SPRING 2025 ISSUE

B.M.W

# CANDY DARLING





ACTRESS



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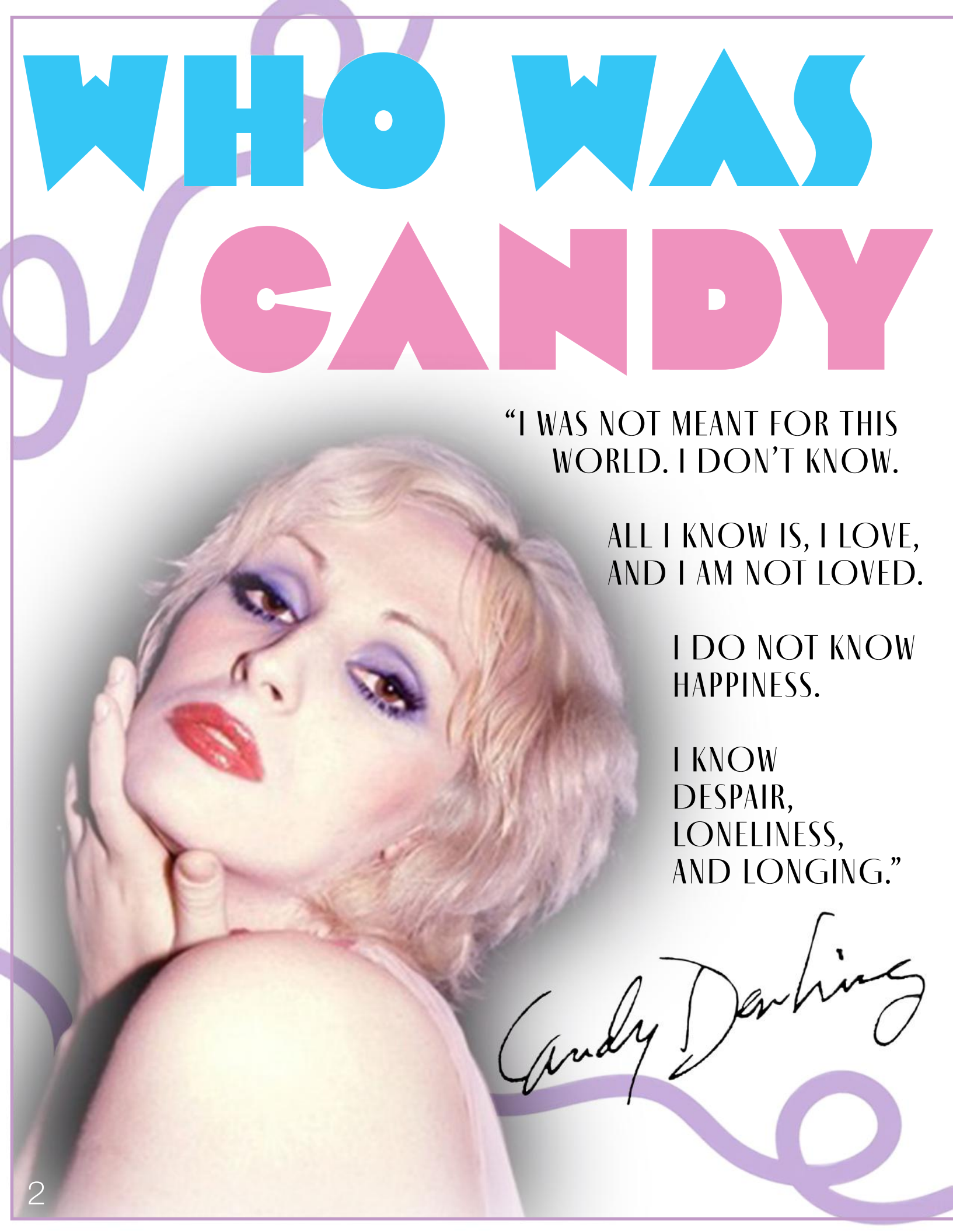
&



ACTIVIST

THE MEGA-ZINE

# WHO WAS CANDY



"I WAS NOT MEANT FOR THIS WORLD. I DON'T KNOW.

