

ANDY WARHOL

The Andy Warhol Photographic Legacy Project
University of South Carolina Upstate
Spartanburg, South Carolina

ANDY WARHOL

University of South Carolina Upstate Collection

Gift of the Andy Warhol Foundation



(Fig. 1) Lauren Hutton, April 23, 1982, Black and White print, 8X10", Collection USC Upstate.

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(Fig. 2) Male Model, 1982, Black and White Print, 8X10", Collection USC Upstate.

Sifting through mail one day in February 2007, I sorted the usual suspects to a discard pile as I checked emails and listened to voice messages. Some distraction steered me away from the office and the discards stayed on my desk for a few days, or it may have been weeks. My office becomes a maze of papers, equipment and supplies after the first week into the semester and I keep faith my colleagues won't perform an intervention for hoarding. At some point the discard pile resurfaced and a return address for the Andy Warhol Foundation nagged for my attention. Before throwing it directly into the trash I opened the letter to see what sort of solicitation was enclosed. Skimming the first few lines I got to the middle of the letter and realized it was actually directed to me, Jane Nodine, director of the Art Gallery. The content of the letter was offering a gift of original Andy Warhol photographs, if the University of South Carolina Upstate met criteria required by the Foundation. I re-read the letter several times; quite sure I had overlooked some bit of fine-print information, and finally decided it might be authentic. What else to do but Google the names and places, just in case. The pages appeared for the Andy Warhol Foundation; the names of the director and the curator of photography were all listed, as were details of the Andy Warhol Photographic Legacy Program that honors the 20th anniversary of the Warhol Foundation.

The function of the Legacy Program is to make substantial gifts of Warhol photographic works to university and college museums, galleries, and art collections across the United States. The mission of the project is to provide greater access to Warhol's artwork and process and enable a wide range of people from communities across the country to view and study this important yet relatively unknown body of Warhol's work. After exchanging numerous emails and documentation of the University's non-profit status, I was contacted by the Foundation in May and informed that USC Upstate had been approved to receive over 150 of the images from the Foundation's exorbitant collection of 28,543 original Warhol photographs valued at twenty-eight million dollars.

Acquiring 152 original photographs by an artist of Andy Warhol's stature is an exciting experience and yet a daunting responsibility. While the University has had an art gallery for over thirty years and a number of works in their permanent collection, our dealings have primarily included regional and a few nationally recognized artists. So this seemed like an exciting opportunity with the addition of an interesting journey. In accepting the gift, the University, which at that point was me, agreed to promote and make public the collection through exhibitions and research venues.

In March of 2008, Jenny Moore, curator for the Photographic Legacy Program, notified me that shipment of the photographs she had selected for USC Upstate, from the mass of photographs managed by the Foundation would be made in April. Near the end of the month I received a curated selection of 152 mostly unseen original color Polaroid and black and white photographs which include a mix of subjects and styles.

As viewers browse our collection of photographs taken by Warhol during the seventies and eighties, they may question the significance of a single image such as a group of eggs on a dark background, an overhead view of a parking lot, miscellaneous cafeteria food, or endless snapshots of mostly anonymous figures. And viewers would be justified to wonder about them as single images torn from context, because the solo photographs hold modest meaning and alone are not the work of art. The significance of these images lies in the body, or collection, of photographs and in the viewer's chance to see into the mind of the artist: a glimpse, be it ever so slight, into the creative process of Andrew Warhola, better known as Andy Warhol.

The Polaroid portrait photographs served as reference material for Warhol as he manufactured colorful silk-screen portraits for commissions during these years and allowed him to support a rather comfortable and often extravagant lifestyle. But all of the photographs also served as documentation, the documentation of Andy Warhol's life, his day-to-day activities, his collections and visual record of things he saw, people he met, food he ate, and things he did. It was his precursor to Facebook, Twitter or MySpace. Or maybe Warhol's most noted quote, "In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes," (now immortalized as the phrase, "Fifteen Minutes of Fame") gave rise to the social networking blogs we now refer to as *status updates*.

Looking back, this whole process reminds me a bit of watching a dog chase a car, and wondering what he would do if he caught it. I was as surprised to receive these photographs as that dog would have been to find himself in possession of an automobile. Almost three years have passed since the invitation letter arrived from the Warhol Foundation, and I am grateful for the opportunity to write the introduction for the catalogue that will accompany the USC Upstate collection of photographs by Andy Warhol. The University is pleased to offer this modest group of original photographs as a way to further inform, generate discussion, and give explanation about the works and influences of Andy Warhol. In support of the collection I have selected

several scholarly essays to include with the intent to broaden points of view and further expand opinions of this iconic artist and his work.

Generous thanks are due Rachel Snow, Ph.D. art historian, colleague and friend, for her contributions to seeing this project accomplished in scholarly form, and to Dr. Snow's student intern, Heather Shockey, an astute researcher who worked with Dr. Snow during countless hours they dedicated to this project. Special thanks to Catherine Zuromskis, of the University of New Mexico, for her contribution to the catalogue.

August 2010

Jane Allen Nodine

Curtis R. Harley Gallery

University of South Carolina Upstate



Clockwise from top left: (Figs. 3 – 6) Nancy N. Nasher, 5/1979, Polacolor Type 108, Collection USC Upstate.

Andy Warhol: In the Vernacular

Catherine Zuromskis

Few photographers have been as astoundingly prolific as Andy Warhol. A devotee of inexpensive and easy to use photographic technologies, Warhol was seemingly never without his one of his Polaroid “Big Shots” cameras or a small, portable 35mm point-and-shoot. Warhol supported himself throughout the 1970s with lucrative silkscreen portrait commissions all produced from original Polaroids. He also obsessively documented friends, trips, celebrity parties, and daily life with his camera. Warhol published his photographs in books, stitched them together into large serial artworks, and squirreled them away in his monthly “time capsules.” According to one oft repeated account by Bob Colacello, editor of Warhol’s *Interview* magazine throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, during the last decade of his life Warhol shot an estimated one roll of film per day; “at 36 frames per roll,” Colacello estimates, “it added up to over 13,000 images a year, and over 150,000 images in the 12 years between 1976 and 1987.”¹ It is this voracious photographic habit that produced the selection of over 28,500 photographs donated to more than 180 college and university art collections by the Andy Warhol Foundation through the Andy Warhol Photographic Legacy program—their sheer number so staggering they seem to require parceling out into bite size, comprehensible chunks. But even in these representative samplings, Warhol’s photographs seem to defy simple explanation. Perusing the assortment of photographs in this exhibition, one wonders what to make of the series of almost identical 3 ¼ X 4 ¼ inch Polaroid portraits of dramatically pale Nancy Nasher (the renowned art collector) (1979) (Fig. 3 – 6) gazing somberly and somewhat awkwardly over her bare white shoulder, or a decidedly blurry black-and-white 8 x 10 of a station wagon (Fig. 7) parked on a dirt road, its rear door open to reveal a pile of luggage, or a glaring black-and-white print of an unidentified muscular young man in a polo shirt and khakis (Fig. 8) drink in hand (at a party perhaps, though Warhol’s flash has completely obliterated any trace of the background) looking askance at someone beyond the edge of the frame. What do these

¹ Bob Colacello, “Paparazziism: Or How Andy Warhol Became a Real Photographer,” *Social Disease: Photographs '76 – '79*, Karl Steinorth and Thomas Buchsteiner, eds. (Tübingen: Institut für Kulturaustausch, 1992), 16.

photographs tell us about one of the greatest artists of the 20th century, and what do they have to say to each other? In contrast to the relative conceptual clarity and visual uniformity of Warhol's Pop Art silkscreen paintings of soup cans and movie stars or the avant-garde stillness of his experimental film work, the vast and varied corpus of Warhol's photographs seem at once too messy, too heterogeneous, and, to a certain extent, too inconsequential to be fully comprehensible. Indeed, despite the extensive body of critical and scholarly work on the artist and his work, Warhol's photography has, with a few notable exceptions, been given relatively short shrift.²

