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GIRL ON FILM ANNE COLLIER'S REVEALING RE-PHOTOGRAPHS

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By Christabel Stewart

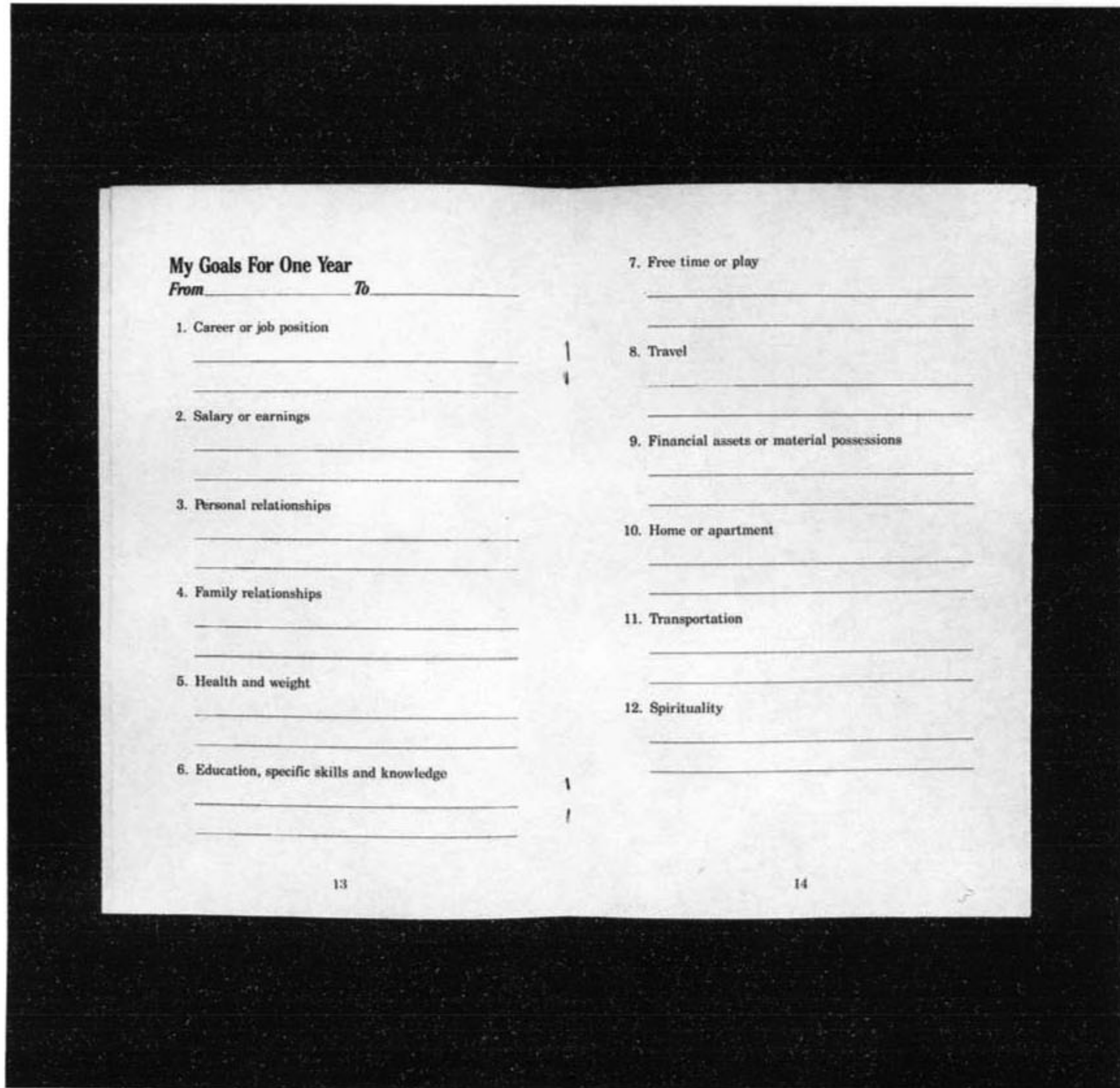
ANNE COLLIER'S WORK involves an elegantly confident examination of feminism, anxiety, self-portraiture, beauty and recent historical photography, achieved by re-photographing existing images from posters, books, magazines and record covers. Her prints are large (up to a metre and a half high), so the object in question appears magnified and oversized. Objects are presented in the context of their original use – a poster is pinned to a wall, a book lies open, records are stacked on top of one another – but always against a monochrome studio backdrop. Immaculate yet charismatic, her work provokes comparisons with that of Los Angeles photographer Christopher Williams, whose almost archaeological images of modern objects have the glossy lucidity of commercial photographs and display a sharp critical wit. In Collier's case, the wit is directed at herself: she describes her work as "deflected self-portraits."

