



STUDIO

NIGHT MAGIC

ENGLISH TRANSCRIPT

AGO

#Studio54AGO

Irina Moore West

Studio 54: Night Magic

Known for its celebrity-studded parties, extravagant décor, and dazzling disco nights, the nightclub Studio 54 offered a magical escape from the turbulent 1970s in America. At Studio 54, political scandal, financial collapse, and the aftermath of the Vietnam War could be forgotten; race, sexuality, and creed didn't matter. People from all walks of life—from ordinary people to A-list celebrities—gathered together to dance the night away.

This exhibition tells the story of how two Brooklyn-born entrepreneurs transformed a former Manhattan opera house and television studio into one of the world's most legendary nightclubs. The innovative scenery and soundscapes of this disco hotspot are represented here in couture and street fashion, photographs, films, and ephemera. Though its doors were open for less than three years (from April 1977 to February 1980), Studio 54 left a glittering impression on popular culture and changed nightlife forever.

Studio 54: Night Magic is organized by the Brooklyn Museum. It is curated by Matthew Yokobosky, Senior Curator of Fashion and Material Culture, Brooklyn Museum.

Bypass instructions and content warning:

To help stop the spread of COVID-19 we are limiting the number of visitors in the exhibition.

Please use the Bypass Lanes, indicated with arrows on the floor, if you would like to move through the space quickly.

This exhibition contains some photographs and films which contain brief scenes of nudity, some references to illicit drug use, and other adult content.

This exhibition contains images that include out-dated cultural depictions and examples of cultural appropriation

Warning: this exhibition contains flashing lights, which may affect visitors with photosensitivity.

Sponsors:

The Spirit of *Studio 54: Night Magic*
Johnnie Walker

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Presented in collaboration with Spotify, founding partner of the
Studio 54 exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum

Timeline:

Lightning in a Bottle: The Creation of Studio 54

The period between April 26, 1977 and February 4, 1980—the brief lifespan of Studio 54—became known as “the 33 months that changed nightlife forever.” But it takes vision, courage, and precisely the right circumstances to capture lightning in a bottle. North America underwent significant political, social, and economic changes in the 1970s. It was under these volatile conditions that Ian Schrager and Steve Rubell created Studio 54.

This timeline of key events spans 1969 through 1981 and includes just a few of the socio-cultural factors that influenced the rise and fall of Studio 54.

1969:

A police raid at the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village on June 28 sparks the Stonewall riots, a series of clashes between New York’s LGBTQ+ community and the city’s cops. Within 6 months, gay activists begin to organize into a more unified movement, continuing their fight for equality and freedom.

1970:

Because of low rents, many artists and musicians move to New York City, where over the coming years three new genres of music will emerge: punk, hip-hop, and disco.

1972:

In the aftermath of the Stonewall riots, the LGBTQ+ scene undergoes a vital transformation. New York in the 1970s will see the emergence of nightclubs that cater to gay audiences, including the Loft and Le Jardin.

1973:

Saudi Arabia proclaims an oil embargo, which has a profound effect on Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. This leads to a year of gas rationing and long lines at fill stations, as well as immediate economic effects including high oil prices.

The construction of the World Trade Center is completed in Manhattan, New York.

1974:

Under threat of impeachment after the Watergate scandal, President Richard Nixon resigns.

[Photo caption:]

President Richard Nixon, with digital clock indicating the exact minute he resigned the presidency, August 8, 1974. Courtesy: CSU Archives / Everett Collection / Alamy.

1975:

The last of the U.S. troops leave Southeast Asia. The Vietnam War is over.

New York City, troubled by a stagnant economy due in part to President Gerald Ford's refusal to provide federal aid, barely escapes bankruptcy.

The city of Toronto is growing rapidly. The 519 on Church Street opens, becoming a vital hub for LGBTQ+ community members.

[Photo caption:]

I Love New York campaign commercial. Aired May 1978. © Department of Commerce, New York State.

1976:

Soon to be one of the most beloved bars in Toronto's gay village, The Barn opens in a building that was once a religious bookstore. It will earn its reputation as a site of steamy encounters, over-the-top parties, and booming disco beats.

1977:

U.S. President Jimmy Carter begins his term in office.

New York entrepreneurs Ian Schrager and Steve Rubell open Studio 54 on April 26.

New York City experiences a brutal two-day blackout in the summer. One day after the blackout, the “I ♥ NY” campaign is born as part of an effort to rebrand the city.

Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau separates from his wife, Margaret, a regular fixture at Studio 54.

[Photo caption:]

Rose Hartman, Bethann Hardison, Daniela Morera, and Stephen Burrows at Valentino’s birthday party, May 12, 1978. Courtesy of the artist. © Rose Hartman.

1978:

Gloria Gaynor’s “I Will Survive,” promoted by Studio 54 DJ Richie Kaczor, becomes a no. 1 hit and is widely adopted as an anthem for the rights of all people around the globe.

Designer Norma Kamali’s signature “sleeping-bag coat” becomes a staple at Studio 54: staff working the door don the unisex parka to keep warm on long, cold nights.

Calvin Klein, a frequent patron of Studio 54, comes up with the idea for his denim line after a night of partying at the club.

1979:

Donna Summer's platinum-selling *Bad Girls*, which includes the iconic single "Hot Stuff," tops the American pop and R&B charts. The album cements her status as the reigning queen of disco.

"Jean Queen" Gloria Vanderbilt collaborates with businessman Mohan Murjani and launches a women's denim line. The jeans—emblazoned with a now iconic swan logo—are an instant success.

1980:

A widespread cultural backlash against disco kicks off. Punk rock bands and hip-hop and rap artists begin to dominate the music scene.

Republican Ronald Reagan defeats incumbent Jimmy Carter in the U.S. presidential election.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau and his incumbent Liberal Party win Canada's federal election.

[Photo caption:]

Adam Scull, Dance Floor Renovation, 1981. Photo by © Adam Scull/PHOTOlink.net.

1981:

On July 3, the New York Times publishes an article titled “A Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals.” In the coming years, AIDS-related illnesses will claim the lives of many friends of Studio 54, including club co-founder Steve Rubell, who passes away on July 25, 1989.

Toronto experiences its own version of the Stonewall riots in February when 200 cops storm four bathhouses in the city’s gay village, arresting more than 300 men. Bathhouse patrons respond to the raid by smashing police cruiser windshields and throwing their bodies against the doors of City Hall, laying the groundwork for the city’s burgeoning LGBTQ+-rights activist movement.

Studio 54 reopens in September 1981 under new management. Schrager and Rubell stay involved as consultants until late 1982. By the time new owner Mark Fleischman sells the club in 1986, the tides will have turned and New York City club culture will have become something very different.

[Platform 1 labels:]

[Mural caption:]

Pat Cleveland on the dance floor during Halston’s disco bash at Studio 54, 1977. Photo: Guy Marineau, courtesy of Guy Marineau/WWD/Shutterstock.

ZANDRA RHODES

British, born 1940

Dress, 2019

lamé

Courtesy of the artist and the Fashion and Textile Museum,
London

In the mural on the wall, model Pat Cleveland takes a twirl at Studio 54, wearing a pleated lamé gown by Dame Zandra Rhodes. Rhodes, a textile artist turned fashion designer, went on to design many similar dresses, eventually titling this iconic version "The Pat Cleveland."

[Platform 2 labels:]

NORMA KAMALI

American, born 1945

Heavy stud thong slip mio swimsuit, 2019

nylon, spandex, and metal studs

Courtesy of Norma Kamali

In the 1970s, designer Norma Kamali expanded the boundaries of eveningwear, presenting a one-piece swimsuit and skirt as a going-out ensemble. Sparkling metal studding gives this daytime

thong swimsuit the versatility to transition into an evening disco look.

NORMA KAMALI

American, born 1945

Ensemble (blanket sleeping bag coat, turtle top, and leggings), 2019

silver nylon, polyester fill, and black jersey

Courtesy of Norma Kamali

NORMA KAMALI

American, born 1945

Parachute dress, 2020

silver lamé

Courtesy of Norma Kamali

Norma Kamali befriended the artist and window designer Victor Hugo in the late 1970s. On one occasion, Hugo invited Kamali to the townhouse where he lived with Halston. Hugo asked Kamali to sit on the ground floor of the atrium with her eyes closed; he then climbed the stairs and dropped a parachute on her. “I know

you'll do something amazing with that," he said. Silk parachutes, like sleeping bags, would thereafter become a staple in Kamali's design kit.

Kamali's influential designs from the 1970s, which also include the "slinky dress," are still heralded for their innovation and timelessness, and are frequently re-editioned today.

NORMA KAMALI

American, born 1945

Sleeping Bag coat, around 1979

sleeping bags

Collection of Myra Scheer, New York

Myra Scheer, who was Steve Rubell's assistant, recalls how she came to own this Norma Kamali coat:

"Only a few women worked at Studio 54 during the day. ... The best perk of all was that we were invited to Norma Kamali's seasonal sample sales. We knew Norma's story: how she was literally on her own with nothing left after a divorce, except a sleeping bag in the middle of an empty living room. Hence the inspiration for the sleeping bag coat. ...

After Ian and Steve's Studio closed, we all faced a bleak decade scarred by the fear of AIDS and the deaths of loved ones. ...

During the darkest times in my own spiritually empty living room, I literally slept in that coat. It was my comforter then, and today it remains an inspiration.”

NORMA KAMALI

American, born 1945

Parachute dress, Spring/Summer 2020

silver lamé

Courtesy of Norma Kamali

NORMA KAMALI

American, born 1945

Slinky dress, 1977; remade 2019

pink jersey

Courtesy of Norma Kamali

[Interpretive panel:]

New York City in the 1970s

The 1970s were years of great social, political, and economic upheaval in the United States. Nationwide protests for the rights of the LGBTQ+ community, Black Americans, women, and other marginalized groups were unrelenting. In New York City, although there were notable accomplishments such as the completion of the World Trade Center in 1973, many neighbourhoods were in disrepair and crime was rampant.

Similar to our current age, a period of great emotional upheaval, it was an exhausting time to be alive. “The seventies was a lot of robbery, shootings, muggings, crack addicts,” recalls Judy Licht, a former reporter for the American news station Channel 5: “Crime was cheap and titillating. ‘If it bleeds, it leads’ was an operating principle.” When Studio 54 opened in 1977, it was a jewel in the midst of broken glass.

[Wall labels:]

ANDY WARHOL

American, 1928–1987

Studio 54, 1978

screenprints on vellum

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection,
Contribution of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts,
Inc., 1998.1.3939—.3946

DUSTIN PITTMAN

**Steve Rubell and Carmen d'Alessio in Norma Kamali
coats, 1977**

digital print

Courtesy of the artist

[Wall quote:]

“It was night, and suddenly I felt like dancing.” —Amanda Lear

Section 1/Sherman:

Discotheques and a New Nightlife

Discotheques, or nightclubs where people danced to recorded music, began to appear in the 1960s and multiplied across America throughout the 1970s. Their emergence coincided with the Civil Rights movement, which championed the rights of all people, including Black Americans and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

In this period, it was illegal for men to dance together—gay men often carried “jail money” when they went out in case they needed to post bail. By opening their doors to members only or by invitation only, clubs in New York City such as Flamingo and Le Jardin were able to prescreen their guests and allow entry only to queer or queer-friendly patrons, creating a safe space to celebrate and let loose. Under bright lights, to the upbeat rhythm of pop music, social change was taking place.

[Platform 3 labels:]

STEPHEN BURROWS

American, born 1943

Halter top, 1977

metal mesh, manufactured by Whiting and Davis

Courtesy of Pat Cleveland

FIORUCCI

(DESIGN HOUSE)

Italian, founded 1967

ANTONIO LOPEZ

(DESIGNER)

American, born Puerto Rico, 1943–1987

JUAN RAMOS

(DESIGNER)

American, born Puerto Rico, 1942–1995

Skirt, 1977

burgundy tulle and gold rickrack

Collection of Pat Cleveland

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

**Grace Jones mask, for “Warm Leatherette” single
release at Bond International Casino, May 1980**

airbrush, gouache, pencil, and collage on board

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

This mask of Grace Jones is based on the image that Richard Bernstein used to create the gatefold paintings for the record sleeve of Jones's *Portfolio* (1977), which featured the songs "That's the Trouble" and "I Need a Man."

RICHARD BERNSTEIN
(COVER ILLUSTRATION)
American, 1939–2002

GRACE JONES
(RECORDING ARTIST)
American, born Jamaica, 1948

Portfolio (Grace Jones), released September 6, 1977

album cover
Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

[Wall labels:]

UNIDENTIFIED PHOTOGRAPHER

Scene at Enchanted Garden, 1976

gelatin silver print
Ian Schrager Archive

Carmen D'Alessio was a master of self-reinvention. Over barely more than a decade, she worked for the United Nations as an interpreter, for the Valentino fashion company in Rome, and finally as a club promoter in New York City. The well-connected D'Alessio organized events at nightclubs such as Tropicalia on Second Avenue at 86th Street, where she hosted a series of successful parties on Tuesday and Thursday evenings—nights that had previously been quiet.

In 1976 D'Alessio began to work at Infinity nightclub, which is where Schrager and Rubell first became aware of her and her knack for drawing crowds. Not long after, they approached D'Alessio about developing events at their club in Queens, the Enchanted Garden.

ROBERT SEFCIK

American, born 1948

New York City (party after fashion show at 79th Street Rotunda, Riverside Park), 1976

gelatin silver print
Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Cynthia K. Yanowitz, 85.94.4

By the time this photograph was taken in 1976, many styles of music and dancing were emerging in New York City. In the Bronx, DJ Kool Herc, who has been called the father of hip-hop, had begun collecting obscure records and blending them with local hits of the day. He would connect three “breaks”—instrumental interludes—using a technique he called the “merry-go-round”; dancing to his mixes thus became known as “break dancing.” In Queens, there were developments in rock music, with the advent of bands Kiss and the Ramones. Some bands, such as Blondie, drew on a variety of musical genres including disco, punk, reggae, and rap.

RUDY BURCKHARDT

American, 1914–1999

Deli Market, New York, 1978

gelatin silver print

Brooklyn Museum, Gift of the Alex Katz Foundation, 2008.45.7

This image by Rudy Burckhardt features an early version of the now-iconic “I ♥ New York” logo, which was created by Milton Glaser as part of a campaign to rebrand the city after a crippling blackout in July 1977. The appearance of the logo in a crowded market in Burckhardt’s 1978 photograph suggests that affection for New York was alive and well in the streets of the city.

HARRY LAPOW

American, 1909–1982

Untitled (Subway Quarter), 1978

gelatin silver print

Brooklyn Museum, Gift of the artist, 82.148.3

MILDRED E. HATRY

American, 1893–1973

Stage Door Canteen; Dunham Dancers, November 1943

gelatin silver print

Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Mrs. Harry Hatry, 55.187.7

Katherine Dunham was the founder of the first African American dance company, which was active from the 1930s until the 1950s. Dunham and her company performed in numerous successful productions, including the Broadway hit *Cabin in the Sky* (1940) and the Hollywood musical *Stormy Weather* (1943). Here, the dancers are shown at the Stage Door Canteen: a Times Square

nightclub that inspired a Hollywood film featuring Dunham, Ethel Merman, and other star performers of the day.

[Interpretive panel:]

New York City Nightclubs and the Paparazzi

New York City has a long tradition of storied nightclubs. Between the 1920s and the 1960s, the United States saw historic changes to discriminatory laws that prevented people with diverse backgrounds, sexual orientations, and gender identities from mingling in public spaces. Café Society (1938–1948) was the first truly integrated New York nightclub. Many artists held residencies at the club, including the singer Billie Holiday, who first performed her protest song “Strange Fruit” there in 1939.

Because of their celebrity clientele, nightclubs often attracted gossip columnists and paparazzi. When Studio 54 opened in 1977, older outlets for celebrity photographs like the longstanding National Enquirer thrived alongside newer ones, including People and Star (both first published in 1974) and Us (first published in 1977). These “supermarket tabloids,” gained popularity by offering exclusives about celebrities and scandals—stories that were often a collaboration between paparazzi, such as the highly successful Ron Galella, and the editors of the magazine.

