

PERSONS AS PLANTS

The connection between plant and human characteristics

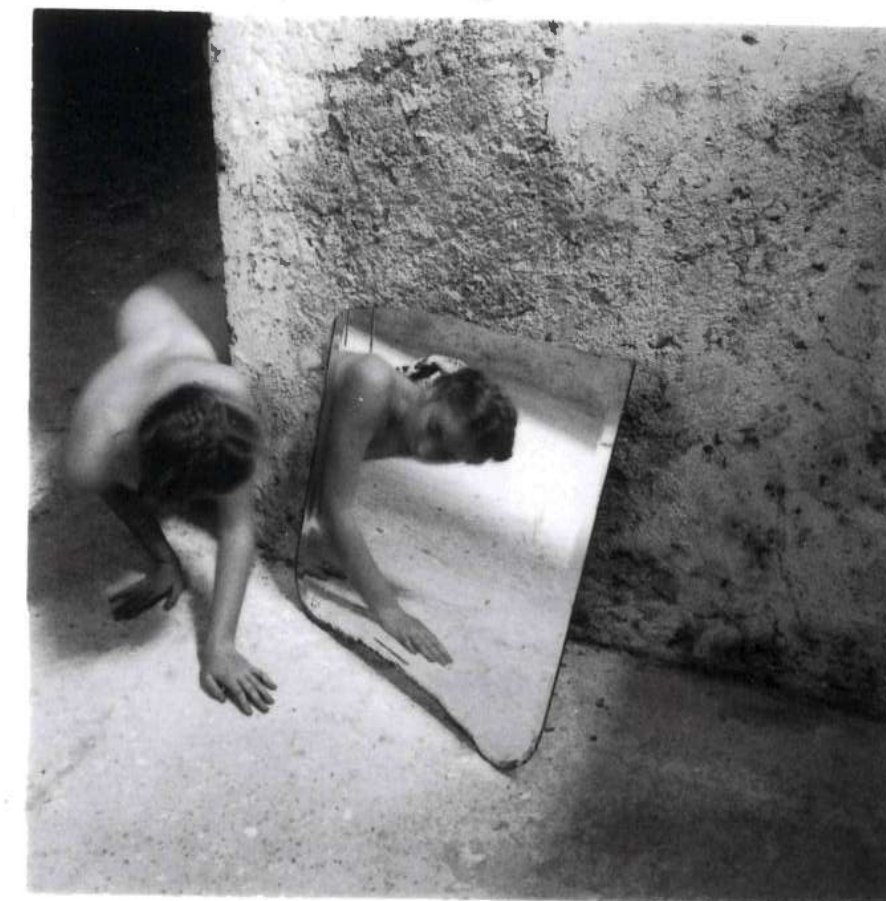
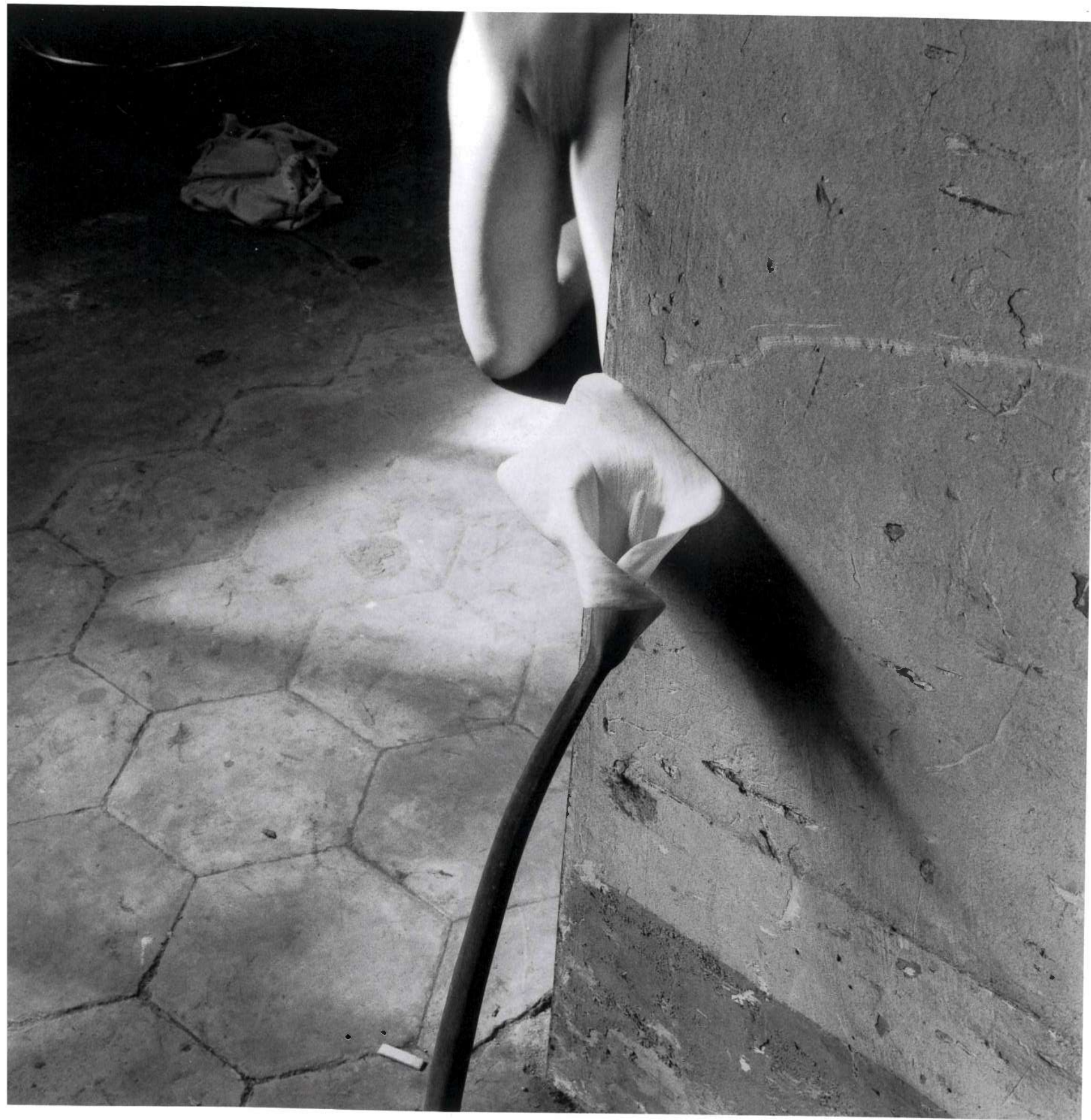
For Nakahira, plants are uncanny, mysterious creatures. He sees in them transcendental beings that are removed from the world of seeming certainty, that carry the otherness of things within them, and that threaten the self with their silence. To him, plants with their autonomous growth imply an intermediate state that belongs neither to the subject nor to the object of perception.

