

# Specchi Magici

## Machines for looking

Karl Holmqvist

I'M STARTING WITH THE THEY/THEM IN THE MIRROR  
THEY/THEM IN THE MIRROR IF YOU WANNA MAKE THE  
WORLD A BETTER PLACE TAKE A LOOK AT YOURSELF  
AND THEN MAKE A CHANGE

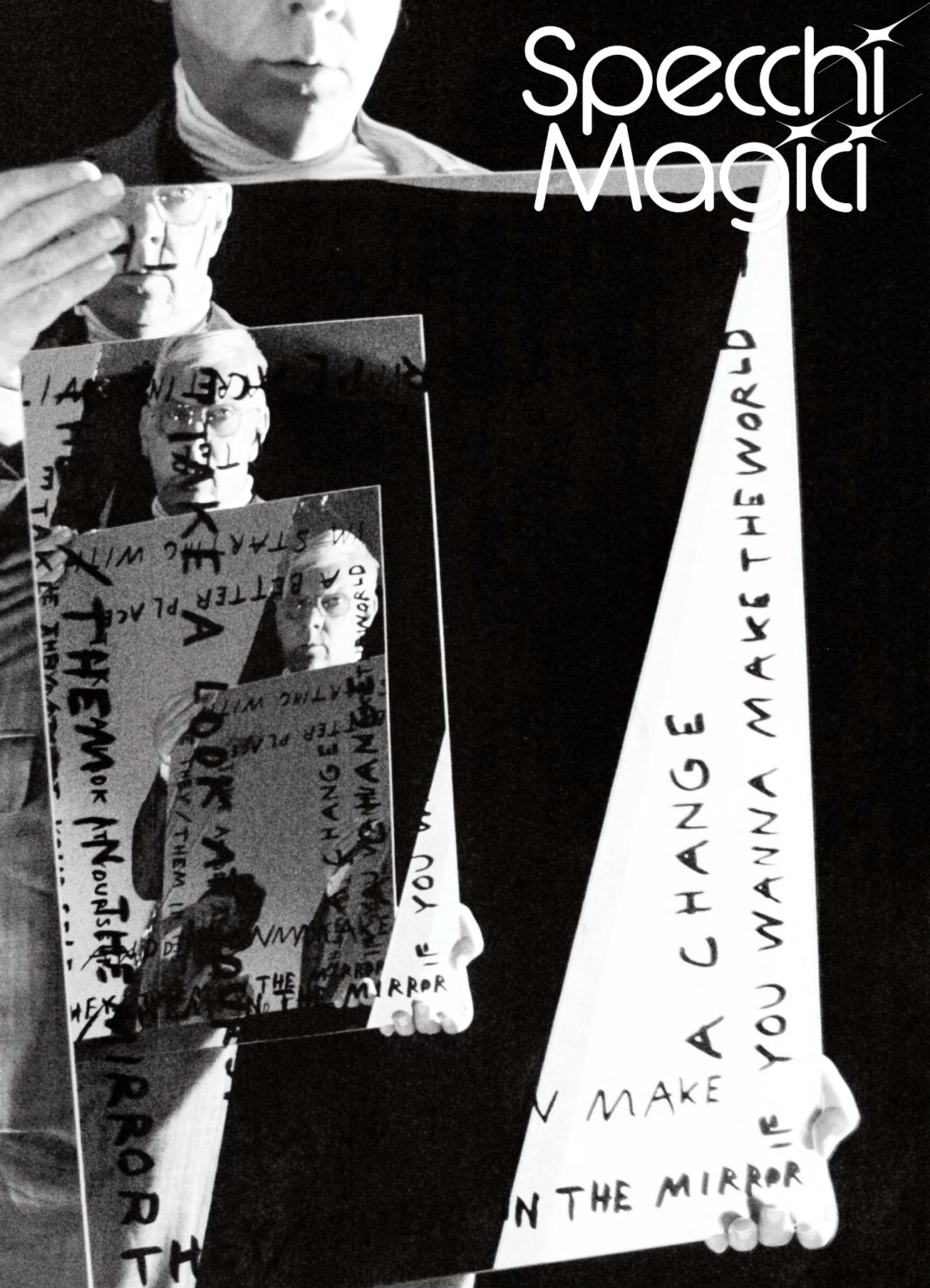
Artworks are like machines for looking you look so intently when making them and also again when looking at them, discovering something maybe you never thought of before in quite that way. An act of focusing or giving attention shared between the artist and their audience. Also people seem to say that whatever was the artist's mood or state of mind when making something will show then and be transferred to the viewer. One of the few professions maybe where this might be true. Unless chefs in restaurants maybe have their mood communicated through their food. But they're rarely remembered after they're dead. Artists on the other hand don't get Michelin stars. This ain't Rock'n'Roll this is the mirror stage.

