

ANDY WARHOL

WARHOL AND DANCE

PARIS DEBELLEYME

11 Saturday - 16 Saturday



In collaboration with the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, New York, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to announce an exhibition of drawings never before shown by Andy Warhol.

These 60 drawings date from the early 1950s when he first came to New York and was spending a great deal of time in the dance world. Warhol and Dance explores the cultural milieu that welcomed the artist and provided him with his first "scene" to record with what has become as his individualistic style of portraiture, ink drawings on Manila paper. Among these works, we have figures from both the worlds of emerging modern dance like Charles Weidman, John Butler, Paul Draper, as well as ballet personalities like Jacques d'Amboise, Karel Shook and Alexandra Danilova. Clearly, Warhol was interested in all forms of dance including ethnic performance styles as the cast of characters also included Nala Najan, Mesita, Mara and the Cambodian Dancers. It is very likely that he saw the first performances of the Royal Cambodian Ballet in New York, held in the early 1950s and was undeniably hungry for the subtle distinctions between one dancer's profile and another, as evidenced by the simple, determined line drawings with which he could inscribe both the look and personality of his subject. Indisputably, Warhol was a clinical observer of the exotic as well as the classical qualities that he saw in this highly specialized sub-culture. Quite wonderfully, there are several drawings of bodies moving in space, where Warhol's quick ability to catch the gesture and the body position simultaneously offers a more rounded perspective on his level of interest at that time.

One of the most illuminating of these is *Three Dancers* (c. 1954) where he has used ink to color in the leotard and tights of the dancers performing highly stylized dance movements, all of which would become many years later choreographic elements in Merce Cunningham's mature style.

To accompany the exhibition we have commissioned Anna Kisselgoff, former Chief Dance Critic of the New York Times, to provide an insight into the dance world of this time, the characters and personalities that Warhol drew.

We are also grateful for the help of the New York Public Library Dance Collection and the Opera Garnier who have helped us find photographic material to accompany the catalogue.

Exhibition curated by Jill Silverman van Coenegrachts and Bénédicte Burrus.