ELIZABETH OLDS

American, 1896–1991

Harlem Dancers, 1939

woodcut on paper

Brooklyn Museum, Courtesy of the Fine Arts Program, U.S.
General Services Administration, 40.551

DUSTIN PITTMAN

Two Dancers, 1977; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

DUSTIN PITTMAN

Calvin Klein, 1979; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

DOUG VANN

American, born 1954

Princess Caroline of Monaco and Philippe Junot, 1978

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

American, born 1945

Studio 54: Steve Rubell and Ian Schrager, around 1977

vintage gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Beth Rudin DeWoody

RICHARD MANNING, A.K.A. RPM

American, 1941–2013

Untitled, around 1977

composite gelatin silver print

Collection of William and Carol Clements

Richard P. Manning (a.k.a. RPM) was a photo editor for *Discotheken* magazine. He was one of just a few photographers whom Rubell allowed to take candid images of patrons and events inside Studio 54. With this exclusive privilege, he was frequently able to capture arresting and unexpected scenes on the dance floor.

RICHARD MANNING, A.K.A. RPM

American, 1941–2013

St. 54, around 1977

gelatin silver print

Collection of William and Carol Clements

[Interpretive panel:]

Enchanted Garden

Steve Rubell and Ian Schrager, both born and raised in Brooklyn, met at Syracuse University in the 1960s. Rubell earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in finance and went on to open a chain of steak restaurants. Schrager earned a law degree and eventually opened his own practice.

In 1974, the two decided to go into business together, and they started a nightclub called the Enchanted Garden in Queens, New York. Although the club was only open for 19 months, Schrager and Rubell learned how to navigate New York City nightlife during its short run. They would frequently visit other popular clubs to take notes and eye the competition. By 1977, they were ready to take Manhattan, and opened Studio 54.

CHARLES TRACY

American, 1934–2015

**Pat Cleveland modelling Stephen Burrows halter,
1977; printed 2019**

inkjet print

Charles Tracy Archive

CHARLES TRACY

American, 1934–2015

**Alva Chinn modeling Bobby Breslau disco bag,
January 1977; printed 2019**

colour photograph

Charles Tracy Archive

CHARLES TRACY

American, 1934–2015

Pat Cleveland in Antonio Lopez for Fiorucci, January 1977; printed 2019

colour photograph

Charles Tracy Archive

Model Pat Cleveland met designer Antonio Lopez in the late 1960s, and with his encouragement relocated to Paris in 1971. Cleveland maintained close relationships with Lopez and with designers Stephen Burrows and Halston, and when she returned to the United States in 1974, she became an icon of 1970s American fashion.

Lopez, like Cleveland, was a central figure in the New York fashion scene. When Rubell and Schrager were trying to attract guests to the Enchanted Garden in Queens, they sent a bus to Lopez's studio one evening to bring a group of more than 50 people to the nightclub. Guests included Cleveland, a Fiorucci-clad Grace Jones, the drag artist Potassa, and Jerry Hall—who had recently recorded a song titled "Antonio's Girls."

[Photo caption:]

Invitation for “Fiorucci’s Fantasy” at Enchanted Garden, featuring Pat Cleveland in a Fiorucci skirt, January 24, 1977. Photo: Charles Tracy.

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

American, born 1945

Gloria Gaynor/Disco Convention, 1975; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of Allan Tannenbaum

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

American, born 1945

Infinity Disco, November 1975; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of Allan Tannenbaum

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

American, born 1945

**Labelle at Bottom Line in costumes by Larry LeGaspi,
1974; printed 2019**

inkjet print

Courtesy of Allan Tannenbaum

CHRISTOPHER MAKOS

American, born 1948

**Designer David Croland and Grace Jones, around
1976**

vintage gelatin silver print

MAKOS ARCHIVE

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Poppers, around 1975

rubberized silk on wood frame

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Poppers, around 1975

screenprint

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

The ambient chemical amyl nitrite was discovered in the 1800s and originally administered to patients with heart ailments to relieve chest stress. In the 1960s and 1970s, it emerged in club culture as a recreational drug. It was sold in glass tubes wrapped in a mesh fabric; when the glass was broken or “popped,” the vapour could be inhaled. In discos, “poppers” gained popularity because they created a quick, vivid high.

In 1975 Richard Bernstein created this “poppers” wallpaper for Steve Rubell and John Addison’s nightclub in Boston, the 15 Lansdowne Street Discotheque.

[Photo caption:]

Woman in front of Poppers backdrop designed by Richard Bernstein, 15 Lansdowne Street Discotheque, Boston, around 1975.

[Labels for overhead projection:]

**Scenes from the *Grease* opening party at Studio 54,
ABC News, June 13, 1978**

video (colour, sound; television broadcast excerpt: 1 min. 23 sec.)
Courtesy of Getty Images, Los Angeles

SUSAN HILLARY SHAPIRO
(FILMMAKER)

GLENN ALBIN
(FILMMAKER)

SUSAN HILLARY SHAPIRO
(CINEMATOGRAPHER)

Couple walking into Studio 54, April 1979

16mm film (colour, silent; excerpt: 30 sec.)
© Glenn Albin and Susan Hillary Shapiro

[Labels for monitor:]

Chubby Checker Performs “The Twist” on *American Bandstand*, August 6, 1960

video (black-and-white, sound; television broadcast excerpt: 3 min. 42 sec.)

Courtesy of ABC

“The Twist”: New Dance Craze Hits Tokyo, 1962

film (black-and-white, silent; 50 sec.)

Courtesy of British Pathé, London

Chubby Checker’s performance of “The Twist” on the television show *American Bandstand* created a dance sensation across America in the 1960s. Checker liked the Twist because it did not require a partner, so people were liberated to dance on their own. The Twist craze spread quickly around the globe, and the song reached No. 1 on the *Billboard* charts twice—in September 1960 and January 1962.

VAN MCCOY

American, 1940–1979

The Hustle, April 1975

video (colour, sound; television broadcast excerpt: 2 min.)
Courtesy of Historic Films Archive

In the early 1970s, a new style of dance developed in the Bronx: initially referred to as “touch dancing,” it later became known as the “Spanish hustle,” in reference to the Puerto Rican teenagers who created it. In contrast to the Twist of the 1960s, which could be done solo, the Spanish hustle was a partner dance.

The dance was so striking that musician Van McCoy wrote the disco mainstay “The Hustle” after simply hearing the moves described. “The Hustle” became the “song of the summer” in 1975, when it rose to No. 1 on the *Billboard* charts. Versions of the hustle, including the classic rendition in the film *Saturday Night Fever* (1977), would permeate popular culture for years.

Section 2:

Antonio Lopez

The child of parents who worked in fashion, Antonio Lopez grew up looking at the human form and thinking about how bodies can be draped. He created illustrations for designers including Charles James, Karl Lagerfeld, and Valentino. With his partner, Juan Ramos, he assumed a consultancy role at the fashion house Fiorucci, where the two worked on window displays and garment design. Lopez, who based his drawings on live models, frequently collaborated with model Pat Cleveland, and is known for discovering Jerry Hall and Jessica Lange.

[Wall labels:]

ANTONIO LOPEZ

American, born Puerto Rico, 1943–1987

Proposal for Studio 54 logo, 1978

coloured pencil and collage on paper

The Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

ANTONIO LOPEZ

American, born Puerto Rico, 1943–1987

**Proposal for American in Tokyo with Kay Thompson,
1976**

ink on vellum

The Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

ANTONIO LOPEZ

American, born Puerto Rico, 1943–1987

Studio 54 invitation sketch, 1978

coloured pencil on watercolour paper

The Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

ANTONIO LOPEZ

American, born Puerto Rico, 1943–1987

**Jay Jenkins (top row), Arrow (middle row), and
unknown model (bottom row), wearing designs by
Antonio Lopez, 1977**

Polaroids

The Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

[Mural caption:]

Sketches of dancers. Design: Antonio Lopez, courtesy of the Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos.

FIORUCCI

(DESIGN HOUSE)

Italian, founded 1967

CHRISTIAN PIPER

(ARTIST)

German, born 1941

Opening Night poster, 1977

printed colour poster

The Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

JOE EULA

American, 1925–2004

Proposal for Studio 54 logo, 1977

watercolour on paper

Ian Schrager Archive

[Mural caption:]

Entrance Hallway at Studio 54, 1978. Photo: Adam Scull,
courtesy of Adam Scull.

NEAL SLAVIN

American, born 1941

**Brian Thomson, Renny Reynolds, Carmen D'Alessio,
Scott Bromley, Ian Schrager, Steve Rubell, Ron Doud,
Paul Marantz, Aerographics (Dean Janoff and Richie
Williamson), and Richard DeCourcey, 1977**

Polaroid

Ian Schrager Archive

ADAM SCULL

Studio 54 (bar and partial dance floor), around 1977

inkjet print

Photo by Adam Scull/PHOTOlink.net

ANTONIO LOPEZ

American, born Puerto Rico, 1943–1987

Judy in Ribbons, 1977

pencil on vellum

Collection of Judy (Licht) Della Femina

[Platform 4 labels:]

FIORUCCI

(DESIGN HOUSE)

Italian, founded 1967

ANTONIO LOPEZ

(DESIGNER)

American, born Puerto Rico, 1943–1987

JUAN RAMOS

(DESIGNER)

American, born Puerto Rico, 1942–1995

Skirt, 1977; remade 2019

burgundy tulle and gold rickrack

Collection of Pat Cleveland

DAVID WOLFSON

(ORIGINAL AND REPLICA FABRICATOR)

American, born 1947

Red, blue, and silver ribbons

Courtesy of David Wolfson & Associates

[Section panel:]

Building Studio 54

Steve Rubell and Ian Schrager partnered with businessman Jack Dushey in early 1977 to acquire the television studio and theatre space at 254 West 54th Street that would become Studio 54.

They quickly enlisted a design team known as “Experience Space”: interior designer Ron Doud, architect Scott Bromley, florist and event planner Renny Reynolds, and interior lighting designer Brian Thomson. Lighting experts Paul Marantz and Jules Fisher were brought in to produce a kinetic light experience. They presented four options, from which Schrager and Rubell selected Richie Williamson and Dean Janoff, the artists known as Aerographics. Engineer Richard Long, who was known for creating sound systems at various New York clubs, came on board to engineer the club’s audio set-up. The combination of high-end interior design, original theatre architecture, and evolving, state-of-the-art sets, lighting, and sound created an environment that had never before been experienced in a New York nightclub.

[Monitor label:]

WILLIAM A. GRAHAM

(DIRECTOR)

American, 1926–2013

**Contract on Cherry Street, November 19, 1977
(airdate)**

video (colour, sound; television broadcast excerpt: 2 min. 46 sec.)

Courtesy of Columbia Pictures Television

Although there is minimal footage of Studio 54 from 1977, this scene from made-for-TV crime movie *Contract on Cherry Street* documents the club's original design, including a floral landscape by Renny Reynolds, Ron Doud's glass-block fountain behind the brass bar, the pulsing light poles above the parquet floor, and Aerographics' "Step Pyramid" theatrical drop. The film stars Frank Sinatra as a police detective seeking to avenge the death of his partner. In this scene, filmed during the summer of 1977, Sinatra visits a nightclub during off-hours while following a lead.

[Table case 1:]

GIL LESSER

American, 1935–1990

Studio 54 Opening invitation/poster (final), 1977

printed invitation
Ian Schrager Archive

The guest list at the door for Studio 54's opening night included more than six thousand names culled from the networks of Andy Warhol, Calvin Klein, Ford Models, Halston, Joe Eula, Francesco Scavullo, Ron Ferri, Fiorucci, and other cultural heavy hitters. Although most invitations were sent by mail, VIPs received hand-delivered messages.

GIL LESSER

American, 1935–1990

Studio 54 press folder, 1977

printed folder
Ian Schrager Archive

GIL LESSER

American, 1935–1990

Studio 54 business card, 1977

printed card

Studio 54 VIP complimentary drink ticket, 1977

printed silver paper

Ian Schrager Archive

Ian Schrager's appointment book, March 1977

notebook with handwritten entries

Ian Schrager Archive

Studio 54 Opening door list, 1977

14 stapled, printed pages

Ian Schrager Archive

[Table case 2:]

RON DOUD

(ARCHITECT)

American, 1949–1983

Studio 54 blueprints, April 4, 1977

blueprints
Ian Schrager Archive

[Table case 3:]

ANTONIO LOPEZ

American, born Puerto Rico, 1943–1987

Alvin Ailey costume designs, 1976–1977

envelope, Pentel pen on pattern paper, pencil, Pentel pen, and
fabric swatch on graph paper, and Pentel pen on vellum

The Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

ANTONIO LOPEZ

American, born Puerto Rico, 1943–1987

Dancer series sketches, 1977

marker on paper

Courtesy of the Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

“Fiorucci Follies,” in *Vogue Italia*, April 1977

printed magazine

The Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

This feature in *Vogue Italia* from the spring of 1977 reads: “From a Fiorucci press release: In fact, on Tuesday, April 26, Studio 54 will be inaugurated, in the most lively metropolis, as a temple of disco....

The Fiorucci show in New York will be a Busby Berkeley parade: Antonio Lopez, the well-known fashion illustrator currently designing for Fiorucci, has sketched his looks for the show in a sequence of sixteen images.”

[Table case 4:]

ANTONIO LOPEZ

American, born Puerto Rico, 1943–1987

Dancer series sketches, 1977

marker on paper

Courtesy of the Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

[Table case 5:]

ANTONIO LOPEZ

American, born Puerto Rico, 1943–1987

Dancer series sketches, 1977

marker on paper

Courtesy of the Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

[Section 3+4:]

When Fashion Met Disco

Choosing what to wear to Studio 54 could involve a lot of strategy. Some people were determined to look as glamorous as possible to get past the velvet rope. For others, outfit selection was based on whether they would actually be dancing, cruising, or just gazing from the balcony.

The fashion-design superstars of the 1970s, people like Stephen Burrows, Halston, Norma Kamali, Calvin Klein, and Giorgio di Sant'Angelo, were responsible for many of the silhouettes seen inside Studio 54, including the glittering jumpsuits and clingy, 1930s-inspired slip dresses that were popular among clubgoers. Designers who viewed fashion as a form of pure artistic expression created one-of-a-kind outfits for patrons of the club. Among the highlights: Philip Haight and Ronald Kolodzie's elaborate ensembles for performance artist Richard Gallo, Larry LeGaspi's silver and lamé glam-rock designs, and Zandra Rhodes's ethereal, silkscreened sheaths. These looks added intrigue and mystery to the kinetic, dreamlike spectacle at Studio 54.

Parties, Paps, Photographs: Studio 54 and the Press

Studio 54 had a symbiotic relationship with the press. When a special event was scheduled, whether it was a birthday or a movie premiere, paparazzi and newspaper photographers would be alerted. Staged and timed photo ops allowed participants to snap a quick celebrity shot before they moved on to the next event they were covering. With luck, the image would get published, the photographer would get paid, and Studio 54 and its celebrity patrons would get publicity.

On April 27, 1977, a photo of Cher attending the opening of Studio 54 the previous evening made the front page of the *New York Post*. On May 4, 1977, an image of Bianca Jagger feeding cake to Mick Jagger appeared on the front page of the *Daily News*. Inside that issue, a spread titled “Wee Hours, High Times” showcased a photo of Bianca astride a white horse—one of many now-iconic images of her from that party featured in the international press.

Elizabeth and Liza: Studio’s Brightest Stars

Elizabeth Taylor and Liza Minnelli, two of Studio’s most famous regulars, amplified the club’s star power. They first met on the set of the 1950 film *Father of the Bride*, which starred Taylor and was directed by Minnelli’s father, Vincente Minnelli. Liza Minnelli, who, at 74, is still working today, embodied a new type of star in the

1970s: a triple threat singer/dancer/actor, whose talents were featured on stage and screen. The two women remained friends until Taylor's death in 2011. Minnelli once said of Taylor, "I smile now as I think of her. She was the last of an era, the end of a tradition that died with her."