ALL I KNOW IS, I LOVE, AND I AM NOT LOVED.

I DO NOT KNOW HAPPINESS.

I KNOW DESPAIR, LONELINESS, AND LONGING."

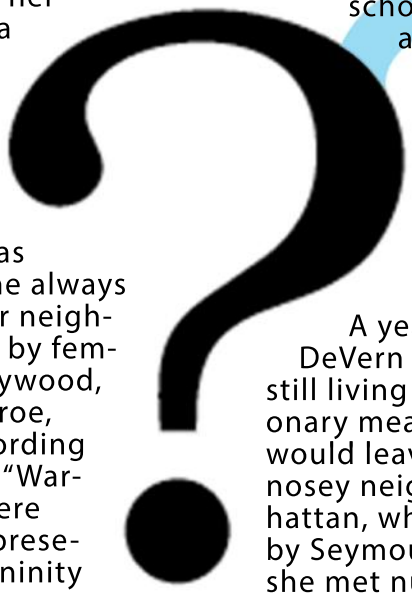
Candy Darling



# DARLING

## Candy Darling was born on November 24, 1944, in Forest Hills, Queens, New York, as James "Jimmy" Lawrence Slattery.

She grew up in a working-class, Catholic family, where her mother, Theresa Phelan, was a strict and overbearing figure. Her father, Jim Slattery, was largely absent, leaving her to often feel alienated at home. Theresa worked at an esteemed club in Manhattan named the Jockey Club, while her father Jim was, as written by Candy herself in her diaries, "a violent alcoholic who spent a lot of time at the racetrack. Growing up with an unstable family is never easy, and Candy's just got more difficult as she began having confusing feelings about her identity.



As a child, Candy was often described as a quiet, introspective "boy", but said she always felt different from the other boys in her neighborhood. Candy was always fascinated by femininity and the glamorous stars of Hollywood, particularly actresses like Marilyn Monroe, Jean Harlow, and Elizabeth Taylor. According to biographer James Gavin in his book "Warhol: The Biography", these film icons were major inspirations for Darling. They represenented an idealized, larger-than-life femininity that she longed to embody all her life. Reportedly, her favorite film was *Million Dollar Movie*-which featured a different movie every week, and aided in introducing Candy to various types of film and acting, as well as her favorite actresses, Joan Bennet and Kim Novak.

After her parents' divorce, Candy lived with her mother in a Long Island gunalow, where Theresa worked at a telephone company. During this time, Candy began cross-dressing and frequenting a gay bar named The Hayloft in her free time. One day, Theresa approached Candy at home with the news that they had seen Candy go into a gay bar dressed as a girl, to which Candy told her mother to sit at the table and wait for a moment- When Candy returned she was in drag, and came out to her mother as Gay. Theresa is quoted later on in life, describing her mindset at the time:

*"I knew then… that I couldn't stop Jimmy. Candy was just too beautiful and talented."*

By the 1960's, Candy had dropped out of high school, after years of bullying, rejection, and a threat from a group of boys who attempted to lynch her. People were starting to notice her increasingly effeminate behavior–her interest in theater and film, along with a growing fascination with her gender identity, and she began to openly explore her identity as a result.

A year after dropping out, she enrolled in DeVern School of Cosmetology in Long Island, still living with her mom, but taking precautionary measures to protect her lifestyle. Candy would leave the house late at night to avoid nosey neighbors and hop on the train to Manhattan, where she would frequent a salon run by Seymour Levy on Bleecker Street, where she met numerous people who allowed her to be herself around them–and oftentimes referring to her mother's place as her own "country house".

It was here during the 1960s that Darling started to fully embrace her identity, influenced by the burgeoning counterculture movement that celebrated nonconformity and artistic expression. According to writer Bob Collacello, a Vanity Fair correspondant, who also happened to be Andy Warhol's right-hand-man: "Candy Darling was Andy's favorite drag queen. And unlike Caitlyn Jenner, Candy was witty, smart, and truly brave, because transsexuals or transvestites were not being put on the cover of-

–mainstream magazines back in 1969 or 1970."

