

Art in Review

Gary Schneider

Nudes

Aperture Foundation
547 West 27th Street, Chelsea
Through tomorrow

Working with only a flashlight and a big-format camera, Gary Schneider — best known for his “Genetic Self Portrait” (1997-98), a series depicting the interior and exterior of his body — here shows remarkable photographs (external only) of 26 men and women photographed life-size in the nude.

Each subject, identified only by first name, posed for Mr. Schneider lying face up on a black cloth, hands resting on the tops of thighs. He built each image by exposing one part of the body after another to the tiny beam of the flashlight as the camera lens, poised above the subject’s middle, recorded. Starting with the head, he moved down the right side of the body, then up the left.

Although the subjects participated in a kind of ritualistic performance, lying still as the photographer called out the seconds needed for each of his flashlight exposures, their images seem unposed, distinguished by their nuanced skin tones and physical quirks rather than their responses to the camera. (One woman, Ellen, was six months pregnant, and her belly moved as the baby within responded to the light.)

Seen together, these poignant portraits rise above their individual characteristics to present a collective celebration of the human body, its life force triumphant over its very evident mortality.

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