

# the warhol:

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*Keith Edmier and Farrah Fawcett*



*The American Supermarket*

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## THE ANDY WARHOL MUSEUM ANNOUNCES SUMMER EXHIBITIONS *KEITH EDMIER AND FARRAH FAWCETT* AND *THE AMERICAN SUPERMARKET*

(Pittsburgh, PA) . . . May 20, 2003... This summer, The Andy Warhol Museum is presenting numerous special exhibitions and programs under the banner of “Summer of Andy”—a celebration of the fact that August 6, 2003 would have been Andy Warhol’s 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. Three exhibitions, *Where is Elvis?*, *Douglas Gordon: Blind Star* and *Too Hot to Handle: Creating Controversy Through Political Cartoons* open in June with an opening event on Saturday, June 14. Next up are two more special exhibitions, *Keith Edmier and Farrah Fawcett* and *The American Supermarket*. Both exhibitions will be on view July 13 through October 5, 2003 with an opening event on Saturday, July 12.

### *Keith Edmier and Farrah Fawcett*

The exhibition, *Keith Edmier and Farrah Fawcett*, examines the connection between artist and muse through a series of collaborative sculptures and photographs by contemporary artist, Keith Edmier, and actress and artist, Farrah Fawcett. Produced by Art Production Fund, the exhibition features the results of a two-year collaboration between the artists, spurred by Edmier’s childhood admiration of Fawcett.

### Collaboration

Since her 1976 debut in the television series *Charlie’s Angels*, actress Farrah Fawcett has played the role of the ideal woman and muse for many men. For Edmier, Fawcett was a particularly resonant figure of youthful admiration and inspiration because he knew she herself was an artist. Edmier first contacted Fawcett with the hope of inviting her into a collaborative project. With only a vague idea of how such a project would take shape, Edmier wrote in his original proposal, “In the very broadest terms, I would like to propose making a portrait of Ms. Fawcett... with her ideas and concerns about the piece directly influencing its final form.”

In August 2000, the project began with the idea of a sculpture of Fawcett, but encouraged by Edmier, she decided to make a portrait of him as well. Ultimately, they produced what would be the centerpiece of *Keith Edmier and Farrah Fawcett*, a reclining female in marble and a standing male in bronze, both life-size. Fawcett’s active role in the creation of art for the project threw into question distinctions between inspiration and collaboration, artist and muse. Rather than standing in as Edmier’s independently powerful muse who facilitated creation, Fawcett participated in and directly influenced the process.

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### **The Exhibition**

The centerpiece of the exhibition, *Keith Edmier and Farrah Fawcett 2000*, includes a pair of nude sculptures the artists made of each other. Both life-size, a reclining Fawcett is rendered in white marble; a standing Edmier in bronze. In the sculptures, the artists are depicted less as themselves than as ideals. Edmier's boyish good looks are enhanced and Fawcett has not aged since her 1976 television debut. In reinventing the image of Fawcett that was so crucial to his youth, Edmier shifts the narrative of his past from first to third person, unhooking it from autobiography. But by providing a grown-up Edmier as mate to a 1970s Fawcett, the collaboration sustains the original fantasy, suggesting that past is never wholly resolved.

In addition to the sculptures of *Keith Edmier and Farrah Fawcett 2000*, the exhibition include five small sculptures, a group of black and white photographs by the collaborators, and two color photographs: a close-up of Fawcett's hand touching her hair, and *The Space Between You and Me*, a digital photograph that shows Fawcett leaning her forehead against Edmier's. What at first glance looks like a romantic image, on closer inspection becomes a sort of pieta. Edmier and Fawcett clearly had this theme in mind when they juxtaposed the photograph beside an image of Michelangelo's *Pieta Rondanini* (1555-64).

### **The Artists**

Fawcett's interest in art began early in life and continued during the late 1960s at the University of Texas at Austin, where she was an art major. The professor who encouraged her efforts made large-scale religious sculptures for churches, so her training was mainly in classical techniques. Over the years, Fawcett has continued to make sculpture, paint and draw.