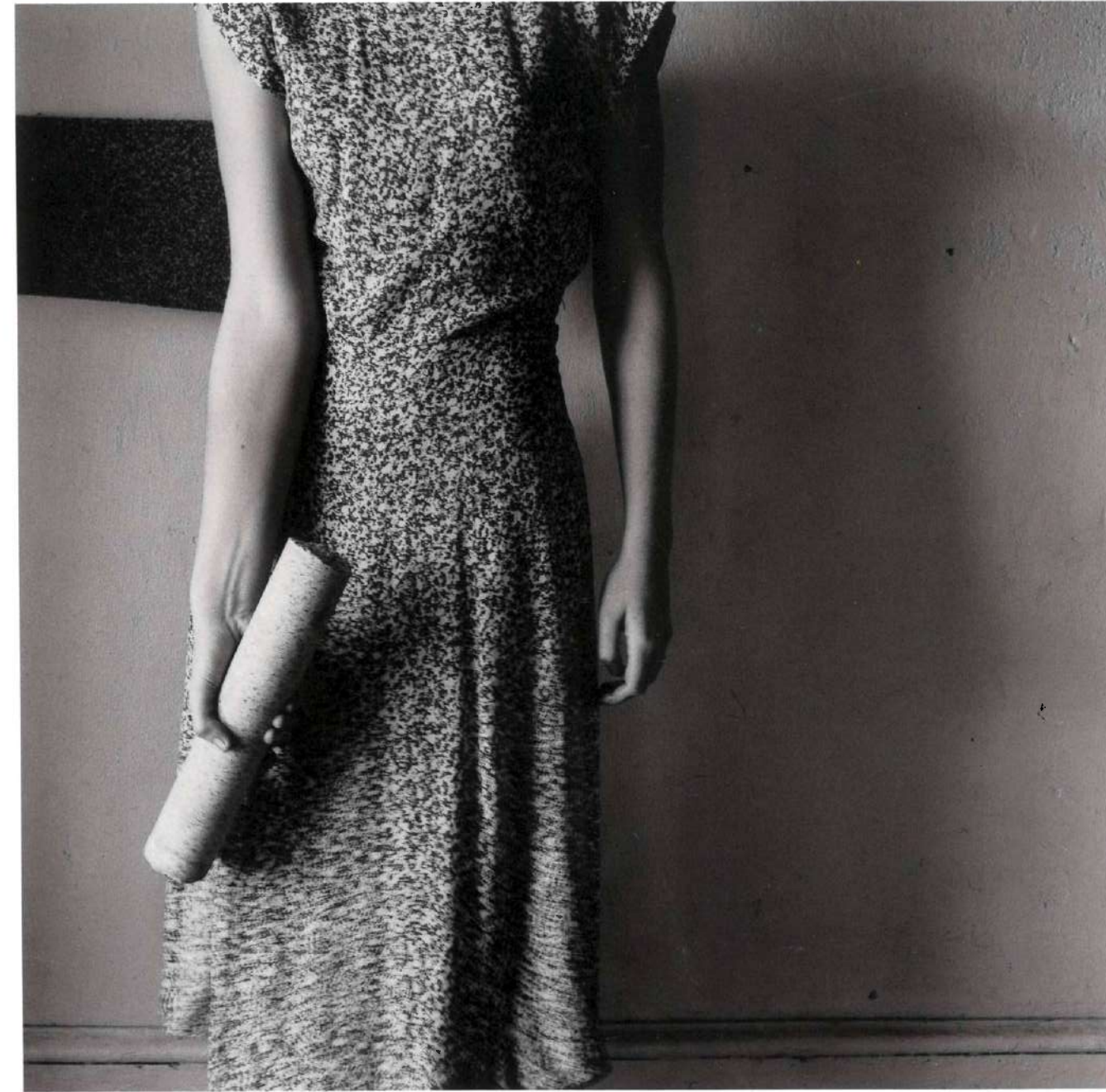
By Masashi Kohara



Study for Temple Project, New York, Spring 1980







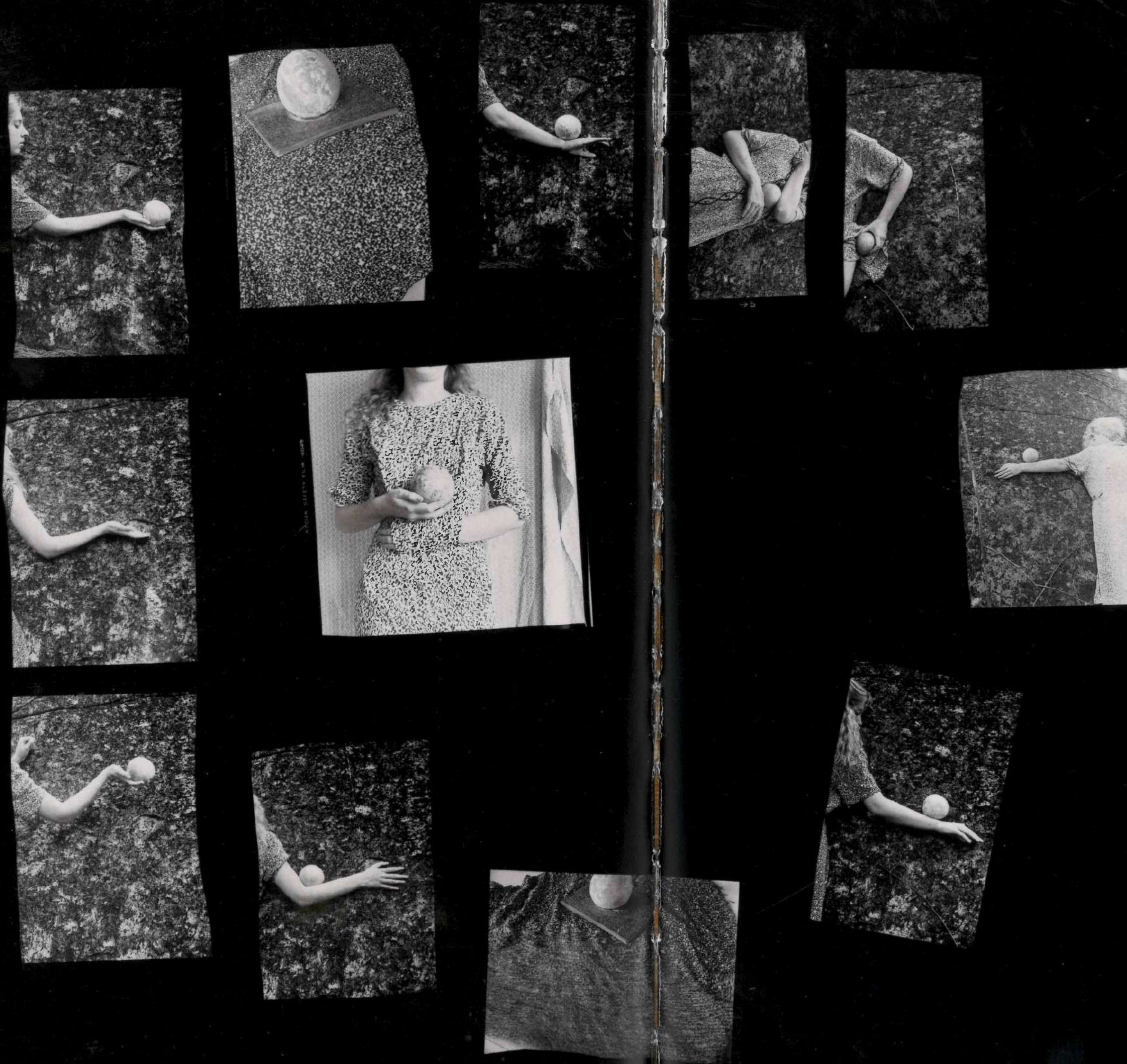
MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, New Hampshire, Summer 1990

MacDowell Colony, New Hampshire
Stanwood, Washington
1979-1980



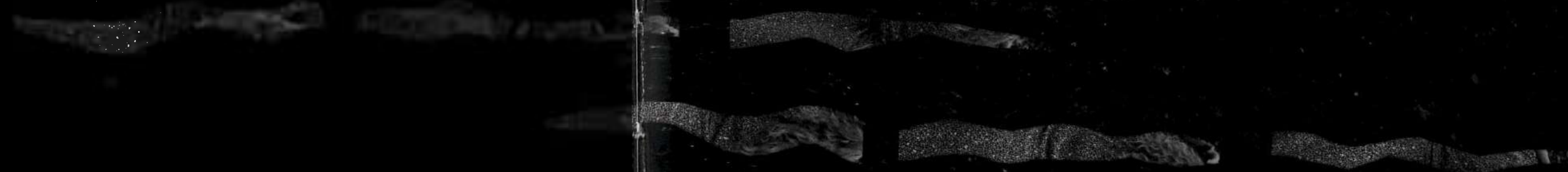


MacDowell Colony,
Peterborough,
New Hampshire,
Summer 1980



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low light, cool

Queensland umbrella tree

Schefflera actinophylla 'Nova')

An upright evergreen, with various cultivars having variegation to a greater or lesser degree.