During the heyday of Studio 54, the designer Halston considered the two women to be his muses. As he proclaimed in various interviews, "you are as good as the people you dress." Minnelli and Taylor remain fashion icons to this day.

[Label for monitor on wall:]

JUAN RAMOS

(ART DIRECTOR)

American, born Puerto Rico, 1942–1995

**Afternoon dress rehearsal for Alvin Ailey
performance, opening night of Studio 54, April 26,
1977**

slideshow (35mm film, colour)

The Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

[Wall labels:]

AEROGRAPHICS

RICHIE WILLIAMSON

American, born 1947

DEAN JANOFF

American, born 1948

The Moon and Spoon with Planets, 1977; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of Richie Williamson

Richie Williamson was originally from Austin, where he specialized in airbrushing designs on fabric and clothing. After moving to New York in 1969, he began working on costumes and set design with partner Dean Janoff. During a meeting with Williamson to discuss décor, Schrager referenced Busby Berkeley musicals of the 1930s and suggested just having a visual of a nose and spoon, to acknowledge the popularity of cocaine.

In 1977, Williamson and Janoff designed Studio 54's original moon and spoon. With the release of *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* that year, outer space had a hold on the popular imagination. Williamson airbrushed details on the plywood moon and spoon and on the planets, which were made from varnished cardboard balls. Paul Marantz added the twinkling lights on the spoon, the zip light up the nose, and the red lights in the eye.

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

American, born 1945

Fiorucci Dancers, April 26, 1977; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of Allan Tannenbaum

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

American, born 1945

Fiorucci Dancer Blue Cape, April 26, 1977; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of Allan Tannenbaum

Stevie Wonder at the birthday party for his assistant Mary Ann Cummings, June 19, 1977

Polaroids

Ian Schrager Archive

MERYL MEISLER

American, born 1951

Stretched on floor (silver boots), 1977; printed 2019

gelatin silver prints

Collection of the artist

MERYL MEISLER

American, born 1951

**Warhol eyes closed between his friend and Judi
Jupiter, 1977; printed 2019**

gelatin silver print

Collection of the artist

In the 1970s, the young Meryl Meisler took numerous photographs at Studio 54 and other nightclubs around New York City. She then spent 30 years as a public school art teacher. It was not until her retirement that Meisler reclaimed her negatives and restarted her photography career. Many of her images are displayed for the first time in this exhibition.

MERYL MEISLER

American, born 1951

Disco Bells, July 25, 1977; printed 2019

archival colour pigment print

Collection of the artist

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

**Louise Lasser, Donna McKechnie, Ruth Warrick, and
Gloria Steinem at Bella Abzug's Birthday party at
Studio 54, July 25, 1977**

vintage gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

**Shirley MacLaine and Bella Abzug at Bella Abzug's
birthday party at Studio 54, July 25, 1977**

vintage gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

ROSE HARTMAN

American, born 1937

Bianca Jagger, May 2, 1977; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of Rose Hartman

One of the most fabled spectacles at Studio 54 happened about a week after the club's opening, when a white horse was among the guests at Bianca Jagger's 30th birthday party. When Jagger saw the horse she leapt enthusiastically onto its back, and the resulting photographs were splashed across newspapers worldwide over the following days. The images recall the legend of Lady Godiva, who is said to have ridden a white horse naked through the streets to protest her husband's high taxation policies. Although Jagger was wearing a red Halston gown rather than riding nude, the photograph would nonetheless contribute to the new club's reputation as a creative and sexually progressive space that promoted freedom amid political and economic strife.

ROBIN RICE

American, born 1956

Grace Jones at Studio 54, Opening Night, April 26, 1977

Kodachrome 25/dye sublimation print; text created by removing film emulsion with straight pin

Courtesy of the artist

ROBIN RICE

American, born 1956

Photographers at Studio 54, Opening Night, April 26, 1977

Kodachrome 25/dye sublimation print; text created by removing film emulsion with straight pin

Courtesy of the artist

[Labels for monitors on wall:]

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

Grace Jones performance, New Year's Eve, 1977–1978

slideshow (35mm colour slides and 35mm black-and-white images, shown in original shooting sequence)

Courtesy of the artist

ANTON PERICH

American, born Croatia, 1945

Anton Perich Presents Grace Jones, Cinandre, 1978

Featuring Grace Jones and Andre Martheleur

video (colour, sound; excerpt: 4 min. 15 sec.)

Courtesy of the artist

[Label for monitor on platform:]

**Michael Jackson talking about dancing and Studio 54,
around 1978**

video (colour, sound; television broadcast excerpt: 26 sec.)

NBC News Archives

ANTON PERICH

American, born Croatia, 1945

**The Anton Movies: Charles Jourdan, Studio 54,
October 13, 1977**

video (colour, sound; excerpt: 2 min. 40 sec.)

Courtesy of the artist

[Headliner label:]

Canada's Wild Child: Margaret Trudeau

Margaret Trudeau, known today as the first woman in history to have been a wife of one Canadian prime minister and the mother of another one, was a regular fixture at Studio 54. At the age of 22, she married Pierre Trudeau, who was 29 years her senior. Margaret proved to be as charismatic and impressive as her infamous husband, refusing to conform to conventional notions of how the wife of a politician should behave in public. She infamously smoked pot in front of her security detail, spent a night partying with the Rolling Stones after she had privately separated from Prime Minister Trudeau, and was photographed dancing many nights away at Studio 54.

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

January 1, 1978: New York City, Studio 54, New Year's Eve party, Grace Jones performs a concert, 1977–1978

vintage gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

By 1977 Grace Jones had launched her singing career. Her background as a model brought couture fashion to the disco stage. For her New Year's Eve party at Studio, Jones was dressed by Norma Kamali. The performance, which was directed by Rod Link (known for his off-Broadway theatrical events), began at 3 am. Jones emerged from the large cobra's mouth that framed the main stage, holding a white fox fur blanket in front of her; over the next 20 minutes, she sang while removing layers of her outfit. Jones was flanked by male dancers wearing break-away pants, which she gradually took off to reveal jockstraps and guns.

CHRISTOPHER MAKOS

American, born 1948

In Context: John Lennon, Liza Minnelli, Andy Warhol, and Victor Hugo, February 17, 1978

gelatin silver contact sheet with crayon

MAKOS ARCHIVE

In 1978 Polaroid announced a new product called Polavision, a kind of cinematic film that would instantly develop on its own. Polaroid sent Andy Warhol a Polavision camera, a case of film, and a Polavision viewer in early 1978. This contact sheet documents one of the first times the device was used at Warhol's studio, the Factory. Wielding a Polavision camera, Vincent

Fremont films Warhol photographing Liza Minnelli (along with Victor Hugo and John Lennon) for a new portrait (for more examples, see nearby Polavision films). Warhol's Polaroid photographs from this session would be the basis for his now-classic paintings of Minnelli, one of which was later used as the cover for her album *Live at Carnegie Hall* (1981).

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

American, born 1945

Elizabeth Taylor, Halston, and Bianca Jagger at Studio 54, March 6, 1978

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Beth Rudin DeWoody

At her birthday party on March 6, 1978, Elizabeth Taylor was greeted in the grand Studio 54 hallway by an eight-foot-square portrait of herself. Michael Vollbracht had painted the work earlier in the day (see photograph below), dramatically rendering Taylor's eyes, lips, and beauty mark in a style resembling that of his famous Bloomingdale's shopping bag. The painting was installed so that it would be illuminated with a blue light from one angle and a white light from another; the work appeared to glow at the end of the hallway. When she saw the portrait, Taylor apparently gasped, frozen in place. The work was later gifted to her.

[Photo caption:]

Michaele Vollbracht, *Painted Portrait of Elizabeth Taylor*, 1978.
Current location unknown.

TOD PAPAGEORGE

American, born 1940

**Studio 54 (from left: makeup artist Sandy Linter,
fashion designer Carolina Herrera, unknown model,
and jewelry designer Toni Tucci), January 1, 1978**

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist and Pace / MacGill Gallery

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

**Bianca Jagger, Halston, Jack Haley Jr., and Liza
Minnelli, New Year's Eve, 1977–1978; printed 2019**

digital print

Courtesy of the artist

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

Andy Warhol and Bianca Jagger, around 1977

digital print

Courtesy of the artist

RICHARD MANNING, A.K.A. RPM

American, 1941–2013

Studio 54, around 1977

gelatin silver print

Collection of William and Carol Clements

ADAM SCULL

**Lillian Carter and Andy Warhol, December 5, 1977;
printed 2019**

inkjet print

Courtesy of Adam Scull

ADAM SCULL

Brooke Shields and Mariel Hemingway, 1977; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of Adam Scull

TOD PAPAGEORGE

American, born 1940

Studio 54 with balloons, 1978

gelatin silver print

Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Robert L. Smith and Patricia L. Sawyer,
1999.127.4

DUSTIN PITTMAN

Bianca Jagger emerging from Steve Rubell's birthday cake, December 2, 1977; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

**New York City, Premiere Party for *The Turning Point*
at Studio 54, Michael Jackson and Steve Rubell,
November 14, 1977**

vintage gelatin silver print
Courtesy of the artist

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

American, born 1945

Halloween Tits Lamé Skirt, 1977; printed 2019

inkjet print
Courtesy of Allan Tannenbaum

ROSE HARTMAN

American, born 1937

**Francesco Scavullo and Tina Turner, May 18, 1978;
printed 2019**

inkjet print
Courtesy of Rose Hartman

LARRY FINK

American, born 1941

Studio 54, May 1977

gelatin silver print
Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Sidney Singer, 1991.221.7

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

**Kenzo advertisement for Bloomingdale's, featuring
Grace Jones, 1977**

offset print
Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

[Mural caption:]

Bar at Studio 54, 1977. Photo: Adam Scull, courtesy of Adam Scull.

CHARLES TRACY

American, 1934–2015

Elsa Peretti, 1971

vintage gelatin silver print

Charles Tracy Archive

ADAM SCULL

**Jerry Hall, Marc Benecke, and Mick Jagger, 1978;
printed 2019**

inkjet print

Courtesy of Adam Scull

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

**Alan Greenspan and Barbara Walters, December 12,
1977**

vintage gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

American, born 1945

Studio 54: Bianca Jagger, Diana Vreeland, Andy Warhol, March 6, 1978

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Beth Rudin DeWoody

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

New York City, Studio 54, party for Bianca Jagger hosted by Halston; Bianca Jagger with doves and Steve Rubell, December 12, 1977; printed 2019

digital print

Courtesy of the artist

The technicians at Studio 54 sometimes created a dance floor “event” by suspending strips of Mylar—a shiny polyester material—so that they would envelop the dancers on the crowded floor. The Mylar strips were clipped onto a 30-foot-long bar, which would lower from above and then quickly jump back up. Sometimes the dancers would pull strips off the rod and wear them like scarves. Paul Mathiesen, Studio 54’s stage and

technical head and current lighting expert at the AGO, would refresh the Mylar every evening as a part of the evening preset.

[Projection label:]

ANDY WARHOL

American, 1928–1987

Polavision film No. 2 (feat. Andy Warhol, Caroline Kennedy, Steve Rubell, and Studio 54), 1978

Polavision film No. 13 (feat. Andy Warhol, Liza Minnelli, John Lennon, and Victor Hugo), February 17, 1978

Polavision film No. 14 (feat. Andy Warhol, Liza Minnelli, and Victor Hugo), February 17, 1978

film (colour, silent, approx. 2 min. 30 sec.)

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection,
Contribution of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts,
Inc.

[Platform 5 labels:]

NORMA KAMALI

American, born 1945

Low-back slip mio and ruffle skirt, 1977; remade 2019

black jersey

Courtesy of Norma Kamali

HALSTON

American, 1932–1990

One-shoulder sarong gown, 1977

champagne lycra spandex

Collection of Chris Royer

JUAN RAMOS

American, born Puerto Rico, 1942–1995

Blouse, 1977

black tulle

Collection of Pat Cleveland

NORMA KAMALI

American, born 1945

Super flare dress, 1977; remade 2019

leopard-print jersey

Courtesy of Norma Kamali

STEPHEN BURROWS

American, born 1943

Dress, around 1978

black jersey

Private collection

Belt, around 1977

leather

Courtesy of Pat Cleveland

HOUSE OF CHARLES JOURDAN

(DESIGN STUDIO)

French, founded 1919

Sandals, 1977

metallic leather

Museum of the City of New York, Gift of Mrs. Marion Poons, 1985

HOUSE OF CHARLES JOURDAN

(DESIGN STUDIO)

French, founded 1919

High heels, around 1977

red leather and grosgrain ribbon

Courtesy of Pat Cleveland

[Platform 6 labels:]

HALSTON

American, 1932–1990

Ensemble (jacket, pants, and scarf) worn by Liza Minnelli, 1977

white silk, blue silk, and sequins

Collection of Mark Payne

[Photo caption:]

Bianca Jagger and Liza Minnelli at Halston's birthday party for Jagger at Studio 54, December 12, 1977. Photo: Getty Images.

HALSTON

American, 1932–1990

Dress, worn by Liza Minnelli, 1978

red silk satin

Collection of Mark Payne

HALSTON

American, 1932–1990

Halter, worn by Liza Minnelli, around 1979

red silk

Collection of Mark Payne

[Photo caption:]

Liza Minnelli and Mark Gero at Woody Allen's New Year's Eve party, December 31, 1979. Photo: Ron Galella, courtesy of Getty Images.

HALSTON

American, 1932–1990

Evening ensemble (gown, jacket, and scarf), worn by Elizabeth Taylor at the Academy Awards, 1976

red silk chiffon

The Elizabeth Taylor Archive

HALSTON

American, 1932–1990

Sandals, worn by Elizabeth Taylor to her birthday party at Studio 54, 1978

metallic leather

The Elizabeth Taylor Archive

[Table case 6:]

New York Post, April 1977

printed newspaper

Ian Schrager Archive

When Studio 54 opened, the late *New York Post* showbiz columnist Earl Wilson wrote: “I used to go to Studio 54 on West 54th Street to watch the What’s My Line? TV show and say hello to John Daly. But suddenly it’s a beautifully rebuilt discotheque where 2,500 people can quiver and quake to ‘Disco Inferno,’ ‘My Love is Free,’ and Thelma Houston’s ‘Don’t Leave Me This Way.’ With the turnover, the bosses estimated that 4,000 came in during the night. Disco is indeed here.”

ANTONIO LOPEZ

American, born Puerto Rico, 1943–1987

Diary, April 26, 1977

notebook with handwriting

The Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

An excerpt from Antonio Lopez’s diary (original spelling and punctuation have been preserved):

Opening of Studio 54 — grey + cold...Up at 9:30 a.m. ... at 10:15 John came — He drove us to Studio 54 — the place a mess — impossible to move — the dancers were waiting...We spent 2 hours cleaning rooms upstairs + setting up dressing rooms...The dress rehearsal started at 2:30 — Channel 11 came — then Channel 4 — a mess — we broke for lunch...— the girls look

great + the guys incredible — the place opened at 9:00 — a real mess — people shoving to get in from 9 to 3:00 a.m. — I got a lot of them in — the show started at 10:30 p.m. — very good — after champagne for all the dancers + roses — Toscani took photos for Elle, l'Uomo Vogue — We stayed till 2:00 a.m. ...taxi to Empire Diner — breakfast — taxi home — to bed at 4:00 a.m.

ROBIN RICE

(PHOTOGRAPHER)

American, born 1956

“Openings,” in *Discoworld*, September 1977

printed magazine

Courtesy of Robin Rice

[Table case 7:]

ANTONIO LOPEZ

American, born Puerto Rico, 1943–1987

Visual Diary, 1977

stencil, handwriting, crayon, collage, and Polaroids on sketchbook paper

The Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

Antonio Lopez kept written and visual collage diaries throughout his career. In several entries, he mentions events at Studio 54.

