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Spring 2018

## Interview Magazine: Art & Fame

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### Recommended Citation

Danziger, Josephine G., "Interview Magazine: Art & Fame" (2018). *Senior Projects Spring 2018*. 234.  
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**ANDY WARHOL'S**

# Interview

**INTERVIEW MAGAZINE**

**ART & FAME**

**JOSIE DANZIGER**



*INTERVIEW MAGAZINE: ART & FAME*

Senior Project Submitted to  
The Division of The Arts  
of Bard College

by  
Josephine G. Danziger

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York  
May 2018



## *Acknowledgements*

Thank you to Tom Wolf, my Senior Project Advisor, for always taking time to discuss academic ideas, art and life. You have inspired me to write about art with passion and clarity. Whether they took place on the Lower East Side or in Annandale, my meetings with you proved to be the most constructive time spent on the execution of this project.

Thank you to Alex Kitnick, my Pop Art professor. I look up to you and have always valued class time with you as well as time spent in conversation with you. Without your help, I would not have embarked on this research project in the first place, and I have sincere gratitude for your investment in my happiness as a student of Art History.

Thank you to Bob Colacello. The time you spent talking to me about *Interview Magazine* is invaluable. I cherish the insights that you gave me into your world of Pop. I am endlessly inspired by your writing, and I am grateful for your willingness to spend time helping me. Because of your contribution to this project, I was able to create a product that I am very proud of.

Thank you to Robert Becker. Your kindness in taking the time to sit with me on Bowery and chronicle your experience working with Andy Warhol and the *Interview Magazine* team allowed me to more fully understand the 1970s-era magic that took place at the Factory. I admire your natural ability to articulate any story with eloquence, humor and sincerity.

Thank you to Jenny Tobias & the MoMA Library. The access you granted me in being able to view the original editions of *Interview Magazine* allowed me to study the first decade of the publication as the precious artifact that it is.

Thank you to Bronwen Bitetti & the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard. I spent the vast majority of my time writing in your beautiful and peaceful facilities. Your lending me access to the Special Collections was a crucial part of my research.



## *Dedication*

This project is dedicated to my family.

To my parents, Lucy and James—

I couldn't even try to say 'thank you' enough times in order to express my gratitude to you. I have admired everything you have done since I can remember. One of the greatest aspects of transferring to Bard is that it allowed me to spend more time with you.

Mom, the example you have set for me as a working woman is exceptional. I have grown up watching you excel as an editor and an entrepreneur, and I will always try to emulate your drive, perseverance, confidence, resilience, and strength. You've taught me to be self-sufficient, and to find happiness wherever I go.

Dad, I look up to you in so many ways. Your love of art, fashion, music and Pop culture inspired this project like you have inspired most of my pursuits throughout life thus far. I have always looked to you for advice, and I value your guidance and your simultaneous reassurance that I need no guidance at all.

To my brother, Julian—

Your work ethic has motivated me to always try to be the best version of myself, and I will continue to do so in all of my future endeavors because of the example you have set for me. Having an older brother whose moral compass I would like to emulate is not something that I take for granted. You are an admirable person in every category. I cherish every single Sunday night Chinese food & NBA dinner I get to spend with you.





## *Table of Contents*

Introduction

Chapter I

*“I want to be as famous as the Queen of England.”*

Chapter II

*‘Stupid question.’*

Chapter III

*‘The Crystal Ball of Pop’*

Chapter IV

*‘Art and fame’ becomes ‘heart and soul.’*

Chapter V

*“If anyone can be said to embody the American Dream, it’s Kim Kardashian West.”*

Conclusion



## *Introduction*

The world today is radically different from the world of the 1960s. Andy Warhol was the pinnacle of Pop, and print publications were supreme in the industry of news and fashion alike. What was Pop culture in 1969 seems foreign and antiquated today, and yet there are similarities to be drawn between the era of mod and the modern era.

In the research paper *Interview Magazine: Art & Fame*, I aim to explore the connection between the artistic excellence that launched the publication's success and the obsession with celebrity that charged its passion — a bond that formed to act as the crux of the magazine that impacted the industry with innovative clout.

*inter/VIEW*, as it was originally titled, was first published in 1969 by Andy Warhol. The magazine began as a film critique journal in its first decade, and rapidly evolved into a publication that proclaimed itself 'The Crystal Ball of Pop,' and featured original content, heavily inspired by the wit of Warhol, on the all-encompassing realm of popular culture.

In *Interview Magazine: Art & Fame*, I chronicle the publication's founding years through interviews with Bob Colacello and Robert Becker, whose experiences writing and editing for the magazine provide an invaluable insider's history of Andy Warhol's *Interview Magazine*. In this research paper, I choose one issue from each of the decades in which the publication has thrived in order to study the development of *Interview* and its impact on the intersection between art and celebrity.

In this research paper, I will consider the magazine's covers as art objects in their own right and study the visual representation of cultural phenomena that the seductive print

publication possessed. I will study the magazine's unique identity as a byproduct of a culture and an artist obsessed with fame and celebrity.

*Interview Magazine* has now been published for half a century. In *Interview Magazine: Art & Fame*, I study the ways in which the publication capitalized off of the fame machine in a way that was unique in its undying allegiance to Pop culture.

Chapter I “I want to be as famous as the Queen of England.”

*Interview Magazine* began out of the pursuit of super-stardom. Art alone was not attractive enough. Art’s relationship with celebrity, with obsession, with immortality in fame, and with cultural phenomena—that was more like it. Perhaps that explains the recollections that friends of Warhol have of the artist saying things such as, “I want to be as famous as the Queen of England.”<sup>1</sup> This motivation exactly was what fueled most of his social encounters; his parties, his projects, and eventually, the start of his magazine. It is crucial to understand the context in which *Interview Magazine*, as we know it today, was born. The Pop Art movement, which had begun a decade before the first issue of *inter/VIEW* was published, paved the way for the counter-culture, or perhaps even a subculture of the counter-culture, that would eventually surround the magazine.

A vast amount of literature surrounding the emergence of Pop Art on the preexisting cultural scene refers to the lack of an immediate acceptance of it. Laurence Alloway writes in *The Arts and The Mass Media*, that “everything in our culture that changes is the material of the popular arts. Critics of the mass media often complain of the hostility towards intellectuals and the lack of respect for art expressed there, but...the feeling is mutual.”<sup>2</sup> The understanding of Pop Art as a movement that threatened the sanctity of Fine Art seems to be a continuous theme throughout the conversations that surround the study of the Pop Art movement. Hal Foster’s *On the First Pop Age* explores Richard Hamilton’s 1956 artwork such as *Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?* and the lack of modesty that this style of art, like

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<sup>1</sup> Colacello, Bob. *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up*. Vintage Books, 2014. (32).

<sup>2</sup> “The Arts and The Mass Media.” *Pop Art: A Critical History*, by Steven Henry. Madoff, Press, 1997.

most Pop Art, displayed. Foster writes, “Perhaps this conflation of fetishisms is historically new to this moment: though foreseen in Surrealism, it is only foregrounded in Pop, which acts out this super-fetishism in ways that are excessive but demonstrative.”<sup>3</sup> ‘Super-fetishism’ is a term that is well-suited to describe Andy Warhol’s *Interview Magazine* as well as Warhol’s general artistic style. It is a step beyond ‘fetishism’ alone, because it is self-referential in its fetishization. Super-fetishism in Pop art points to attributes of its own culture and magnifies them in order to generate a new perspective and thus a new identity. This particular realm of Pop Art is the origin point from which a line can be traced to the product of *Interview Magazine*, which was created in the wake of a revolutionary artistic style. This ‘super-fetishism’ might have been difficult for viewers used to Fine Art only to digest. However, it can be argued that the very nature of Pop Art relied on the culture of the so-called old style’s hesitation to accept it. For Pop Art to possess a certain quality of rebellion, there needed to be a suspicion about the validity of it instead of an immediate high regard for it.

The bare truth of paint on canvas helps define Pop Art as it is known today; with Warholesque innocence in its candor. It was in the year 1962 that Andy Warhol painted his soup can, the one that became iconic as a representation of the Pop world. “Brutally realistic, it looked exactly like the label on the can. Asked later why he chose the subject, Warhol said, ‘I used to drink it. I used to have the same lunch every day.’ Warhol had found a subject: the American brand.”<sup>4</sup> This brings into question the pattern of a counterculture, and where Pop Art fit in in the niche scene of the art world as well as the grand scheme of the so-called real world. If the hippies

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<sup>3</sup> Foster, Hal. *On The First Pop Age*. New Left Review, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Ingram, Catherine, and Andrew Rae. *This Is Warhol*. Laurence King Publishing, 2014.

were the counterculture to 1960s political America, there needed to be a counterculture to *that*. For the artist who did not identify with a rejection of superficiality, there became a need for a new artistic, cultural movement that celebrated the materialistic. This seems to be where Pop Art found its place; in between two cultural spheres in which it did not fit.

In the 1960s in America, there lived paintbrush-holding, cigarette-smoking teenagers who were ready to dedicate their lives to Andy Warhol. Warhol devotees were a dime a dozen, and most were young, eager, and regarded the artist with ‘Second Coming’ idolization. A young, Warhol devotee could be found in Bob Colacello, whose 2011 book *Holy Terror* chronicles the scrappy beginnings of *inter/VIEW* and its eventual rise to success as *Interview Magazine*. In it, he describes his introduction to the dazzling world of print publications. Colacello recounts his eager attitude about working for Warhol, and his desire to commit to the lifestyle as well as to the day-job. “When I first met Andy Warhol, the only thing I wanted to be was a Factory lifer.”<sup>5</sup> The Factory was Andy Warhol’s studio, located in Manhattan, downtown, though he relocated a few times within the city. Photographer Stephen Shore gave a retrospective interview for *Dazed Magazine* in 2016 in which he described the room where it all happened. “There has never been anything quite like this place,” he shared. “We knew that Andy was an important artist, but I don’t think anyone knew how he would be viewed 50 years later, in the second half of the 20th century. I feel very lucky that I was able to discover it.”<sup>6</sup> Shore remarked on the cult following that Andy Warhol was effortlessly able to attract, though his recollection of the Factory is less party-centric than most’s. He told *Dazed*,

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<sup>5</sup> Colacello, Bob. *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up*. Vintage Books, 2014. (5).

<sup>6</sup> Dazed. “Behind the Walls of Andy Warhol’s Secretive Factory.” *Dazed*, 7 Nov. 2016.



There were a couple of parties, by which I mean a couple – a handful! It was a studio, and we were there working every day. There were a lot of people who sat around waiting for something to happen in the evening, but there really were not many parties. For some [of these] people this was the centre of their life, [and] they were living vicariously through Andy.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, *Interview Magazine* was able to succeed partly due to the personal lives that it infiltrated. The publication did not live and die on a newsstand; rather, it permeated popular culture much like the reputation of the artist who started it.

It seems as though any story dating back to the years in which Andy Warhol dominated Pop culture and began his career as editor-in-chief of *Interview Magazine* can be told and retold in ways that are completely opposing. Perhaps this comes with the territory of legend; there are many sides to any story, and behind each side is a camp of people, passionate that theirs is the historical truth. This reputation of a studio that perhaps threw a party or two differs greatly from the studio recounted by Colacello in *Holy Terror*, in which he writes that the Factory “became famous in the sixties as the all-night filming sessions turned into twenty-four-hour parties, where heirs from Harvard and drag queens from Harlem mixed and mingled, and much more, under Billy Name’s disco ball of mirrors.”<sup>8</sup> It could be that one’s understanding of the Factory was based upon one’s view of Andy Warhol, and one’s interest in the party lifestyle in the first place. Or perhaps the times had changed by the time Bob Colacello appeared on the scene. This was the Factory life that Colacello had been chasing all the way from Rockville Centre, Long Island.

