

Ali Feser

*The Subject is the Byproduct of the Production of Desire, 2022*

Archival pigment print and transparencies

In order to ensure that color photographs were printed at Kodak's standards, the company distributed reference cards to professional and amateur developers. Both the sample photographs and the white women who modeled for them were called, "Shirleys." With the model positioned squarely towards the camera, the card resembles nineteenth-century anthropological images of 'racial types,' as well as the composite images produced in eugenics research.

As a referent in the darkroom, the Shirley naturalized whiteness as an object of desire. In the process, she is flattened into instrument and vessel. Here, cut up and collaged, she refuses the violence of that form and casts, now unintelligible, its fantasies on an image of silver developing through an electron microscope.

