

What Warhol Saw When He Looked at Women

Following a massive retrospective at the Whitney, Dominique Lévy and Brett Gorvy have organized the show 'Warhol Women' at their Upper East Side gallery, opening April 25



LADY IN RED Andy Warhol's 'Red Jackie' is one of the first works viewers see at Lévy Gorvy gallery's 'Warhol Women' show. 'Red Jackie,' 1964, Acrylic and silkscreen ink, 40 x 40 inches. PHOTO: © 2019 THE ANDY WARHOL FOUNDATION FOR THE VISUAL ARTS, INC. / LICENSED BY ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK. PHOTO: FROELICH COLLECTION, STUTT GART, COURTESY FROELICH COLLECTION, STUTT GART

By *Lane Florsheim*

April 23, 2019 8:37 a.m. ET

Dominique Lévy went to *From A to B and Back Again*, the Whitney Museum of American Art's Andy Warhol retrospective, at least ten times when it was on earlier this year. "You [went] tired, anxious or on a bad day, and you came out with an energy that's almost vibrating," says Lévy, the co-founder of Lévy Gorvy gallery. She and her co-founder Brett Gorvy think the Whitney show has opened a door to zoom in even more closely on Warhol. On April 25, their show *Warhol Women* opens at the gallery's Upper East Side space, exploring the artist's relationship to women, femininity and beauty through his silkscreen portraits from the early 1960s through the '80s.

Gorvy and Lévy think the show will energize collectors—the Warhol market moves in waves, Gorvy says, and the Whitney show created the "next big one." They're also excited to bring in the broader public and the many artists who have been influenced by Warhol. "He has this capacity of being the father figure to pretty much all the younger artists that are working today," says Gorvy. "Him representing women as a male artist is a very interesting idea. This is someone who thought he was ugly as hell and changed his whole image to hide [that]. He identified with femininity."

Gorvy and Lévy have arranged the show so that the first works viewers see are portraits of Jackie Onassis and Marilyn Monroe, facing one another. Lévy, who came up with the show's concept, says that no other man has been able to look at women the way Warhol did. "Without sexualizing the subject, he was able to do these portraits where the woman is allowed to be who she is," she says. "He captures the openness, the self-consciousness, the self-assurance, the insecurity. Aren't we all self-conscious? I think nobody [else] does that, and that's where he becomes conceptual." In Warhol's depiction of Monroe, Lévy says, he "sees the enormous sadness" that she felt.

Warhol's understanding of women evolved over several decades, according to Lévy. As the women's rights movement took off in the 1960s, he was "purely an artist" portraying women. "The '70s and '80s are a very different story. By then, he's much more aware of the discussion of feminism," she says. Warhol's concept of beauty

wasn't "stereotypical," she adds. "I think he found Gertrude Stein and Golda Meir beautiful." Their portraits are featured in the show, along with silkscreens of Aretha Franklin, Brigitte Bardot, Dolly Parton, Warhol's mother Julia Warhola, and many others.

The show spans three floors of the gallery's airy Upper East Side space, including its vestibule on 73rd Street. The whole room has been covered in foil, in the way of Warhol's Factory, and a screen shows some of his famous three-minute screen tests with subjects like Edie Sedgwick and Susan Sontag. On Wednesdays from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., gallery-goers can also create their own 90-second screen tests, which they can easily post to—where else?—Instagram.

Warhol has been labeled a forebear to Instagram—for both his aesthetic and his compulsion to record everything. "It's fascinating to see [people] vogue and pose for selfies in front of Warhol pictures," says Gorvy. "He saw this [selfie culture] 40 or 50 years before access to technology allowed people to take it into their own hands. Instagram today allows you to have that 15 minutes of fame, though it might only be for 30 seconds or whatever."