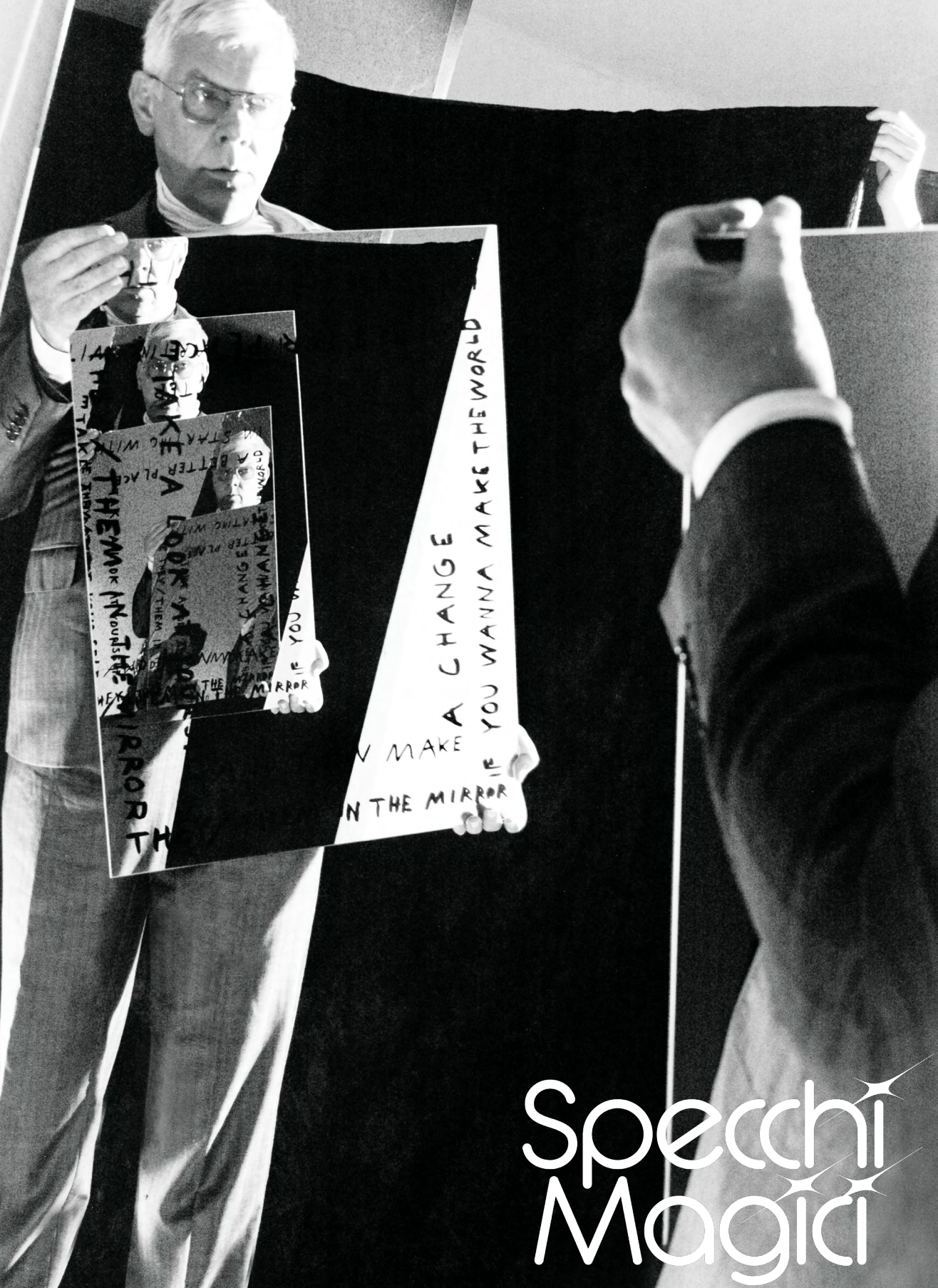
In the last century or so, these machines for looking have developed into just about anything it seems. First with cameras through film and photography, and then onto such things as made up language and lobster claws with Dada in Zurich or several living horses in rows attached to the wall with Italian Neorealismo\*. Somehow art seems to work the best when someone thinks they're doing something else copying a master in a traditional setting. Or even before getting busy with a commission for the church or someone like a prince, adding some unexpected detail testing things out in a way that makes this work stand out be memorable and eventually timeless. As if the machine for looking works the best when no one's looking.

