

'Genius!'

From California surfer boy to Manhattan social chronicler, photographer **Christopher Makos** moved within Andy Warhol's inner circle like no other. With photos excerpted here from *Warhol / Makos in Context*, which chronicles the faces and places of that Fabulous time, **Jeffrey Slonim** talks all tomorrow's parties with the shy pop legend's gregarious court portraitist.



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POP STAR: JUNE 1985
AT THE TIME OF THIS SHOOT, ANDY WARHOL WAS INTO
THE HEALING POWERS OF CRYSTALS, AND HAD
SWITCHED FROM LIQUOR DRINKS TO HERBAL TEA (IN
PUBLIC, AT LEAST).



A

ndy Warhol loved to be written about.

But he kept his buff, photographic Boswell, Christopher Makos—with his beachy modern sensibilities—particularly close at hand.

After being shot by the troubled Valerie Solanas, a gun-shy Warhol grew paranoid of the general public. Makos, who had apprenticed with Man Ray in Paris, drew him out, snapping, perhaps most famously, those iconic studio portraits of Warhol in flip-hairdo drag and black necktie.

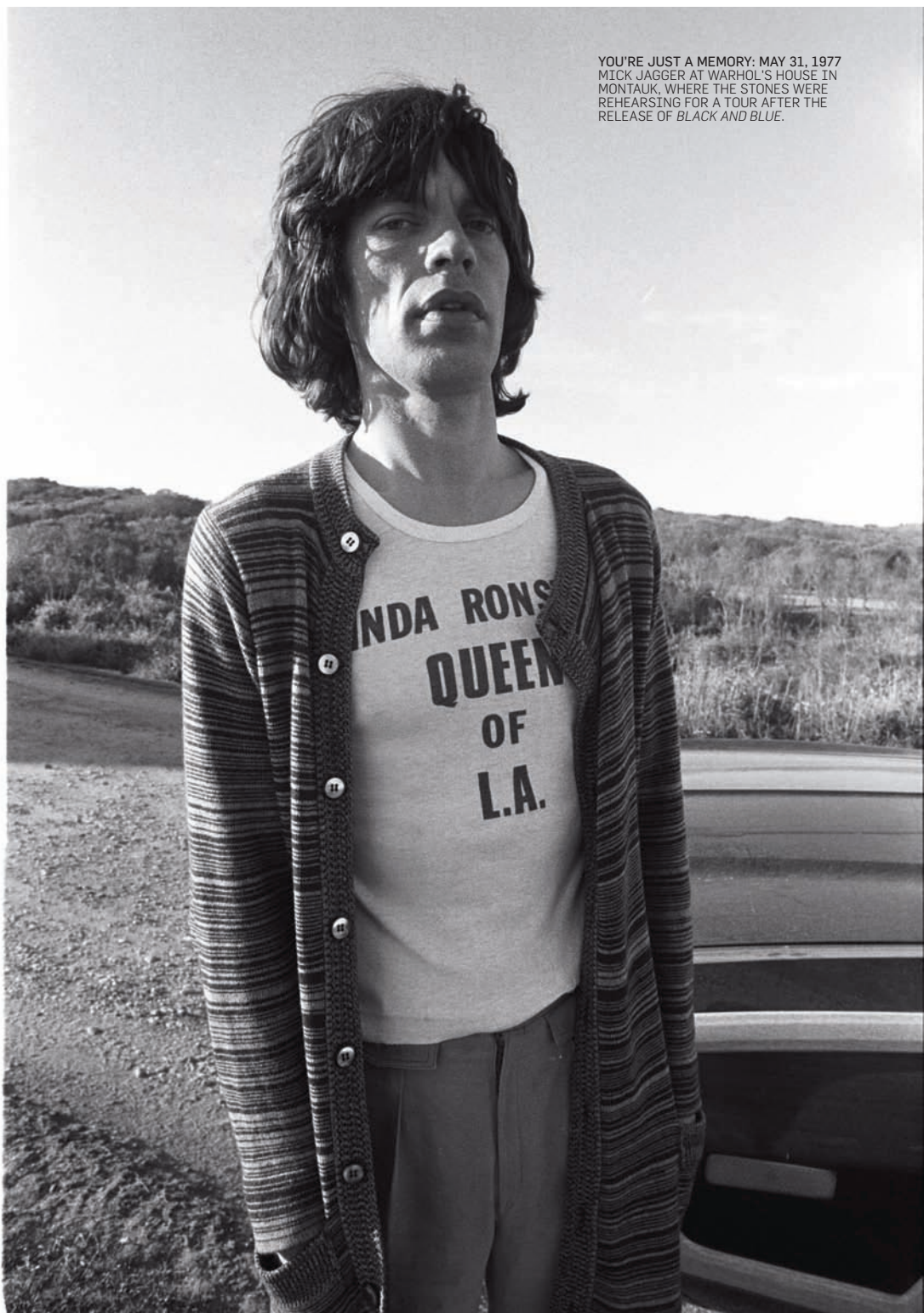
An extrovert, the preternaturally-youthful Makos also collected attractive guest-stars for Warhol's inner circle, and for his own long-running column in *Interview* magazine entitled, simply, "In." He hails from Lowell, Massachusetts, a city named for Francis Cabot Lowell, who brought the first power looms to America. (In fact, a very early American usage of the term "factory girls" referred to the young women of the blue-collar burg.)

