



# THE FILMS OF ANDY WARHOL: A SEVEN-WEEK INTRODUCTION

THE FILMS OF ANDY WARHOL:  
A SEVEN-WEEK INTRODUCTION

SAN FRANCISCO CINEMATHEQUE  
JANUARY 28-MARCH 11, 1990

BY KURT EASTERWOOD AND E. S. THEISE

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## PREFACE TO THE PDF EDITION (2021)

A couple of years after Eric and I's monograph on Andy Warhol's films was published, I received an incredibly generous, detailed 8-page single-spaced typed letter from Ronald Tavel, who was the scriptwriter and/or director on many of Warhol's films for a two-and-a-half year period from 1964 to 1967. He was nice enough to say he thought my comments on Warhol's films were "really first-rate", while at the same time chastising me for not contacting him prior to writing, and correcting many errors not only in our monograph but in the Warhol biography/criticism ecosphere where he saw "the same clichés rehashed". Tavel also wrote, regarding my essay on *The Life of Juanita Castro* which he wrote, appears in, and is the de facto director of, "I have the feeling that no one has watched or listened to this film as carefully as you," which fills me with a pride I'm not sure I can quite explain.

When I think back 31 years to the writing and publication of this monograph, the overwhelming memory for me is how utterly consumed Eric and I were with watching, discussing, and writing about these films. For myself, while I felt honored and humbled that San Francisco Cinematheque's Artistic Director Steve Anker had asked me to take part in the project, I was equally doubtful I was up to the task, which is to say I was unsure the as yet unseen Warhol films would resonate with me. Put simply, would I be able to write anything that wasn't just those same clichés rehashed?

In his letter, Tavel writes in passing about appearing in person at some of the Warhol film screenings in 1990-91 and "...the immediate pleasure of all those young minds waking up to the wonder of something they only vaguely suspected existed." That was me too, when I walked out of the Cinematheque's tiny screening room after watching my first Warhol film.

I had not been totally unprepared. In my late teens I had read Stein and Plimpton's *Edie: American Girl*, and had listened to Velvet Underground's banana album enough times to sing "All Tomorrow's Parties"

backwards. Stills from Warhol's films, Robert Indiana eating a mushroom, or that barely visible clock atop the Empire State Building, were as singed into my brain as were the images of Deren at her window or Snow's New York loft or Dali/Buñuel's eyeball and razor and numerous other mysterious images from the books and articles on avant-garde film I devoured at the time. To say nothing of the soup cans and electric chairs, Marilyn Monroe and Chairman Mao. It was easy to trick myself into thinking I knew what I was walking into, that I had the requisite historical, visual and temporal vocabulary to see these films, these artifacts from the Factory floor.

Like the young minds Tavel witnessed, after seeing the films for the first time I too woke up to the wonder of something that was vaguely familiar yet wholly unlike what I had been expecting. It's one thing to see a still image from, say *Blow Job*, and another thing entirely to watch 37 minutes of semi-slow motion footage of the recipient who may or not be receiving what we had been so tantalizingly promised. One thinks that "8 hours of a single shot of the Empire State Building" is all you need to know about *Empire*, the ultimate spoiler alert as it were, but no one can tell you about the setting sun, the office lights going on or off, the flashing beacon, the swirling film grain, or your own symbiotic relationship to what is up on screen.

I have not seen any of these films in the years since I wrote the essays here, so I can't vouch for how the essays contained herein hold up, or more importantly how the films themselves would hold up for me. I found *Empire* completely captivating when I saw a longer version at the PFA in Berkeley (the Cinematheque only showed a 40-minute excerpt), and not in that *I sat through all 8 hours of Empire, and enjoyed it, so take that you plebeian naysayers* kind of way either, but I doubt I would want to watch it now. Some films like *Vinyl* I can now barely remember, whereas others like *The Life of Juanita Castro* I can't ever forget, proving Tavel's observation correct.

Looking at this monograph again, so many years removed from the person I was when I participated in it – more years in fact than the 25 or so years the 1990 retrospective

was removed from the films' first screenings – the writings contained herein, Tavel's treasured letter, the memories of Eric and I running on fumes as we forwent sleep to meet the deadline, are the treasured artifacts now, and what fill this old man with wonder.

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My most unsettling memory of working on this monograph relates to an afternoon spent threading through microfilm at the old Main Library, now the site of the Asian Art Museum. There were screening dates to confirm and *Village Voice* articles to transcribe. My essay on *Empire* required consultation with architectural guidebooks and a Manhattan street map; on the spur of the moment it occurred to me to search the *New York Times* for the night of filming's weather forecast. I'd arrived after an early lunch, anticipating at most two hours of research but if any patrons remained in the building later than I they were not behaving civilly.

After being ejected from the Library I wandered west along Grove Street, my eyes taking in San Francisco's Civic Auditorium and City Hall. But the rest of my body and mind were having none of that, traveling instead southbound through SoHo toward Tribeca and the Twin Towers. My five hour immersion in the popular press of 1960s New York City had transported me to a not-especially Warholian Manhattan circa late-1980s. What little memory of my dreams remains upon waking dissipates quickly but that day I could not shake the sensation of walking through a city 2600 miles distant.

My greatest source of pride related to this monograph began with Steve Anker telling me that Callie Angell, adjunct curator of the Andy Warhol Film Project at the Whitney Museum of American Art, had told him that my essay on *Empire* facilitated their sequencing of the reels, a task up until then considered daunting for the reels where the



Building is consistently illuminated from start to end. She was gracious about crediting me in the Whitney's *The Films of Andy Warhol: Part II* booklet and later in her Acknowledgement to *Andy Warhol Screen Tests* (regrettably the vowels in my last name were transposed to "Thiese"). When I traveled to New York for premieres of the second release of restorations in 1994, she was exceedingly generous with her time and curatorial elan, taking me behind the scenes at the Whitney and introducing me to scholars, critics, Superstars, and senior staff of the still-in-the-works Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh. We'd been in touch a few times since that visit but the news of her suicide took a long time to reach me. With Kurt's agreement we are releasing this PDF on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the eleventh anniversary of her passing.

It's worth noting that Kurt and I were on a tight deadline and were not able to preview all of the films we discuss here. Throughout these pages we're guilty of having injected fresh energy into old myths, misrepresentations, and outright falsehoods. My biggest regret related to this publication is relying too much on the literature, old issues of *Film Culture* and the like, and not telephoning or writing letters to key players who were very much alive at the time of the writing.

Pieces of the Warhol puzzle occasionally still drop into place for me. I must have been suffering from Warhol fatigue in the months immediately after our monograph was published because it was more than a decade before Lou Reed and John Cale's *Songs for Drella* (1990) entered my consciousness via a friend's mix CD. It remains a favorite, partly because it, too, perpetuates untruths, and partly because I feel seen in the lyrics of "Work":

*Andy said a lot of things, I stored them  
all away in my head  
Sometimes when I can't decide what I should  
do  
I think what would Andy have said  
He'd probably say you think too much  
That's 'cause there's work that you don't  
want to do  
It's work, the most important thing is work*

I'm grateful that I had the opportunity to see the late John Giorno give a flawless reading/performance from memory at the First Unitarian Universalist Church in 2009. And I still make an effort to see "new" Warhol films. I caught the Pacific Film Archive's screening of *Poor Little Rich Girl* (1965) and a selection of Screen Tests in 2018. I was fortunate to be in town for a geography conference when Chicago Filmmakers screened *Tiger Morse* (1967) and *Jill Johnston Dancing* (1964) in 2015. In 2012 I was able to schedule an appointment at the Warhol Museum and spent several days viewing VHS dupes, finally seeing *Couch*, having a rip-roaring time viewing *Ondine*, *Ingrid Superstar*, and others in *Since* (1966), and being absolutely transfixed as Jack Smith commandeered the closing minutes of *Camp*.

I'd like to see *Eat* and *Chelsea Girls* again, and I remain deeply envious of anyone who's seen *Drunk*.

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## COLOPHON TO THE PDF EDITION (2021)

This monograph was originally written using an MS-DOS scientific word processing program called ChiWriter, which was end-of-lifed in 1996. After asking Kurt how he'd feel about releasing it as a PDF version 31 years hence, I was delighted to discover that I'd had the foresight to export an ASCII version at the time we completed the project.

This PDF was reconstructed from that export with only cosmetic changes: correcting diacriticals using Unicode characters and attending to one capitalization error, inadvertently excluded or included spaces, a duplicated period or two. There have been no edits to the text. Two monospaced fonts, Libertinus Mono and Andale Mono, help preserve the original look. Beginning with page 4, page numbers in the PDF match the page numbers of the original.

I remember rubber cementing the title onto the cover sheet before delivering the project for offset printing at A. Maciel Printing when it was located on 24<sup>th</sup> Street in San Francisco's Mission District. If memory serves, Maciel created halftones from photographs right before printing the job and uncertainty about the final sizes was the reason images were left uncaptioned. Inside images are frames from *Eat* (page 4), *The Life of Juanita Castro* (page 27), and *My Hustler* (page 33). The cover features Andy Warhol directing Jack Smith in *Batman Dracula* (1964). Photographer unknown. Images have been scanned from an original paper copy of the monograph.



## FOREWORD

The reissue of Andy Warhol's films marks the end of one of the most frustrating chapters in recent American film history. Warhol galvanized the independent cinema of the early 1960s more than any other filmmaker of that time, with the possible exception of Stan Brakhage, and his work had an impact on the general culture unequalled by any avant-garde filmmaker before or since. His influences continue to be seen in the work of later artists as diverse as Michael Snow, Beth and Scott B., and even Brian Eno. Yet little of Warhol's prodigious filmic output has been available for more than twenty years, even though Ondine's occasional screenings of *Vinyl* and *Chelsea Girls* made it clear that this indeed was a major buried cultural treasure.

*The Films of Andy Warhol: A Seven-Week Introduction* is the beginning of a restoration project which will make available dozens, perhaps even hundreds of films and excerpts (many for the first time), finally putting Warhol's incalculable influence on film and the other media arts into perspective. We can only hope that long unseen work by other key figures such as Jack Smith or Gregory Markopolous might also come to light. The Cinematheque would like to express its gratitude to several Staff Members of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, most notably Jon Gartenberg of the Film Preservation Program and Marilyn Mancino of the Circulating Film Library.

Steve Anker  
Artistic Director

David Gerstein  
Executive Director

*San Francisco Cinematheque*

## SCHEDULE FOR THE FILMS OF ANDY WARHOL: A SEVEN-WEEK INTRODUCTION

	S.F. CINEMATHEQUE	PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE
<i>Kiss, Beauty #2</i>	1/28; 7:00 & 9:15	2/3; 7:00 & 9:20
<i>Sleep, My Hustler</i>	2/4; 7:00 & 9:15	2/7; 7:30 & 9:35
<i>Empire, The Life of Juanita Castro</i>	2/11; 7:00 & 9:15	2/10; 7:30 & 9:35
<i>Eat, Blow Job, Vinyl</i>	2/18; 7:00 only	2/13 & 17; 7:00 only
<i>Henry Geldzahler</i>	2/25; 7:00 only	2/13; 9:35 only
<i>Flesh</i>	-----	2/17; 9:35 only
<i>Chelsea Girls</i>	3/4; 7:00 only	3/3; 7:30 only
<i>Lonesome Cowboys</i>	3/11; 7:00 only	3/7; 7:30 only
<i>Nude Restaurant</i>	3/11; 9:00 only	3/7; 9:35 only

S.F. Cinematheque screenings will be held at the San Francisco Art Institute, 800 Chestnut Street, San Francisco. Pacific Film Archive is at 2625 Durant Avenue, Berkeley.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With an artist like Andy Warhol, whose films have been a mystery for those not fortunate to have experienced them in the Sixties, the passage of 20 years (and more) makes it very difficult to know where truth and fiction, reliable and unreliable, begin and end. Any research of course opens on to a morass of facts which may in the end only contradict each other, but Warhol seems to be an especially tough case to crack. At any rate, we have tried our best to be as accurate as possible, and apologize for any remaining errors.

For the interested reader who may not want to wade as deeply as we have, we recommend David Bourdon's very encompassing (and for the most part accurate) *Warhol*, which provides a detailed account of the man's life *and* work. For a fair assessment of his films, we recommend Jonas Mekas' essay, "Notes After Reseeing the Movies of Andy Warhol," (from John Coplans' *Andy Warhol*) which almost 20 years after it was written still strikes a chord of veracity.

We would like to thank the following people, without whom our job would have been more difficult: Steve Anker, Fred Camper, Maxine Garrett, Jon Gartenberg, David Gerstein, Lissa Gibbs, Margaret MacCaffrey, Beth and John Luther Schofill, and Don Walker.

--K.E. and E.S.T.

## INTRODUCTION

*It's the movies that have really been running things in America ever since they were invented. They show you what to do, how to do it, when to do it, how to feel about it, and how to look how you feel about it. When they show you how to kiss like James Dean or hook like Jane Fonda or win like Rocky, that's great.*

--Andy Warhol [*America*, 1985, p. 11]

Warhol. Drop the name and release the flood of Pop images: myriad silk screened canvasses of Campbell's soup cans and Coca-Cola bottles, Marilyn Monroe and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, auto collisions and electric chairs. By applying the mechanical and repetitive process of silk screening to the canvas, Warhol outraged the brushstroke-heavy Abstract Expressionists and sent fine art thudding back to the concrete and, as a consequence, back to public interest.

More so than his contemporaries -- Jim Dine, Robert Indiana, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, Marisol, Claes Oldenburg, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist, Tom Wesselman -- Warhol's art in the 1960s was a Duchampian celebration of the art in every thing and artist in every one. His subjects were blatantly anti-Art, portraying bland consumer icons or "found" photographs: publicity stills, UPI wire photos, or glossy magazine spreads. According to the prevailing legend, Warhol left not only the production of his paintings to others, but the artistic decision making. His assistants, friends, and strangers often chose subject, colors, size, and composition, with the only directive being to make it look nice.

Andy. By the end of his life, Warhol's fame had eclipsed that of the subjects of his 1960s portraits. Marilyn. Liz. Marlon. Jackie. Elvis. Names so much a part of the American Pop vernacular that, except for the occasional Troy, last names were superfluous. Warhol's own public persona was stoked by his incessant socializing with glamorous trendsetters and by his droll witticisms, the best of which are as much cultural artifacts as his soup cans or silver pillows. America's fascination with Warhol peaked after his death in 1987, the now legendary Sotheby's auction taking in over 25 million dollars from the sale of his personal effects. Over a quarter of a million dollars were spent to acquire Warhol's kitschy collection of cookie jars alone.

Despite his more-than-fair share of the public eye, few people recall that, in the mid-1960s, Andy Warhol earned a significant reputation as an avant-garde filmmaker by adapting his working methods to the film medium. Some film historians have gone so far as to liken Warhol's development to the history of cinema itself. From his initial silent period, through his experiments with sound, drama, color, and expanded cinema, Warhol remained a prolific filmmaker for five years, churning out hundreds of reels of film.

