

Anton Kern Gallery

Andy Warhol: *Fashion* Curated by Vincent Fremont

July 9 – August 15, 2025

Opening Reception: Wednesday, July 9 from 6-8pm

"Fashion fascinated Andy Warhol from the beginning. This attraction to fashion is apparent throughout Andy's life and it shows up in his paintings. Some examples are the Flower paintings from the 1960s, the Diamond Dust Shoe paintings from the 1980s, ad campaigns for Halston, Vogue photo editorials, etc..."

- Vincent Fremont, Former Vice President of Andy Warhol's Enterprises; Former Executive Studio Manager; One of three Founding Directors of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

Andy Warhol: *Fashion*, curated by Vincent Fremont at Anton Kern Gallery, features a selection of Warhol's drawings from the 1950s and '60s. These 48 drawings—of women in corsets, tutus, and furs, of loving couples and reclining male nudes—take his fascination with fashion and the human form well beyond his early commercial assignments. Created in ink, graphite, and colored pencil on tracing paper, many of the drawings use Warhol's now-signature "blotted line" technique, in which he traced photographs to produce delicate, broken contours with a calligraphic quality. These drawings grew directly out of Warhol's early commercial practice—refining techniques, subjects, and stylistic choices first developed in the pages of magazines and store ads.



Female Fashion Figure, c. 1957, Ink and graphite on paper, 27 x 21 inches (68.6 x 53.3 cm)

In 1950, Andy Warhol landed his first magazine commission, drawing shoes for an article titled *Climbing the Ladder of Success*. This opportunity led to his I. Miller shoe advertisements—colorful depictions of footwear that were often multi-media. These ads appeared as full- or half-page spreads in the New York Times throughout the latter half of the 1950s. This earlier style is reflected in the drawings on view on the gallery's first floor. Nearly all 23 depict women—most of them anonymous to the viewer—and each is titled directly. For instance, three works share the title *Female Fashion Figure*, all dated circa 1957. In two, the women appear as airy, dynamic ballerinas with pointy shoes; in the third, a composed figure in a sharp suit—adorned with a bow belt and a brooch—delicately extends her hand toward the upper corner of the page. *Tattooed Female In Girdle*, c. 1955, presents a woman with floral-like skin, fully "inked," wrapped up tight in a corset and pointy lace up booties. In *Reclining Cat With Two Shoes*, a 1956 drawing, a Cheshire cat reclines with two power heels right next to it. Another drawing, a profile portrait, depicts cosmetics entrepreneur Helena Rubinstein, founder of the eponymous company that made her one of the wealthiest women in the world. Three additional works, created during Warhol's 1956 travels in Indonesia, reflect his attentiveness to detail and his fascination with how people present themselves in different cultures. *Vogue* from 1958 includes a colorful, anthropomorphized butterfly with an orange hand glove that, like the suited woman, gestures off the page.

On the gallery's second floor visitors encounter drawings of men and isolated body parts, where Warhol begins to explore themes that would later dominate his art—sensuality, fragmentation, and the stylized body. A series titled *Feet* (early 1960s) focuses on slim toes and arches. Other works show male torsos, coiffed heads, and pairs of men in intimate embrace. In *Male Genitals With Bow* (c. 1956), an erect penis is adorned with decorative flourishes, the bow echoing the one worn by the suited woman downstairs.

To underscore Warhol's enduring interest in the body and the world of fashion, Fremont has chosen to include four rarely screened episodes from *Fashion*, a television series he produced for Warhol in 1979–1980 for Manhattan Cable Channel 10, alongside director Don Munroe. *Fashion* was Warhol's concept: a half-hour exposé that would delve into fashion designers' companies and projects, both on and off the runway. At the start of most episodes, Warhol would appear briefly holding an SX-70 Polaroid camera—the same one he carried around with him everywhere—saying “Fashion” before snapping a photo of the viewer. As Fremont explains: “Andy was both the executive producer and logo of the series.”

The four episodes on view across the gallery's two floors are *Male Models*, *Models & Photographers*, *The Betsy Johnson Story*, and *Halston*. *Male Models* begins with half-nude models simultaneously beautifying and answering questions in a hotel suite at the Sheraton Hotel in New York City. *Models & Photographers* explores the dynamics between the person behind the camera and the one in front of it, focusing on three archetypes within the industry: the established (Lena Kansbod and Arthur Elgort), the less established (Amina Warsuma and Scott Heiser), and the ingénue (Phoebe Cates). Betsy Johnson talks on her style influences throughout different decades while models pose and dance along to *Broken English* by Marianne Faithfull. In *Halston*, scenes of Roy Halston Frowick seated at an executive-style table—cigarette in hand and a silver Elsa Peretti ashtray beside him—are intercut with models twirling down a red carpet in his designs, all set against panoramic views from his Olympic Tower studio overlooking St. Patrick's Cathedral. Warhol's television work of the late 1970s and early 1980s, made possible by his investment in broadcast-quality equipment and a small but committed team, was a natural extension of his decades-long fascination with celebrity, class, and American consumerism.

From his commercial illustrations in *Glamour* and *Harper's Bazaar* to his late-career television ventures, Andy Warhol's engagement with fashion was neither incidental nor superficial—it was foundational. In fact, in the credit lines of even his earliest magazine commissions—“Warhol,” not “Warhola” (his birth name), was printed—linking his name change to his professional trajectory and marking a defining moment of self-styling, emblematic of the porous boundaries between personal branding and artistic production that would characterize his career. Far from mere freelance work or decorative showcases, Warhol's drawings made while he was working for magazines mark the beginning of his sustained inquiry into the aesthetics of consumerism and desire—themes that would anchor his practice for decades to come. Andy Warhol: *Fashion* invites visitors to follow this throughline, positioning these works on paper not as early career curiosities but as critical and foundational sites of his artistic innovation.