FRANCESCO SCAVULLO

(PHOTOGRAPHER)

American, 1921–2004

BOB COLACELLO

(EDITOR)

American, born 1947

RANDOM HOUSE

(PUBLISHER)

Scavullo on Men, 1977

printed book

Private collection

[Table case 9:]

TONY WALTON

(DESIGNER)

British, born 1934

Style, Studio 54 issue in *Soho News*, 1978

printed newspaper

ANTONIO LOPEZ

American, born Puerto Rico, 1943–1987

Sketchbook diary entry, April 26, 1978

invitation and handwritten diary entry on sketchbook page
The Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

GIL LESSER

American, 1935–1990

Studio 54 first anniversary invitation, 1978

printed invitation
Ian Schrager Archive

For Studio's first anniversary on April 26, 1978, Issey Miyake conceived of *East Meets West*, a performance that extended his 1976 runway presentation in Japan, which featured Grace Jones and Toukie Smith. Two mirror balls were hung above the dance floor, animating the space with moving dots and streams of light.

(Though mirror balls are commonly associated with disco, they were not part of Studio's permanent décor.) Gold paper screens surrounded the brass and glass-block deco-style bar; elsewhere, there were walls of real exotic pines.

[Table case 10:]

“Disco Dancing” card

from *Life in America* series
printed card
Private collection

Farrah Fawcett and Richard Bernstein, 1978

newsclipping
Courtesy of The Richard Bernstein Estate

ANTON PERICH

(FOUNDER AND COVER PHOTOGRAPHER)
American, born Croatia, 1945

***NIGHT*, vol. 1, no. 1 (with original cover), September 1978**

printed newsprint magazine
Courtesy of the artist

ANTON PERICH
(FOUNDER AND COVER PHOTOGRAPHER)
American, born Croatia, 1945

***NIGHT*, vol. 1, no. 2, October 1978**

printed newsprint magazine
Courtesy of Tony Walton

Thank-you letter from Farrah Fawcett to Richard Bernstein, 1978

handwritten letter on Farrah Fawcett letterhead
Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

In 1978 Farrah Fawcett asked Richard Bernstein to paint her portrait, which he rendered by hand based on a smaller photograph that she provided. At the time she had a lead role in the hit television series *Charlie's Angels* and was widely known as

the star of a best-selling poster, which featured her in a red Norma Kamali bathing suit. After the portrait was unveiled, some reports described the likeness as uncharacteristic, because it lacked Fawcett's signature smile.

ANTON PERICH

(FOUNDER AND COVER PHOTOGRAPHER)

American, born Croatia, 1945

***NIGHT*, vol. 1, no. 1 (with alternative cover),
September 1978**

***NIGHT*, vol. 1, no. 1 (insert), September 1978**

printed newsprint magazine

Courtesy of the artist

Section 5:

Setting the Stage: Studio's Iconic Scenery

Several times on any given night at Studio 54, a moon and a spoon would fly in from stage left and stage right, meeting at the centre. As the spoon twinkled, a string of lights would zip up the moon's nose—a scene meant to suggest cocaine use. This stage set signified the spirit of liberation that reigned at Studio 54. Then, as now, an illegal drug, cocaine was so popular among clubgoers that it was also known as “disco dust” during the 1970s.

Aerographics (a.k.a. design duo Richie Williamson and Dean Janoff) designed and executed the moon and spoon, a step pyramid, a sky with tree-leaf silhouettes surrounding the stage, and rockets that covered the chase poles. For Studio's renovation in 1978, lighting designers Jules Fisher and Paul Marantz brought in the fanned neon backdrop from the Broadway production of *Chicago*. Designed by Tony Award-winning designer Tony Walton, the neon fan would become another of the nightclub's visual icons.

Cue the Lights: Studio's Dynamic Lighting Effects

The building at 254 West 54th Street had a long history as a performance space. Originally built as the Gallo Opera House in 1927, it housed a succession of theatres in the 1930s. From 1943

onward it operated as a television studio, until Schrager, Rubell, and Dushey acquired it 30 years later.

Having decided that light-up dance floors and mirror balls were passé, Schrager asked Paul Marantz and Jules Fisher to design kinetic lighting. In contrast to the dark discos of the time, they opted for a bright approach. Twelve chase poles festooned with red and yellow bulbs were wired together in groups and programmed to fool the eye into seeing moving light. Marantz and Fisher would implement various new designs over the years, including a 60-foot-wide rotating mirror that reflected light across the dance floor, and purple tarmac lights. Scenery changes could be frequent, seamless, and magical.

Fashion and Film: Stephen Burrows and Anton Perich

Designer Stephen Burrows and artist Anton Perich were major figures in 1970s culture. Perich founded *NIGHT*, a magazine that focused on NYC nightlife, bringing together art, club culture, and fashion. He often photographed models and celebrities in Burrows's iconic designs at Studio.

Stephen Burrows regularly worked with matte jersey and chiffon (featuring his signature lettuce-edge hem); by the late 1970s, he began a series fashioned from metal mesh. The heavy material had a drape that accentuated the body, and it shimmered under

the lights. Pat Cleveland, Jerry Hall, and Patti Hansen all wore variations to Studio 54, and Farrah Fawcett wore a gold mesh Burrows ensemble to the 1978 Academy Awards.

[Labels for monitor on wall:]

SUSAN HILLARY SHAPIRO

(FILMMAKER)

GLENN ALBIN

(FILMMAKER)

Neon fan, 1979

film (16mm, colour, silent, 35 sec.)

© Glenn Albin and Susan Hillary Shapiro

SUSAN HILLARY SHAPIRO

(FILMMAKER)

GLENN ALBIN

(FILMMAKER)

Mylar drop, 1979

film (16mm, colour, silent, 1 min. 51 sec.)

© Glenn Albin and Susan Hillary Shapiro

Pendulum heart, around 1978–1979

television (colour, sound, 8 sec.)
F.I.L.M. Archives, Inc., New York

SUSAN HILLARY SHAPIRO
(FILMMAKER)

GLENN ALBIN
(FILMMAKER)

Pendulum heart, 1979

film (16mm, colour, silent, 22 sec.)
© Glenn Albin and Susan Hillary Shapiro

Smoking sun, around 1978–1979

television (colour, sound, 13 sec.)
F.I.L.M. Archives, Inc., New York

MIESTORM
American, born 1958

Rollerena, 1977; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

Rollerena, a Vietnam War veteran and drag queen originally from Kentucky, was a regular at Studio 54, and at many other nightclubs and gay bars in the West Village. Miestorm recalled that Rollerena would walk around Studio 54 with a wand, tapping people on the shoulder and then tossing fairy dust and candy at them.

MERYL MEISLER

American, born 1951

Dance Floor, 1977; printed 2019

gelatin silver print

Collection of the artist

[Label for monitor:]

ANTON PERICH

(FOUNDER AND COVER PHOTOGRAPHER)

American, born Croatia, 1945

***NIGHT* magazine, selected pages from vol. 1, nos. 1
and 2**

slideshow

Courtesy of Anton Perich, Tony Walton, and Ian Schrager

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Farrah Fawcett, 1978

mixed media on canvas

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

ANTON PERICH

American, born Croatia, 1945

Patti Hansen, 1978

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

ANTON PERICH

American, born Croatia, 1945

Jerry Hall, 1978

ink on paper (“machine painting”)

Courtesy of the artist

ANTON PERICH

American, born Croatia, 1945

Jerry Hall, May 23, 1978

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

On the evening of “A Salute to American Designers” at Studio 54, Jerry Hall drew the attention of several photographers, including Anton Perich, Ron Galella, and Allan Tannenbaum. Perich, who had recently created an electric painting machine (a precursor of the inkjet printer) from Army surplus parts, chose this image of Hall for one of his first machine paintings (displayed nearby). The image was projected onto paper or canvas, and the machine’s photocell attachment moved across and down this surface, applying paint wherever it encountered a darkened area.

ROSE HARTMAN

American, born 1937

Bethann Hardison, Daniela Morera, and Stephen Burrows at Valentino's birthday party, May 12, 1978; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of Rose Hartman

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

George Willig, Barbara Carrera, and Guy Burgos holding Jerry Hall, who had modelled in the fashion show at "A Salute to American Designers"; and the book *The Fashion Makers*, at Studio 54, May 23, 1978

vintage gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

**Dolly Parton at a party in her honour at Studio 54,
after her performance at the Palladium, August 22,
1978; printed 2019**

digital print

Courtesy of the artist

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

**Steve Rubell, Halston, Mikhail Baryshnikov, and Liza
Minnelli, June 4, 1978**

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

ROXANNE LOWIT

American, born 1958

**Giancarlo Giammetti, Studio 54, May 12, 1978; printed
2019**

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

For designer Valentino's 46th birthday, his business partner Giancarlo Giammetti worked with Ian Schrager to stage a "circus" at Studio 54, complete with performances by trapeze artists and whimsical costumes from Federico Fellini's film *The Clowns* (1970). In this photograph Giammetti wears a costume designed by Fellini's long-time collaborator Danilo Donati. Valentino himself wore a ringmaster's red jacket, white breeches, and black leather boots; other elaborate ensembles included a fortune-teller, an exotic bird, and a lion.

[Projection label:]

RICHIE WILLIAMSON

American, born 1947

Realized Sets at Studio 54, 1977–1980, 2020

video animation (colour, silent, 8 min. 2 sec.)

Courtesy of the artist

Sets in order of appearance:

Deco Cut drop with palm leaf proscenium

Moon and Spoon, without planets

Moon and Spoon, with planets, Opening, April 26, 1977

Step Pyramid

Mylar drop

Cobra set, New Year's Eve 1977

Rocket Records rocket chase-pole covers

Dolly Parton on Moon, August 22, 1978

Step Pyramid, black light version, September 1978

Crystal City scrim

Cut-Velvet Mandala

Native American chase-pole covers, 1978

Donna Summer, April 26, 1979

Smoking Sun with police-light eyes (by Tony Walton)

Neon fan from Chicago (by Tony Walton)

Pendulum Heart (by Tony Walton)

Shimmer Disk scrim drop with striped shimmer backdrop,
reopening, September 1979

Volcano

Moon and Spoon

Skyscraper chase-pole covers

Shimmer Disk with scrim drop with studs and Mylar

This animation recreates drops and scenery for which there is little or no existing footage, including the Volcano, the Cut-Velvet Mandala, and the Shimmer Disk.

JULES FISHER

American, born 1937

PAUL MARANTZ

American, born 1938

Concept Sketches for Studio 54, August 14, 1978

ink on paper

Courtesy of Fisher Marantz Stone

“Fisher and Marantz created one of the best effects at Studio 54, the ‘spinning periaktoid.’ It was a 40-foot-wide, three-sided, triangular cylinder clad in mirrors that was supported along the top of the proscenium. A bank of 40 to 60 pinspots was focused on the mirrored side of the rotating armature, which caused light beams to sweep the entire audience and balcony of the club. It was a really brilliant and elegant way to achieve major light movement.” —Van Rice, Bestek Theatrical, 2019

TONY WALTON

British, born 1934

Pendulum Heart (Inflatable or “Stuffed”), 1979

collage

Courtesy of the artist

TONY WALTON

British, born 1934

Moon Madness (Frost), 1979

collage

Courtesy of the artist

TONY WALTON

British, born 1934

Smoking Sun (Model for Studio 54), 1979

collage

Courtesy of the artist

TONY WALTON

British, born 1934

Model for Chicago, 1975

wire in shadow box

Courtesy of the artist

During the renovation of Studio 54 in 1978, designers Jules Fisher and Paul Marantz were asked to “update” the lighting in the space. At that time, the Broadway production of *Chicago*, designed by Tony Walton, was closing, and they suggested acquiring the neon fan from the theatre.

[Photo caption:]

Liza Minnelli performing in *Chicago*, 1975. Photo: Tony Walton.

[Mural caption:]

The Moon and Spoon with Planets, 1977. Design by: Richie Williamson and Dean Janoff, courtesy of Richie Williamson.

CHRISTOPHER MAKOS

American, born 1948

In Context: Gang of Four, 1978

gelatin silver contact sheet with crayon and tape

MAKOS ARCHIVE

While preparing to go onstage for Studio 54’s first anniversary party, Halston, Bianca Jagger, Liza Minnelli, and Andy Warhol waited in the basement (which was accessed through a door

behind the bar). Once on the dance floor, Liza Minnelli read aloud from Vogue and sang “Embraceable You” from The Act, the Broadway show she was performing in at the time, and Halston gave a speech about how much Studio 54 had bolstered New York City’s economy.

ADAM SCULL

Issey Miyake and Diana Vreeland, 1978; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of Adam Scull

ROXANNE LOWIT

American, born 1958

Steve Rubell, Liza Minnelli, Bianca Jagger, Andy Warhol, Studio 54, April 26, 1978; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

ADAM SCULL

Liza Minnelli and Halston, April 26, 1978; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of Adam Scull

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

American, born 1945

Model Amina in Miyake, 1978; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of Allan Tannenbaum

[Label for monitor:]

SUSAN HILLARY SHAPIRO

(FILMMAKER)

GLENN ALBIN

(FILMMAKER)

**Chase poles and moving light (feat. Rudolf Nureyev),
April 1979**

film (16mm, colour, silent, 2 min. 17 sec.)

© Glenn Albin and Susan Hillary Shapiro

[Platform 7 labels:]

CALVIN KLEIN

American, born 1942

Slip dress (Spring 1978, Look 59), 1977

pink silk

PVH Archives, New York

STEPHEN BURROWS

American, born 1943

Dress, around 1978

blue silk

Collection of Kay Unger

STEPHEN BURROWS

American, born 1943

Evening ensemble (halter top and skirt), 1978

metal mesh, manufactured by Whiting and Davis
SCAD FASH permanent collection, gift of Charles and Diana
Revson

HALSTON

American, 1932–1990

Ensemble (shirt, vest, and pants), around 1979

gold lamé

Collection of Doris Duke, Newport Restoration Foundation, Rhode
Island

HALSTON

American, 1932–1990

Jacket and scarf, worn by Liza Minnelli when she accepted a Tony Award for The Act, on June 4, 1978

gold lamé

Collection of Mark Payne

[Table case 11:]

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Cover (feat. Truman Capote), *Interview*, January 1979

printed magazine

Brooklyn Museum Library Collection

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Liz Taylor mask, 1976

mixed media on board

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Cover (feat. Liza Minnelli), *Interview*, September 1979

printed magazine

Brooklyn Museum Library Collection

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Cover (feat. Steve Rubell), *Interview*, February 1979

printed magazine

Brooklyn Museum Library Collection

FRANCESCO SCAVULLO

(PHOTOGRAPHER)

American, 1921–2004

HARPER & ROW

(PUBLISHER)

Scavullo Women, 1982

printed book

Private collection

CHRISTOPHER MAKOS

American, born 1948

Andy with *Interview*, September 1976

Polaroid

MAKOS ARCHIVE

SANDY LINTER

(AUTHOR)

American, born 1947

SIMON & SCHUSTER

(PUBLISHER)

Disco Beauty: Nighttime Make-Up, 1979

printed book

Collection of the artist

[Table case 12:]

GIL LESSER

American, 1935–1990

St. Valentine's Day invitation, 1979

printed invitation, arrow, and box

Collection of Harry King

Steve Rubell's chronicle of being in jail for 33 hours, April 11, 1979

pen on 38 printed drink tickets
Collection of Myra Scheer, New York

After Rubell had an altercation with a television crew that was filming Ron Galella at the door of Studio on April 11, 1979, he was arrested and spent 33 hours in jail. He wrote an account of the experience on 38 drink tickets, transcribed by Myra Scheer, Rubell and Schrager's former assistant (excerpt to the right; original spelling, syntax, and punctuation have been preserved):

The shock of entering a prison there should be some sort of adjustment period. I found it devastating for the first 12 hours everyone is in the same boat and you have to be helpful to each because you feel so removed from the outside world. The only people you think you can count on are people you are with. Your world becomes the world you're in. Studio 54, celebrities, some prominence and money didn't count for much except for the belief that I would get out and have a better chance whether I was guilty or not. I could afford it.

