

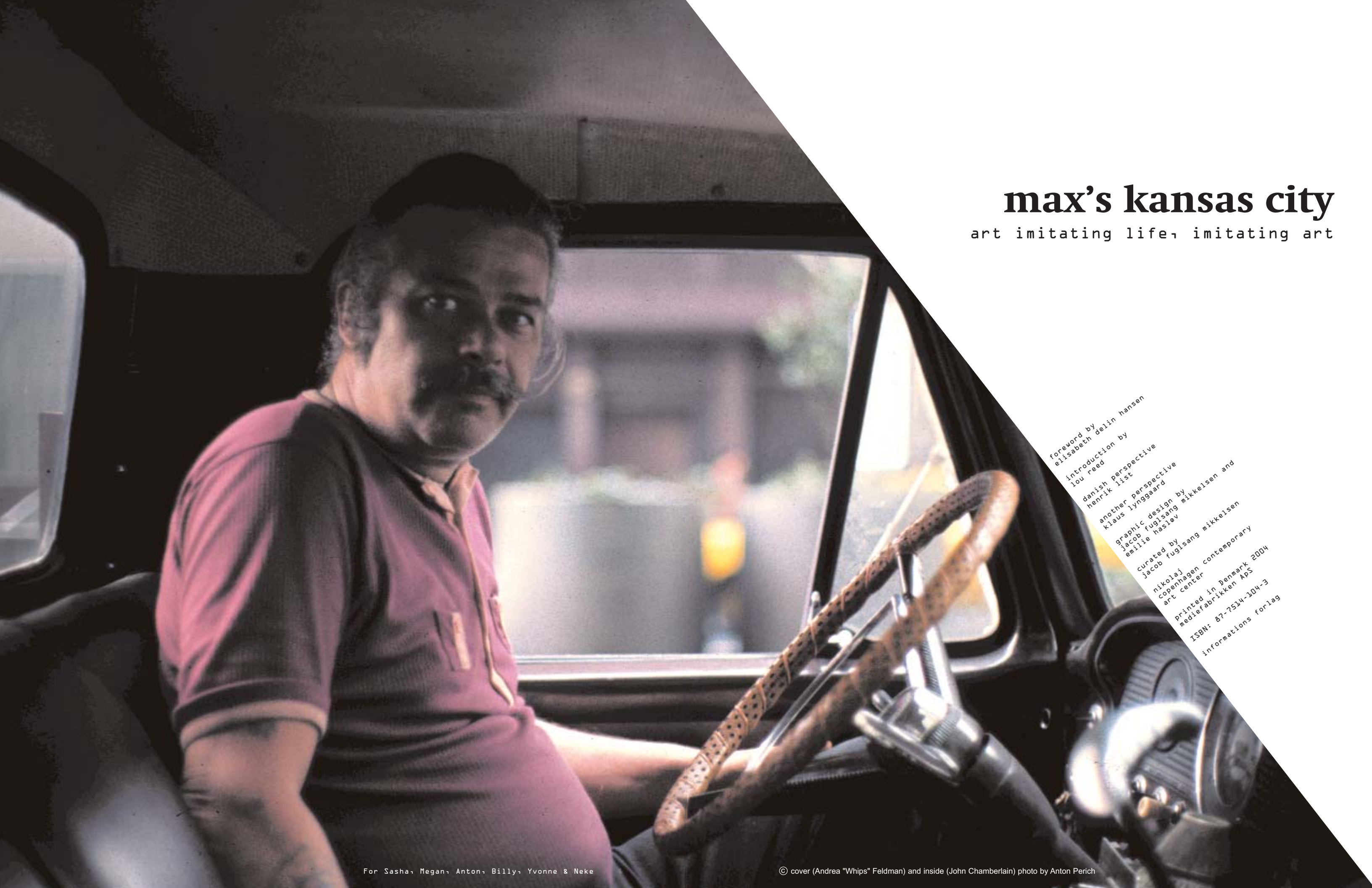


max's city

max's kansas

max's kansas city
art imitating life, imitating art

nikolaj copenhagen contemporary art center
foreword by lou reed
introduction by elisabeth delin hansen
danish perspective henrik list
another perspective klaus lynggaard
curated by jacob fuglsang mikkelsen
informations forlag



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foreword by Elisabeth Delin Hansen:

“Max’s Kansas City was the exact spot where Pop Art and Pop Life came together in the sixties” (Andy Warhol)

New York in the sixties and seventies was obviously among the world’s most dynamic cultural centers. While the period was one of fundamental upheaval, both within individual art forms and in the culture in general, there was also interference among individual art forms, the role of the artist changed and the sharp division between life practice and art came under attack.

Max’s Kansas City was a legendary spot in New York, a restaurant and bar decorated by artists of the day and expanding, for a period, with an upstairs stage where unrivalled, pioneering concert activity unfolded. The nightclub was founded in 1965 by Mickey Ruskin and it functioned with him as its vital core for 10 years as a meeting place for artists, musicians, superstars, photographers, fashion people, writers and actors. Warhol held court at Max’s; Lou Reed, John Cale, and Philip Glass were regulars, as were Joseph Kosuth, Lawrence Weiner, Robert Smithson, Robert Rauschenberg and Frosty Myers, to name just a few.

High on Rebellion, a book about Max’s Kansas City, quotes the American conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth, “I think that a lot of very important conversations that constructed the discourse of the art that was to have a major effect in the next thirty years, really took place at Max’s – the big battles, the great intellectual struggles. Nobody takes into account those kind of institutions

in which real human life goes on, and you know it’s this kind of interface between one’s other aesthetic battles, that is, between your eating, your drinking, and your sexuality that goes along with your ideas, and the rest of the thing.”

This quote indicates the tremendous significance of the nightclub as an intense developing ground for aesthetic debate, while also describing the singular character of this unorthodox academy that was grounded in life practice.

Many photographers were part of daily life at Max’s. A large volume of largely unpublished material exists, not only documenting events but also conveying the ambience of the legendary nightspot. This presentation of Max’s Kansas City has at its core a large volume of pictures by Anton Perich and Billy Name, supplemented by pictures by a string of other photographers. Furthermore, the exhibition includes examples from Max’s art universe: Dan Flavin’s light installation which dominated Max’s back room; works by Warhol and Rauschenberg from the period; Malcolm Morley’s painting of the Ruskin family; Brigid Berlin’s tit prints; a variation of Frosty Myers’ laser installation, which ran from his studio and around several city blocks before ending up on a mirror on the jukebox loudspeaker inside Max’s Kansas City; paintings executed by Anton Perich’s painting machine; as well as works by other Max’s artists. An exhibition about Max’s Kansas City will almost by definition be more than just a focus on a specific period of American history, it will also reflect

developments since then in wide areas of the visual arts and rock music.

A warm thanks to the artist Jacob Fuglsang Mikkelsen for taking the initiative for a show about Max’s Kansas City, and for his huge curatorial effort in realizing it. Likewise, I want to thank Yvonne Sewall-Ruskin for going out of her way to facilitate our plans for this exhibition. Thanks to Anton Perich for his invaluable help and for graciously making his photos from Max’s Kansas City available to us – which naturally extends to the other contributing photographers, as well. Moreover, I would like to acknowledge the private persons and public institutions that loaned works to this exhibition: Birthe Rokkedal, Yvonne Sewall-Ruskin, Anton Perich, Jessica Ruskin and the Orlando Art Museum.

Finally, our thanks to Vincent Fremont and the Rauschenberg Studio for assisting in the preparations for this exhibition.

