



# unsinnzINE

SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE





**AMERICAN SLIDE** explores the dark passion and hypocrisy that lurk beneath the conformity of mid-century Americana.

The people in the original slide photographs probably look like your aunts and uncles, your cousins and grandparents. Hell, I bought all the slides on eBay, so maybe some of them actually ARE related to you. But, something tragic boils beneath the surface of these happy celebrations of life and family, these ephemeral moments frozen in time.

Repression.

Regret.

Despair.

As American as apple pie.

Composing nude models into these slide photos instantly sends modern and vintage social morays crashing into each other, amplifying and subverting those suppressed emotions in a subtle and astonishing contextual metamorphosis.

And the more you look at these images, the more meaning and subtext they exude.

So, get naked. Enjoy yourself. Have fun. Because the collective memory forgets. And in 60 years, some descendant you never met will be selling *your* cherished family memories on-line for pennies a pound and nobody will remember you were here.

Even when there is photographic evidence left behind.









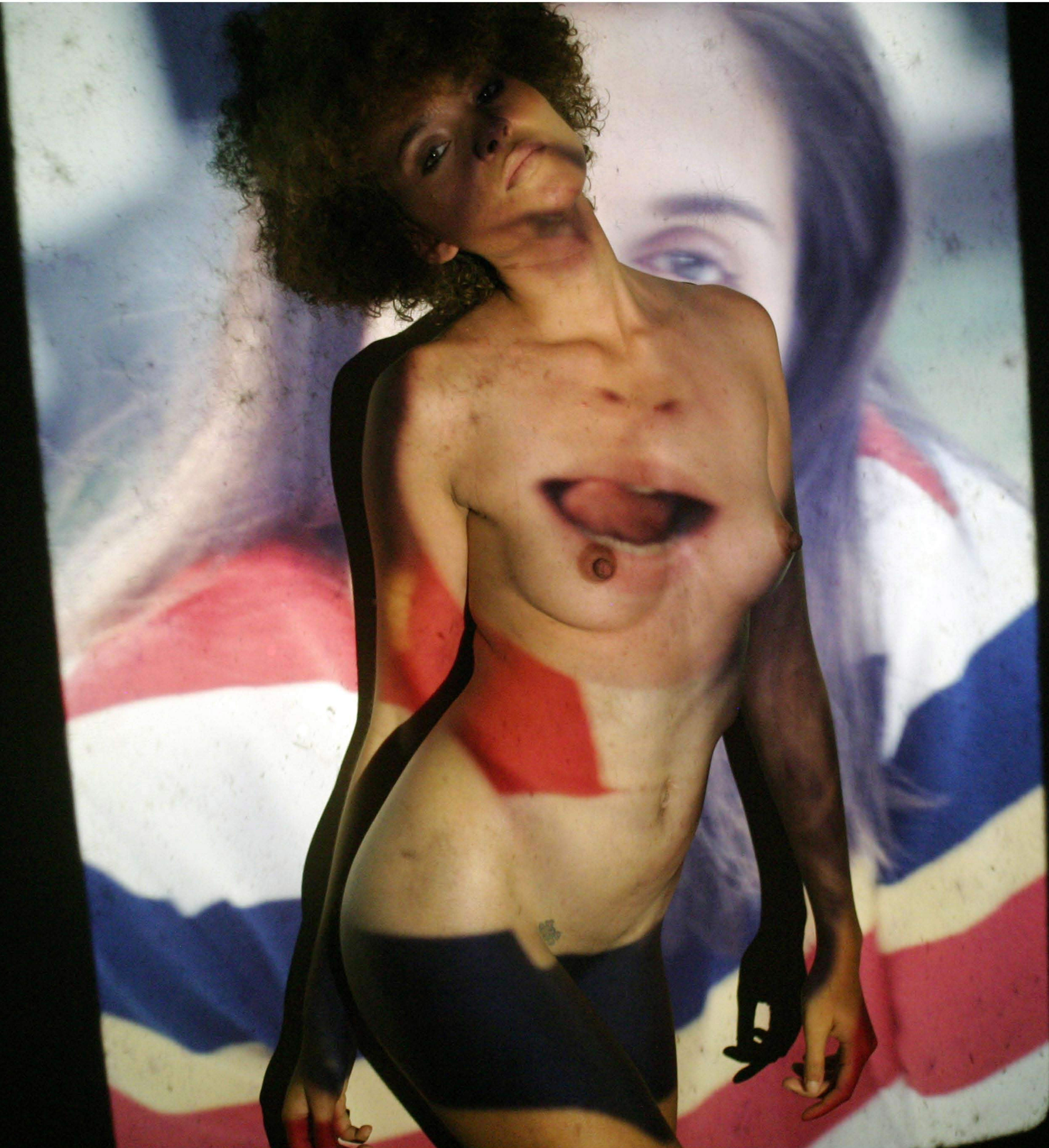




















































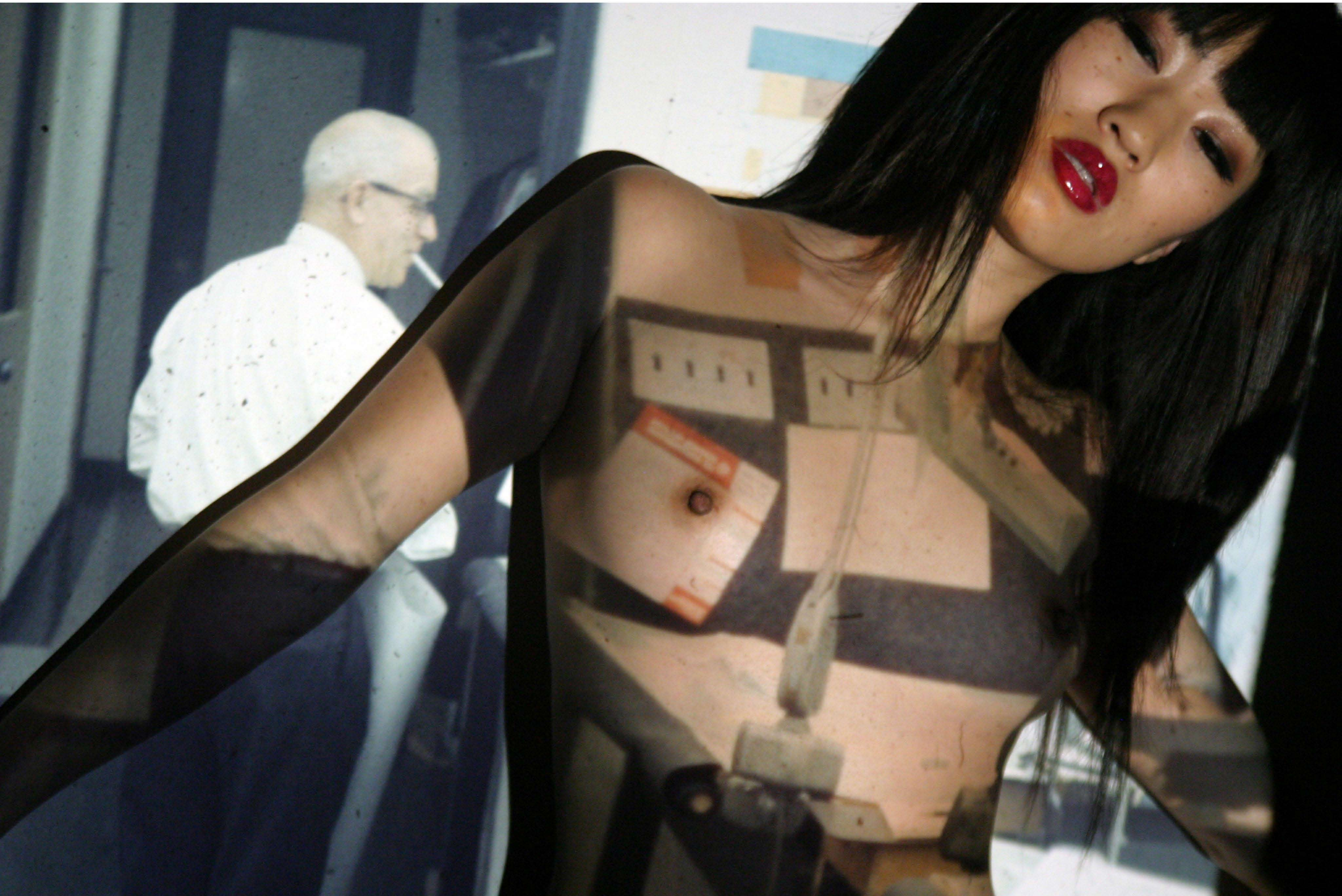






























































HE KNOWS WHEN YOU ARE SLEEPING.  
HE KNOWS WHEN YOU'RE AWAKE...





