



SALON 94

THE NEW YORKER

Lyle Ashton Harris, Self/Portrait

The New Yorker

March 15, 2000

Twenty-two Polaroid portraits of the artist and of his friends and acquaintances (including Cindy Sherman, Tony Kushner, Robert Storr, and Al Sharpton) serve as an introduction to a ten-year project (1998-2008) that involved more than two hundred men and women. Their rich sepia toning (Harris calls them "Chocolate Polaroids") gives the photographs a historic resonance, but the frank, confrontational quality of these portrait heads recalls not just mug shots and nineteenth-century anthropological studies but also Thomas Ruff, Lorna Simpson, and Chuck Close. The wall texts that accompany the images—as well as Harris's intense, repeated presence on the wall—underline the very personal nature of the project, and his decision to photograph everyone from both front and back adds a quirky, telling layer of vulnerability to each portrait pairing. Through Oct. 23.