It was some measure of his films' impact that Warhol received the *Film Culture* Sixth Independent Film Award in 1964 for *Sleep*, *Haircut*, *Eat*, *Kiss*, and *Empire*. These films, silent, in black and white, combined long gazes from a fixed-camera position with exaggeratedly slow action. Warhol filmed these works at the usual 24 frames per second, but insisted that they be projected at 16 f.p.s. This transforms the two-minute, 45 seconds of recorded time into four-minutes, ten-seconds of screen time, prolonging



the already minimal movement. Jonas Mekas, director of the New York Film-Maker's Co-operative, became an active proselytizer of Warhol's films, providing the key to viewing these works:

*The film starts rolling, the audience sits quietly, for a minute or two. The catcalls and crack remarks begin. In the fourth or fifth minute, however, they begin to realize that I have no intention of stopping the film, and the reports from the back lines reach the front lines, that the reel is big ... After ten minutes or so the impatient ones leave or give up, others resign, and the rest of the show proceeds quietly. Later, from the discussions, it becomes clear that there is always ... a period of jumping the reality gap ... of adjusting to the aesthetic weightlessness, to the different gravitational pull ... from there on everything becomes very rich. You are watching now from a new angle, every detail reveals a new meaning, the proportions and perspectives change ... a whole new world opens because of this shifted angle of vision, of seeing, a world in which there is as much action, suspense, tension, adventure, and entertainment as on the former plane -- and more!*

--Jonas Mekas, "Notes After Reseeing the Movies of Andy Warhol" [1970]

Whether he felt that he had reached the zenith of silent picture making with the 8-hour *Empire*, or rather that he discovered making sound films was within his grasp (financially and technically), Warhol made the transition to sound film with *Harlot*, which was filmed in December, 1964. Sound brought with it collaborators and new directions:

*Academic art historians have little trouble dealing with the silent Warhol. The graphic qualities and neo-Dadaist aesthetics of Sleep, Eat, Haircut, and Kiss fit right into the context of his paintings -- post-Duchamp conceptual art. But in 1965, when Warhol's films began to talk, most of these commentators became silent, and those that did not showed precious little understanding of the centrality of homosexuality to Warhol. A spectral presence in such silent works as Kiss, Blow Job, and Sleep, and especially Couch, homoeroticism dominates the sound period, bringing with it a teatro-literary tradition that can best be described as that of the homosexual hipster.*

--David Ehrenstein [1989]

If there was a direct influence on Warhol's filmmaking during this period, it would have to be Jack Smith, an infamous filmmaker, performance artist, actor and playwright whose film *Flaming Creatures* became the cause celebre of the New American Cinema in 1962 when police confiscated it along with Genet's *Un Chant d'Amour*. Although Smith's and Warhol's filmmaking was antithetical, they both drew on the same source for much of their work, specifically a camp sensibility that included (in Ehrenstein's words) a "baroque nostalgia for Hollywood in general."

Prior to *Chelsea Girls* (1966), Warhol was becoming increasingly stuck on the idea that he was developing into a property that Hollywood studios might want to get a hold of. The minor success of *My Hustler* (minor in terms of commercial cinema, but major for Warhol) had put in his mind the idea that soon Hollywood might be around the corner, an extremely naive thing for Warhol to presuppose, given the nature of his films up to that point (including *My Hustler*). Although he liked to fancy himself as someone ready

at any minute to answer Hollywood's call, the fact of the matter is that even after the success of *Chelsea Girls*, the closest Hollywood would meet Warhol was by way of *Midnight Cowboy* (1967). Whatever else one can say about Warhol's films (and specifically, the world of those films), the plain fact remains that they were just too damn seedy for Hollywood; too damn real. Dustin Hoffman as "Ratso" was infinitely more preferable than Ondine as Ondine. Method was palatable. The Underground wasn't.

The Factory residents represented to the "straight" world the underbelly of the "free love" Sixties. When that Underground peeked its ugly head above the moral equator with the success of *Chelsea Girls*, it was all the critics (film, social, and otherwise) could do to push it back and tell it to stay under, to stay within the reflective tin-foil and silver painted walls of the Factory. *You can bask in your own glory. Just don't let us have to see you.*

Although Warhol didn't know it yet, the Factory days were becoming increasingly numbered as 1968 rolled around, and soon Warhol himself would begin to get weary (and more importantly, wary) of those hangers-on around him. One of those people was Valerie Solanis, the sole member of a group she called the Society for Cutting Up Men, or S.C.U.M. for short. Solanis had been a bit player in Warhol's film *I, a Man*, and also a frustrated screenwriter. Claiming that Warhol "had too much control over me," Solanis one day went to the Factory and attempted to kill Warhol. Although she failed at her goal, she did put Warhol into the hospital for two months.

Concurrent with Warhol's recuperation in the hospital from the assassination attempt was Paul Morrissey's usurping of film production at the Factory. Morrissey had been a part of Warhol's coterie of assistants for some time and his influence on Warhol had been steadily rising as other assistants like Gerard Malanga and Billy Linich (Billy Name) became less and less involved with the running of the Factory. According to Ondine, Morrissey was "a garbage collector and a cultivator of lice." Something of an anomaly among those who worked for Warhol, he was puritanical in his views on drugs, not to mention a philistine when it came to appreciating Warhol's work. His continuing obsession was to get Warhol to stop making "art films," and while Warhol was in the hospital, he made *Flesh*, which superficially bore some resemblance to Warhol (at least the later Warhol of *Lonesome Cowboys*). When Warhol regained his health, he was content to let Morrissey continue directing, and Warhol's role in the making of films was eventually reduced to that of producer. The period of Andy Warhol, filmmaker, was effectively over.

The story of Stan Brakhage undergoing a St. Augustine conversion in the face of Warhol's early silent filmmaking once he discovered that the films were meant to be seen projected at 16 frames per second was one propagated by Mekas with typical hyperbole. It was as if he was trying to magically cover holes just then starting to open up in film; rifts which proceeded along the same lines as those between the Abstract Expressionist and the Pop Artist. Brakhage was not the only filmmaker to find himself on the opposite side of Warhol -- others were Gregory Markopolous and Peter Emanuel Goldman. Film history would prove Mekas right to worry about the gap, for as the Sixties progressed, the gap widened, with the Structural film movement picking up the filmic pieces that Warhol had left them.

--K.E. and E.S.T.

## SLEEP (1963)

16mm, black & white, silent, 42 minutes at 16 f.p.s. (excerpt from the 6 hour original).

Filmed during July and August, 1963.

Premiered by the Film-Makers' Cooperative at the Gramercy Arts Theater, 138 West 27th Street, New York, on 17 January 1964.

With John Giorno.

\*\*\*

*We were up late one night to 4:30 in the morning ... I got really drunk on 150-proof black rum. I just passed out when my head hit the pillow. I woke up to take a piss as the sun was coming up. I looked over and there was Andy in bed next to me, his head propped up on his arm, wide-eyed awake, looking at me. "What are you doing?" I said with a rubber tongue. "Watching you," said Andy. I awoke again and Andy was still looking at me with Bette Davis eyes ... I went back to sleep, and awoke every once in a while to see if he was still doing it. I woke up again to take a piss and Andy was sitting in a chair alongside the front of the bed in the morning light. The next time I woke up, he was lying with his cheek on the pillow drowsily looking at me ... When I awoke the next time, Andy was gone. It was 1:30 in the afternoon and he had watched me sleep for eight hours ... On the crowded New Haven railroad back to New York, Andy said, "I want to make a movie. Do you want to be the star?"*

--John Giorno, in "A Collective Portrait of Andy Warhol," [McShine, 1989]

Giorno's recollection of the inspiration for *Sleep* sheds light not only on how the film came to be, but on Warhol's artistic vision, his approach to seeing. Although Warhol's voyeurism is the stuff legends are made of, enough of his collaborators have described his gaze as meditative, or as reflecting perfect contentment, to suggest that the peeping-Tom angle is overemphasized.

It seems very likely that *Sleep* contains the first 16mm footage Warhol ever shot; it is for this reason that we have listed it first. Although *Kiss and Andy Warhol Films Jack Smith Filming Normal Love* (1963) were publicly screened prior to *Sleep*, Warhol learned the basics of operating his Bolex movie camera while shooting *Sleep*. The hard way, if Bockris' [1989, p. 134] assertion is correct, that only after shooting and developing many hours of film did Warhol discover that he had been loading the camera incorrectly.

A stockbroker and poet, Giorno had a reputation among his friends for being the only person who still slept for any length of time in the amphetamine-powered 1960s. His "sitting" took place over several weeks' time. A typical session would find Warhol setting up his equipment, while Giorno prepared for bed. He was usually fast asleep by the time Warhol was ready to begin shooting.

One common myth about *Sleep* is that it is taken from a fixed-camera position. It seems to be true that once Warhol switched the electric motor drive on, he did not move the camera for the two-minute, 45-second duration of the

100-foot reel. However, reels were shot from different vantage points on different evenings, and the final consolidation of footage reveals editing decisions beyond that of, say, *Kiss*, where the untrimmed reels were simply spliced end-to-end.

Jon Gartenberg [1990], the Assistant Curator of the Department of Film at The Museum of Modern Art, reports that the excerpt being circulated is the first reel of one 6-hour version of *Sleep*. Several versions are known to exist, and the Museum is reluctant to consider any version the definitive *Sleep*. He remembers some of the footage in the excerpt appearing in subsequent reels of this version.

The excerpt is a fairly literal re-enactment of *Giorno's* story. If memory serves, it features seven distinct camera viewpoints: a cross-shot of *Giorno's* angled reclining torso; another cross-shot with horizontal torso; an oddly composed view up the length of *Giorno's* body, his face in focus; a difficult to identify armpit shot; a close-up of his draped hand, shot along the length of his arm; a shot of *Giorno's* head; and a shot of his throat, with chin, ear, and hairy chest visible. Warhol's compositions of the sleeping figure are surprisingly unPop, being either classical, if prudish, nude studies or close-up abstractions of body parts. During the second torso shot, it appeared to me that the light source was moved very slowly, imperceptibly altering the shadows across *Giorno's* abdomen.

The editing is, for early Warhol, almost a montage. Many of the shots have been loop printed, the material sometimes appearing as a long cycle, other times re-appearing later in the excerpt. The excerpt contains few of the shots commonly reproduced in filmographies, or the shot later used by Warhol as a silkscreen, suggesting that the camera explores many viewpoints in the entire six hours. I found the 42-minute excerpt to pass very fleetingly, and join the ranks wondering what the full six hours would be like.

*When ... we are surrounded on all sides by oceans of joyous boredom, I would suggest a way to relieve the artless tedium: a spectacular 30-hour sleep movie which shows the two heroes (A. Warhol and J. Mekas) enjoying a peaceful slumber after having taken an overdose of sleeping tablets. Among the many charms of this feature would be the secure knowledge that it would be their last.*

--Wolfgang Zuchermann, "No Beauty Sleep," [1964]

*... If I say Sleep was a boring movie, and I do say "Sleep is a boring movie," I do not necessarily mean that as a criticism, and in fact I do not mean that as a criticism ... I saw Sleep and I liked Sleep and while liking Sleep I saw what there was to see and I liked what I saw. While liking what I saw my mind wondered and thought of many other things too and that was O.K. with me and after 3 hours of Sleep I felt like going home and doing something and so I went home and did something.*

*I like Sleep. I like Sleep. [26 more pairs] I like Sleep. I like Sleep.*

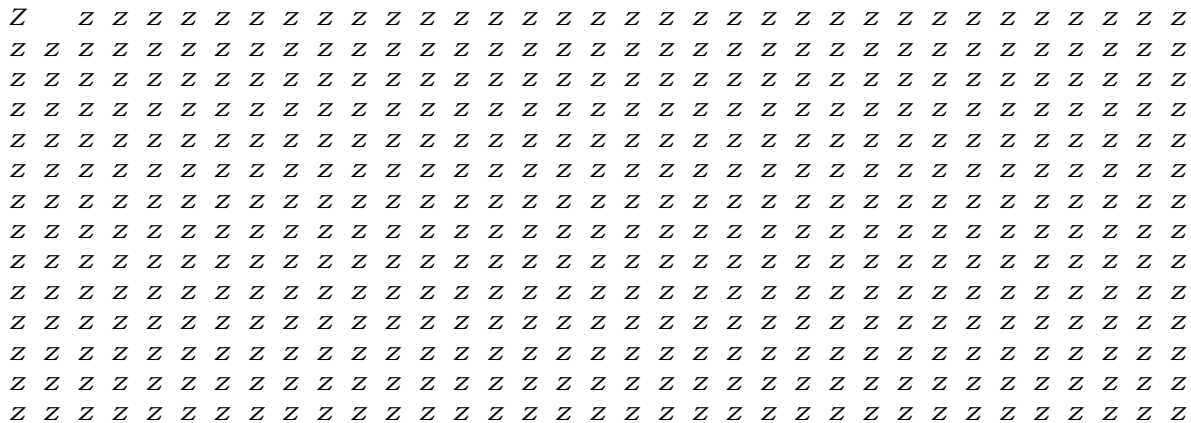
--Joe Brainard, Parts III and IV of "Andy Warhol's Sleep Movie" [1964]

*At the second screening of Sleep at the Cinematheque, Warhol himself was present. Mekas greeted him with a rope. led him to a seat in the second row from the back, and tied him down. Somewhere halfway through the film, Mekas decided to check that seat ... "I found the rope," he recalls.*

--Stephen Koch [1973, p. 35f]

P. Adams Sitney's [1979, Chapter 11] often-debated paradigm of *structural film* admits four defining qualities: a fixed-camera position, the flicker effect, loop printing, and rephotography off the screen. Sitney credits Warhol with being the major precursor of structural film, and, in *Sleep* uncovers the roots of all but the flicker effect. *Sleep*'s use of loop printing has already been mentioned, and the fixed-camera position, used here, became Warhol's trademark for the barrage of silent film portraits produced until 1965. Unfortunately, the excerpt does not contain the episode Sitney likens to rephotography off the screen.

The last scene of a version of *Sleep* includes a freeze-frame of Giorno's head. Sitney's comment: "That freeze process emphasizes the grain and flattens the image precisely as rephotography off the screen does." It is difficult to imagine, first, the impact that the intrusion of such an artificial device at the end of a six hour naturalistic movie would have on the viewer, and second, that Warhol would take such an active role in his filmmaking. Not until the appearance of the strobe cut two years later would the viewer be so consciously aware of Warhol's presence behind the camera.



--Ron Padgett, "Sonnet/Homage to Andy Warhol," [1964]

Incidentally, John Giorno later hit on the idea for Dial-A-Poem, which began operation in 1968 at the Architectural League of New York. Dial-A-Poem, and the compilations of recordings that were later issued on Giorno Poetry Systems records -- invariably containing at least one of Giorno's own performances -- helped to establish, develop, or enhance the reputations of a wide variety of artists. Laurie Anderson, Glenn Branca, William S. Burroughs, Jim Carroll, Allen Ginsberg, Philip Glass, Lenny Kaye, Patti Smith, Anne Waldman, and Frank Zappa have all appeared on Giorno's records.

--E.S.T.