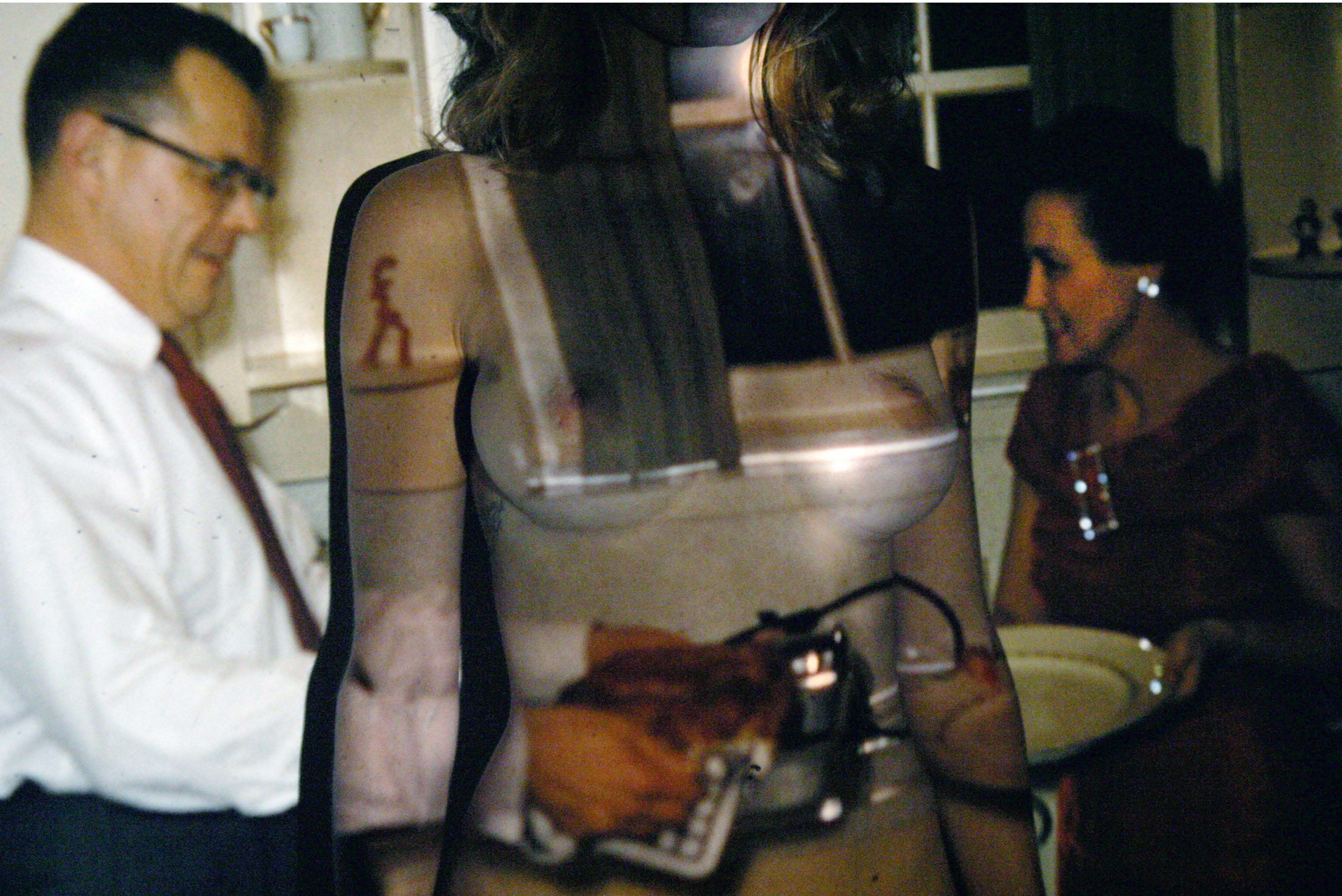


HE KNOWS IF YOU'VE BEEN BÄD OR GOOD,  
SO BE GOOD FOR GOODNESS SÄKE!























# INFINITE-HOUR PHOTO

an original short ghost story

There is no rhythm to be found as the orange lights on the warning barricades flash out of time with each other.

And the placement of those barricades themselves seems just as random, as they create a haphazard maze around the half-excavated parking lot.