In 1970, Colacello received a phone call from Soren Agenoux, who at the time was the editor of *inter/VIEW*. The purpose of the call was to enlist the young writer to review a film for *inter/VIEW*, if he would. Bob Colacello explained to his skeptical parents, ““Andy Warhol is the

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<sup>7</sup> Dazed. “Behind the Walls of Andy Warhol’s Secretive Factory.” *Dazed*, 7 Nov. 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Colacello, Bob. *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up*. Vintage Books, 2014. (40).

most important artist and filmmaker in the world today!” for he was, according to Colacello, “the soulless soul of cool, the heartless heart of hip.”<sup>9</sup> The world in which Bob Colacello grew up happened to be the world that Andy Warhol idealized in his art. “I grew up Pop,” he shares. “Plainview, Long Island, where I lived from eight to sixteen, was Pop Art come to life: a former potato field covered with split-levels and the occasional shopping strip...all the seductive banalities of the postwar American dream.”<sup>10</sup> Bob Colacello’s life, in 1970, seemed to transform, Cinderella-style, into a world of glamour.

Stardom was the quality that lived at the heart of Andy Warhol’s magazine. Fame was the nucleus of it all. In the fall of 1969, a stirring grew within Warhol and the urge to succeed—not just in his own career, but to succeed beyond his contemporaries—drove the artist to start a new project called *inter/VIEW*. Colacello writes,

At the end of the decade when he had conquered the world of Pop Art and Underground film, Andy Warhol decided to start a magazine. His initial impulse was jealousy. The overnight success--Andy’s favorite kind--of *Rolling Stone* and *Screw* drove him crazy. ‘Jann Wenner is so powerful. Al Goldstein is so rich,’ he moaned to his three right-hand men: Paul Morrissey, who directed Andy’s movies; Fred Hughes, who sold Andy’s paintings; and Gerry Malanga, who needed something to do.”<sup>11</sup>

Andy Warhol wanted urgently to capitalize off of the fame machine, and art was his pathway. This is not to detract from Warhol’s career as an artist -- the talent and style that he possessed were undeniable, and the renown that the artist earned for that alone was significant. But one cannot judge an artist’s urge to ask, ‘what next?’ The magazine became his next pursuit, and it would not be subtle or mild. It would be grand.

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<sup>9</sup> Colacello, Bob. *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up*. Vintage Books, 2014. (6).

<sup>10</sup> Colacello, Bob. *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up*. Vintage Books, 2014. (6).

<sup>11</sup> Colacello, Bob. *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up*. Vintage Books, 2014. (7).



Bob Colacello.

Image courtesy of *Interview Magazine* and [www.patrickmcmullan.com](http://www.patrickmcmullan.com)

I met Bob Colacello in an ice cream shop on Long Island. I had written to him a few weeks prior and asked if he'd take the time to speak to me about *Interview Magazine*, and about his former boss, Andy Warhol. I was relieved to hear his response: sincere gratitude for my interest in the subject. In my slightly nervous mind before meeting him, Bob Colacello was intimidatingly serious and perhaps sarcastic with no tolerance for ineptitude. In reality, Bob Colacello is sweet, unassuming, patient, generous, and perhaps still holds an intolerance for ineptitude, but conceals it well.

He informed me that his series of job titles at *Interview* consisted of 'Managing Editor,' 'Arts Director,' and 'Special Contributing Editor.' We sat at a table for two with iced coffees and ice cream, and I jumped right into my book of questions, asking him about whether or not the

staff of *Interview* immediately felt the weight of the cultural significance of the magazine while working there in the 1970s, and whether or not Andy Warhol predicted the future success of his project. Colacello replied, with a laugh,

You know, Andy's philosophy was always, 'just do it.' He didn't encourage a lot of introspection. He got very impatient when you'd say something like, 'But the paper's not really good...' or, 'Oh, I can't think of who to put on the cover.' His theory was, 'put anybody on the cover! Put someone we know on it. I saw Bianca last night; put her on the cover.'<sup>12</sup>

That would be Bianca Jagger, though I dared not ask to confirm, as there was a definite repertoire of references that surrounded the world of *Interview Magazine* that one just should know. It should be noted that Bob Colacello is generous in his responses; his answers are long and thorough and charged with sincerity. He recalls his years at *Interview* with perfect, cinematic detail. Given his status as a renowned journalist, former magazine editor, and current author of several books, not a half hour of our chat goes by without a visitor dropping by our table and inviting Bob over for dinner at their Hamptons house, or to drinks with a party of presumably fabulous people. He never failed to engage them in conversation, and to introduce me before always politely declining their many invitations. Distractions dismissed, he resumed his exact train of thought without hesitation or repetition.

What people liked about *Interview* was that it was like the school newspaper of the coolest, most *in* clique in the world. The Yves Saint Laurent, Valentino, Andy Warhol clique.<sup>13</sup>

The casual editorial style with which the magazine wrote was only attainable once the magazine had established itself by the 1970s. *inter/VIEW* began, as Colacello admits, as a ticket to the New York Film Festival. The first cover of the publication was a behind-the-scenes photograph from

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<sup>12</sup> Colacello, Bob. Interview by Josie Danziger. Long Island, New York. January 20th, 2018.

<sup>13</sup> Colacello, Bob. Interview by Josie Danziger. Long Island, New York. January 20th, 2018.

Agnes Varda's 1969 film *Lion's Love* in which the three stars, Viva, James Rado and Jerome Ragni, appear nude across the front cover as Varda herself directs the scene. Andy Warhol began conducting interviews with all of his featured artists through a tape recorder and transcribed the sessions to print for the magazine "with every 'Ah' and 'Well' intact."<sup>14</sup> Bob Colacello explains the convenience of the tape-recording style.

The transcription technique appealed to Andy conceptually because it seemed modern and real, two qualities he consistently valued above all others. For Andy, modern meant mechanical--silkscreen, movie camera, tape recorder, video, any machine that came between the creator and his audience. Tape recording was the literary equivalent of cinema verite, and nobody's cinema was more verite than Andy's.<sup>15</sup>

Warhol seemed to have taken the structure out of the tradition of the interview; the conversation that took place when he sat down with another individual was the interview that would be recorded and shared with the readers of the magazine. In a sense, this is the most pure that an interview can be. Warhol did not take the time to think of questions in advance, or to research a subject before interviewing him or her. He freestyled, and that was fascinating enough. In *The Gay & Lesbian Review's* 'Warhol's Interview: A Brief History,' writer Martha E. Stone offers what may be a realistic and definitely a somewhat cynical reason as to why *Interview Magazine* might have gained momentum.

In no particular order, the founders may have launched *Interview* for any one of the following reasons (or some combination thereof): To score free tickets to the New York Film Festival. *Interview* was originally conceived in 1969 as a 28-page magazine of film criticism, which would have given the Warhol entourage an entrée into the New York film scene.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Colacello, Bob. *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up*. Vintage Books, 2014. (8).

<sup>15</sup> Colacello, Bob. *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up*. Vintage Books, 2014. (9).

<sup>16</sup> Stone, Martha E. "Warhol's Interview: A Brief History." *The Gay & Lesbian Review*, [www.glreview.org/article/warhols-interview-a%E2%80%88brief-history/](http://www.glreview.org/article/warhols-interview-a%E2%80%88brief-history/).

Another of Stone's suggestions is that the magazine was created "to give the 'Factory Kids' something to do."<sup>17</sup> Perhaps the pedestal that the name 'Andy Warhol' sits upon today was then held by the filmmakers and artists a generation prior, and Andy Warhol was no different from art-fans today, simply wanting access to a world in which he aspired to be accepted and praised.

There seems to have been a self-consciousness to the founding of *inter/VIEW*. As Stone points out, "Emblazoned across the first cover of *inter/VIEW* were the prescient words: 'First Issue Collector's Item.'"<sup>18</sup> The notion that the first issue would be a coveted item is one that revolves around the idea of celebrity and the obsession that follows artists, musicians, and other creative icons. It wasn't until the 1970s, when Bob Colacello and Glenn O'Brien acquired editorial roles in the magazine that *inter/VIEW* moved toward a more classic, professional style of publication. "Along with editor Glenn O'Brien, Colacello gave the magazine a more professional appearance, finding 'real' writers willing to work for little pay. The magazine set out to review every film released in New York while toning down some of the puffery of the interviews themselves."<sup>19</sup> As mentioned, once the magazine had gained traction after the 1960s and had become recognized as a 'real' publication in its own right rather than a vanity project of Andy Warhol's, a habitual style of production was established. Instead of seeking to report on the newest films, the editors sought to interview the biggest stars when they were in between

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<sup>17</sup> Stone, Martha E. "Warhol's Interview: A Brief History." *The Gay & Lesbian Review*, [www.glreview.org/article/warhols-interview-a%E2%80%88brief-history/](http://www.glreview.org/article/warhols-interview-a%E2%80%88brief-history/).

<sup>18</sup> Stone, Martha E. "Warhol's Interview: A Brief History." *The Gay & Lesbian Review*, [www.glreview.org/article/warhols-interview-a%E2%80%88brief-history/](http://www.glreview.org/article/warhols-interview-a%E2%80%88brief-history/).

<sup>19</sup> Stone, Martha E. "Warhol's Interview: A Brief History." *The Gay & Lesbian Review*, [www.glreview.org/article/warhols-interview-a%E2%80%88brief-history/](http://www.glreview.org/article/warhols-interview-a%E2%80%88brief-history/).

projects. This generated original content that only Andy Warhol and his team could have possibly had access to. Bob Colacello explained the close-knit culture of celebrity that fueled the magazine's ability to succeed.

We started, more and more, to put our friends on the cover. Now, some of our friends had names like Mick Jagger and Jack Nicholson, but we could get them when they *weren't* doing a movie and were therefore doing twenty interviews across America to promote the movie. They'd just happen to be in New York, and Jack would call. His PR people would be furious when it came out. We started to realize that what we were doing was documenting a certain scene, which happened to be a world that was very hip, very cool.<sup>20</sup>

Though he admits that at the start of his career at *Interview Magazine* he was barely paid, Bob Colacello was introduced to Andy Warhol, which was payment enough and then some. This seemed to be the way by which the publication 'got by'. Payment was scarce, but those who contributed to the magazine were rich in inspiration and excitement, validation and inclusion. The upside of having a cult following was the dedication that young adults were ready to throw at any project of Andy Warhol's.

By 1972, the magazine was referred to as *Andy Warhol's Interview*. The inclusion of the artist's own name in the title of the magazine seems crucial, for it may have been that there would be no successful *Interview Magazine* without the fame of Warhol himself attached to it.

The death of Andy Warhol in 1987 and the consequent selling of the magazine to Brant

Publications was a major step toward the monetization of the Andy Warhol brand itself. In 2004, Brant Publications

released a book in seven volumes titled *Andy Warhol's Interview: The Crystal Ball of Pop Culture*, edited by Ingrid Sischey and Sandra J. Brant, with a cover price of \$475. It consisted of a plywood carrying case designed by Karl Lagerfeld, with wheels and a telescoping handle, to hold and transport the weighty set, introducing a novel element of mobility into the culture of

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<sup>20</sup> Colacello, Bob. Interview by Josie Danziger. Long Island, New York. January 20th, 2018.

book buying and ownership. Contained in the book were reprints of the first ten years of the magazine, reprints of covers and interviews from later years, along with profiles of personalities, stars, directors, and a generous serving of celebs interviewing other celebs.<sup>21</sup>

The recognition of *Interview Magazine* as a historical document of the pinnacle of Pop culture can be observed in the creation of this special edition set. It is the first real notice of the cultural significance of the publication, and the poignant role that Andy Warhol served as arbiter of cool.