Born in 1970 in Los Angeles, Collier studied at CalArts and her work clearly draws on the legacy of West Coast conceptualism and minimalism. *Folded Madonna Poster (Steven Meisel)* (2007) reveals an adherence to "arbitrary comprehensiveness" as defined by Ed Ruscha's iconic 1962 book *Twentysix Gasoline*

Stations. Her almost forensically detailed examination of images so familiar they would, in another context, struggle to hold the casual viewer's attention, highlights the divergence between the public's collective preoccupations and her personal ones. Yet the detached tone of her pictures suggests her subjects should be considered rather than venerated. Her work could be seen as a textbook visual interpretation of the gender politics debate: she reflects on femininity through its conventional icons, reproducing well-known photographs of Marilyn Monroe and Madonna as Marilyn as seen on record covers and posters. More generally, her work addresses the question that has haunted photography since its inception – whether or not it can capture reality – while wryly insisting on defining reality as subjective. It is a deadpan parallel of re-photography, in which the site of a historical photograph is revisited and framed to match the earlier shot, providing a "then and now" comparison. Except with Collier's images, the "now" means that viewers are made to consider the past through the prism not only of her insight, but also her unease.

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My Goals For One Year (2007)



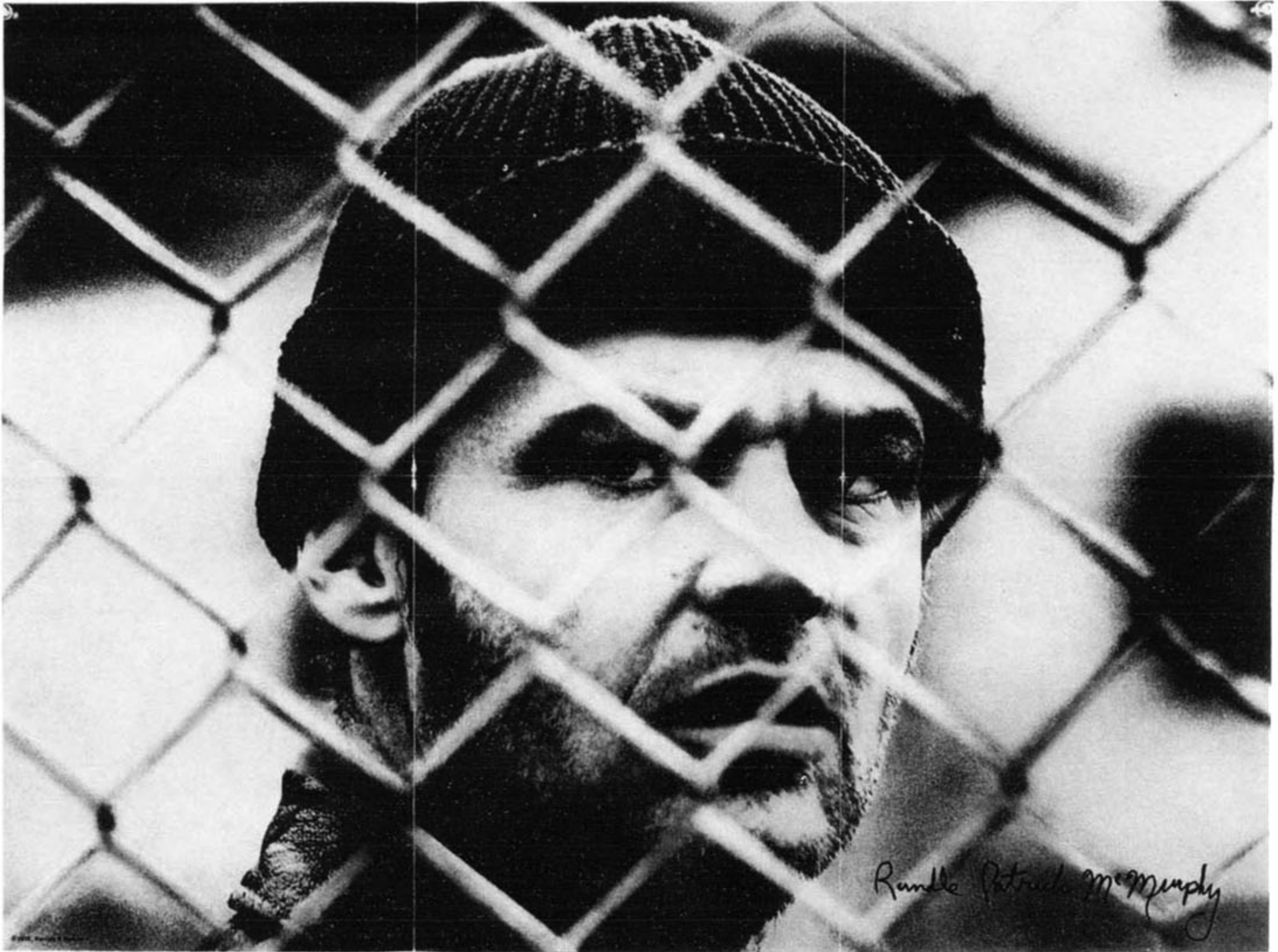
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Double Marilyn (2007)



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Folded Madonna Poster (Steven Meisel) (2007)



Folded Jack Nicholson Poster (One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest) (2007)