

Big Tilda (Swinton) Statement

Photographing the movie actress Tilda Swinton around the world and landscapes along the way I then put them together in a computer and made the 21 montages. These pictures, like all layering of images, are about doubt. They are second guesses on what already exists in reality. They take what we know and show us that there must be more to see, to learn. By bringing disparate parts together I was able to reflect on the fluid identity of an actress. I did this with Tilda's consent and participation and that of her partner, the painter and playwright John Byrne, and their two children.

Take the image *Celebrity*. I was thinking, at the time, that Tilda was on the verge of becoming much more famous than she had been and how that would make her personality more opaque and difficult for her to be who she was. To be famous is to be known whether she wants to be or not. She loses control of her identity; she becomes what her public makes of her. It is almost impossible for her to hold onto herself for herself and her family and friends. Her life is taken over by strangers and the need to please them, which is how she succeeds in movies and feeds her family. In *Hide and Seek* I made the actress sneak up on her own image posted on the van and the closer she gets the more her real self begins to disappear beginning with the back of her head though she doesn't notice. In *Lightning* her image is like a reflection cracking over all of those mirrored buildings in New York. In *Fences* her appearance is scattered and no longer recognizable as if it has become the landscape. In *Bernhard Box* she is a kind of Superwoman character kicking her way out of the history of photographic images of beautiful naked women like the famous image in the photographer Ruth Bernhard's rectangular cardboard box. In *Route 66* I imagine her images have been stolen or created without her and are being driven down a road we all had great feelings for in America but it is derelict now, closed and forgotten. I imagine the images, the replicants, will be held hostage in history, cardboard imitations of the real, live, fantastic person, Tilda. When I was a girl I thought fame was desirable whereas now I see that way of looking at the world, and at women, as a kind of prison sentence.