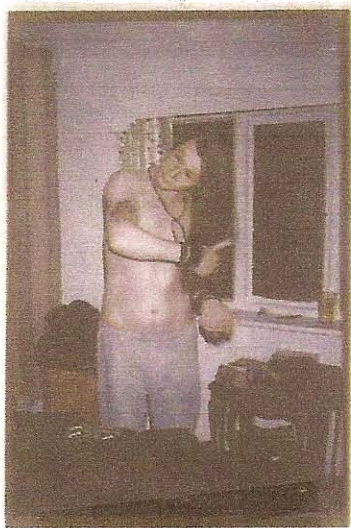


# REGEN PROJECTS

Pagel, David, *Los Angeles Times*, "Fantasy, reality: Wearing her art," April 9, 2004, p. E34, ill.

## Los Angeles Times



*Regen Projects*

**GILLIAN WEARING: A self-portrait as her brother.**

### Fantasy, reality: Wearing her art

Blind fate, dumb luck and stupid pranks come together with remarkable precision in Gillian Wearing's "Album," a suite of six self-portraits at Regen Projects. Each of the digitally printed color photographs depicts the 40-year-old British artist wearing a wax mask that was made with the assistance of the experts at Madame Tussaud's.

The masks are lifelike copies of the faces of Wearing family members, including her uncle, mom, dad, brother, sister and teenage self. Each is based on a snapshot she selected from the family album. The new photographs are larger than life-size but far stranger than straightforward enlargements.

Even a quick glance at the impeccably printed pictures suggests that something is out of whack. The uncanny power of Wearing's perversely circular art resides in the details, particularly around her eyes, where the mask's eyeholes are visible and the difference between skin and wax is evident.

Once you figure out what's going on, you start to wonder why. That's when things get weird.

Is Wearing inspired by a Wordsworthian fantasy of getting inside someone else's skin and seeing the world through his or her eyes? Isn't that what viewers do when we look at her roundabout self-portraits?

Or is she making fun of Cindy Sherman, who also dresses up as other people to make poignant photos of folks whose self-images are profoundly out of sync with reality? Is it merely a coincidence that Wearing's Uncle Bryan looks like a cross between a ventriloquist's dummy and George W. Bush? That her dashing father could be James Bond's stunt double? Her mother a Bonnie to an anonymous Clyde? And her sister a low-budget Farrah Fawcett from the actress' prime?

The line between fantasy and reality blurs in Wearing's deceptively simple pictures. Halloween pales by comparison with her redone family album, which turns narcissism upside down and inside out. Taking her surname as a literal description of what she does to make art, Wearing intimates that the madly methodical game she plays with identity runs in her blood.

**Regen Projects**, 633 N. Almont Drive, (310) 276-5424, through April 24. Closed Sundays and Mondays.