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Gerard Malanga

Gerard Malanga - Screen Tests, Portraits, Nudes 1964-1996

Design: Hans Werner Holzwarth, Berlin

Reproductions: Gert Schwab/Steidl, Schwab Scantechnik, Göttingen

Printing and production: Steidl, Göttingen

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The Screen Tests – a Collaboration with Andy Warhol (shot by Gerard Malanga) included in this book first appeared in *Screen Tests / A Diary* by Gerard Malanga and Andy Warhol.

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Estate of Ben Maddow, Acts of Friendship

A. D. Coleman, "My eyes are drawn to an imaginary being": the nudes of Gerard Malanga

Asako Kitaori, Gerard Malanga: Interview © 2000 for this edition: Steidl Publishers Düstere Strasse 4, D-37073 Göttingen phone 49 551 496 0618, fax 49 551 496 0617

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ISBN 3-88243-577-1 First Edition 2000 Printed in Germany

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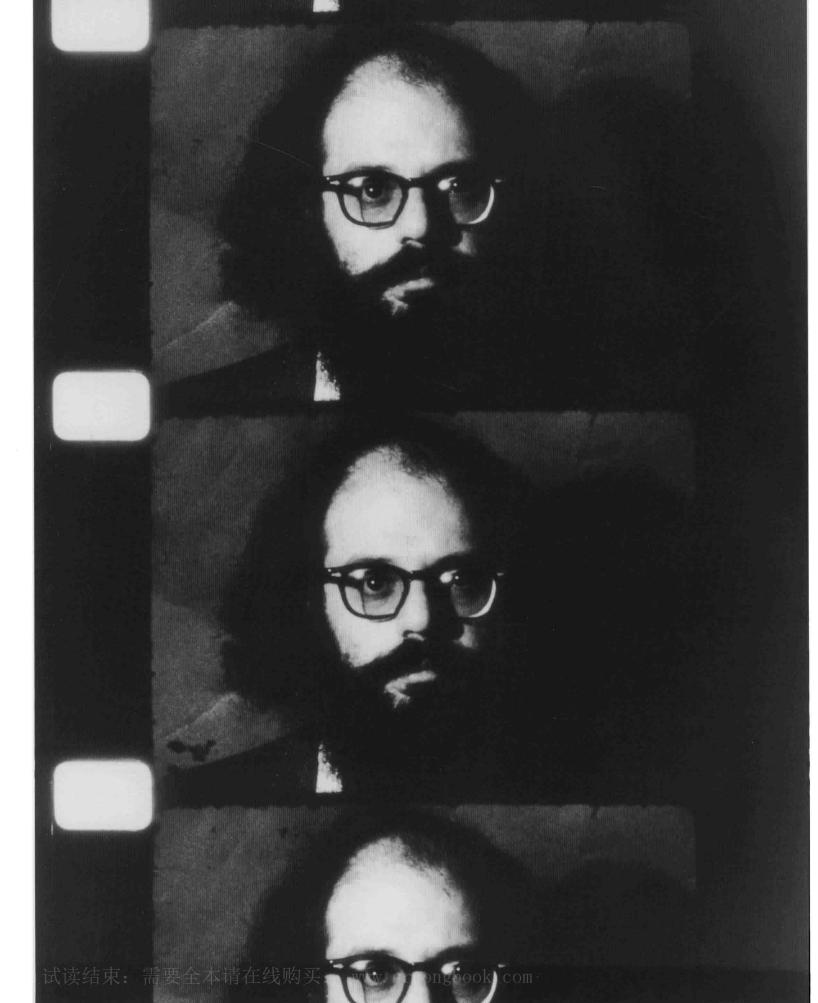
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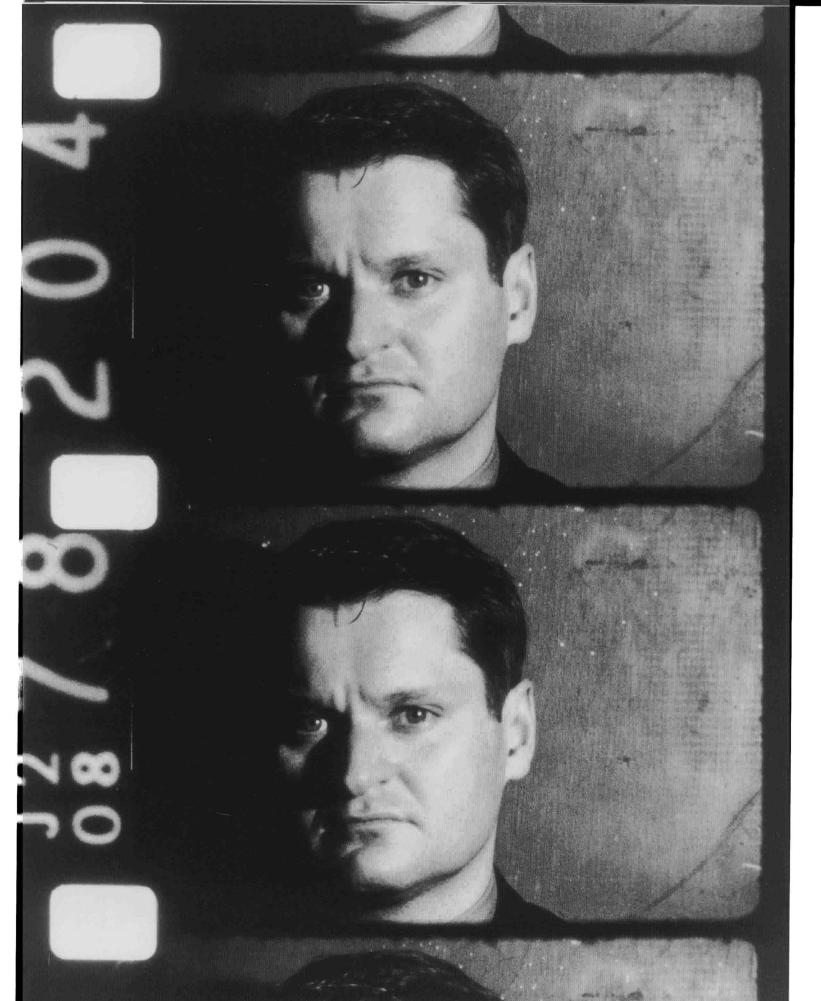


