



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Peter Berlin | One of a Kind

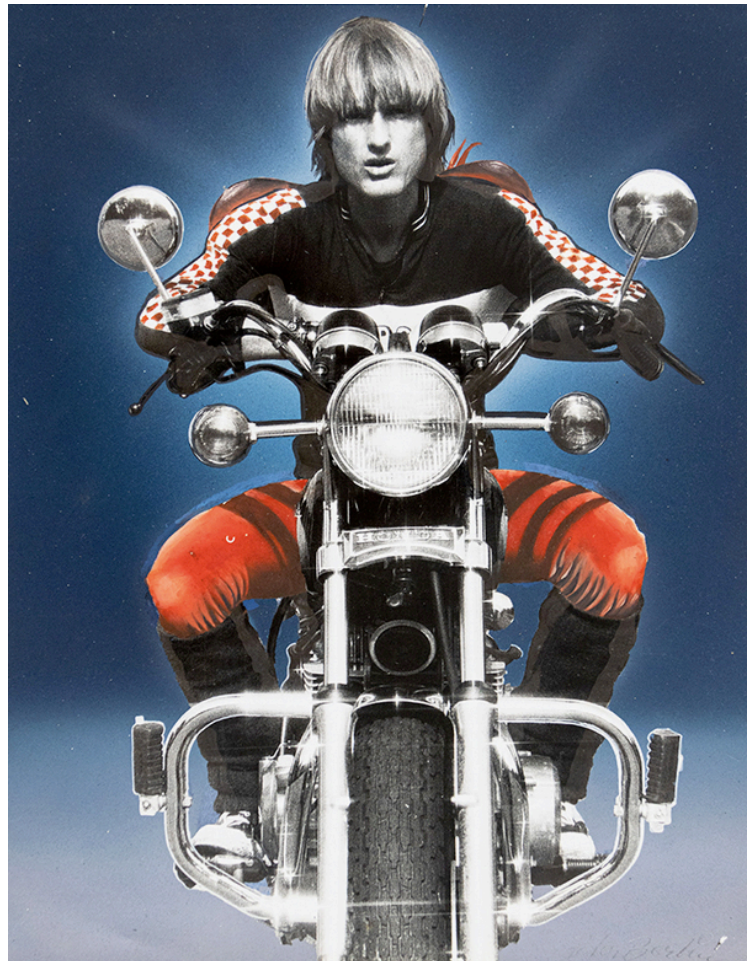
November 4 – December 18, 2021

Opening reception:
Thursday, November 4, 2021
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

ClampArt is pleased to present “Peter Berlin: One of a Kind”—an exhibition of the artist’s hand-painted photographic self portraits from the 1970s and 1980s, along with other work.

In his early 20s while still living in Germany, Peter Berlin began designing and sewing skin-tight clothing which he would wear as he cruised the parks and train stations of Berlin, Rome, Paris, New York, and San Francisco. After several long-term stays on the east coast of the United States, he eventually settled in San Francisco in 1969 and became a fixture on the streets with his signature look and perpetual posing.

Trained in photography, Berlin would shoot self portraits in order to document his favorite outfits. By the 1970s, as he became increasingly well known, these photographs grew into a mail order business. However, often in the excitement of a shoot, the artist would inadvertently underexpose some frames of film. Not wanting to waste any of the prints, Berlin began taking a brush with acrylic and oil paint to enhance and beautify the compositions. After a visit to SoHo in New York with his friend the painter Jochen Labriola (then represented by Circle Gallery), Berlin was inspired to learn to airbrush his photographs. He writes: “I covered my image with art masking fluid and airbrushed the backgrounds. I liked the effect and kept on to embellish, decorate, adorn, dress up, ornament, enrich, and exaggerate many photos.” ClampArt’s exhibition features the last remaining “one of a kind” hand-painted prints.



Born in Poland in 1942 as Baron Armin Hagen von Hoyningen-Huene, Peter Berlin is a relative of the celebrated fashion photographer George Hoyningen-Huene (1900-1968). Raised in Germany, Berlin received post-secondary education as a photo-technician, and worked as a celebrity portraitist for German television before moving to the United States.

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By the early 1970s, Berlin began producing films and starred in the now iconic "Nights in Black Leather" (1973), co-directed by Richard Abel. He then produced, directed, and starred in "That Boy" the following year, and made four shorter films through the mid- to late-1970s, while publishing and selling his photographic self portraits.

Peter Berlin was the subject of several Robert Mapplethorpe photographs, four drawings by Tom of Finland, and at least one portrait by Andy Warhol, attesting to his worldwide celebrity. Aside from his role in the sexual revolution helping make gay men and gay sexuality more visible to the public at large, Berlin was responsible for the definition of many gay archetypes which persist today, while contributing to the achievement of artistic legitimacy for erotic gay subject matter, in general.

Berlin's photographic project is arguably closer to performance art, in that the act of cruising in his elaborate getups was the point of his ambitious pursuits. The expertly composed and printed photographs, gorgeous art objects in and of themselves, are ultimately records of his sexually pointed happenings.

Peter Berlin resides in San Francisco quietly today, where he is still frequently recognized on the sidewalks by his fans. His photographs are represented in the collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, as part of the Robert Mapplethorpe archive (Mapplethorpe and Sam Wagstaff collected Peter Berlin's work); in addition to The Kinsey Institute at Indiana University in Bloomington.

For more information and images please contact Brian Paul Clamp, Director, or see www.clampart.com. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Image 1: © Peter Berlin, "Self Portrait on Motorcycle," 1970s, Vintage hand-painted black-and-white C-print, 14 x 11 inches (35.6 x 27.9 cm).
Image 2: © Peter Berlin, "Metallic Self Portrait," c. 1970s, Vintage gelatin silver print with collaged graphics and letters, 10 x 3.5 inches (25.4 x 8.9 cm).