## KISS (1963)

16mm, black & white, silent, 58 minutes at 16 f.p.s.

The Naomi Levine kisses were filmed during August 1963; the remaining kisses were filmed during November and December 1963.

The Naomi Levine kisses premiered at the Gramercy Arts Theater, 138 West 27th Street, New York, September 1963 under the title *Andy Warhol Serial*.

With Naomi Levine and Ed Sanders, Naomi Levine and Rufus Collins, Naomi Levine and Gerard Malanga, Baby Jane Holzer and John Palmer, Baby Jane Holzer and Gerard Malanga, John Palmer and Andrew Meyer, Freddy Herko and Johnny Dodd; also Charlotte Gilbertson, Phillip van Renselet, Pierre Restany, Marisol. (this list is compiled from several filmographies, and does not list the performers in order of appearance)

\*\*\*

*Kiss* contains the first publicly screened Warhol footage. For a time, Jonas Mekas screened a new kiss each week as a short prior to the scheduled films at the Film-Makers' Co-op. Each kiss was recorded by a stationary Bolex onto a 100-foot reel, the two-minutes, 45-seconds of recorded time translating into four-minutes, ten-seconds of screen time. The movement, slow by direction, appears even more prolonged. The reels were spliced end-to-end, including the light flares and perforations; there were no other edits.

Yet the film does not bore. Some couples kiss with abandon; others are restrained to a catatonic frigidity. For every couple seemingly oblivious to the camera, another cracks up. Tenderness coexists with hammy overacting, and the kissers' personalities inevitably come through. There are welcome surprises, as when one realizes well into a segment that both kissers are male, or at the camera's rare movement, real -- a bumped tripod? -- or imagined -- was that reframed? -- or at the appearance of the film's only black kisser, Rufus Collins. There are instances when one anxiously awaits the flare, signaling the end of an uninteresting segment -- how many more of these are there? -- but the flare, with metronomic precision, occasionally disappoints by arriving too soon. And when the kissers are not interesting, a shift in seeing reveals the dance of the film grain, exquisite here at the slow projection speed, in the newly struck print.

At the time of *Kiss*, Naomi Levine was a major figure in New York underground film. The New York Film-Makers' Co-operative catalog lists twelve films she made between the years 1963 and 1972, some with exorbitant rental fees. She starred with Taylor Mead in Warhol's *Tarzan and Jane Regained ... Sort Of* (1963), shot in Los Angeles concurrently with Warhol's Ferus Gallery show, the first display of his Elvis Presley and Elizabeth Taylor portraits. She also appeared in *Naomi and Rufus Kiss* (1963), *Couch* (1964), *Batman Dracula* (1964) and possibly others. She was in Jack Smith's *Normal Love* (1963-), Barbara Rubin's *Christmas on Earth* (1963), and Ken Jacobs' *Naomi Is a Vision of Loveliness*. She was a painter prior to becoming a filmmaker.

Ed Sanders was co-founder/lead singer of The Fugs: "musically primitive garage band poets who'd been bemused by the erotic and playful possibilities of rock." [Ward, Stokes, and Tucker, 1986].

Rufus Collins was an actor with the Living Theatre, appearing in, among other works, *The Brig* (1963), referred to by some sources as the most controversial theatrical event of 1963; Jonas and Adolfas Mekas produced a powerful film document of the play on its last night in 1964.

Gerard Malanga was Warhol's best-known assistant. He was hired in June, 1963, for his experience with the silkscreen process, and was one of the few people ever on the Factory payroll: he was paid minimum wage. He stayed until November, 1970, assisting with Warhol's paintings, films, and Interview magazine. He starred in *Vinyl* and *Bufferin* aka *Gerard Malanga Reads Poetry* (1966), and appeared in *Couch* (1964), *Harlot* (1964), *13 Most Beautiful Boys* (1964-65), *Bitch* (1965), *Camp* (1965), *Hedy* (1965), *Chelsea Girls* (1966), \*\*\*\* (1966-67), and possibly others; he has also appeared in films by other artists. He has published poetry and prose, and is presently a photoarchivist for the Department of Parks and Recreation in New York City.

*She is gorgeous in the most outrageous way. Her hair rises up from her head in a huge hairy corona, a huge tan mane around a narrow face and two eyes opened -- swock! -- like umbrellas, with all that hair flowing down over a coat made of ... zebra! ... She comprehends what the Rolling Stones mean. Any columnist in New York could tell them who she is ... a celebrity of New York's new era of Wog Hip ... Baby Jane Holzer ... in Vogue ... in Life ... in Andy Warhol's underground movies ... in the world of High Camp ... Jane Holzer is -- well, how can one put it into words? Jane Holzer is This Year's Girl ... none of your old idea of sexpots, prima donnas, romantic tragediennes, she is the girl who knows ... the Stones, East End vitality ...*  
--Tom Wolfe, *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby* [1965]

John Palmer, a young filmmaker, was credited with the co-direction of *Empire*, and was later cameraman for *Ciao! Manhattan*. Andrew Meyer, another filmmaker, has seven films to his credit in The New York Co-op catalog. All were produced between 1964 and 1969; *Match Girl* (1966), with Warhol and Malanga, is probably his best known film.

Freddy Herko was a dancer in the James Waring company, a troupe whose performances, according to Yvonne Rainer, mixed elements of balleticism and camp. At one point, Herko shared an apartment with Billy Linich (Name). Herko roller skated around New York on one roller skate in *Dance Movie* (1963) and appeared in *13 Most Beautiful Boys* (1964-65). He was an early casualty of the Factory scene, choreographing his suicide in 1964 when he danced naked out of a fifth floor window to a recording of Mozart's *Coronation Mass*. Warhol's verbal reaction -- wishing that he'd been there to film it -- is better known than his artistic reaction; he dedicated an all-white Flowers silkscreen to Herko at the Castelli Gallery opening. It was from Johnny Dodd's apartment that Herko left; Dodd starred with Billy Linich in one of the several versions of *Haircut* (1963).

Pierre Restany christened the Nouveau Réalisme art movement and penned their manifesto in 1960. At the "New Realists" show at Janis Gallery, 1962, he expressed doubts that Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein would ever amount to anything. Marisol is known for her blocky, wood portrait-sculptures, that integrate found objects and plaster casts. Although she was represented by the Stable Gallery, her work was more folk/naive than Pop. Bockris [1989, p. 118] quotes a mutual friend describing her interactions with Warhol as "two pussycats rubbing their heads together."

--E.S.T.

## EAT (1964)

16mm, black and white, silent, 37 minutes at 16 f.p.s.

Filmed November 1963.

Premiered by the Film-Makers' Cooperative at the Gramercy Arts Theater, January 10, 1964.

With Robert Indiana.

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*A man is eating a mushroom (or, perhaps, a piece of orange, or an apple -- it doesn't matter). He does nothing else, and why should he? He just eats. There are thoughts and reveries appearing on his face, and disappearing again, as he continues eating. No hurry, nowhere to hurry. He likes what he is eating, and that could last one million years. His unpretentiousness amazes us. Why doesn't he think of something else to do; why doesn't he want anything else? Doesn't he seek anything important? His world ends with the apple? Doesn't he read books, perhaps? Yes, he disappoints us, because he just eats his apple. We are not -- or are no longer -- familiar with such humility of existence; happiness looks suspicious to us. What pompous asses we are!*

--Jonas Mekas [in Sitney, 1971]

Almost as soon as Warhol acquired a camera in 1963, he started to make film portraits. According to Mekas, a motorized 16mm Bolex camera was permanently set up at the Factory, and any new visitor would be required to sit for their film portrait for the duration of a 100-foot roll of film (two minutes, 45 seconds of filming time) [cited in Koch, 1985]. Many of these were later assembled into longer works such as *13 Most Beautiful Women* (1964), *13 Most Beautiful Men* (1965), and *50 Fantastics and 50 Personalities* (1965) by splicing these individual rolls together. Most were filmed in tightly-framed close-ups, with the sitters instructed to remain as still as possible.

*Eat* was one of the first instances where Warhol extended the length of the portrait by filming successive rolls of one sitter. The sitter for *Eat* is Robert Indiana, who was a fellow Pop artist from the Stable Gallery. Indiana's best known work is probably his "Love" series, which are as emblematic of the Sixties in their own way as Warhol's Factory is. Starting in 1962, Indiana had done a series of works incorporating the word "eat," and it's safe to assume that Warhol was aware of this in choosing Indiana for his role as eater.

Through nine rolls of film, Indiana occupies himself with eating a mushroom. Part of the fascination of the film is the astonishing slowness with which Indiana eats this one mushroom. Heightened by the fact that it is being projected at a slower speed than what it was filmed at, the act of eating becomes at once sensual and boring. It is also mysterious. The different rolls that make up the film were not assembled in the correct sequential order, so that it seems as if Indiana's one mushroom is regenerative. As in *Blow Job*, which would immediately follow, Warhol extends the act the title signifies well beyond any normative time frame.



Although the film portrait has been a "genre" many avant-garde filmmakers have mined, until Warhol, most were concerned with using expressive filmic strategies to delineate a "sitter's" character. As typified by the work of Stan Brakhage, manipulations both during the shooting process and then later in the editing were intended to convey an internal, subjective "portrait." By simply setting up a camera and letting friends and visitors sit for it, Warhol was taking the concept of the portrait back to a more analogous relationship with how portraiture had historically operated in other media. At the same time, however, by using film, which exists not as an object out of time but as something that has to be experienced in time, he brought portraiture closer to a time-based reality. Because to visually experience a Warhol film portrait is to some extent to experience how long that portrait took to be made (although in the silents, some disparity exists because the film is being projected at 16 f.p.s.), the viewer in essence is able to see both the creative act and the final product.

By rudimentarily setting up a camera and simply filming until it ran out of film (and for many of the portraits, the task of making them was handled by Warhol's assistants), one would think that Warhol was also dispensing with the subjective point of view inherent not only in other film practice but in all portraiture to some extent. But far from being a passive recorder of that which was sitting in front of it, the camera, in its own, special way, actually replaced a human creator without displacing the manipulative abilities such a creator would have.

Portraiture is based on an interaction between the person sitting for the portrait and the person executing it: they are both implicated in the end result, obviously. While the artist is fashioning out the "likeness," the sitter is engaged not only with the artist but also with him or herself, in a state of self-consciousness. David E. James has written:

*Indiana's eyes focus on the mushroom, then rove around the room seeking to avoid the very place where they must eventually come to rest. The situation is that of psychoanalysis; the camera is the silent analyst who has abandoned the subject to the necessity of his fantastic self-projection...Alone in the anxiety caused by the knowledge of being observed but denied access to the results of that observation, the subject must construct himself in the mental mirrors of his self-image ...[James, 1989]*

*Sleep* is of course an obvious precursor to *Eat* in that it also features a friend of Warhol's, the poet John Giorno, and that it records a physical function common to everyone. To what extent it qualifies as a portrait, though, is debatable. In the former, by virtue of the activity that Giorno "performs" for the camera, he is precluded from any awareness that he is being filmed (other than an *a priori* one). Indiana, on the other hand, is denied the comforts of somnolence, as it were. Any privatized existence that may result from his eating is constantly being mitigated by the camera's uninflected stare.

--K.E.

## BLOW JOB (1964)

16mm, black and white, silent, 37 minutes at 16 f.p.s.

Filmed Winter, 1963-64.

Premiered by the Film-Makers' Cinematheque at the Washington Square Art Gallery, March 16, 1964.

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*At the end of '63 when I decided to shoot Blow Job, I called up Charles Rydell and asked him to star in it. I told him that all he'd have to do was lie back and then about five different boys would come in and keep on blowing him until he came, but that we'd just show his face. He said, "Fine. I'll do it."*

*We set everything up for the next Sunday afternoon, and then we waited and waited and Charles didn't show up ... I called Jerome Hill's suite in the Algonquin and he answered the phone and I screamed, "Charles! Where are you? ... We've got the cameras ready and the five boys are all here, everything's set up." He was shocked; he said, "Are you crazy? I thought you were kidding. I'd never do that!" We wound up using a good-looking kid who happened to be hanging around the Factory that day, and years later I spotted him in a Clint Eastwood movie.*

--Warhol [1980]

*Blow Job* introduces, however minimally, pornography into Warhol's oeuvre. Although sex had been titillatingly present in *Kiss*, and *Sleep* focuses lovingly for six hours on various parts of John Giorno's nude body, it wasn't until *Blow Job* that Warhol began to give explicit voice to an implicit concern.

In reality, *Blow Job* isn't explicit at all, and without its title, the film amounts to a 37-minute portrait in close-up of a hunky, anonymous male. The supposition that he may or may not be receiving a blow job is entirely a function of the film's title, and as such, the title promises something that visually, it only tangentially gives.

Through nine 100-foot rolls of film, all we ever see is a leather-jacketed stud going through a variety of facial expressions, not the least of which is a good dose of self-consciousness. Sometimes he appears to be in ecstasy, at other times, boredom, and still at other times, just a bad actor. He addresses the camera often with his eyes, and even at one point he seems to be talking to people off-screen. He often looks down, signifying that yes, there is someone down there that he can feel but that we can't see.

Though it would be ridiculous to ascribe to Warhol the project of recapitulating lessons learned by the Russian filmmaker, theorist and teacher Lev Kuleshov in the early 1920s, *Blow Job* does further our understanding of principles that Kuleshov laid the ground work for and in the process, secures a place for itself in the lexicon of filmic language. Among the many experiments that Kuleshov and his students conducted, perhaps the most famous of these involved three identical, emotionless shots of the Russian actor Ivan Mozhukhin. Kuleshov explored the expressive

possibilities in editing by intercutting Mozhukhin's face with three shots of different material. What he discovered was that cut with a shot of a bowl of soup, the audience would read into the actor's expression hunger; with a shot of a dead woman in a coffin, he evinced grief; and with a shot of child playing with a toy, the actor seemed happy. Thus in all three manifestations, the viewer read into the actor's face his or her own reaction to each shot [Pudovkin,1929].

These fundamental experiments find a curious and contemporary echo in *Blow Job*, where the "reaction shot" is the sole component of the film. On a practical level, we have no idea that what this on-screen personage is reacting to is the sexual ministrations of someone below his belt (and below the film's frame-line). But because of the give-away title, we accept wholesale that the expressions on his face are an accurate register of the act we had expected to see in the first place.

An early Film-Makers' Cooperative catalogue humorously identifies the participants in *Blow Job* as "Willard something and Peter von something," and if Warhol is to be believed, there were five different people who serviced the one anonymity that we see for the course of the film. Though in the end it matters little how many off-screen participants there were, it is interesting to note that a variety of servicers may account in part for the staying power of the actor whose good fortune it was to be the object of fellatio.

More importantly, however, it is the camera that is the arbiter of not only what we are seeing, but for how long as well. Concomitant to the grinding of the camera is the endemic notion that whatever is being filmed is therefore being watched. Our hunk up there on the screen is (or was, rather) very much aware that the private act he was participating in was taking place in a public sphere. No sooner does his head roll back in ecstasy do his eyes roll forward to look at us; every prelude to orgasm is stymied by his realization that he is not alone. The camera is the reason he is there in the first place, and yet it constantly serves to deny his fulfillment.