Barring economic collapse, the dilapidated strip mall storefronts will soon find new life. But for now, not a single street lamp lights the entire block as two figures dart from the hedgerow toward the abandoned kiosk in the middle of the lot.

Day by day, the black resurfacing and freshly-painted yellow lines edges ever closer to the tiny, boarded-up booth. It is merely a matter of time until progress consumes it entirely.

Of course, progress has really already consumed it. Before a brief, and failed, stint as a Sunglass Hut, it had been a one-hour photo lab. But instant, digital images supplanted its utility twenty years ago.

Now, it is a graffiti-covered time capsule of obsolescence just waiting to be overrun by revitalization and run over by a Caterpillar.

But, back to those dark, darting figures. Using a wealth of extraneous scene-setting and the darkness of a moonless night as cover, they make it to the back of the kiosk. With the twist of a nail bar, screws rip from rotted wood and the padlock drops to the dirt. With the creak of rusty hinges, the two slide inside.

. . . . .

All denim and hormones, Kenny and Denise take a moment to revel in pulling off the crime of the century before commencing to paw at each other and intertwining tongues in a slobbery free-for-all. If either of them had a car or absentee parents, this breaking-and-entering wouldn't be necessary. But, here they are...both lucky and unlucky in love.

Kenny's fingers slide underneath Denise's bra, twisting her nipple like turning up the volume, as her hand slides over his

jeans. Passion fueled by teenage intensity and illicit behavior. Someday, it may be the only thing they remember fondly of their high school years.

Body-warmed clothing hits the dirty, littered floor as two half-naked high schoolers writhe in the darkness. Panting. Squealing. A brief wince of pain. Then more panting.

And breathing.

A breathing not coming from Kenny or Denise.

Denise pulls her face away from Kenny's long enough to look to the side. Is that a shadow? She stops Kenny, turning his head.

Another alien breath.

Kenny, half-dressed but unafraid, lunges at the shadow, punching through it and into the plywood-covered window.

He tries to shake the pain out of his hand as his knuckles ooze blood.

The couple both turn to see the shadow now on the other side of the kiosk.

"Wait."

Did they really hear a voice?

Kenny pulls his phone from his pocket, flicks on the flashlight and points it toward the shadow.

Nothing there.

He scans the tiny enclosure. There's barely enough room for a third person and there's none in sight.

He turns off his flashlight and takes Denise in his arms.

"Wait."



They turn and again to see a shadow with a vaguely human form.

Again, Kenny lunges toward it, punching into the darkness and connecting with nothing but the wall. He cradles his already-injured hand.

"Fuck!"

"Please..." the voice whispers.

Denise pulls out her phone and shines her flashlight toward the voice.

At first, there is nothing there. Then...is that just the barest hint of human eyes glinting back at them in the dark?

A ghostly hand begins to form, reaching toward the light. It causes the strangest, barest of shadows to project onto the wall. And counterintuitively, as the light begins to rapidly dim, the figure becomes defined.

The white light turns yellow as the phone is slowly drained of power and the scruffy hair, patchy beard and plaid shirt of a young man become translucently visible.

"What is that?" the figure asks weakly.

Denise stares at him, confused.

"The phone?"

"That's a phone?" asks the figure as the last of the cell's power fades. The flashlight goes dark, but the young man glows faintly visible in the night. "That's hella-cool."

"Who the fuck are you?" Kenny asks.

"Duane."

Denise steps toward him, staring with fascination. Kenny steps in front of her and pushes her back. "Cover up," he tells her.

"I work here," Duane says.

"Nobody works here," Kenny replies.

"I used to."

"Are you...?" Denise begins breathlessly.

"Dead?" Duane says. "Way dead."

"Bullshit," barks Kenny...a skeptic in the face of a plausible explanation.

Duane swings his arm. As Kenny flinches in self defense, the arm passes right through him.

Hard to be a skeptic in the face of that.

"This place used to be awesome. You know who comes to a one-hour photo? Guys who take naked pictures of their girlfriends. A lot of them are hogs, but man...a lot of them are total smoke-shows. Sometimes guys would pay me extra to, y'know, look the other way. Like I cared. Some of the shit was really nasty. So, I'd make prints, right? But I kept them to myself. I kept their privacy."

Kenny pulls out his phone and opens his photo file. Swiping past several images, he holds up one to Duane.