On his working relationship with his boss, Bob Colacello offers a different perspective to the notion that Andy Warhol was purely fame-hungry or that he had an ego among his peers. But perhaps Warhol was conscious that part of his charm as editor of *Interview* was his candor and his ability to poke fun at himself as well as everyone working with the magazine.

Andy was inherently modest. He would never say, 'I'm the coolest person in the world.' He kind of made a joke of everything; everything was very tongue-in-cheek. If you read the captions and the headlines, or the introductions to the interviews, they would say, 'Jack Nicholson is wearing a tweed jacket with a Saks Fifth Avenue shirt.' 'AW is wearing a turtleneck and khakis,' which was funny because he was always wearing the same thing.<sup>22</sup>

Colacello recalls that Andy Warhol's motto for how to approach his work was "fast, easy, cheap and new." This seems to encapsulate not just Warhol's artwork or his approach to creating a publication, but to the entire world of Pop. The influence of Pop culture was so immediate and was able to strike the youth so directly because of these four qualifiers. If something was too difficult to do, or too expensive to do, it probably was not what you were supposed to be doing if contributing to the culture of nowness was your constant goal, which Andy Warhol's certainly seemed to be. The things that came naturally him and to his team was what they tended to be

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<sup>21</sup> Stone, Martha E. "Warhol's Interview: A Brief History." *The Gay & Lesbian Review*, [www.glreview.org/article/warhols-interview-a%E2%80%88brief-history/](http://www.glreview.org/article/warhols-interview-a%E2%80%88brief-history/).

<sup>22</sup> Colacello, Bob. Interview by Josie Danziger. Long Island, New York. January 20th, 2018.



good at, and that would be how the magazine operated. It seemed to all be done on the fly; it was on newsprint and not glossy paper, photographers were not initially paid generously, because in return, what was really valuable was the page in Andy Warhol's *Interview Magazine*.

Chapter II 'Stupid question.'



inter/VIEW Vol. 1 No. 1. Behind the scenes from Agnes Varda's *Lion's Love* (1969).

Image courtesy of MoMa.

I have spent the past ten months or so trying to decipher which parts of Andy Warhol's personality are genuine in their nature, and which are put on. So much of the artist's reputation is a result not specifically of his physical art but of his being, and he himself has contributed to that legacy having written books such as *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)* in 1975. An unsigned report in *Newsweek* from 1964 seems to take Warhol's personality as sincere; that his disposition and his natural, laid-back charisma was coincidentally a perfect match with the identity of Pop Art. The piece chronicles a party thrown in honor of Andy Warhol and his latest New York art opening. The author writes, "Warhol is in truth the Peter Pan of the current art scene... There in the midst of the Beatle-rocking bedlam was the 32-year-old artist, listening to the twanging anthems of triumph with his elfin smile, dancing only with his pale blue eyes..."<sup>23</sup> There certainly seemed to have been an idolization of the artist, but was there also an idealization of him?

Great fame often seems to precede great speculation on morality and on one's character. At the time of this article's publication, Andy Warhol was in the midst of the fame phase. Any eye movement or smile was recorded as angelic and boyish, and crowds seemed desperate to be a part of his world in any way possible. Only decades later are we able to reflect on the artist and the culture of which he was the epicenter; was all of this as candid as the *Newsweek* article painted it to be? It is a uniquely innocent view of Andy Warhol, and one that lies in stark contrast to Warhol's reputation as a calculated persona as opposed to a genuine person. In a society that worshipped "the fetishes of commercial art [and] the super-fetishes of painting," here was Andy

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<sup>23</sup> "Newsweek," Unsigned report. *Pop Art: A Critical History*. Steven Henry. Madoff, Press, 1997. (278)

Warhol;<sup>24</sup> a young man who just happened to “have the same soup lunch every day for twenty years,” and so he painted it.<sup>25</sup>

Andy Warhol was not alone in his nature of casual convenience. A similarity can be observed in his fellow artists as well as his future fellow coworkers. Almost a decade later, once *inter/VIEW* had become *Interview Magazine*, the covers were graced by most big-name celebrities you could think of. It was a scene so spectacular that it almost seems too good to be true. But of course, it was true, because such was Andy Warhol’s life. He struck gold in simply being himself during a time when his personality, or persona, constituted him as king.

The first issue of *inter/VIEW*, like its subsequent issues from the first decade or so, has now turned light-brown and tattered after nearly fifty years of existence. It is unassuming in size; 8 by 11.5 inches, and there is no binding holding each page together but rather there are folds that organize the structure of the magazine like a newspaper. One aspect of Vol. 1 No. 1 that has not fallen under the strain of time is the black ink with which the content is printed.

The images and the headlines are bold and clear as ever, and just beneath the cover’s image of the nude bodies of Rado, Ragni and Viva in the aforementioned *Lion’s Love* photograph are the words, “First Issue Collector’s Edition.” And so here the issue lives, in its own special box stored behind the protection of security guards and art handlers in the MoMa Queens Library. A collector’s edition indeed.

The print on the first issue’s cover is assertive, and immediately the tone of its editor and creator, Andy Warhol, can be perceived. “INSIDE: Cukor, Varda, Sarne, Fonda.” The image of

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<sup>24</sup> *Pop Art: A Critical History*. Steven Henry. Madoff, Press, 1997. (278)

<sup>25</sup> *Pop Art: A Critical History*. Steven Henry. Madoff, Press, 1997. (279)



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# inter/VIEW



## INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL SARNE

by Susan File

*Q: I wanted to ask you about Genevieve Waite, who has now become a Max's regular.*

M.S.: She is a Max's regular? She was going to Max's every night when I was in New York.

*Q: That's what's so great about it—it's exactly the type of person she was in "Joanna".*

M.S.: She was only famous among a certain group, you know— She was never famous as a person even for the general public. Mmmm . . . Genevieve was an odd girl . . . for the people who go to Max's she was very famous, she was a great celebrity.

Other Voice: —I don't believe I've ever heard of it. What's "MAX'S"?

M.S.: It's a great place, though. It's really nice. It's the only place you can go to in New York where some nights you dance, some nights you get laid, sometimes you just . . . you know . . . oh, it's a great place—I love it.

UNION SQUARE  
O.V.: Have you seen that new—Japanese painter that paints exactly like he said, that. He gets a white canvas, stretched over a frame.

M.S.: Yes.

O.V.: Just white. And the canvas behind that is a different color, either green or red. And he takes a razor Blade and goes CHOHPH CHAHHK ZHHHHOUMM

M.S.: Fontana.

O.V.: Is it Fontana?

M.S.: Fontana

O.V.: And it's a WONderful number!!! Beautiful things. Fontana is lovely. Ava, did you meet Monty.

—No, I haven't met her.

inter/VIEW. Raquel Welch, Vol. 1. No. 1.

Image courtesy of CCS Bard Hessel Museum

the three nude film stars along with the filmmaker, Agnes Varda, takes up most of the page, and the logo comes in second place in large, black, bold graphic design. The magazine does not turn page by page, but rather it is folded so that the reader opens the issue directly to the center of the book, to a centerfold image of American actress Raquel Welch standing before a spotlight in her bra and panties only. Beneath, the image is contextualized with the line, “Interview with Michael Sarne.” Michael Sarne was an actor as well as a singer and after searching his name online, it can be noted that Sarne had previously had relations with French actress and blonde bombshell Brigitte Bardot, so naturally he was of interest to Andy Warhol and the *inter/VIEW* team, who concerned themselves with the famous, and occasionally the friends of the famous. In this case, Sarne and Welch are relevant to Warhol for their roles as writer and star, respectively, of the 1970 film adaptation of *Myra Breckinridge*, originally a novel by Gore Vidal. The discussion of the film serves as a platform to discuss many famous individuals, and not just the ones who were to star in Sarne’s adaptation. Try to keep up with the whiplash of names that will fly by in a matter of sentences.

It was at that stage I thought, still, that Candy Darling wouldn’t be able to play the *kind* of camp that, for instance, Viva can play, you know...I mean she... Viva would have been good for Myra. She would have been *really* good. I could have played it that way. It’s high camp, you know. I’m doing it very well. Probably if they didn’t have me they’d be in big trouble. I think Raquel will be very good as Myra...I think if I were Myron I would rather wind up Raquel Welch than Candy Darling. Or, if I were Myron, I would want to be...oh...Betty Bacall...I wouldn’t mind being Lauren Bacall or Ah Audrey Hepburn, but that’s me, and my particular generation.<sup>26</sup>

Susan Pile conducted the interview, which flows like a conversation between two good friends and begins with, “I wanted to ask you about Genevieve Waite, who has now become a

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<sup>26</sup> *inter/VIEW*. Vol. 1. No. 1. “Interview with Michael Sarne.”

Max's regular." Max's, short for Max's Kansas City, was a restaurant and nightclub on Park Avenue South. Andy Warhol's time spent there amongst Robert Rauschenberg and Willem de Kooning would later inspire a new group of notable creatives, such as Robert Mapplethorpe and Patti Smith, to hang out at Max's. The restaurant closed down in 1981. Before it closed, though, South-African actress "[Genevieve Waite] was going to Max's every night" when Michael Sarne was in New York, and as he thought about it, he came to the conclusion, "It's the only place you can go to in New York where some nights you dance, some nights you get laid, sometimes you just...you know...oh it's a great *place*--I love it."

The very first interview in *inter/VIEW* was dedicated to the worship of Max's Kansas City. It was not focused on film or art exclusively, but rather the social universe that surrounded it all. Andy Warhol was giving readers a mega-glimpse into his world. One can't help but wonder; *who was reading this thing?* And who was caring? Were there teens across America who desperately wanted to know where Andy Warhol & co. dined and seduced, or just across New York?

Just one page beyond the centerfold came the masthead. The editors' list featured Andy Warhol's name last. The assistant director: Patricia Hackett. Art Director: C.B. David. Assistant Art Director: John DeSalvo. Art Staff: Hank Dericco, Marlene David, Lannes Kenfield. Rome Correspondent: Jan Pugh. Then the Michael Sarne interview continues, and if another voice wanted to contribute to the back-and-forth, it would be printed as 'Other Voice', or 'O.V.'. In other interviews within the magazine, occasionally instead of prefacing his or her question as 'question', the interviewer would write, 'stupid question'. Every stutter and daydream was recorded, and it's difficult to say whether nothing was intentional or everything was intentional.

Many of the images within the first issue of the magazine are full-sized film stills and portray an appreciative, fashionable split-second of whichever films the issue was featuring; *Zabriskie Point*, *Alice's Restaurant*, *Feast of Friends*, and more, though many of the images lack the accompaniment of a caption explaining who is in the photograph—that knowledge seemed to be information that the editors assumed that their readers already attained. The assumption was that anyone reading *inter/VIEW* in 1969 shared the body of knowledge that the *inter/VIEW* staff possessed, and if you weren't in-the-know, perhaps this was not the magazine for you.

Daria Halprin and Mark Frechette, the costars of Italian film director Michelangelo Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point*, are pictured together above their interview by Amy Sullivan. She begins, "We'd like to get a rough idea of what *Zabriskie Point* is all about. No one really seems to know."<sup>27</sup> Did Andy Warhol train his staff to speak like he did, or did he only hire people who shared his voice? The actors talk about their time spent in Death Valley with Antonioni and how they fell in love with each other before the shooting even began.

*inter/VIEW* does an incredible job at establishing itself for a future of success and continuity. 'Feast of Friends' is an article from the first issue of the magazine that refers to the title of Jim Morrison's short film, *Feast of Friends*, and begins with a preface by Jerry Hopkins. He wrote, "The following is the first in a series of articles about rock stars as filmmakers and concerns recent efforts of the Doors to broaden their artistic base. In following weeks, articles will be about the Mothers of Invention, Ginger Baker (ex-Cream), the band from Big Pink, Papa John Phillips and Lou Adler." Mentioned in the piece is the irony of Hollywood and Jim

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<sup>27</sup> *inter/VIEW*. Vol. 1. No. 1. "Interview with Mark Frechette and Daria Halprin." Amy Sullivan. 1969.