Elisabeth Delin Hansen
Director, Nikolaj Copenhagen
Contemporary Art Center



René Ricard: Discovered amongst others Jean-Michel Basquiat

Yvonne Sewall Ruskin: Author of "High on Rebellion - Inside The Underground at max's kansas city"

introduction by Lou Reed:

The dark brigade

It's all really gone now. The laser light that shone from the back room with all its red tables. The chick peas. The bad steak and horrible salad. Warhol, the superstars, the rock-groups-to-be and not-to-be. The poets (and almost everyone was thought to be), the painters – in the front at the bar – and, toward the end, the upstairs where entertainment of a more formal nature resided – complete with a booker. The Velvet Underground played its last gasp up there. Mickey, thin, hawk-faced, dark stringy hair severely parted and forever hanging over his right eye, was personally responsible for my survival for three years because he fed me every day. While I sometimes showed up for the five P.M. buffet, it was actually the "tab" that made it possible for me and a small army of other artists to exist just to the left of the line that defines more extreme modes of criminality. The difference between car theft and stabbing, for instance. I remember when Tiny Malice tried to commit suicide after an especially degrading sexual encounter with Leland Rose the critic and the choreographer Little Mouse the Dwarf (another in a long line of self-inflicted degradations). Malice was the publisher of The Lavender Movie Guide and an ex-New Yorker editor fired for correcting a VERY FAMOUS AUTHOR'S prose. Of course she survived, and with the flowers sent by Mickey to the hospital came a note advising her to pay her bill first next time. And of course, Eric and Ronnie and Jed and the Twins, the Cuban Bananas, the incredible David Hoff, the West Coast Davids, Larry's Winchell and the Spaghetti triplets, movie stars with credit cards, and

Dylan's rejects from Woodstock who had mastered a nasal midwestern twang that somehow seemed revolting removed from him. Record-company flacks and writers and PR people galore - the home of many a career-to-be and life-to-end and drug casualties in the extreme, only no one (well, I didn't) knew it yet. Some of these drugs were so new they weren't illegal yet unless you trusted your new best buddy's downtown review of the week in Bellevue. And how was your day? I myself don't know anyone who paid the tab although there must be someone somewhere. Every seven or eight months Mickey might mention it. We naturally would be insulted-nervous: he could cancel it. Contacts were made, lives changed. It was the most democratic meeting ground imaginable. It was there Brian Epstein took me to his limo to tell me between drags of pot how if he could "only take three records to a desert island..." People thought the Velvet Underground really existed, this appendage of Warhol's. But we were broke, totally and completely and always had been. Money went for drugs or drink - not food. And there was never any money. But there was always Mickey and Max's. We had a home in Mickey's game room, this extension of his psyche, his home. He was interested in artists. He liked them. He wanted them to have a place. He wanted them to survive. Many people in Max's got me into trouble but so many others helped me out. Few of the regulars lived long enough to be a nostalgic memory. It was a speedy world - New York - and revolutions were taking place in it - art, life, and rock

and roll. It was palpable and exciting. A young reckless nighttime bunch were we. The dark brigade who never saw the sun. Mickey didn't lecture us unless the outrage was beyond endurance and then you were temporarily banned until no one remembered what happened in the first place. He made sure you were okay and everyone was still standing. Nodding you in from his perch at the bar or scanning the back room, possibly amazed it was still there. And on those days when you thought the world might have ended and you crawled to Max's shaking, Mickey would send over a scotch and beer, tell a waitress to come over and "take care of...." We wanted to be artists. And Mickey believed and supported us. Who else besides Andy did that? Later revived, you passed Mickey who waved you out the door with, "think you might catch that bill in a couple of months?" Laughing. A man's man. You didn't have to be poor to appreciate what a great guy he was. But I don't think money people ever got it. Genteel journalists and critics could pontificate forever about the exploitation of people, by Warhol, by Max's. But those people wouldn't understand a good time if it kicked them, nor greatness if it sat across from them in a crowded booth and stood them to a good meal. For myself it's scary to think what would have happened to me without Mickey Ruskin in my life. We made a big family all of us. And Mickey, I think you'd get a big laugh at where it all ended up.

Lou Reed

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another perspective by Klaus Lynggaard:

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away was a place called Max’s

“...entering from the greater reality of elsewhere, one is only in search of the city, a place to hide, to lose or discover oneself, to make a dream wherein you prove that perhaps after all you are not an ugly duckling, but wonderful, and worthy of love...”

Truman Capote, New York

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away

The years 1965-1974 were a period of upheaval and change in the United States as well as in the rest of the “free” nations of the Western hemisphere. What with the war in Vietnam, the Black Panther Party, the assassinations of Bobby Kennedy (who can forget the black-and-white photograph of Kennedy dying on the kitchen floor of the Ambassador Hotel in L.A.?) and Martin Luther King, Paris ’68, riots in the ghettos, the hippie movement, tensions between the USA and the USSR, the influx of all kinds of drugs, communal living, revolts on the campuses of universities and colleges across the land, sexual liberation, Watergate, women’s lib, escalation of international terrorism, the rise of weird religious cults, the wars, the wars, the wars... and finally, the first – and so far, the most serious – oil crisis, reminding everybody how all this wealth, leisure and abundance of consumer goods was built on Third World misery and pure uninhibited exploitation of the “poor huddled masses” familiar from the inscription on the Statue of Liberty. The oil crisis of ’73 brought all this to an end. Along with the war in Vietnam coming to a grinding halt in ’75 and leaving the USA – the superpower to end all super-powers – dazed and confused, humbled, even, when its population realized that this stupid and senseless war was LOST. It was a period where everybody questioned everything, where nothing was sacred, where old-time beliefs and convictions were constantly questioned and attacked. The so-called silent majority responded by electing the ultra-right wing Richard M. Nixon for president. For a period he was probably the most revered AND the most hated man on the planet, until he brought about his own downfall. American politics has been jaded ever since. Cynicism pervades every aspect of it.

Not only in society as such was everything questioned, exposed, ridiculed and/or turned upside down, but also within the arts

things changed drastically, maybe even more so: films got so much more realistic, downbeat, interesting, odd and pessimistic than ever before. The Film School Brats and their kin – Scorsese, Coppola, Bogdanovich, Friedkin, Ashby, Altman, even Spielberg and Lucas for a while (before Jaws and Star Wars fucked them, as well as the movie industry, up... for good!) – showed us the underbelly of this beast called the USA in hitherto forbidden ways. Believe you me – L.A. ruled! Literature turned strange, elitist and spacey – and in the process lost its readership to the popular novel, almighty, but impossibly bland TV and cinema. So the real news was what was then called “new journalism” (or “gonzo”), as practiced by Tom Wolfe and Hunter S. Thompson, among others; even old-timers like Truman Capote and Norman Mailer got in on it. And what about the visual arts? Get out of here – everything was possible, nothing was sacred and the field became so wide, so expansive, so FAR OUT that it still hasn’t recovered. No more old-fashioned painters in their garrets with brushes and oils, no sireee.

Conceptualism beat craft any old time. THAT’S the name of the game. Has been ever since, really. New additions to the sacred halls of the Fine Arts were made (and later, subtracted again): Comics. Posters. Science fiction. Industrial design. Crime stories. Rock’n’ roll. The documentary. And, as an extension of the widespread underground cinema, the burgeoning experimental video scene appeared. In other words, commercial art. Pop culture, as it was lovingly labelled. Genres and forms of expression that previously had been frowned on, basically. They all had their time in the sun. Some even peaked. And, most importantly, boundaries were blurred. If you were willing and able, almost anything could be mixed in some way or the other. “Multi-media” was definitely a buzzword among those in the know. And who but Andy Warhol to bring it all back home in ’66 with his Exploding Plastic Inevitable.

At the time, the most important cities seemed to be San Francisco, Paris and London. In retrospect it seems that Los Angeles, Tokyo and New York City played an equally important role in this turning of the tides. But by popular opinion at the time, London was swinging and San

Francisco was hip, while L.A. – this wonderful hybrid of (too much) sunshine and noir – oozed “plastic”... but in a good way. And New York was... what? Cold? Monolithic? Passé? Rundown? Truth be told, not a lot of the era’s great music came out of N.Y.C. Except, of course, the Velvet Underground. Who were the greatest. Not that anybody gave a toss at the time, but there you go... prophets are rarely appreciated in their own time.

Ah, but N.Y.C. was so different back then. N.Y.C. in the late ’60s through the ’70s and ’80s, even into the early ’90s, was a run-down, seedy and strangely uninviting place. Remember how it nearly went bankrupt in ’75? Full of crime, freaks, hustlers, junkies, homeless people, drugstore cowboys and dilapidated buildings in dire need of restoration, yes, whole areas of a strangely decrepit yet enticing atmosphere. A city characterized by street violence, illegal drugs, racial and ethnic tensions, homelessness and widespread pessimism among its residents about its future. Anyone who visited the city back then can attest to the fact that 42nd Street really was full of whores and grand old cinemas showing the hardest kind of hardcore porno movies. And Times Square was a sleazy and sometimes downright dangerous wonderland for buying drugs and sex of just about any kind.

