

FRAENKEL

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For immediate release:



PETER HUJAR The Gracie Mansion Show Revisited

September 4 – October 25, 2025

In *Peter Hujar: The Gracie Mansion Show Revisited*, Fraenkel Gallery recreates the now-legendary exhibition that took place in New York's East Village in 1986, one year before the artist's death. For the show, Gracie Mansion Gallery presented 70 photographs including portraits of friends and fellow artists, nudes, landscapes, and pictures of animals and abandoned buildings. Hung in a long grid two rows high, the exhibition freely mixed genres and subjects, creating a sequence that encouraged multiple associations. Fraenkel Gallery's new exhibition presents a version of the original 1986 layout, offering contemporary viewers a chance to experience Hujar's work as he conceived it. This will be Fraenkel Gallery's sixth exhibition of Hujar's work since 2002. The gallery will hold a public reception for the show and a concurrent exhibition by Katy Grannan on Saturday, September 13, from 2-4pm.

The 1986 exhibition, titled *Peter Hujar: Recent Photographs*, was the artist's eighth and final solo show. Before his death, Hujar was recognized for his extraordinary photographs by a small but influential group in downtown New York that included avant-garde artists, writers, and performers, a circle that often overlapped with his portrait subjects. By the time of the show, his work had been featured in solo

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exhibitions in New York and Europe, and he had published one catalogue and his only book, *Portraits in Life and Death*. Gallerist Gracie Mansion organized the exhibition with Sur Rodney (Sur), at the suggestion of Hujar's close friend, artist David Wojnarowicz. The gallery had included Hujar's work in group shows, but *Recent Photographs* was his first solo exhibition since 1981. Following a difficult period, Hujar had perhaps hoped for sales as the market for photography began to grow, but very few photographs sold. While the show was not a commercial success, the opening reception drew an enthusiastic crowd, followed by an after-party in the Mike Todd Room at the Palladium nightclub. "Looking back to his show, it drew so many of the New York luminaries," recalls Mansion. "Peter was a star. The show was a triumph."

Beyond its memorable opening night, the exhibition's expansive approach and distinctive format provide valuable insight into the artist's thinking about his work. Matted and hung inches apart, the photographs are sequenced so that images from the same genre rarely follow each other in any direction. A cow chews straw across from English actor David Warrilow, photographed nude. A portrait of Warhol superstar Jackie Curtis dead in a coffin abuts a New Jersey landscape and a drag queen showing off a tattooed thigh. Fashion editor Diana Vreeland sits next to a close-up showing the feet of Australian artist and dancer Vali Meyer and a trash pit in Queens. The arrangement highlights the individuality of every person, place, or animal, inviting the viewer to move in and out of the grid as connections between images grow and fade or shift. As Hujar once noted, "I photograph those who push themselves to any extreme. That's what interests me, and people who cling to the freedom to be themselves." Rather than comparing his subjects with each other, he was determined to see the singularity in each, an aim the exhibition supports.

Peter Hujar (1934–1987) was recently the subject of *Peter Hujar – Eyes Open in the Dark* at Raven Row, London; *Portraits in Life and Death*, a collateral exhibition of the 2024 Venice Biennale organized by the Peter Hujar Foundation; and *Peter Hujar: Rialto*, presented by the Ukrainian Museum in New York. In 2018, the retrospective *Peter Hujar: Speed of Life* opened at the Morgan Library & Museum, New York and traveled to Fundación MAPFRE, Madrid; the Berkeley Art Museum in California; the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio; and Jeu de Paume, Paris. Hujar's work has been featured in major exhibitions at Museum Ludwig in Cologne, Germany; Punta della Dogana/François Pinault Foundation, Venice, Italy; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; MoMA PS1, New York; Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; Fotomuseum, Winterthur, Switzerland; and Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany, among others. His work is in the collection of institutions including the Art Institute of Chicago; Museum of Modern Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among many others.

Concurrent with *Peter Hujar: The Gracie Mansion Show Revisited*, Fraenkel Gallery is pleased to present new photographs by Katy Grannan, made in Northern California's Humboldt County, where Grannan has recently been living and working. Densely forested and largely rural, it has been called a place where

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people go to disappear. There, Grannan meets people through ads she places in Craigslist and on local bulletin boards. Her subjects are eager to be seen, and to collaborate with Grannan for reasons as varied as the individuals themselves: an autistic teenager, a circus performer, an actress, a queer farmer, a young couple and their cat, a man and his goat.

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Image: Peter Hujar, *Lynn Davis*, 1981

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