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Kiss, Warhol, Andy, 1963

The Chelsea girls, Warhol, Andy, 1966

My hustler, Warhol, Andy, 1965

The

Films of

Andy

Warhol

Genius or charlatan? Whatever, Andy Warhol is perhaps the most famous artist of the 20th century and a modern myth. This season provides a rare chance to examine the myth – to see films heard about but never seen (at least not for a very long time!), such as the gay classics *Blow Job* and *My Hustler* and the minimal masterpieces *Kiss*, *Eat*, *Sleep* and *Empire*, and to see the almost equally mythical 'superstars': the late Edie Sedgwick in her astonishing role in *Beauty #2* and with Gerard Malanga in *Vinyl*, and the indomitable Viva and original underground star Taylor Mead in *Lonesome Cowboys* and *Nude Restaurant*.

In early 1963, Warhol, the painter, turned to making films in the silver-coated Factory. The films were radical and shocking responses to the American underground and, together with his genius for self-publicity, established him as a major avant-garde film-maker virtually overnight. The static camera, long-takes, mundane subject-matter and stress on the intense voyeurism of cinema set a new aesthetic for the avant-garde. His six-hour film of a man asleep (*Sleep*); nine-hour film of the Empire State Building (*Empire*); his films of a man eating a mushroom (*Eat*) and couples kissing (*Kiss*) – were all subversive by their very simplicity. It was as if he wanted to reinvent the cinema. His output was prolific (65 or more films between 1963 and 1968). In 1964, with the acquisition of an Auricon sound camera, performance and a manic camp theatricality dominated his films, helped by Ronald

Tavel's eccentric scripts for *Vinyl*, *Juanita Castro* and many others. The superstars began to appear – Edie Sedgwick being the first and the most enigmatic.

A host of personalities paraded through the Factory – art dealers, museum curators, high-society hostesses, film stars, pop singers, New York underground characters plus a dangerous and exotic array of junkies, freaks, transvestites – until Warhol was shot and wounded by one of them, a radical lesbian, in 1968. Many posed for him or acted out scenes where the divide between artifice and reality was provocatively crossed.

Unlike any other major artist, Warhol made an enormous contribution to cinema, influencing avant-garde film, art cinema and even mainstream Hollywood where he opened space for sexual frankness, low-life social realism and more improvisational acting styles. In the 60s, his impact could only be matched by Godard's. His fame rests as much on the 12 films shown here as on his paintings. The programmes form part of the international touring exhibition *Andy Warhol: A Retrospective* (sponsored by The British Petroleum Company plc) now at the Hayward Gallery. A unique opportunity, not to be missed. –Michael O'Pray.

Warhol art-work © The Estate and Foundation of Andy Warhol.

Andy Warhol: Film Factory edited by Michael O'Pray is published by the BFI this month.