Colacello stated that Candy's initial drag name was Hope Slattery, and Jackie Curits, fellow drag performer and Warhol star, said that Candy was inspired by Hope Stansbury, an actress with whom she shared an apartment with at the time.

Candy tried on a few different identities during this time in her life, as Holly Woodlawn, trans-gender actress and another Warhol star wrote in her book "*A Low Life in High Heels: The Holly Woodlawn Story*". A few of the names she played with before becoming the iconic "Darling" that we know today were: Hope Dahl, Candy Dahl, and Candy Cane. "Darling" was coined after another friend of hers, *Taffy Tits Sarcastic*, would frequently be noticed calling out to her while walking around town together, "*Come on, let's go, Candy, darling*."

In the mid 1960's, it is known that Candy started hormone injections, right before moving to New York City in 1966, where she became involved in Andy Warhol's Factory scene. However, specific details about the exact year she began hormone therapy are not well-documented in available sources. Close friends say that she received hormone injections from a doctor on 5th Avenue, but never wanted to get gender reassignment surgery:

## "FRIENDS WHO GET SEX-CHANGE OPERATIONS ARE JUST BORING- NOT MARVELOUS ANYMORE"

Fran Leibowtiz, author, actor and public speaker who was heavily involved with the New York art scene during the 70's stated:

"*Having a vagina was not the answer to her problems– she just wanted to be an MGM movie star.*"





It is also known that Candy did not like being referred to as a drag performer, though it is important to note that she was one of Greenwich Village's top performers–Candy almost never presented herself masculine, and only used "she" and "her" pronouns.

"Transgender" was not yet a commonly used word, and due to the ongoing developments regarding of gender identity, the people who lived on the outside of traditional gender norms were often labeled with outdated, or medicialized, words such as "Transsexual", or were even misgendered entirely. It wasn't until the late 80's-early -90's that it would appear in mainstream discourse, when there advocating for LGBTQ+ rights was something new. Although this is the case some people, such as Cynthia Carr, a New York based writer who wrote "*Candy Darling: Dreamer, Icon, Superstar*" (2024), looks back at the 60's and 70's and would have liked to think that Candy would identify as Trans-gender today.

## "SHE FELT SHE WAS A WOMAN"

In several places through the book, Carr would highlight Candy's strong conviction about her identity, despite the lack of terminology like "Transgender". For instance, she (Candy) once wrote:

"I am a woman of Science and not nature." indicating a belief she had that her gender identity was a matter of science rather than biology. Candy would keep a list of questions she would ask herself, "Do I consider myself a woman?" and "Would I prefer to be a man again?", to which no answers would ever be provided.

Candy was a part of a growing community of young people searching for new ways of expressing themselves outside of traditional gender norms.

Candy was particularly drawn to the work of Andy Warhol, who would later immortalize the "tall sensational blonde" in many artworks and underground film projects of his. Warhol's Factory, legendary New York City Studio, creative hub, social hotspot, film-set, party venue, art studio and cultural labratory was where Warhol would produce his iconic silkscreens and experimental films. The Factory was famously filled with a rotating cast including artists, musicians, drag queens, actors, writers, and socialites- all of which Warhol would refer to as his "Superstars".

The Factory embodied Warhol's fascination with celebrity, glamour, and mass-production, blurring the line between the arts and life.
Candy's recognition finally came in 1968 when she was featured in "*Flesh*" (1968) a film directed by Paul Morrissey and Andy Warhol, a gritty-voyeuristic-feeling movie with minimal editing and the story about a hustler named Joe Dallesandro who tries to earn money for his wife's girlfriend's abortion. Flesh received a lot of divided feedback, some praising it for being a bold, unfiltered portrayal of queer life, and others saying it was amateurish and exploitative, especially because of the "non-professional acting". Candy played the role of a transgender woman, which, though fictional, had mirrored her own life. Warhol's films were groundbreaking for their portrayal of marginalized figures, and Candy's performance made a lasting impact. Her beauty, poise, and how she embraced a gender-fluid identity, made her stand out as soon as you saw her on screen. She soon became a regular figure in Warhol's orbit, and someone to look up to within the LGBTQ+ community.