Most of Warhol's silent films were expressly concerned with time, both real and psychological, and in its own, diabolical way, the same can be said for *Blow Job*. Stretched as it is over thirty-some minutes, the act, real or perceived, achieves an increased sense of potency, if you will. The tension involved in waiting for the actor to climax is heightened by the protracted length of the film, while visually the camera 'flares' every four minutes become a rhythmic comment on the ebb and flow of his ecstasy.

The duration of the act, as well as our limited view, makes the film a conceptual tease. *Blow Job* finds Warhol holding out, as it were. He resolutely refuses to come through with the expected except in only the most peripheral way. Warhol is playing hard to get, and as such places the onus of the film experience onto the viewer, where it should be.

--K.E.

## EMPIRE (1964)

16mm, black & white, silent, 48 minutes at 16 f.p.s. (excerpt from the 8 hour original)

Filmed Saturday into Sunday, 25-26 July 1964.

Premiered by the Film-Makers' Cinemathèque at the City Hall Cinema, 170 Nassau Street, New York, March 6, 1965, 8:30 p.m.

Arranger: Henry Romney. Co-Director: John Palmer. Cameraman: Jonas Mekas.

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The first I heard of Andy Warhol's *Empire* was in 1982. I had just learned my first important lesson in graduate school: that I could study ten hours a week and not know what was going on, or I could study 60 hours a week and not know what was going on. I chose the former, and began to branch out.

All roads led to minimalisms that year. It was the first I'd heard of Satie's *Vexations*. Those you-call-that-painting? black canvasses by Ad Reinhardt suddenly became objects of contemplation. I scoured record stores looking for music by someone called Philip Glass that I'd only read about. The stores weren't much help; was I supposed to be looking in the classical or the rock section? *New Music* did not have a separate bin in 1982. I finally stumbled across Glass' *North Star* (1977) and *Music in Twelve Parts: Parts 1 & 2* (1974); it was what I was looking for. Reich and Riley and Eno and Fripp came next. The Chicago art school/punk band scene still had some life in it. Laurie Anderson's *Big Science* (1982) was on my turntable daily.

All this by way of demonstrating that when I returned to Chicago from my first trip to New York City that summer, infatuated, with the memory of a midnight walk across the Brooklyn Bridge ringing in my ears, the birthday cake-topped skyscrapers of Manhattan radiant in their blues and whites and yellows and reds, I was as receptive to an eight-hour film of the Empire State Building as you can get.

Only to find a silence. No one showed *Empire*, or any of the other minimal Warhol films. It wasn't until 1985, when I started programming experimental film screenings, that I heard the story. The films were pulled after Warhol was shot. No reason to fret. They were boring pranks, anyway, badly filmed, unedited. A waste of your time.

I didn't really believe this, but I had no say in the matter: the films were not in distribution. Until now. 1990. It's been a long wait, and in the case of *Empire* and *Sleep*, the wait for the real thing continues. In the meantime, we have excerpts, to which some purists have reacted by boycotting the retrospectives, mumbling oxymorons about the integrity of Warhol's work.

I have twice viewed the *Empire* excerpt that will be screened at the Bay Area retrospective. Logistics dictate that this is the print that will be seen in Minneapolis and Honolulu, and I have it on good authority that the same print was shown in Chicago last summer [Schofill, 1990]. If this print is an accurate reflection of the original, it seems to me that the 25-year legacy of this film has been little more than an elaborate game of telephone.

Telephone -- you may know it under a different name -- is the game where the participants, arranged in a circle, pass a message once around the group. This is not a game played at parties; it is a game played in introductory psychology and communication classes. It demonstrates how rapidly a message can deteriorate once it is cut off from its source; very often, the initiator of a message will not recognize it by the time it returns.

The conventional wisdom on *Empire* goes like this:

*If I were the camera, I would faint with boredom staring that long at one thing, the Empire State Building. Two hours would seem like two years. My legs would buckle, my eyes would bulge.*

--John Bernard Myers, "A Letter to Gregory Battcock," in Battcock [1967]

*Ten minutes after the film started, a crowd of 30 or 40 people stormed out of the theatre into the lobby, surrounded the box office ... and threatened to beat us up and destroy the theatre unless their money was returned. "This is not entertainment! This movie doesn't move!" shouted the mob.*

--Jonas Mekas [1965]

*For the next half hour, I, along with the other members of the audience were witness to this wavering [indistinct image of a fog-shrouded Empire State Building] of what the title of this presentation referred to as Empire. Upon the realization that this was going to be the whole show, I picked up my coat and left.*

--Rudolph Siegal [1965]

*If ever a film was devised to be discussed and not seen, Empire is surely that film ... The idea of the film (rather than the experience of watching it), in which the movement of the sun can be codified as a thought, the passage of the day encapsulated in a single stroke of eidetic shorthand, is in itself impressive and rather beautiful. Of course, the disjunction between the pristine idea and the eight-hour reality is literal and incommensurable.*

--Stephen Koch [1973, p. 61]

*I have in mind the image of a film I've never seen ... It is, of course, Warhol's Empire ... The form and image-content of the film are so immediately open to paraphrastic statement that one can construct a distinct impression of what its experience entails -- and therefore can respond to, critique, or otherwise interact with it -- such that its existence as an imagined object in consciousness has become its essential condition, its locus of meaning and influence.*

--Paul Arthur [1978]

*A couple of planes went by and a light went out and that's all that happened.*

--Andy Warhol, 1968 lecture in Minneapolis, quoted in Bourdon [1989]

*Empire was a seven-hour movie where nothing happened except how the audience reacted.*

--Gerard Malanga [1988]

So goes the self-propagating legacy of a film screened in its entirety at most a handful of times.

The experience of sitting through even one reel of *Empire* differs from the idea of sitting through the film in several fundamental ways. The impacts associated with the unfolding of time and the film's minimal developments cannot realistically be imagined; the film must be experienced for these rhythms to be felt and understood. The film has an unexpected structural dimension. And finally, a viewing reveals that, with the possible exception of *The Chelsea Girls* and \*\*\*\* (1966-67), there is more confusion surrounding the filming and screening of *Empire* than any other Warhol film. There is also evidence to suggest that Warhol was a more careful filmmaker than is generally thought.

The excerpt begins. It is very dark, casting immediate doubt on Jon Gartenberg's [1990] claim that this is the pivotal second reel. But my disappointment fades before it is fully conscious as my eyes attend to the unexpected movement on the screen. The light at the top of the spire flashes steadily every three seconds, successfully warding away any airplanes. The eye travels -- as it would in a painting -- around to the very few city lights, which drift in and out of vision like stars. They are easily confused with screen junk; particles and an unexpected variety of flares and other blemishes. The trick of looking slightly to the side of a dim object -- shifting the responsibility for sight from the color-sensitive cones to the light-sensitive rods -- seems successful in bringing the lower portion of the building, the Manhattan skyline, a dim light source into focus. I may be fooling myself. At one point I see rain; I *am* fooling myself.

Twelve minutes into the excerpt, the light at the top of a neighboring building goes out. In the pace of the Warhol silent portrait, in what Mekas calls *the different gravitational pull*, this, together with subsequent events, is momentous drama. These movements, rather than making us feel that we are watching an enormous clockwork, invoke the sense that we are witnessing the life of a gigantic organism, one with a slow and plodding grace. It is *Empire*, not *Sleep*, that is the single, continuous view of a being at rest.

Let me return to my slanderous comment about Jon Gartenberg. Many credible sources claim that the *Empire* shoot began around 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 25th. From on-screen clues, it is clear that the excerpt records time from 8:52 p.m. to 9:25 p.m. If shooting began at 6:00, the excerpted reel would fall into the sixth position. However, Jonas Mekas [1965], writing several days after being present at the shoot, claims that it began around 8:00 p.m. With this information, allowing time for a reel change, it seems quite likely that this is the second reel, as Gartenberg claimed.

The *New York Times* that day reported that sunset would be at 8:19, explaining the darkness of the excerpt, but not the brightness of most filmography stills. The *Times* goes on to predict that the moon, one day past full, will rise at 9:20 p.m. This speaks volumes about the ambient light during the remaining eight -- or is it ten? -- reels of *Empire*.

The Mekas article provides some other interesting information about the credits and crew for *Empire*. Henry Romney, the arranger, worked in the office on the 41st floor of the Time-Life Building from which the film was shot. Romney appears also to have been a catalyst in *Vinyl* (1965), negotiating for the film rights to *A Clockwork Orange* and arguing that the

film should star Rudolf Nureyev, Mick Jagger, and Baby Jane Holzer [Warhol and Hackett, 1980, p. 80]. Eighteen year old John Palmer, the co-director, is credited with giving Warhol the idea for the film -- although George Maciunas [1969], leader of the Fluxus group, claimed that the idea was plagiarized from Nam June Paik's *Empire State Building* (1964) -- and with setting the lens to its widest aperture. The f-stop was set in anticipation of the evening and, as a result, the first reel is reported to be wildly overexposed: the "fog-shrouded" building mentioned by the audience member.

Mekas, the avant-garde's protagonist par excellence, operated the camera. He had used an Auricon sound camera to shoot his widely-acclaimed film documentation of The Living Theater's *The Brig* (1964), and his technical knowledge of the camera was deemed invaluable for the shoot. While this remarkable camera is capable of optically recording sound onto the film during a shoot, Warhol rented an Auricon for *Empire* because of its ability to shoot 1200 foot magazines; the 16mm Bolex holds 100 feet internally or 400 feet in an externally mounted magazine. With 1200 feet of film, Warhol's habit of filming at 24 f.p.s. and projecting at 16 f.p.s. turns 33.33 minutes of filmed time into 50 minutes of screened time. Gerard Malanga reportedly carried fourteen, 1200 foot reels of film to the shoot [Bourdon, 1989], and he and Mekas were responsible for changing reels as the filming progressed. Also present for the shoot were "Henry X" (almost certainly Geldzahler) and Marie Desert. Quoting Mekas [1965]:

*John: "Why is nothing happening? I don't understand." Henry: "What would you like to happen?" John: "I don't know." Henry: "I have a feeling that all we're filming is the red light." Andy: "Oh, Henry!!!" Henry: "Andy?! NOW IS THE TIME TO PAN." John: "Look at all that action going on. Those flashes. Tourists taking photos." Andy: "Henry, what is the meaning of action?" Henry: "Action is the absence of inaction." Andy: "Let's say things intelligent." Gerard: "Listen! We don't want to deceive the public, dear." John: "We're hitting a new milestone." Andy: "Henry, Say Nietzsche." Henry: "Another asporism?" John: "B movies are better than A movies." Andy: "Jack Smith in every garage." Marie: "Someday we're all going to live underground and this movie will be a smash."*

*John: "The lack of action in the last three 1200-foot rolls is alarming!" Henry: "You have to mark these rolls very carefully so as not to get them mixed up." Jonas: "Did you know that the Empire State Building sways?" Marie: "I read somewhere that art is created in fun." Jonas: "What?" Gerard: "During the projection we should set up window panes for the audience to look through." Andy: "The Empire State Building is a star!" John: "Has anything happened at all?!" Marie: "No." John: "Good!" Henry: "The script calls for a pan right at this point. I don't see why my artistic advice is being constantly rejected." Henry to Andy: "The bad children are smoking pot again." John: "I don't think anything has happened in the last hundred feet." Gerard: "Jonas, how long is this interview supposed to be?" Jonas: "As much as you have." Andy: "An eight-hour hard-on!" Gerard: "We have to maintain our cool at all times." John: "We have to get this film licensed." Andy: "It looks very phallic." Jonas: "I don't think it will pass." John: "Nothing has happened in the last half-hour." John: "The audience viewing Empire will be convinced after seeing the film that they have viewed it from the 41st floor of the Time-Life Building, and that's a whole bag in itself. Isn't that fantastic?" Jonas: "I don't think that last reel was a waste." Henry to John: "I think it's too playful."*

A brief comment on the structural quality of the film. Sitney [1979, p. 371f] credits Warhol with being the major precursor of structural film, and, through *Sleep*, uncovers the roots of all characteristics but the flicker effect. He mentions *Empire*, but it is not clear that he has seen it. Pure filmic dissertations on the flicker effect are available and widely seen: Peter Kubelka's *Arnulf Rainer* (1958-60), Tony Conrad's *The Flicker* (1966), Paul Sharits' work, beginning with *Ray Gun Virus* (1966) and *Piece Mandala/End War* (1966). Based on the excerpted reel, I would suggest that *Empire* qualifies as a forgotten minor entry in the flicker genre. Except when the excerpt quiets down in roughly the third quarter, the flares, bubbles, and streaks break up and obliterate the skyline composition, sometimes with such ferociousness that only the starkest contrasts of the floodlit tower remain. At these moments, *Empire* becomes more graphic than photographic, its three-dimensionality, however slight, collapsing into the picture plane.

A final insight, harkening back to my Brooklyn Bridge stroll. The images in the excerpt and in virtually every still from *Empire* are reversed. The Time-Life Building (1959) was the first of the "posturing, bulbous boxes built" along 6th Avenue, between 50th and 51st Streets [Willensky and White, 1988]. The 102-story Empire State Building (1931) is located to the south-southeast, on 5th Avenue, between 33rd and 34th Street. The 51-story Metropolitan Life Insurance Company Tower (1909) -- the neighboring building whose beacon goes off -- is on Madison Square at 24th Street, further southeast of the Empire State Building. In addition to having a 26 foot diameter clock halfway up its facade, the light at the top of the campanile signals the time of day by switching off, then flashing the appropriate number of times on the hour, once on the fifteen minutes. Its neighbor is the 34-story New York Life Insurance Company Building (1929) with its gilded, pyramidal top. Viewed from the Time-Life Building, these two insurance company landmarks should appear to the left of Empire, not to the right. A photograph of the Lincoln Building, Empire still under construction, in Stern, Gilmartin, and Mellins [1987, p. 549] confirms the correct orientation of the three buildings.

For some reason -- accident, mischief, carelessness -- Warhol has reversed the Manhattan landscape in his *Empire*. That no one has gone on record noticing is a final confirmation of the widespread belief in the validity of the statement:

I have in mind the image of a film I've never seen ...

--E.S.T.



## HENRY GELDZAHLER (1964)

16mm, black & white, silent, 100 minutes at 16 f.p.s.

Filmed Sunday afternoon, 26 July 1964, the day after the night of *Empire*.

Premiered at the Film Culture Sixth Independent Film Award ceremony at the New Yorker Theatre on 7 December 1964.

With Henry Geldzahler.