Water and feed regularly in spring and summer, gradually decreasing in autumn and keeping compost just moist in winter. Repot in spring; cut back hard in spring if plant has become leggy but do not then repot. Propagate by stem cuttings in summer.



low light, cool

False aralia, Finger aralia
(*Schefflera elegantissima*)

Best when young, as the notched finger-like leaves become coarse and less attractive with age.

- water carefully in winter but keep compost moist in spring and summer; feed regularly
- repot in spring, but when the plant becomes leggy cut back the main stem to encourage new shoots – do not repot then
- propagate by seed in spring



low light, warm

Spreading club moss
(*Selaginella kraussiana*)

A fern-like moss with spreading low-growing stems which are much branched with yellowish green-tinged leaves.

- water regularly in spring and summer, and give occasional feeds; water sparingly in winter; spray regularly with water during growing season
- repot in spring
- propagate by cuttings in spring or summer



light light, cool

Skimmia (Skimmia japonica 'Rubella')

A bushy evergreen with fragrant white flowers which are pink in the bud. The flowers stems are reddish-bronze and are decorative even before blossoming.

Keep compost moist at all times; feed weekly in spring and summer. Repot every year in spring. Propagate by stem cuttings in summer or by seed in cold frame in autumn.



bright light, cool

Winter cherry (Solanum capsicastrum)

Grown for its orange-red berries which ripen in late autumn and winter. The shrubby stems have dark-green foliage, with white star-like flowers appearing in summer.

- keep compost moist at all times and feed every fortnight; spray daily
- repot and prune to shape in spring; stand outdoors in summer
- propagate by seed or stem cuttings in spring



low light, draughty

Baby's tears, Irish moss, Mind your own business (Soleirolia soleirolii)

A compact plant in general, but capable of spreading over quite a large area and therefore useful for covering the surfaces of pots with single subjects. Golden and white variegated forms are available, but the leaves often revert to pale green.

- keep moist at all times; do not overfeed
- repot from spring to autumn
- propagate by division from spring to autumn



bright light, humid

Flame nettle, Coleus
(*Solenostemon scutellarioides*)

A very variable plant in leaf form, colour and size, which can reach between 30 and 60cm (1–2ft).

- water freely in summer but keep soil just moist in winter; feed weekly in spring and summer
- repotting each year is not worth doing for mature plants, as young plants are best propagated regularly by cuttings from spring to autumn or seed sown in spring



low light, cool

House lime, African hemp
(*Sparrmannia africana*)

A shrub with pale green, downy leaves and white flowers with prominent stamens, which expand rapidly when touched.

- water well in spring and summer, and reduce in winter; feed weekly from spring to summer
- repot or top-dress in spring; prune back hard after flowering
- propagate by stem cuttings in spring



low light, cool

Peace lily (Spathiphyllum wallisii)

Although this plant has attractive glossy-green foliage the pure white arum-shaped inflorescences which appear in spring add to its decorativeness.

- keep compost moist at all times; feed every two weeks from spring to autumn, and monthly in winter
- repot every spring
- propagate by division in spring



bright light, warm
(cool in winter)

Madagascar jasmine
(*Stephanotis floribunda*)

A climber with very fragrant white waxy flowers. Training on a support is essential.

