

Press Release

PETER HUJAR

12 April – 18 May 2008

private view: Saturday 12 April 6.00 - 8.00 pm

“Photography... converts the whole world into a cemetery. Photographers, connoisseurs of beauty, are also – wittingly or unwittingly – the recording angels of death.

... fleshed and moist-eyed friends and acquaintances stand, sit, slouch, mostly lie – and are made to appear to meditate on their own mortality... The Palermo photographs – which precede these portraits in time – complete them, comment upon them. Peter Hujar knows that portraits in life are always also portraits in death.”

from Susan Sontag, *Peter Hujar: Portraits in Life and Death*, Da Capo Press, New York, 1976

Maureen Paley is pleased to present this exhibition of work by the late photographer Peter Hujar. A key influence on subsequent generations of photographers including Nan Goldin, as well as his contemporaries such as Robert Mapplethorpe, Hujar depicted street scenes from the night-time Manhattan of the 1960s and 70s, documenting the lives of his friends and associates including many visual artists, performers and drag queens. Hujar's work was the subject of a recent retrospective at the ICA in London, and the exhibition at Maureen Paley will focus on his work that deals with the notion of memento mori, including images of catacombs alongside portraits of the drag performance group the Cockettes, and his iconic photographs of Candy Darling. The documentary film *The Cockettes* from 2002 will be screened for the duration of the exhibition.

Peter Hujar, 1934 - 1987. Selected solo exhibitions: *Male: Work from the Collection of Vince Aletti*, White Columns, New York, 2008, *Peter Hujar*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 2007, *Paul Thek in the Context of Today's Contemporary Art*, Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe, 2007, *Peter Hujar*, P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, 2005, *Night*, Matthew Marks Gallery, New York, 2005 *Portraits in Life and Death*, Matthew Marks Gallery, New York, 2002, *Seminal Works*, James Danziger Gallery, New York, 1998, Galerie Rodolphe Janssen, Brussels, 1996, *Peter Hujar: Das Photographische Werk*, DAAD Galerie, Berlin, 1996, *Peter Hujar: A Retrospective*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1996, *Peter Hujar's New York*, James Danziger Gallery, New York, 1991, Grey Art Gallery & Study Center, New York University, 1990, *The Photographs of Peter Hujar*, State University College of New York at Buffalo, 1988, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, 1982, Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, 1982, Galerie Modern Art, Vienna, 1982, *Recent Photographs*, Robert Samuel Gallery, New York, 1981, *New York Portraits*, Marcuse Pfeifer Gallery, New York, 1977, Catskill Center for Photography, Woodstock, New York, 1977.

The Cockettes by Billy Weber and David Weissman courtesy of Tartan Films

A publication with text by Vince Aletti will accompany the exhibition.



Champagne provided by Perrier-Jouët

FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS:

WOLFGANG TILLMANS 28 May – 13 July, BANKS VIOLETTE September – October, DARIA MARTIN October – November

The gallery is open from Wednesday to Sunday 11.00 am – 6.00 pm and by appointment.
For further information please contact Katie Guggenheim – katie@maureenpaley.com