At age thirteen Makos moved with his mother to California, where his personal aesthetic—"surfing safari, my whole California vibe"—took hold. Predating Stonewall ("I didn't even know what 'gay' was," he says), Makos met a male admirer with "a Ford Mustang convertible and a bag of marijuana." In 1967, he packed his sport jacket and madras shorts and journeyed with him to New York City.

Including 100 contact sheets, *Warhol / Makos in Context* (Powerhouse Books, 2007)—his 13th photo tome—chronicles the bleached-blond photographer's wide-eyed, wide-lens, starry existence from 1976 to 1987.

JEFFREY SLONIM: When you arrived in New York from California, you must have been very green and fresh-faced. How did you end up on the hyper-exclusive celebrity circuit?

CHRISTOPHER MAKOS: I found a one-room flat on Waverly Place, off Washington Square Park. I was one of those cute young boys that everyone wanted to be around. I met all the writers—Tennessee Williams, Dotson Rader. I met Andy [Warhol] at the Whitney Museum during his retrospective. I was invited to come play Monopoly at Anthony Perkins' apartment. He later gave me a camera. I eventually had a show called "Step on It" in SoHo—raw, cutting photos. And Bob Colacello, the editor of *Interview* at the time, said, "You should shoot for us."



YOU'RE JUST A MEMORY: MAY 31, 1977
MICK JAGGER AT WARHOL'S HOUSE IN
MONTAUK, WHERE THE STONES WERE
REHEARSING FOR A TOUR AFTER THE
RELEASE OF *BLACK AND BLUE*.

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FAMOUS FACES: MARCH 6, 1979
OPENING OF WARHOL'S SHADOWS PAINTINGS AT
HEINER FRIEDRICH GALLERY, NYC. ATTENDEES
INCLUDED PHILIP JOHNSON, FRANCESCO SCAVULLO,
ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE, AND TRUMAN CAPOTE



OH, WOW: FEBRUARY 1978
WARHOL CAPTURING LIZA MINNELLI, WITH
VICTOR HUGO STYLING.

JS: Tell me about the title of the book, *Warhol / Makos in Context*.

CM: I'm tired of journalists and writers rewriting history, reading into the attitudes and the obsessions of well-known people like Andy Warhol. So I included a lot of contact sheets and behind-the-scenes views of life. There are photos of Andy using a sponge mop to gesso his canvases. People can see this for themselves in the photos. They don't have to rely on incorrect opinions about why and how Andy painted.

JS: When did Warhol first take notice of you?

CM: My first book, *White Trash*, came out in 1977. It was about the punk movement—Debbie Harry, Richard Hell. Andy really noticed that. I didn't have a place to hang out, so I would go over to the Factory. Later, I showed Andy how to take photographs.

JS: You were a regular at the Warhol Studio when so many great people used to visit.

CM: I met Liza Minnelli when Andy was doing the portraits of her at the Factory. She was nice, but all keyed up like she was on a *lot* of coffee. And John Lennon stopped by the same day. I was working on an issue of *Interview*, and thought it would be great to have photos of people kissing for Valentine's Day. So I have those great pictures of John and Liza smooching.

JS: You traveled to Beijing, and then frequently to Europe, with Warhol.

CM: Andy was working with [the art dealer] Bruno Bischofberger, and we would stay in these amazing hotels, which always had a terrific concierge. Andy was all about getting things done, whether he just needed a cup of soup or a movie theater. My favorite part was taking the Concorde, because it was always the heads of big companies on board: the chairman of Perrier, or Yves



RAZOR'S EDGE: MAY 1977
DEBBIE HARRY (OF BLONDIE) POSING FOR A STAND-UP PORTRAIT IN MAKOS' WEST VILLAGE APARTMENT, WEARING A WOVEN DRESS BY STEPHEN SPROUSE. DETAIL OF THE DRESS AND RAZOR BLADES BECAME THE COVER OF MAKOS' BOOK *WHITE TRASH*.

St. Laurent. I always sat next to Andy. And there was no way the public could get in to *that* party, because you had to pay—like, \$12,000.

JS: Still, you must have been invited to some stellar parties.

CM: Back when playing backgammon was the really cool thing to do, I remember playing against Mick Jagger at somebody's fabulous spread on the Ile St. Louis in Paris. That was fun, but I got really bored with the game. Mick was so nice, though. I know he loved doing the album jacket with Andy [*Sticky Fingers*]; it was Warhol's idea to use a real zipper.

JS: I still see you out on the town with Calvin Klein. What's the secret to maintaining famous friendships?

CM: We keep each other's confidences. None of us kiss and tell. We grew up in this culture together. We've seen New York City grow and change. What are you

without friends? The first time I met Calvin Klein was in an elevator on the way to a party. If you think about it, between him and Bruce Weber, they really changed the way that people look at men and women. They changed the culture.

JS: I know that Andy loved Debbie Harry, but did you know in her early days at CBGB's that she would be so huge?

CM: She is still doing great music. She was really the first female pop phenomenon. Without Debbie, there wouldn't have been a Madonna.

JS: You knew Truman Capote, and you were close with Malcolm Forbes and chronicled all those great trips with him. So many legends of the time have come and gone. But you're like Emperor Claudius—you survive. What's the secret?

CM: I never drank, so I have lots of energy.