Section 6:

DJ as Celebrity

DJs in the 1970s would manually alternate between two or three analog turntables, segueing between songs to create a continuous soundscape for dancers. Technological improvements, such as the ability to adjust turntable speed in order to bridge tempos across records, were seen as groundbreaking.

This era also signalled the rise of the celebrity disc jockey. Richie Kaczor, Studio 54's original DJ, was a star performer in his own right, paving the way for contemporary counterparts like Steve Aoki and David Guetta. Kaczor is credited with the breakout success of Gloria Gaynor's hit "I Will Survive." During a visit to Studio, you could hear him spinning the track, which went on to become a modern anthem of acceptance and civil rights for all. The lyrics, driving beats, and mixes orchestrated by savvy DJs provided a soundscape that, along with lighting and set changes, allowed dancers to lose their sense of time and space.

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

American, born 1945

DJ Richie Kaczor, 1978; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of Allan Tannenbaum

DOUG VANN

American, born 1954

Chee-Chee, around 1978

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

DOUG VANN

American, born 1954

Bianca Jagger in DJ booth at Studio 54, around 1978

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

“The music was incredible. They’d take it down low and give your ears a rest, and then bring it back up. The music was ‘constructed’— they’d play cartoons and opera and mix in the disco.” —Edward Tricomi, hair designer, 2018

DOUG VANN

American, born 1954

Nick Ashford and Valerie Simpson, around 1978

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

Studio 54, crowd and DJ, around 1977–1978; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

Studio 54 Premiere Party for *Grease*, Andy Warhol with Grace Jones, June 13, 1978; printed 2019

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

MERYL MEISLER

American, born 1951

Man carries Judi Jupiter in film dress, 1978; printed 2019

archival colour pigment print

Collection of the artist

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

American, born 1945

“Fashion Makers” show, Jerry Hall, May 23, 1978; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of Allan Tannenbaum

Jerry Hall appeared only once as a model at Studio 54, for the presentation of Stephen Burrows's collection at “A Salute to American Designers.” This event was held in connection with the publication launch of *The Fashion Makers*, a book of photographs by Barbra Walz and Bernadine Morris that pulled back the curtain on the lives and work of many élite fashion designers of the day.

Several designers participated in the presentation, including Geoffrey Beene and Perry Ellis.

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

New York City, Studio 54, “A Salute to American Designers,” Sterling St. Jacques and Eartha Kitt, May 23, 1978

vintage gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

ANTON PERICH

American, born Croatia, 1945

Untitled, around 1978

colour photograph

Courtesy of the artist

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

Party for Egon von Furstenberg's book *The Power Look*, New York City; Ara Gallant, Diane von Furstenberg, and Cedric Lopez, September 25, 1978

vintage gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

New York City, Studio 54, *Grease* premiere party; Diane von Furstenberg, June 13, 1978; printed 2019

digital print

Courtesy of the artist

The smash-hit 1978 film *Grease*, starring John Travolta, was set in the 1950s. For the premiere party at Studio 54, the entrance was lined with lockers, and attendants doled out pomade for guests to slick their hair. Designer Renny Reynolds parked six vintage cars on the dance floor. Two large painted portraits of Travolta and Olivia Newton-John flanked the proscenium, propped up on easels. Ice-cream cones, hot dogs, and hamburgers—fast food favourites for teens—were served. The *Grease* party was filmed and photographed by major media,

which not only helped to promote the film, but also provided Studio 54 with another infamous evening.

[Label for monitor:]

**Scenes from the *Grease* opening party at Studio 54,
featuring Allan Carr, Divine, Elton John, Grace Jones,
Rollerena, Holly Woodlawn, and Francesco Scavullo,
June 13, 1978**

video (colour, sound; broadcast television excerpt: 3 min. 30 sec.)
Courtesy of ABC

[Label for projection:]

SUSAN HILLARY SHAPIRO
(FILMMAKER)

GLENN ALBIN
(FILMMAKER)

Halloween, 1978

film (16 mm, black-and-white, silent; excerpt: 1 min. 14 sec.)
© Glenn Albin and Susan Hillary Shapiro

ROSE HARTMAN

American, born 1937

Woman in Red (Valerie LeGaspi), around 1978; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of Rose Hartman

DUSTIN PITTMAN

Little Jacques, 1979; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

DUSTIN PITTMAN

Silver Boots, 1978; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

DUSTIN PITTMAN

Richard Gallo, New Year's Eve, 1979; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

RICHARD GALLO

American, 1946–2007

Untitled, around 1973

felt marker on paper

Richard Gallo Archives

MIESTROM

American, born 1958

**Gallo wearing a costume by Ronald Kolodzie and
Phillip Haight at Studio 54, 1979; printed 2018**

digital C-print

Richard Gallo Archives

UNIDENTIFIED PHOTOGRAPHER

Untitled (Linda Yablonsky, Ronald Kolodzie, and Richard Gallo at Studio 54); Gallo wearing a costume by Ronald Kolodzie and Phillip Haight, 1977

gelatin silver print

Richard Gallo Archives

Designers Ronald Kolodzie and Phillip Haight fashioned many outfits for Richard Gallo. For one special occasion, Haight created a glove covered in rhinestones. This glove, which Gallo began wearing immediately for performances, became a signature element of many of his ensembles.

Director Robert Wilson recalls: “Richie was a trendsetter. He was way out there and many people copied him, and very little credit was given to him. But soon after I met him [in 1965], he was already wearing a silver glove—one glove—and some years later Michael Jackson was wearing one silver glove.” Many believe that Gallo’s solo rhinestone glove was the inspiration for the iconic glove worn by Michael Jackson, who was also frequently a guest at Studio 54.

UNIDENTIFIED PHOTOGRAPHER

**Untitled (Studio 54), Gallo wearing a costume by
Ronald Kolodzie and Phillip Haight, around 1980**

gelatin silver print
Richard Gallo Archives

ROXANNE LOWIT

American, born 1958

**Yves Saint Laurent, Opium Party, Studio 54,
September 20, 1978; printed 2019**

inkjet print
Courtesy of the artist

HASSE PERSSON

Swedish, born 1942

Party time, 1978

gelatin silver print
Courtesy of the artist

“After much experimenting, I finally found a way to capture the Studio 54 ambience on camera by using a flash to freeze the subject at the same time as I kept the shutter open for up to 30 seconds. This allowed me to catch movement on the dance floor, and the coloured light and other details that characterized disco culture.” —Hasse Persson, Studio 54

HASSE PERSSON

Swedish, born 1942

Halloween, 1978

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

HASSE PERSSON

Swedish, born 1942

New Year's Eve, 1978

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

HASSE PERSSON

Swedish, born 1942

Halloween, 1978

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

[Label for monitor on wall:]

SUSAN HILLARY SHAPIRO

(FILMMAKER)

GLENN ALBIN

(FILMMAKER)

Richard Gallo, 1979

film (16 mm, colour, silent, 11 sec.)

© Glenn Albin and Susan Hillary Shapiro

“I don’t think downtown accepted him. They didn’t accept the S&M costumes, the leopard prints, and things like that. That’s why he would go to Studio 54, because there was such an eclectic mix of people, and he would fit in perfectly there, because that was also the fashion crowd, the models, Andy Warhol, and other celebrities. He was always stunning and always commanding.... He wasn’t hiding; he was observing and waiting and watching for

his moment when he was going to take over the room.” —Susan Raymond, filmmaker and Gallo’s neighbour

DUSTIN PITTMAN

Richard Gallo, 1979;

printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

Best known for his street performances on Fifth Avenue and his work onstage with experimental director Robert Wilson in the early 1970s, Richard Gallo took his performance art to the dance floor later in the decade at nightclubs such as Studio 54. When Gallo was not wearing his signature rhinestone glove, he would often hold a butter knife in the air to sparkle under the lights. Another characteristic prop was a ball of yarn, which friends such as performance artist Sheryl Sutton would pull from his thigh-high waders and use to bind people together on the dance floor. As scholar Scott Rollins has noted, “When Gallo performed, he was more like an art object rather than a stage actor.”

BIL DONOVAN

American, born 1953

Drawing for Kenny Bonavitacola wrap jumpsuit, 1979

mixed media on paper

Courtesy of the artist

[Platform 8 labels:]

PHILIPPE VENET

French, born 1929

Dress, late 1970s

black velvet

Rough Point Collection, Newport Restoration Foundation,
Newport, RI

LARRY LEGASPI

American, 1950–2001

Gauntlet gloves, 1978

black cotton and lamé

Collection of Valerie LeGaspi

LARRY LEGASPI

American, 1950–2001

Hooded catsuit, 1978

black cotton

Collection of Valerie LeGaspi

[Platform 9 labels:]

RICHARD GALLO

(DESIGNER)

American, 1946–2007

GEOFFREY MAC

(FABRICATOR)

Ensemble, 1978; recreated 2020

sequined bodysuit and skullcap, modified elevator blanket and boots, and gloves

Richard Gallo Archives

LARRY LEGASPI

American, 1950–2001

Top with epaulets, 1978

black cotton and lamé

Collection of Valerie LeGaspi

LARRY LEGASPI

American, 1950–2001

Asymmetrical catsuit, 1978

red cotton

Collection of Valerie LeGaspi

KENNY BONAVITACOLA

American, born 1953

Wrap jumpsuit, 1979

black jersey and hand-set rhinestones

Courtesy of the artist

[Table case 13:]

Envelope with invitation (from Studio 54 to Mr. Andy Warhol, posted June 19, 1978, New York)

printed invitation and envelope

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection,
Contribution of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts,
Inc., TC211.157.1–.2

On June 22, 1978, Liza Minnelli, dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov, and Halston hosted a gala benefit for the Martha Graham Center of Contemporary Dance at Studio 54. Minnelli had been a student of Graham's in the late 1960s, and Halston was a longtime supporter who had more recently begun to design and reimagine costumes for the Graham company. This was the first of several benefits held at Studio for Graham, who would stay on afterward to watch the dancers—once, she watched from a perch in the DJ booth, accompanied by former student and former First Lady Betty Ford.

ELSA PERETTI

Italian, born 1940

Lighters from the collection of Liza Minnelli, around 1970s

made by Tiffany & Co., New York (founded 1837)

silver

Collection of Mark Payne

Letter from Liza Minnelli to Elizabeth Taylor, March 15, 1979

typewritten letter with handwritten signature and notations

The Elizabeth Taylor Archive

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

**Doris Duke attending Martha Graham Award
presentation to Halston, May 21, 1979; printed 2009**

digital print

Courtesy of the artist

Section 7:

Let it Snow: Winter at Studio

Studio 54's décor evoked the bright lights of the city, but as Steve Rubell said in a 1977 interview, it also brought indoors the drama of the natural world—sunrises and sunsets, snowstorms and rain, all in one night.

According to Ian Schrager, the décor for Studio 54's 1978 New Year's Eve party was the best the club ever featured in its 33-month run—he described the vibe as “standing on stardust.” Florist and event designer Renny Reynolds bought barrels that were filled not with regular glitter, but with actual diamond dust in a variety of sizes. The floor was covered with two tons of the stuff, and another two tons were sprinkled onto the crowd throughout the evening. Months later, people claimed that diamond dust could still be spotted twinkling on the clothes of those who had attended the party.

[Platform 10 labels:]

KENNY BONAVITACOLA

American, born 1953

V-neck blouse, 1979

purple silk chiffon and hand-applied paillettes

Courtesy of the artist

Kenny Bonavitacola began his career working with Giorgio di Sant'Angelo in the late 1970s; before long, he was designing and producing his own collections. With their hand-arranged embellishments and fluid silhouettes, Bonavitacola's creations exemplified disco couture. His clients included singer Diana Ross, actress Beverly D'Angelo, and model Kevin Boyce.

GIORGIO DI SANT'ANGELO

American, born Argentina, 1933–1989

Dress (from Romantic Chiffon collection), 1974

silk chiffon

Collection of Doris Duke, Newport Restoration Foundation, Rhode Island

At age 19, Giorgio di Sant'Angelo spent three months apprenticing with Pablo Picasso at his studio in the South of France. After brief stints working as an animator, an interior designer and a jewellery designer, he moved onto fashion. In 1969 he declared, "the bikini is the evening dress of the future." Sant'Angelo and Norma Kamali's bikinis and swimsuits, often worn with wrap skirts, were popular dance looks at Studio 54.

Sant'Angelo's body-conscious disco-era fashions incorporated stretch fabrics developed in collaboration with multinational chemical corporation DuPont, as well as traditional silk chiffon, which was draped and layered to make wrap skirts and dresses that moved beautifully on the dance floor. Those stretch materials came in handy when Sant'Angelo designed a swimsuit worn by supermodel Christie Brinkley in her cover shoot for the summer 1978 issue of Sports Illustrated and, later, when he conceived a bodysuit and flag cape for Mick Jagger's international tour in 1981.

ZANDRA RHODES

British, born 1940

Mexican turnaround top and skirt from the Mexican Collection, 1977

silkscreened silk

Courtesy of Zandra Rhodes

[Mural caption:]

Snow Drop, New Year's Eve, 1979. Photo: Dustin Pittman, courtesy of Dustin Pittman.

[Wall labels:]

RICHARD MANNING, A.K.A. RPM

American, 1941–2013

Studio 54, Sophia Loren, November 3, 1978

gelatin silver print

Collection of William and Carol Clements

Italian actress Sophia Loren is said to have made only one brief visit to Studio 54, but she was so widely known for her talent and beauty that the occasion brought much publicity to the club.

ROSE HARTMAN

American, born 1937

**R. Couri Hay and Zandra Rhodes, around 1977;
printed 2019**

inkjet print

Courtesy of Rose Hartman

ADAM SCULL

**Steve Rubell and Tom Snyder, September 21, 1978;
printed 2019**

inkjet print

Courtesy of Adam Scull

DUSTIN PITTMAN

**Valerie LeGaspi, Larry LeGaspi, and Zandra Rhodes,
1979; printed 2019**

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

DUSTIN PITTMAN

**Zandra Rhodes and Tina Chow, around 1979; printed
2019**

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

DUSTIN PITTMAN

Diana Ross, New Year's Eve, 1979; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

DUSTIN PITTMAN

**Studio 54 entrance hallway, New Year's Eve, 1979;
printed 2019**

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

In his diaries Andy Warhol describes the Studio 54 New Year's Eve party in 1979 as "surreal," not only because of the club's glittering dance floor, but because of an odd experience that he had before setting out for the event. He was at dinner with Halston, Bianca Jagger, and fashion editor D.D. Ryan when—to their great surprise—a voice on the radio, supposedly "live from Studio 54," announced, "Oh yes! Here they come! Halston, Bianca, and Andy Warhol! They're walking in the door right now!"

ANTON PERICH

American, born Croatia, 1945

Karen Bjornson, 1978

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

Karen Bjornson was one of a group of models who were so often seen with Halston that they became known as the Halstonettes. Here she is pictured at Studio 54 wearing one of the designer's original made-to-order creations.

RICHARD MANNING, A.K.A. RPM

American, 1941–2013

Studio 54 Working Press (Felice Quinto), around 1978

gelatin silver print, mounted on paper

Collection of William and Carol Clements

RICHARD MANNING, A.K.A. RPM

American, 1941–2013

Studio 54, around 1977

gelatin silver print

Collection of William and Carol Clements

ANDY WARHOL

American, 1928–1987

Norman Fisher, 1977

acrylic and silkscreen ink on linen

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection,
Contribution of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts,
Inc., 1998.1.543

ANDY WARHOL

American, 1928–1987

Norman Fisher, 1977

acrylic and silkscreen ink on linen

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection,
Contribution of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts,
Inc., 1998.1.544

[Label for monitor on pedestal:]

ANDY WARHOL

American, 1928–1987

Zandra Rhodes—New Decade Collection

from *Andy Warhol's T.V.*, 1980

video (colour, sound; excerpt: 7 min.)

