz's striking portraits of O'Keeffe, as well as in Wearing's image.

Me as Mapplethorpe
2009

Framed gelatin silver bromide print
Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, Purchase
Based upon the Robert Mapplethorpe work *Self Portrait*, 1988 © Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation

Wearing's ongoing contemplation of both mortality and the artist as an immortalized celebrity figure is embodied in the second *Spiritual Family* work, *Me as Mapplethorpe*, Wearing's tribute to the American photographer Robert Mapplethorpe (1946–1989). For this photograph Wearing painstakingly re-created an iconic self-portrait that Mapplethorpe made in 1988, not long before his death from AIDS complications. In the original image Mapplethorpe's masklike face looms out of darkness; it is almost a twin of the skull topping the cane he grasps in his hand. Wearing has noted the bravery with which Mapplethorpe confronted his fate. For her self-portrait she replaces the photographer's psychologically intense gaze with her own in an effort to understand how Mapplethorpe felt as he faced the camera.

Me as Julia Margaret Cameron and Two Muses

2019

Framed gelatin silver bromide print
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

In *Me as Julia Margaret Cameron and Two Muses*, Wearing has composed an allegorical tableau much like those the British photographer (1815–1879) organized with favorite servants and family members as subjects. As Cameron, Wearing is masked and seated in flowing robes, a formidable goddess of photography accompanied by twin wreathed muses in white gowns, both embodied by Wearing unmasked. However, Wearing's naked face is no more revealing of her "true" self; as the muses she is simply masked in a different way. She is portraying someone in Cameron's milieu pretending to be a muse.

Me as Julia Margaret Cameron and Two Muses is an allegory of self-portraiture, which is characterized by the artist's mirror roles as both the object of the image and its producer. Using digital interventions Wearing began to incorporate into the *Spiritual Family* self-portraits in 2018, she here creates not only identical twin muses but also metaphorically mirrors herself as artist in the reflection of herself as muse.

Diane Arbus
2021

Painted bronze on granite base with metal plaque
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Me as Arbus
2008

Framed gelatin silver bromide print
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Ralph M. Parsons Fund

As the first photograph in the *Spiritual Family* series, *Me as Arbus* signals Wearing's deep admiration for the American photographer Diane Arbus (1923–1971). Renowned for her groundbreaking approach to portraiture as well as for her tragic biography, Arbus was fascinated by the masquerade of identity in both theatrical settings and everyday life. She identified with many of her subjects, at times to the extent that her uncanny images seem like displaced self-portraits of their maker.

As in all the *Spiritual Family* works that would follow, Wearing based *Me as Arbus* on meticulous research, drawing from pictures of Arbus taken by herself and by others. In this image Wearing-as-Arbus coolly confronts the viewer, her iconic twin-lens reflex camera in hand. The directness of this portrayal reflects qualities that imbue both artists' practices: an empathetic desire to give voice and visibility to people who are often ignored and overlooked, without judgment or sentiment.

Me as Warhol in Drag with Scar
2010

Framed gelatin silver bromide print
Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, Gift of Carla Emil and Rich Silverstein

For *Me as Warhol in Drag with Scar*, Wearing combined elements from two famous photo shoots of American artist Andy Warhol (1928–1987): a 1981 image of the artist in drag by Christopher Makos and a visceral 1968 shot by Richard Avedon of Warhol displaying the freshly healed wounds to his torso that resulted from a recent attempt on his life.

Throughout *Spiritual Family* Wearing slips fluidly between masculine and feminine genders; she also selects artists who notably photographed queer subjects, including themselves. Furthermore, the artists initially featured in the series—Warhol, Diane Arbus, and Robert Mapplethorpe—all created work that referenced mortality, and tragically died before their time. Photographs of these artists, by their own or others' hands, have yielded them mythic status, transcending their unnaturally shortened existences. Based exclusively on people who are no longer alive, all of Wearing's *Spiritual Family* self-portraits are commemorative tributes.