This is perhaps because Warhol's photographs are not only large in number, they also pose certain challenges to established notions of fine art photography. Photography has never been an easy fit within the art historical canon. Despite the embrace of art photography in museums and galleries over the past 40 years, the medium's technological simplicity, its indexical relation to the physical world, and its mass culture appeal have historically been at odds with the modernist history of art as an expressive, creative, high-cultural form. Indeed, as Christopher Phillips points out in his history of the Museum of Modern Art's vanguard department of photography (the first in an American art museum), even the MoMA was not able to exhibit fine art photography with any real success until the 1960s.³ Thus Warhol's photographs were made in a period when photography itself was still something of a fledgling art medium. Moreover, Warhol's particular style of photography did little to mitigate the issue of photography's debatable status as art. Warhol's deliberately deskilled approach to all art making is particularly in evidence in his photographs. Warhol liked his cameras idiot-proof and used only the most vernacular and limiting of photographic technologies. Warhol also took what, by most aesthetic standards (of his day or ours), would be considered "bad photographs," refusing any kind of technical mastery of lighting, framing, focus, or depth of field. Instead, he favored an approach—one hesitates to call it an aesthetic, even in the raw, unstudied mode of photographers like Larry Clark or Nan Goldin—that conveys banality more than anything else. And if art photographers of the day sought to distance themselves from photography's

² The key exceptions are William Ganis' singular monograph on the subject, *Andy Warhol's Serial Photography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), and two exhibitions, both with extensive catalogs: Gordon Baldwin, ed., *Nadar/Warhol, Paris/New York: Photography and Fame*, (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1999); and *Andy Warhol Photography* (Pittsburgh and Hamburg: The Andy Warhol Museum and Hamburg Kunsthalle, 1999).

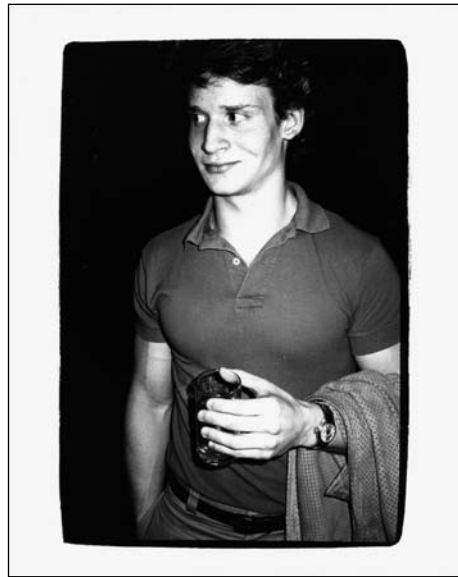
³ Christopher Phillips, "The Judgment Seat of Photography," *October* 22 (1982): 27-63.

ready associations with commercial culture, Warhol did just the opposite, embracing consumerism through his portrait commissions of wealthy socialites, his shutter-bugging at celebrity soirees, and his many, many photographs of his own possessions. As such, Warhol seems to deliberately undermine any and all aesthetic frameworks through which we might read these images. Looking at the range of ways that Warhol produced and employed his photographs, one might define them as instrumental (like the Polaroid maquettes for Warhol's real artworks, the silkscreen portraits) or historical (an exhaustive document of his day-to-day life and social interactions that complemented his obsessive collecting and tape-recording habits), but with few exceptions, it is difficult to read them as works of modern art photography in their own right.

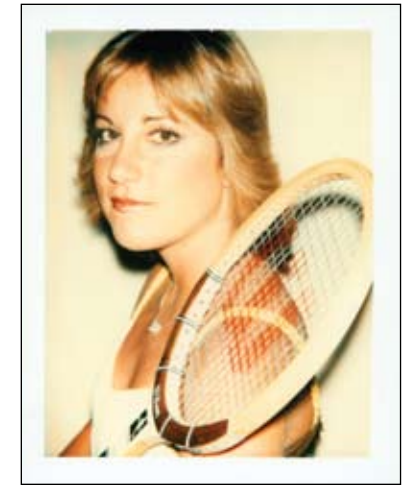
Perhaps, then, the best way to approach the aesthetic value of Warhol's vast corpus of blown out Polaroid portraits and grainy and poorly lit black-and-whites is through a somewhat more indirect route, to follow Warhol's lead and think of them not as works of art, but instead, as precisely what they appear to be: everyday, vernacular photographs. If modern art photography, broadly conceived, suggests a singular, subjective or expressive view of the world, then vernacular photography offers just the opposite. Comprising everything from picture postcards and formulaic studio portraiture to the ubiquitous personal snapshot, vernacular photography is what Geoffrey Batchen has called the "abject" and "ordinary" side of our photographic history.⁴ Vernacular photographs eschew artistry in favor of utility and indexicality. Thus, as Pierre Bourdieu writes, this "middle-brow art" is governed by "an aesthetic which makes the signifier completely subordinate to the signified."⁵ For this reason, the vernacular photograph is often utterly conventional, its singularity, such as it is, a product of its content, not its composition, form, or overall aesthetic. While such images are certainly important to their owners—those who keep and frame them, collate them into albums and paste them to refrigerator doors—they generally hold little interest to the viewer outside the immediate social circle for which the image was intended. If we define Warhol's photographs as "just photographs" in this vernacular sense, then we begin to understand why they are so difficult to pin down. Certainly Warhol's photographs held some significance within the context of his life and world, but this meaning is not readily available to the aesthetically-minded gallery-goer.

⁴ Geoffrey Batchen, "Vernacular Photographies," *Each Wild Idea* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 57.

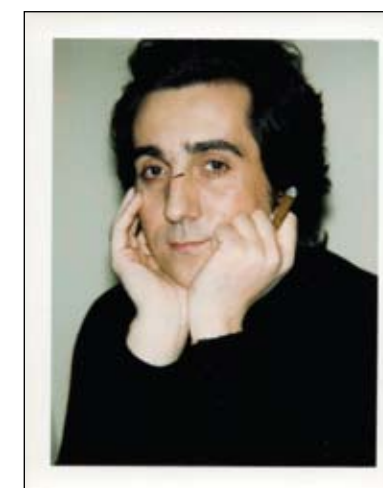
⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, *Photography: A Middle-brow Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 86.



Top and Bottom: (Fig. 7) Station Wagon, 1982, (Fig. 8) Unidentified Man, undated, Black and White Prints, 8X10", Collection USC Upstate.



Clockwise from top left: (Figs. 9, 10) Marge Cowen, 10/1979, Polacolor 2, (Fig. 11) Chris Evert, 1977, Polacolor Type 108 (Fig. 12) Princess Caroline of Monaco, 1983, Polacolor ER, Collection USC Upstate.



Clockwise from top left: (Figs. 13, 14) Gianfranco Ferré, 1980, Polacolor 2, (Figs. 15, 16) Sao Schlumberger, 9/1973, Polacolor Type 108, Collection USC Upstate.

Clockwise from top left: (Figs. 17 - 20) Luciano Anselmino, Polacolor Type 108, Collection USC Upstate.