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection,
Contribution of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts,
Inc.

This work was originally presented in *Studio 54: Night Magic* with headphones. In compliance with COVID-19 hygienic standards, we are instead offering a brief synopsis:

British designer Dame Zandra Rhodes, a frequent visitor to Studio 54, always wore clothes of her own design (photographs of Rhodes and her fashions are on display nearby). In this episode of *Andy Warhol's T.V.*, Rhodes is interviewed by Joan Quinn, and discusses her background as a textile designer and printer, her career in fashion (“I think I supply fantasy to people’s lives”), and the presentation of her “New Decade Collection” at the Pierre Hotel, which was directed by Ron Link. Link had previously directed Grace Jones’s New Year’s Eve show at Studio 54. Rhodes’s interview is intercut with scenes from their Pierre Hotel presentation.

[Label for monitor on wall:]

SUSAN HILLARY SHAPIRO
(FILMMAKER)

GLENN ALBIN
(FILMMAKER)

Fashion designer Scott Barrie drawing, April 1979

film (16mm, colour, silent, 1 min. 57 sec.)

© Glenn Albin and Susan Hillary Shapiro

[Label for monitor on pedestal:]

ANDY WARHOL
American, 1928–1987

Fashion: Halston, 1979

video (colour, sound; excerpt: 8 min.)

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection,
Contribution of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts,
Inc.

This work was originally presented in *Studio 54: Night Magic* with headphones. In compliance with COVID-19 hygiene standards, we are instead offering a brief synopsis:

Halston was one of the most recognized American fashion designers of the 1970s. For his close friend Andy Warhol's cable television program *Fashion*, Halston reflects on his career, clients, and the creative process: "I usually do my creative exercise quite alone." Recorded in 1979, Halston discusses current projects such as his redesign of the Girl Scouts of America uniforms for its 365,000 members, costumes for the Martha Graham Dance Company, and the performance wardrobe of Liza Minnelli. The interview is intercut with scenes from two fashion shows: Halston Made to Order, Fall/Winter Collection, 1979, and Halston Originals Resort, 1979 Collection. Both shows were filmed in Halston's extraordinary 21st-floor atelier at the Olympic Tower, New York.

[Label for monitor on wall:]

ANTON PERICH

American, born Croatia, 1945

Victor Hugo Working in Halston Window, around 1974

in *Halston/Victor Hugo*, 1977

video (colour, silent; excerpt: 3 min. 37 sec.)

Courtesy of the artist

ROXANNE LOWIT

American, born 1958

**Victor Hugo, Studio 54, September 12, 1978; printed
2019**

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

ANDY WARHOL

American, 1928–1987

Studio 54, 1978

acrylic and silkscreen ink on linen

Diane von Furstenberg Archives

“I finally decided what I’m going to give all the Halston family for Christmas—Halston and Steve and Dr. Giller and Bianca—
paintings of a free drink ticket from 54.” —*The Andy Warhol
Diaries*, December 19, 1978

Section 8:

Studio 54 and *Interview* Magazine

In June 1979, when Andy Warhol's *Interview* magazine held its 10th-anniversary party at Studio 54, the nightclub was already in its third year of business. To mark the occasion, organizers planned a curtain drop featuring all the covers from the magazine's history. On display here are some of the original working photographs and paintings used for those covers, which were designed by Richard Bernstein and featured luminaries who were part of the Studio social scene. The who's who included models Iman and Paul van Ravenstein, actors Mariel Hemingway, Liza Minnelli, Tatum O'Neal, and Elizabeth Taylor, singers Cher, Mick Jagger, Grace Jones, Olivia Newton-John, and Diana Ross, and *Interview* contributor Truman Capote.

Interview magazine covers were the result of an extensive collaborative process. After Andy Warhol and editor Bob Colacello had selected the subject, that individual would be photographed and interviewed, often by another celebrity.

[Wall labels:]

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Mariel Hemingway, May 1978

airbrush, gouache, pencil, and collage on board
Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Cher, May 1982

airbrush, gouache, pencil, and collage on board
Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Tatum O'Neal, February 1980

airbrush, gouache, pencil, and collage on board
Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Marina Schiano, May 1980

airbrush, gouache, pencil, and collage on board
Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

ERIC BOWMAN

Grace Jones, for cover of the single “On Your Knees,” June 1979

gelatin silver print
Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Vitas Gerulaitis, June 1979

airbrush, gouache, pencil, and collage on board
Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

ANDY WARHOL

American, 1928–1987

Steve Rubell, February 1979

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Steve Rubell, February 1979

airbrush, gouache, pencil, and collage on board

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Margaret Trudeau, March 1978

airbrush, gouache, pencil, and collage on board

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Mariel Hemingway, April 1982

airbrush, gouache, pencil, and collage on board
Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Diahnne Abbott, October 1977

airbrush, gouache, pencil, and collage on board
Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Mick Jagger, Iman, and Paul van Ravenstein, December 1977

airbrush, gouache, pencil, and collage on board
Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Liza Minnelli, October 1975

airbrush, gouache, pencil, and collage on board
Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Liz Taylor, November 1976

airbrush, gouache, pencil, and collage on board
Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

SONIA MOSKOWITZ

American, born 1950

Grace Jones and Richard Bernstein, June 7, 1979

gelatin silver photograph
The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection,
Contribution of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts,
Inc., T3502

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Bianca Jagger, September 1975

airbrush, gouache, pencil, and collage on board
Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

American, born 1945

Debbie Harry at *Interview* magazine party, June 7, 1979; printed 2019

inkjet print
Courtesy of Allan Tannenbaum

Debbie Harry, lead singer of Blondie, was chosen as the subject for the 10th-anniversary issue of *Interview*—an honour that reflected the band's No. 1 single "Heart of Glass." For this cover, photographer Barry McKinley, makeup artist and Studio regular Sandy Linter, and Harry King produced the photograph that Richard Bernstein used as the basis of the final artwork.

CHRIS VON WANGENHEIM

German, 1942–1981

Diana Ross, September 1976

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

ANDY WARHOL

American, 1928–1987

Bob Colacello, 1979

facsimile of original Polaroid

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection,
Contribution of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts,
Inc., 1998.1.2856 (facsimile 01)

CHRIS VON WANGENHEIM

German, 1942–1981

Diana Ross, September 1976

gelatin silver print with tissue paper

Courtesy of The Richard Bernstein Estate

ARA GALLANT

American, 1932–1990

Tatum O'Neal, February 1980

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

CLIVE ARROWSMITH

British, born 1949

Liza Minnelli, September 1979

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

HIROSHI SUGA

Japanese, born 1945

Sandy Linter in *Got Tu Go Disco* t-shirt, 1979

colour photograph

Collection of Sandy Linter

Got Tu Go Disco was a Broadway musical that ran for just five days, from June 25 to 30, 1979. According to the synopsis in *Playbill*: “A woman who sells disco clothes in a store hates disco music, until her boyfriend convinces her to go to the local dance club, where she becomes the queen.” The production featured performances by Studio 54’s doorman Marc Benecke, Warhol actress Jane Holzer, and Irene Cara, future star of the 1980 film *Fame*, as well as costumes and artistic direction by Studio 54 friends Joe Eula and Ron Ferri.

CHRIS VON WANGENHEIM

German, 1942–1981

Bianca Jagger, wearing a dress by Giorgio di Sant’Angelo, 1975

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

DANIEL COHEN

Sandy Linter, around 1978

Polaroid

Collection of Sandy Linter

DANIEL COHEN

Debbie Harry and Sandy Linter, 1979

Polaroid

Collection of Sandy Linter

HARRY KING

American, born United Kingdom, 1944

Debbie Harry, for *Interview* magazine, 1979

Polaroids

Collection of Harry King

BARRY MCKINLEY

New Zealander, died 1992

Truman Capote, January 1979

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

PATRICK DEMARCHELIER

French, born 1943

Mariel Hemingway, May 1978

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

ARA GALLANT

American, 1932–1990

Diane von Furstenberg, March 1977

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

[Headliner label with image:]

A Model of Glamour: Grace Jones

Grace Jones, one of the most influential and celebrated supermodels of the 1970s, found her groove under the flashing lights of Studio 54's main stage. Jones moved from Jamaica to

New York at age 13, in the early 1960s. After relocating to Paris in her early 20s, she began modelling for major fashion houses. It was in 1977, the year Studio 54 opened its doors, that Jones began her music career. She also served as a muse for many of the designers who frequented Studio 54, including Norma Kamali, who made custom stage outfits for her iconic performances. In 1985, Jones appeared on the big screen as femme fatale May Day in the 1985 James Bond film *A View to a Kill*. This was her best-known role and kept her in the spotlight well into the 1990s.

[Photo caption:]

Ron Galella, New York City, Studio 54, *Grease* Premiere Party, Andy Warhol with Grace Jones, 1978. Courtesy of the artist.

[Label for monitor on wall:]

SANDY LINTER

(MAKEUP ARTIST)

American, born 1947

SIMON AND SCHUSTER

(PUBLISHER)

Disco Beauty: Nighttime Make-Up, 1979

slideshow featuring book pages

Collection of the artist

[Label for monitor on pedestal:]

ANDY WARHOL

American, 1928–1987

Fashion: Debbie Harry and Friends (feat. Andy Warhol, Debbie Harry, Blondie, Berry Berenson Perkins, Stephen Sprouse, Chris Royer, Dennis Christopher, and Paul Palermo), 1979

video (colour, sound; excerpt: 16 min. 15 sec.)

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection,
Contribution of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts,
Inc.

This work was originally presented in *Studio 54: Night Magic* with headphones. In compliance with COVID-19 hygiene standards, we are instead offering a brief synopsis:

Fashion: Debbie Harry and Friends opens with the music video for Blondie's hit single "Heart of Glass," which was released in 1979. This clip features an exterior shot of Studio 54 and then cuts to a performance that was filmed inside another nightclub.

Harry's dress and the band members' outfits were designed by Stephen Sprouse, Halston's assistant in the early 1970s. The sarong style is reminiscent of the garments that Halston designed

for clients such as Cher and Barbara Walters, but in this case, Sprouse created the fabric. He based the pattern on the horizontal scan lines that make the image on a tube television. When printed in different directions on sheer chiffon and then layered, the lines produce criss-crossing patterns and metallic effects.

[Table case 14:]

1. Drink tickets (Studio 54 VIP), around 1978

ink on coated paper, stapled, with plastic-coated ribbon
The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection,
Contribution of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual
Arts, Inc. TC249.206

On August 7, 1979, Halston threw a birthday party for Andy Warhol. The designer hosted the party in his home, and afterward, all the guests went to Studio 54, where Steve Rubell gifted Andy Warhol with this roll of free drink tickets. On another occasion, Rubell presented him with a garbage pail filled with “a thousand dollars’ worth” of one-dollar bills (which Warhol later discovered, to his disappointment, added up to a mere \$800).

2. ROY THODE

(DJ MIXER AND PROGRAMMER)

American, 1949–1982

Customized headphone, around 1970

plastic

Courtesy of Marsha Stern

3. Master call list, October 1979

8 typewritten pages (7 facsimile; 1 original)

Collection of Myra Scheer, New York

4. Studio 54 door list for Franco Rossellini's Back Door party, 1979

3 typewritten pages, annotated in ink

Collection of Myra Scheer, New York

5. Studio 54 guest list: Thursday (Marc Benecke's copy), 1979

typewritten page

Collection of Myra Scheer, New York

“There were no red carpets back then and no disco balls at Studio 54. There were basically no photos taken with celebrities and no

autographs asked for. It just was not cool, especially if you were an employee.” —Myra Scheer, 2018

6. Studio 54 complimentary ticket, 1977

paper

Ian Schrager Archive

7. Coat-check tickets, 1979

printed paper

Collection of Myra Scheer, New York

**8. Casablanca Record & Filmworks party invitation,
February 26, 1979**

postcard with handwriting

Courtesy of Ron Galella

**9. Calliope Nicholas and Lisa (Wright) Overington,
around 1979**

vintage gelatin silver print

Collection of Calliope Nicholas

10. **Party-booker Shay (wearing Norma Kamali),
Shay's former husband, and Myra Scheer, around
1979**

gelatin silver print

Collection of Myra Scheer, New York

11. **A Night at Studio 54, 1979**

record sleeve with double 12-inch vinyl album (personalized
edition)

Collection of L.J. Kirby

12. **ROY THODE**

(DJ MIXER AND PROGRAMMER)

American, 1949–1982

**Recording of DJ set at Studio 54, September 12,
1979**

reel-to-reel audiotape in original box

Courtesy of Marsha Stern

13. **ROY THODE**

(DJ MIXER AND PROGRAMMER)

American, 1949–1982

The BPM (Beats Per Minute) Bible, around 1979

notebook with handwritten entries

Courtesy of Marsha Stern

Before electronic technology could “count” the BPM (beats per minute) of a record, disco DJs used a stopwatch to keep time with musical tracks. DJ Roy Thode compiled this info—from 80 BPM (a slow tempo) to 140 BPM (a fast tempo) in a “BPM Bible” that he consulted during gigs. Having this knowledge allowed Thode to seamlessly segue from one song to the next without losing momentum. The direct-drive turntable, a new innovation at the time, also enabled the DJ to speed up and slow down the speed of a turntable, so that they could more fluidly match beats between songs.

14. **GIL LESSER**

American, 1935–1990

New Year’s Eve invitation and envelope, 1978

printed invitation on metallic paper, envelope

Collection of Harry King

Section 9:

Party On

After Rubell and Schrager went to prison in February 1980, Studio 54's remaining staff oversaw events that had already been scheduled, such as that month's Valentine's Day party. When Studio's liquor license expired at the end of February 1980 and the club received a marshal's notice for the loud music, manager Michael Overington ran the operation without a license, continuing to host Saturday night parties and Sunday gay nights.

By May 1980, Studio 54 had officially changed hands. Rubell and Schrager stayed on as consultants under the club's new owner, Mark Fleischman. In 1983 Studio closed for a second time, with Fleischman still owing on the purchase notes. To cover that debt, Rubell and Schrager acquired a Fleischman property in Manhattan, which opened in 1984 as the Morgan, the first "boutique hotel." In May 1985 Rubell and Schrager opened New York City's Palladium nightclub.

[Wall labels:]

NINA MELEDANDRI
(PHOTOGRAPHER)
American, born 1957

KARIN BACON

(EVENT DESIGNER AND PRODUCER)

American, born 1940

Second Anniversary Party, April 26, 1979

slideshow featuring 35mm colour slides

Courtesy of Karin Bacon

VARIOUS PHOTOGRAPHERS

KARIN BACON

(EVENT DESIGNER AND PRODUCER)

American, born 1940

Parties after February 4, 1980

slideshow featuring 35mm colour slides

Courtesy of Karin Bacon

Note: This slideshow contains images that include outdated cultural depictions and examples of cultural appropriation.