Edmier was born in Chicago in 1967, when Fawcett was at Austin. After a brief stint at California Institute of the Arts, he left school at age 18 to work on special effects in Hollywood. At age 24 he moved to New York and entered the art world. Exposed to Conceptualism during his brief tenure at CalArts, he began his career creating art with an emotional distance. He credits artists of his own generation for reminding him that it was permissible to make art that overtly engages sentiment. Currently, Edmier is concerned with the impact of celebrity on the individual. He uses himself and his subjects as evidence in this exploration, testing ideas against experience.

Working together, Edmier and Fawcett have held a magnifying glass to the connection between fantasy and reality, celebrity and fan, and created a new understanding of the way mass culture affects lives and shapes memory.

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*Keith Edmier and Farrah Fawcett* was produced by Art Production Fund. Art Production Fund (APF), a non-profit organization devoted to helping artists realize difficult to produce works, has supported and organized this entire project from its inception. APF was co-founded in January 2000 by: Yvonne Force Villareal, President/Curator; and Doreen Remen, Director. This project would not have been possible without the support of the following APF Sponsors: The Deerfield Foundation, Mr. Donald Keough, Mr. Louis Marx Jr., and Mr. Laurance S. Rockefeller. Special thanks to Friedrich Petzel Gallery for their support.

The exhibition was originally conceived by Lynn Zelevansky, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

### ***The American Supermarket***

*The American Supermarket* is a recreation the famous 1964 Pop Art installation of the same name. A collaboration between the great names of Pop Art including Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Richard Artschwager, Robert Watts, Tom Wesselman and others, the exhibition is an evocation of an ordinary 1964 supermarket – complete with meat, cheese and fruit counters, neon signs and jaunty background musak. In the installation’s “aisles,” real foods are mixed together with iconic Pop works such as Warhol’s stacks of Campbell’s Soup cans and Robert Watts’ alluring chrome fruits and multi-colored wax eggs.

*The American Supermarket* was recreated by the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt for their recent exhibition, *Shopping: A Century of Art and Consumer Culture*. The installation’s presentation at The Warhol is the first time it will be seen in the United States since its sensational 1964 debut at New York City’s Bianchini Gallery.

The driving force behind the 1964 display of *The American Supermarket* was artist Ben Birillo, partner with Paul Bianchini in the Bianchini Gallery, who devised the installation, approached artists and produced many of the works on display. Starting on October 6, 1964, Birillo staged a weeklong “Grand Opening” in the Gallery that mimicked the attention-grabbing and point-of-sale promotional techniques of supermarket operators. One thousand buttons with turkey, apple, or soup can motifs were given away free, while a hot dog stand provided nourishment to the “shoppers” and art collectors who snapped up ‘Specials’ such as actual Campbell’s soup cans signed by Warhol for only \$18. A neon sign advertised Ballantine brand beer and illuminated signs led customers to the Egg, Fruit and Bread aisles. In the rear of the store, melons, apples, pears and bananas, as well as lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, and zucchini by Robert Watts were displayed on colored paper in wooden crates. Twelve  
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dollars bought customers a paper bag silk-screened with a Campbell's Tomato Soup motif by Warhol or a turkey motif by Roy Lichtenstein. Fake sirloin steaks by Mary Inman went for \$27. The exhibition attracted thousands of curious visitors and widespread press attention including a full-color feature in *Life* magazine. With its Pop Art proprietors *The American Supermarket* celebrated the spectacle of consumption with a happening-like event in which shopping was elevated to an art form and serious art collectors were turned into ordinary supermarket customers.

The Andy Warhol Museum receives state arts funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. The 2003 exhibition program has been supported, in part, by The Juliet Lea Hillman Simonds Foundation, Inc.

Located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the place of Andy Warhol's birth, The Warhol is one of the most comprehensive single-artist museums in the world. The Andy Warhol Museum is one of the four Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh. Additional information about The Warhol is available at [www.warhol.org](http://www.warhol.org).

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**Phone: 412.237.8300**  
**Hours: Tues, Wed, Thurs, Sat, and Sun 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.**  
**Fri, 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.**  
**Mon closed**  
**Admission: Members - free**  
**Good Fridays - 5-10 p.m.**  
**Adults - \$8, Sr. Citizens - \$7, Children/Students - \$4**  
**The Warhol Store/The Warhol Café – free**