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*I think that Andy's first attempt at a movie was an 8mm job ... he just rented a little camera and came in and did a three minute movie where I was smoking a cigar, and, then, I threw the cigar in the toilet, and I brushed my teeth, and, then, I flushed the toilet.*

--Henry Geldzahler on a lost film from 1963 [Smith, 1986]

*Andy Warhol's films conceal their art exactly as his paintings do. The apparently sloppy and unedited is fascinating ... we find that the more that is eliminated the greater concentration is possible on the spare remaining essentials. The slightest variation becomes an event, something on which we can focus our attention ... what he will soon be able to do [is] make content-less movies that are exactly filmed still-lives with the minimum of motion necessary to retain the interested attention of the unprejudiced viewer.*

--Henry Geldzahler on *Sleep* [1964]

*Henry Geldzahler, the film, is certainly the least known of the Warhol films in this retrospective. Like *The Life of Juanita Castro* or *Nude Restaurant*, precious little has been written about the film. It is somewhat surprising to hear several friends describe it as the dark horse of the Art Institute of Chicago's retrospective in the summer of 1989. These friends -- I'll leave them nameless, just in case -- report reactions on two levels. Reacting to *Geldzahler*, they felt that, visually, it was the most interesting of the 13 films re-released thus far. Reacting to Geldzahler, they sensed that he was the jolly, engaging sort of fellow that you'd love to chat with at a party: a truly Pop sentiment.*

Henry Geldzahler, the person, was the most prominent of the advocates, promoters, and defenders of Pop Art at the time of its emergence. Geldzahler was a student of art history, first at Yale, later at Harvard and the Sorbonne. He joined the staff of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1960 as a sort of a curator-at-large, and appointed himself to the task of discovering new artists before they were taken on by the established galleries. It was on a studio-tripping session with gallery owner Ivan Karp that Geldzahler met Warhol. They immediately took a liking to each other, and began talking on the telephone for several hours a day and attending countless dinners, parties, and art openings together. Although their friendship went through a rocky period in the heyday of the Factory years, the two essentially remained close friends until the end of Warhol's life.

The 100 minute film, *Henry Geldzahler*, is the longest and one of the last of Warhol's fixed-camera, silent, black and white people portraits. From its terse description by Mekas [1970] -- "a portrait of Henry Geldzahler smoking a cigar" -- it would seem to epitomize the exactly filmed, contentless composition that its subject prophesized. As usual, the seemingly glossed surface, upon examination, reveals a subtle but murky depth.

Bourdon [1989, p. 188] is the first to remark that *Geldzahler* was filmed on the afternoon following the *Empire* shoot using the same rented Auricon: it didn't have to be returned until Monday morning, and two 1200 foot reels were leftover from *Empire*. Bourdon does not mention Geldzahler being along on the *Empire* shoot, although Smith [1986, p. 416] and Bockris [1989, p. 154] treat this as a given, and the Henry X character in Mekas' [1964] transcript is more likely Geldzahler than Henry Romney. Geldzahler was probably drained from the *Empire* experience; he was also stoned (on marijuana). Bourdon assembles Geldzahler's recollection of the film from several obscure sources:

*I was horrified because Andy didn't stand behind the camera ... He'd come back once in a while and wave at me ... it was a fantastic experience ... [the film has] a quality of portraiture that I really hadn't seen before, because within the hour and a half with nobody standing behind the camera, I'd gone through my entire gesture vocabulary, and everything about me that I knew was revealed in the film because there's no way of hiding.*

At the risk of being pedantic, I remind the reader that *someone* would have had to intervene for a reel change at the halfway point, and that Geldzahler would have been filmed for at most 67 minutes which, at the slowed projection speed, translates into 100 minutes of screen time. And while Henry Geldzahler is acutely aware of emptying himself in the presence of the unflinching camera, the less sensitized viewer will simply witness Geldzahler shifting in his seat, playing with his glasses, glancing at the camera, taking out and lighting his cigar. Monotonous, perhaps, but *Geldzahler* effectively captures Geldzahler's charm in the aggressively passive stance that, with the arrival of Tavel and Wein, increasingly defined Factory filmmaking. To some, the reclining position struck by Geldzahler in the film suggests the scandalous, bedroom-eyed portrait of Truman Capote that graced the cover of his *Other Voices, Other Rooms* (1948); Warhol was infatuated with the photograph for many years.

By June 1966, Geldzahler was prominent enough in the art world to be invited to serve as commissioner of the Venice Biennale. He selected paintings by Helen Frankenthaler, Ellsworth Kelly, Jules Olitski, and Roy Lichtenstein to represent the United States. In *POPism* [p. 195], Warhol is unusually frank about his hurt feelings in response, first, to Geldzahler's choice of Lichtenstein as Pop representative, and second to Geldzahler's decision to not discuss the matter with Warhol; Warhol learned of Geldzahler's appointment and selections in *The New York Times*. Even though Geldzahler attended Truman Capote's masked ball with Warhol in November 1966 -- Warhol quipped that they were the only nobodies there -- the rift was not smoothed over until many years later.

A Geldzahler quote in Bockris [1989, p. 194] is revealing of the direction the Factory had taken by the summer of 1966:

*I finally understood what Andy was doing with people and I had to get out of there to save myself. There was one tense moment. There was a blackboard in*

*the studio and I wrote: "Andy Warhol can't paint anymore and he can't make movies yet." He never forgot it.*

Geldzahler's decisions appear to have clinched his appointment to the Metropolitans first curatorial position in 20th century art. He left this position in 1978 to become New York Cultural Affairs Commissioner. Since 1982, Henry Geldzahler has been writing, curating, lecturing, and advising corporations and collectors [Naropa, 1989].

--E.S.T.



## THE LIFE OF JUANITA CASTRO (1965)

16mm, black and white, sound, 66 minutes at 24 f.p.s.

Filmed March or April, 1965.

Premiere date unknown.

Cueman and scenarist: Ronald Tavel.

Starring: Marie Menken as Juanita, Mercedes Ospina as Fidel, Aniram Anipso (Marina Ospina) as Che, Elecktrah as Raul.

The Family: Jenny Burn, Waldo Diaz Balart, Harvey Tavel, Amanda Cheryl, Bonnie Gerr, Isabelle Collin Dufresne (Ultra Violet), Isadora Rose, Elizabeth Sow, Carol LoBrodicco.

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In early 1965, during the height of Warhol's working relationship with the playwright Ronald Tavel which had brought sound to the Factory, Warhol pushed on Tavel the idea of doing "the life" of Juanita Castro. *Life* magazine had in August of 1964 published an article by Castro entitled "My Brother is a Tyrant and He Must Go," in which she gave her not particularly flattering views on Fidel and the Cuban revolution. Tavel responded with a script based not only on Juanita's "Fidel is a filthy communist" diatribe but one full of campy references to homosexuality among the Castro entourage. These two "themes" form the main dramatic thrust (such as it is) of *The Life of Juanita Castro*. Raul Castro (Fidel's brother) and Che Guevara -- who along with Fidel are all played by women -- keep up the camp as homosexual lovers. The sexual ambiguity, as well as a stupefied (and increasingly stuporous) Marie Menken in the title role, makes the film a hilarious romp, seemingly in spite of the rigorousness with which Warhol filmed it.

This rigor is not only the product of Warhol's fixed camera, but also of its fixed subject. The Castro family, along with what Tavel refers to as a chorus [Smith, 1986], are positioned in roughly three rows as if they were sitting for a royal family portrait. The film was shot with a long focal length lens, making the space of the filmic action extremely flattened, further constricting the subject. But it is the "pose" of the ensemble, and more specifically, the direction in which they face, that provides the film with its actual drama. The ensemble faces not the camera that is filming (i.e., the supposed audience who will see the film), but another camera, or rather the pretense of one, off-screen.

Whether it is something implied but not seen (*Blow Job*), dialogue/commentary interjected by participants beyond the camera's viewpoint (*Harlot* (1965), the *Screen Test* series (1965), *Beauty #2*), or actors reading "idiot" cards held up off-screen because they hadn't memorized their lines (*Horse* (1965), *Vinyl*), off-screen space is a dominant force in the films of Warhol. Even the preening self-absorption of the Factory stable of stars and would-be stars who not so much played to the camera as they did to the presumptive audience begot by/beyond the camera exemplifies the determinant power of this space.

In *Juanita Castro*, not only is the off-screen space made present in the form of the "decoy" camera, but this presence takes the shape of an additional audience, separate from the one viewing the film. The Castro entourage is posing/playing not only to us as viewer/heir to the enterprise, but to this off-screen audience that is alternately treated as both still- and moving-picture camera. (In this regard it is important to remember that in its original context, a Warhol film had two lives: one while it was being filmed, when it was a Factory "happening," with hangers-on and the press in residence as audience, and the one it had when two weeks later it was being projected on some bed sheet in a night club or on the screen at the Film-makers' Cinematheque.)

*Juanita Castro* further collapses the traditional out-of-sight, out-of-mind premise that Hollywood is based on by having its filmic action directed from the inside, as it were. The usual set-up of the director existing outside of the film directed is here inverted as our director, "played" by the film's scenarist, Tavel, is part of this family portrait. Indeed Tavel is more or less center stage, not only in physical placing but because he is directing the action, telling the family members (the actors) their lines, instructing them on the desired inflection and the required physical actions. The hierarchical director-actor relationship is tempered not only by this self-reflexiveness but also because Tavel at times allows himself to be subsumed within his own "narrative," as when he follows his own direction for the family to fall asleep during a speech by Juanita.

The success of *Juanita Castro*, depends on this camera which may or may not be there (according to Tavel, the idea was Warhol's [Smith]) and its opposition to the one that *is* there. What the viewer gains from this set-up is the feeling of having a privileged window onto not merely the Castro family and chorus (after all, the wilful suspension of disbelief is never really possible here or in any of Warhol's sound films) but the Factory family (the stars) and its hangers-on. With the notable exception of Menken, the ensemble dutifully poses, dutifully hams it up, dutifully does what it is told to do. Ultimately even the ornery Menken is a dupe, facing a camera that doesn't exist, going in for close-ups that in reality efface her. The viewer is afforded in essence a behind-the-scenes view, a view that might have been received from a passive Warhol that left his camera's viewpoint fixed, resisting camera movement or zooming, but who nevertheless arranged his subject so that cruel becomes a concomitant of cool.

In the lower right-hand corner of the frame is seated Ultra Violet, who bears the unmistakable look of someone who doesn't want to be a party to the film's proceedings. Whereas the rest of the ensemble maintains the not so polite fiction that the camera is "over there," this fidgeting "actress" cannot help but let her eyes dart towards the camera that is actually rolling. The whites of her eyes, like the sparkling of her sequined blouse, form the pivot(al) point on the axis between the two viewpoints of the film. Her alternately poignant and hilarious presence becomes trapped in the dialectic these viewpoints, both Factory-manufactured, engender.

--K.E.

## VINYL (1965)

16mm, black and white, sound, 66 minutes at 24 f.p.s.

Filmed in late April or early May, 1965.

Premiered by the Film-makers' Cinematheque, June 4, 1965.

Written by Ronald Tavel.

With Gerard Malanga as Victor, Tosh Carillo as "The Doctor," J.D. MacDermott as "The Cop." Also Robert Filippo, Larry Latreille, Ondine, Jacques Potin, and Edie Sedgwick.

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*It's an expose of sort of pseudo teddy boy delinquent New York speed heads. There's no moral pulled out of it, that's what I like, there's no morality involved, no pseudo moralizing. It's just there.*

--Ondine [1977]

*Vinyl* is the first filmed version of Anthony Burgess' novel *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), to which Warhol had bought the rights for a mere \$3,000 in early 1965. Apparently Ronald Tavel, who wrote the script in the usual three days, only adapted the first half of the book, not having read the whole thing [Smith, 1986].

Warhol's constant attempts to sabotage rehearsals that Tavel thought essential for the performance of his script (including keeping Gerard Malanga out late on nights before shooting [Koch, 1985]) account for much of *Vinyl*'s stagy and stilted feel. The cast had not memorized their lines, and so in addition to a script at Malanga's feet, "idiot" cards were held up off-screen. Lines are read without accuracy and without conviction, adding to the film's stylized quality. The self-consciousness with which the script is played is in keeping, though, with the theatrical aspect of sado-masochism that is the film's ostensible subject. It also adds to the hyperbole that pervades the film.

*Vinyl* is for obvious reasons an obscure adaptation compared to the Stanley Kubrick film of 1971, despite the arguable point that the eroticizing of violence in the Burgess novel finds a more trenchant and pertinent voice in the milieu of the Warhol Factory.

A by-product of Warhol's lower-class upbringing and his homosexuality was a dualistic response to masculinity that found Warhol on one hand fascinated with virility that he himself did not possess, and on the other, a need to sublimate that virility. Stephen Koch hits the mark when he notes that "the intense homosexual inflection given the film suggests the psychological strategy of first theatricalizing as sadism the unacceptable and threatening 'male' property of aggression, the better to punish and redeem that masculinity in a sexualized and rather evasive ritual of masochism." [Koch, 1985] While in both the Burgess novel and in Warhol's film the violence Alex (in *Vinyl*, called Victor) commits is in the end replaced with another more insidious sort of violence (reconditioning at the hands of a "cop" and

"doctor, i.e. society), one senses that Warhol was not so much attracted to the political ramifications of the novel as he was to the spiritual.

Despite the violence of the script, there is very little of what could be termed "action" in the film. Its slow pace thwarts any engagement on the part of the viewer. The rigidly fixed camera, as well as a filmed space that is very cramped and dark, contribute to the static drama. When Malanga does his alternately violent and affected dance to Martha and the Vendellas' "Nowhere to Run" prior to his arrest, the camera does not respond. It remains fixed, waiting for Malanga to play out his histrionics, as if it knows that this is his ecstatic last dance before he will undergo reconditioning.

The accidents and mistakes -- and there were many -- that occurred during the filming of a Warhol film were invariably kept in the finished product. In *Vinyl*, the accident waiting to happen was Edie Sedgwick, who walked into the Factory just before filming was about to begin. Despite an all-male cast, Sedgwick was inserted into the film, with Warhol claiming she looked like a boy. She is placed on the right edge of the frame, an "extra," as it were. And yet, what started out as a vehicle for Warhol's right-hand man Malanga is in effect stolen by Sedgwick's silent presence.

*Edie was incredible on camera -- just the way she moved. And she never stopped moving for a second -- even when she was sleeping, her hands were wide awake. She was all energy -- she didn't know what to do with it when it came to living her life, but it was wonderful to film. The great stars are the ones who are doing something you can watch every second, even if it's just a movement inside their eye. [Warhol, 1980]*

Bathed in light, Sedgwick is set apart from the rest of the participants while still remaining very much a part of the frame. The height of her involvement (or self-involvement) is when she can mime Malanga's dance moves. When the action is more tightly framed later, her "dancing" hand enters the frame in response to The Kinks' "Tired of Waiting for You," providing a hilarious counterpoint to Malanga's torture. But except for those few moments when she can groove to the music, she mostly just sits there in a contented boredom, as if the boys next to her acting out their ritualistic games are not all that interesting. Occasionally she engages herself in the action, exchanging cigarettes or holding props, but her presence is less disruptive of the action as it is distracting for the viewer. Her inexplicable and silent presence takes the viewer away from the main "action" of the film (such as that is), as well as obscuring the goings-on in the background. When Sedgwick decides to leave the frame for a moment, we realize that she has been shielding from our view a bit of torture that is going on in the background. Her presence screen right thereby not only delineates the horizontal boundaries of the frame but also reveals the physical depth of that frame. Ultimately the film is steered further towards a *textural* -- as opposed to *textual* -- reading, and Sedgwick sitting there on a trunk proves to be an ironic foil to the film's homoerotic subtext.

