

Catalogue Essay***Celebrity Portraits from the Andy Warhol Factory Years:
Photographs by Billy Name, Gerard Malanga, Carl Fischer & Curtis Knapp*****The Martin Sanders Collection****Ludwig Museum, Koblenz, Germany**

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Celebrity Portraits from the Andy Warhol Factory Years spans exactly two decades of portrait photography surrounding Andy Warhol's Factory in New York (1963-1983), one of the most important periods for contemporary art. When I began working with Gerard Malanga, Billy Name, Carl Fischer, and Curtis Knapp Warhol in 2005, I saw an opportunity to bring together a fascinating and important body of photographic portraits that had never been exhibited before in a unified context. Some of the photographs by Carl Fischer and Curtis Knapp had not yet been exhibited in a gallery. I found their work so compelling and iconic that I proposed an exhibition to present major works from Warhol years by all four photographers. The resulting exhibition of 30 photographs appeared at Irvine Contemporary gallery in Washington, DC in February 2006. A complete set of the exhibited photographs plus some recent acquisitions now form the Martin Sanders collection of photographs from the Warhol era.

The Warhol Factory Years were the era of Andy Warhol's studios in New York from the time of the "Silver Factory" on E. 47th St. in 1964 through the third and final location on Madison Avenue in the 1980s. The photographers in this exhibition portray Andy Warhol and some of his closest associates, artists, and friends. The images provide an intimate and creative record of a two-decade period that continues to drive important issues in contemporary art. The photographers are well-known individually and their works have been exhibited frequently in other venues. Malanga and Name especially have been seen most often in books and exhibitions documenting the Warhol years, and their works are in many important museum collections. Fischer and Knapp both have had distinguished professional photography careers, but their portraits of Andy Warhol and other Factory personalities had not yet been seen in this larger context until the first exhibition in 2006.

Andy Warhol changed the way we look at portraits of "pop" personalities—musicians, actors and actresses, artists, fashion models—viewed in the context of art. Andy was obsessed with fame, celebrity, youth, and sexiness, and he was rarely seen without a camera. Through his paintings, films, *Interview* magazine, and as a promoter of numerous creative people in his circle, Warhol created a "superstar" machine for accelerating fame and stardom. He would have smiled at the now-famous statement by Madonna, whose multiple celebrity personas would be impossible without Warhol: "what's the point of doing anything off camera?" (As a footnote for this exhibition, Andy Warhol was a guest at Madonna and Sean Penn's wedding in 1985, and Andy and Keith Haring gave her a rare collaborative painting: a silkscreened *New York Post* cover that featured Madonna overlaid with Haring's drawings). Though fixated on personality in

photographed images, Warhol wanted to remove the personality of the photographer or filmmaker from the work, shifting attention to what the camera “saw” and how it transforms a person into an image. Whether emphasizing the intervention of the artist or the media-saturation of popular culture, the artists of the 1960s and 1970s were part of an era that saw photography established as a serious art form that no one could ignore.

The photographs made by Warhol and his collaborators were almost entirely portraits or figurative works, staged in controlled sets or candid shots and “cinema verité” or everything in between. All the portrait images produced by Warhol—silkscreen portraits from photos, film “screen tests,” feature-length films, and still photographs—were motivated by two main goals: to capture and elevate personality, fame, and celebrity (of the moment and in the moment), and to create a momentary defense against time, the transience of life, and death. The Factory scene changed irrevocably after June 1968, when Warhol almost died from gunshot wounds after an assassination attempt. After his recovery, Warhol never held a film camera again, and his artistic and business interests were more guarded, and, as some have argued, more commercial and less interesting. Warhol recovered his fame and celebrity ambitions during the 1980s, when some of his most important paintings and portraits were produced. The photographers in this exhibition present a story in portraits of the two-decade era largely defined by Andy Warhol’s new mythology of the artist as a mirror of culture.

Background on the Photographs and Photographers

Gerard Malanga’s first photographic work was his collaborative project with Andy Warhol known as the *Screen Tests*. Although the name for this series was taken from a Hollywood term for an auditioned movie shot, the “Screen Tests” were actually film portraits shot in one 3-minute take on black and white 16mm film. Gerard had the idea to do a publicity shot for himself in which he and Andy would shoot the motion film and then select out frames to enlarge as stills. The Gerard Malanga self-portraits in this exhibition are from the first Screen Test film shot in the Factory. Malanga also produced a unique color-processed enlargement of a 16mm frame in positive and negative, forming a highly original diptych of his Screen Test portrait. The other screen test images with their distinctive film sprocket holes and multiframe images are examples from the over 500 Screen Test film portraits made in the factory from 1963-1968. Malanga absorbed everything he could learn about the use of images and portraits while working with Warhol, and then went on to develop his own personal style. He has photographed some of the leading celebrities in the arts and literature, including his iconic portrait of Mick Jagger in this exhibition.