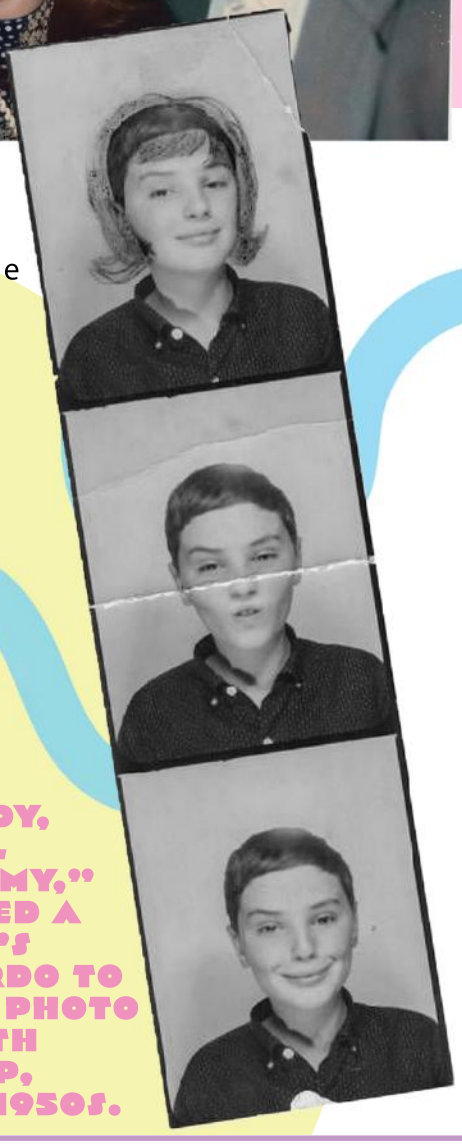
Later, Candy would continue to appear in other experimental films for the duo, such as, "*Women in Revolt*" (1971), and right alongside other Warhol Superstars- Holly Woodlawn and Jackie Curtis.



HOLLY WOODLAWN



JACKIE CURTIS & ANDY WARHOL



CANDY, STILL "JIMMY," ADDED A GIRL'S HAIRDO TO THIS PHOTO BOOTH STRIP, MID-1950S.



CANDY IN WOMEN IN REVOLT, 1971

According to Biographer Barry Miles in his book "Warhol: The Biography", her appearance at the Factory helped to challenge societal norms and bring visibility to the transgender community, despite her struggles with her identity and health. Darling's early years were marked by resilience, grace, and humor, as she navigated the complexities of gender, fame, and acting.

Ultimately, Candy has become a symbol of the freedom and rebellion that defined the 1960s and 1970s avant-garde scene. Candy's legacy continues to live on as we return to the classics, all of the things we call "vintage" now, old films, books, stories–and as newer generations learn about the way of life over 60 years ago. Candy has been everywhere and we haven't even noticed yet. Starring in numerous films and working with some of the most iconic people in Hollywood history, such as, Andy Warhol, The Velvet Underground/Lou Reed, The Smiths, Jackie Curtis, Holly Woodlawn, Veronica Lake, Joe Dallesandro, Sylvia Miles, Truman Capote, Tennessee Williams, Jane Fonda, Lady Liberty, Sophia Loren, Jack Mitchell, Magdalena Montezuma and many, many more...



(left-to-right) Jackie Curtis, Holly Woodlawn, and Candy Darling, actresses, Vogue front cover, New York, March 3, 1972



Portrait of Andy Warhol and Candy Darling, New York, early 1970s.
(Photo by Tim Boxer/Getty Images)

## THE PASSION SHE HAD TOWARDS LIVING A LIFE OF THE UTMOST COMFORT, BEAUTY, AND HONESTY CONTINUES TO REACH US NOW- DECADES LATER.



