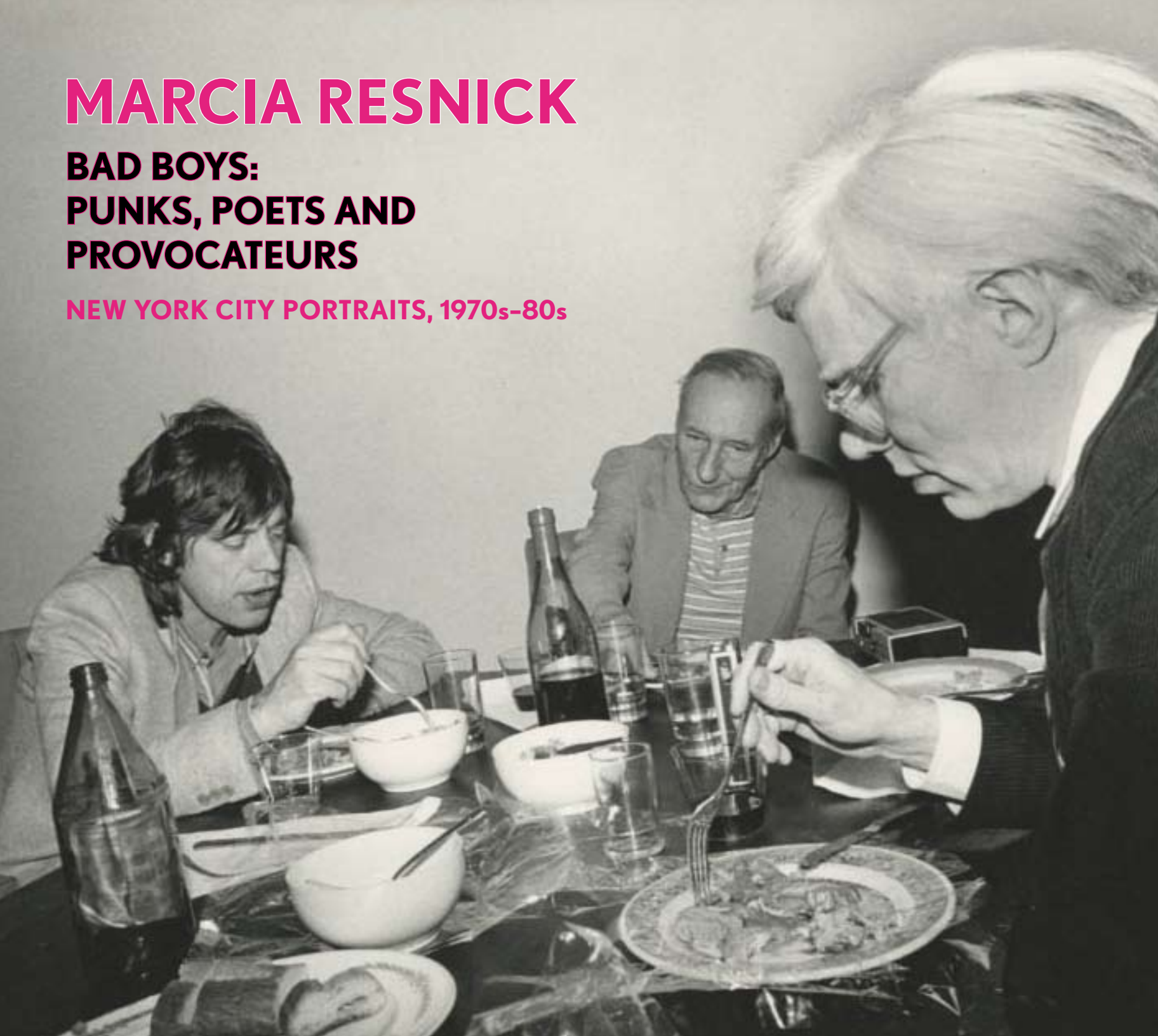


# MARCIA RESNICK

## **BAD BOYS: PUNKS, POETS AND PROVOCATEURS**

NEW YORK CITY PORTRAITS, 1970s-80s





JOHNNY THUNDERS IN THE MIRROR, NYC, 1978



KIPPER KIDS, NYC, 1980

## MARCIA RESNICK'S BAD BOYS

PUBLISHED BY DEBORAH BELL PHOTOGRAPHS AND PAUL M. HERTZMANN, INC. IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE EXHIBITION "MARCIA RESNICK / BAD BOYS: PUNKS, POETS AND PROVOCATEURS, NEW YORK CITY PORTRAITS, 1970s-80s" AT DEBORAH BELL PHOTOGRAPHS, NEW YORK, NY, JANUARY 14-FEBRUARY 26, 2011.

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DESIGN: BEVERLY JOEL, PULP, INK.  
PRINTING: MERIDIAN PRINTING,  
EAST GREENWICH, RI

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ON THE COVER: MICK JAGGER, WILLIAM BURROUGHS AND ANDY WARHOL EATING AT THE BUNKER, NYC, 1980

Moving on from "Re-visions," her feminist-inspired, self-referential, mid-seventies photographs of the perils of female puberty and adolescence, Marcia Resnick trained her camera on yet another phenomenon of the period: that counterculture icon, the Bad Boy. First photographing the cutting-edge punk rock musicians of downtown Manhattan, she dropped into a twilight seedbed of smart, inspired, confident men, who had something to say and were intent on exchanging everything. "Bad Boys" probes the ways power and maleness manifested themselves in New York when it was the vibrant cultural capital of the world yet at the same time torn apart by poverty, chaos, hard-drug dealing and extreme violence against women.

Portrait photography brought before her camera a form for which Resnick seems ultimately suited. "Bad Boys" explores aggression, fame, sexuality and the ironic gamut of interpretations for the word "bad," from "evil" to "naughty" to "cool" to "good," and extends the meaning of "boys" beyond male children to "enfants terribles." Her own coy style echoes the primordial boldness of punk and new-wave music. For Resnick, taking portraits combined confrontation and collaboration in a performance which she regards as an extension of