Billy Name began working in the Warhol Factory as a photographer in 1964, and his intimate black and white photographs of Andy Warhol and his portraits of the people in the Factory scene became instant icons. His photographs were first published in the catalogue for Warhol’s 1968 retrospective at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, and have appeared in almost every publication about Warhol ever since. Billy’s images have become inextricably connected to Warhol as official icons of the culture and with Warhol’s own mythology and self-image. The photographs have a *noir* romanticism, a sense of immediacy and intimacy that successfully took over the popular imagination about Warhol in the 1960s. His color photographs bring a different sense of the world to light, closer to shots from a family album.

Carl Fischer had his photography studio around the corner from Andy Warhol's house in the Upper East Side of New York, where the photographs in this exhibition were shot. After studying at Cooper Union in New York, Fischer had begun a distinguished career as a photographer for magazines. He shot many of the arresting photographs for the covers *Esquire* magazine in the 1960s. In our post-Photoshop world, we need to notice the extraordinary studio work in his photographs of Warhol in the tomato soup can and Warhol in the mylar room with scars exposed. His portraits of Warhol and the haunting portrait of Julia Warhola, Warhol's mother, holding the iconic portrait of Andy himself, are among the most inventive photographic works of the 1960s.

Curtis Knapp was recruited to shoot for Andy Warhol's *Interview Magazine* in 1982, and the following year he did a series of portraits of Warhol: Warhol at work on a large painting with a red ground and formal studio portraits in black and white and in color. In the same year, he photographed Warhol around New York in informal contexts. His studio portraits of Andy Warhol are among the last formal portraits taken of Andy Warhol before his death in 1987.

Artists' Biographies

Billy Name (born William Linich) is known as Warhol's main "resident photographer" from 1964-70, and is the creator of the look and design of Warhol's famous "Silver Factory." Name photographed most of the celebrities and artists who visited the Factory in the 1960s and is largely responsible for communicating the intimate visual memory of the era. His work has appeared in numerous exhibitions and publications, including a Retrospective of his photography at the Institute of Contemporary Art, London, in 1997, and the book, *All Tomorrow's Parties: Billy Name's Photographs of Andy Warhol's Factory* (1997). Name has a photo archive collection of over 3,000 images from the Warhol era and the art and music scene through the present day.

Gerard Malanga is a photographer, filmmaker, poet, and photo archivist, and he worked closely with Andy Warhol in the 1960s as a studio assistant. He began working at the Factory as Warhol's silkscreen assistant in 1963, and he helped produce Warhol's first silkscreen portrait paintings, "translating pictures into paintings," as he described the process. He soon began collaborating with Warhol on the famous "Screen Test" series shot in the Factory, and he worked on many of Warhol's underground films. His work has appeared in many exhibitions, and recently during the Vienna "Viennale" in 2005 at the Charim Galerie. Malanga has written twenty-three books and numerous articles, and his most recent publications include *No Respect: New and Selected Poems 1964-2000* (2001) and a major book of his photographs, *Gerard Malanga: Screen Tests, Portraits, Nudes 1964-1996* (2003).

Carl Fischer graduated from The Cooper Union and studied in London at the Saint Martins College of Art and Design on a Fulbright Fellowship. He then began his career as an advertising art director in New York, and in the 1950's he opened a photography studio in New York. He produced work that has won numerous awards, including, most recently, awards for his photograph of Andy Warhol in the tomato soup can (in this exhibition) and his portrait of Muhammad Ali, *Esquire Magazine*, which placed in the top

10 "Best 40 Magazine Covers" awarded by The American Society of Magazine Editors. His work has been exhibited internationally and is in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The International Center of Photography, The George Eastman House, and The Rose Art Museum. His book of photography, *Portraits: 1953 to 1984*, was published in 2006. His photograph of Andy Warhol at a typewriter in a closet was exhibited in the Dia Foundation's *Dia's Andy: Through the Lens of Patronage* in 2005-2006.

Curtis Knapp is an award-winning portrait and fashion photographer. He attended the Parsons School of Design, New York. Since the 1980s, he has photographed some of the greatest artists, musicians, actors, writers, and celebrities of our day, including Madonna (her first portrait magazine cover), Laurie Anderson, Lou Reed, REM, Brian Eno, Dennis Hopper, Margaux Hemmingway, and many others. In 1982, he began shooting for Andy Warhol's *Interview Magazine*, and met Warhol in 1983, the year he shot the portraits in our exhibition. Knapp has published seven books of photography, including *Catwalk: Fashion Models of Japan* (1993), *Foto Portraits* (1998), and *Prison's Inside Art* (1999). His portraits of Andy Warhol are among the last formal portraits we have of Warhol before his death in 1987.

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