13 Sep
Wed 6.30 NFT1
17 Sep
Sun 6.15 NFT2

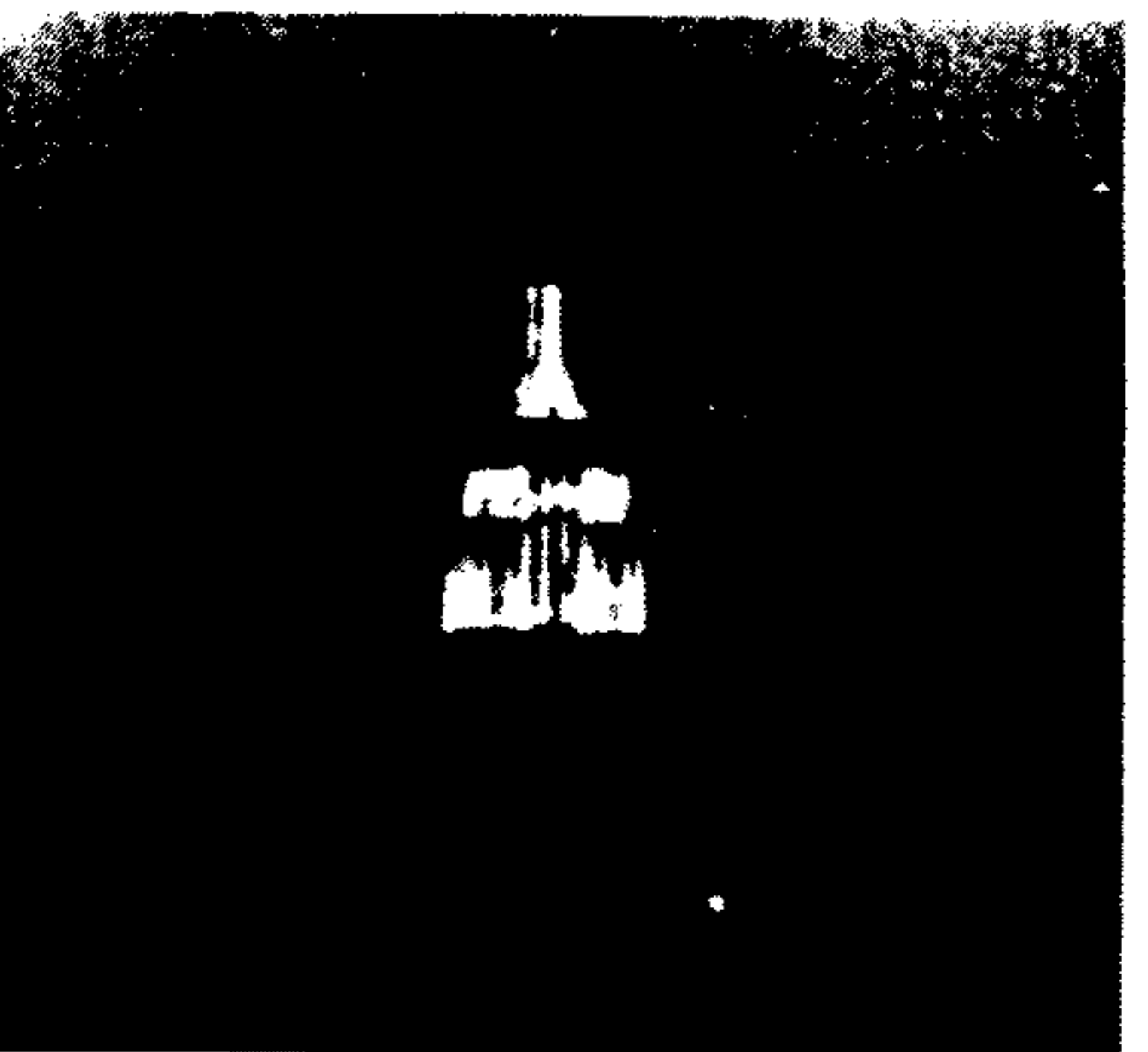
Vinyl/Eat

Vinyl is Warhol's bad-taste 'version' of *Clockwork Orange*. Gerard Malanga plays the delinquent and Edie Sedgwick appears for the first time on film as a bemused onlooker whose presence transforms the drama. *USA 1965*. In *Eat*, Robert Indiana slowly eats a mushroom before a light-flooded window. A portrait which, like many of the films of the early years, uses duration as a subtle means of revealing personality. *USA 1963*.



17 Sep
Sun 8.30 NFT2
Kiss/Sleep

Kiss is a compendium of 100 feet reels of different couples kissing for Warhol's camera. It was Warhol's first film and was shown reel by reel as a serial at Mekas's Film Co-op. *USA 1963*. With Gerard Malanga, Baby Jane Holzer, Naomi Levine. Warhol claims to have been too shy to film John Giorno awake so this film was made over a period of nights as Giorno slept. Six hours long, and edited in camera, it is a classic voyeur film full of intimations of mortality, the body and death itself. *USA 1963*. 42 min extract.



