

# The Telegraph

A party at The Factory, 1965 –  
Warhol and Lichtenstein: before they were famous



For over a decade, photographer Fred W. McDarrah (1926 – 2007) captured the artistic community of the East Village. When Pop Artists such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein arrived on the scene, they sought out McDarrah, in the hope he would photograph them and publish their picture. Over 150 of his vintage prints are currently [on display in New York](#).

McDarrah grew up in impoverished circumstances in inter-war Brooklyn. After buying his first camera in 1939 and becoming acquainted with painter William Littlefield in 1949, he became a photographer for Greenwich Village's alternative weekly publication The Village Voice, and a regular fixture at The Club, a society for New York's modern artists. They hosted lectures, meetings and parties attended by the likes of Willem de Kooning, Ad Reinhardt and Jack Kerouac.

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Sensing the uniqueness of the cultural moment he was privy to, McDarrah attempted to capture all he could of the artist's world.

**Above:** Party at the Andy Warhol "Silver" Factory 231 East 47th Street , September 1, 1965



McDarrah described Greenwich Village in the Fifties as "the most colorful community of interesting people, fascinating places, and dynamic ideas". He began photographing the area's resident artists in local coffee shops and parks, not on any commission, but simply because he felt the phenomenon was important to document.

**Above:** Jed Johnson, Jay Johnson, Andy Warhol at the Factory Posing for Cecil Beaton for his exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York, April 24, 1969

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Andy Warhol captured among his notorious Brillo Boxes, exact replicas of commercial brillo box packaging made by screenprinting ink on to wood. Warhol sold his replicas to art collectors and museums and galleries in great numbers. Every time a box sold, it acquired a greater likeness to the consumer product Warhol had tried to replicate.

**Above:** Andy Warhol at the Stable Gallery, April 21 1964

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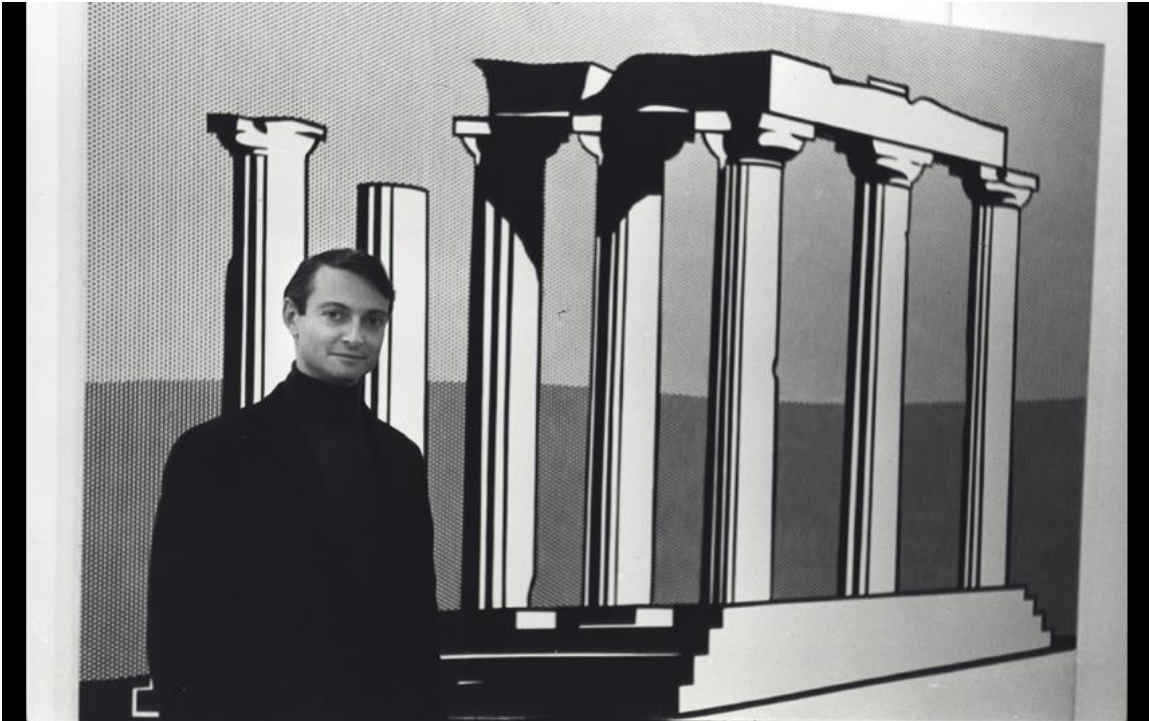


Two years later, in 1966, McDarragh captured Warhol with some of his 'Silver Clouds' – helium filled synthetic floatations first exhibited at the Leo Castelli gallery.