"Like this?"

"Kenny!" Denise objects, knowing it's her and pulling his arm down.

"Yeah. Shit, I can't believe that's on a PHONE!"

"Hell yeah, man. Everybody takes pictures with phones now," Kenny laughs. "Especially dirty ones."

"Is that what happened?" Duane asks.

"What happened to what?"

"To photography."

"What happened to you?" she asks.

"I was closing up one night. This guy showed up. With a gun. He wanted all the money. And I guess it wasn't enough. Or I wasn't fast enough. Because he shot me. A lot. I laid there on the floor all night. Alone. I tried to call for help, but I couldn't reach the phone. I could feel myself just...slipping away. There was so much blood. I saw a light. Like they say. But, then it went away. It just left me here. They found me the next morning. But I've been here ever since."



"I'm sorry," Denise whispers.

"It wasn't so bad, at first. I knew everybody who worked here. It was like I was just hanging out with them all the time. They couldn't hear me, but I never talked that much anyway, so big deal. I still got to see all the nakes the boyfriends brought in. We'd listen to music. It was kinda boring, but it was cool. Then my friends started to go away and new people started working here. I didn't know them. Didn't really want to. Then business started to dry up. The hours got shorter. And one day, the place just closed all together. They boarded it up. Shut me in. Alone. In the dark."

"Shit," Kenny says as he pulls out a cigarette and lights it.

"Ooh...!" Duane croaks as he tries to fan the smoke toward his nose. "I haven't had one in so long."

Duane inhales, but to no avail.

"Shit. I can't smell it. Fuckin' figures."

"They didn't even bother to tear this place down," Denise says. "It's so small and this mall is so shitty, nobody even cared."

"It wasn't like it was in anybody's way. So, nobody wanted to spend the money," Kenny says. "When did you...get shot?"

"1995. October."

"Shit," Kenny coughs.

"That explains the flannel," Denise says. "How old were you?"

"Nineteen."

Denise frowns.

"Nineteen forever," Kenny muses.

"What year is it now?"

"It's probably better if you don't know," she says.

"They're gonna bulldoze this place," Kenny explains. "They're repaving the parking lot."

Denise turns. "What'll happen to him?"

Kenny shrugs blandly as he puffs his cigarette.

"What will happen to you?" she asks Duane.

"Fuck if I know. What happens when I'm stuck in here and there ain't no here here anymore?"

They all stand silently for a moment.

"Can I watch you guys fuck?"

Denise makes a face.

"What? I'm a ghost! What the fuck difference does it make?"

Kenny looks to Denise.

"No," she says flatly.

Kenny shrugs at Duane. "Kinda lost the mood, anyway, dead dude."

Denise grabs Kenny's cigarette and takes a drag.

Another awkward, silent moment.

"I do have one more idea..." says Duane.

. . . . .

Two dark figures sprint away from the crumbling booth as flames begin licking the inside walls, crawling out the open door and rising toward the roof. Accelerated by flammable film negatives and unused photo envelopes, orange fire quickly consumes the tiny structure, outshining the asynchronous flashing of the orange lights on the barricades.

One less thing for the Caterpillar driver to obliterate come Monday.

A wise person...well, SEVERAL actually...once said "it's better to burn out than to fade away."

But none of them ever said anything about doing both at the same time.