BUT – and this is important – it also meant that rent was cheap in many of the declining areas of the grand metropolis. Which meant that young (and sometimes even talented) people – read: wannabe artists – could go and live there. So for a while the city was overflowing with young, daring and often downright reckless young peoploids who had escaped different small towns and rural areas across the U.S. and gone to the Big Apple in search of kicks, adventure, the Holy Grail and maybe some kind of career. There were places to go and sights to see, but probably none hipper or stranger than Andy Warhol’s original studio, known as the Factory – so baptized by photographer Billy Name, as it manufactured people, ideas, concepts, film, even art – which was located at 231 East 47th Street from 1963 to 1967. Due to a total laissez-faire atmosphere, one of the strangest crowds ever assembled gathered there. People with names like Ultra Violet, Ondine, Ingrid Superstar, Viva, Candy Darling, Nico and

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International Velvet. Or just plain names, such as Jackie Curtis, Eric Emerson, Edie Sedgwick, Taylor Mead, Gerard Malanga, Paul Morrissey and Joe Dallesandro.

Although the names don’t mean a thing when it came to deviant behaviour, and some of them even made up the characters in Lou Reed’s only ever hit single, Walk On The Wild Side. A bunch of fucked-up A-heads, transvestites, wannabes, art groupies, out-of-work actors, junkies and assorted flotsam and jetsam looking for kicks, adventure and maybe even a glimpse of the Truth away from the surrounding American Normalcy, which has a tendency to appear quite insane.

These people and countless others of their ilk living in and around Manhattan needed an after-hours waterhole to go to and “relax.” And – according to Ultra Violet, one of Warhol’s countless “Superstars,” there was only one place that really mattered: “Max’s Kansas City is where the Pop Scene, Pop life, and Pop Art fuse. It is a two-story restaurant and bar at Park Avenue South and Sixteenth Street, the big hangout of the sixties. Mickey Ruskin, the owner, has operated previous establishments – Deux Magots on East Seventh Street, the Paradox, the Ninth Circle, the Annex – that attracted poets, poetry readings, painters, sculptors. At Max’s, the heavyweights of the art world hang around the long bar, and in the back room, kids, groupies, dropouts, beautiful little girls of fourteen who’ve already had abortions, get noisy or stoned. “Going to Max’s is like going to a gallery opening. You dress up or down. The last time I was at Max’s I wore an old lace nightgown dyed violet. Tonight my ultra mini will stop traffic.

“In the back room, lit by talented light artist Dan Flavin, red and yellow neon tubes produce an air of mystery and modernism. Taped rock music bounces off the walls. Mickey has a flair for recognizing who is somebody in art and who will be somebody. For booze and food he exchanges paintings and collages that years later will make

their way into museums. The barter system keeps the place noisily animated, for even the least solvent artists can drink with abandon...”¹

As Danny Fields, an observant bystander of the era, recalls, “Before that neighbourhood was populated and trendy like it is today, it was grim and deserted at night, and so Max’s was a destination; no one just walked in off the street. There were musicians, poets, painters, journalists, celebrities ... sort of an A-list of an alternative universe. “When they came here, the Cockettes were there every night; Candy Darling and all the great drag queens (though Candy was way beyond a drag queen); Jackie Curtis; the theatre crowd; John Vaccaro from Theatre of the Ridiculous. Germaine Greer, the great journalist Lillian Roxon, other club owners – just everyone you could possibly want to know. Kennedys were always there. “Downstairs Max’s was a restaurant, and upstairs was at first a disco just for people who were at the restaurant – who had to go up a flight of stairs in the back to get there and dance for a while [...] Later they turned the upstairs into a club to which the public could go...”

The excellent album “The Velvet Underground: Live At Max’s Kansas City”² can obviously serve to enlighten and entertain the listener on a number of different levels. One can, of course, listen to it out of love for the music of the Velvet Underground, the ultimate N.Y.C. rock ‘n’ roll band, ’cause although it has been called the “first legitimate bootleg album” – as it was recorded by Warhol associate Brigid Berlin (a.k.a. Polk) on a small portable cassette recorder – it



Abbie Hoffman eating chicken wings at max's



Allen Ginsberg pointing at black man with kinky afro pointing at his lip



Film-still from Anton Perich's movie "Spaghetti Western"



Muhammad Ali in interview with Terry Southern film-still by Anton Perich



the times

by Klaus Lyngaard

The years 1965-1974 were a period of upheaval and change in the United States as well as in the rest of the "free" nations of the Western hemisphere. What with the war in Vietnam, the Black Panther Party, the assassinations of Bobby Kennedy (who can forget the black-and-white photograph of Kennedy dying on the kitchen floor of the Ambassador Hotel in L.A.?) and Martin Luther King, Paris '68, riots in the ghettos, the hippie movement, tensions between the USA and the USSR, the influx of all kinds of drugs, communal living, revolts on the campuses of universities and colleges across the land, sexual liberation, Watergate, women's lib, escalation of international terrorism, the rise of weird religious cults, the wars, the wars, the wars... and finally, the first – and so far, the most serious – oil crisis, reminding everybody how all this wealth, leisure and abundance of consumer goods was built on Third World misery and pure uninhibited exploitation of the poor huddled masses" familiar from the inscription on the Statue of Liberty. The oil crisis of '73 brought all this to an end. Along with the war in Vietnam coming to a grinding halt in '75 and leaving the USA – the superpower to end all super-powers – dazed and confused, humbled, even, when its population realized that this stupid and senseless war was LOST. It was a period where everybody questioned everything, where nothing was sacred, where old-time beliefs and convictions were constantly questioned and attacked. The so-called silent majority responded by electing the ultra-right wing Richard M. Nixon for president. For a period he was probably the most revered AND the most hated man on the planet, until he brought about his own downfall. American politics has been jaded ever since. Cynicism pervades every aspect of it.

machine paintings on cotton canvas

"They say Anton was home with his painting machine and I was so jealous.
My dream. To have a machine that could paint while you're away."
Andy Warhol



Candy
Darling

Cyrinda
Foxe

Andrea
Whips

Johnny
Thunders

Mona
Lisa

Robert
Mapplethorpe

by Anton Perich



Bananas

Jane Forth eating a banana
photographed by Anton Perich



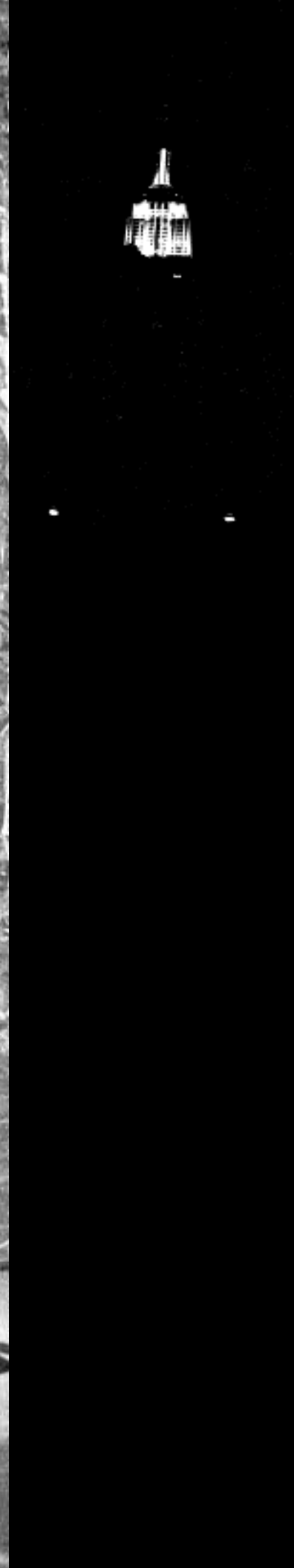
Andy Warhol working on banana prints for
Velvet Underground record cover
photographed by Billy Name

note for exhibition:
one of the above original silkscreened
bananas is part of the 2004 Copenhagen
exhibition



