

**13 Most
Wanted Men**
Andy Warhol
and the 1964
World's Fair

**Apr 27
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**Sept 7
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Cover: Andy Warhol, *13 Most Wanted Men*, silkscreen on masonite, 20 x 20 ft. Installed on the exterior of the New York State Pavilion.
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More than fifty years have passed since architect Philip Johnson was asked by New York State Governor Nelson Rockefeller to design the New York State Pavilion for the 1964 New York World's Fair. To adorn the outside wall of the Pavilion's circular Theaterama, Johnson invited ten up-and-coming artists to each produce a new work for a 20' x 20' slot: Peter Agostini, John Chamberlain, Robert Indiana, Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Alexander Lieberman, Robert Mallery, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist and Andy Warhol, who at that time had enjoyed only one New York exhibition of his Pop paintings.

While Lichtenstein contributed a laughing comic-book redhead and Kelly paired red and blue monochromatic forms, Warhol chose to enlarge mug shots of the NYPD's 13 most wanted criminals of 1962, silkscreen them on square Masonite panels, and tile them together into an animated black-and-white rogue's gallery that would look out over the Fair. *13 Most Wanted Men* was installed by April 15, 1964, and, after triggering objections at the highest level, was painted over with silver paint a few days later. When the Fair opened to the public on April 22, all that was visible was a 20' x 20' silver square, mounted on the concrete structure between a fragile-looking white sculpture by Agostini and a colorful combination of advertising imagery by Rosenquist.



Billy Name, *Warhol on his desk*, 1964, reprint 2014, archival pigment print. Courtesy the artist.

#13MostWanted



That July, Warhol revisited the project and reused the silkscreens for the mural to make a set of paintings each featuring one of the mugshots. Abandoning the square format of the Fair tiles, Warhol restored a portrait format by using 48" x 40" canvases. He also returned to the source material for the first names and "numbers" of the criminals themselves to title these new, individual works. These paintings—*Most Wanted Man #1, John M.*; *Most Wanted Man #2, John Victor G.*; *Most Wanted Man #3, Ellis Ruez B.*; *Most Wanted Man #4, Redmond C.*; *Most Wanted Man #6, Thomas Francis C.*; *Most Wanted Man #7, Salvatore V.*; *Most Wanted Man #10, Louis Joseph M.*; *Most Wanted Man #11, John Joseph H.*; and *Most Wanted Man #12, Frank B.*—have been brought together from collections in the US and Germany to form the core of *13 Most Wanted Men: Andy Warhol and the 1964 World's Fair*.

Before moving on to other work, Warhol produced a replacement for the *Men* which was never accepted and is now lost: 25 identical Masonite panels each depicting the smiling face of World's Fair President and New York City planning mastermind Robert Moses. Although there is no evidence that Moses had anything to do with the commission or the covering-over of the mural, the fact that Warhol identified him as censor in this way indicates how large Moses loomed in the collective imagination of the time.

The Fair was open from April to October of both 1964 and 1965, and the square silvery blank that had been *13 Most Wanted Men* stayed up for both of those seasons. In a New York *World-Telegram* article from July 6, 1965 titled "Silver Square 'So Nothing' It Satisfies Warhol," the artist, standing before the mural at the World's Fair with members of his entourage, is quoted as saying that the silvered-over version is "more me now." Through typical Warholian attitudinal alchemy, the *Men* had become a new work in the form of a silver monochrome.



The New York State Pavilion's Theaterama with Peter Agostini and silvered-over Andy Warhol, 1964. Courtesy Bill Cotter of worldsfairphotos.com
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Andy Warhol, *Most Wanted Man No. 11, John Joseph H., Jr.*, 1964. Acrylic and liquitex silkscreen on canvas. Image courtesy Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main. Photographer: Axel Schneider, Frankfurt am Main
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There is no easy answer to why Warhol chose to make *13 Most Wanted Men*. There is also no satisfactory answer to the question of why it was ordered covered over. Years after the incident itself, Philip Johnson explained that Rockefeller, vulnerable because of his faltering bid for the Republican nomination for President, said the work must go because seven out of the thirteen men had Italian names and he was unwilling to alienate this constituency. But as a socially liberal legislator and major collector of the visual art of his time, perhaps Rockefeller was not able to express a position as straightforwardly as some Long Island and Queens residents interviewed for a New York *Journal-American* article on April 15, 1964: "Frankly, I consider it out of place at the Fair;" "The Fair is a place for beauty, progress, and enjoyment;" and "Thugs at the Fair? Nobody wants to see their distasteful pictures. Why not concentrate on beauty instead of criminals and crime?" One did express a liking for the idea and suggested that Rockefeller himself should be featured amongst the criminals.

With its punning reference to “wanted men,” the active glances going on amongst those men in their mural configuration, and what could be seen as a reference to “rough trade,” the homoerotic subtext of *13 Most Wanted Men* has been well noted by art historians. Many other works by Warhol could also be seen as coded references to, or joking puns on, gay desire, including *Empire*, his eight-hour film of the Empire State Building—as much a phallic image as it is an unblinking portrait of the iconic structure Warhol called “a star.” (*Empire* could also be considered a “World’s Fair” artwork — its subject’s lights were installed on the occasion of the global expo.)