That said, buried within the banality of Warhol's photography is something quite revolutionary: a form of intimacy and social commentary that challenges dominant characterizations of Warhol as a detached, superficial voyeur, obsessed with money and stardom but devoid of real humanity. Vernacular photography, particularly in the "snapshot" mode, is not just a private documentary process; it is also a social tool. In dramatic contrast to conventional readings of photography as primarily voyeuristic, a means of capturing and laying claim (as Susan Sontag suggests in her seminal book *On Photography*) vernacular photographs often exist to create social connections and to signify people and things that the photographer feels affection for.⁶ Thus to take or to view a photograph is to presume a certain intimacy with and between the subjects. Over the course of the 120 years since the first snapshot camera was introduced, amateur, vernacular photography has become integral to the formation and maintenance of social and familial bonds and is often an essential part of social rituals from birth, marriage, and family gatherings to high school proms and family vacations. These ritual images are often visually formulaic in the extreme, rife with rigid frontal poses, awkward gestures of affection, and forced smiles, but the act of taking them is a signifying practice, marking something as important, worthy of photographing. The circulation and exchange of these images is a gesture of friendship and inclusion as well, wherein to view a snapshot or a picture postcard is a kind of virtual participation in what is represented. The image implies what the standard postcard message states outright: "wish you were here."

Part of the pleasure of viewing Warhol's photographs is precisely this vicarious participation in Warhol's world and the unique access they provide behind the public façade of celebrity culture. This phenomenon is certainly central to the way we understand Warhol's portrait Polaroids. Included in this exhibition are a number of these Polaroids, most of them, the unused leftovers from the photo shoots that produced finished silkscreen portraits for Marge Cowan (Figs. 9, 10) Chris Evert (Fig. 11) Princess Caroline of Monaco (Fig. 12) and many others. A glimpse inside the portrait process may help to explain what these images connote. According to Vincent Freemont, Warhol's portrait sessions generally began with a buffet lunch as an opportunity for Warhol to "break the ice" with his subjects.⁷ Mixing and mingling with Warhol's friends, associates, and Factory denizens, the portrait subject had the opportunity

to chat, share stories, and engage in the social world of the Factory. Once the congenial atmosphere between photographer and subject was established, Warhol began the photographic session itself by transforming the subject for the portrait image. Women, in particular, were often painted with white face make-up to hide wrinkles and blemishes and enhance the contrast of the Polaroid image for the silkscreen transfer. They also frequently disrobed and appear wrapped in a familiar blue-and-white checked sheet in order to bare their neck and shoulders for the camera. Warhol then directed the subjects as they posed for dozens of shots in a sitting, from which Warhol would select the five best candidates for the silkscreen portrait. Through this meticulous process, Warhol arrived at a completed silkscreen portrait that bathed the sitter in flawless celebrity artifice. Stylishly posed, brilliantly colored, and reducing the face to a clean, unblemished abstraction, the finished portraits inject the subject, whomever he or she may be, with Warhol's signature star look, one that has since become a visual shorthand for celebrity vanity and narcissism. Yet the Polaroid originals and, more specifically, the Polaroids that were not chosen for silkscreening have a rather different effect. Part of this is due to the Polaroid medium itself. The small instant photos seem like silly little novelties, "test shots" or "outtakes" perhaps, the epitome of trivial vernacularity. Further emphasizing their anti-monumentality is the fact that, when given the luxury of examining a sequence of six or seven shots together, we see the cracks in the serious façade of Warhol's rich and powerful portrait subjects begin to emerge. The shy playfulness or silly pomposity of fashion designer Gianfranco Ferré (Fig. 13, 14), socialite and art collector Sao Schlumberger (Fig. 15, 16) and Italian art dealer Luciano Anselmino (Fig. 17 – 20) reveal themselves in a poorly timed blink, a stifled laugh, a flicker of boredom, or a brooding seriousness and formal affectation that comes off as slightly ridiculous in the Polaroid photo. If the final silkscreen portrait is an exercise in constructing celebrity artifice (even for those who might not be recognizably famous to begin with), then the photo session reveals glimpses of the charming, slightly flawed humanity that necessarily lies beneath the glittering superficiality. Caught in the Polaroid moment, Warhol's subjects let slip their true selves, foibles and all, in the very act of trying to obscure them. Also included in the selection here are a small sampling of the tens of thousands of black-and-white photos that Warhol shot with his Minox, Konica, Chinon, and Minolta 35mm cameras during the latter half of his career. The subjects of these photographs are both everything and nothing: friends, celebrity parties, and trips to China and Washington, DC, but also half eaten meals, shop windows, and parking lots. The images seem, in one sense, to be a sampling of Warhol's personal snapshots, yet Warhol's glamorous lifestyle (particularly in the 1970s and

⁶ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Doubleday, 1973).

⁷ Vincent Freemont, "Sometime Around 1970, Andy Warhol Bought a Big Shot Camera," *Andy Warhol Photography*, 157-160.

80s when his own fame as an artist and cultural figure was well established) elevates these vernacular glimpses of day-to-day life to something more. Warhol published a small selection of photographs like those on view in this exhibition in a series of books—*Exposures* (1979), *America* (1985), and *Andy Warhol's Party Book* (published posthumously in 1988)—essentially acknowledging the appeal of his “snapshots” to a broader public audience and inviting us into his social world.⁸ Looking through these photographs, one is struck both by the stardom on display, and the casualness, even indifference with which Warhol seems to record his subjects. Here is young and handsome Christopher Reeve (Fig. 21) out on the town with friends. There is Lauren Hutton, (Fig. 1) sitting anxiously in the audience before a fashion show. Using his own fame to get behind the scenes, Warhol plays the role of both celebrity and fan, snapping elegant models at Halston's showroom (Fig. 22) and sharing an awkward smile with Rolling Stone editor Jann Wenner (Fig. 23). At the same time, however, these celebrity photos are anything but glamorous. These works, again, challenge fundamental notions of what art photography should look like. Even good friend and collaborator Christopher Makos' extensive retouching could not compensate for Warhol's erratic use of flash and frame, pointing and shooting wherever he liked with seemingly no regard for the look or legibility of the finished photo. The resulting images, then, are remarkably unflattering even as casual snapshots. Jann Wenner, on second glance is not smiling at Warhol, but smirking lasciviously at a woman, the back of whose head occupies the majority of the frame. And Lauren Hutton offers not her famous gap-toothed smile, but a blank, slightly harried stare, her hand clutching at her hair in bemusement.

The point here is not that Warhol makes his subjects look ugly (though at times he does), but rather that he captures them in moments where they appear, to use Warhol's term, “unfamous.”⁹ Even the dashing handsome Christopher Reeve appears here in an unfamous moment, lips parted mid-sentence, a diminutive glass of wine clutched in his massive hand, his two male companions lurching toward and away from the burst of the flash. Through his thoroughly vernacular, content driven photographs, then, Warhol does not simply invite us to join him in ogling the celebrity spectacle; rather, he prompts us to imagine that their lives

⁸ Andy Warhol, *Andy Warhol's Exposures* (New York: Andy Warhol Books/Grosset & Dunlap, 1979); Andy Warhol, *America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985); Andy Warhol, *Andy Warhol's Party Book* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1988).

⁹ Warhol, *Exposures*, 19.

are no more exceptional than our own, and thus, that the lines between celebrity and everyday life are entirely permeable. In Warhol's thoroughly inclusive photographic record, everyone and everything finds itself on strikingly equal footing.

Both the Polaroids and the black-and-white photographs of celebrity culture establish an interdependence between the extremes of celebrity artifice and performance on the one hand and the realm of the quotidian on the other. Warhol's celebrity subjects are relatable because they are both famous and unfamous (and so, potentially, are his viewers). The same applies to Warhol himself. In his many self-portraits, books, and interviews, Warhol performs a kind of aesthetic inscrutability, transforming himself into an ethereal icon, all vapid mien and silver wig. This is the Warhol most of us are familiar with, yet looking through this exhibition we encounter a different Warhol, a living, breathing, desiring Warhol who reveals his extraordinary ordinariness through his photographic habits. Particularly significant in this regard are the photographs that address Warhol's sexual desires. Most emphatic among these are the sex pictures, Polaroids of male genitals and sex acts (often between friend Victor Hugo and men that he picked up in bars and brought to the Factory for Warhol's pornographic photo sessions) that were, according to accounts by Colacello, a somewhat routine practice for Warhol.¹⁰ Yet Warhol's private life and desires emerge as well in his black-and-white snapshots of handsome young men eating, drinking, and socializing and the many photographs of Warhol's boyfriend Jon Gould (according to William Ganis, Warhol's single most frequent photographic subject) (Fig. 24, 25). Warhol's “swishy” persona was something of an anomaly in the art world of the 1960s when he first made a name for himself as an artist. Even gay contemporaries like Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg (the latter featured here in a suggestive photograph relieving himself in a men's bathroom) (Fig. 26) played it relatively straight in public. But here, Warhol's queer desires are explicit and unapologetic, forcing us to acknowledge the complexity of his own enigmatic celebrity persona and the impulses and intimacies that lie beneath it.