The difficult thing for Liza Minelli when she played Sally Bowles in the film Cabaret was to play it down since she just wasn't supposed to be a very good singer or dancer. Had Sally Bowles been any good at either she wouldn't have found herself on the sorry-ass Kit Kat Club stage singing to drunkards and prostitutes. Then again maybe that was basically the only audience there was in

Karl Holmqvist,  
Untitled (THEY/THEM  
IN THE MIRROR), 2023,  
50x70cm, Silk screen  
on mirror, Photo by  
Rob Kulisek, Courtesy;  
the artist and Specchi  
Magici

\*The Dada spoken word  
performance by Hugo  
Ball at the Cabaret  
Voltaire in Zurich in  
1917 and the 12 Horses  
installation by Jannis  
Kounellis at the Galleria  
L'attico in Rome in 1969.





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Weimar era Berlin.

Sturtevant was getting so much aggression her way when she was making Oldenburg's *The Store* just a few blocks from where Claes Oldenburg had done his own store in the East Village in 1967. People just couldn't believe it lol how someone would be so unoriginal and opportunistic. It came to a point where Sturtevant just had to stop making works for something like ten years, before her triumphant return and later years production that in large terms occupied itself with explaining the intentions and purposes of what she had doing from the start.

Department stores were invented more or less at the same time as modern art with people for the first time having enough leisure time away from the cornfield or factory floor to actually go visit them. Duchamp is supposed to have found his bottle dryer at the Bazaar de l'Hotel de Ville in 1914. Industrialism providing enough products to put them on display and people lining up to get them with the more money they made the more they had to work somehow.

The flaneur as it were coming inside from the parks and boulevards eventually entering elevators and escalators for getting around instead and see everything available on display. Isn't it funny how window dressing was always such a gay profession. Something about the glass and the street a certain distance the act decorating and

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 WOMAN LIFE FREEDOM

You can't escape into space, as is stated in one of Wolfgang Tillmans' new tunes, we're already in it. A slightly dizzying slightly terrifying realisation. What if those who are there to look out for us and make sure that

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we all get an as safe and as satisfying existence as possible are not doing a very good job. Shiny things, paillettes and sequins from fast fashion ending up in fishes stomachs cutting them open. And what about packing materials, bubble wrap or boxes brown packing paper after flying around supposedly are one of the dirtiest things ever.

Everything on the internet, open no cost returns and no one even going to the store anymore everything just delivered from door to door. Bicycle errand boys pedalling around in the empty wastelands that used to be the city center. No more stores, no restaurants or bars or people everything on the internet flying around finishing your food in front of the laptop. Retail therapie my ass. Hurts my ass from all this sitting.

A girl could cry. Comic book mirrors painted by Roy Lichtenstein. A comic book sixties blond girl with make up crying painted by Roy Lichtenstein. Comic book artists angry for not being taken seriously enough lol. If anything the new film Whaam! Blam! Roy Lichtenstein and the Art of Appropriation looking to reevaluate the relationship between Roy Lichtenstein and comic book artists only increases one's respect for Roy Lichtenstein. What they seem to be saying be so upset about is that their work doesn't bring in millions and millions of dollars at auction. In fact so doesn't most things and maybe that's a good thing in the end. You can't escape into space.

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Anne Collier, Mirror (Black&White), 2021, 76x49cm, B/W photograph Courtesy; Galerie Neu