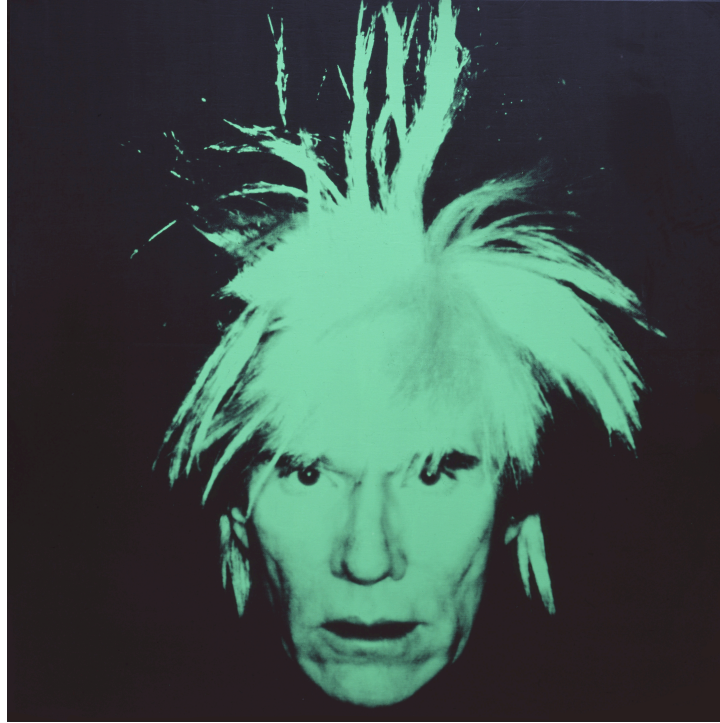


SKARSTEDT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ANDY WARHOL: SELF PORTRAITS (FRIGHT WIGS)

OPENING RECEPTION: FEBRUARY 23, 6-8PM
20 East 79th Street



“If I’d gone ahead and died ten years ago, I’d probably be a cult figure today.”
–Andy Warhol, 1980

Skarstedt is pleased to present *Andy Warhol: Self Portraits (Fright Wigs)*, an exhibition of five, monumental works from the artist’s final self-portrait series which will be on view from February 23 – April 22, 2017 at Skarstedt’s Upper East Side gallery. Completed in 1986, less than a year before Warhol’s untimely death, these haunting self-portraits have been championed as some of Warhol’s most iconic paintings.

Andy Warhol’s larger-than-life self-portraits were commissioned by Anthony d’Offay. Unveiled in July 1986 at d’Offay’s London gallery, the show represented the first and only exhibition in Warhol’s career dedicated entirely to the theme of self-portraiture. Overwhelming in scale, the artist’s ghostly portrait emerges from a seemingly infinite black void. The artist’s decision to wear a black turtleneck allows for his neck, shoulders and torso to disappear, focusing the attention on his sunken features. His skull-like face, gaunt and boney, wears an impenetrable, piercing stare that is juxtaposed by the electricity of his wig, which swings to the top of the canvas in a strong, vertical movement. Reminiscent of a Byzantine icon, Warhol’s frontal portrait floats among a flat, ambiguous surface; time and space dissolve and viewers are left only with a *memento mori*, or a precursor to his impending death.



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The *Self Portrait (Fright Wig)* series represents a culmination of themes present in Warhol's oeuvre. Throughout his career, Warhol painted portraits of celebrities, politicians and socialites that he considered the icons of contemporary life. Here he places himself in that same category, elevating his own status and the status of the artist. Further, Warhol employs his mechanical approach to art making by using his perfected silk-screen technique to create a serialized image. In a lesser-known interview by Gretchen Berg in 1967, Warhol said, "In my art work, hand painting would take much too long and anyway that's not the age we live in. Mechanical means are today, and using them I can get more art to more people. Art should be for everyone."

Born Andrew Warhola on August 6, 1928 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Andy Warhol graduated from the Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1949. Widely regarded as a defining figure of Pop Art, Warhol began his career as a commercial artist and illustrator. His oeuvre expanded to include paintings, drawings, photographs, prints, films and even product endorsements. By the early 1960s, he began to consolidate his well-known style of large-scale, colorful prints of popular consumer goods and other ad-related images that were prevalent throughout mass media. He challenged traditional notions of high art versus commercial art while simultaneously blurring the distinction between art and life. For Andy, art and life were one in the same. Warhol's style had, and continues to have, unparalleled impact on contemporary visual culture at large.

Warhol's work has been the subject of countless exhibitions in galleries and museums around the world. Important exhibitions were held at the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin in 2001, the Wilhelm-Hack-Museum in Ludwigshafen, Germany in 1996, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris in 1989. His works have also been exhibited in major institutions such as the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution in Washington, the Museum Haus Lange in Krefeld, Germany and the Moderna Museet in Stockholm. The Andy Warhol Museum opened in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in May of 1994. His work has been featured in numerous publications. Andy Warhol died in 1987 in New York.

About Skarstedt

Skarstedt (20 E. 79th Street, New York, NY) was founded in 1994 by Per Skarstedt to mount historical exhibitions by Contemporary European and American artists that had become the core of his specialty in Sweden and New York in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The New York gallery's program focuses on artists of the late Twentieth Century whose work explores concepts such as representation, authorship, identity, and sexual politics across a wide-range of media. Skarstedt's unique relationship with artists allows it to present exhibitions both on the primary and secondary markets, creating a dialogue between the generations.

Located at 8 Bennet Street, Skarstedt's new London gallery is situated in the historic district of St James's, on the corner of Arlington Street and Bennet Street, both named after Henry Bennet, Earl of Arlington. Known as 'ministerial street' in the 17th and 18th centuries, the street was previously home to Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole and his son Horace Walpole, an esteemed collector and connoisseur. Measuring 5,000 square feet, with the main exhibition space at ground floor level, the three interconnected galleries enable Skarstedt to continue its program, of historically-researched and museum-quality exhibitions.



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Skarstedt opened its Chelsea space at 550 W. 21st Street in May 2014 with the inaugural exhibition *Klein and Warhol: Fire and Oxidation Paintings*, adding to the gallery's existing locations on New York's Upper East Side and in London. The additional gallery space enables Skarstedt to expand on its core program of museum-quality, historically researched exhibitions from modern and contemporary masters.

The gallery works with the following artists and artists' estates: Francis Bacon, Georg Baselitz, Jean-Michel Basquiat, George Condo, Willem de Kooning, Eric Fischl, Peter Fischli & David Weiss, Lucio Fontana, Keith Haring, Jenny Holzer, Mike Kelley, Martin Kippenberger, Yves Klein, Jeff Koons, Barbara Kruger, Juan Muñoz, Cady Noland, Albert Oehlen, Richard Prince, David Salle, Thomas Schütte, Cindy Sherman, Rosemarie Trockel, Cy Twombly, Andy Warhol and Christopher Wool.

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Image Credit: Andy Warhol, *Self-Portrait (Fright Wig)*, 1986. Acrylic and silkscreen ink on canvas. 80 x 80 inches (203.2 x 203.2 cm.) © 2017 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