- water freely from spring to autumn, keeping compost just moist in winter; spray regularly in summer; feed regularly in spring and summer
- repot every two years in spring; cut back after flowering
- propagate by stem cuttings in summer



low light, warm

Cape cowslip, Cape primrose
(*Streptocarpus x hybrid*)

From spring to autumn, white, pink, red, blue or purple trumpet-shaped flowers are held on wiry stems above a rosette of foliage.

- water and feed freely during full growth, but sparingly in winter
- repot every year in spring in a shallow pot
- propagate by leaf cuttings in summer, seed or division in spring



bright light, cool

Black-eyed Susan (Thunbergia alata)

A fast-growing climbing plant with slender stems that readily intertwine but require good support. The yellow flowers have dark chocolate-coloured centres and appear from late spring to autumn.

- keep watered and fed regularly when in full growth
- Treat as an annual and discard after flowering



light, humid

ge palm (*Cordyline australis*)

reaching at least 3m (10ft) when grown in its natural tropical habitat, but only attaining half that height in a 15cm (6in) pot. It grows freely from spring to autumn, moderately in winter; feed weekly during full growth in spring or summer. Propagate from basal shoots, tops of leggy sections of bare stems; underground stems can be separated and potted.



bright light, warm

Jade plant, Money tree (*Crassula ovata*)

The Jade plant has compact tree-like growth with oval succulent leaves. Masses of starry flowers are produced in spring. Variegated and coloured-leaved forms are also available.

- water sparingly in spring and summer; keep dry at other times
- repot every year in spring
- propagate by stem cuttings or individual leaves in spring or summer



bright light, cool

Crocus (*Crocus vernus*)

There are many cultivated forms, with large, funnel-shaped to rounded, white, purple or blue flowers, which appear in early spring or autumn.

- water freely when in flower
- pot in autumn and keep in a cool, dark place to encourage root production
- after flowering discard old corms and plant outdoors



low light, cool/warm

Cymbidium (*Cymbidium hybrid*)

Cymbidium varieties are some of the easiest orchids to grow, and they remain healthy in ordinary room conditions.

- keep compost moist by reduced watering in winter; feed every two to three weeks; use soft water; spray in spring and summer
- repot occasionally when plants deteriorate; use special orchid compost
- propagate by division



low light, cool

Umbrella grass (*Cyperus alternifolius*)

The green foliage is formed into tufts like umbrella frames on top of fairly stiff stems up to 60cm (2ft) high.

- keep well watered at all times, even standing it in a water-filled shallow container; feed weekly from spring to autumn
- repot in spring
- propagate by division or seed; the 'umbrella' will also root in winter



low light, cool

Dumb cane (*Dieffenbachia compacta*)

There are many forms, all with attractively marked foliage which is, however, poisonous. Occasionally rather inconspicuous greenish flowers are formed.

- keep compost moist at all times and feed fortnightly from spring to autumn
- repot every spring
- propagate by division, stem cuttings or stem section in spring or summer



light, cool

Monterey cypress (*Cupressus arpa* 'Goldcrest')

Green with fine leaves which assume a golden yellow colour in good light. It is very hardy. Water and feed regularly during spring and summer; keep compost moist in autumn and winter. Prune to shape in summer or autumn. Propagate by heel cuttings in late summer.



low light, cool

Cycad, Sago palm (*Cycas revoluta*)

Not a true palm but has similar growth, with stout fronds with many stiff leaflets arising from a short, almost ball-shaped base.

- keep compost moist at all times but avoid waterlogging; feed occasionally throughout the growing season
- repot every two to three years in spring or summer
- propagate in spring by removing side growths