In 1974, Candy Darling developed Hodgkin's Lymphoma, a cancer argeting her immune system, and it is speculated that her disease could have been caused by a carcinogenic hormone injection, and sadly lead her to death on March 21st, 1974.

On her deathbed, Candy asked her friend Peter Hujar to take photos of her, saying:

"FANS WOULD FEEL CHEATED IF THEY DIDN'T GET TO SEE WHAT I LOOKED LIKE IN MY HOSPITAL BED."

- CANDY DARLING



"I'M A THOUSAND DIFFERENT PEOPLE.
EVERY ONE IS REAL."







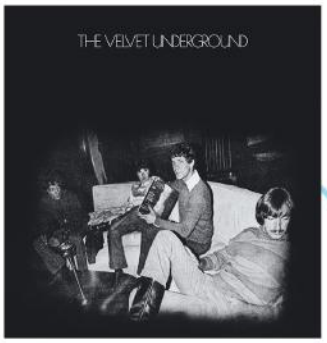






"YOU MUST ALWAYS BE YOURSELF,
NO MATTER WHAT THE PRICE.
IT IS THE HIGHEST FORM OF MORALITY."

# DARLING, WE'LL NEVER FORGET YOU-

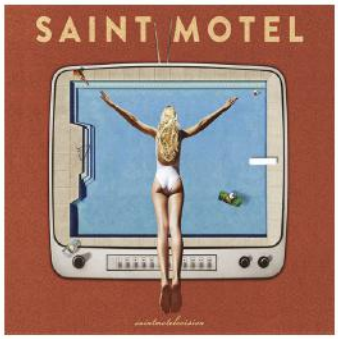








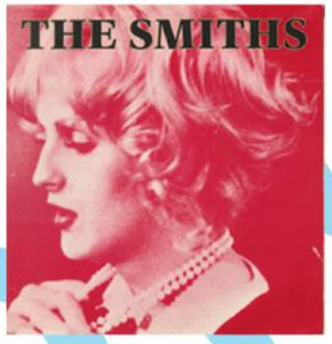


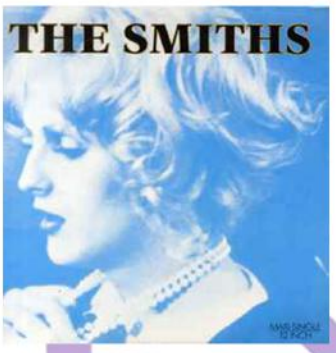












## LISTEN IN:

Sheila Take A bow, The Smiths

Candy Says, The Velvet Underground

Walk On The Wild Side, Lou Reed

Citadel, The Rolling Stones

Candy Darling, St. Vincent

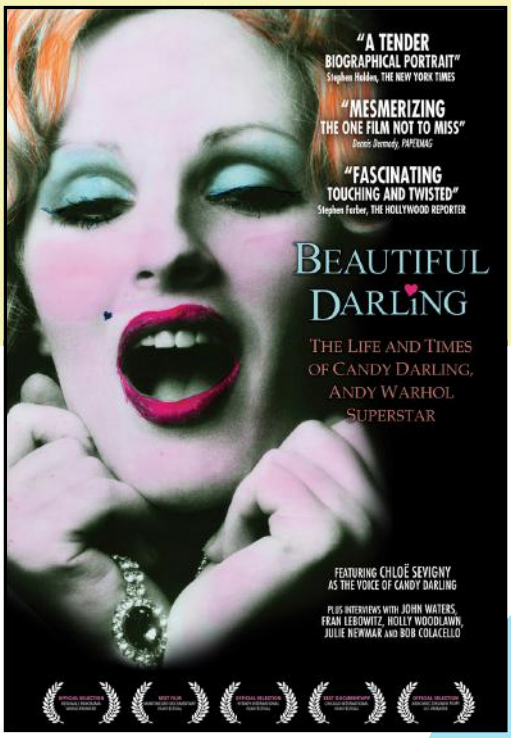
I am A Bird Now, Antony and The Johnsons