People
2011

Framed gelatin silver bromide print
Private collection

Me as Weegee

2013

Framed gelatin silver bromide print
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles,
Gift of the Heather and Tony Podesta Collection

In this photograph Wearing appears in the guise of Weegee (Arthur Fellig, 1899–1968), the flamboyant American tabloid and experimental photographer. Sporting a suit, she conveys a decorum that belies the photographer's career as an ambulance-chaser and frequent witness to shocking violence. Yet Wearing manages to capture the unbridled dynamism of the man and his work through the manner in which she, as Weegee, leans into the frame and gazes intensely at the camera. Wearing's self-portrait is unusual in that Weegee was often photographed working, holding up an oversize flash camera, with a cigar stub clenched in his teeth. She instead depicts him posed in a studio with a cigarillo in his hand, white smoke wafting in an abstract pattern against the black background. This detail references Weegee's penchant for photographing smokers, a vanitas evocation of the fleeting moment and perhaps a nod to his surrealistic experiments in the darkroom.

Me as Sander

2012

Framed gelatin silver bromide print
Collection of Tanya Bonakdar

In 2012 and the following year, Wearing created self-portraits of three photography forefathers recognized for their documentary portraiture and their promotion of photography as an art form: August Sander, Weegee, and William Henry Fox Talbot. Often shot outdoors, the seemingly casual, frontal portraits of German photographer Sander (1876–1964) defined a cutting-edge reportage approach. Sander applied this objective style to his legendary uncompleted project to comprehensively represent the people of his time based on their roles in German society. Despite the social masks Sander's sitters present to the world, their keenly recorded features and direct gazes convey their individuality. For *Me as Sander* Wearing hews closely to a 1925 self-portrait by the photographer, faithfully reiterating, with minimal intervention, his starkly rendered face and piercing eyes.

Me as Talbot

2013

Framed gelatin silver bromide print
Collection of Elaine Goldman and John Benis

Me as Talbot pays tribute to William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–1877), the staid British pioneer of photography and inventor of the technique that enabled paper copies of images. In her self-portrait, Wearing appears standing beside a table in formal waistcoat and jacket, right hand holding a camera, in a pose that synthesizes two or more nineteenth-century portraits of Talbot. Wearing's rigid comportment references the long exposures required by early photography, as well as the solemn conventions of society portraiture. Her facial prosthetic replicates Talbot's serious, masklike visage, an indicator of the lofty professional status he sought for the revolutionary technology he developed.

Me as Cahun Holding a Mask of My Face

2012

Framed gelatin silver bromide print
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles,
Gift of the Heather and Tony Podesta Collection

Me as Cahun Holding a Mask of My Face marks the beginning of Wearing's engagement with the work of the French Surrealist writer, artist, and activist Claude Cahun (the androgynous pseudonym of Lucy Schwob, 1894–1954), who is best known for their prescient, gender-questioning self-portraits. In their writing, image-making, and daily life, Cahun conceived of identity as a mask, and gender as mutable. For this work Wearing took as inspiration an enigmatic self-portrait from around 1927 in which Cahun poses as a boy comic-strip character brought to life as a weight lifter. In place of Cahun's original barbells, Wearing-as-Cahun holds in her right hand a rod with a mask of her own face appended to it. In many of the French artist's images, the personae Cahun posits are nonbinary; gender polarities collapse into a unitary androgynous subject, or multiply into a panoply of alternately more or less masculine or feminine selves. The mask that Wearing holds in *Me as Cahun* is likewise not specifically gendered.

Cahun and Wearing
2017

Framed gelatin silver bromide print
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Me and Claude in Mirror
2017

Framed gelatin silver bromide print
Collection of Carla Emil and Rich Silverstein

Me as Dürer

2018

Framed chromogenic print
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

In 2018 Wearing created an eerily faithful simulation of Albrecht Dürer's painted *Self-Portrait at Twenty-Eight* (1500), an image notorious for its iconic presentation of the German artist (1471–1528) in the style of devotional paintings of Christ. While the exact meaning of Dürer's pose is unknowable today, the gesture likely contributed to the mystique of the artist's otherworldly talent for lifelike representations. The image is also a memento mori, given the inevitable fate of the human son of God at age thirty-three. *Me as Dürer* is the first of Wearing's *Spiritual Family* self-portraits to be based on a painting rather than a photograph, much less one of a Renaissance artist. It is also the initial figure to appear in living color, which here brings out the uncanny similarity between Dürer's painted and Wearing's photographed hazel eyes.