Morrison's gratitude for the lack of authority there is in the film world. His thought process is in keeping with *inter/VIEW*'s general tone; "There are no experts, so, theoretically, the student knows almost as much as any professor."<sup>28</sup>

There is something cinematic about the transcription of interviews within this magazine. *inter/VIEW* follows the traditional structure of a publication in that the main feature within the issue is the feature that is promoted on the issue's cover. Issue 1's cover story, *Lion's Love*, features a dialogue between Soren Agenoux and Agnes Varda. The preface begins, "The interviewer, Soren Agenoux, does not like the form of the interview and the implication of the form that the person has information to be given to the interviewer which the interviewer does not have and can not get except by asking."<sup>29</sup> The narration is followed by cinematic, jump-cut-like editing from person A to person B, with stylistic elements that allow the readers to visualize the conversation in their heads as the transcription reads as informal and familial.

*SOREN: Shall I ask you intellectual questions? I don't know what kind of questions to ask you.*

*AGNES: Intellectual?*

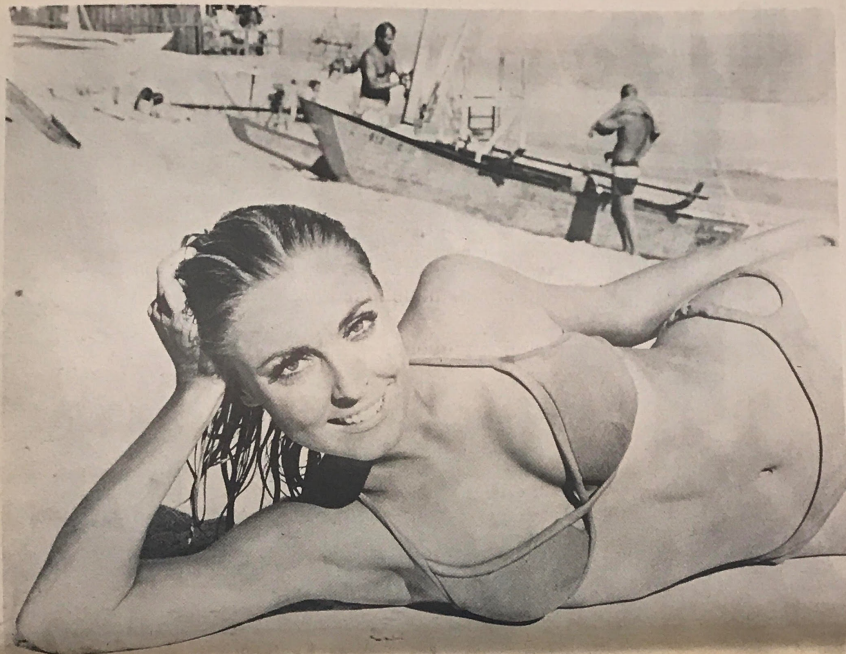
*SOREN: Well, like...do you think faces (VIVA! JIM RADO and JERRY RAGNI) are hieratic?*<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *inter/VIEW*. Vol. 1. No. 1. "Feast of Friends." Jerry Hopkins. 1969.

<sup>29</sup> *inter/VIEW*. Vol. 1. No. 1. "Interview with Agnes Varda, *Lion's Love*." Soren Agenoux. 1969.

<sup>30</sup> *inter/VIEW*. Vol. 1. No. 1. "Interview with Agnes Varda, *Lion's Love*." Soren Agenoux. 1969.



## THE PERMANENCE OF SHARON TATE

by Gerard Malanga

In the twentieth century sudden death through accident, adventure or premeditated violence, often taking the young and innocent, is so frequent and so widely broadcast that few can avoid a certain sombre impact to it all. Automobile, airplane and railway take so heavy a toll that you can hardly escape the feeling that it may be your turn next. And there is always the danger, whether you are a fighter or a non-combatant, that the far-flung ferocities of modern war will claim you as a victim.

Sharon Tate was no victim of war but of murder by circumstance. The only permanent documentation of Sharon Tate that survives are the movies and photographs. It is all but impossible to imagine a disembodied personality. When we are thinking of absent persons whether they are dead or alive, we invariably visualize their natural forms, their bodies through which alone we have known them and been aware of their personalities. Pictures are our favorite and most vivid reminders. The workings of association are so strong that for a time at least we tend towards identifying a dead person with its body. We do not like to think of their bodies being mutilated, dissected, or resting in a noisy, strange or unbeautiful place.

Thus, in the modern world, little else remains for the poet to do but to function as the benevolent purveyor of

man's mortality. In Sharon Tate's memory I present the following poem.

### LITTLE ELEGY FOR SHARON TATE

there's something in my head  
and it hurts

its the bee  
sting caught in a net  
work of flowers

and hair  
light a cigarette but cant smoke  
it

because i dont feel like smoking  
instead i keep thinking  
your head goes hay  
wire in the blood

for three days  
your face appears  
on the front page of the final  
editions

inside my head a fog of words  
beautiful youre made that way  
without risk in the sight of  
god

the moment of profound silence  
on the evening of a Saturday  
just before midnight  
lines one by one form in my  
heart and head

about you without resolution  
one thinks to lose oneself  
in childhood  
in the black forest  
of an unhappy ending

or one thinks to win at any cost  
to survive

you are the little girl  
who danced in my head  
you died without understanding  
why you were dieing

without understanding  
anything of your death  
as it happened

running to me in the rain so long  
ago at rome  
your selfstyled beauty  
remains in my memory  
of you

cielo drive  
its name means sky  
curves steeply upward into the  
hills  
of a potential brush fire  
arms with the law

impaled on the iron  
grill of the house where you  
extended into the afterlife  
coldblooded ineffectual

memories put back in their place  
at the door of the bedroom  
next to your diary next to bread  
next to shoes  
of a life undiscussed  
unexplained

in the street a living being goes by  
with all his blood inside  
inside the house you are dead  
and all your blood is outside  
and you know you know  
you never again will pass

tranquilly like this living being  
outside  
you neither live nor ever fade

Perhaps the beautiful people  
like everyone else, will be subject to  
fatal accidents. But with this  
qualification it is conceivable that  
human beings might ultimately learn  
how not to die. Sharon Tate enjoyed  
her life to the utmost while it lasted  
and contributed a high and joyous  
quality to the life of others. Death  
could not alter this fact; for however  
death may affect the future, it cannot  
touch the past.

We cannot be sorry for Sharon  
Tate as dead, but only for her as dying  
and as dying unwillingly, conscious  
that she was leaving this life  
prematurely with much of her rightful  
human experience being denied her.  
But there may come a time in the  
career of any person, when to die will  
prove more effective for one's central  
purposes than to live; when through  
one's death what one stands for will  
become more clear and convincing  
then in any other way.

But the tragedy remains. The sting  
of death may be tempered, but it  
cannot be removed. Sharon came into  
existence and has passed out of  
existence. Yet between that birth and  
death she lived her life, has made her  
actions count with a scope and  
meaning that the finality of death  
cannot defeat.

inter/VIEW. Sharon Tate, Vol. 1. No. 1.

Image courtesy of CCS Bard Hessel Museum

The final page in Vol. 1 No. 1 is an image of a lively, bikini-clad actress and model Sharon Tate, who that year had been stabbed to death. The image is paired with writing on the cruelty of a life cut short, and an elegy written in her honor. The inclusion of this piece seems more somber than tone of the magazine throughout, but still the image chosen of her brightens up an otherwise morbid subject. This tribute is rather visually shocking, and can be related to Andy Warhol's works such as *Green Car Crash*, *Race Riot*, and *Shot Marilyns* in the sense that both feature pleasant, bold, sexy imagery that might not represent what it appears to represent upon deeper inspection and understanding. The flip-side of the Sharon Tate page is the back cover of the magazine, with which one can fill out a name and address in order to subscribe to *inter/VIEW* for \$7.00 per 24 issues.

I conducted an interview with Robert Becker, the journalist and author who had, in the late 1970s, been working as an intern at *The Paris Review* when he met Andy Warhol, his future employer at *Interview*. The editor of *Edie*, George Plimpton, was as well the editor of *The Paris Review*; and Becker's job as an eighteen-year-old was to write and refine. His skill set suited the needs of the staff of *Interview*, and conveniently, a cousin of a friend of Becker's invited him to a dinner party at which Andy Warhol happened to be a guest.

We had a conversation, and in that conversation, I told him I was working with this book, *Edie*. Andy was aware that that book was going to have a lot about him in it. He was probably more interested than concerned. He invited me to lunch, during which he offered me a job... But I didn't want a job stretching canvases, which seems crazy when I think about it now. I really wanted to be a writer. So I turned down the job, but six months later I needed a job. I was twenty by then. I first joined as the Assistant to the Advertising Director.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Becker, Robert. Interview by Josie Danziger. New York, New York. January 19th, 2018.

That seemed to be the natural way that one got involved with Andy Warhol and his magazine project. Becker was young, straight [which Andy seemed to find an interesting and entertaining way to add diversity to the staff], and had a literary connection to Warhol himself. According to Robert Becker, at this point in time, Fred Hughes ran the whole operation; he was Andy's dealer, he was the President of Warhol Enterprises and the Publisher of *Interview*... He was certainly a pivotal character in this history. Six months into into Becker's job at *Interview*, at twenty-and-a-half, he was sent by Fred Hughes to interview artists and to write about artists. This is how he became the Arts Editor; a position that today would be sought after and pursued through rounds of competitive interviews. Back then, Becker had the interest and the intellect to write about artists, and thus, he was granted the title.

Robert Becker's career at *Interview* lasted seven years. He was there 'until Andy died.' I asked if the magazine changed after the death of Andy Warhol, to which he replied,

Yes it did. One of the things that is a hallmark of Andy's history was its connection to the Factory... It's important to position *Interview* as a product of the Factory. The Factory was always a gathering of creative, slightly-damaged people. It is my assertion many years after the fact that there was a cultish quality to it. At the time I was there, I didn't recognize it. But in the '60s, when the Factory was at its creative prime, there was an amateur quality to it. It was not professional. I don't think people who hung out at the Factory had salaries, but rather, they were trying to figure out ways to make money.<sup>32</sup>

There is no question that *Interview* was an effort at a profit-making business. It was a way to capitalize off the aura of Andy, and of the Factory itself. In Becker's time, in 1980, *Interview* became professional. He seems to feel as though he was the last amateur to be hired; that *Interview*'s style of hiring was that the employees trained on the job. Perhaps that was the

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<sup>32</sup> Becker, Robert. *Interview* by Josie Danziger. New York, New York. January 19th, 2018.

sensibility that was lost after the death of Andy Warhol; the quickness and the charm of the magazine was not able to be performed, or pulled off, without its original character.

The term ‘amateur’ does not denote a lack of skill, but rather it describes the fact that the staff of the magazine would rather publish an interview that was conducted from one celebrity to another instead of a sit-down, formal meeting from journalist to subject. *Interview* grew from being a film critique journal to a magazine that focused on fashion, film, music and the inevitable term; Pop Culture. Why did it expand? The same force that drove Andy Warhol seemed to drive the project of *Interview Magazine*: fame. *Interview* had the potential to grow into a cultural phenomenon, and to do so, it needed to cover more ground; it needed to reach a greater demographic. What qualified *Interview* as having a shot at surpassing its competitors was its ability to be ahead of the curve. Robert Becker explained the foresight,

We were ahead. Even if was just by ten minutes, we were ahead of everybody else. That was our job. We had our tentacles out, and we were looking at the next great thing. You can look at the first issue, and the line proclaiming it a collector’s edition, and that should tell you Andy Warhol’s outlook on the project: buy this, because this is going to be incredible.<sup>33</sup>

It almost feels humorous; the headline on the first issue. It could be perceived as a reference to other fanzines or comic books, there could be a tongue-in-cheek element or irony to its confidence. But the fact of the matter is, it was true. It’s ironic, and not audacious, because it became true.