In his consideration of Warhol's life-long fascination with documentary technologies (tape recorders, movie cameras, and of course, photography), Jonathan Flatley has argued that the camera, for Warhol, was essentially a machine “for liking.”¹¹ In so doing, Flatley suggests

¹⁰ Bob Colacello, *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990), 344.

¹¹ Jonathan Flatley, “Art Machine,” *Sol Lewitt: Incomplete Open Cubes* (Hartford: Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, 2001), 86-7. Flatley has expanded upon the conceptual, social, and political implications of Warhol's unique capacity for “liking” in his more recent essay, “Like: Collecting and Collectivity,” *October* 132 (2010): 71-98.



Top to bottom: (Fig. 21) Christopher Reeve in Center of Three men, February 20, 1979, (Fig. 22) Pat Cleveland, Undated, Black and White Prints, 8X10", Collection USC Upstate.



Top to bottom: (Fig. 23) Jann Wenner and Unidentified Woman, Undated, (Fig. 24, 25) Jon Gould, Undated, Black and White Prints, 8X10", Collection USC Upstate.

that to represent or produce a likeness was also, for Warhol, a gesture of connection, simulation, and, I would add, affection. By sidestepping the consideration of aesthetics and embracing the vernacularity of Warhol's photography, we see that the medium was a dynamic part of Warhol's social life, forging social and sexual connections between the artist and his subjects and revealing subtle (and not so subtle) moments of humanity and banality beneath the dazzling artifice of celebrity culture. In this context, even Warhol's photographs of half eaten meals and parking lots are important; they are all part of Warhol's visible, democratically "likeable" world and thus deserve our attention. Yet it is also here, in the exciting and utterly mundane photographic traces of Warhol's life, that we ultimately arrive upon the true art of these images. Warhol is undoubtedly one of the most difficult and complex artists of the 20th century, in no small part because of his tenacious refusal to concretely define the terms of his aesthetic practice. Warhol's art can, in some sense, be located precisely in his denial of, to borrow a phrase from Allan Kaprow, "the separation of art and life." This is evident in Warhol's iconic Pop Art paintings of Campbell's soup cans; representing both a familiar American brand and Warhol's lunch of choice these paintings pugnaciously and brilliantly problematize the rarified space of the art gallery with consumer culture. Conversely, Warhol's photographs of the everyday lives of both celebrities and nobodies deserve our conceptual consideration as artworks for the way that they force us to reconsider issues of aesthetics, social relations, sexual politics, and indeed, our very understanding of Warhol himself as an artist, a businessman, a celebrity, and an individual. By refusing to distinguish fine art from the vernacular, Warhol at once undermines conventional aesthetics and broadens them, inviting all of us into his quotidian world of life and art.



(Fig. 26) Robert Rauschenberg, Undated, Black and White Print, 8X10", Collection USC Upstate.

Warhol In and Out of the Still Life Tradition

Rachel Snow



(Fig. 27) Table setting, undated, Black and White Print, 8X10", Collection USC Upstate.

Many of Andy Warhol's photographs, including those acquired in 2008 by the University of South Carolina Upstate as part of the Andy Warhol Photographic Legacy Program, reference long-standing art historical genres. The collection primarily features portraiture, but it also includes nudes and still lifes. This essay focuses on the last category to discover the ways that Warhol both relies upon and subverts conventions of the still life genre.

Warhol's black and white photograph of a formally set dinner table is perhaps the most traditional still life in the USC Upstate collection (Fig. 27). An uneaten roll on a small porcelain plate comprises the image's focal point. It is located in the brightest part of the photograph and there are no objects obscuring it. A pack of Chesterfield cigarettes appears directly behind the plate, helping to create a clear diagonal line leading the viewer's eye into the background. The scene's tight framing highlights the artist's presence but also leaves enough room to suggest that a spot has been left for the viewer at the table. These are compositional devices seen again and again in the still life genre. As with many images in the USC Upstate collection, it can be hard to tell if Warhol actively composed this scene into the still life that he wanted, or if he found, framed and preserved an authentic moment with his camera. Whether through recognition and appropriation or through active manipulation of the objects present at the time of creation, works like this demonstrate that Warhol was using visual tropes from the still life tradition.

In her essay "Objects of Desire: the Modern Still Life," curator Margit Rowell suggests that, "Throughout history the still life has been defined as a composition of inanimate (usually domestic) objects, and it is this fundamental limitation that has allowed, indeed obliged, artists to exhibit a high degree of imagination and invention in order to achieve true originality in the genre."¹

¹ Margit Rowell, "Objects of Desire: The Modern Still Life," MoMa 25 (Summer 1997); 2. Rowell provides a more in-depth examination of the still life genre in the exhibition catalog, Margit Rowell, *Objects of Desire: The Modern Still Life*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1997).

This originality might be located in formal and technical innovation, but it also might be secured through a re-envisioning of what qualifies as appropriate subject matter for the still life genre. On both of these levels, Warhol's still lifes present a kind of originality. Having said this, however, it is important to add that Warhol's art, with its heavy reliance on the appropriation of pre-existing imagery, presents a complicated relationship to the very notion of originality. Indeed his art questions the concept of originality and subverts this concept's important role in the definition and evaluation of art. In Warhol's case, it is also worth cautioning against the impulse to associate innovation with the usual markers of technical skill, especially those that fetishize the artist's personal touch and handling of materials. In fact, Warhol's defiance of these expectations constitutes a large part of his contribution to art history.

Like Warhol, many artists working in the United States pop art movement of the 1960s were interested in exploring the still life genre. Despite important differences among these artists, all were all looking for ways to investigate modern modes of production and consumption and for a means to challenge the separation between high and low forms of culture. While these are not the only characteristics of pop art, they do provide a platform for exploring why pop artists, including Warhol, were interested in the still life genre.²

Though representations of familiar objects from everyday life have been made for millennia, the category of the still life with which these artists played was formulated in more recent times. From the sixteenth century until the end of the nineteenth century Western art was separated into genres, or distinct categories that were ranked in order of importance. First formulated by Italian theoreticians, this idea was later formalized and disseminated by art academies across Europe. In 1667, André Félibien (1619-95) distilled and codified the theory of the hierarchy of the genres, placing history painting (including religious narratives and allegorical subjects) at the top, portrait painting next, then genre painting (or scenes of everyday life), followed by landscapes and cityscapes and animal painting. The still life genre came last.³ Félibien based his ranking on an interpretation of ancient theory arguing that it takes more

² There is no consensus among scholars about the aims of pop art. However, Jennifer Dyer and Stephen Bann provide effective overviews of key critical positions in this debate. See Jennifer Dyer, "The Metaphysics of the Mundane: Understanding Andy Warhol's Serial Imagery," *Artibus et Historiae* vol. 25, no. 49 (2004) and Stephen Bann, "Pop Art and Genre," *New Literary History* vol. 24, no. 1 (Winter 1993).

³ Paul Duro, "Imitation and Authority: the Creation of the Academic Canon in French Art, 1648-1870," in Anna Brzyski, *Partisan Canons* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 96-7.

intellectual effort and moral fortitude to render the ideal essence of things and people than it does to depict the world as it is, that is, to merely mechanically copy the real appearance of things. Thus, the still life genre was the lowest of the low, because it was thought to merely record the observable world while allegorical history paintings conveyed a moral and intellectual message.