The action in this image in particular emphasises McDarragh's aim of documenting the New York art scene literally as it happened.

**Above:** Andy Warhol Sending up Floatations at Castelli Gallery, April 1, 1966

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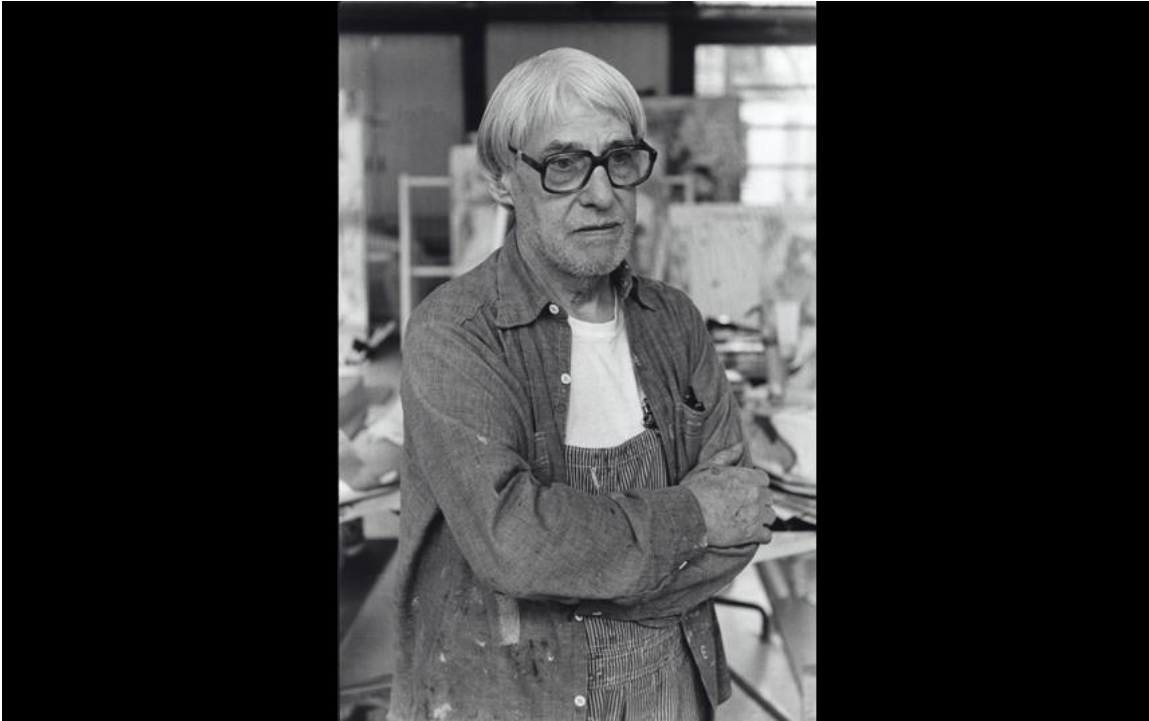


Roy Lichtenstein had enjoyed a rise to prominence in the years leading up to this portrait, with Leo Castelli giving him his first one man exhibition in 1961. Perhaps that's why he's looking so genial. Lichtenstein was also among a group of artists photographed by McDarragh at social gatherings in Warhol's studio, The Factory.

**Above:** Warhol's Pop Art contemporary Roy Lichtenstein photographed in front of his 1964 painting Temple of Apollo.



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Although many of McDarrah's portraits were taken long before the artists were known outside Greenwich Village, this portrait of Willem de Kooning was taken when the artist had already gained wide notoriety, and was settled in his own large studio in East Hampton, Long Island.