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<sup>33</sup> Becker, Robert. Interview by Josie Danziger. New York, New York. January 19th, 2018.



Chapter III *The Crystal Ball of Pop*

Interview Magazine April 1979. Cover designed and painted by Richard Bernstein featuring Liza Minnelli photographed by Clive Arrowsmith.

<https://shop.fashionillustrationgallery.com/>

Liza Minnelli graces the cover of *Interview Magazine's* April 1979 issue. The portrait, designed and painted by Richard Bernstein from a photograph by Clive Arrowsmith, features the performer as animated, extravagant and, as was the ultimate goal in selling magazines, is an eye-



Liza Minelli, Photo courtesy of 'Five 1970s Burlesque Icons.'

[www.burlexe.com](http://www.burlexe.com)

catching image. The cover is mostly toned in red, and morphs into an orange hue that in its tones that shade into each other resembles an electric peach that grabs the viewer's attention and holds it. One can observe, in comparing this cover with photographs of the actress and singer, that Liza Minnelli's eyes were in fact big, beautiful, and almost cartoonish in their Bambi-like femininity.

The desired effect for the cover of the magazine was ultimately achieved through a meeting of the minds across the staff of *Interview*. Richard Bernstein, who created the iconic

covers for *Interview Magazine* for seventeen years, is the artist behind Liza Minnelli's 1979 cover. "Bernstein's portraits of stars like Cher, Ali MacGraw, Tom Cruise and Sylvester Stallone captured the glittering excess of the disco era. Embellishing photographs with pencils, airbrush and pastels, he gave his subjects an idealized glow that was intensified by the large format of the magazine."<sup>34</sup> Fred Hughes, Andy Warhol, Bob Colacello and Glenn O'Brien would visit Richard Bernstein's studio and together they would collaborate until the artist had come up with a product that pleased the editor; Warhol.

Bob Colacello explained the multi-faceted relationship that Andy Warhol had with fame;

Andy wanted to get in with Hollywood. He wanted to make movies in Hollywood, but they never really happened because they always thought Andy was too campy, that he was making fun of Hollywood — which he kind of was. But he also adored it. He compared Marilyn [Monroe] and Liz [Taylor], to American consumer culture and the whole concept of fame. The genius of Andy was that he always had it both ways. He was, in a way, worshipping it and critiquing it. Promoting it and making fun of it.<sup>35</sup>

When art and fame coincide, a new level of super-celebrity can be observed in the form of a cultural phenomenon. There are numerous musicians, for example, who are talented but not renowned, and many celebrities whose moments last only fifteen minutes, while those who are 'famous' as well as 'artistic' are able to generate a persona that outlives their time on Earth; the cultural phenomenon is perhaps as close as humanity can get to immortality. The power of fame is often underestimated, categorized as superficial, and yet it has the ability to attract the masses and establish what is the popular culture.

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<sup>34</sup> Laviertes, Stuart. "Richard Bernstein, 62; Created Covers for Interview Magazine." *The New York Times*, 2 Nov. 2002

<sup>35</sup> Colacello, Bob. Interview by Josie Danziger. Long Island, New York. January 20th, 2018.



*Interview Magazine* grasps at the concept of fame and magnifies it so that it may be projected on a scale that is larger-than-life, immortal in its ink-on-paper. This can be compared to Andy Warhol's strategy within his own career. A parallel between the artist's brand of persona and the existence of *Interview Magazine* may be drawn, with the quest for becoming a cultural phenomenon as the connecting feature. Fans of art, like the pious to their god, yearn to believe in the book of Andy Warhol. Though there are facts that act as gravity, holding the artist's history to the ground, his devotees seem rather to believe the mythologies that float around him, elevating him as if to hover angelically above the stories surrounding his name. Andy Warhol certainly was attracted to fame; it was Pop culture's heartbeat, and a tool with which he could leverage himself as well as his publication. As the magazine evolved, the covers became more and more star-oriented. In this particular case, Liza Minnelli shone brightly across the cover underneath the emblazoned yellow lettering of the publication's logo. This constant trend of promoting superstardom appears to be the lifeblood of *Interview Magazine*.

Art objects can follow a similar trend to that of their creator. One element that amplifies the trajectory of an art object becoming famous is time. With each passing year, a magazine's cover gets closer and closer to becoming an artifact: an image that signifies the history of fashion, art, music, or film, rather than proclaiming nowness. The cover of a magazine is the perfect platform upon which to broadcast an image. *Interview Magazine* took and continues to take that opportunity to forge ahead with covers that serve the purpose of being iconic and playing into Pop culture's game. *Interview Magazine*'s covers play up, play with and play into the idea of an icon. What Medieval and Renaissance paintings did to Jesus and Mary, *Interview* did with Liza Minnelli in the 1970s and Kanye West in the 2000s — the publication took

advantage of the opportunity to promote a celebrity as a god. Celebrities such as those who grace the covers of the magazine are beyond mortal reach. *Interview*'s editorial staff use traits such as sex, beauty, and raw artistic talent, and they amplify those characteristics until they reach holy-

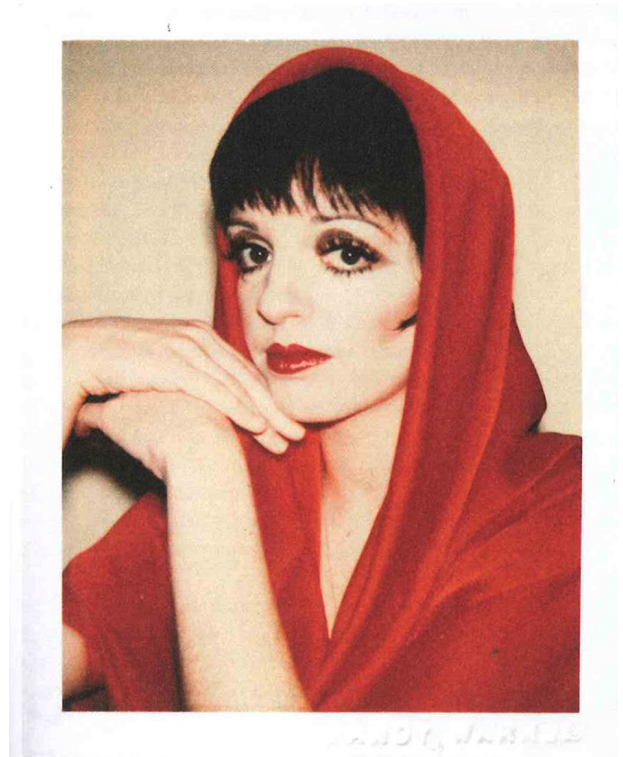


Andy Warhol Kissing Liza Minelli, 1978. Christopher Makos.

[www.artnet.com](http://www.artnet.com)

like levels. On the April 1979 cover of *Interview*, Liza Minelli's eyes sparkle like the gems that hang from her ears. Her eyelashes extend past her brow bone, and her cherry lips match the background of the portrait, only further intensifying the general red hue. Looking back on this image through the modern eyes of a viewer in the year 2018, it maintains an aspect of modernity in its dressed-up exaggeration. It can be said that if the sitter of a portrait dresses up in costume,

one unlike the quotidian fashion of the moment at which it was produced, the portrait becomes timeless. An individual in costume in 1979 might look exactly the same as an individual in the same costume in 2018. In this case, Liza Minnelli wears the costume of her persona; the performer. This is Liza Minnelli at the peak of her career, and thus it became an iconic representation of her being.



Liza Minnelli photographed by Andy Warhol.

[www.interviewmagazine.com/culture/q-and-andy-liza-minnelli](http://www.interviewmagazine.com/culture/q-and-andy-liza-minnelli)

[www.revolverwarholgallery.com/liza-minelli-sells-warhols/](http://www.revolverwarholgallery.com/liza-minelli-sells-warhols/)

Minnelli, who in 1972 took her greatest film role as Sally Bowles in the musical *Cabaret*, continued on an upward trajectory of success with *The Act* in 1977, a performance for which she gained her second Tony Award for Best Actress in a musical.<sup>36</sup> Society will forever think of Liza

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<sup>36</sup> "Liza Minnelli." Biography.com, A&E Networks Television, 2 Apr. 2014, [www.biography.com/people/liza-minnelli-9409583](http://www.biography.com/people/liza-minnelli-9409583).

Minnelli in this exact visual manner, because that was the costume of herself, and Andy Warhol and the *Interview Magazine* team had the foresight to recognize it. The cover captures the image of the celebrity as icon and in turn hopes to seduce the reader, the human, to purchase the magazine. They may own a piece of the icon's moment, while contributing to it simultaneously.

The ability to assist in the future success of a star became the focus for the subtitle of magazine's name: *Interview Magazine: The Crystal Ball of Pop*. The brand advocated for itself in a way that mimicked Andy Warhol's own fame and career-oriented isolation. There was perhaps no greater advocate of the brand of Andy Warhol than the artist Andy Warhol. His 'art movies' offer a unique insight into this argument, and one film in particular; 1963's *Kiss*, can be used as a case study. "Two androgynous figures smooch...with a Warhol painting of Jackie Kennedy propped behind them. Warhol didn't exhibit the Jackie silkscreens until 1965: here, the painting, not yet a masterpiece, not yet valuable, functions as wallpaper..."<sup>37</sup>

Warhol is able to reference himself while featuring three individuals, not including himself. A recognition of the artist in the faces of others is not an unfamiliar feeling to viewers of his work. That we see Andy Warhol in his creations is in keeping with the idea of the artist as a divine entity, or at least a person whose being transcends physicality. This strategy is heavily utilized on the covers of *Interview Magazine*. In order to attract an audience and gain a loyal demographic of readers, the covers of *Interview* needed to look like art objects of Andy Warhol's. Though it was Richard Bernstein who painted the images, they are done in the exaggerated, colorful style with which Andy Warhol painted in the 1960s with works such as *Marilyn Diptych* from 1962.

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<sup>37</sup> Koestenbaum, Wayne. *Andy Warhol*. Waterville, ME: Thorndike Press, 2002.



Andy Warhol, *Marilyn Diptych*, 1962.

Photo courtesy of Khan Academy. [www.khanacademy.org/](http://www.khanacademy.org/)

Andy Warhol's 1979 interview with Liza Minnelli consists of short, concise, somewhat arbitrary questions such as, "*Do you take showers or baths?*" One wonders what the purpose of publishing this particular interview with this enormously famous star might be, given that one question is about her choice of hygienic method. It becomes clear, however, after reading question upon arbitrary question, that it wasn't necessarily the answers that the interviewee would be prompted to give that were of interest to Andy, but rather, it was the interview itself. The very practice of asking a question and recording an answer seems to be the written art. The



back-and-forth between Andy and Liza is what is being recorded, and the answers themselves are just a collateral of the exchange.