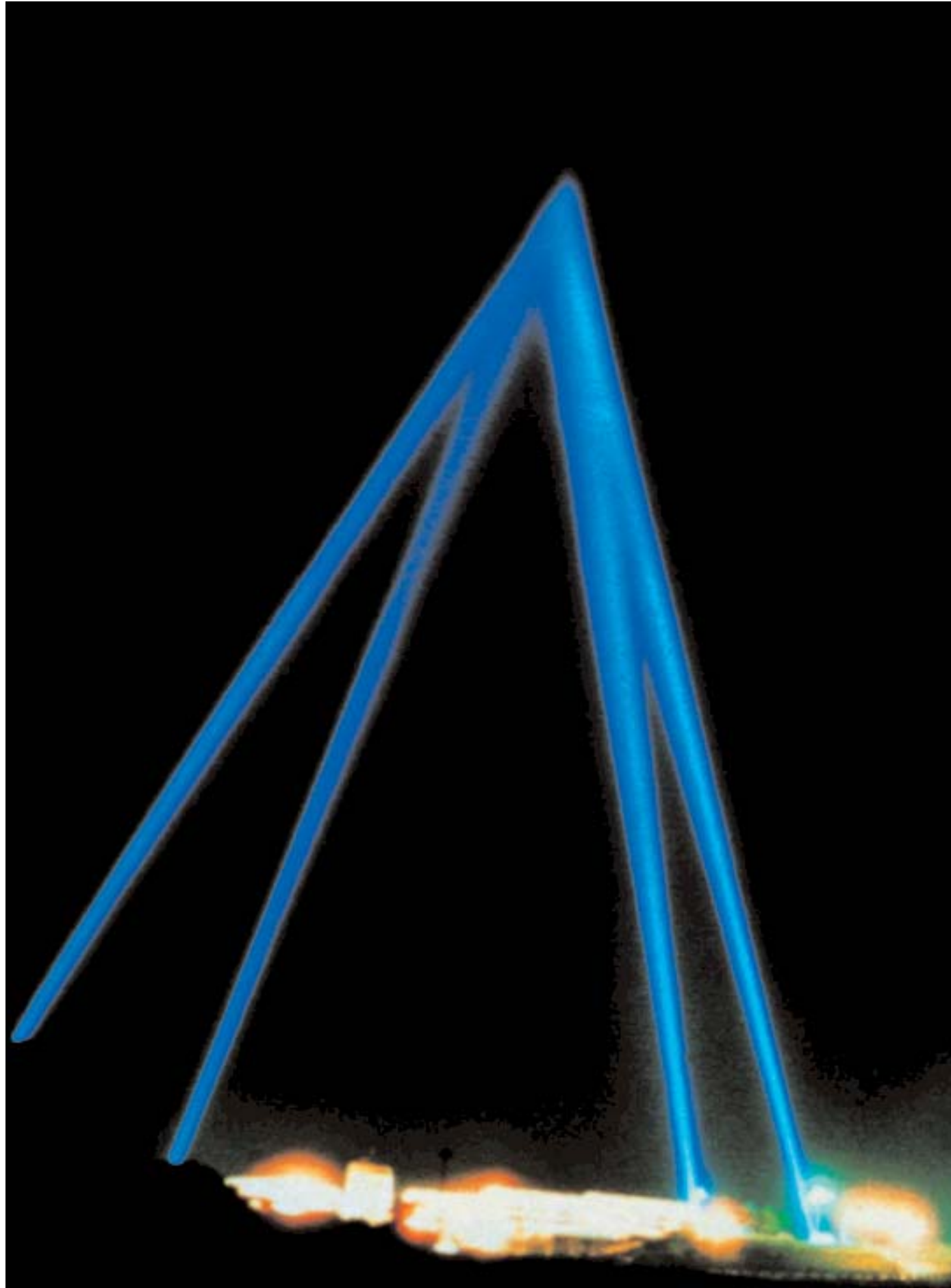
Billy Name inspired Warhol's mind and gave the Factory its futuristic silver color, while laying down the rules as to how the Factory should be run along with having the awareness to capture what was going on with his camera. By spending most of his time in the darkroom with his chemicals, Billy's photos were talking to him. Soon after Warhol was shot by militant-feminist Valerie Solanas, Billy left for a life dedicated to meditation and magic.

Billy Name

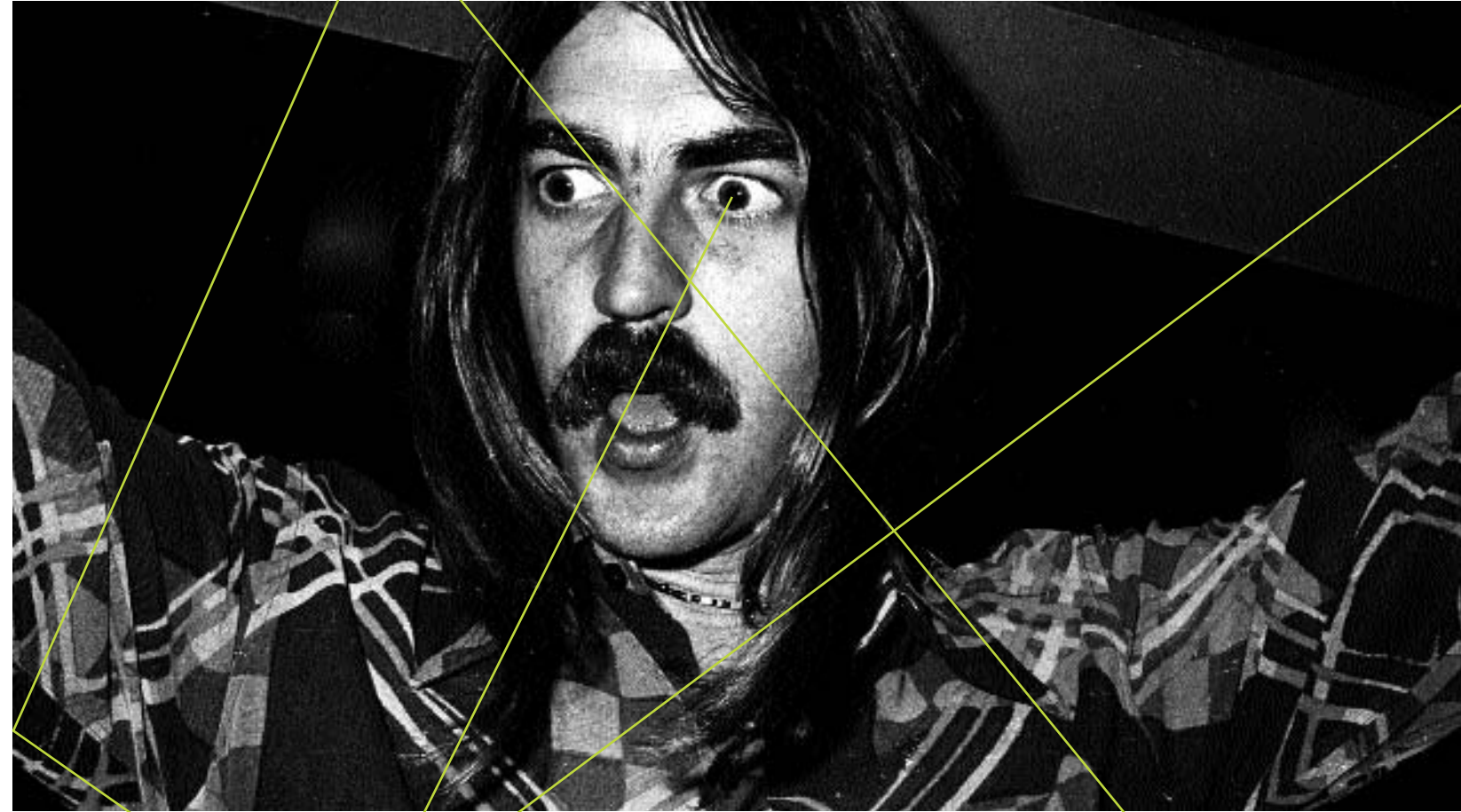


Edie Sedgwick sitting on the time capsule that was made for Billy when he left the Factory. When he came back from his long Journey, it was opened and out of it came several rolls of undeveloped film that once they were developed gave Billy's color images just the right hue that they were supposed to have.