--K.E.

## BEAUTY #2 (1965)

16mm, black and white, sound, 66 minutes at 24 f.p.s.

Filmed early July, 1965.

Premiered by the Film-Makers' Cinematheque, July 17, 1965.

Writer and assistant director: Chuck Wein.

With Edie Sedgwick and Gino Piserchio.

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The filmed space of *Beauty #2* is quite banal. On a bed lies a couple, Edie Sedgwick and Gino Piserchio, who are somewhat risquely dressed in their underwear, although compared to other Warhol films (e.g. the pornographic *Couch* (1964)) the scene is tame. The atmosphere has both a dull and vibrant quality about it. It is the wee hours of the morning, the senses are dulled by smoke and drink, yet an electricity is palpably present; vulnerability is ripe for exploitation and considerations like sensitivity are moot points.

Visually, *Beauty #2* again presents the viewer with a framed space which remains inviolable (with one exception) for the duration of the film's two 35-minute takes. (The exception to this is a Doberman named Horse that, although tellingly chained to the bed, at least has enough slack on his leash to wander in and out of the frame from time to time.)

Although sound at first did not alter Warhol's insistence on a static camera, it was nevertheless an integral part of his films, and indeed, expanded the scope of them well beyond the mere benefit of hearing his Superstars speak. In *Beauty #2* the sound originates not only from the couple on the bed, but from the "assistant director," Chuck Wein, who is positioned off-screen. The sound creates a triangle of sorts among the three that replicates the film's "narrative": Wein is Edie's ex-lover ("beauty #1") who has graciously brought for her this "beauty #2," Gino. The triumvirate, however, remains an incomplete -- and to some extent, incomprehensible -- entity, precisely because one cannot see Wein.

Despite Wein's peripheral presence, he is the driving force of the film. He is both matchmaker ("why don't you lie down and get to know each other?") and interrogator, and a few other things as well:

Wein: If I left, what would happen?

Sedgwick: I wouldn't know what to do.

Wein: Stick to your roles!

Typically for Warhol, however, roles are anything but fixed here. Indeed, *Beauty #2* amounts to a powerful portrait of Edie Sedgwick, as parts of her very real past are brought up and exploited by Wein, who takes advantage of intimate details that are known to him because of the relationship he and Edie had outside of the film [Stein, 1982]. Edie's trust is constantly being fractured by this betrayal of intimacy, making the situation volatile. Continually -- and spontaneously -- she must fend for herself against Wein's verbal onslaught (Gino is of pitiably little help). Under the circumstances, she handles herself with considerable aplomb and wit, and indeed for much of the film is able to spar with Wein on an equal footing. Whether the tactic

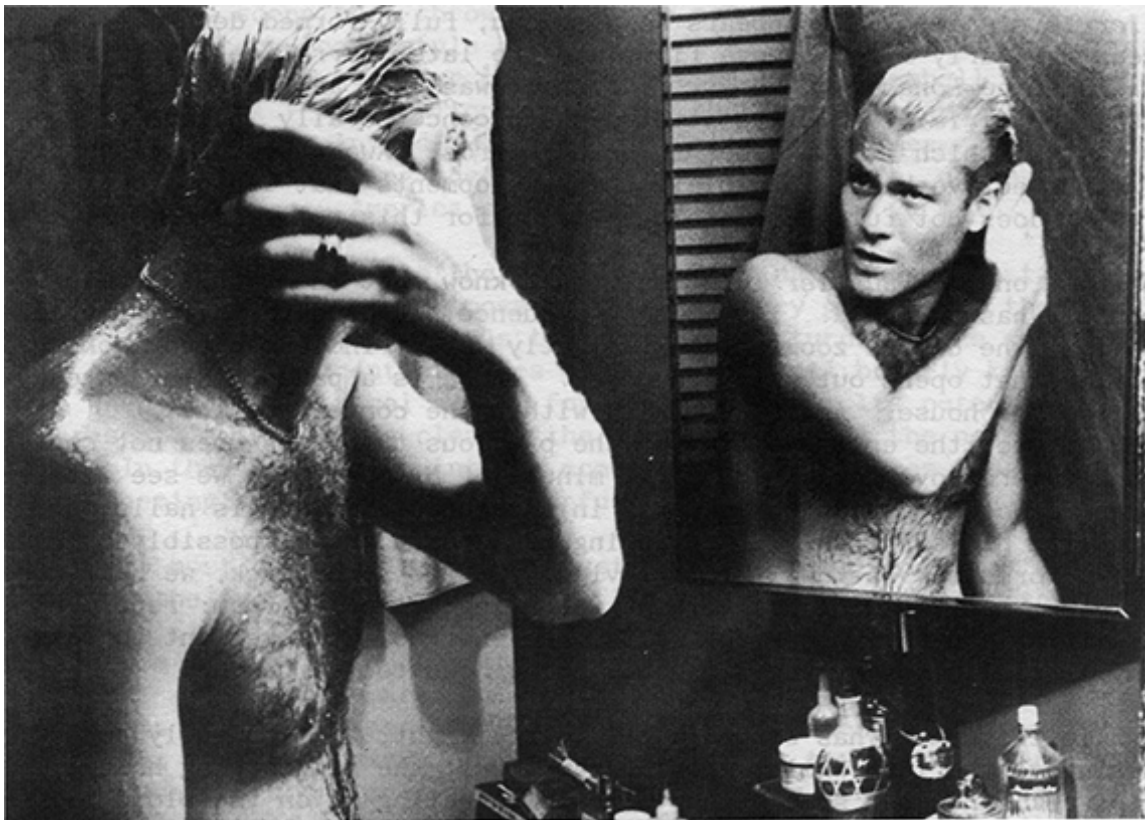


is one of coyness ("What's a voyeur?") or pseudo-psychology ("The reason you [Wein] are around is because you're unhappy"), Edie tries to keep up her part of the verbal bargain. To a large extent it is her presence (and presence of mind) that saves the film from being one of only petty and unredeeming nastiness. Inevitably, though, Wein does get the best of her, and all Edie can do is hurl an ashtray.

Wein's intangible aural presence is paradoxically what strengthens his very tangible hold on the film and its minimal action. Try as they might, neither Edie nor Gino can escape the presence of their off-screen interlocutor. The dictates of the "script" require that they remain on the bed, of course, but their inability (or rather, inertia) to transcend both the physical and psychic boundaries of the framed space, like their inability to consummate a sexual union, creates a capitulation to Wein unpleasant in its implications.

When Edie says to Wein, "I don't mean to involve you in whatever it is we're involving you in," she is being disingenuous: Wein chose the scene; they are there for his benefit. But they are also there for our benefit. Wein is a voyeur who by his spectral presence simulates the viewer's peephole view. Yet, because Wein is also fashioner of the scene, the viewer's complicity in the voyeuristic set-up is deferred. Wein's presence allows the viewer to evade responsibility...for the moment. In this respect, the viewer is in a position analogous to Warhol's position as maker of the film. With Wein as stand-in director, Warhol can remain on the passive side of the passive/assertive dichotomy while at the same time retaining directorial control. Directing at one remove affords Warhol the distance needed to stave off responsibility for what his camera records. Ultimately, though, Warhol retains more than control. He retains culpability, for what is seen *and heard*.

--K.E.



## MY HUSTLER (1965)

16mm, black & white, sound, 67 minutes at 24 f.p.s.

Filmed Labor Day weekend, 1965, on location at Cherry Grove, Fire Island, NY.

Premiered by the Film-Makers' Cinemathèque at the 125 West 41st Street theater, New York, October 1965.

Director: Chuck Wein. Sound: Paul Morrissey.

With, in order of appearance, Ed Hood as the house-owner/john, John MacDermott as the servant/bodyguard, Paul America (Paul Johnson) as the Dial-A-Hustler, Genevieve Charbin as the next-door neighbor, Joseph Campbell aka Sugar Plum Fairy as the acquaintance, and Dorothy Dean as the last of the hustler's options.

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*Paul America was another strange cup of tea. He was everybody's lover ... he was marvelously satisfying to everyone. Imagine having that type of curse ... He was the personification of total sexual satisfaction. Without a brain in his head. Just beautifully vapid. He was a wonderful creature. Anybody who wanted anything from Paul could get it. He was there to satisfy. And he did.*

--Ondine [Stein, 1982, p. 212]

Considered chronologically within the context of this retrospective, *My Hustler* is stunning. It appears as a sudden, fully-formed demarcation between the early fixed-camera films and the later narrative films, *Nude Restaurant* and *Lonesome Cowboys*. Though it was shot and screened long before *The Chelsea Girls* (1966), its attitudes and concerns ally it more with the later works, which it surpasses in both regards. Awareness of films not in the retrospective helps to explain the developments that led up to the film, but still does not fully prepare the viewer for this remarkable work.

From frame one, *My Hustler* lets the viewer know that the Warhol filmic vocabulary has expanded. The opening sequence begins with the optics already in motion, the camera zooming back slightly as we find ourselves looking into a doorway that opens out onto a sundeck. There is a pause, then a steady zoom into the house. Again, speaking within the context of the retrospective, the entire output of the previous two years does not contain as much camera movement as the first minute of *My Hustler*. We see literary scholar Ed Hood lounging comfortably in a bathrobe, doing his nails, and toying with his sunglasses. A painting of a beach scene, possibly by David Hockney, forms the back wall to our view. On the soundtrack, we hear Hood -- clearly! -- reprimanding his servant for being out of uniform: reporting for work with no boots, leather, or belts. He instructs the servant to take care of any special needs of the blond boy going down to the beach.

Meanwhile the camera has bumped a bit to the right, then bouncily begun wandering to the left whilst zooming back, past the neighboring houses, along a boardwalk, and down some steps, finally targeting in on the blond boy under discussion, Paul America. He steps onto the beach, removes his shirt, and

begins attending to his leisure: applying suntan lotion, whittling a piece of wood, adjusting a transistor radio, brushing sand and flies away. Hood's worshipful, muttering monologue continues.

Suddenly, the camera pans wildly back to Hood just as the story line -- another innovation -- is introduced by the arrival of Hood's bathing-suited neighbor, played by Genevieve Charbin. In a conversation dominated by Hood, the two of them compare notes on America, his "dipped" hair, and their respective sexual appetites. The camera meanders back to the beach. A new male character saunters up and begins talking with America. Jealously, both Hood and Charbin demand that he come up to the deck; it is Joseph Campbell, whom Hood knows as the Sugar Plum Fairy. Campbell, in turn, claims to know America from shadier incidents in the past.

The threesome continues to discuss America, when suddenly, there is an audible and visible *zap!* as the film cuts to the beach: the first strobe cut in the film, possibly Warhol's first ever. The strobe cut is a phenomenon peculiar to the optically recorded sound capability of the Auricon camera. Achieved simply by turning the camera off and on while filming -- a new technique in itself for the Warhol crew -- it was later used to create purely gratuitous edits.

The plot evolves into the bet upon which the rest of the film hinges. Hood bets his summer home that neither of the other two will be able to seduce his boy, now revealed to be hired from Dial-A-Hustler, away from him. The first reel ends unresolved, with America and Charbin, making her move, wading in the ocean amidst crashing waves.

The infamous second reel is shot through the doorway of the cramped bathroom in Hood's summer home. America and Campbell take turns showering, shaving, brushing their teeth, pissing, and generally primping after their swim. In many ways, this scene is a throwback to the mount-the-camera and turn-the-characters-loose style of earlier films. The dialogue centers on the finer points of a hustling career as presented by Campbell, an 18 year veteran. Campbell -- later lionized in the Lou Reed song, *Walk on the Wild Side* (1972) -- drifts in and out of authenticity, sometimes speaking from the heart, other times shooting the camera a disgusted glance, obviously bored with the proceedings. America contributes many "Whadda ya mean?"s.

The dialogue is secondary to the gravity developing between the two men. The screen is charged with sexual possibilities as they go through their body play, brushing past each other as they take their turns at the mirror. Little overtly sexual contact takes place -- Campbell briefly kneading his crotch when America's towel slips, for example -- but its potential is ever-present. Campbell is clearly the pursuer, America the nervous, young evader. In the film's more intense moments America freezes, trapped at the mirror, seemingly on the verge of confused tears.

Contrary to most descriptions of *My Hustler*, this homoerotic *pas de deux* does not occupy the full second reel. The film takes a twisted, confrontational turn in the final six minutes. Charbin, now fully dressed, materializes in the bathroom doorway, proposes that America go away with her, then disappears. The most remarkable moment in the film then begins as Hood takes his place in the doorframe. Campbell, genuinely shaken, withdraws into a space hidden from the camera, but still visible in the mirror. America, unsure of what to do, stares straight ahead, filing his nails. In methodical, measured tones, punctuated by "Paul," Hood recounts the

financial, educational, social, and sexual benefits that will accrue to America if he stays, and admonishes him to think it over. In stark contrast to his composed manner of speaking, Hood appears to be deranged or wasted; he peers through his sunglasses, not quite being able to focus on the camera, slugging with abandon from a Canada Dry bottle. In the very bizarre last minute of the film, a completely new character, played by Dorothy Dean, appears in the doorway making a by-now-familiar proposition to America. She gets a last, unfortunately unintelligible line in, the screen dots with perforations, and *My Hustler* ends.

There are a number of circumstances surrounding the making of *My Hustler* that account for the on-screen tension, although they cannot explain the mesmerizing end result. It was filmed shortly after *Beauty #2*, at a time when Edie Sedgwick was beginning to distance herself from the Factory and become more involved with the Bob Dylan entourage. The film was intended to have an all-male cast, with the part for Genevieve Charbin -- Sedgwick's roommate -- spitefully sketched in at the last minute. It is interesting that, while hostilities were clearly developing, the infamous Philadelphia Institute of Contemporary Art opening -- where the paintings were removed so that the ecstatic crowd, chanting "Edie and Andy," would not crush the art -- took place the next month.

The LSD-laced scrambled eggs, served up by Chuck Wein, might have been another influence. Although Warhol and Morrissey denied being dosed, Malanga claims to have found Warhol rummaging through garbage cans early one morning. Morrissey was discovered curled up under the boardwalk, uncharacteristically assuming the fetal position, smiling. America claimed to have spent the entire weekend tripping, and that the crew trashed the home used in the film.

Whatever the reasons, *My Hustler* remains one of Warhol's most curious films. It was his first commercial success; no less a source that *Variety* [Cohn, 1987] credits it with being "a key forerunner of the gay-themed features that flourished in the 1970s." And it is precisely its treatment of this theme that makes *My Hustler* interesting. While homosexuality is a presence in many of the earlier films -- the two male couples in *Kiss*, the unseen actor in *Blow Job*, the privately-screened *Couch* (1964), the absurd allegations in *Juanita Castro* -- *My Hustler* is the first Warhol film having the conviction to let the subject develop with respect, maturity, and seriousness. Ed Hood unashamedly plays out his bitchy, witty, tirades and Campbell, though a lesser performer, eventually loses his reticence to speak openly about his tricking experiences.