ROXANNE LOWIT

American, born 1958

Scott Barrie, Studio 54, 1979; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

American, born 1945

**Donna Summer and Steve Rubell, April 26, 1979;
printed 2019**

inkjet prints

Courtesy of Allan Tannenbaum

DUSTIN PITTMAN

Red balloons, Valentine's Day, 1979; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

[Table case 15:]

1. **GARY FEINSTEIN**
***NIGHT*, vol. 2, no. 5 (back cover), June 1979**
printed newsprint magazine

2. **Rear view of Valerie, 1979**
gelatin silver print
Collection of Valerie LeGaspi

3. **MARK RAVITZ**
American, born 1948
Model for Halloween, 1979
pencil and ink on paper
Courtesy of Mark Ravitz Art & Design

4. **Pat Cleveland in Larry LeGaspi gown, 1979**
gelatin silver print
Collection of Valerie LeGaspi

5. **GIL LESSER**

American, 1935–1990

**Announcement of Studio 54's opening of its
showroom and sales offices**

Advertisement in *Women's Wear Daily*, April 24, 1979

printed newspaper

Ian Schrager Archive

6. **MARK RAVITZ**

American, born 1948

36 Idea Cards for Halloween, July 1979

pencil on notecards

Courtesy of Mark Ravitz Art & Design

7. **MAUD FRIZON**

French, born 1941

2 pairs of spectator high heels, 1979

leather

Collection of Fred J. DeVito and Beth King DeVito

8. **Clothing label (Studio 54 Jeans), around 1979**

printed coated paper

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection,
Contribution of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual
Arts, Inc., TC249.166

9. **PETER ROGERS**

(CONCEPT AND DESIGNER)

American, born 1934

GORDON MUNRO

(PHOTOGRAPHER)

American, born 1938

**Now everybody can get into Studio 54 (mock-up),
1979**

composite photograph

Ian Schrager Archive

10. **KENN DUNCAN**

(PHOTOGRAPHER)

American, 1928–1986

**“Storming the Gates in Style,” in After Dark,
August 1979**

printed magazine

Private collection

Section 10:

Halston: Designer to the Stars

The designer Halston had a circle of famous and beautiful friends and a visionary approach to style, which infused Studio 54 with glamour and originality that had not been seen in New York since the postwar era of upscale nightclubs. He cultivated this aura by maintaining long and successful relationships with such Hollywood celebrities and socialites as Doris Duke, Liza Minnelli, and Elizabeth Taylor, among many others.

Stars in his orbit included the model and jewellery designer Elsa Peretti, Halston house model Chris Royer, illustrator and art director Joe Eula, and Halston's companion and muse, the Venezuelan artist and window designer Victor Hugo. Halston's clique of American models, known as the Halstonettes, included Karen Bjornson, Alva Chinn, Pat Cleveland, and Nancy North. Members of this glamorous group frequently accompanied Halston to special events at Studio 54 such as the designer's disco bash for Bianca Jagger and third annual Martha Graham Awards ceremony.

[Wall labels:]

ROXANNE LOWIT

American, born 1958

Truman Capote, Studio 54, 1979; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

ROXANNE LOWIT

American, born 1958

Liza Minnelli, Studio 54, 1978; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

ALICE WERBLOWSKY

Liza Minnelli, 1980

gelatin silver print

Collection of Mark Payne

BOB COLACELLO

American, born 1947

Vincente and Liza Minnelli with candles, 1979

gelatin silver print (printed by Christopher Makos)
Courtesy of Vito Schnabel Projects

[Labels for monitors on wall:]

Liza Minnelli performing “Bad Girls,” wearing costumes by Halston from Goldie and Liza Together, February 19, 1980 (airdate)

video (colour, sound; broadcast television excerpt: 1 min. 2 sec.)
Courtesy of CBS

DAVID NILES

(DIRECTOR)

American

CERRONE

(DRUMMER AND RECORD PRODUCER)

French, born 1952

Je Suis Music, 1979

video (colour, sound, 2 min. 44 sec.)
Courtesy of Warner Music Group

[Platform 11 labels:]

HALSTON

American, 1932–1990

**Ensemble (jacket, halter top, pants, and belt) worn by
Liza Minnelli, around 1979**

blue silk chiffon and glass beads

Collection of Mark Payne

HALSTON

American, 1932–1990

Jumpsuit, around 1978

orange silk and iridescent glass beads

Courtesy of Pat Cleveland

HALSTON

American, 1932–1990

Ensemble (blouse, halter jumpsuit, and scarf), 1979

purple silk chiffon

Collection of Doris Duke, Newport Restoration Foundation, Rhode Island

HALSTON

American, 1932–1990

Ensemble (jacket, halter top, pants, and belt), 1979

blue chiffon with cobalt blue beading

Collection of Mark Payne, Pacific Palisades, California

HALSTON

American, 1932–1990

Ensemble (butterfly jacket and jumpsuit) worn by Liza Minnelli, around 1979

black silk chiffon and glass beads

Collection of Mark Payne

When Halston was looking for artisans to produce beading for his couture garments in the 1970s, he turned to the family of his

future assistant Naeem Khan, in India. Because fully beaded garments were often heavy and Halston was working in chiffon, he spaced out the rows of baubles to create light, diaphanous garments. During this period, he installed “disco lighting” in his atelier to get a sense of how his clothes would look in the dance-club environment.

HALSTON

American, 1932–1990

Evening pajama ensemble (jacket, pants, camisole, and sash), mid-1970s

black grosgrain, silk jersey, and sequins

Museum of the City of New York, Gift of Lauren Bacall, 1985

Liza Minnelli recalled in an interview that when Halston was designing her wardrobe for the 1972 television special *Liza with a Z* (directed, choreographed, and co-produced by Bob Fosse), he came backstage after a performance. Surveying Minnelli’s sweaty body and black hair, he said, “OK, we’ll do something shiny and black.” This pavé sequin ensemble became a signature look for Minnelli during the period, and a staple design that Halston adapted for many clients, including Lauren Bacall.

HALSTON

American, 1932–1990

Ensemble (jacket, camisole, pants, and belt), 1979

white silk chiffon and iridescent sequins

Collection of Doris Duke, Newport Restoration Foundation, Rhode Island

Wealthy socialite Doris Duke, who frequented Birdland and other New York nightclubs over the decades, was also a regular at Studio 54. A statuesque fashion icon, Duke visited Halston's salon for ensembles "made to measure"—which is how Halston described his one-of-a-kind couture designs.

[Photo caption:]

Doris Duke, wearing a dress by Herrera y Ollero and David Webb earrings, with Joe Castro at Birdland, New York City, 1940. Photo: Getty Images.

[Table case 16:]

RICHIE KACZOR

(DJ MIXER AND PROGRAMMER)

American, 1952–1993

Steppin' to Our Disco, 1978

vinyl record transferred to digital media

GIL LESSER

American, 1935–1990

Gala reopening invitation, September 12, 1978

printed Plexiglas invitation box and black confetti
Ian Schrager Archive

This invitation reads: “Studio 54 invites you to throw caution to the wind and confetti in the air to celebrate its gala reopening.”

Press release credits, 1978

2 stapled, typewritten pages
Ian Schrager Archive

“Fantasy” advertisement for *Moonstone*, around 1972

photograph
Collection of Valerie LeGaspi

Kiss trading card, early 1980s

printed card

Private collection

JAMES W. BREWER

**Valerie LeGaspi in black hooded catsuit and vest by
Larry LeGaspi, 1978**

vintage gelatin silver print

Collection of Valerie LeGaspi

Section 11:

The Staff of Studio 54

The busboys and bartenders at Studio 54 have become as legendary as the nightclub's celebrity clientele. Ronald Kolodzie is credited with designing the busboys' uniform of tight tennis shorts, knee-high socks, and white tennis shoes, an ensemble that nodded knowingly toward gay culture and high camp.

Rubell often handled interviews, hiring Lenny 54 (a.k.a. photographer Miestorm) and Patrick 54 (future actor Patrick Taylor, who worked as a busboy and bartender before being cast in the 1981 film *Endless Love*, starring Studio regular Brooke Shields). To take care of their physiques, many busboys and bartenders had gym memberships, while others took dance classes. Club policy required these staff to have stylish haircuts and maintain clean-shaven faces and bodies.

[Mural captions:]

Bartender, 1977. Photo: Allan Tannenbaum, courtesy of Allan Tannenbaum.

Studio 54 Busboy "Fierce" Jones, December 20, 1979. Photo: Miestorm, courtesy of Miestorm.

[Wall labels:]

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

American, born 1945

Bartender, 1977; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of Allan Tannenbaum

MIESTORM

American, born 1958

**Esme and bartender Eddie Paken, December 13,
1979; printed 2019**

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

UNIDENTIFIED PHOTOGRAPHER

Vitas Gerulaitis and Marc Benecke, around 1979

gelatin silver print

Collection of Myra Scheer, New York

ROBIN PLATZER

Steve Rubell and Bernie the Bunny, around 1981

vintage gelatin silver print

Collection of Myra Scheer, New York

UNIDENTIFIED PHOTOGRAPHER

Steve Rubell, around 1978

gelatin silver print

Ian Schrager Archive

CHRISTOPHER MAKOS

American, born 1948

**Steve Rubell and Andy Warhol at Calvin Klein's
House, Fire Island, 1979**

vintage gelatin silver print

MAKOS ARCHIVE

FELICE QUINTO

Italian, 1929–2010

On camera at Studio 54 (Judy Licht and Richard Gere), September 17, 1979

vintage gelatin silver print

Collection of Judy (Licht) Della Femina

BILL CUNNINGHAM

American, 1929–2016

Allan Tannenbaum, New Year's Eve, Studio 54, 1979

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Allan Tannenbaum

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

American, born 1945

New Year's Crotch Hug, 1979; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of Allan Tannenbaum

Note to Steve Rubell from Fernando Sanchez, 1980

marker on paper

Collection of Myra Scheer, New York

ANDY WARHOL

American, 1928–1987

Stavros Merjos, 1977

gelatin silver print

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection,
Contribution of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts,
Inc., 1998.2.473

MIESTORM

American, born 1958

Studio 54 busboy, December 1, 1979; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

MIESTORM

American, born 1958

Crowd, February 23, 1979

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

MIESTORM

American, born 1958

**Studio 54 busboy “Fierce” Jones, December 20, 1979;
printed 2019**

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

**New York City, Ian Schrager at Studio 54; Halston
receiving Martha Graham Award, May 21, 1979**

vintage gelatin silver print
Courtesy of the artist

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

**Steve Rubell, Elizabeth Taylor, and Halston; Halston
receiving Martha Graham Award, May 21, 1979**

vintage gelatin silver print
Courtesy of the artist

DUSTIN PITTMAN

**Entrance to Steve Rubell's birthday party, December
2, 1977; printed 2019**

inkjet print
Courtesy of the artist

MIESTORM

American, born 1958

Duo, February 23, 1979

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

MIESTORM

American, born 1958

Dancing couple, December 13, 1979

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

**Steve Rubell and Elizabeth Taylor, snapped in the
backseat of their limo after they attended a party
honouring Martha Graham and Halston at Studio 54 in
New York City, May 21, 1979**

vintage gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

In April 1979 Ron Galella was banned for life from Studio 54 after an altercation between the club's bouncers and a film crew that was following him. The incident also landed Steve Rubell in jail for 33 hours. Undeterred, Galella staked out the club's entrance and backstage door so that he could continue getting exclusive images of celebrities.

He took this photograph of Elizabeth Taylor on the night of May 21, 1979, as she was leaving the benefit honouring Halston organized by modern dance legend Martha Graham and her company. Shooting the photo through a tinted limousine window with a fixed-lens camera and flash produced a distorted image. The unflattering photograph was featured on the cover of filmmaker Kenneth Anger's book *Hollywood Babylon II*, which details celebrity scandals.

GEORGE DUBOSE

American, born Morocco, 1951

Barbara Colaciello with Bryan Adams, around 1979

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of Barbara Colaciello

In the late 1970s, as disco culture took hold in America, rock artists were also beginning to write dance numbers. Bryan

Adams's first single in November 1978 was "Let Me Take You Dancing." Other rock acts also drew inspiration from disco culture at that time: the Rolling Stones released "Miss You" in May 1978, Rod Stewart released "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy" that November, and Kiss's "I Was Made for Lovin' You" came out the following May.

BILL CUNNINGHAM

American, 1929–2016

Jodi Pavlis, Juan Ramos, Paul Caranicas, and Don Hall, Studio 54, New York City, New Year's Eve 1979–1980

gelatin silver prints

The Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

The entrance and bar area décor for New Year's Eve 1979 at Studio 54 included ice sculptures and ice walls. Around the perimeter of the room, large blocks of ice were stacked in troughs, anchored in crushed ice. Black lights made the ice appear bluish. The usual silver couches had been moved to the back, replaced for the evening with new seating made of foam rubber overlaid with pink faux fur. The floor was covered in a foot of foam peanuts.

MIESTORM

American, born 1958

Studio 54 doorman Marc Benecke, December 20, 1979; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

When journalist Judy Licht asked Marc Benecke how he decided who was allowed into Studio 54, he answered, "People who had energy, [I'm] always looking for energy."

[Platform 12 labels:]

ZANDRA RHODES

British, born 1940

Mexican fan evening dress from the Chinese Collection, 1980

silkscreened silk

Courtesy of Zandra Rhodes

Seashell bra, around 1979

metal and chain

Collection of Calliope Nicholas

[Label for monitor on wall:]

UNIDENTIFIED PHOTOGRAPHER

KARIN BACON

(EVENT DESIGNER AND PRODUCER)

American, born 1940

New Year's Eve Party, 1979–1980

slideshow featuring 35mm colour slides

Courtesy of Karin Bacon

For New Year's Eve 1979, the chase poles were covered in skyscrapers made from airbrushed carpet foam, which fit over the poles like giant socks. The windows were made using refraction plastic and Mylar.

[Table case 17:]

ANTONIO LOPEZ

American, born Puerto Rico, 1943–1987

Visual diary, January 1, 1978 to February 24, 1978

invitation, stencil, ink, crayon, collage, and Polaroids on
sketchbook paper

The Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

GIL LESSER

American, 1935–1990

**Invitation to Grace Jones's New Year's Eve party,
1977**

printed invitation

Ian Schrager Archive

CHIC

(BAND)

American, founded 1976

Le Freak b/w Savoir Faire, released September 21, 1978

record sleeve with 7-inch vinyl album

Private collection

While courting Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards, founders of the band Chic, to work on her second album, Grace Jones invited them to her performance at Studio 54. When they arrived at the club, Rodgers and Edwards discovered that their names were not on the door list. They eventually left, unable to convince the doormen to let them in. While drinking and jamming about the experience, they hit on a riff with the refrain of “Fuck off!” In the song’s final version, “Fuck off!” became “Freak out!” and the following lyrics were added: “Just come on down, to the 54 / Find a spot out on the floor.” “Le Freak” would become Chic’s first *Billboard* No. 1 single. It would take another 10 years before Jones had the opportunity to work with Rodgers and Edwards, on her album *Bulletproof Heart*.

RICHARD BERNSTEIN
(COVER ILLUSTRATION)
American, 1939–2002

GRACE JONES
(RECORDING ARTIST)
American, born Jamaica, 1948

Portfolio, released September 6, 1977

record sleeve with gatefold

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

Section 12:

The Ongoing Stylistic Influence of Studio 54

In its heyday, Studio 54 was highly influential—among other cultural institutions, it inspired Fabrice Emaer’s nightclub Le Palace in Paris, which opened in 1978 and continues to operate today. The qualities that defined Studio 54—a carefully curated dance floor and a spectacular environment where fashionable and sexually liberated people of diverse racial and gender identities could connect—have endured and resonated for more than 40 years through images and films captured at the club.

Through the 2010s allusions to disco’s glitter and flash, especially in fashion, were often described as having been inspired by Studio 54. Even today, bold images synonymous with the club’s heyday—Bianca Jagger in a red Halston gown astride a white horse; Richard Gallo standing in the middle of the dance floor with one Haight-Kolodzie sequined glove sparkling under the lights; Grace Jones swathed in gold lamé Kamali singing “I Need a Man”—appear on fashion designers’ mood boards as catalysts for new collections.

Disco is Forever: Contemporary Fashion and Studio 54

Among 21st-century fashion houses, Kenzo, Elie Saab, and Saint Laurent are just a handful of the designers who have cited Studio

54 as an influence on certain collections. Disco-era pioneer Norma Kamali continues to reference her own Studio 54 past in her recent work. The mastermind behind the “slinky dress,” the parachute skirts, dresses, and coats, and the iconic sleeping bag coat—all classic Studio looks—Kamali draws on her archive to reinterpret and re-edition earlier designs, now emphasizing that the pieces can be worn by people of all genders. She has explained her inclusive approach like so: “Imagine that you walked into a clothing store, and there were just clothes and everyone selected from the same racks.”

American designer Rick Owens has long been inspired by trailblazing designer Larry LeGaspi, known for his iconic creations for artists like Kiss, Labelle, and Parliament-Funkadelic.