*ANDY WARHOL: What did you have for breakfast?*

*LIZA MINNELLI: Steel-cut oatmeal with lots of honey and sugar.*

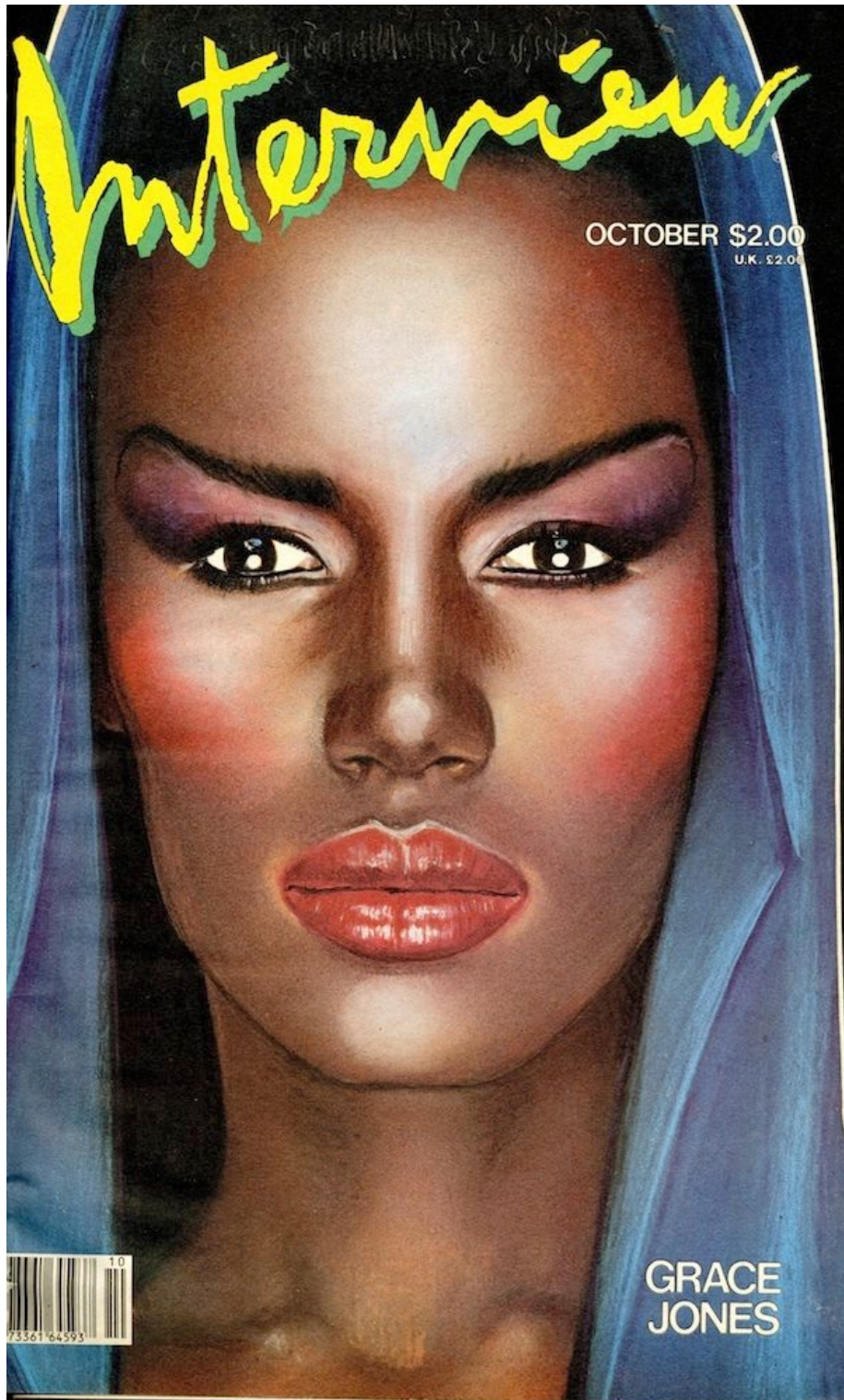
*WARHOL: What are your beauty secrets?*

*MINNELLI: Oh, honey...moisturize!!!<sup>38</sup>*

Though *Interview Magazine* has changed its style of speech since the death of Andy Warhol, a similar method of conducting an interview can be seen in the media today. *Vogue Magazine* has begun to regularly feature videos in which the cover stars of each issue answer 73 *Questions*. Cindy Crawford is asked, “Can you show me a hidden talent?” Serena Williams is given the hypothetical situation, “You can only eat one thing forever. What is it?” The questions and answers fly quickly by in just a few minutes, and the viewer is left with the experience of the interview rather than deep, long, meaningful answers to thought-provoking questions. That is the legacy of Andy Warhol’s *Interview Magazine*. He created a style in which an interview itself can be a piece of popular art.

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<sup>38</sup> Warhol, Andy. “Andy Warhol's Interview Interview: Liza Minnelli.” *Interview Magazine*, 18 Sept. 2017, [www.interviewmagazine.com/culture/q-and-andy-liza-minnelli#](http://www.interviewmagazine.com/culture/q-and-andy-liza-minnelli#).



Interview Magazine, Grace Jones, 1984. Richard Bernstein.

Image courtesy of [www.interviewmagazine.com](http://www.interviewmagazine.com)

*Interview Magazine*'s perception of the 1980s can be summed up by one star's iconic cover page; Grace Jones. The image, with its bright lights, head-on perspective and hot colors, exaggerates everything that there is to be exaggerated. Her cheekbones are mountainous and give Jones a feline-like quality, and the rouge on her skin further augments the natural form of her face. Her cat-eyes sport dark makeup that wings out from the corner of her eye to the tip of her eyebrow, and in between the two features lies a bright purple shadow that pops from her brow-bones. Her lips, red and glossy, are a plump juxtaposition to her solid, sharp jawline. Her makeup is so glamorous that it almost comes off as drag; as if her stage presence is a persona that she puts on like morning makeup — a trick not unfamiliar to Andy Warhol himself.

Grace Jones is cloaked by a blue hood that hovers around the top of her head, emulating divinity and causing the viewer to question if the star seems to look like the Madonna or like Christ himself. *Interview Magazine* seems to be in the camp of Christ, as the preface to the interview acknowledges the way in which “Designers Montana, Kenzo, Miyake, and Alaïa come to Grace with gifts as if to an altar incarnate.”<sup>39</sup> The interview was conducted collaboratively by Andy Warhol and André Leon Talley. Leon Talley began his career at the Factory in the 1970s, and would go on to dominate the fashion industry with his grandiose personality that eventually landed him with a career that solidified his legend as a force of nature in the fashion industry as editor-at-large at *Vogue* in 1998. He begins the interview in classic André Leon Talley style; with an exuberance for life and for fashion that truly makes the reader believe that life *is* fashion.

ANDRÉ LEON TALLEY: Grace, now hit it! Right from the top, they want to know about the glamour bit. How many furs do you own at this moment?

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<sup>39</sup> Andy, Warhol, and Leon Talley André. “New Again: Grace Jones.” *Interview Magazine*, 16 July 2014, [www.interviewmagazine.com/music/new-again-grace-jones](http://www.interviewmagazine.com/music/new-again-grace-jones).



GRACE JONES: Around 35. I'm having a new yellow fox made by Clause Montana. I buy them with my play money, money I make from the Honda TV commercials, and the new Citroën car commercial I will begin shooting in Paris next week with Jean-Paul [Goude]. In that, my hairdo will become the headlights of the car. And I start running like Superwoman. Soon, I guess they will have me in airplane commercials, reflecting speed.<sup>40</sup>

Grace Jones is *Interview Magazine*'s dream girl. She's all the glamour, all the ego, and none of the shame. The bulk of the interview is on the topic of 'fur versus diamonds,' which Jones seems to take as seriously as any topic should be taken. She doesn't just play Andy Warhol's game; she is the game. Jones holds a certain power over her interviewers in the sense that though they can all enjoy bantering about the latest fashion's, it's Grace Jones's fashion that serves as the final word as it's her face on the cover of the magazine, not Andy Warhol's.

WARHOL: Diamonds would look great on you.

JONES: Well, I don't think I could get away with it. I would be held up in the street. But no one comes over to me and says, "Give me that fur coat."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Andy, Warhol, and Leon Talley André. "New Again: Grace Jones." *Interview Magazine*, 16 July 2014, [www.interviewmagazine.com/music/new-again-grace-jones](http://www.interviewmagazine.com/music/new-again-grace-jones).

<sup>41</sup> Andy, Warhol, and Leon Talley André. "New Again: Grace Jones." *Interview Magazine*, 16 July 2014, [www.interviewmagazine.com/music/new-again-grace-jones](http://www.interviewmagazine.com/music/new-again-grace-jones).

Chapter IV 'Art and fame' becomes 'heart and soul.'



Leonardo DiCaprio, *Interview Magazine*, June 1994.

<https://www.interviewmagazine.com/film/celebrity-archive>

Many fables surround the hard truths of the history of Andy Warhol, who died on February 22nd, 1987. As the decades pass since the artist's death and those who knew him personally are becoming more and more sparse, it has become increasingly difficult to separate fact from fantasy. Andy Warhol's legend is so supreme in the history of art as well as in the history of Pop culture that one finds oneself reading opinions of the artist that are the fruits of speculation rather than the inferences of reality. Of one thing, however, I have become certain; every aesthetic decision in Andy Warhol's career was intentional. No headline or choice of subject matter came into place by happenstance, though it seems Andy Warhol liked to recount his dealings with celebrities as exactly that. More specifically, the words he chose to describe his own work are powerful and predictive, and show an incredible amount of confidence in foresight. The magazine labeled itself, *Interview Magazine*, 'The Crystal Ball of Pop.' Not only was the magazine declaring its cultural relevance and reflecting what was happening 'now,' it was also proclaiming its power to inform the reader of what will come next.

Antje Krause-Wahl's essay titled *Andy Warhol's Inter/VIEW - Arbiter of (Queer) Style*<sup>42</sup> delves into the topic of influence, claiming there was more to the magazine's force than simply fashion or solely art. Rather, the magazine was able to draw a line between social and political genres, becoming a force that connected and bound social politics with Pop culture. Krause-Wahl contextualizes the founding of the magazine with the demographics it was instantly able to reach, writing, "Inter/VIEW was a collective product: poet Gerard Malanga, director Paul Morrissey, journalist John Wilcock and Andy Warhol were listed on the masthead. Their involvement in

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<sup>42</sup> Krause-Wahl, Antje. "Andy Warhol's Inter/VIEW--Arbiter of (Queer) Style." *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, vol. 20, no. 1, Feb. 2016, pp. 51-80. EBSCOhost, doi: 10.1080/1362704X.2015.1077654.

other magazine projects—especially Warhol’s and Malanga’s interest in fashion—throws light on the founding intentions of Inter/VIEW.”<sup>43</sup> This phrase, ‘founding intentions,’ is well suited to Andy Warhol’s career track as editor-in-chief. He was not solely intending on creating the magazine, publishing issues on schedule, and making money from advertisers; he was intending on becoming [or remaining] at the core of cool culture. If Andy Warhol’s *Interview Magazine* could remain the predictor of Pop culture, then so, by extension, would Andy Warhol himself. This, too, may be perceived as a founding intention of the magazine.

The study of the magazine’s covers allows for a breakdown of the fusion of art and fame; the two vital forces of *Interview Magazine*. Though they are very different cultural entities, art and fame at times can go hand in hand in a mutually beneficial relationship. *Interview Magazine* exploits the concept of fame and the driving forces behind it in order to generate a desirable publication. In the mid-1990s, If Leonardo DiCaprio was gaining popularity from his role in *What’s Eating Gilbert Grape*, then he would be shot for the cover of *Interview Magazine*, making puppy-dog eyes at Bruce Weber’s lens while holding a balloon in the shape of red lips that read, “Kiss Me.”