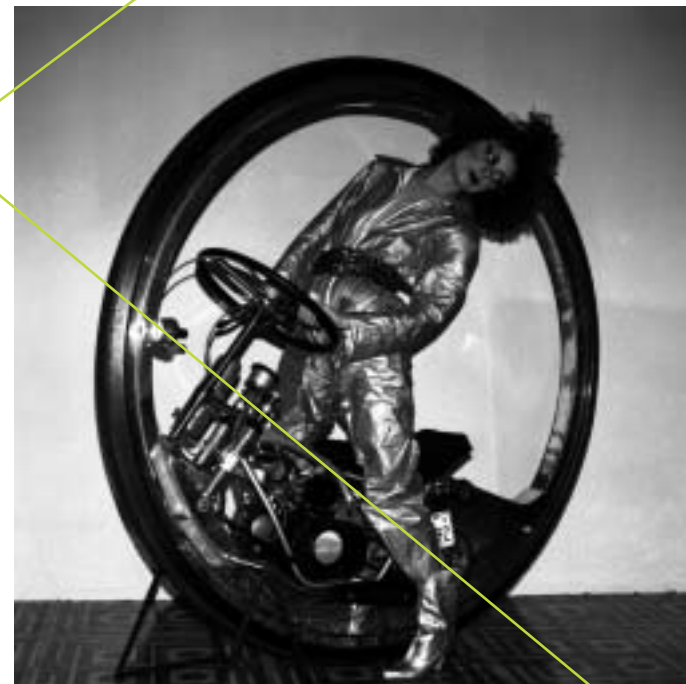




Searchlight sculpture, May 1966. Tompkins Square Park, NYC

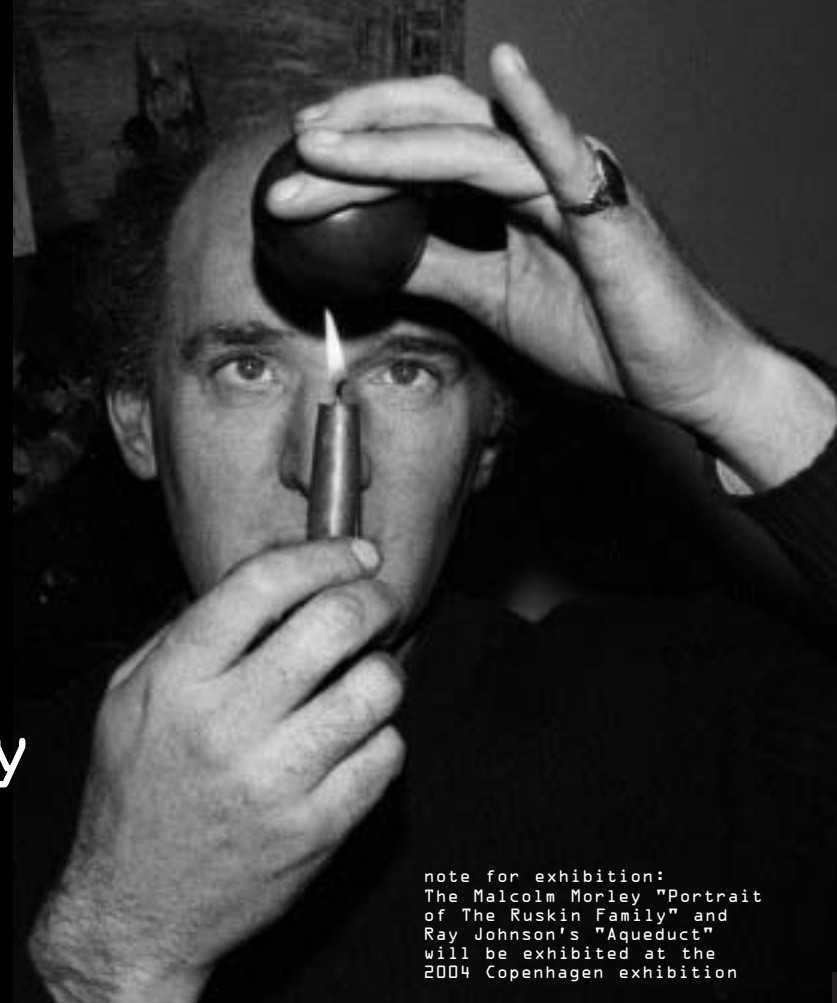


FROSTY MYERS



Unicycle commissioned by John de Menil

note for exhibition: Searchlight
pyramide sculpture will be
reproduced October 8th 2004 in
Copenhagen on Nikolaj Plads



Malcolm Morley

Portrait of the Ruskin Family,
1968
148x208cm
collection of the Ruskin Family
On loan by The Orlando Museum of Art
photographed by Raymond Martinot

note for exhibition:
The Malcolm Morley "Portrait
of The Ruskin Family" and
Ray Johnson's "Aqueduct"
will be exhibited at the
2004 Copenhagen exhibition



Ray Johnson



Aqueduct
1979-80
collage, mixed media
29x12cm
by Ray Johnson



Detail



Robert Rauschenberg

Inspired by the signs of the times and during the early years of the seventies created large prints reflecting his visions and emotions around what was going on in the world. At Max's he loved disco dancing and having a good laugh.

Yellow Body,
1971
Silkscreen
122x159cm
by Robert Rauschenberg



Original

Top supermodel of the time
Donna Jordan



After winning a photo contest in Italy, the 20 year old Oliviero Toscani won a trip to New York. By following Frosty Myers' laser beam going in to max's from Park Avenue, he went inside and after quite some time came out with new colors on his mind.

note for exhibition:
Rauschenberg's "Yellow Body"
and Toscani's spread will be
exhibited at the 2004
Copenhagen exhibition



Max's Kansas City spread
Published in L'Uomo Vogue,
Conde Nast, Italy
December issue 1972



Before



After



Vote McGovern, 1972
 Silkscreen
 106x106cm
 by Andy Warhol

The "Vote for McGovern" print was Warhol's contribution to the Democratic presidential campaign and after it was sold during fundraisers, it turned out to be the largest contribution they received that year. Afterwards Warhol was in big trouble with the IRS, and there are theories that he was assassinated during a routine kidney stone operation, that mysteriously killed him.



Mick Jagger, 1975
 Silkscreen
 110x74cm
 by Andy Warhol

Mick Jagger got BB'd (thrown out) from Max's after he had caught a mouse and put it in his mouth to show people what a good cat he was.



Warhol's wild night knights around the backroom round table. Photographed by Billy Name

WARHOL

"We used to call him Wendy Airhole"
 Rosemary Castora

note for exhibition:
 The Warhol "Vote McGovern" and "Mick Jagger" prints will be exhibited at the 2004 Copenhagen exhibition



Top: Barbie Benton and Playboy Hugh Hefner

Middle: Before and after max's

Bottom: The woman in control on Sex, Drugs n' Rock'n' Roll



Andy Warhol's Polaroids of Neke Carson painting a portrait of Andy Warhol with the help of a paintbrush up his ass, while Anton Perich takes pictures of it all.



Showtime with Eric Emerson

SEX



Neke Carson High society performance piece

all photographs by Anton Perich



Above: New Year's Eve at max's with The Ramones, Jane County and crew photographed by Bob Gruen

MUSIC



Top corner: Cyrinda Foxe; Muse of Johnny Thunders, David Johansen, David Bowie and Steve Tyler

Middle: Danny Fields; The hippest band manager/record executive of all times, signed amongst others The Stooges, Bowie, Iggy, Nico, MC5, Ramones and The Doors

Right: Lee Black Childers and Ava Cherry. Lee having a slick finger in everything to do with music and beautiful boys



Velvet Underground with Andy Warhol, Lou Reed, John Cale, Nico, Maureen Tucker, Mary Woronov, Sterling Morrison, Gerard Malanga and Nico's son Ari



max's
kansas city
chick peas
Top left: David Johansen
(later Buster Poindexter)
Topright: Johnny Thunders
Bottom left: Lou Reed
Bottom right: Iggy Pop
all photographed
by Anton Perich



Debbie Harry who started her
career as a waitress at max's
photographed by Bob Gruen