Although Warhol films eventually became more explicit, even pornographic, in their portrayal of homosexuality circa the late 1960s, their stance was entrenched in camp humor and shock value. At times, *My Hustler* feels more like a documentary or cinema verite than the ad-libbed, drug-fueled, open-ended romp it started as. To quote Pope Ondine in *The Chelsea Girls*: "The only other thing I can say is that this may be a historic document."

--E.S.T.

## CHELSEA GIRLS (1966)

16mm, color/black and white, sound, 195 minutes (varies slightly from showing to showing) at 24 f.p.s.

Filmed Summer, 1966.

Premiered by the Film-Makers' Cinematheque, September 15, 1966.

Reels and cast:

- Reel 1: "Nico in Kitchen"  
Nico (Christa Paffgen), Eric Emerson, Ari Delon (Nico's son).
- Reel 2: "The Pope Ondine Story"  
Ondine (Robert Olivo), Ingrid Superstar (Ingrid von Scheven), Albert Rene Ricard.
- Reel 3: "Brigid Holds Court" (also known as "The Duchess")  
Brigid Polk (Brigid Berlin), Ingrid Superstar.
- Reel 4: "The John" (also known as "Boys in Bed")  
Ed Hood, Patrick Flemming, International Velvet (Susan Bottomly), Mary Might (Mary Woronov), Gerard Malanga, Albert Rene Ricard.
- Reel 5: "Hanoi Hannah (Queen of China)"  
Mary Might, International Velvet, Ingrid Superstar, Angelina "Pepper" Davis.
- Reel 6: "More Hanoi Hannah and Guests"  
Same cast as reel 5.
- Reel 7: "The John" (cont.) (also known as "Mario Sings Two Songs")  
Ed Hood, Patrick Flemming, Mario Montez, Angelina "Pepper" Davis, Ingrid Superstar.
- Reel 8: "The Gerard Malanga Story"  
Gerard Malanga, Marie Menken, Mary Might.
- Reel 9: "The Trip" (also known as "Eric Says All")  
Eric Emerson.
- Reel 10: "Their Town (Toby Short)" (also known as "Color Lights on Cast")  
Eric Emerson, others.
- Reel 11: "The Pope Ondine Story"  
Ondine, Rona Page.
- Reel 12: "Nico Crying"  
Nico.

Music by the Velvet Underground.

Reels 8, 9, 10, and 12 are in color; the rest are black and white. Odd numbered reels are shown on the right, even numbered on the left.

\*\*\*

In 1966, Warhol entered his most prolific period as a filmmaker. Shooting as many as three films a week, they ran the gamut from 35-minute close-ups of friends, to improvised scenes filmed in the Factory and elsewhere, to scripted films in the vein of the earlier Ronald Tavel collaborations.

Concurrently with this fecundity, Warhol had been branching out into other fields while still remaining tethered to his filmmaking. Importantly, he was anxious to traverse another area of pop culture that promised a certain amount of glamour, the pop music scene, and did so by bringing aboard the Factory wagon the loud and dissonant rock group The Velvet Underground. (It speaks of Warhol's naivete that his entry into pop music would center on a most unglamorous band). The Velvets' lyrics, in their depiction of the seamier side of New York life, were a direct analog to the content of Warhol's films, while their minimalist music (at least in pop terms) mimicked Warhol's sparse and technically "bad" filmmaking.

From the first, Warhol's plan was to utilize the Velvets in his version of what was at the time a new Sixties phenomenon, the psychedelic club. Featuring rock music, multiple slide and moving-picture projections, a myriad of lights and filters, and dancers, the clubs were an effort to simulate experiences occasioned by the use of hallucinogenic drugs. Eventually, Warhol's version of this would become known as "The Exploding Plastic Inevitable (EPI)," which was installed for a month (beginning in late April, 1966) at a converted dance hall on St. Mark's Place in the East Village. It featured not just the Velvets and films like *Vinyl* and *Couch* projected on the walls, but also Nico, Edie Sedgwick, and Gerard Malanga doing his infamous whip dance [Bourdon, 1989].

The impetus for these light show extravaganzas came not only from the acquisition of a rock band, but from earlier experiments that Warhol had been doing in late 1965 with the projection of some of his films. As early as *The Bed* and *Lupe* (both 1965), Warhol had toyed with the idea of projecting his films in something other than the traditional one-screen format. Instrumental to this was an "Expanded Cinema" festival that Jonas Mekas put together in November of 1965 at the Film-Makers' Cinematheque. In addition to a two-day program featuring Warhol, other participants included Nam June Paik, Robert Rauschenberg, and various psychedelic and light artists. Warhol's program was in essence an early version of the EPI.

Both the prolific filmmaking and the multi-media shows would find their culmination in Warhol's two most ambitious films, *Chelsea Girls* and \*\*\*\* (aka *Four Stars*) (1967), the latter being essentially a chaotic 25-hour film *Happening*, whose ephemerality was a somewhat poignant (and prophetic) statement on the future of Warhol's Factory. ("I knew we'd never screen it in this long way again, so it was like life, our lives, flashing in front of us -- it would just go by once and we'd never see it again" [Warhol, 1980].)

Sometime in the summer of 1966, when his shooting was reaching its zenith, Warhol decided to take from among the dozens of reels he had filmed those he especially valued, and compile them into a double-projection work which became *Chelsea Girls*. While his exact intentions are not known, it is doubtful, given the prior experiments with film projection, that his reason for screening the work in a two-screen format was to cut the film's length in half. Indeed, in the end it matters little why he decided the way he

did -- just as it is of small consequence to establish precisely to what extent Warhol was behind the camera. The work, whatever permutations it would undergo, was issued forth from Warhol, and designed for two projectors.

At the time of its premiere at the Film-Makers' Cinematheque, the only thing fixed about the *Chelsea Girls*, other than its title, was that it utilized two projectors. It was left up to the projectionist to decide the order of the reels, and those reels which were to have preeminence in terms of their soundtrack being audible. Owing to the idiosyncrasies of both the projectionist and the projectors, each new screening was just that, new. At the outset, even the actual reels to be shown was kept in flux, and indeed, several reels which appeared in the original presentations are no longer associated with the work.

It seems, however, that between the time the film premiered at the Cinematheque and its move to more commercial venues (and subsequent reviews in the "straight" press) two and a half months later, the film had acquired some degree of fixity. In the Seventies, when one of its stars, Ondine, exhibited his print of the film, a "tradition" had been established as to the order of the reels [Ondine, 1977]. As the film is currently distributed by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, very specific instructions as to not only the order of the reels, but also as to the sound levels of each reel and lapses of time between projectors, are included with the film.

In spite of the apparent fixing of the film's projection, *Chelsea Girls* remains a work that defies solidification; it is a film both ephemeral and about ephemerality. Mekas: "...it seems to me that Warhol's cinema is really about the transitoriness of the medium and the transitory state of all things. About the transitoriness of all existence and all art" [Mekas, 1970].

Because of the dual projection, the varying states of audibility of each reel, and the proliferation of discourses that occurs both in the succession of reels and between conjunctive reels, any one viewing of *Chelsea Girls* is likely to be a mere part of a whole. Camera/performer, performer/audience, performer/performer, sound/silence, black and white/color, script/improvisation, et cetera, et al.: the multiple viewpoints create a faceted and fascinating dialectic. The myriad of possibilities suggested by *Chelsea Girls* defy any consuming viewpoint, deny any encompassing mouthpiece.

The film ostensibly is set in the Chelsea Hotel (a venerable and durable establishment which has housed over the years its share of the famous and infamous, including a few of the Factory entourage), each reel purporting to open onto a view of a room therein. (A few of the reels were actually filmed at the hotel, but most were shot either at the Factory or at other locations in New York City and Cambridge, Mass.). Warhol's device for thematically presenting his material was not original. Films such as *Grand Hotel* and *Ship of Fools* (both originally novels) are obvious examples, but whereas those films and others utilized cross-cutting to present the omnibus characters and their respective stories, Warhol uses the twin-screen format.

What the projection set-up does is dispense with the compression of time and space inherent in those examples cited above. The duration of each scene in *Chelsea Girls* is the time it took to film that scene, or as the critic Andrew Sarris somewhat derisively pointed out, "If there were more film, there would be more talk. It there were less film, there would be less talk" [Sarris, 1966]. The "space" of each reel remains fixed not because it was filmed with

a static camera (there are pans and zooms in the film, however erratic they may be), but because the reel's space is defined by its place up there on the screen. Placed as they are side by side, the spatial properties of the reels depend less on what is in the reel than its juxtaposition with the reel opposite it. The contiguous relationship between the reels is more than physical, however. When we see Mary Micht portraying a sadistic woman on one side of the screen, and Gerard Malanga's quiet girlfriend on the other, the psychological space of the film becomes elongated.

In a film where there is no distinction between actor and character, authenticity and make-believe, the viewer must tread through a murky pool of self-absorption begetting self-indulgence begetting self-righteousness. So too must "characters" cautiously walk, at least those who are ill-equipped for a walk on the wild side of narcissism. The dangers of such a walk are made vivid in the most (in)famous scene of the film (or of any Warhol film, for that matter), the "Pope Ondine" reel which appears last on the right-hand side of the screen.

Ondine had earlier established his "eminence" in reel two, where he hears "confession" from several women, alternates between priest and analyst, and complains about his responsibilities as a patriarch. Any verbal abuse he inflicts is subsumed within the particularities of his papal play. No such luck in reel eleven.

We first see his "Popage" enter and sit down on a couch, then proceed to shoot himself up with methadrine. He is agitated, he addresses people off-screen. He professes to not want to be the Pope, yet claims to be ready to hear confession. "Is there anyone left?," he asks. One is tempted to interject a resounding yes, for what else has the viewer seen if not a coterie of characters ripe for confession. One expects to see a familiar face from the Pope's "flock."

As soon as the final penitent enters the frame, one senses that something is amiss, that this confessor is "all wrong" for the scene that will be played out. Her dress separates her from the rest of the Chelsea Hotel lot, but more importantly, it is her lack of a style, an ironic way of presenting herself, that disengages her from the proceedings. She accuses the Pope of being a phony. "PHONY?" He becomes enraged, and in his specialized topsyturvy world of spirituality, all hell breaks loose. Phoniness is obviously in the eye of the beholder.

As Stephen Koch has perceptively written, "She was not mistreated for a lack of brilliance or wit or grace: she had stepped in front of the camera insensitive to the life it was structuring and that it required; she failed to understand that in front of it she had to live within its irony, and that she was among people for whom that irony is life" [Koch, 1985].

The trajectory delineated by Warhol's films leads inexorably to this. All those so-called passive hours of filming had always positioned him on the fine line between observer and manipulator; the cool persona doing an evasive dance with the cruel. As Ondine tries to regain his composure, to play out the end of this "historic document," the camera too tries to remain composed. The truth, however, was that it was never composed to begin with. In that moment when Ondine's bubble was burst, Pop was popped. The explosion of plastic was inevitable. The coda of *Chelsea Girls*, with an utterly self-absorbed Nico crying, can only be anti-climactic.

--K.E.



## NUDE RESTAURANT (1967)

16mm, color, sound, 95 minutes at 24 f.p.s.

Filmed October 1967.

Opened at the Hudson Theater, West 44th Street, New York, NY, 13 November, 1967.

With Viva (Susan Hoffmann), Taylor Mead, Louis Waldron, Alan Midgette, Ingrid Superstar (Ingrid von Scheven), Julian Burroughs, and others.

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Of the little that has been written about *Nude Restaurant*, most suggests that it is the weakest film in the retrospective. Although there are occasional strong words of praise -- for example, Gene Youngblood's [1968]:

*...a fantastic film, a great and profoundly moving film, a distillation of everything that was ever valid and revolutionary and magical in Warhol's non-art ... Taylor Mead and Viva may well be the greatest living non-actors, the greatest contemporary 'stars' by any traditional definition of the term ... I'd gladly trade every mumbling Marlon Brando movie for just one shot of Taylor Mead tweaking Ingrid Superstar's nipples with a gleeful grin.*

-- most commentators take the tone of Koch [1973], p. 103:

*To be sure, this film is not so repellent a failure as Loves of Ondine, though, unlike that movie, which has at least some amusing moments before the catastrophe, I cannot think of a single inch of footage in *Nude Restaurant* that seems to me worth looking at.*

and p. 100:

*... in the works immediately following *The Chelsea Girls* something absolutely grotesque happened to Warhol's two finest gifts: his visual intelligence and his taste. It was simply this: Degradation ... Even one who prides himself on strong nerves must recoil from them ... there is, indeed, something compelling, resonant with novelistic terror, in the spectacle of the 1960's' blue-jeaned arbiter elegantium collapsing to the level of *Nude Restaurant*. It is like *Beau Brummel* at the end, unshaved, obese, his dingy linen reeking, the waistcoat stained with slobbering.*

Mekas [1970] describes the action in *Nude Restaurant* as falling into two parts. In the first, Viva bathes with a man. She then reports to work in New York's Mad Hatter restaurant, which the Warhol crew rented for the shoot. There is some indication that two movies were filmed at the same time in the Mad Hatter: this one, where the wait-persons and customers wear G-strings, and another, unreleased film called *Restaurant* (1967) with an all-male cast and no G-strings. Neither of these should be confused with another obscure restaurant film, *Restaurant* (1965), which was a Warhol collaboration with either Ronald Tavel or Chuck Wein -- sources disagree -- starring Edie Sedgwick, Ondine, Donald Lyons, Sally Kirkland, and Gordon Baldwin, and filmed in the just opened L'Avventura restaurant.

*Nude Restaurant* is obsessed with conversations and monologues. Some of these are on subjects that are profoundly uninteresting. Some are amusingly absurdist, others naturalistic. The diatribes that stand out were probably outrageous in their time -- Viva complaining about meeting only "faggots," relating stories of her seduction by priests in the convent -- but it is not clear how they will have aged. Taylor Mead acts variously as listener, singer, and harmonica player. The camera plays a moderately active role, punctuating the proceedings with strobe cuts and occasional pans.