In January 1964, Warhol began the Screen Tests, three-minute-long 16 mm filmed portraits. The very first of these—which could be said to be the inspiration for all of the Tests, which eventually numbered 472—were titled *13 Most Beautiful Boys*. This conceptual series, which continued into 1966 but was concentrated in 1964, eventually comprised 42 portraits of young men—from downtown personality Taylor Mead to dancer Freddie Herko to poet and artist John Giorno to Factory photographer Billy Name to actor Dennis Hopper to someone noted only as “Boy.” In a later interview, Name says that the work was the title—an endlessly fungible, manipulable group that could always be added to, like any other collection. The *Boys* and *Men* share more than the first part of their title. In the Tests’ very process, in which a subject, under bright lights, was requested to stay as still as possible for three excruciating minutes, we also find a hint of the punishing constraints of the police department mug shot.

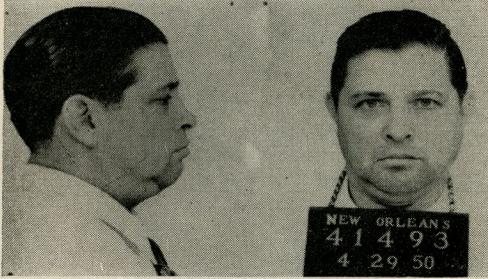
In *POPism*, his 1980 autobiography, Warhol says of the *13 Most Wanted Men*: “In one way I was glad the mural was gone: now I wouldn’t have to feel responsible if one of the criminals ever got turned in to the FBI because someone had recognized him from my pictures.” Here, he is identifying himself with the *Men*—frankly hoping for their continued freedom. The well-documented crackdown on gay bars as well as cinemas and theaters suspected of showing pornography was intensifying in Spring 1964 and involved Warhol and his circle directly in police action and lawsuits. Film-cultural giant and long-time Warhol supporter Jonas Mekas was at the center of what was understood as a World’s Fair-related clean-up of bohemia. His screening of *Flaming Creatures*, a work by underground filmmaker Jack Smith, was raided and all films featured that night confiscated as evidence, leading to the loss of what may have been Warhol’s first film, which had been on the program that night. (This was a 3-minute reel documenting the making of Jack Smith’s second film, *Normal Love*.) Although the conception of the *13 Most Wanted* predates this specific activity, the mainstream attitude towards Warhol’s core social scene was that of repression and condemnation, crystallized perhaps in a several-thousand-word article published in the *New York Times* in December 1963 with the headline “Growth of Overt Homosexuality in City Provokes Wide Concern.”



Show, Vol. 4, no. 10 (November 1964), The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Gift of Kyle Wright. Pictured: Baby Jane Holzer in World’s Fair souvenir sunglasses

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GRAND LARCENY



SALVATORE VITALE

ALIAS

Sal Vitale.

DESCRIPTION

Age, 54 (1957); ht., 5'3"; wt., 200 lbs.; straight black hair, slightly gray on sides; olive complexion; blue eyes; round chubby face; irregularly cut scar below left nostril; cut scar top of forehead at hairline; short and stocky build. Last known address, 9 Prince Street, Manhattan; born in Cinic, Italy.

FINGERPRINT CLASSIFICATION

16 0 21 W M 0 0 17
0 28 W M 0 1

P.D. No. B 107,032

Special Frauds Squad

Issued July 20, 1957

CIRCUMSTANCES OF CRIME

Vitale was indicted by the New York County Grand Jury on January 3, 1957, on six counts of grand larceny in aspirin switch confidence game. Poses as possessor of \$50,000 seeking to return to Italy with it. Accosts victim on street, supposedly seeking a "builder" who was to help him. Victim, induced to perform this service by accomplice who flashes bundle of cash, withdraws money from a bank to show good faith. He is sent for aspirin to help illness feigned by perpetrator. Victim leaves money with the perpetrators and when he returns with drugs, they are gone.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Vitale has a history of thirteen arrests, among them two for violation of Harrison Act; one each for suspicion of murder and violation of immigration laws; larceny by fraud and trickery, four times. Moves from city to city; arrested for aspirin switch in Pennsylvania and Louisiana.

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The Thirteen Most Wanted, Police Department, City of New York, 1962 (source material for Andy Warhol's "Most Wanted Men" series) p. 9. The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection, Contribution The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. © 2014 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

13 Most Wanted Men: Andy Warhol and the 1964 World's Fair takes Warhol's mural as its single subject, addressing its creation and destruction and placing it in its artistic and social context by combining art, documentation, and archival material. Parallel to the striking, somber mugshot canvases, materials in the exhibition are organized so the viewer can begin to appreciate the intersection and overlap of underground and establishment; the lives and careers of the major players; of painting, sculpture, and film in a key year for Warhol; and of art, protest, and gay life at the time.

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13 Most Wanted Men: Andy Warhol and the 1964 World's Fair

is organized by Larissa Harris, Curator, Queens Museum, and Nicholas Chambers, Milton Fine Curator of Art, The Andy Warhol Museum, with Anastasia Rygle, assistant curator for the project, and Timothy Mennel, curatorial advisor.

13 Most Wanted Men: Andy Warhol and the 1964 World's Fair is presented in collaboration with The Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, PA., where the exhibition will be on view September 27, 2014 – January 5, 2015.

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