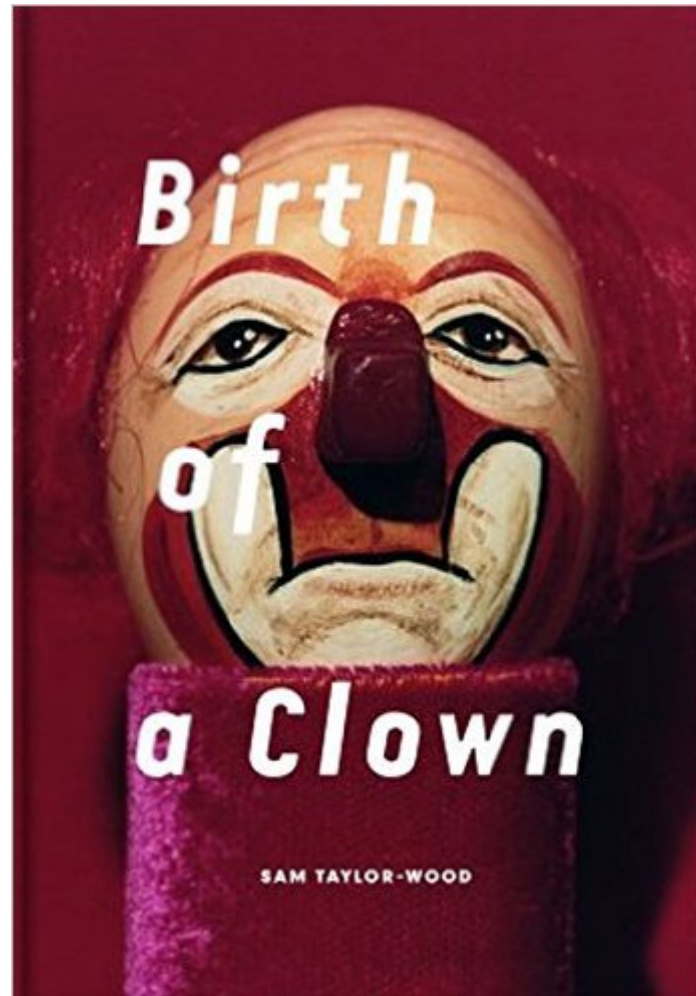


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Sam Taylor-Wood: Birth Of A Clown



Synopsis

In 1947, London's Circus Clowns Club began employing an oddly practical method to record its members' makeup: they copied each design onto an egg, which was then placed in a registry that effectively trademarked the identity of each member. Painted on real chicken eggshells, with the inside emptied out, by Stan Bult, the first head of the Circus Clowns Club, these studies now form part of the Clowns' Gallery and Museum in north London. Bult's practice was resurrected by the Club in 1984, and in addition to paint, samples of the clowns' costumes and wig hair are often used, so that these eggs become much more than a mere record of creative makeup, and often achieve a wonderfully eccentric kind of portraiture. Today the collection of the Clowns' Gallery and Museum includes egg portraits of some of the most famous clowns in circus history, such as Co-Co, Lou Harris and Grimaldi. Birth of a Clown compiles 53 photographs of the eggs by English artist Sam Taylor-Wood, who discovered the museum while researching clowns as part of a larger project. Sam Taylor-Wood was born in London in 1967. She came to prominence in the 1990s as a member of the Young British Artists group, and is currently represented by White Cube in London.

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