UZ

















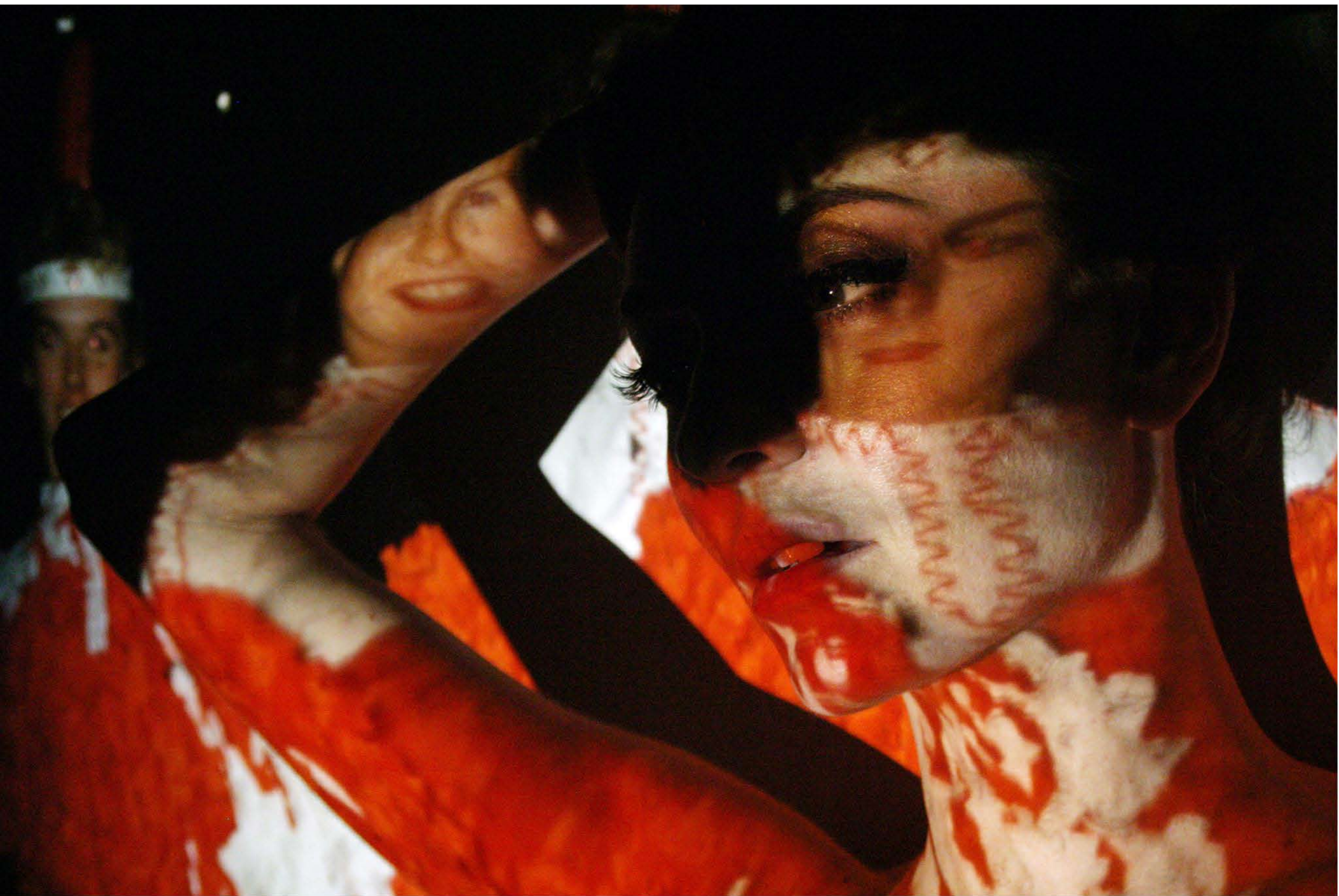












**AMERICAN SIDE** would not have been possible without the talent and imagination of four wonderful models. **JOCELYN, SKYE, SHEILA J. and AN.**

Spending long hours interacting meaningfully with strange and mundane projected slides — which also just happen to be blinding you — in an otherwise darkened room is no easy task. But managing to do it while infusing the resulting images with depth, humor, pathos and beauty is a testament to just how fantastic they are at their craft. What they brought to this series is immeasurable. And I truly appreciate each of them for helping me to realize my vision.