This hierarchical system held sway over Western art until the decline of academies in the late nineteenth century, at which time the still life genre flourished, becoming a favorite subject matter. Impressionist, post-impressionist and many other twentieth century artists who followed them, including Picasso and Braque, used the genre to work out their formal experiments. Once classed among the lowest forms of artistic expression, still lifes were increasingly associated with the avant garde. The 'redemption' of the still life genre was a fitting turn of events and just one sign that the twentieth century would be largely dedicated to questioning old definitions of art and erasing the separation of art from everyday experience.

Pop artists were not only attracted to the still life genre because of its historically marginalized position. They also identified with its overt exploration of issues of consumption, issues that inevitably highlighted art's own status as a commodity. Examples of the genre's connection with consumption abound in sixteenth and seventeenth century Dutch painting, for example, where themes of desire, sensual pleasure, wealth and possession take center stage. In this time and place, the still life genre flourished against the historical backdrop of mercantile capitalism and the rise of a newly rich merchant class, who spent money commissioning paintings of the things they could now consume. Art historian R. G. Saisselin further argues that the rare, valuable and beautiful objects in Dutch still life paintings were deemed worthy of depiction because they acted as an indirect portrait of their possessor.⁴

Dutch artists created countless still lifes featuring any and all kinds of commodities: flowers, food, drink, tobacco, fine tableware, furniture, textiles, coins, pearls, jewels, and more . . . items evocative of sensuous pleasure that could whet the appetite and please the eye. Jan Davidsz de Heem's (c. 1606-84) *A Table of Desserts* (1640) is a representative example. Like many others of its kind, this painting seems to encourage indulgence of one's desires and unbridled consumption of food and goods. At the same time, this work has a

⁴ R. G. Saisselin, "Still-Life Paintings in a Consumer Society," *Leonardo*, vol. 9, no. 3 (Summer, 1976): 202.

symbolically-coded subtext warning against indulgence. This type of painting, known as *vanitas* or *memento mori*, underscores the brevity of all earthly delights. *Memento mori* literally translates from Latin as “Remember you must die.” In de Heem’s painting, the watch with the blue strap on the left hand side of the table, for example, is a reference to the fleeting nature of time and a reminder to exercise moderation in the face of temptations. The symbolic content of Dutch still life is often lost on modern viewers, but, at the time, widely circulated emblem books would have educated the viewing public about the symbolic meaning of a wilting flower, a peeled lemon, or a smoldering candle. In de Heem’s painting, the lute and recorder, would have been understood as a veiled reference to the transitory and fleeting nature of sensual pleasures like food and music. Dutch still life painters created for an audience steeped in a common ritualistic and spiritual culture. De Heem’s painting, for example, is rife with Christian symbolism. The bread and wine on the right side of the table reference the Eucharist, the peaches and apples are meant to evoke associations with the forbidden fruit, cherries symbolize Paradise, and the grapes reference salvation. Nearly everything pictured in this (and most Dutch still lifes) had symbolic import.

As in Dutch paintings, many of the objects in Warhol’s still lifes remain signifiers, but, in contrast to the Dutch tradition, these objects and their meanings now emerge out of the secular realm, specifically, out of our shared popular culture. Objects in Warhol’s works are impersonal and often impenetrable, especially in comparison to the warm domestic interiors of Dutch still lifes with their display of precious, rare, and often hand-crafted luxuries. Warhol’s paintings of Campbell’s soup cans might evoke emotion, but the emotions they evoke have already been pre-processed in advertising and other forms of mass media. How the viewer feels about these objects is already determined before Warhol’s deployment of them in his compositions. Unlike the Dutch still life paintings, pop art still life images are not portraits of possession, nor are they tied to religious rituals, although one could argue the case that they do retain a certain vestigial moralizing tone.

Arguably, Warhol’s black and white silkscreen paintings from the *Tuna Fish Disaster* series (1963) can be considered a pop art version of the *memento mori*. Works from this series feature elements Warhol appropriated from a *Newsweek* story about tainted tuna that killed two Detroit house wives. All eleven works include degraded reproductions of photographs of the two victims and a seized can of tuna. Some versions of the work contain a reprint of the

entire story, while several others simply include the caption that appeared in the original story underneath the image of the poisonous can of tuna. Though *Tuna Disaster* is less subtle than traditional *memento mori* images, the final message remains the same: life is short and can be snuffed out at any moment. Like Dutch still lifes, these paintings also warn viewers to be careful of what they consume. Even though they do not narrate a story in the same way, Warhol’s numerous Polaroids showing switchblades, straight razors and all kinds of knives also can be viewed as references to death and harm. Warhol’s allusions to the tradition of the *memento mori* reveal both the depth of his immersion in the history of the still life genre and the ways in which he breaks from this history, creating new forms appropriate to his own distinctive cultural milieu. Investigating issues particular to his own times, Warhol used the still life genre to address the problem of consumption and to blur high and low culture.

Unlike Dutch still life paintings, Pop art foregrounds mass culture, not individual luxury. Saisselin puts it succinctly: “Pop art still lifes are not invitations to touch, taste and enjoy, but merely to consume.”⁵ But the consumption of mass culture is not, ultimately, a simple thing, and, like the Dutch still life painters before them, pop artists seem to have recognized and appreciated the genre’s multivalent character, its ability to offer the space for multiple layers of meaning. Sometimes pop still lifes appear to hedonistically celebrate the display of commodities and the ways that consumption enhances human existence with its earthly, sensuous delights. But the same still lifes could be read as coded critiques of consumption and as a warning against overdoing it. Pop artist Claes Oldenburg’s (1929-) famous soft sculpture *Giant Hamburger* (1962), for example, presents the viewer with something typically associated with pleasure, but on an enormous scale and with a peculiar texture that also provokes feelings of disgust.

Much subtler in overall effect than Oldenburg’s *Giant Hamburger*, Warhol’s still life compositions often feature brand names like Chesterfield and American Express to evoke the commodification of American culture and everything, good and bad, attendant upon this process. Initially training and working as a graphic designer and commercial artist outside of the museum/gallery context, Warhol was particularly attuned to the role graphic images play in the commodification of culture. He made posters, designed shoes, and created window displays for department stores. Thus, his work has always involved some form of arranging and displaying

⁵ Ibid.



(Fig. 28) Table Setting, Undated, Black and White Print, 8X10", Collection USC Upstate.



(Fig. 29) Stores, Undated, Black and White Print, 8X10", Collection USC Upstate.

commercial objects. Given this history, it comes as little surprise that Warhol's still lifes emphasize the commercialization of objects and the world of mass produced commodities. Even when his photographs are couched in the traditional compositional language of the still life, Warhol's works in the genre become complex ruminations on the process of selling and being sold to, on the act and experience of consumption itself in late twentieth century America.

The complexity of Warhol's investment in the still life genre is evident in several works from the USC Upstate collection, including his photograph of a tea service featuring a bottle of Perrier placed next to a basket with fruit and cookies (Fig. 28). The tea cup has only a small bit of tea left in it, and the fruit basket is partially empty. A half consumed banana also appears on a small plate on the right hand side of the composition. At first glance, this attractive tableau, like many traditional still lifes before it, creates a cozy, almost homey feeling. However, closer examination reveals the presence of a generic, pre-printed greeting card from a German Hotel welcoming guests and wishing them a pleasant stay. This is really a still life photograph of a commodified display that was already composed and pre-packaged for Warhol as a guest of the hotel. Recognizing the fortuity of this situation, he used his camera to appropriate the composition. Meanwhile, the browning banana peel could be an allusion to the tradition of the *memento mori*, but it could also be regarded as a clever nod to another commodity, Warhol's own work. In fact, he used images of bananas so frequently in his work that the presence in this image of this fruit serves as a kind of signature. Here, therefore, Warhol has deployed an object which alludes simultaneously to both the traditional symbolic meanings associated with the still life genre and to his own celebrity as status as a brand name, in effect, to his status as a commodified object.

