I’ve never met a person I couldn’t call a beauty.—Andy Warhol

From 1970 to 1987 Andy Warhol took thousands of Polaroid pictures, the vast majority of which were never seen by the public. These images often served as the basis for his commissioned portraits, silk-screen paintings, drawings, and prints. Warhol captured a wide range of individuals with his Polaroid Big Shot camera. The royalty, rock stars, industrialists, artists, patrons of the arts, and athletes who epitomized 1970s and 1980s high society, as well as unknown sitters, are represented with a sense of dignity and verve. Warhol was interested in a new definition of “Society” that emerged in this period. In the introduction to the 1979 publication Andy Warhol’s Exposures, the artist wrote:

Now it doesn’t matter if you came over on the Mayflower, so long as you can get into Studio 54. Anyone rich, powerful, beautiful, or famous can get into Society. If you’re a few of those things you can really get to the top.1

Warhol’s images not only documented, but participated in, the creation of this new high society: Jade, the daughter of Mick and Bianca Jagger. By the 1970s and 1980s, portrait commissions became a main source of his income. Warhol’s Polaroids borrow from paparazzi and high-fashion photography and at the same time elevate an inexpensive, everyday medium to the realm of high art. Warhol’s portraits confuse the boundaries of advertising and art, high and low, celebrity portraiture and the depiction of everyday people, and even photography and painting. His subjects are perpetually illuminated by the afterimage of a flashbulb, their faces immortalized by Warhol’s style.

Fabian Leyva-Barragan, Curatorial Intern
Stephanie Carnizza, Assistant Curator

2 Ibid., 28-29.

Andy Warhol’s Polaroids / Facility 240 is organized by Curatorial Intern Fabian Leyva-Barragan and Assistant Curator Stephanie Carnizza. Special thanks to The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts for making this exhibition possible. The MATRIX Program at the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive is made possible by a generous endowment gift from Phyllis C. Watts and the continued support of the BAM/PFA Trustees.

Andy Warhol’s Polaroid portraits of famous and less famous people are on display in Andy Warhol’s Exposures, which is organized by Curatorial Intern Fabian Leyva-Barragan and Assistant Curator Stephanie Carnizza. Special thanks to The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts for making this exhibition possible. The MATRIX Program at the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive is made possible by a generous endowment gift from Phyllis C. Watts and the continued support of the BAM/PFA Trustees.

Andy Warhol’s Polaroid portraits of famous and less famous people are on display in Andy Warhol’s Exposures, which is organized by Curatorial Intern Fabian Leyva-Barragan and Assistant Curator Stephanie Carnizza. Special thanks to The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts for making this exhibition possible. The MATRIX Program at the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive is made possible by a generous endowment gift from Phyllis C. Watts and the continued support of the BAM/PFA Trustees.

Andy Warhol’s Polaroid portraits of famous and less famous people are on display in Andy Warhol’s Exposures, which is organized by Curatorial Intern Fabian Leyva-Barragan and Assistant Curator Stephanie Carnizza. Special thanks to The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts for making this exhibition possible. The MATRIX Program at the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive is made possible by a generous endowment gift from Phyllis C. Watts and the continued support of the BAM/PFA Trustees.

Andy Warhol’s Polaroid portraits of famous and less famous people are on display in Andy Warhol’s Exposures, which is organized by Curatorial Intern Fabian Leyva-Barragan and Assistant Curator Stephanie Carnizza. Special thanks to The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts for making this exhibition possible. The MATRIX Program at the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive is made possible by a generous endowment gift from Phyllis C. Watts and the continued support of the BAM/PFA Trustees.

Andy Warhol’s Polaroid portraits of famous and less famous people are on display in Andy Warhol’s Exposures, which is organized by Curatorial Intern Fabian Leyva-Barragan and Assistant Curator Stephanie Carnizza. Special thanks to The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts for making this exhibition possible. The MATRIX Program at the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive is made possible by a generous endowment gift from Phyllis C. Watts and the continued support of the BAM/PFA Trustees.
In 2007, to commemorate its twentieth anniversary, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts launched the Andy Warhol Photographic Legacy Program. Designed to give a broad public greater access to Warhol’s photographs, the program donated over 28,500 of Warhol’s original Polaroids and gelatin silver prints to more than 180 college and university museums and galleries across the country. Each institution received a curated selection of over one hundred Polaroids and fifty black-and-white prints. BAM/PFA is proud to present selected Polaroids drawn from this extraordinary gift of the Warhol Foundation to the museum, and looks forward to sharing more in years to come.