

Books

The Rituals of Life At Andy Warhol's Court

by Hunter Drohojowska

Exposures, by Andy Warhol (Grosset and Dunlop, \$25.00)

In a sunny Sunday afternoon, a few weeks past, the rich white folk were out at Famous Amos' chocolate chip cookie store on Sunset Boulevard. They had come for the free, cheap champagne, the free, overpriced cookies and the Donna Summer disco sounds. They had also come to gape at Andy Warhol who was autographing giveaway copies of his *Interview* magazine, cans of Campbell's tomato soup, the guitar of some '60s throwback, a girl's dress, (Bob Colacello, editor of *Interview* magazine, muttered, "usually, they want him to sign their tits ... or their tattoos") and signing hundreds of his latest book, *Exposures*, at \$25 per.

Despite this event being just another whistle stop on the Warhol book tour, Andy looked a little lost, very vulnerable and very white. Especially in contrast to Wally Amos, the former William Morris agent turned millionaire cookie mogul, who shuffled and grinned for the press and even got Warhol back in the kitchen to make cookies. Somehow it wasn't very interesting. Not even after the champagne. What was interesting was the size of the very young crowd. There were fat lines around the building waiting to get autographs, kids who scarcely could have remembered Warhol's Factory of the '60s, or the Happenings or *Chelsea Girls*.

Aside from Mick Jagger, Andy Warhol is one of the only '60s myths to survive into the '80s. In March, yet another Warhol

book will be published, *Popism, Memoirs of the '60s* and in the works is *Trashier*, a sequel to *Trash* (this time, Joe D'allesandro and Holly Woodlawn have four children and move to the suburbs).

Armed with tape recorder and camera, Warhol has always absorbed all that the glitterati have to offer, which doesn't change all that much with the passing of decades, and turned it into art. He considers himself a traveling portrait painter but functions more like a Velasquez, recording the rituals of life at court, from the inside out.

Exposures is a volume of such inner-circle snapshots, culled from the annals of two decades of dedicated party attendance, and is intriguing in a historical sense: famous faces in famous places.

The idea for *Exposures* came about when Marisa Berenson told Warhol and Colacello that they could cover her wedding from 4 p.m. on and turn it into a book. Some sensible publisher maintained that no matter what the magnitude of the occasion, it could only be a chapter. Then Mick and Bianca Jagger got divorced but the publisher relegated that incident to chapter status, as well. Finally, *Exposures* was created with a chapter for each of Warhol's Famous Friends: Steve Rubell and Paulette Goddard, Salvador Dali and Margaret Trudeau, Halston and Lillian Carter ... all written up in a melange style that sounds like Rona Barrett interpreting the Tao Te Ching.

Although accolades for authorship are difficult to place (Was it written by Bob? Or with Bridget? Did Andy have anything to do with it all?), the oblique, easy prose butchers its subjects with kindness. It is too subtle to provoke libel suits a la Capote's *Answered Prayers* but Warhol's eye for the foibles of the famous is quietly vicious. He reports all the tawdriest, and best, details. There are occasional bolts of the earlier, irreverent Warhol wit but most of the pages are painstaking and painful observations.

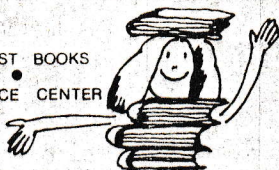
Below are some nibbles of the nastier stuff:

"Barbra (Streisand) has the most beautiful art deco furniture. She gave me a tour of it. She had a big buffet and each dish was labeled with a porcelain plaque. 'Egg Salad,' 'Chopped Liver,' 'Lox.' It was so elegant."

"Image is so important to rock stars. At one point, it was the thing to put diamonds in your teeth. Mick (Jagger) liked the idea but he wanted to be original. He had an emerald put in one of his side teeth. Everytime he smiled someone said, 'Mick, is that a piece of spinach stuck to your tooth?' Mick was forced to switch to a diamond because rubies look like

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beets."

There are many entertaining tidbits but the whole book is really worth one poem recited to Andy by Muhammad Ali at his training camp, Fighter's Heaven.

Concorde's Palace

*I was flying the Concorde
at 60,000 feet*

*And the feeling you get is
really neat.*

*It puts everything New York has
to a pity*

*So to keep it looking bad they
keep it out of the city.*

*The Americans should be protesting
to save the young boys*

*Instead of wasting time protesting
the Concorde's noise.*

*The Concorde is the greatest thing
in the history of mankind.*

*When headed in the right direction
it outruns the sunshine.*

*The Americans left England years ago
in order to be free*

*So they should remember that the Con-
corde people made the Concorde
Out of the roots of their tree.*

Exposures proves to be the ideal title. The text ingenuously exposes what we've suspected all along: those healthy, wealthy, fame-coated shells are just disguises for disappointingly conventional human beings. Warhol knows about becoming famous — media manipulation has been his life story — and so he is able to render fallible those

personalities inflated by media hype. He knows that fame is a by-product of a hungry and hurried press, bestowed haphazardly, at best, and that the industry's need for the newest "star" is never sated. Warhol once said, "The day will come when everyone will be famous for 15 minutes." He has recently altered that to read, "In fifteen minutes, everyone will be famous."

Everyone who wants to be famous should borrow a copy of *Exposures*. Those that are already famous can afford to go out and buy one. ■