17-18 Sep
Sun 4.00 NFT2
Mon 8.40 NFT1
**Beauty #2/
Empire**

Edie and a young man lie on a bed half-heartedly attempting love-making while Chuck Wein and Gerard Malanga, off-camera, interrogate, bully and simply chat. Witty, stark, erotic, immensely sad and brilliant proof of Edie's captivating screen presence. *USA 1965*. With Gino Peschio. *Empire* was filmed on 25 June 1964 from the 44th floor of the Time-Life building, assisted by John Palmer and Jonas Mekas. The ultimate conceptual film – rarely seen in its entirety (eight hours), it has become a symbol of 60s avant-gardism. *USA 1964*. 48 min extract.



16 Sep
Sat 6.30 NFT1
18 Sep
Mon 6.15 NFT2

Blow Job/ My Hustler

Two rarely-seen Warhol classics of gay cinema. *Blow Job*'s static shot of a young man's face as he experiences fellatio is a clever visual conceit and example of pornographic wit. Its silence and stark black-and-white photography lend an unexpected graphic quality. *USA 1963*. *My Hustler* is unique in having a plot and being a brilliant essay in male seduction, coquetry and friendship that affords great insight into male sexuality. An astonishing double-bill. *USA 1965*. With Paul America, Ed Hood, John MacDermott.

Never seen before in Britain, *The Life of Juanita Castro* takes a camp look at Cuban-American politics and is based on the rumours that Castro wanted to be a Hollywood movie star and that his brother was a transvestite! The film marks a transition in Warhol's work towards his ambitions on Hollywood and stars the indomitable film-maker Marie Menken. *USA 1965*.

28 Sep
Thu 8.30 NFT2
1 Oct
Sun 4.00 NFT2

The Life of Juanita Castro



One of the most sublime and most intimate of the Warhol portraits. Henry Geldzahler, an influential museum curator and friend of Warhol, sits and smokes a huge cigar as the camera silently and relentlessly (at slow speed) captures his every movement. Initial boredom is quickly replaced by a fascination with this human being and thoughts of time, texture, history and death are allowed space. *USA 1964*.

25 Sep
Mon 6.15 NFT2
28 Sep
Thu 6.15 NFT2

Henry Geldzahler



A new print of Warhol's masterpiece depicting the Chelsea Hotel in the 60s. Its perennial appeal to every new generation resides in its humour, bizarre personalities, frank sexuality, obsession with drugs and uncompromising stance. The two-screen format disrupts any facile voyeuristic consumption of its images and it becomes impossible to separate reality and fantasy. *USA 1966*. With Gerard Malanga, Ondine, Nico, Ingrid Superstar. 195 mins. Tickets £4.00, standby £3.75.

20 Sep
Wed 7.00 NFT1
30 Sep
Sat 7.00 NFT1

The Chelsea Girls



The film which attracted the interest of the FBI and the last one Warhol made before being shot. An aimless camp version of the Western in which a bunch of gay cowboys hit town and practice ballet, talk endlessly, dress up and make love (or at least try). Aided and abetted by a vituperative Viva and a bemused Taylor Mead. *USA 1967*. With Joe Dallesandro, Eric Emerson.

5 Oct
Thu 8.45 NFT1
8 Oct
Sun 6.15 NFT2

Lonesome Cowboys



A controversial film in the Warhol canon. It can be seen as an early feminist work, with a nude Viva physically and 'intellectually' dominating the proceedings with her monologues about sex, fathers, childhood and Catholicism. Her strident independence and sharp wit herald the new woman, replacing the vulnerable Edie. For others, the film represents rock-bottom – witless, pornographic and visually uninteresting. A rare screening – decide for yourselves! *USA 1967*.

21 Sep
Thu 6.30 NFT1
25 Sep
Mon 8.40 NFT2

Nude Restaurant

