

## FASHION: AS PART OF AVEDON'S LARGER BODY OF WORK

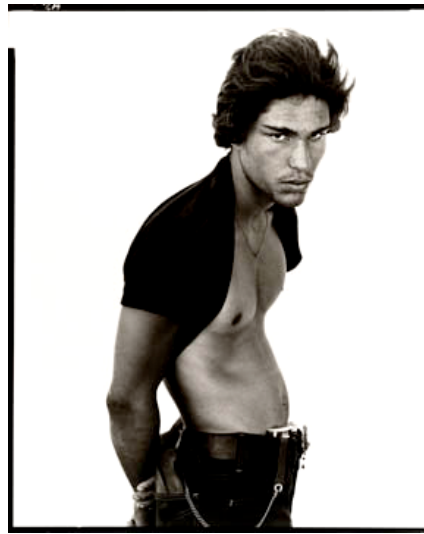
*The book is constructed with pairings of photographs on facing pages, which may sometimes seem to have no relationship to each other but are all meant to be driven by their own eccentric logic: Dovima modeling a dress echoes Andy Warhol showing off his scars.*

Richard Avedon, foreword to *An Autobiography*, 1993

In 1993 Avedon brought out a book entitled 'An Autobiography' in which he juxtaposed portraiture, fashion photography and reportage from throughout his career. Although Avedon drew a distinction between fashion and his 'deeper' work this book highlights the way in which these two areas informed one another. The book maps his continued fascination with the subject as performer. As Adam Gopnik describes it, fashion images are a subset of Avedon's theme; "the necessary role of appearances in creating value."



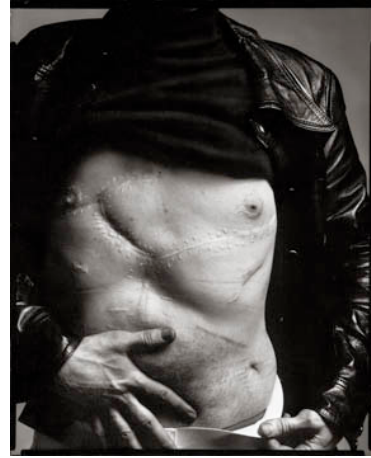
China Machado,  
New York, 1958



Juan Patricio Lobato, carney,  
Colorado, 1980



Dovima, Paris, 1950



Andy Warhol, artist, New York, 1969

#### POINTS OF DEPARTURE:

1. Look at the top two images of the model China and the carney Juan. Both photographs were included in Avedon's *An Autobiography*.
  - a. What parallels can be drawn between the two images?
  - b. If you were not presented with their titles how easy would it be to distinguish between the model and the non-model, not to allocate China as society lady or Juan as male model?
2. Both images show the subject isolated from the context of their lives. The neutral background was a technique developed and increasingly used by Avedon towards the end of his career. What effect does this have upon the way we read the images? How does it further our ability to compare the two?
3. Now look at the bottom two images of Dovima and Warhol, which were paired together by Avedon in the same book.
  - a. Although at first they are seemingly disparate what compositional similarities are there between the two images?
  - b. Do you think there is also a parallel to be drawn in the way they both present themselves to the camera and therefore Avedon?

4. Within fashion we expect the model to be performing however when looking at a portrait the viewer often imagines the 'real' person is being seen. Avedon stated that 'portraiture is performance.' As a group do these four images support this statement?
5. By classifying not only fashion but also his portraiture as performance what comment is Avedon passing upon what it is to be human, to present oneself?