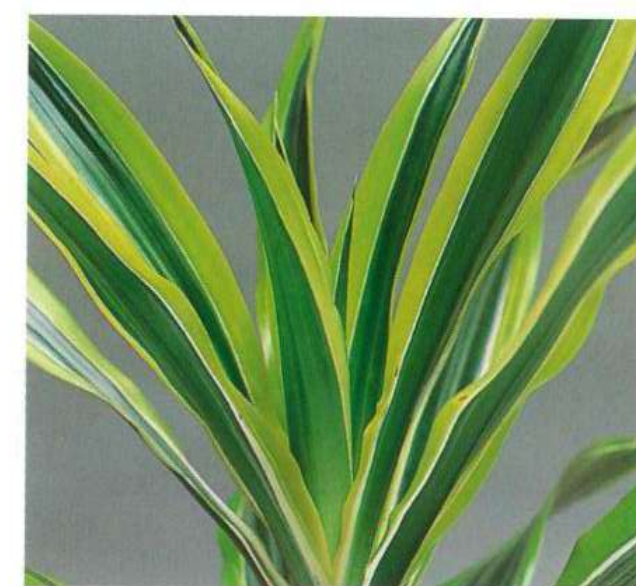


low light, cool

Cyclamen (*Cyclamen persicum*)

Hybrid cultivars have white, pink, red or crimson flowers, and many have marked foliage.

- keep compost moist when in full growth; feed every fortnight when in flower; spray daily with water; allow compost to dry out and place on its side outdoors in late spring; carefully remove dead flowers and leaf stems in their entirety
- repot every summer when new growth appears
- propagate by seed in late summer



bright light, cool

Madagascar dragon tree (*Dracaena marginata* 'Colorama')

A slow-growing species, whose tough narrow leaves are dark green with cream and pink stripes.

- water regularly in spring and summer, reducing at the start of winter; feed once every two weeks during growing period
- repot every other spring
- propagate by stem sections or tip cuttings



bright light, cool

Mexican gem, Mexican snow ball (*Echeveria elegans*)

A succulent plant with fleshy foliage formed in a rosette. The erect flower stem has pinkish blooms with yellow inside which appear in spring and summer.

- water sparingly at all times, especially in winter and feed monthly from spring to late summer
- repot every second year in spring
- propagate from offsets or leaf cuttings



bright light, warm

Abyssinian banana (*Ensete ventricosum* 'Maurelii')

A banana plant bearing inedible fruit but with attractive maroon-blotched green leaves. Growing to about 1.6m (5½ft), it has a spread of a similar measurement.

- water and feed regularly in spring and summer, but keep compost almost dry in winter
- repot in spring
- propagate by division in spring







CAPTIONS FOR PLATES I

I

Annabelle Whitford Moore in *Serpentine dance* by Annabelle, one of her films à la Loie Fuller, probably produced by Edison Manufacturing Company in 1896. Annabelle here uses wands to extend the reach of her voluminous skirt, which is gathered under her arms. It is mostly the 'wings' on either side of her body that create the serpentine forms while the basic shape of Annabelle's gown remains for the most part intact. Unlike Fuller's dance costumes at the time, Annabelle's reflects fashionable dress, with its feminine details such as appliqué décolletage and pearl trimmings around the neckline and arms. As Giovanni Lista notes in his book *Loie Fuller, danseuse de la Belle Époque* (2006: 616), these beautifully coloured glass plates (of which there are 36 preserved in the collections of Nouveau musée national de Monaco) were extracted from the film to be used for magic lantern projections.

© Nouveau musée national de Monaco / Photos Mauro Magliani & Barbara Piovani.

II

Lina Esbrard: *danse serpentine* was probably made in 1902 by Alice Guy for Société L. Gaumont et compagnie. The dancer is filmed here on a plain 'stage' against a dark background. She wears a Fulleresque white serpentine costume which is gathered under her arms, where it also features a flounce. Like one of Fuller's early costumes, it is decorated with serpents, which seem to undulate as the skirts swirl about. Although Esbrard's arms are bare, her hands and wands are hidden underneath the skirts, in 'pockets' created by two layers of fabric sewn together. Esbrard reveals her legs during much of the routine. This was clearly premeditated as she dressed them in sequined tights (matching the detail of her dress trimming) for an added sparkling effect.

Frame enlargements courtesy Gaumont-Pathé archives.