NEW YORK DOLLS



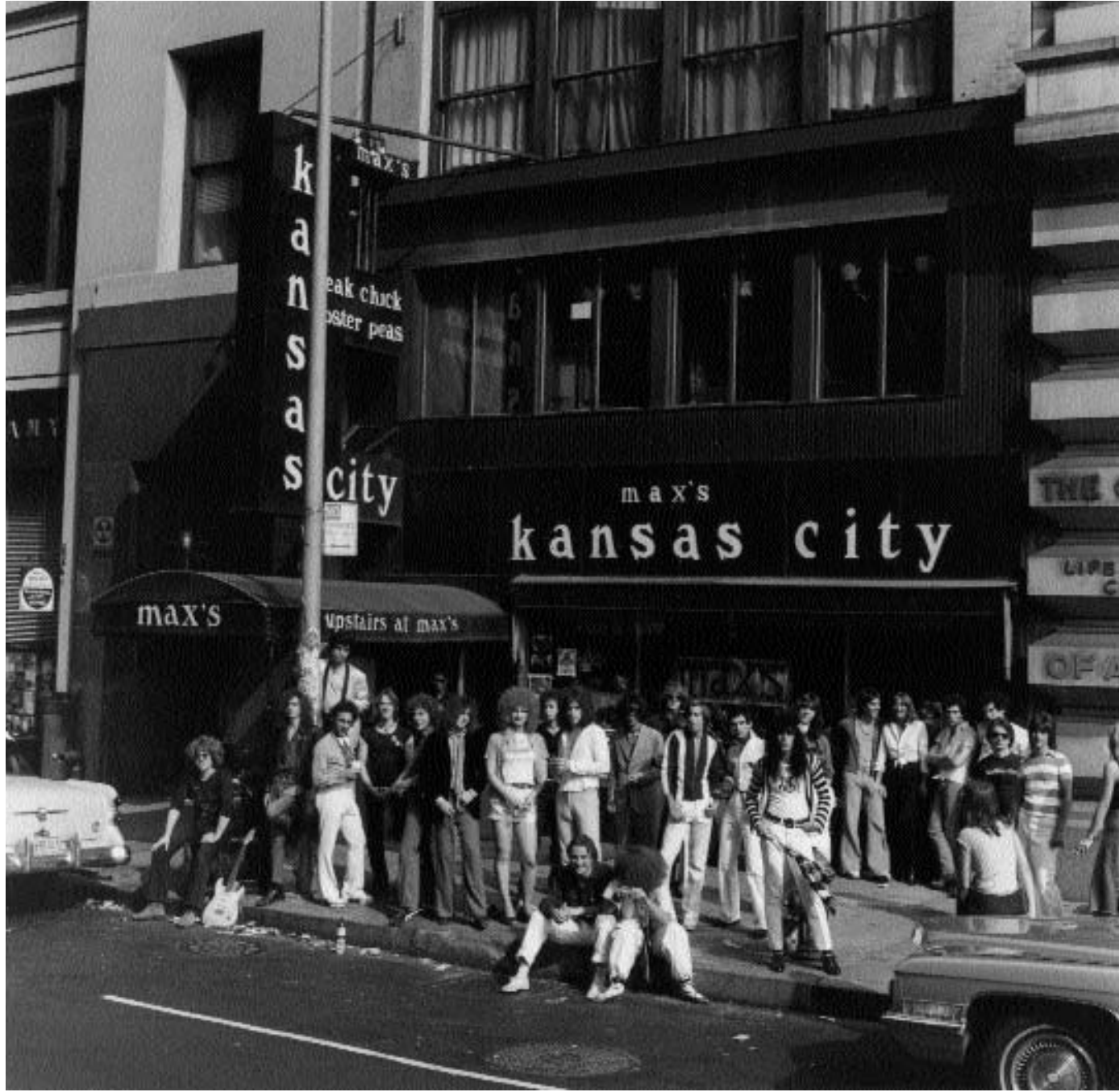


Photo by Bob Gruen



Photo by Anton Perich

HARD CORES OF TCO



Jane County and The Backstreet Boys photographed by Anton Perich. B52's photographed by George DuBose

Warhol Superstar Ivy Nicholson
photographed by Billy Name

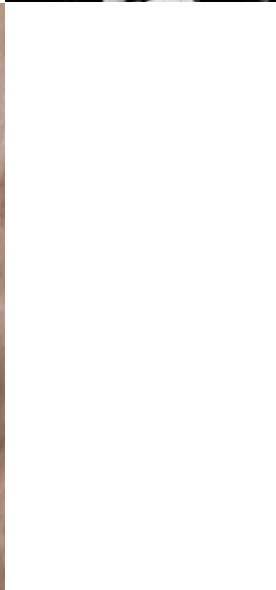
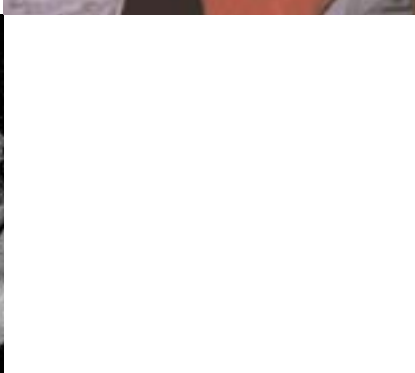
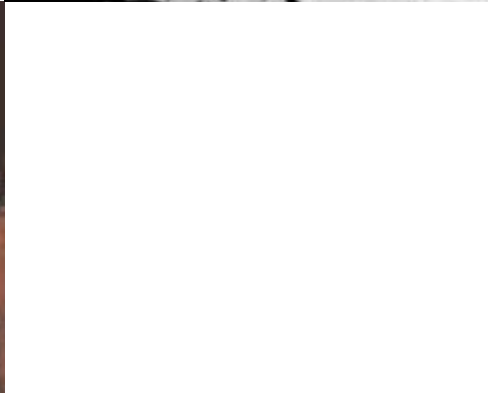


Max's girl with cigar &
Flavin sculpture in the
background, photographed
by Anton Perich