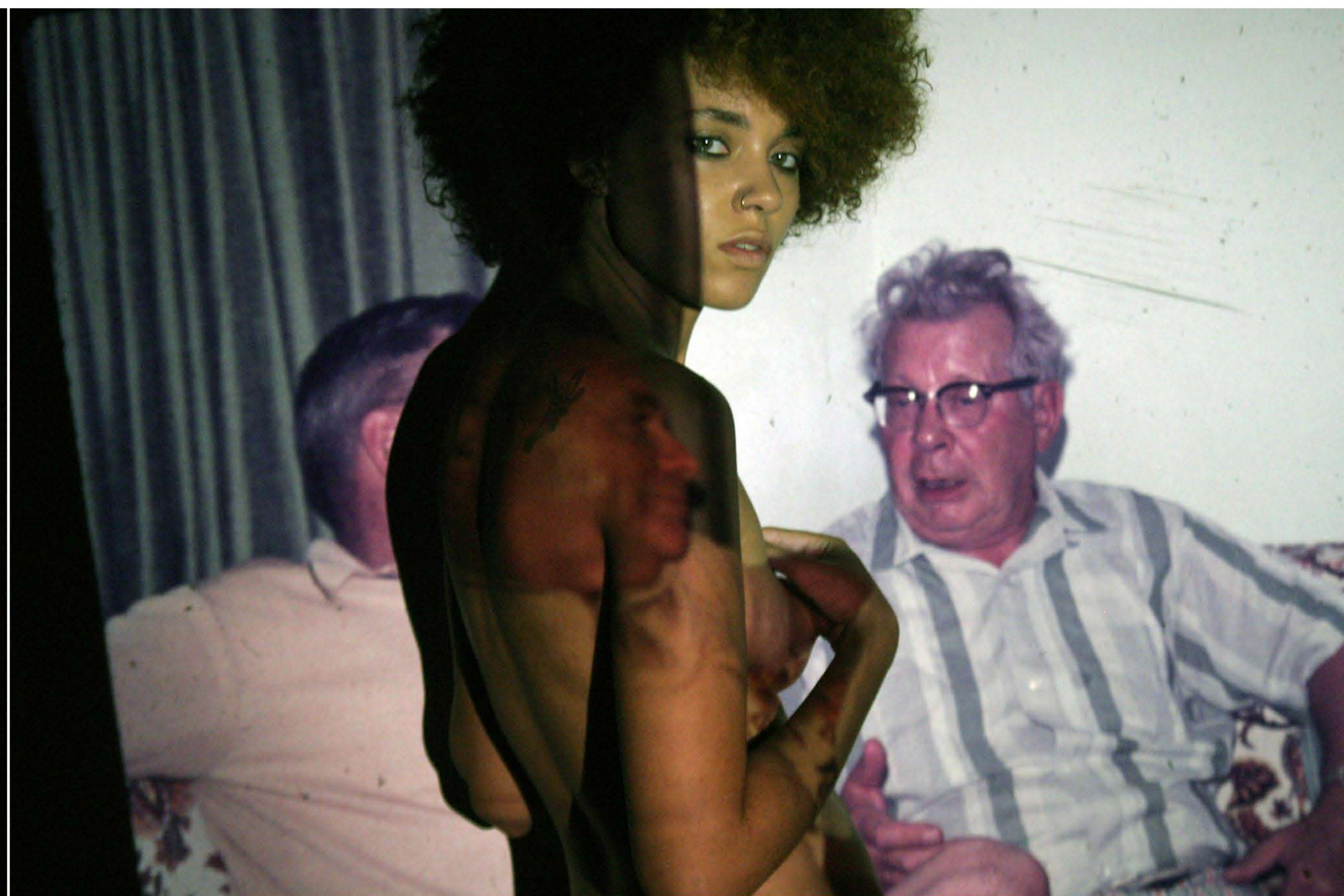








































**NOSTALGIA** seems to run in twenty to thirty-year cycles. Which, in most parts of the country — including where I grew up — is about the amount of time it takes for you to grow up, get married and have kids, then realize that getting married and having kids have stolen your dreams and derailed your life.

So, you resort to looking back and fondly remembering the good times.

A funny thing about nostalgia, though, is you are just as likely to feel it for an era you never experienced as you are about your own life.

I have a nostalgia for mid-century America — specifically the 1950s — even though I wasn't yet born at the time. But, nostalgia for the 50s was strong in the 1970s and 1980s, when I grew up.

Because...y'know, that cycle.

GREASE, HAPPY DAYS and AMERICAN GRAFFITI were hits in the 70s. And local independent stations and cable channels filled many of their programming hours with shows from the era, from LEAVE IT TO BEAVER to FATHER KNOWS BEST. So, if you were a latchkey kid with a TV set, as I was, you grew up on a lot of television that promoted the squeaky-clean, blissful perfection of the 50s.

That patina of joy, prosperity and simplicity, through which we view the 1950s, helped cement in me a warm longing for the Eisenhower decade. But that same glow can blind us to the reality beneath...that it was not such a perfect time if you were a woman, a person of color, LGBTQ+, a believer in true Marxist Communism, non-Christian or any number of other subsets of the population who were not white, straight, capitalist, God-fearing and male.

Once you are self-aware enough to become conscious of life in those terms, it seriously challenges your viewpoint and puts you at odds with your nostalgia.