**Above:** Willem de Kooning in his Woodbine Street Studio, East Hampton, March 26, 1978

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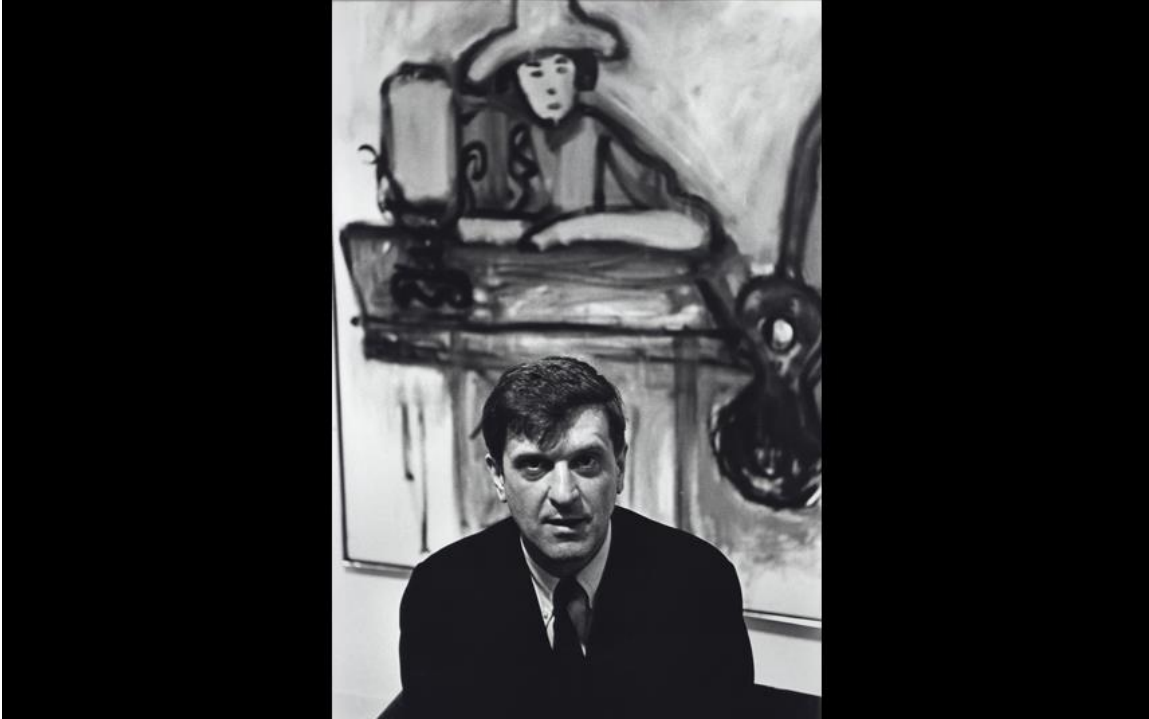


For many years, McDarragh was The Village Voice's only staff photographer, and also its first picture editor. At the time it was one of few periodicals giving serious coverage to the Pop genre, as well as women artists, and political and civil movements such as Women's Rights, Gay Rights, Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam War marches.

The artist Eva Hesse was one of few women working successfully as artists in minimalist and post-minimalist circles. Having returned from Germany three years prior to this portrait, she had started working with latex, fiberglass and plastics to make the sculptures for which she later gained considerable notoriety.

**Above:** Eva Hesse in her Bowery Loft, September 14, 1968

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After moving to Greenwich Village in 1942 with his then wife, Virginia Admiral, Robert de Niro Sr. (father of actor Robert de Niro) made himself a social fixture of the Village, gaining the friendship of many artists and writers. This, perhaps, is what made McDarrah photograph him. At this time, de Niro was already an established artist, having exhibited twice at Peggy Guggenheim's gallery alongside Abstract Expressionists such as Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko.

**Above:** Robert De Niro Sr., January 14, 1967



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A near obsessive chronicler, this seemingly spontaneous portrait of sculptor Larry Bell reminds us that McDarragh was trained in journalism at NYU.

**Above:** Larry Bell at His Sculpture Exhibit, April 9, 1971

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Even into the late Sixties, Greenwich Village was a centre for counter-culture, and the social side to the area was as unique as the art that came out of it. Here McDarrah captured photographer Ed Ruscha and sculptor Gerald Laing, two of many artists who migrated to the Village to cultivate their creative careers, from California and Scotland respectively.

**Above:** Ed Ruscha and Gerald Laing, ca. 1968

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This portrait of Pop Art forerunner Robert Rauschenberg was taken the same year McDarrah's book, *The Artist's World in Pictures*, was published. The collection gathered together the images McDarrah took throughout the Fifties while working at The Club.

McDarrah remained in Greenwich Village until his death in 2007.

The current exhibition at [Steven Kasher Gallery, New York](#), features over 150 vintage prints, including the original book prints for *The Artist's World in Pictures*. It runs until June 6.

**Above:** Robert Rauschenberg, January 15, 1961