THE MEN



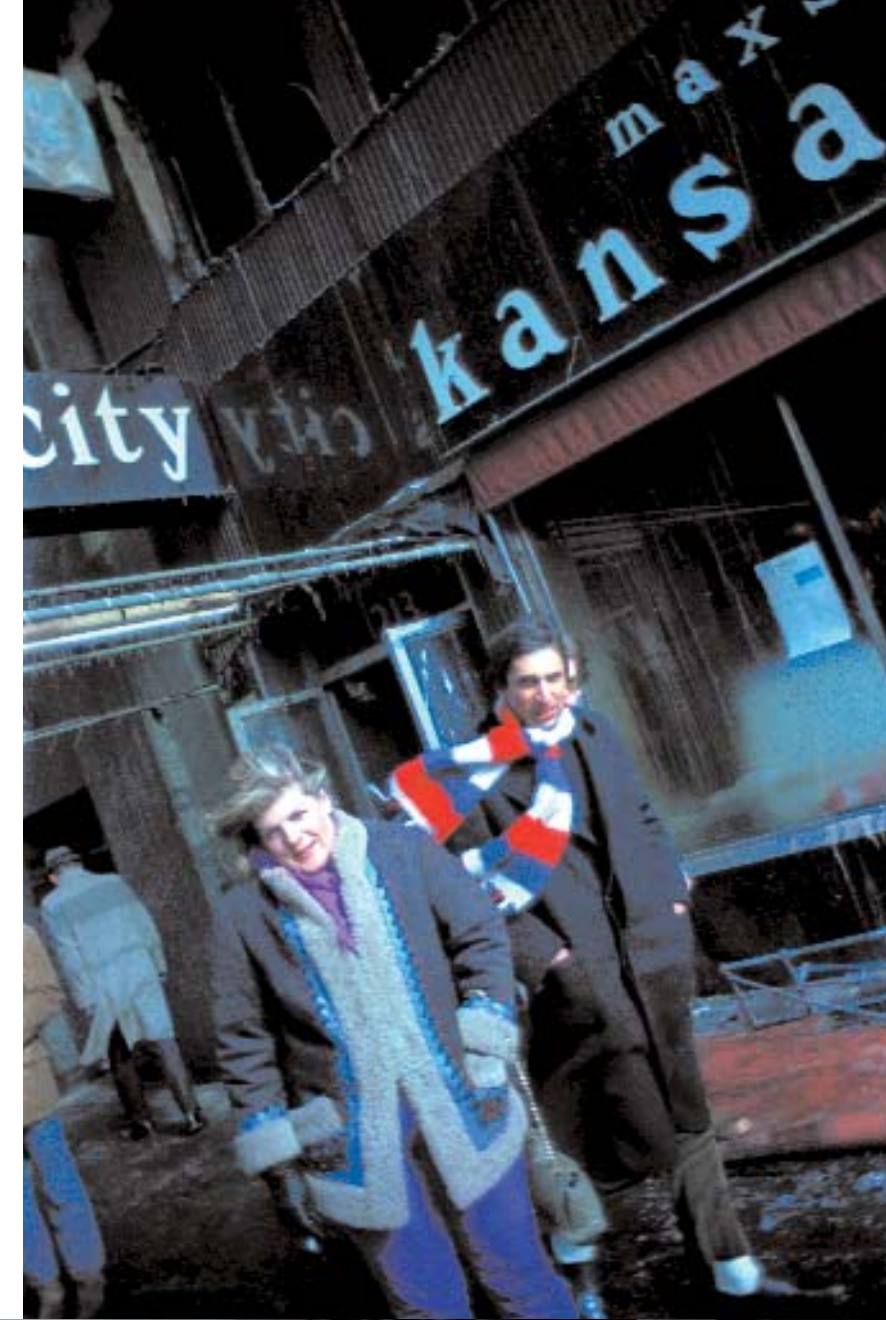
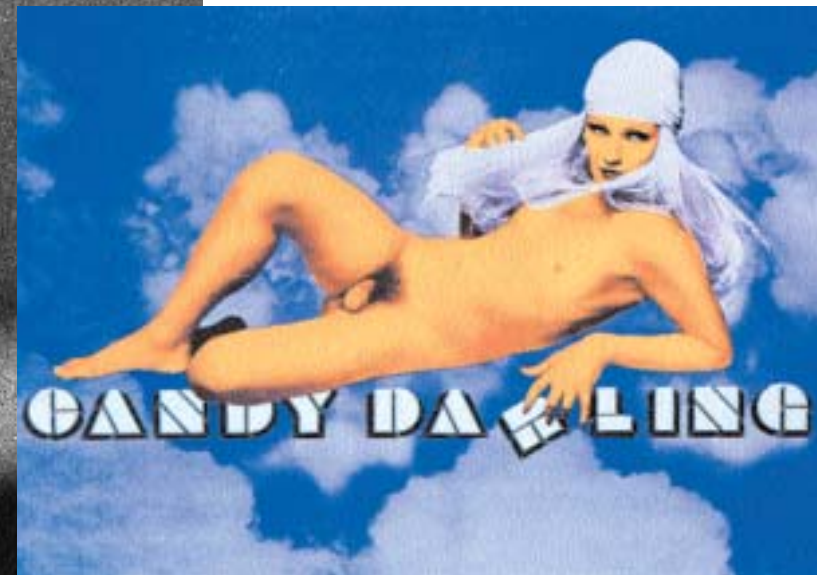
- 1 Allen Ginsberg
- 2 William S. Burroughs
- 3 Neil Williams and Larry Poons
- 4 John Waters
- 5 Andy Warhol
- 6 Robert Mapplethorpe
- 7 Eric Emerson & Candy Darling
- 8 Henry Geldzahler
- 9 Gregory Corso
- 10 Ondine: The Pope and Alchemist
- 11 Mickey Ruskin
- 12 Nicholas Ray
- (The Original Rebel Without a Cause)
- 13 de Kooning
- 14 Ronnie Cutrone & Tony Shafrazi
- 15 John Chamberlain & Andrew Wylie
- 16 David Johansen & David Bowie
- 17 Edgar Winter
- 18 Bob Dylan



CANDY DARLING

Candy Darling, born Richard Slattery from Ronkonkama, Long Island. Warhol's favorite superstar, starring in *Flesh and Women in Revolt*. To date the most beautiful and talented of New York's drag queens.

Candy Darling
1971
Silkscreen
by Richard Bernstein



Top right corner: Brigid Berlin left and Mickey Ruskin right, after fire at max's

The Pope and the Duchess (on Warhol's right side): Ondine (the Factory Shaman and Alchemist) and Brigid Berlin (the Factory woman with balls of steel and buns of speed).



BRIGID BERLIN

Note for exhibition: Brigid Berlin's "Tit Prints" will be exposed as well as Richard Bernstein's silkscreen of "Candy Darling"



curator's note:

Let’s look at it like this:

Max’s is the place where you want to be more than any other place in the world. Mickey Ruskin is your father and mother figure, catching you in the rye. The people at Max’s were your brothers, sisters, lovers, mentors, best friends, inspiration and reason to be alive. The ten years that Max’s made the imprint on your mind, were most of your adult-life. Of course along with war, atom bombs, assassinations, corrupt politicians, racial segregation and many overdoses of sex, drugs n’ rock’n’ roll. Then who are you?

People who had one month’s exposure to Max’s have been changed for life. The things that came out of Max’s have given pop culture a red filter.

Anton Perich came to New York as a young man from Croatia--via Paris--with a camera and a deep love for the Holy Grail and electric machinery. Billy Name inspired Warhol’s mind and gave the Factory its futuristic silver color, while laying down the rules as to how the Factory should be run along with having the awareness to capture what was going on with his camera. By spending most of his time in the darkroom with his chemicals, Billy’s photos were talking to him. Soon after Warhol was shot by militant-feminist Valerie Solanas, Billy left for a life dedicated to meditation and magic.

Frosty Myers had his artwork sent to the moon and created the largest sculpture ever made. Even bigger than the original pyramid in Egypt. The vision of the 2002 September 11th light sculpture shown at Ground Zero came to Frosty before the Twins were even standing in the first place. Dan Flavin covered Max’s with his blood red triangle with two triangles inside. Roger Vadim found the characters for “Barbarella” ten years after his “And God Created Woman”. Brigid Berlin did her “Tit prints” in between playing people’s surface back to them. Robert Rauschenberg created his “Signs”, illustrating the harsh reality outside of Max’s protected fire proof walls and ceilings. Warhol was still a Democrat and gave the largest contribution to the McGovern Presidential campaign of all to help kick Nixon out of office, along with iconic portraits of some of the strongest women in American history; such as Elisabeth Taylor, Jackie Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe. However he also turned young boy hustlers’ piss into gold while snapping Polaroids of them doing it.

Neke Carson painted a portrait of Warhol with the help of a paintbrush up his ass, while Warhol snapped pictures and Anton Perich documented Warhol snapping pictures. Robert Mapplethorpe had not yet stirred up the National Endowment for the

Arts’ criteria for art. Malcolm Morley mirrored his perspective of the truth in his super realistic paintings. Lou Reed wrote “I will be your mirror” for Nico, who sang about the next night at Max’s she was getting made-up for. John Chamberlain crushed cars into little cubes and sold them back to the people who could afford it, for more than the car had cost new.

Roy Lichtenstein created empty words of love between young men and women. Oliviero Toscani found all the colors he would ever need. Andrea “Whips” Feldman could only look people in the eye if she looked through a pocket mirror, but would happily serve champagne from a bottle she had just had inside of her. Candy Darling, Holly Woodlawn, Jackie Curtis, Divine, Jane County, Taylor Mead and René Ricard could not get arrested for being who they were, however much they tried. Just to mention a few things.

Jacob Fuglsang Mikkelsen
www.jayfugmik.com

danish perspective by Henrik List:

Showtime at Max’s Kansas City:

Max’s Kansas City was the ultimate New York in-spot in the 1960s and 1970s. The nightclub’s blood-red back room was a decadent womb for Andy Warhol and his “Superstars”, rock stars and drag queens, jetsetters and artists, hustlers and wanna-be’s. Henrik List writes about the nightspot that was the nexus of an era and looks back on his own years as a nightclub operator in Copenhagen in the 1990s.

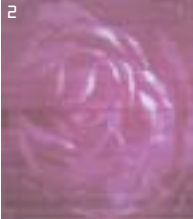
I: Lou Reed saluted a few of them in Walk On the Wild Side: Holly who plucked her eyebrows, shaved her legs “and then he was a she”; Jackie who thought she was James Dean for a day, “then I guess she had to crash / Valium would have helped that bash”; and Candy who “came from out on the Island / In the back room she was everybody’s darlin’ / But she never lost her head / Even when she was giving head.”