III

Unknown dancer in the hand-coloured film *La Danse du papillon* (*Butterfly Dance*), attributed to the French photographer and film pioneer Léar (Albert Kirchner) and probably made in 1896. As in Lumière's *Danse de l'éventail*, the butterfly dress here is double-layered for a simple transformation effect. The dancer 'flutters' onto the stage wearing a green costume decorated with large butterflies (similar to one Bob Walter wears in Gaumont's 1897 film *Bob Walter, danse des Papillons*) and eventually drops this 'top' layer to reveal a pair of dark-red wings trimmed with gold.

Frame enlargements courtesy Lobster Films.

IV

Frame enlargements from Ferdinand Zecca's féerie *Le Pêcheur de perles* (*The Pearl Fisher*, Pathé Frères, 1907), a story about a poor fisherman whose fortunes change following an encounter with a marvellous submarine world. The fisherman is returned to land asleep in a giant seashell. He wakes up next to a huge pearl necklace which begins his fairytale transformation from pauper into courtier. Especially the last transformation scene – the apotheosis – presents a vision of dazzling abundance: his cottage is turned into a pearl-festooned palace (reminiscent of Méliès's in *Le Palais des mille et une nuits*) and a cast of pages and sea fairies magically appear amidst coloured smoke and jets of water. The film preserved at Lobster Films is stencilled and tinted.

Courtesy Lobster Films.

V

Promotional photograph for Segundo de Chomón's partly coloured 1909 film *La Danse du feu* for Pathe Frères. The film is an example of a popular subgenre of phantasmagorias centred around the 'attraction' of the serpentine dance. According to the script, the film is set in Hell, where a serpentine dancer emerges from flames to perform her act. As she dances, surrounded by flames, her dress changes colour while various 'hideous monsters' lurk about.

Courtesy Collection Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé.

VI

Women-butterflies display their wings in one of Georges Méliès's most luscious tableaux in *Conte de la grand-mère et Rêve de l'enfant* (*Grandmother's Story*, 1908). While a little boy (played by Méliès's nephew André) sleeps in a fantastical garden full of giant pansies, lilies and roses, he dreams of a butterfly-woman being born out of one of the flowers. She is then followed by three others, all dressed like the first in exotic 'dance' costumes of light gauze skirts and circular breast-plates. When the troupe is complete, they perform a 'little ballet' and arrange themselves in different configurations among the flora. Also see this book: 122.

Courtesy Bibliothèque du Film (BIFI), Paris.

VII

'The Palace of the Hen Who Laid the Golden Eggs', the final apotheosis of Gaston Velle's four-act féerie *La Poule aux œufs d'or* (*The Conjuror's Lottery*, 1905) for Pathé Frères; inspired by a fable by Jean de La Fontaine. Several large golden eggs hatch to reveal beautiful women wearing different coloured dresses (the 'Hen Fairies') who raise banners in the shape of golden coins. Then the 'Fairy of Gold' emerges from the seventh – and biggest – egg, which occupies the centre of the frame. Standing on a pedestal and presiding majestically over the display, she spreads her sequined magical cloak and conjures a shower of gold coins, while the halo-like disc behind her head revolves.

Courtesy Collection Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé.

VIII

A promotional photograph showing 'The Triumph of Ali Baba', the final apotheosis in Ferdinand Zecca and Albert Capellani's sumptuously coloured féerie *Ali Baba et les quarante voleurs* (*Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves*, 1902). The grand finale of the apotheosis features a woman rising from the ground to take her position in front of the central disc, which begins to revolve, together with the other rings and stars around her. See also this book: 126–7.

Courtesy Collection Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé.

IX

The set of Georges Méliès's film *Le Papillon fantastique* (*The Fantastical Butterfly*, 1909). A magician (played by Méliès) conjures up a butterfly-woman who displays her blue and yellow-coloured wings, and another who is placed in front of a star-shaped target at the centre of the frame. Suddenly, the latter turns into a large octopus, suspended in the middle of a giant spider's web. She waves

