9. *Patricia Miller*, 1998

This portrait is born from a series that Lixenberg began in 1997 photographing residents at a homeless shelter for women in Jeffersonville, Indiana. Lixenberg returned there repeatedly over a seven-year period creating a body of work that challenged cultural stereotypes about how the homeless should look.

Here her subject, Patricia Miller, is photographed in a manner that emphasizes her radiance and energy. Miller stares defiantly into the distance with piercing blue eyes. She wears a cream-colored dress with thin straps with a matching silk scarf draped across her neck, items she apparently selected from a pile of donated clothes she was helping to organize, as a resident at the shelter.

Photographer and curator Carla Williams wrote that, “Lixenberg’s portraits are not about homelessness in the abstract, or about statistics or journalistic reportage . . . Rather, they are about how we see and thus believe that we understand people,

about how codes of appearance determine our assumption and govern our behavior..., refusing to let us off easy with what we think we already know about them." Lixenberg sees to it that her subjects do not allow their circumstances, nor the assumptions of others, to define them.

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