The transvestites Holly Woodlawn, Jackie Curtis and Candy Darling moved in the inner circle of “Superstars” surrounding Andy Warhol and his Factory in New York in the late 1960s and early ’70s. Squeezing every last drop out of their “15 minutes of

fame,” they wallowed in sex, drugs and rock ’n’ roll, hanging with Candy Andy practically every night of the week in the mythical back room Lou Reed was referring to, at the Max’s Kansas City nightclub. From 1965 to 1981, Max’s Kansas City (on Park Avenue South, near Union Square) was the home away from home for artists, bohemians, writers, journalists, rock musicians, fashion designers, models, photographers, actors, filmmakers, gays, freaks, pushers, gangsters, jetsetters and drag queens – from the beats through the hippie, glam and punk generations. Sure, there were other legendary hot-spots in New York during this period – the Paradise Garage and Studio 54, CBGB’s and the Mudd Club – but none kept it up at such a high pace for such a long time as Max’s. Perhaps because it was not “just” a nightclub, but an ingenious hybrid of bar, restaurant, art gallery, music venue and private club, open most of the 24 hours of the day, becoming a prism for more than two decades of subcultural tendencies. Today, at the start of the third millennium, now that everything is retro and young people are looking back to the sixties and seventies in everything from street fashion to rock music, the Max’s Kansas City photography exhibition, running through October 24 at Nikolaj Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center, looks like a cross between a treasure chest and a Pandora’s box, bursting with ideas and inspirations, anecdotes and stories. Max’s took it to the max, from the mid-sixties up through the mid-seventies (when it became more of a music venue and the cradle of the budding punk movement.) Max’s is where Jim Morrison peed into a bottle of wine and handed it back to the waitress, saying, “By the way, this is very good wine. I saved some for you.” Where Mick Jagger was banned after he walked around with a live mouse in his mouth, scaring the female guests. Where Iggy Pop cut his stomach with a broken bottle at one of his first shows in New York. Where at least half of the clientele was always shooting up in the bathrooms during the long instrumental intermezzo of Heroin by the house band, the Velvet Underground. Where Lou met Iggy and David Bowie, discovering their shared tastes in make-up and hard substances. Where beat guru Gregory Corso sat at a table jacking off in front of a girl who had rebuffed him, then shook her hand with his palm full of come. Where Yoko Ono persuaded John Lennon to move to New York. Where Debbie Harry waited tables before she became the lead singer of Blondie. Where bisexual cocksman Eric Emerson fucked Jane Fonda in the bathroom while her husband, the French filmmaker Roger Vadim, watched. And where the socialite Andrea “Whips” Feldman performed a nightly back-room event known as “Showtime,” strutting on the tables amid glasses and plates, while the patrons watched as she stripped, sang or stuck champagne bottles up her snatch – until her suicide in 1972. Feldman was one of

many at Max’s who lived hard and died young, like Max’s owner and proprietor, Mickey Ruskin, himself, who, like so many other “family members,” OD’ed on booze, coke and pills – though in 1983, a full 10 years after he sold Max’s and ended the golden, hardcore years of the night-club’s history. Max’s Kansas City peaked as the quintessence of ultra cool, the dark side of the six-ties counter culture, leading into Nixon, Watergate, Vietnam, disillusion and punk in the seventies. Mickey Ruskin, a nice, suburban middle-class kid with a law degree from Cornell, first opened his bar and restaurant (plus VIP back room) on the ground floor – later expanding with the upstairs music venue – because he wanted to create a forum for his artist friends. The artists paid their tabs with paintings or sculptures, which were displayed on the premises, and Ruskin had a hard time scratching cash out of his regulars – which ultimately led to the nightclub’s demise. Lou Reed mentions how for three years he lived on free food at Max’s – even if it was “bad steak and horrible salads!”

Ruskin loved freaks and outsiders, and always gave them preferred access ahead of Hollywood stars or rich kids who were used to skipping the line. Most nights, he manned the door himself, deciding who got in. Many celebrities didn’t. Shortly after the opening of “Bonnie and Clyde,” Warren Beatty was ordered to change his clothes – Ruskin would not let him in dressed in a suit and tie – while Janis Joplin, conversely, had to go back to the Chelsea Hotel to take a bath; she was too plain filthy for Ruskin. Afternoons and early evenings, ordinary businesspeople and others were allowed in – there had to be some revenue, after all. Meanwhile, Max’s was the first club in New York to let in transvestites, even though it was then against the law for men to appear in public in women’s clothing. With the artists and the rock stars came the groupies, with Warhol came a slew of fairies and mysterious it-girls with names like Ultra Violet and Viva, and with the Velvet Underground came “the dark brigade who never saw the sun,” punk’s black-clad pioneers, and bands like the New York Dolls, MC5, Television and the Ramones. The regulars were one thing. What was truly special about Max’s was that the real heavies and players went there as well:



Inspiration for catalouge:
1. Toulouse-Lautrec's "Cha-U-Kau the female Clown at the Moulin Rouge"
2. Anton Perich's "The Rose"
3. Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa
4. Leonardo da Vinci's "Vitruvian Man"
5. Anton Perich's Andrea "Whips" Feldman



mayors and Hollywood moguls, famous writers and Kennedys, corporate leaders and movie stars – if Mickey was in a good mood, that is, and let them in. Eventually they all made it in, everyone from Federico Fellini to Miles Davis, William Burroughs to Twiggy, the Rolling Stones to Robert Rauschenberg, Dustin Hoffman to Germaine Greer. All rubbing elbows with over-the-top gay icons like Taylor Mead, hardboiled drag queens like Candy Darling or the girls giving five-dollar blowjobs in the phone booths – as upstairs, the likes of Bruce Springsteen and Bob Marley gave their first performances in New York. While the innermost inner circle threw chickpeas (the house snack), snorted cocaine, dined on bad steaks, had their picture taken by the busboy Anton Perich, swilled champagne from bottles that had been up vaginas, gossiping about and blowing each other in the blood-red back room.

II: Running a nightclub can be an art unto itself. Working there, going there, can be an art. When Mickey Ruskin opened Max’s Kansas City, I had just been born. I was riding around on a chopper bicycle in Esbjerg, with my Prince Valiant haircut and my bell-bottom pants, when the glam rock/proto-punk scene crested in New York. When I made my first trip to New York in the mid-eighties, Max’s had long since closed down. But the dream of the nightclub as a medium – an art nexus and subcultural forum, where it’s not the size of your bank account, the title on your business card or the brand of your clothes, but only your style and personality that decide who gets in – I lived out with my friends in the late eighties and early nineties. For a few years, we ran such clubs as Einstein, Snuff and Sputnik in downtown Copenhagen, started the Club Roskilde-scene at the Roskilde Festival and threw huge New Year’s house parties, with DJ’s like Little Louie Vega spinning, and techno raves, with bands like the Underground Resistance playing, in old discos and decaying warehouse. And it was all good and well.

Then came a time, in the fall of 1990, after we moved our Thursday club Einstein from the slack, seventies disco Trocadero to U-Matic, when, for some reason, for a few glorious months, there was a special magic in the air. We actually succeeded in crea-

ting a local, small-scale Max’s where everyone who was anyone in Copenhagen at the time simply had to come – from writers and ballet dancers to media moguls and millionaires, from Hell’s Angels gang members and drag queens to Christiania’s Pusher Street barons and suburban hip-hoppers, from models and back-alley junkies to rock stars and neoexpressionist painters. We mixed our cocaine with the heroin of the bar flies from Floss and dropped heavy speedballs; we stood sweating in the door in our designer suits, sorting out the crowd and anointing the 500-600 people who got in (I still have enemies because of that!); we popped Ecstasy tablets like gummi bears and washed them down with Jack D; we had Ice Cube and Depeche Mode stopping in to spin records after their shows; we got blowjobs in the “VIP basement” from perky teenyboppers of good families; we were the toppermost of the poppermost, our pockets stuffed with fat rolls of hundred-kroner bills, as we slogged over to Cosy Bar to “wind down” with high-octane beer and fatties Friday morning. While it lasted...

As sometimes happens, in any city with any kind of nightlife, there is a place or two where everything clicks and comes together, in music and fashion, underground and zeitgeist – plus all the sex, drugs & rock 'n' roll, of course! – whether it’s the Moulin Rouge in Paris in the 1890s or Einstein in Copenhagen in the 1990s (no comparison otherwise!) And for those who always got in, the people at the front of the line and those who went along for the whole ride through all those long, euphoric, pulsating nights of a period when a nightclub suddenly caught on fire, focusing the energy of an age, a scene, and a generation, the party will never be the same again.

Henrik List
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BLOOD

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