her nature: "As soon as a subject enters the lens of my camera he is coming into a relationship and having a conversation with me and becoming part of what I want to say about the world. The exchange we have is hopefully focused and deliberate; I have on occasion found myself throwing people 'up against the wall' and kicking them into place."

Between 1977 and 1982 she traveled through the subterranean jungles of the city finding her subjects among the hardcore men of the New York underground. As the journey continued, her focus broadened to include Bad Boys from all the arts, including punk icons Quentin Crisp and Divine. In fact, in an intuitive achievement that gives the collection one of its deepest strengths, she all but photographed into being that short but vital age, the Beat-Warhol-Punk Generation. This unique alliance between the three most rebellious art movements of the '50s, '60s and '70s represented the final climax of the counterculture.

Each portrait session featured Resnick's rare knack of capturing her subjects at that precise instant that defines them. Nowhere is this clearer than in the portrait of John Belushi reveling in vulnerability; Jean-Michel Basquiat poised on the edge of fame; or a dinner party for the three kings of the counterculture, William Burroughs, Mick Jagger and Andy Warhol, where clashing egos result in a profound silence. By locating her subjects on the edge Resnick adds to the mythology of their "badness."

These insider's portraits by an artist whose subjects knew her to be one of them offer us Marcia Resnick's unique perspective of this evolving tribe of actors, artists, musicians, movie directors and writers. "Bad Boys" began as a confrontation and became a collaboration. It arrives here as a celebration of heroism and the rare collective vision that enshrines these men in living works of art and history. They are the signature photographs of her forthcoming book, *Bad Boys: A Compendium of Punks, Poets and Provocateurs*.

VICTOR BOCKRIS, NEW YORK, 2010



ROBERT GORDON, NYC, 1978



KLAUS NOMI, NYC, 1978