Homage to the woman with the bandaged face who I saw yesterday down Walworth Road

1995

Black-and-white and color video, with sound, 7 min.
Tony Podesta Collection, Washington, D.C.

Wearing's short video *Homage to the woman with the bandaged face who I saw yesterday down Walworth Road* unfolds in three acts. The first is a documentary-style reenactment of the artist's sighting of the titular woman, for which Wearing covers her face with a bandage-like gauze mask and walks along a busy market street in London. In the next act she records the reactions of passersby from the woman's perspective. Finally she shoots a group of mechanics at a local garage who do not know what to make of her. This is the first instance in Wearing's oeuvre in which she wears a sort of mask. While the plastic masks she provided to the participants in her first confessional video, made in 1994, were intended to disguise, the bandaged woman's face-covering is more a vehicle for the artist to try on a different identity, that of a person who is literally unable to fully hide her wounds in public and instead draws attention in her attempt at concealment.

My Charms
2021

Bronze chain, 3D-printed objects, and mixed media
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London

Rock 'n' Roll 70
2015

Two chromogenic prints, framed, and printed wallpaper
Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, Museum purchase with funds from the International and Contemporary Collectors, 2016

In the conceptual triptych *Rock 'n' Roll 70*, Wearing anticipates aging twenty years. Housed in a bright yellow frame, the work includes two photographic self-portraits, one taken by Wearing when the piece was made, at age fifty, and the other an imagined version of the artist at seventy. A third, empty matboard window is labeled "Me at 70, 2034" and will contain a future portrait, to be inserted when the time comes.

Rock 'n' Roll 70 is often displayed mounted on a wallpaper backdrop of the same name, tiled with a repeating grid of fifteen photographic fantasy self-portraits of Wearing at seventy. She collaborated with forensic and age-progression artists to create these predictive renderings of the kind used by law enforcement for long-term missing persons. She also used analogue techniques for the stylistically varied self-portraits—some look like ID headshots, others like studio portraits or snapshots. Any could be slotted into the framed photograph's second window.

Gillian Wearing
in collaboration with Wieden + Kennedy

Wearing, Gillian
2018

Color video, with sound, 5 min.
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,
Purchased with funds contributed by the Photography Council 2019.67

Wearing, Gillian is a synthesis of the artist's explorations to date of the masquerade of identity and selfhood. Like much of Wearing's work, it is recursive—it includes references to earlier pieces as well as performances within performances and masks worn over masks. The title is suggestive of an archival file documenting the artist's multiple and variable selves.

Produced in collaboration with the global advertising agency Wieden + Kennedy and scripted around a seemingly candid statement of her artistic purpose, *Wearing, Gillian* takes the form of a promotional piece about Wearing herself. To create the work, the artist placed an online casting call for actors to portray her in a short film. A troupe of more than fifteen people appears in the resulting 5-minute video, their faces, bodies, and voices digitally morphed with the artist's and each other's to create myriad hybrid versions of a deepfake persona.

Me as Mona Lisa
2020

Framed chromogenic print
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Me as an Artist in 1984
2014

Framed chromogenic print
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Me as an Artist in 1984 is part of an ongoing series of self-portraits that Wearing makes at different stages in her life, often by re-creating old photographs and donning masks of herself at a younger age. *Me as an Artist in 1984* is based on a snapshot of Wearing seated in a corner of her London apartment. At the time the snapshot was taken, Wearing would have been twenty years old and not yet determined to be an artist; she made this work thirty years later, in her fiftieth year, at a moment when she could look back at the photo and reflect on the roots of her practice. The presence of the small figures and painted green mask suggests that Wearing is reclaiming her identity as a sculptor with this photograph: she produced her first self-portrait sculpture, *Me as Mask* (2013), in the year prior to making it.

Self-Portrait at 27 Years Old
2012

Framed chromogenic print
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Self-Portrait of Me Now in Mask
2011

Framed chromogenic print
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Modern Women's Fund

Me as a Ghost
2015

Framed chromogenic print
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Self-Portrait
1985

Oil on board
Thomson Family Collection, Minneapolis

Me: Me
1991

Gelatin silver bromide print, mounted on aluminum
Tony Podesta Collection, Washington, D.C.