With the loss of Andy Warhol came a loss of originality and spunk that during his time as editor could be felt in every interview he conducted. Leonardo DiCaprio’s 1994 interview was conducted by Ingrid Sischy, who reigned as editor during the years 1990 to 2008. Sischy’s success at the magazine is undeniable, as an article dedicated to her time spent on the staff writes,

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<sup>43</sup> Krause-Wahl, Antje. "Andy Warhol's Inter/VIEW--Arbiter of (Queer) Style." *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, vol. 20, no. 1, Feb. 2016, pp. 51-80. EBSCOhost, doi: 10.1080/1362704X.2015.1077654. (P. 53).





Leonardo DiCaprio, *Interview Magazine*, June 1994.

<https://www.interviewmagazine.com/film/new-again-leonardo-dicaprio>

Throughout her life, Sischy dedicated herself to supporting talented artists across every field—from Herb Ritts, who shot many of Interview’s most iconic covers, to Alexander McQueen, who counted Sischy as an early supporter, to Kanye West, who Interview profiled in 2004, and actors like Chloë Sevigny, Nicole Kidman, Ryan Gosling, Christina Ricci, Naomi Watts, and Charlize Theron, all of whom were featured in the magazine numerous times throughout the ’90s and 2000s—and many of whom became close friends of hers.<sup>44</sup>

What is lacking in the style of editing post-Warhol, though, resided in his personality, or rather, his persona. As was pointed out in Andy Warhol’s late-1970s interview with Liza Minnelli, the original editor had a way with people that was unconventional and yet plain; totally ridiculous without trying too hard to be silly. Sischy’s leading question to DiCaprio was as follows.

SISCHY: I’ve been noticing how many young actors are coming along who grew up in Hollywood but whose parents weren’t in the business. That’s the case with you, right? So start the story of your road to becoming an actor.

DICAPRIO: I always wanted to become an actor. My parents know I was outgoing as a child, and whenever people came over I’d automatically do impressions of them as soon as they left; it was my mom’s favorite thing. Yes, I grew up in Hollywood but not in any rich neighborhood. But my parents, who were split up, were so good at keeping my environment strong and keeping everything around me not focused on the fact that we were poor. They got me culture. They took me to museums. They showed art to me. They read to me. And my mother drove two hours a day to take me to University Elementary School. My father picked me up. He’d been an underground comic artist in New York in the ’60s and he’s been distributing comics and records and books in L.A. for a while now. I’d go on trips with him to all the comic-book stores around town when I was little. School, I never truly got the knack of. I could never focus on things I didn’t want to learn. Math is just the worst. To this day, I can’t concentrate on it. People always say, “You should have tried harder.” But actually, I cheated a lot because I could not sit and do homework. Most of the other stuff that I got from school was from hanging out with friends and meeting kids. I used to, like, take half of the school and do break-dancing skits with my friend in front of them at lunchtime. I had this one science class where the teacher would give me ten minutes after the class ended and I would get up and do improv!<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> “Remembering Ingrid Sischy.” Interview Magazine, 10 Sept. 2015, [www.interviewmagazine.com/culture/remembering-ingrid-sischy](http://www.interviewmagazine.com/culture/remembering-ingrid-sischy).

<sup>45</sup> “New Again: Leonardo DiCaprio.” Interview Magazine, 25 June 2012, [www.interviewmagazine.com/film/new-again-leonardo-dicaprio](http://www.interviewmagazine.com/film/new-again-leonardo-dicaprio).

A success of Ingrid Sischy was that as an interviewer, she was able to pose a question to a 20-year-old actor that inspired a lengthy, detailed response that went beyond the social small-talk one would assume a young man of his age would naturally be able to offer. What falls short, however, is any sense of individuality for the publication's content. Any interviewer at any magazine could potentially ask Leonardo DiCaprio how he got his start in acting; the question is an obvious one with which to lead. Only Andy Warhol would have perhaps had the gall to ask nonsensical, simple questions for the sake of a quirky interview. Whether or not Warhol's style generated better content than Sischy's can be left to personal opinion, but what is undeniable is that Warhol's style was what made *Interview Magazine* stand out.

A factor that was perhaps able to remain the same at *Interview* after the death of Andy Warhol was the magazine covers' strength as stand-alone art objects. This is due to the fact that the relationships between photographers and *Interview* staff members that were built once *Interview* was established as a publication that featured strong, original content in the fashion and art departments were able to outlast Warhol's time at the magazine. Another theory is that the covers, with each passing year, become interesting as objects of retrospection. Not only is the physical photograph nostalgic, but the subject and their reason for gracing the cover of *Interview* becomes a signifier of a time that once was, rather than a reflection of the current era. *Interview Magazine*'s website in April 2012 was able to revisit the 1994 feature with Leonardo DiCaprio, remembering, 'Before Titanic and Gisele, and when "being green" was usually accidental, DiCaprio was slightly more indulgent with the press. Here, he talks growing up in Hollywood,

learning about the birds and the bees with Pauly Shore, and, of course, falling in love.’<sup>46</sup> The article that revisited the original DiCaprio issue is called ‘New Again,’ and is a testament to the power of the trend, and the concept that what is relevant initially will once again become new.

Leonardo DiCaprio had not yet become Jack Dawson of *Titanic*; the iconic romantic tragedy would not be released for another three years. But the staff at *Interview Magazine* saw an opportunity to feature a young actor who was just climbing the mountain of media success, and they seized it wholeheartedly. The photoshoot by Bruce Weber is over-the-top. The 20-year-old actor is seen with his shirt pulled up nonsensically in multiple frames, and yet that may be the genius of the operation. The emerging-actor status of DiCaprio perhaps wasn’t enough; the stardom that the young man could harness by playing into his persona of the heartthrob, however, was likely to launch the publication’s sales as well as status amongst a younger, more obsessive demographic. Then, the New Millennium hit.

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<sup>46</sup> “New Again: Leonardo DiCaprio.” *Interview Magazine*, 25 June 2012, [www.interviewmagazine.com/film/new-again-leonardo-dicaprio](http://www.interviewmagazine.com/film/new-again-leonardo-dicaprio).





Kate Moss, *Interview Magazine*, Sept 2008. Photographed by Mert & Marcus.

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/217861700699154824/>

The 2000s can be represented by an onslaught of imagery surrounding sex, modernity, and rock n' roll. At least, that is what can be observed in *Interview Magazine*'s September 2008 cover featuring Kate Moss photographed by Mert & Marcus. The cover, drenched in red, featured Moss wearing a headpiece that looks like a BDSM version of a crown. The structure covers part of the model's face, but reveals enough to allow any passer-by to recognize, albeit after a double-take, the image as the supermodel who ruled the 1990s fashion scene and continues to be a successful entrepreneur and contributing-editor of *British Vogue* today. To fully gage the amplification of sexuality that *Interview Magazine* was launching itself into, it is necessary to include an example from the images that were featured in the cover story.



Kate Moss, *Interview Magazine*, Sept 2008. Photographed by Mert & Marcus.

[www.interviewmagazine.com](http://www.interviewmagazine.com)

*Interview Magazine* was at this point a publication that was 39-years-old. One anxiety that all publications are forced to confront is the issue of staying relevant and interesting to a group of readers. The theory that ‘sex sells’ seems to have caught on with the *Interview Magazine* team considering the fashion story that featured Kate Moss in very little fashion at all. The interview was conducted by Glenn O’Brien himself; a member of Andy Warhol’s Factory as well as the editor of *Interview Magazine* from 1971-1974, and the subsequent 2008 Editorial Director of Brant Publications, during which he rejoined the *Interview* team.

Glenn O’Brien conducted the interview with Kate Moss with the same whimsical wit and flirtatiousness that Andy Warhol established in his founding years at *inter/VIEW*. The questions are simple and somewhat satirical, as he asks the model if she has met everyone in the world already. By ‘everyone,’ O’Brien seems to mean ‘everyone famous,’ but the implication that you were nobody unless you were a famous somebody is in keeping with *Interview Magazine*’s as well as Andy Warhol’s morals.

Fashion became a large part of the magazine’s content, and yet what would traditionally be a fashion story, the magazine cover’s editorial photography spread, features Kate Moss, nude, except for a pair of fishnet gloves. Why? Because not only does sex sell, but sex also happens to generate a great deal of publicity. *Interview Magazine* continues to pair art and fame as the two leading forces behind the publication’s success. ‘Art and fame’ becomes ‘heart and soul.’

GO: But being a fashion freak, how do you contain your-

KM: I am not a fashion freak!

GO: Yes, you are.

KM: No, I'm not at all. I hardly ever-

GO: Okay, you're a clothes person-

KM: Yeah, I like clothes, but I hardly ever go shopping. Hardly ever!

GO: How do you get your clothes then?

KM: Well, I just come across them.<sup>47</sup>

As a reader, you want to believe that the two parties are sitting with grins on their faces, not caring about whether or not the interview turns out to report anything significant, because the nonchalant attitude of the magazine paired with the immense talent that is found within the pages — the photographers' work, the stylists' inventions, the cover star's acting abilities — is what helped create the rare breed that *Interview Magazine* continues to be today.

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<sup>47</sup> "Kate Moss." Interview Magazine, 19 Oct. 2016, [www.interviewmagazine.com/art/kate-moss#slideshow\\_43843.5](http://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/kate-moss#slideshow_43843.5).

Chapter V “If anyone can be said to embody the American Dream, it’s Kim Kardashian West.”



Kim Kardashian West & North West. *Interview Magazine*. Photographed by Steven Klein.

Image courtesy of [www.interviewmagazine.com](http://www.interviewmagazine.com)

Who is Kim Kardashian West? This question is so often posed in tones of scrutiny. It is difficult to trace the roots of Kardashian's celebrity to their very beginning. Most often she is noted to have appeared in a sex tape with R&B singer Ray J, leaked in 2007. Her association with Hollywood can also be linked to her status as socialite-starlet Paris Hilton's personal assistant throughout the 2000s. Most notably, she became a star in her own right on *E!* Network's *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*, which aired in the fall of 2007. The name Kardashian, however, was no novelty to the tabloids. Kim Kardashian West is the daughter of Robert Kardashian, O.J. Simpson's close friend as well as defense attorney during the murder trial that dominated media throughout the mid 1990s.

Kim Kardashian West has 109 Million followers on *Instagram*, though with each day the count grows seemingly exponentially. She follows only 124 accounts. A family portrait that she posted of herself with her husband, American rapper Kanye West, and children North, Saint and Chicago, generated 5,959,100 "likes" and 54,482 comments [as of the moment at which this was written]. Kim Kardashian West launched *KKW Beauty*, a new line of beauty products, in June of 2017. The line sold out entirely in under three hours, raking in approximately \$14.4 million in its initial release. According to *Forbes*, Kardashian earned \$45.5 million in the year 2017 alone.<sup>48</sup> This data goes to show the extreme influence that a celebrity in pop culture has on society and the world of fashion, beauty, music, and more.

And yet, when this question is posed, *who is Kim Kardashian West?* often what follows is an eye-roll, a dismissing of her credibility, and a disapproving attitude toward her often hyper-

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<sup>48</sup> "Kim Kardashian West." *Forbes*, *Forbes Magazine*, [www.forbes.com/profile/kim-kardashian-west/](http://www.forbes.com/profile/kim-kardashian-west/).



sexual social media presence. Why is this? Perhaps society is uncomfortable accepting the sexualized woman as anything other than ‘whore’ — a whore of fame, of attention, and of sex itself. Kim Kardashian West should be able to strip her clothes without being stripped of her dignity. Perhaps *Interview Magazine* intended on playing with the concept that there are certain ways with which women present themselves that warrant respect and equal treatment, and certain ways which seem only to act as a catalyst for hatred, sexism and minimization. The September 2016 cover of *Interview Magazine* was photographed by Steven Klein. The photographer, well known for publishing fashion-centric images of Madonna, Lady Gaga, and Brad Pitt among others, was selected to photograph Kim Kardashian West, and the product was unlike most other images of the cultural icon. The cover photograph features Kardashian dressed in the conservative-chic style of the 1960s, and is modeled to resemble one woman in particular and a muse of Andy Warhol’s; Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.

