

# ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY



## DAVID COMPANYY

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John DIVOLA

Hallways

1995

Gelatin silver prints

3 prints from the Continuity

series, 20.5 x 25.5 cm

[8 x 10 in] each

From top, Nos. 1, 4, 25

These images come from the 1930s archives of Warner Brothers film studios.

Then as now separate parts of scenes were often filmed days or weeks apart so continuity shots were taken as records of lighting, decor and objects but even these photographs were made on a 10 x 8 inch plate camera to exacting specifications. Divola collected these stills over a number of years, grouping them not by film but by type (*Hallways, Evidence of Aggression, Mirrors, and Incidental Subjects*) to draw attention to the film industry's standardisation of images of the world. 'Like so many of the images on which we base our contemporary sense of reality, these photographs offer a representational ground that has a familiarity born of repeated viewing ... the millions of such images seen in a lifetime form the internal visual index of what we accept to be real.'

— John Divola, *Continuity*, 1997



opposite

Zoe LEONARD and Cheryl DUNYÉ

The Fae Richards Photo Archive

[detail]

1993-96

Black and white photograph with ink inscription

Fae Richards, 1908-73, is a celebrated African-American Hollywood actress and singer invented by photographer Leonard and filmmaker Dunye

The archive comprises publicity stills and album snapshots recreated in period style. These chart the star's career from typecast Hollywood roles to later work in 'race films' as well as her richly layered personal life, providing a complex portrait rather than simply a cipher for invisibility in mainstream cinema. The project demanded all the resources of photography and filmmaking, using cast, crew, props, wardrobe, sets, lighting, make-up, locations and printing skills. Both exhibited and published in a book, the photographs were also central to Dunye's influential feature film *The Watermelon Woman* (1996).



# TRACES OF TRACES

A photograph is an image that bears

the mark of the real. The light that illuminates the world is the light that records its image. In this sense all photographs are traces. However the world itself contains traces or marks. These have been of enduring interest to artists. A photograph of a trace is perhaps the opposite of the 'decisive moment'. It is the moment after. It records the marks made by the world on the body and by the body on the world. Both performance and conceptual art utilized the photograph as a means of recording traces. More recently, documentary photography has moved beyond the recording of 'events' to include the aftermath. For all their diversity, the works in this section share a certain forensic quality, engaging with the scientific use of the photographic image.

John DIVOLA

Untitled

1974

Gelatin silver print

25.5 x 35.5 cm [14 x 14 in]

From the *Vandalism* series, 1973-75

Divola explores relationships between the natural and the artificial, the objective and the subjective. In the *Vandalism* series he blurred the distinction between found evidence and constructed performance. The marks recorded by the camera appear intentional yet their meaning is elusive. Has the camera 'encountered' them or have they been made especially for it? The photographs preserve the ambiguous status of the traces. In fact Divola had himself broken into these condemned buildings, which he 'vandalised' creatively before photographing them.