An even more familiar kind of commodity display is on offer in his photograph showing a typical bakery case filled with pastries, pies, cakes, muffins and tarts (Fig. 29). Even though the photograph is black and white, the viewer's eye is still invited to peruse the items lined up one after another, demonstrating American ideals of endless choice and total abundance. The glare created by the light pouring in from the windows opposite the display case creates a dazzling flash that punctures the surface of the image with shimmer but also captures a faint reflection of a person, who occupies the same space as the photographer. This is very similar to techniques observed in Dutch still life paintings, where painters would show off their skills by reproducing in minute detail the world outside of the painting using reflections on the surface

of shiny metal objects, glass, or mirrors. Of course, true to the techniques of pop art, Warhol reminds us that none of this dazzlingly displayed abundance comes for free through his inclusion of an American Express Card imprinter and a paper receipt that sits on top of it.

Warhol once again merges the language of art and commerce in his black and white photograph showing a collection of perfume bottles, a few open cosmetic cases, a tube of lipstick, and a large, heart-shaped metal necklace on a tasseled string (Fig. 30). These objects are placed against a plain background and are evenly lit in a manner reminiscent of commercial photography. One of the primary objectives of commercial photography is to take banal, mass-produced consumer objects and represent them as something worthy of special attention, as if they are precious and unique while they are in fact obtainable by everyone. The items Warhol has pictured in this photograph are ideal examples of American consumer culture because they are used to construct a desirable self-image for public display. Yet, in contrast to most commercial photographs, this image is generic. It has no aura of luxury or sensuality about it. Indeed, it is somewhat uncanny to see these items removed from the ideological context of advertising, stripped bare of typical allusions to luxury, beauty, and wealth. Even without glaring references to brand names and the artistic contrivances found in still life paintings, most viewers will effortlessly associate the items pictured with the genre and narratives of consumption. Proving that it only takes the most minimal suggestions to evoke these narratives once they have been engrained through cultural training.

Although less elaborate in subject matter and less visually nuanced than his black and white photographic prints, some of Warhol's Polaroids are surprisingly beautiful in ways one might not expect from this particular artist and certainly not from this form of photography, with its stress on automation and instantaneity. Most of the time Warhol works with these aspects of the medium, but occasionally he works against it. His Polaroid of seven very bright white eggs against a deep black background, for example, shows concern for traditional art techniques like balance, contrast, and composition (Fig. 31). While one can recognize that the objects are eggs, the color contrast is so strong that they are transformed into a modernist abstraction that can be appreciated formally.

Most of Warhol's Polaroid still lifes depict just a few of the same type of object or a single iconic object. Isolated or in a group, the objects are almost always photographed close-up



(Fig. 30) Perfume, Undated, Black and White Print, 8X10", Collection USC Upstate.

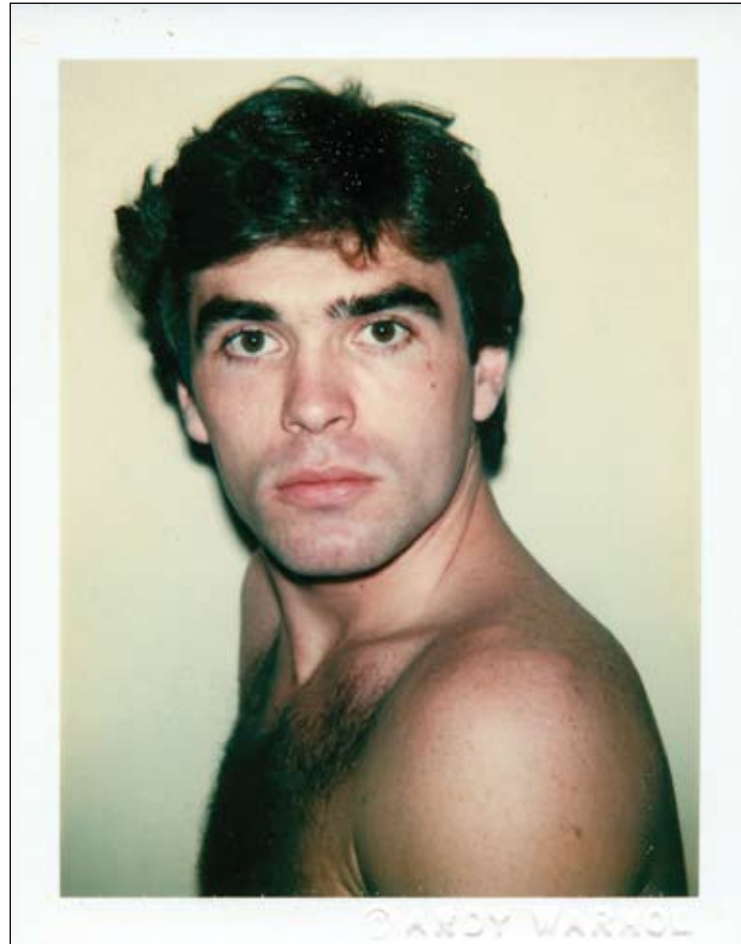


Clockwise from top left: (Fig. 31) Easter Eggs, 1982, (Fig. 32) Shoes, 1980, (Fig. 33) Food Still Life, 1986, (Fig. 34) Japanese Toy, 1983, Polacolor 2, Collection USC Upstate.

and against a starkly minimal and (usually) white background. This formula monumentalizes the inconsequential and the kitschy. It also has a leveling effect visually. Whether the subject is a pile of women's high-heeled shoes, a plate of cooked pasta, or a plastic toy, after viewing enough of Warhol's Polaroid still lifes, they all start to appear strikingly similar, as if they were made on an assembly line (Figs. 32, 33, 34). The still life genre has largely shed its historical reputation as the lowest of all possible subject matter. However, many of Warhol's still life Polaroids, including those just mentioned, seem to underscore and even celebrate the genre's past associations with low culture. The genre was previously marginalized because it was thought to merely record anything and everything in the observable world. Warhol delights in this idea and exploits it to its fullest. This paradox is typical of Warhol's work. When considered as a whole, we observe in his career a body of imagery where high and low meet and where the hierarchies connoted by such words become indistinguishably confused. Regardless of the medium used, Warhol's art highlights the fact that we have deeply complicated relationships to the world of objects. His still life photographs present an invitation to think about these relationships, how they are formed and what they might tell us about our moment in history.

Portrait as Process: Andy Warhol's Polaroid to Silkscreen Method

Heather Shockey



(Fig. 35) Sean McKeon, 8/1980 Polacolor 2, Collection USC Upstate.

In 1970, Andy Warhol bought his first camera, a Polaroid Big Shot, which was ideal for portrait photography. Warhol's own words regarding the Polaroid camera are simple and elegant, "Mr. Land invented this great camera called a Polaroid. And it takes the face of a person. There is something about the camera that makes the person look just right. They usually come out great." This camera required no focusing; subjects would sit four to five feet from the photographer, and the resulting image was perfectly cropped, showing just the head and shoulders of the person. When Polaroid discontinued making the camera in 1973, Warhol contacted the company and purchased all of the remaining stock. It is unknown how many cameras he purchased, but he continued to use the Big Shot until his death in 1987¹. Aside from the easy mechanics, another advantage of this camera was that it used pack film in which the picture was actually pulled from the camera. Once removed, the photographer would wait a minute and a half for the picture to develop and then peel back the negative. The negative was usually discarded, but Warhol had it blown up in size to the standard 40" x 40" used for all of his silkscreen portraits. A very light image of the photograph would be transferred to the canvas and Warhol would add the colors. Finally, the image would then be transposed over the painted canvas, completing the portrait. At least two factors prompted Warhol's development and continued use of the Polaroid to silkscreen portrait process. One involved Warhol's fear of violating the strict copyright infringement laws passed by Congress in 1976. Around this time Warhol moved away from using images created by others (Marilyn, Elvis, Dollar Bills, Coca Cola) and instead he began creating art from photographs he personally took and to which he owned the rights, like those that appear in this exhibition. Keeping possible copyright issues in mind, Warhol sometimes had people dress in costume for the Polaroids. Sean McKeon, a Wilhelmina model, posed bare-chested for Warhol in 1980 (Fig. 35). In 1981, Warhol had him pose as Dracula (Fig. 33). This image became the basis for one of the paintings in Warhol's *Myth Series*, which consists of characters well-known in American society.