The styling, by Patti Wilson, that is featured within these photographs is loaded with meaning. The neck of her white dress is high-cut, her forearms are covered in white gloves. It is an almost comical image of the celebrity whose choice of style most often accentuates her famously curvaceous figure. But on the cover of *Interview* she can hardly be recognized as herself. Beside her sits her daughter, North, equally dressed in uncharacteristically traditional attire. The image of ‘mother and child’ is one that dates back to the earliest iconographic depictions, and promotes the concept of motherhood as pure, commendable, and anti-sexual. It is difficult not to read into the magazine’s choice of portrayal in this way. Thus, *Interview Magazine’s* cover asks the question, *Do you respect her now?* Dressed like this; covered up and posing modestly next to her daughter?

The headline of the magazine's cover reads "America's New First Lady." The logo of this particular cover is printed with a fill-tone pattern of the American flag. A passage beneath the cover story's headline confirms the notion that *Interview Magazine* aimed, with this choice in cover-star, to encourage the nay-sayers of Kardashian's success to rethink their judgement. "She's underestimated, misunderstood, and undeniably fascinating. For her debut appearance on the cover of a magazine with her daughter North, Kim Kardashian West channels another mother whose every move captivated the American imagination: First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis."<sup>49</sup>

The year 2017 represents an upward trend in the obsession of fame itself with the embrace of technology and social media. *Instagram* facilitates the idolization of a cultural icon to an extreme, as "followers" swarm the feed of a celebrity who shares mundane details of his or her daily life. A celebrity might share on *Instagram* a photo of his or her outfit that day, the food he or she eats, or a vintage photograph of a parent — all things that are similar to the content of Andy Warhol's interviews with his cover stars. This is the modern version of the celebrity, a concept with which Andy Warhol seemed to be infatuated. The first sentence of the September 2016 Kardashian feature reads, "If anyone can be said to embody the American Dream, it's Kim Kardashian West." *Interview*'s statement deeming Kim Kardashian West the new Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis establishes the magazine as an authoritative voice of the Pop culture of today; as the designator of such titles. This cover serves as a meeting of two sources of cultural influence; Andy Warhol's artistic legacy and Kim Kardashian West's career.

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<sup>49</sup> "Kim Kardashian West." *Interview Magazine*, 5 Oct. 2017





*Interview Magazine*, Kim Kardashian West and North West, Photographed by Steven Klein.

Image courtesy of [www.interviewmagazine.com](http://www.interviewmagazine.com)

One opens the cover of the magazine to the primary source of income for any magazine: the advertisement section. Dior, Louis Vuitton, and Gucci bombard the viewer's eyes once the cover is lifted, and yet once the viewer reaches the content of the publication, the masthead is rather humble in appearance. The Editor in Chief, Nick Haramis's name is third down after Editorial Director Fabien Baron and Creative Director Karl Templer. The typeface is small; smaller than the logo above which reads "Andy Warhol's *Interview*" with "Interview" in its traditional, script graphic design. The location of the magazine's office headquarters is included. 110 Greene Street. SoHo seems like an appropriate address for a magazine centered on fashion and Pop culture, and the magazine does not belong to Condé Nast or Hearst, but rather, it's independently owned by Brant Publications. It becomes clear that *Interview Magazine* had the intention of publishing an issue that played into the idea of superfame.

Janet Mock's interview with the Kardashian family jewel is conducted with a rather formal, respectful tone that contradicts *Interview Magazine*'s history of flippancy. It reads as a conversation, woman-to-woman, about motherhood, sibling dynamics, and being a business woman in an anti-Kardashian industry.

MOCK: Someone who mentors me has said that one of the greatest gifts you can ever have as a public person, and a businessperson, is the gift of being underestimated. That sound bite continues to follow you and your family—the sense of, "They have no talent. They're just famous for being famous."

KARDASHIAN WEST: I used to say, "I love being underestimated." But now when I hear, "They're so not talented,"—ten years into it—I'm kind of like, "Okay, give a girl a little respect." If I'm so not talented, if I do nothing, then how is my career my reality? And I poke fun at it, like when I was on the cover of *Forbes* I posted the hashtag #NotBadForAGirlWithNoTalent. I don't mind being underestimated because it does fuel me. But after a while, I do feel like, "C'mon, you can recognize a little bit."

MOCK: Well, no one makes something like \$14 million in mere hours, like you did during the launch of KKW Beauty. That doesn't just happen. That takes a lot of thought and planning and work.

KARDASHIAN WEST: You can say a lot of things about me, but you cannot say I don't work hard. I don't sing. I don't dance. I don't act. But I am not lazy.<sup>50</sup>

Mock appears to set up each question in order to give Kardashian a platform upon which to defend herself, or clear her name, in a world of anonymous watchers of her every move and critics of her every *Instagram* post. The interviewer values a traditional style of reporting over the magazine's usual fast-paced freshness, and perhaps this approach itself is revolutionary in the sense that it takes Kim Kardashian West seriously.

The interview with Kim Kardashian West is paired with another, special interview; one that redeems the magazine's sense of humor and innovative style. Four-year-old North West, the daughter of Kim Kardashian West and Kanye West, is interviewed by a few fellow celebrity-children, as well as by her cousin and age-group peer, Penelope Disick.

KAIA GERBER (MODEL AND DAUGHTER OF CINDY CRAWFORD AND RANDE GERBER): What's the best thing about having a little brother?

NORTH WEST: Giving him toy trucks, and I gave him a big toy bear.

GERBER: What does your family call you?

WEST: Bubs.

GERBER: What do you like on your pizza?

WEST: Just Cheese! Cheese, cheese—everywhere cheese.

SEAN AND JAYDEN FEDERLINE (BRITNEY SPEARS'S SONS): What's your favorite TV show?

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<sup>50</sup> *Interview Magazine*, "Kim Kardashian West & North West," Janet Mock. [www.interviewmagazine.com](http://www.interviewmagazine.com)

WEST: Shimmer and Shine.

FEDERLINES: What's your favorite song?

WEST: My daddy's song "Amazing." So amazing!

PENELOPE DISICK (WEST'S COUSIN, DAUGHTER OF KOURTNEY KARDASHIAN AND SCOTT DISICK): Should we build tree houses and be neighbors?

WEST: Yeah.

DISICK: Can I sleep over at your house for four days and bring my puppy?

WEST: Oh yeah!

DISICK: Can we have a baking party?

WEST: We can make rainbow princess cake!<sup>51</sup>

What is particularly hilarious about these questions and responses, despite their obvious humor in the innocence of youth, is that the interview is almost identical in style to the interviews that Andy Warhol was conducting in the 1970s for his magazine, and in particular, the aforementioned Liza Minnelli conversation. It is joyous, simple, unexpected, uncensored and nonsensical. The North West interview shares a comic-style interaction facilitated by the editors of *Interview Magazine* that is so specifically *Pop* that it allows the reader to transport back to the Warhol-era world. Pop Art in any form, above all other defining characteristics, must be current. The history of *Interview Magazine* has fit seamlessly into the history of Pop Art and Pop culture, but the legacy of *Interview Magazine* has a future that is less definite. When studying the reasons for success that the publication has had, one must evaluate *Interview Magazine* in its relation to Pop, as the magazine states itself as Pop Culture's Crystal Ball. A product of Pop must be sexy.

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<sup>51</sup> *Interview Magazine*, "North West," [www.interviewmagazine.com](http://www.interviewmagazine.com)



Miley Cyrus and Mert Alas. *Interview Magazine*. Photographed by Mert Alas.

Image courtesy of [www.hollywoodreporter.com/](http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/)

*Interview Magazine* has encapsulated this concept from the get-go with an original cover that featured numerous nudes and the lens of a film camera within the frame. A product of Pop must feature some form of rebellion against tradition. It must speak on behalf of the youth, which *Interview Magazine* has always aimed to do and seems to continue to do. And finally, it must attain a keen sense of foresight. It must represent the Now. Its very being, as a publication as well as an art object, must relate to the present and even the near future. This is where *Interview Magazine*'s fate as 'The Crystal Ball of Pop' and as a product that epitomizes Pop Culture might fall short.

A magazine has become an object of antiquity. Though in production, print publications are folding by the day due to plummeting newsstand sales — even the word, newsstand, seems to date back to a time that has come and gone. The relevance of the magazine falls almost at the same rate that the relevance of technology, of the iPhone, of *Instagram*, skyrockets. How can a print publication represent what is current when during the time it takes for the content to be printed and distributed, the readers have already digested the same content through their digital screens?

One solution to this seemingly unsolved problem in the magazine industry is to feature content that relates to and revolves around the Social Media Age, rather than aiming to report on the news as instantaneously as an iPhone can. An example of iPhone-turned-Art is seen in *Interview Magazine*'s August 2015 cover 'shot' by Mert Alas. The photographic practice remains in parenthesis because no camera lens was used in the making of the photographs, but rather, the screenshot feature on *Apple*'s iPhone. The cover of the magazine features one image, of many,

from a FaceTime session with child actress turned Pop star turned clothesless rebel turned glam-country-rock super-talent Miley Cyrus.

The cover's headlines can be observed as an attempt to link the language of social media with the language of print publications. The words appear in traditional headline form, under the magazine's logo and on top of the image of the star. They read, "The #ME Issue", "#INSTAGANG", "100 of the Most Powerful Personalities on the Internet", "@INTERVIEWMAG", and "@MILEYCYRUS". In other words, the headlines have been replaced by 'hashtags' and usernames. This 2015 cover was revolutionary in that as a viewer, the image of a FaceTime screenshot, one that seemed modern and yet newly familiar, becomes the art. The familiar, displaced and reframed as art is the essence of Pop. This image appears as a reflection of the Social Media Age, one which the young viewer is a product of, and to see a product of oneself in the form of art is a rare and significant experience.

The vulgarity in the image of an iPhone screenshot is somewhat of a return to the initial aesthetic of *inter/VIEW*. The designation of Kim Kardashian West as cover-girl is a choice that would have suited the style of Andy Warhol. *Interview Magazine* makes a comeback in its most recent decade, as the modern era is one in which a cohesion of art and fame has dominated popular culture through social media. Andy Warhol, Miley Cyrus and Kim Kardashian would have been a historical trio, and in a sense, they are bound together in perpetuity by the pages of *Interview Magazine*.



## *Conclusion*

To create a product that focuses on the era of ‘now’ rather than the era of ‘then’ is to write a love note to the present moment. Andy Warhol’s obsession with Pop culture seems to have come from an appreciation for life as he knew it. Rather than aspiring to recreate a style of the past, as the past is so easy to idealize, Warhol had the rare ability to recognize the beauty and the poignance of his own time.

As a modern society, we have become increasingly obsessed with nostalgia. Young adults who grew up in the early 2000s long for the gritty, grungy 1990s. Teenagers who grew up in the 2010s celebrate the kitschy, camp 2000s. Perhaps it is a form of escapism that manifests in a modern age in which the political climate has turned to absolute calamity. Perhaps it will only be in the year 2038 that we will look back on the popular culture that used to be ours with rosy retrospection.

*Interview Magazine*’s legacy is one that encourages a close attention to art, fame and their collective impact on society. With a celebrity in the Oval Office and the politics of art taking precedence in debates on race and representation, now is as significant a moment in the history of art & fame as there has ever been.

An embracing of the current cultural condition might be a valuable way in which to live. Instead of focusing solely on the critical, a shift in perspective should be assumed in order to appreciate the trends of today and recognize the power in optimism. There is something to envy and to emulate in Andy Warhol’s decision to say, ‘now is the only moment in which to live.’





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