

Post-Warholmania

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The amazing legacy of Andy Warhol continues to thrive, both from the astonishing mark the artist left on the art world and the every bit as remarkable and seemingly unstoppable increase in the value of anything Andy. The “George Washington Slept Here” syndrome as it relates to Warhol’s legacy, including where he worked and lived, has an equally extraordinary effect on the worth of his former properties that otherwise would be considered unrealistic. This week, it was reported that Andy’s first small Manhattan studio in a former firehouse at 159 East 87th Street, which he rented for \$150.00 per month and where some of the famous death and disaster images (one of which sold at auction in 2013 for \$105 million) were created, is now for sale with a \$10 million asking price, again substantially over market for its small size and poor condition.



This building also showcased the first exhibition of Andy’s Brillo boxes, which merits a bronze plaque near the front door. The thirty-acre property that Warhol purchased with Paul Morrissey for about \$220,000 in the 1970s as a summer getaway in Montauk, near the tip of Long Island, is again for sale, having been restored by architect Thierry Despont. It was on the market for a remarkable asking price of \$85 million, but the buyer refused the horse farm included with the estate, and bought the rest of the property for \$50 million, still a 228-fold increase from the original purchase amount.

The point is, that nearly thirty years after his untimely death, there still is a habitual fascination for all things Warhol, whether it is merchandise approved by the Warhol Foundation, limited editions, auction results, or vintage photographs of Andy and his friends, the captivation continues and for good reason. Warhol, who would have been 88 years old this coming summer, continues to be one of few great artists in history whose work remains stronger than ever with a glamorous, perpetually rising price tag to match.

The Boca Raton Museum of Art, celebrating its fifteenth year in their impressive new building, is commemorating this milestone with not one Warhol survey show, but three exhibitions that explore the depth and variety of the world of Andy Warhol.



The first, Warhol on Vinyl: The Record Covers, 1949-1987+, turns a unique lens on this artist's career, from his early years as a graphic designer to the cultural phenomenon he later became. This is a remarkable show of over 100 album covers, all taking advantage of Warhol's LP spin of recognizable branding. The second concurrent exhibit is a selection of classic prints from the collection of Marc Bell, which presents Andy's iconic images, such as Campbell's soup cans, Dollar Signs, Flowers, and even Chairman Mao, who would be delighted to know, if he were alive, that China has overtaken Britain and America as the leading consumer of contemporary art.



The third leg of this trifecta is an amazing presentation of candid photographs by Bob Colacello, titled *In and Out with Andy*. Colacello was in the right place at the right time, when as a degree candidate in film criticism from Columbia University he wrote a review for the *Village Voice* on Warhol's early film "Trash," which Bob hailed as a "great Roman Catholic masterpiece." As luck would have it, Andy read the review and invited Colacello to contribute to *Interview*, and just a few months later, at the age of twenty-eight, he became the editor for the next decade. The magazine flourished under Colacello's direction, and also became an important instrument in the continuing success of Warhol's career. This exhibition consists of images Bob took with his small black Minolta camera, given to him by the art dealer Thomas Ammann, which could be hidden in his jacket pocket.



Bob was with Andy constantly as one-half of their dynamic duo, and that meant going out every night to an endless array of cocktail parties, dinner parties, art openings, film premieres and after hours clubs.

This is the first museum show of these intimate portraits of Andy and friends, which includes snapshots of Mick Jagger, Liza Minnelli and Truman Capote, among dozens of others on display.



I had the distinct pleasure of interviewing Colacello during the exhibition, which continues through May 1, and it gave me personal insights that I never had before and reinforced my long standing conviction that Andy Warhol was one of the most inventive artists of all time. (A five minute excerpt of the interview can be viewed on here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22d2GHeigsQ&feature=youtu.be>)



As you view these rare and intriguing celebrity snapshots that, taken “on the fly,” have a distinctive curious intimacy and openness, as the subjects, often caught off guard, were not pandering to the press but mugging for the handheld camera Colacello would click without warning from across the table at night spots like Studio 54, or while watching Andy getting dressed for a night out.



Although Colacello trained as a journalist and not a photographer, these pre-iPhone images in stark black and white resonate into well-crafted observational moments of history being made as connected to the most recognized personality at the time in New York City. In his book, *Holy Terror*, which recently has been re-issued, Colacello documents an uncanny perspective on the daily conversations, examinations and activities that make one realize the unique informed vantage point that Colacello naturally acquired during his decade-long association with *Interview* magazine and enduring friendship with Andy. Consequently, no one living is better equipped to tell the Warhol story more accurately and dramatically than Bob Colacello. This is a rare photography exhibition that should not be missed!