It makes you ask *"how can I be a good person and still look fondly on that era?"*

Well, I think it's okay to be nostalgic about the good things from the past...as long as we are working to fix the bad things about the present.

Which, let's face it, have their roots in that halcyon yesterday.

If we strive to insure those happy, prosperous, 1950s ideals are equally within reach of every person — regardless of how you may categorize them — and that justice prevails for everyone, our nostalgic longings can actually become aspirational visions propelling us toward achieving a better future for all.

And I believe *that* is the true, and achievable, promise of **AMERICA**.

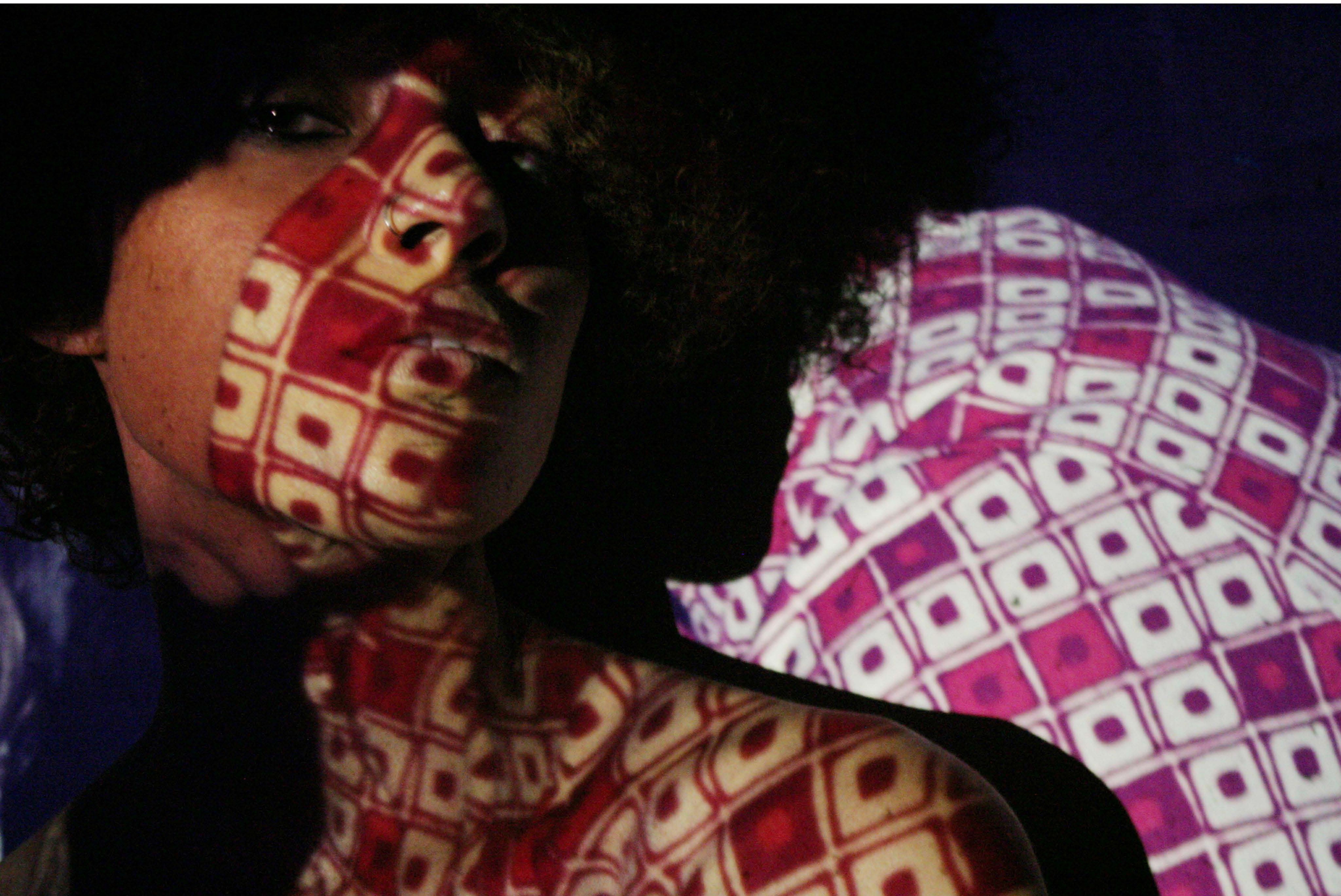




















unsinnzINE || DAS ENDE