



Superstar in a Housedress: The Life and Legend of Jackie Curtis

Craig B. Highberger

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A vivacious, rollicking tribute to one-of-a-kind Warhol superstar Jackie Curtis

Based on author Craig Highberger's documentary of the same name, *Superstar in a Housedress* is a striking oral biography of avant-garde, cross-dressing performer Jackie Curtis. Even among Andy Warhol's orbit of dramatic personas and colorful characters in the sixties and seventies, Curtis stood out. Whether done up in drag or portraying James Dean—to whom he bore an uncanny resemblance—he dazzled in films, plays, and cabarets. Friends fondly recall how he brought his onstage eccentricities to everyday life, holding court in the backroom of the iconic nightclub Max's Kansas City wearing tattered thirties housedresses, torn stockings, fabulous wigs, and glittering makeup.

Curtis died of a drug overdose in 1985, but not before leaving an indelible mark on New York City's underground art scene. More than just a performer, Curtis translated his fixation on fame and its trappings into his own poetry and outrageous plays, such as *Glamour, Glory and Gold* and *Vain Victory*. With snippets of his work alongside colorful recollections from his friends and acquaintances—including Lily Tomlin, Michael Musto, Holly Woodlawn, Harvey Fierstein, and Paul Morrissey—this is a fitting and touching tribute that evokes the spirited, creative energy that radiated from Jackie Curtis.

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