

CLAMP

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Andy Warhol | *Sex Parts*

January 9–March 1, 2025

Opening Reception:

Thursday, January 9, 2025

6 – 8 PM

CLAMP is pleased to present *Andy Warhol | Sex Parts*, an exhibition of screenprints and photographs from the late 1970s.

In 1977, at the height of the Gay Liberation Movement, and just two weeks following Robert Mapplethorpe's notorious New York exhibition at The Kitchen of his sexually explicit "X Portfolio" comprised of male subjects and sadomasochistic scenarios, Andy Warhol began photographing his own nudes at the Factory then located on the north end of Union Square. Meant as a radical counterpoint to his commercially driven commissioned portraits, Warhol was not necessarily anticipating the times, but rather sensing them, which "enabled him not only to join the latest trend but to leap to the head of the line" as described by Bob Colacello in *The Andy Warhol Catalogue Raisonné, Paintings 1976-1978—Volume 5*.

Warhol described the nude imagery as "landscapes," reflecting his interest in the body as a site open to exploration and discovery, and his interest in the abstract positive-negative space present in the compositions. While the artist had explored sexually explicit material in the 1960s in such films as "Blow Job" (1964) and "Blue Movie" (1969), he preferred to delineate between his films and fine artworks, as he was keenly aware of the innate conservatism of the art world at that time, and the fact that erotic imagery would not be well received by museums or private collectors.



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For procuring his male subjects, Warhol relied on confidante Victor Hugo to recruit men of impressive endowment from the New York bathhouses. Back at the Factory, the men were encouraged to strip and make themselves comfortable, and as was typical for the artist, Warhol acted as the shy, coy voyeur photographing the models with a demeanor of remove and distance, never participating in the scenes which unfolded in front of the camera lens. These photographs were employed to produce the series titled *Torsos* (1977) and later the more graphic *Sex Parts* and *Fellatio* silkscreen portfolios—both from 1978.

Notably, faces were never included in the imagery which preserved the models' anonymity. Further, the sketch-like qualities in *Sex Parts* distinguishes the series stylistically from Warhol's other work, which is characterized by big blocks of bold color, layering, and less frenetic lines.

Sex Parts was never sold or distributed through galleries. Rather, Warhol chose to place the artworks privately with collectors, or to gift them to special friends. *Sex Parts* was never publicly exhibited during Warhol's lifetime, but the silkscreens did appear in Richard Gere's 1980 film "American Gigolo" displayed in the drug dealer's living room. The complete portfolio in the present exhibition was acquired directly from The Andy Warhol Foundation around 1997, a decade after the artist's death. The portfolio, straight from the original owner, is being sold intact to an institution only (or to an individual open to committing the portfolio to an institution as a promised gift). The prints will not be broken up.

Also included in CLAMP's show are original Polaroids and photographs shot by Warhol in the Factory, similar to those he used to produce the silkscreens comprising the portfolio *Sex Parts*. Additionally, CLAMP is presenting a wall vinyl reproduction of a photograph shot by Warhol's assistant Ronnie Cutrone during one of the nude studio sessions.

While less known to the wider public, *Sex Parts* is a significant series signaling the artist's final acceptance of his own sexuality. It also opened the door for other progressive and controversial bodies of work such as the *Piss*, *Oxidation*, and *Cum* series.

Thanks to Hedges Projects in Los Angeles for their assistance in organizing the exhibition.

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

Image: Adapted from Andy Warhol's "Sex Parts (F. & S. II. 176)," 1978. © The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York.