Dueling Denim Lines: Gloria Vanderbilt and Calvin Klein

Club regulars Gloria Vanderbilt and Calvin Klein both launched highly successful denim lines in the late 1970s. Vanderbilt’s fashion show at Studio 54 included plus-size jeans, a burgeoning new market. You could recognize a pair of Vanderbilt jeans by the swan icon embroidered on the back pocket. At the top of the fashion show, the brand’s manufacturer, Mohan Murjani, declared 1979 to be “the year of the swan.”

Klein credited the club with his decision to branch into denim. “Someone came up to me ... at 4 o’clock in the morning at Studio 54 and asked me if I’d be interested in doing jeans, blue jeans,” he once recalled. He found great success after the launch of a controversial advertising campaign. Shot by Richard Avedon, the spots featured 14-year-old Brooke Shields posing seductively while she asked a suggestive question: “You know what comes between me and my Calvins? Nothing.” In 1980 sales of Calvin Klein jeans surpassed the 6 million pairs sold by Gloria Vanderbilt the previous year.

Studio 54 and the AIDS Crisis

Following many years of struggle for LGBTQ+ liberation, the progressive attitudes that coloured the 1970s were a revelation of sorts. Rubell and Schrager openly embraced the LGBTQ+ community, believing that a “mixed” environment was more enjoyable for everyone.

That celebratory decade was followed by jarring tragedy. On July 3, 1981, a report appeared in the *New York Times* titled “Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals.” The article described a fatal form of cancer—Kaposi’s sarcoma (KS), marked by recognizable skin lesions. KS was a telltale symptom of the disease later given the acronym AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). AIDS took a heavy toll on the Studio 54 circle, affecting many including Steve Rubell. He died on July 25, 1989, having learned years earlier that he had contracted HIV, the virus linked to AIDS.

Because of the stigma that accompanied the disease, his obituary listed his cause of death as hepatitis and septic shock. Studio 54 celebrities like Elizabeth Taylor and Elton John were among those in the arts community who responded to the crisis by setting up foundations to fund AIDS research and care.

[Wall labels:]

ROXANNE LOWIT

American, born 1958

Claude Montana fashion show, September 5, 1979

slideshow featuring 35mm black-and-white images, in original shooting sequence

Courtesy of the artist

[Label for monitor on pedestal:]

ANDY WARHOL

American, 1928–1987

Social Seasons (*Interview's* party for Fran Lebowitz at Studio 54)

from *Andy Warhol's T.V.*, 1981

video (colour, sound; excerpt: 14 min.)

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection,
Contribution of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts,
Inc.

This work was originally presented in *Studio 54: Night Magic* with headphones. In compliance with COVID-19 hygiene standards, we are instead offering a brief synopsis:

Social Seasons was filmed at the re-opening of Studio 54 in September 1981. That night's party was in honour of author Fran Lebowitz, who was on the cover of *Interview* magazine that month. Andy Warhol's camera crew caught many celebrities avoiding the paparazzi at Studio's back entrance, including Nick Ashford and Valerie Simpson, Jim Carroll, Roy Cohn, Bob Colacello, Caroline Herrera, and André Leon Talley. This episode of *Andy Warhol's T.V.* included a Claude Montana fashion show presented by Bergdorf Goodman, who had also been the sponsor for Montana's show at Studio in 1979.

[Label for overhead projection:]

HOWARD GREENHALGH

(DIRECTOR)

British, born 1963

PET SHOP BOYS

(BAND)

British, founded 1980

New York City Boy, 1999

video (colour, sound; excerpt: 24 min. 48 sec.)

Courtesy of Parlophone Records Limited

PETER ROGERS

(CONCEPT AND DESIGNER)

American, born 1934

GORDON MUNRO

(PHOTOGRAPHER)

American, born 1938

Now everybody can get into Studio 54 (women's jeans), around 1980

poster

Museum of the City of New York

PETER ROGERS

(CONCEPT AND DESIGNER)

American, born 1934

GORDON MUNRO

(PHOTOGRAPHER)

American, born 1938

**Now everybody can get into Studio 54 (men's jeans),
around 1980**

poster

Museum of the City of New York

ZACK CARR

(DESIGNER)

American, 1945–2000

CALVIN KLEIN, INC.

(DESIGN HOUSE)

American, founded 1968

Sketch for “Dance Dress,” 1979

mixed media on paper

PVH Archives, New York

[Label for monitor on wall:]

TIMOTHY GREENFIELD-SANDERS

American, born 1952

About Face: Supermodels Then and Now, 2012

film (colour, sound; excerpt: 2 min. 11 sec.)

Courtesy of Timothy Greenfield-Sanders, New York

DOUG VANN

American, born 1954

Reggie Jackson, Diana Ross, and Liza Minnelli at Studio 54, February 2, 1980

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Fran Lebowitz, September 1981

airbrush, gouache, pencil, and collage on board

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

MARK RAVITZ

American, born 1948

Halloween Rough, July 1979

pencil on paper

Courtesy of Mark Ravitz Art & Design

MARK RAVITZ

American, born 1948

Studio 54 Halloween, July 1979

pencil on yellow sketch paper

Courtesy of Mark Ravitz Art & Design

ROXANNE LOWIT

American, born 1958

Larry LeGaspi and Valerie LeGaspi, Studio 54, Claude Montana Show, September 6, 1979; printed 2019

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

New York State Liquor License, 1980

printed paper

Collection of L.J. Kirby

On bartender L.J. Kirby's last day of work at Studio 54, he decided to take home a souvenir: the club's coveted New York State Liquor License, which expired that evening, February 28, 1980.

RICHARD MANNING, A.K.A. RPM

American, 1941–2013

St. 54 Rubell/Ross (Nile Rodgers on right), 1980

gelatin silver print

Collection of William and Carol Clements

Like most nightclubs in the 1970s, Studio 54 was a cash-only business with a manual cash register. From December 1978 through 1979, the club's accounting practices drew scrutiny from the Internal Revenue Service, and Rubell and Schragar were eventually arrested.

On February 2, 1980, Rubell and Schrager threw an all-night “Going Away” bash at Studio 54. They reported to the Metropolitan Correctional Center two days later and were subsequently transferred to a prison in Arkansas.

After their release on January 30, 1981, the “Comeback Kids,” as the two were dubbed by *New York* magazine, opened a series of boutique hotels and, in May 1985, one more nightclub, the Palladium. On January 17, 2017, Schrager was granted a full and unconditional pardon by President Barack Obama.

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

Olivia Newton-John at the premiere of *Grease* at Studio 54, June 13, 1978; printed 2019

digital print

Courtesy of the artist

FRANCESCO SCAVULLO

American, 1921–2004

Diana Ross, 1979

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Photography,
Columbia College, Chicago, Gift of Motion Picture Group

RICHIE WILLIAMSON

(PHOTOGRAPHER)

American, born 1947

FRED J. DEVITO

(ART DIRECTOR)

American, born 1953

**Tomorrow: An open invitation to zip into Studio 54,
1979**

Velox for advertisement in the *New York Times*

Collection of Fred J. DeVito and Beth King DeVito

After working for a while at Studio 54, photographer Richie Williamson redirected his career to focus primarily on fashion photography. He was known for his flawless airbrush techniques, which were much valued in the pre-Photoshop era. Here, the confetti and straws were airbrushed directly onto the photograph, which became a full-page Studio 54 Jeans advertisement in the *New York Times*.

FRED J. DEVITO

(ART DIRECTOR)

American, born 1953

**Bloomingdale's advertisement for Thierry Mugler
(feat. shoes by Maud Frizon)**

in *W* magazine, February 16–23, 1979

printed newspaper advertisement

Collection of Fred J. DeVito and Beth King DeVito

Maud Frizon, Halston, and Charles Jourdan created some of the most popular women's shoe designs seen at Studio 54. While Jourdan's and Halston's heels featured a slender silhouette, Frizon's had a more architectural, sturdy construction. All were good for dancing.

[Table case 18:]

ANTONIO LOPEZ

American, born Puerto Rico, 1943–1987

Visual diary, February 10, 1978

stencil, ink, crayon, collage, and Polaroids on sketchbook paper

The Estate of Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

Envelope with Western Union mailgram (to Andy Warhol, March 2, 1978)

typewritten mailgram

The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection

ROBIN PLATZER
(PHOTOGRAPHER)

Cover and “On the Move: Steve’s ‘Studio’ Is Where the Elite Meet to Beat Their Feet; For Others, It’s 54 Skidoo,” *People*, November 28, 1977

printed magazine

Collection of Myra Scheer, New York

***Scavullo on Men* book release invitation, November 15, 1977**

printed invitation

Courtesy of Ron Galella

DONNA SUMMER

American, 1948–2012

I Remember Yesterday, released May 13, 1977

record sleeve with 12-inch vinyl

Private collection

Designer Norma Kamali created the gold and black ensemble that Summer is wearing on the front of this hit 1977 album.

[Table case 19:]

GIL LESSER

American, 1935–1990

St. Valentine's Day invitation: "Have a heart at Studio 54," 1980

printed vinyl

Collection of Harry King

BILL CUNNINGHAM

American, 1929–2016

Studio 54, Feb. 14, 1980

gelatin silver contact sheets; envelope addressed to Ian Schrager and Steve Rubell from Norma Kamali
Ian Schrager Archive

Letter from Bill Cunningham to Ian Schrager and Steve Rubell, March 12, 1980

Letter from Bill Cunningham to Ian Schrager and Steve Rubell, February 19, 1980

letters handwritten in pen
Ian Schrager Archive

“Studio 54 Shines Again, Gala Relighting” press announcement, September 15, 1981

2 stapled typewritten pages
Ian Schrager Archive

Roy Cohn birthday party invitation, 1980

printed invitation

Collection of Myra Scheer, New York

[Platform 13 labels:]

Gloria Vanderbilt Fashion Show—The Year of the Swan, 1979

video (colour, sound; excerpt: 2 min. 53 sec.)

Courtesy of Historic Films Archive

[Wall labels for jeans rack:]

CALVIN KLEIN

American, born 1942

Jeans, Summer 1976

blue cotton denim

PVH Archives, New York

NORMA KAMALI

American, born 1945

Studio 54 jeans (women's), 1980

blue cotton denim

Collection of Myra Scheer, New York

NORMA KAMALI

American, born 1945

Studio 54 jeans (men's), 1980

blue cotton denim

Collection of R. Scott Bromley

Norma Kamali threw her hat into the designer-jeans ring in 1979 with Studio 54 Jeans, a collaboration with Landlubber. The designer spent months taking apart various pairs of jeans and reworking her pattern for a great fit. The results were promoted in an ad campaign with a tagline written by legendary ad man Peter Rogers: "Now everybody can get into Studio 54" (see nearby photograph), which riffed on the by-then-infamous velvet-rope door policy.

CALVIN KLEIN, INC.

(DESIGN HOUSE)

American, founded 1968

FRANCISCO COSTA

(DESIGNER)

Brazilian, born 1964

Dress (Look 33), Spring 2011

white silk crepe

PVH Archives, New York

FIORUCCI

(DESIGN HOUSE)

Italian, founded 1967

**Berty jacket and Tara trousers, 1978; re-editioned
2019**

smoke vinyl

Courtesy of Fiorucci

While designer takes on blue denim captivated America in the late 1970s, there were many variations on this trouser theme. At Fiorucci, jeans were sewn from clear vinyl, often in tinted colours

such as pink and smoke. These pants were typically worn without underwear.

CARR

(DESIGN HOUSE)

American, founded 2010

ZACK CARR

(ORIGINAL DESIGNER)

American, 1945–2000

SCOTT FORMBY

(DESIGN DIRECTOR)

GEORGE CARR

(CREATIVE DIRECTOR)

American, born 1949

Popover lounge blouse and dance shorts (Studio 55 collection), 2018

black silk and white silk

Collection of George Carr

Zack Carr was the creative director at Calvin Klein from the early 1970s through 1984, and then from 1987 to the late 1990s. Between 1984 and 1987, Carr ran his own company, Zack Carr Collection. After Zack's death in 2000, his brother George Carr carried on the brand's legacy of minimalism and clean lines, using

the late designer's original drawings. The "Studio 55" collection from 2018, referenced the glamorous disco scene of the 1970s, when the Carr brothers regularly met Klein at Studio 54.

CALVIN KLEIN

American, born 1942

Dance dress (Look 75), Fall 1979

scarlet silk

PVH Archives, New York

CALVIN KLEIN

American, born 1942

Dress (Look 88), Fall 1979

patterned gold lamé

PVH Archives, New York

CALVIN KLEIN

American, born 1942

Dance dress (Look 86), Fall 1979

gold lamé and beads

PVH Archives, New York

CALVIN KLEIN

American, born 1942

Blouse and trousers (Look 87), Fall 1979

patterned gold lamé

PVH Archives, New York

Calvin Klein's Fall 1979 collection featured printed lamé fabrics in patterns that had been designed and edited over a period of months, including Indian paisley and other dynamic, globally inflected motifs.

FIORUCCI

(DESIGN HOUSE)

Italian, founded 1967

Tara Trousers, 1978; re-editioned 2018

clear vinyl

Courtesy of FIORUCCI

[Platform 14 labels:]

RICK OWENS

American, born 1962

Ensemble (Larry collection, Look 9), 2019

nylon and leather

Courtesy of Owenscorp

LARRY LEGASPI

American, 1950–2001

Ensemble (top and pants), 1979

red silk satin

Collection of Valerie LeGaspi

LARRY LEGASPI

American, 1950–2001

Dress, 1982

Lurex and lamé

Collection of Valerie LeGaspi

CLAUDE MONTANA

French, born 1947

Dress, around 1980

black lambskin

Collection of Doris Duke, Newport Restoration Foundation, Rhode Island

RICK OWENS

American, born 1962

Boots (Larry collection), 2019

leather and wood

Courtesy of Owenscorp

[Wall labels:]

MERYL MEISLER

American, born 1951

Cigarette Case (Poppers, Joints, Cigs), 1977; printed 2019

archival colour pigment print
Collection of the artist

MERYL MEISLER

American, born 1951

Turquoise Ring, 1977; printed 2019

archival colour pigment print
Collection of the artist

MERYL MEISLER

American, born 1951

Reddish Hat and Blueish Shirt, 1977; printed 2019

archival colour pigment print
Collection of the artist

DOUG VANN

American, born 1954

Michael Jackson and Brooke Shields, around 1983

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

In 1983 Michael Jackson took to wearing a single rhinestone glove on his left hand. Many Studio 54 regulars suggested that this signature accessory was inspired by the rhinestone glove that Phillip Haight designed for performance artist Richard Gallo, though Jackson never acknowledged Gallo's influence. His pose in this Doug Vann photograph certainly makes it seem likely that there was a connection between the two: Jackson's raised and gloved hand clearly echoes the pose Gallo struck with his own bejewelled handwear.

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

Brooke Shields at RCA Records party for Kristy McNichol at Studio 54, May 4, 1978

vintage gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

Toukie Smith at the 36th annual Coty Awards after party, hosted by Bill Kaiserman, September 28, 1978

vintage gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

New York City, Opium perfume party at Studio 54; Cher, David Geffen, Steve Rubell, and Yves Saint Laurent, September 20, 1978

vintage gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist

RON GALELLA

American, born 1931

**Grace Jones, Allan Carr, and Olivia Newton-John at
the premiere of *Grease* at Studio 54, June 13, 1978;
printed 2019**

digital print

Courtesy of the artist

RICHARD BERNSTEIN

American, 1939–2002

Cher, December 1974

airbrush, gouache, pencil, and collage on board

Courtesy of Richard Bernstein Estate

TOD PAPAGEORGE

American, born 1940

Studio 54, December 1978

gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the artist and Pace / MacGill Gallery

[Exit area label:]

HOWARD GREENHALGH

(DIRECTOR)

British, born 1963

PET SHOP BOYS

(BAND)

British, founded 1980

New York City Boy, 1999

video (colour, sound; excerpt: 24 min. 48 sec.)

Courtesy of Parlophone Records Limited