

VANITY FAIR

September 2007

110

'H

ope is the thing with feathers/That perches in the soul," wrote Emily Dickinson in 1861. Although the homebound, contemplative life that produced these exquisitely fine lines seems light-years away from the lives and times that are captured in *Out*, a new book of Bob Colacello's photographs—all shot between 1976 and 1982 for his now legendary "Out" column in Andy Warhol's *Interview* magazine—I found myself thinking about Dickinson's poem as I leafed through the pages. Perched in Colacello's images is such a sense of hope, of a new world, that one can almost taste it. This was a world where classifications and categories seemed to fall by the wayside, where black and white, gay and straight, traditional society and new society, uptown and downtown, the powerful and the powerless, young and old, all danced under the same mirror ball.

Yes, like hope, the moment was ephemeral. The list of what came next—the AIDS crisis, the recession, the return of everybody to his or her corner—has colored the way we see that period. But not these pictures. Colacello (a writer for *V.F.* since 1984) calls himself "an accidental photographer" and "an amateur paparazzo," and that may be the key to why the images have such verve. He didn't wait for people to pose. He grabbed those "decisive" moments that Henri Cartier-Bresson spoke of when he defined the point of photography—so different from the average party pictures one comes across today, which often feel baldly commercial. Colacello's photographs aren't pretending to be art, but in his brief career as a photographer, he came up with a body of images that are the *ne plus ultra* of fun.

—INGRID SISCHY

Excerpted from *Out*, by Bob Colacello, to be published this month by Edition 7L. All *Out* photographs © by Bob Colacello and Interview, Inc.; used by permission.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BOB COLACELLO