¹ Pat Hackett, *The Andy Warhol Diaries* (New York: Warner Books, 1991), xiv.

The iconic cast included but was not limited to Uncle Sam, Howdy Doody, The Wicked Witch, Santa Claus and Dracula.

The other important factor in Warhol's development and continued use of the Polaroid to silkscreen portrait process was the success of his Marilyn and Elvis silkscreens in the 1960s, which triggered the desire of other celebrities and prominent social figures to have their portraits completed by Warhol. Furthermore, his silkscreen portraits were idealized versions of his sitters, making them highly marketable. Bob Colacello recalled:

His portraits transformed aging socialites into Venus de Milos, and their industrial husbands into Florentine Davids – or at least, into Hollywood facsimiles thereof . . . What Andy did to the negatives was more like plastic surgery . . . He simply took scissors and snipped out double chins, bumps in noses, bags under eyes . . . ‘God,’ I said, as I watched him attack a whole neck and scissor away seventy years of wrinkles, ‘is that how you do it?’²

Warhol's own account of his working process supports Colacello's recollection. He once commented, “I take at least 200 pictures and then I choose. Sometimes I take half a picture and a lip from another picture.” Warhol's silkscreen portraits were idealized versions of his subjects and that is why they were so marketable. Fred Hughes, Warhol's business manager, encouraged this process and began to actively market the concept, often setting up lunches and meetings with anyone and everyone who might be interested in having their portrait completed. Each finished painting would cost \$25,000, with additional canvases of the same image in different colors initially costing \$5,000 each, which over the years rose to \$20,000.³

Interestingly, the Polaroids in question have a “headshot” quality that might, in part, be traced back to a formative childhood experience. When just a boy, the artist developed a disease of the nervous system that caused him to miss his entire third grade year of school. He spent most of that time in bed. His mother entertained him by buying him movie star magazines. Warhol would spend hours cutting out pictures of the rich and famous to hang

around his cot in the living room. Perhaps this is when Warhol began to absorb early but influential lessons regarding visual constructions of celebrity and glamour. However, the effect of this intense exposure to popular culture at a young age should not be overemphasized. It is certainly not the only, or even the most significant life experience that contributed to Warhol's interest in popular imagery. One thing remains clear, regardless of these portraits' source or impetus, they reflect the artist's life-long exploration of how people and things become images and how those images, in turn, become commodities. Sitting for Warhol might make one look famous, but it also entailed submitting one's image to incessant repetition. Not only did Warhol idealize them and turn them into stars in their own minds, he also entered that idealized image into a system of mass reproduction. As this exhibit demonstrates, hardly any of the portraits are singular. This is an important realization because it highlights the fact that each one is significant not as a finished, unique product, but rather as a process, resulting in multiple phases and modes of production and a wide array of outcomes (and products to sell).

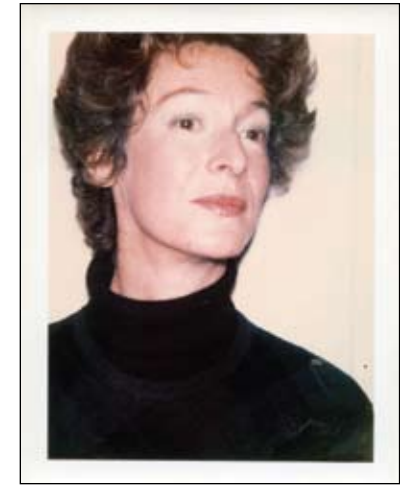
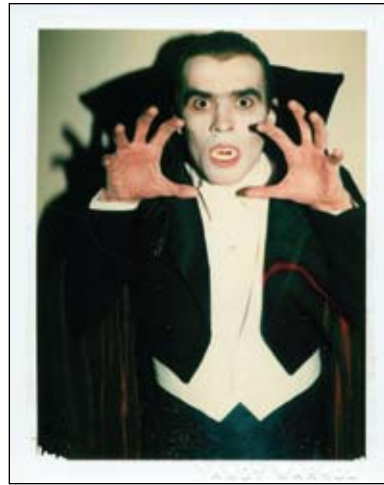
A new and deeper appreciation and understanding of the Polaroids contained within this exhibition emerges when comparing the photographic image to its companion silkscreen portrait. Some of the faces are recognizable, such as Pia Zadora (1983) (Fig. 34) and Caroline, Princess of Monaco (1983) (Fig. 9). One of Warhol's finished silkscreen portraits of the Princess was used for the December 1983 cover of *Vogue* magazine. Other subjects are less familiar, such as Suzie Frankfurt (1980) (Figs. 35). Frankfurt worked as an interior designer for the stars, and met Warhol at the Plaza Hotel in 1954⁴. Sharing a similar sense of humor, they became lifelong friends who would often go antique shopping together. They also collaborated on an amusing cookbook called *Wild Raspberries* (1956). Contributions to the book were made by Frankfurt, Warhol, and Warhol's mother, Julia. Frankfurt wrote the recipes, Warhol illustrated the volume, and Julia's scrawled penmanship and characteristic misspellings made for a delightful read. The work includes such recipes as “Omelette Greta Garbo” with the instructions “always to be eaten alone in a candlelit room.”⁵ Another relatively unknown figure in this exhibition is Luciano Anselmino. Anselmino was an Italian art dealer who introduced Warhol to the artist Man Ray. Warhol traveled to Paris to photograph May Ray for a commissioned silkscreen and he took several Polaroid portraits of Anselmino at the same time (Fig. 39, 17 – 20).

² Bob Colacello, *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990), 89.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Mitchell Owens, “Suzie Frankfurt, 73, a Decorator and Friend to Warhol, Dies,” *New York Times* (January 17, 2005).

⁵ Andy Warhol and Suzie Frankfurt, *Wild Raspberries* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1997).



Clockwise from top left: (Fig. 36) Dracula 1981, Polacolor 2, (Fig. 37) Pia Zadora, 1983, Polacolor ER, (Fig. 38) Suzie Frankfurt, 1980, Polacolor Type 108, (Fig. 39) Luciano Anselmino, 10/1973, Polacolor Type 108, Collection USC Upstate.

Clockwise from top left: (Fig. 40) Gianni Agnelli, 8/1972, (Fig. 41) Marella Agnelli, 6/1972, (Fig. 42) John and Lorraine Chamberlain, 1978, (Fig. 43) Nancy Nasher, 5/1979, Polacolor Type 108, Collection USC Upstate.