Gerard Malanga Screen Tests Portraits Nudes 1964-1996

Edited by Patrick Remy and Marc Parent

Screen Tests







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Writing Pictures — Photographing Poems

by Peter K. Wehrli

New York was Gerard Malanga and Gerard Malanga was New York. That is what I thought, for Gerard Malanga had pictured my New York. No, that's not true; I had pictured New York myself and taken Gerard Malanga as my model. Strange, the sources from which the imagination takes its images and from what daring components it composes them; strange, the scenery one invents when one does not know a city, a city one has never seen. But when we spoke of New York in the 1960's, we spoke of Gerard Malanga at the same time. We saw him before us on the first photographs which came to Europe from Andy Warhol's Factory, for, as a close collaborator of the great Andy, he was strongly influenced by him. And then the first editons of *Interview* arrived by sea mail, founded by Malanga and Warhol together, which spoke of films and film stars and the great world.

When Warhol's films, for example *Chelsea Girls*, were shown in Europe, we saw the person of Malanga transfigured as a superstar on the screen. This label also had its effect: it signified glamour, fame, youthful beauty. And New York must have had something to do with it, for the image of the city began to become crystallized. Vinyl was the material of which our image was formed, "Exploding Plastic Inevitable", and Malanga appeared as an artificial being. And when the Marz Publishers launched their legendary *Acid*, and when *Silverscreen* followed on its tracks, we realized that Malanga was a poet, too.

In Gerard Malanga: A Poet's Selfportrait, the first of Malanga's books to appear in German translation, the pictures showed us the author in daily contact with people who had long since become our idols. No wonder that the radiance of this aura illuminated the profile of the poet for us. The first differentiations in these silhouettes on a neon background gave rise to the study of the printed poems. Suddenly, New York no longer had the appearance of a radiant neon plastic paradise—the city was no longer made of vinyl. And Malanga became an artist composed of flesh and blood, of mind and feelings. The man in whose work we had been interested now became a living being; because he portrayed himself in his poetry, allowed us to recognize and comprehend him, whereas previously he had been merely portrayed by others.

This introduction, the description of projections of a group of young Swiss when looking at the New York scene, seemed to me to be important in order to