Bourdon [1989, p. 259f] recounts a variety of amusing Susan Hoffmann tales. She entered the Factory world after being filmed in the orgy-in-a-raft-in-a-swimming-pool scene from *Ciao! Manhattan*, the John Palmer/Chuck Wein/Genevieve Charbin/Robert Margouloff vehicle that pinnacled the exploitation of Edie Sedgwick. Hoffmann claimed to be a painter, and was a *front-room* hanger-on at Max's Kansas City; the Factory turf, of course, being the *back-room*. Her crossover took place when she appeared in Warhol's *The Loves of Ondine* (1967), where, in one scene, she removes her blouse. She surprised everyone by having applied circular Band-Aids to her nipples and demanding that Ondine pay for their removal. Warhol and Morrissey rechristened her "Viva!", paving the way for her ascent to Superstardom. Hoffmann was an unflinching self-promoter, comparing Viva's performances to those of Greta Garbo, Myrna Loy, and Carole Lombard in her column in the New York tabloid, *Downtown*. Ultra Violet [1989, p. 28-29] wrote of Viva:

*Her forte is complaining. She complains about having no sex ... about restaurants and lousy food ... being depressed ... hating the word "artist" ... people hanging up on her ... male stars who don't get an erection on film ... male chauvinism ... phone calls from weirdos ... Andy's way of stirring people up to fight ... about being called a brainless nincompoop.*

*Time* [1969], in a devastating review of Lonesome Cowboys said of her:

*Now that Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi have passed on, Viva! stands unrivaled as the screen's foremost purveyor of horror. By the simple expedient of removing her clothing, she can produce a sense of primordial terror several nightmares removed from any mad doctor's laboratory.*

Viva is the central character of *Nude Restaurant*; Taylor Mead is her co-star. P. Adams Sitney [1962], in a review of Ron Rice's *The Flower Thief* (1960), crystalized Mead's reputation as an underground film star:

*... he has an air of innocence and dignity which is accented by his stylized, though slightly effeminate, movements, and which sets him apart from his surroundings ... When [he] walks in the middle of the street, or when he steals a flower, it appears natural because one has the feeling that Taylor Mead himself would do this sort of thing ... my candidate for the best young film actor today ... if he continues to appear in films, he will have to be compared to such greats as Laurel, Hardy, Keaton, and Langdon.*

Edouard de Laurot [1962], in the same *Film Culture*, offers counterpoint:

*... he is as old as are absurdity and feeble-mindedness. He is a willess simulacrum of a man, an ambivalent migrant addicted to juvenile gags, heavily symbolic actions, and ephemeral human contacts ... Taylor Mead is an example of ... a bewildered and irresponsible escape from life.*

--E.S.T.

## LONESOME COWBOYS (1967)

16mm, color, sound, 109 minutes at 24 f.p.s.

Filmed December 1967-January, 1968, in Arizona.

Premiered by the San Francisco Film Festival at the Masonic Auditorium, November 1, 1968.

With Taylor Mead, Louis Waldron, Viva, Eric Emerson, Francis Franchine, Alan Midgette, Julian Burroughs, Tom Hompertz, and Joe Dallesandro.

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*I always thought that cowboys looked like hustlers. That's nice. Cowboys and hustlers are quiet. They don't know any words.*

--Warhol [1985]

*All the males in the cast displayed homosexual tendencies and conducted themselves toward one another in an effeminate manner.*

*One of the cowboys practiced his ballet and a conversation ensued regarding the misuse of mascara by one of the other cowboys.*

*There was no plot to the film and no development of character throughout. It was rather a remotely-connected series of scenes which depicted situations of sexual relationships of homosexual and heterosexual nature.*

--Federal Bureau of Investigation memorandum, November 4, 1968.  
[Kramer, 1988]

Throughout Warhol's film career (indeed, his whole life), Hollywood was an omnipresent entity that was constantly being negotiated and renegotiated. Whereas in films like *Vinyl* and *Horse* (1965), Warhol was interested in stylizing them to differentiate his product from that of conventional Hollywood, *Lonesome Cowboys* finds Warhol moving ever closer to that spectre at once venerated and vilified.

*Lonesome Cowboys* represented Warhol's first attempt at a location shoot, and the film was actually partially shot at Old Tucson, a Western movie lot originally built for the 1939 William Holden movie *Arizona* [Bourdon, 1989]. The rest of the shooting was completed at a guest ranch about 40 miles from Tucson, near Oracle.

It was apparently Viva's idea to make the film, and she actually put up some of her own money for film and plane fare [Bourdon]. Viva was Warhol's latest Superstar. Born Susan Hoffmann, she was a part-time painter, part-time artist model until meeting Warhol. Her first film appearance in a Warhol film--she had earlier played a supporting role in *Ciao! Manhattan*--was in *I, a Man* (1967), but she wouldn't become his new star until his next film, *Bike Boy* (1967).

In *Lonesome Cowboys*, Viva plays the proprietor of a Tucson dance hall which doubles as a bordello. The film was originally conceived as a sort of Western "Romeo and Juliet." The remnants of that idea are in the character names of Viva (Ramona) and one of her co-stars, Tom Hompertz, who is called Julian. Taylor Mead plays Viva's nurse. The plot revolves loosely around five cowboy brothers who ride into town and summarily become involved with Viva, Mead, and each other. Sexuality and sexual relations are myriad, as are displays of that sexuality. The brothers sleep naked with one another (incest, homosexuality, or both?), Viva is gang-raped by the same brothers, and everyone is basically trying to get into one another's pants. The film represents an obvious attempt to confront the viewers expectations vis-a-vis the Western and how those films usually depict relations between people (er, men). As Peter Gidal has written, "The homosexual, or rather, bisexual element is that one aspect that is incredibly latent in the usual cowboy film, as well as in the 'historic' retelling of America's grandiose heritage. Cowboys *must* have fucked each other while they were on the range..." [Gidal, 1971].

Warhol had made an earlier foray into the Western genre with *Horse*. There, however, the generic codes of the Western were secondary concerns for Warhol and his scriptwriter, Ronald Tavel, who chose instead to focus on sado-masochistic rituals of masculinity as played out among a horse and four "cowboys."

There is an obvious difference between the Factory where *Horse* was shot, and the wide open expanse of *Lonesome Cowboys*. The claustrophobic Factory set of *Horse* minimalized that film's action, and made the film's proceedings that much darker. In such a setting, the horse existed as an outsider not wanted in town.

A location-shoot out west not only had the possibility to physically open Warhol's filmic space, but the figurative space of his films could also then be widened. The trick, however, was to retain a hold. In the Factory, the personages on screen, for all their improvising, were still bound by what the fixed-camera could see. Once the improvising moved outdoors, Warhol's let-be attitude got the best of him. His stars were strangers to this type of locale. With nothing to support (or blockade) them, Warhol's passive directorial methods descended into inefficacy. And inefficacy was the last thing he needed as he moved closer to a narrative cinema.

--K.E.

## FILMOGRAPHY

It has become axiomatic when compiling a filmography of Warhol's films to disclaim at the outset an indebtedness to Jonas Mekas, who published his Warhol filmography in 1970 as an addendum to his excellent essay on the films, "Notes after Reseeing the Movies of Andy Warhol," which appears in John Coplans' *Andy Warhol* [1970]. Nevertheless, what follows is so indebted. While it may seem superfluous to in essence "reprint" Mekas' document (with a few additions and changes), I feel that until the entire filmic oeuvre of Warhol is once again available for public view -- to whatever immense extent that may prove to be -- it is instrumental to be reminded of the physical scope of that oeuvre, inasmuch as a filmography can reveal such. Until a full accounting of what is extant is made by The Museum of Modern Art in conjunction with the Whitney Museum of American Art's exhibition "The Films of Andy Warhol: A Retrospective" (planned for sometime in the 1990s), it is important to remember that a definitive Warhol filmography is an oxymoron. Thus, Mekas' document remains the most reliable source.

The 13 films in the current introductory retrospective are so denoted with an asterisk. Credits for those films are at the head of the respective notes. The films below have been placed in the years in which they were shot or begun, so far as that is known.

--K.E.

1963

### \**Kiss*

*Dance Movie* (also known as *Roller Skate*)

16mm, 45 min., black and white, silent. 16fps.

Freddy Herko.

*Tarzan and Jane Regained...Sort Of*

16mm, 2 hours, color/black and white. Sound-on-tape

prepared by Taylor Mead. 16fps.

Mead, Naomi Levine.

### \**Sleep*

Andy Warhol Films Jack Smith Filming "Normal Love"

16mm, 4 min., color, silent. 16fps.

*Haircut*

16mm, 33 min., black and white, silent. 16fps.

Billy Linich, John P. Dodd.

### \**Eat*

*Naomi and Rufus Kiss*

16mm, 30 min., black and white, silent. 16fps.

Naomi Levine, Rufus Collins.

*The End of Dawn*

16mm, 18 min., black and white, silent. 16fps.

Billy Linich, John Daley, Freddy Herko, Debby Lee.

*Salome and Delilah*

16mm, 30 min., black and white, silent. 16fps.

Freddy Herko, Debby Lee.

### \**Blow Job*

*Whips*

16mm (No extant information except that it was projected as part of Warhol's E.P.I.)

1964

*\*Empire*

*\*Henry Geldzahler*

*Couch*

16mm, 40 min., black and white, silent. 16fps.

Gerard Malanga, Piero Heliczer, Naomi Levine, Gregory Corso, Allen Ginsberg, John Palmer, Baby Jane Holzer, Ivy Nicholson, Amy Taubin, Ondine, Peter Orlovsky, Jack Kerouac, Taylor Mead, Kate Heliczer, Rufus Collins, Joseph Le Seuer, Bingham Birdie, Mark Lancaster, Gloria Wood, Billy Linich.

*Batman Dracula*

16mm, 2 hours, black and white, silent. 16fps.

Jack Smith, Baby Jane Holzer, Beverly Grant, Ivy Nicholson.

*Shoulder*

16mm, 4 min., black and white, silent. 16fps.

Lucinda Childs.

*Taylor Mead's Ass*

16mm, 70 min., black and white, silent. 16fps.

Taylor Mead.

*Mario Banana*

16mm, 4 min., black and white, silent. 16fps.

Mario Montez.

*Harlot*

16mm, 70 min., black and white, sound.

Mario Montez, Gerard Malanga, Philip Fagan, Carol Koshinskie. Soundtrack by Ronald Tavel, Harry Fainlight, Billy Linich.

*Soap Opera* (also known as *The Lester Persky Story*)

16mm, 70 min., black and white, silent. 16fps.

Baby Jane Holzer.

*The Thirteen Most Beautiful Women*

16mm, 40 min., black and white, silent. 16fps.

Baby Jane Holzer, Anne Buchanan, Sally Kirkland, Barbara Rose, Beverly Grant, Nancy Worthington Fish, Ivy Nicholson, Ethel Scull, Isabel Eberstadt, Jane Wilson, Imu, Marisol, Lucinda Childs, Olga Kluever.

*The Thirteen Most Beautiful Boys*

16mm, 40 min., black and white, silent. 16fps.

Freddy Herko, Gerard Malanga, Dennis Deegan, Kelly Eddy, Bruce Rudo.

*Fifty Fantastics and Fifty Personalities*

16mm, time unknown, silent. 16fps.

Allen Ginsberg, Ed Sanders, Jim Rosenquist, Zachary Scott, Peter Orlovsky, Henry Rago, Ted Berrigan, Roy Lichtenstein, Gregory Battcock, Barbara Rubin, Daniel Cassidy, Harry Fainlight, Donovan.

1965

*Ivy and John*

16mm, 35 min., black and white, sound.

*Suicide*

16mm, 70 min., color, sound.

*Screen Test #1*

16mm, 70 min., black and white, sound.

Philip Fagan.

*Screen Test #2*

16mm, 70 min., black and white, sound.

Mario Montez.

*Drunk*

16mm, 70 min., black and white, sound.

Emile de Antonio.

\**The Life of Juanita Castro*

*Horse*

16mm, 105 min., black and white, sound.

Larry Latreille, Gregory Battcock, Daniel Cassidy Jr., Tosh Carillo.

\**Vinyl*

*Bitch*

16mm, 70 min., black and white, sound.

Marie Menken, Willard Maas, Edie Sedgwick, Gerard Malanga.

*Poor Little Rich Girl*

16mm, 70 min., black and white, sound.

Edie Sedgwick.

*Face*

16mm, 70 min., black and white, sound.

Edie Sedgwick.

*Restaurant*

16mm, 35 min., black and white, sound.

Edie Sedgwick, Ondine.

*Kitchen*

16mm, 70 min., black and white, sound.

Edie Sedgwick, Roger Trudeau, Donald Lyons, Elecktrah, David MacCabe, Albert Rene Ricard.

*Afternoon*

16mm, 105 min., black and white, sound.

Edie Sedgwick, Ondine, Arthur Loeb, Donald Lyons, Dorothy Dean.

(Originally part of *Chelsea Girls*).

*Outer and Inner Space*

16mm, 70 min., black and white, sound.

Edie Sedgwick.

*Prison*

16mm, 70 min., black and white, sound on tape.

Edie Sedgwick, Bibie Hansen, Marie Menken.

\**Beauty #2*

\**My Hustler*

*Space*

16mm, 70 min., black and white, sound.

Edie Sedgwick, Eric Andersen.

*Camp*

16mm, 70 min., black and white, sound.

Paul Swan, Baby Jane Holzer, Mar-Mar Donyle, Jodie Babs, Tally Brown, Jack Smith, Fu-Fu Smith, Tosh Carillo, Mario Montez, Gerard Malanga.

*Paul Swan*

16mm, 70 min., color, sound.

Paul Swan.

*The Bed*

16mm, 35 min., black and white, sound.

(Two 35-min. reels projected side by side. Originally part of *Chelsea Girls*.)

*More Milk, Evette*

16mm, 70 min., black and white, sound.

Mario Montez, Paul Caruso, Richard Schmidt.

*Hedy* (also known as *Hedy the Shoplifter* and *The 14 Year Old Girl*)

16mm, 70 min., black and white, sound.

Mario Montez, Mary Woronov, Harvey Tavel, Ingrid Superstar, Ronald Tavel, Gerard Malanga, Rick Lockwood, James Claire, Randy Borscheidt, David Meyers, Jack Smith, Arnold Rockwood.

*The Closet*

16mm, 70 min., black and white, sound.

Nico, Randy Borscheidt.

(Originally part of *Chelsea Girls*).

*Lupe*

16mm, 35 min., color, sound.

Eddie Sedgwick, Billy Linich.

(Two 35-min. reels projected side by side.)

1966

*The Velvet Underground and Nico*

16mm, 70 min., black and white, sound.

*Bufferin* (also known as *Gerard Malanga Reads Poetry*)

16mm, 35 min., color, sound.

Gerard Malanga, Rona Page.

*Eating Too Fast* (also known as *Blow Job #2*)

16mm, 70 min., black and white, sound.

Gregory Battcock.

*\*Chelsea Girls*

\*\*\*\* (also known as *Four Stars*, *The Twenty Four Hour Movie* or *Since*)

16mm, 25 hours, color, sound.

(Consisting of over 80 35-minute reels and utilizing two projectors, the images of which were superimposed on top of each other, the complete version was shown only once, at the New Cinema Playhouse, 125 West 41st St., New York, on December 15 and 16, 1967. A two-hour version was later in circulation for a short while.)

1967

*I, a Man*

16mm, 100 min., black and white, sound.

Tom Baker, Ivy Nicholson, Ingrid Superstar, Valerie Solanis, Cynthia May, Betina Coffin, Ultra Violet, Nico, Viva.

*Bike Boy*

16mm, 96 min., color, sound.

Joe Spencer, Viva, Ed Weiner, Brigid Polk, Ingrid Superstar.

*The Loves of Ondine*

16mm, 86 min., black and white, sound.

Ondine, Viva, Joe Dallesandro, Angelina "Pepper" Davis, Ivy Nicholson, Brigid Polk.

*\*Nude Restaurant*

*\*Lonesome Cowboys*

*Blue Movie* (also known as *Fuck*)

16mm, 90 min., color, sound.

Viva, Louis Waldron.



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