Warhol said that Anselmino brought cigars to the sitting, which became props in the Polaroids, and in the famous silk screen portrait that Warhol created of Man Ray.⁶

Warhol often did society portraits of husbands and wives. USC Upstate's collection has two examples of such couples. Gianni Agnelli (Fig. 40), former head of the Italian car company Fiat, and his wife, Marella Agnelli (Fig. 41). Although they were photographed separately, the artist John Chamberlain and Lorraine, his wife, are pictured together (Fig. 42). Warhol noted the Chamberlain's photo shoot in his diaries: "John Chamberlain and his wife Lorraine came to the office for lunch. She's really pretty, a lot younger than he is. He said he was tired of living in lofts – he's looking for a small apartment in the Dakota. He's still doing the same sculpture things, but they still look great – the car crashes – and people are still buying them. I did some photographs of him and his wife."⁷

The Nasher family of Dallas Texas were also Warhol patrons. Patsy Nasher had requested that Warhol paint her portrait for her 50th birthday in 1978.⁸ She was so enamored with the finished product that she requested portraits of each of her three daughters the following year. The youngest daughter, Nancy Nasher-Haemisegger (Figs. 3 – 6, 43), recently recollected her photo shoot with Warhol, which took place at the Stoneleigh Hotel:

An entourage of 15 to 20 people was in the suite. They said, 'Take off your suit.' They wrapped me in a towel and covered me with this thick white cosmetic powder. They put it all over my skin, all over my shoulders, but not in my hair, not my lips. Everything else. I was caked in this powder – white, white, totally white. Warhol placed me in front of a dark screen and in a particular pose. He tells you exactly how to hold your head, your neck, how to look at him. And then he starts. He began shooting what she describes as hundreds of Polaroid photographs. It was click, click, click, click.⁹

⁶ Kenneth Goldsmith, Reva Wolf and Wayne Koestenbaum, *I'll Be Your Mirror: The Selected Andy Warhol Interviews : 1962-1987* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2004), 229.

⁷ Pat Hackett, *The Andy Warhol Diaries* (New York: Warner Books, 1991), 100.

⁸ Michael Granberry, "At Nasher, Warhol's Works and Other Storied Art," *Dallas Morning News* (October 27, 2008).

⁹ Ibid.

Warhol describes the reason for using the white powder on his subjects, saying, "Gigi did the makeup, so we now have someone making the faces white so the wrinkles don't show and they print up better and make up into better screens and also it seems to the people like you're doing something more special for them. The pictures really do come out better."¹⁰ Thus, as we can see from these descriptions and first hand accounts, the compositions for Warhol's portraits began as he instructed the subject on how to sit, tilt his or her head, and place his or her hands. However, we can also gather from the same accounts that the Warholian portrait process was also a social and collaborative one. Indeed, Nasher's experience suggests it was nearly a kind of performance directed by Warhol and his entourage.

Many people were involved in Warhol's creative process. His patrons were no exception. The art collector Richard Wiseman, for example, commissioned a series of portraits (later known as the Athlete Series) to be created by Warhol. This collection features ten sports figures that were prominent in the late 1970s. Two of those stars, Pele and Chris Evert, are featured in this exhibit. Warhol photographed each with his or her respective sports equipment. Evert is holding a tennis racket, while Pele is pictured with a soccer ball (Figs. 44). All involved parties agreed that while the athletes would get to keep some of their portraits, some would go to Wiseman, and Warhol would sell the rest. Wiseman kept his collection together, and in September of 2009, the collection was stolen from his home in Los Angeles. There is a one million dollar reward being offered for information leading to the recovery of the art. This is an interesting aside, but the main point deserves repeated emphasis: that Warhol's Polaroids and silkscreen portraits were part of a complex and highly gregarious communal process.

Whether from necessity or absolute business savvy, Warhol's Polaroid to silkscreen portrait process revolutionized the way he created art. Although collaborative and highly social, Warhol no longer relied on images composed by others. In this sense, Warhol took control of the artistic process from the moment the subject sat before him. He molded the image from the very beginning by instructing the person on how to pose and the manipulation continued with the editing of the negatives. Warhol did by hand, what today's graphic artists do with sophisticated computerized software, cutting out those aspects that were unappealing to create an idealized (and therefore highly marketable) final image. There is no question that the process is impressive, but so is the sheer number of photographs and subsequent silkscreen

¹⁰ Pat Hackett, *The Andy Warhol Diaries* (New York: Warner Books, 1991), 181.

portraits that were produced. Warhol was one of the most prolific artists of the twentieth century. Perhaps the Polaroid portraits in this exhibition can stand alone as works of art. However, to view them that way exclusively would be to fundamentally misunderstand their artistic and historical importance, which is deeply and intricately tied to Warhol's social life and other facets of his image making empire. Most of his Polaroids were reincarnated time and again. Their primary significance is their status as matrices. Warhol's Polaroids were his research and source material, which is to say, they are significant as so many points of origin.

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(Fig. 44) Pele 1977, Polacolor Type 108, Collection USC Upstate.

Biographies

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(Figs. 1-44) Images Reproduced in the Catalogue, Collection of USC Upstate

1	Lauren Hutton	FL12.00438	April 23, 1982	Black and White Print
2	Male Model	FL05.04952	1982	Black and White Print
3	Nancy N. Nasher	FA04.13279	5/1979	Polacolor Type 108
4	Nancy N. Nasher	FA04.13280	5/1979	Polacolor Type 108
5	Nancy N. Nasher	FA04.13288	5/1979	Polacolor Type 108
6	Nancy N. Nasher	FA04.13295	5/1979	Polacolor Type 108
7	Station Wagon	FL13.02339	1982	Black and White Print
8	Unidentified Man	FL05.03544	undated	Black and White Print
9	Marge Cowen	FA04.12438	10/1979	Polacolor 2
10	Marge Cowen	FA04.12462	10/1979	Polacolor 2
11	Chris Evert	FA04.00139	1977	Polacolor Type 108
12	Princess Caroline of Monaco	FA04.04701	1983	Polacolor ER
13	Gianfranco Ferré	FA05.02011	1980	Polacolor 2
14	Gianfranco Ferré	FA05.02040	1980	Polacolor 2
15	Sao Schlumberger	FA04.09078	9/1973	Polacolor Type 108
16	Sao Schlumberger	FA04.09082	9/1973	Polacolor Type 108
17	Luciano Anselmino	FA05.08136	10/1973	Polacolor Type 108
18	Luciano Anselmino	FA05.08158	10/1973	Polacolor Type 108
19	Luciano Anselmino	FA05.08153	10/1973	Polacolor Type 108
20	Luciano Anselmino	FA05.08159	10/1973	Polacolor Type 108
21	Christopher Reeve, three Men	FL08.00020	2/20/1979	Black and White Print
22	Pat Cleveland	FL12.00336	undated	Black and White Print
23	Jann Wenner, unidentified woman	FLO6.01963	undated	Black and White Print
24	Jon Gould	FL05.01618	undated	Black and White Print
25	Jon Gould	FL05.01798	undated	Black and White Print
26	Robert Rauschenberg	FL05.02474	undated	Black and White Print
27	Table setting	FL18.00280	undated	Black and White Print
28	Table setting	FL18.00349	undated	Black and White Print
29	Stores	FL13.01131	undated	Black and White Print
30	Perfume	FL09.00153	undated	Black and White Print
31	Easter Eggs	FA09.02514	1982	Polacolor 2
32	Shoes	FA09.01507	1980	Polacolor 2
33	Food Still Life	FA09.01410	1986	Polacolor ER
34	Japanese Toy	FA09.01812	1983	Polacolor ER
35	Sean McKeon	FA05.04871	8/1980	Polacolor 2
36	Dracula	FA09.00885	1981	Polacolor 2
37	Pia Zadora	FA04.00020	1983	Polacolor ER
38	Suzie Frankfurt	FA04.05953	1980	Polacolor Type 108
39	Luciano Anselmino	FA05.08153	10/1973	Polacolor Type 108
40	Gianni Agnelli	FA05.08041	8/1972	Polacolor Type 108
41	Marella Agnelli	FA04.10306	6/1972	Polacolor Type 108
42	John and Lorraine Chamberlain	FA06.00251	1978	Polacolor Type 108
43	Nancy N. Nasher	FA04.13273	5/1979	Polacolor Type 108
44	Pele	FA05.00460	1977	Polacolor Type 108