My Fortune and Misfortune
2014

Resin, marble dust, oil paint, and indelible ink,
two parts
Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Lockdown Portrait 1
2020

Watercolor on paper
Collection of Kathy Kenny

In this recent work Wearing expands on her *Lockdown* self-portraits by inserting herself into an 1877 painting by the French artist Henri Fantin-Latour (1836–1904) titled *La Lecture* (*The Reading*). The original painting depicts two women in a domestic setting, one of whom reads aloud from a book while the other sits beside her, listening. In her version, Wearing takes the place of the listener but crops the image, shifting the focus from the act of reading to the relationship between the two figures. As in the *Spiritual Family* photographs on view in Tower Level 5, Wearing assumes the identity of a historical figure, but here she plays the role of a subject rather than an artist. Carefully studying her female companion, she imagines herself in a time and place that limited women's social lives to private spaces—not unlike those featured in *Lockdown*.

Lockdown Portrait 2
2020

Watercolor on paper
Collection of Jonathan Wearing

Lockdown Portrait 3
2020

Watercolor on paper
Halamish Collection, London

Lockdown Portrait 4
2020

Watercolor on paper
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London

Lockdown Portrait 5
2020

Watercolor on paper
Collection of Robert Violette, London

Lockdown Portrait 6
2020

Watercolor on paper
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London

Lockdown Portrait 8
2020

Watercolor on paper
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London

Untitled (Lockdown portrait)
2020

Oil on board
Private collection, London

Untitled (Lockdown portrait)
2020

Oil on board
Private collection, courtesy Tajan SA

Untitled (Lockdown portrait)
2020

Oil on board
Sigrid and Stephen Kirk Collection

Me in History—A Conversation with the Work of Fantin-Latour

2021

Oil on canvas

Private collection, London

Untitled (Lockdown portrait)
2020

Oil on board
Zabludowicz Collection

Me as My Ideal Self

2012

Acrylic paint on Masonite in custom frame, ink on paper, and photographs under glass
Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles

For *Me as My Ideal Self*, Wearing commissioned an airbrush artist to realize a photoshopped fantasy self-portrait. Previously, for her 2008 series *Pin-Ups*, Wearing placed an ad calling for people who desired to be transformed into models, and asked the same illustrator to depict some of the respondents in a similar manner. Presented as a series of hinged frames that open like books, the resulting *Pin-Up* works have painted images on their exterior "covers" and actual photographs of the aspirants inside, along with their letters to Wearing describing why they wanted to participate in the project. For *Me as My Ideal Self*, Wearing followed the *Pin-Ups* structure but centered the piece on herself. Its interior includes snapshots of the artist as a young woman vamping for the camera, thus, as Wearing says, "fantasy and reality are inextricably entwined" in this work.

Kiss of Life
2017

Platinum silicone, human hair, and wood in vitrine
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London

Mask Masked
2020

Wax, fabric mask, and steel rod on wood base
Zabludowicz Collection



Installation view, Gillian Wearing, *Diane Arbus*, 2021. Painted bronze. Presented by Public Art Fund at Doris C. Freedman Plaza, Central Park, October 20, 2021–August 14, 2022. Photo: Nicholas Knight, courtesy Public Art Fund, N.Y.

This small sculpture is a replica of Wearing's life-size tribute to Diane Arbus (1923–1971), which is currently on view at Doris C. Freedman Plaza in Central Park (pictured above). For this statue Wearing presents Arbus as she looked in the 1960s, holding her twin-lens reflex camera, which she used in Central Park to make some of her most important work. Noting the dearth of monuments in New York City honoring women and artists, Wearing chose to present Arbus not in the heroic style of traditional commemorative sculptures of "great men" but rather as an ordinary person, with whom any of us could identify.

Wearing's Central Park installation, *Gillian Wearing: Diane Arbus*, is organized by Public Art Fund.

Wearing's public sculptures quietly confront the traditions of historical monuments, asking who among us should be so elevated and how should they get there. The series *Everyday Heroes* (2010–12) consists of three proposed monuments to members of the police or armed forces. Like the subjects in *60 Minutes Silence* (1996), these figures occupy social roles that imply power and authority. Yet as individuals they also bear their own histories of trauma, which are relayed on plaques accompanying each model. Depicting each person in street clothes and by first name only, Wearing reminds us how common these kinds of personal narratives are, and yet also how unique.