Lola, The Kinks

For Elise, Saint Motel

# ...AND JUST KNOW, THE SPOTLIGHT MISSES YOU.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| BEAUTIFUL DARLING | 7.3 | CANDY, AS HERSELF |
| KLUTE | 7.1 | DISCOTHEQUE PATRON (UNCREDITED) |
| THE DEATH OF MARIA MILBRAN | 6.4 | ACTRESS |
| THE MAGIC GARDEN OF STANLEY SWEETHEART | 6.3 | EXTRA |
| BRAND X | 6.1 | MARLENE D-TRAIN |
| SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS ARE... | 5.9 | KAREN RICHARDS, HARRY |
| WOMEN IN REVOLT | 5.7 | CANDY, AS HERSELF |
| LADY LIBERTY | 5.7 | TRANSVESTITE (UNCREDITED) |
| FLESH | 5.7 | TRANSVESTITE CANDY |
| DEATHHOUSE | 5.2 | GUEST STAR |



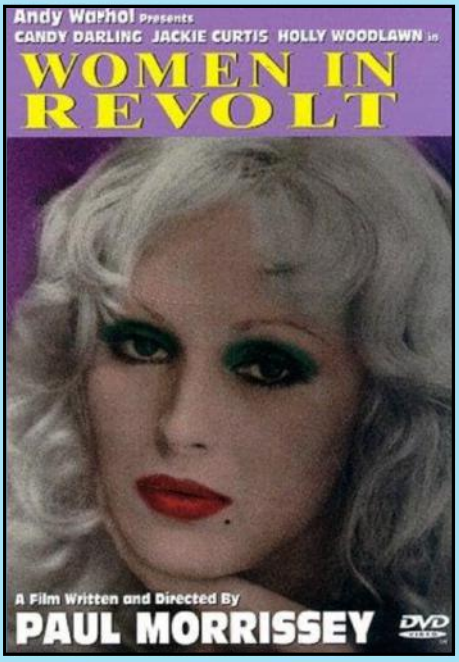







SCAN ME

















From the moment Candy entered this world in 1944, to her untimely passing in 1974, the LGBTQ+ community existed solely within the shadows of mainstream American life–where people from all walks of life were free to be vibrant, creative, and defiant, yet, deeply marginalized.

What is important about Candy's story, is not just about her ascension to the top of the Hollywood charts via acting skill, nor was it beauty, or personality, it was her strength.

In the 40's and 50's, conformity ideals were extreme. Homosexuality was criminalized, classified as a mental illness, and steeped in stigma. Transgender people, though present and living their most authentic lives, had very little language or support. Candy, growing up in Long Island suburbia, would have found few reflections of herself in the world surrounding her, and the few she did have, were coded hints in movies, whispers in magazines, or passing glimpses on city streets.

Then, in the 60's, the mask finally slipped. New York and other cities like San Francisco became increasingly more popular as underground queer comm–unities thrived in nightclubs, theater spaces, and bohemian art scenes. Candy found hers at Andy Warhol's Factory–where her gender, and her craft, finally collided and exploded into a new, even more stunning star in the dark night sky. She became a muse, a "superstar", and a symbol of visibility in a world that still refused to look directly at people like her. Transgender identity, however, remained especially misunderstood. The word "transgender" had just barely begun entering conversations, and Candy was often misgendered or sensationalized, even when she insisted that she was a woman.

## BY SIMPLY EXISTING, SHE WAS REVOLUTIONARY.

Then came Stonewall in 1969. The spark that lit the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement into action once more with protest, and pride, everywhere. But, there was also pain. The same era that birthed pride also brought increased surveillance, discrimination, and medical establishment that still pathologized and terrorized queer, and trans lives. Police raided bars, arrested trans women for "cross-dressing", and the FBI surveilled LGBTQ+ communities. Discrimination was legal– and jobs, housing, and healthcare could be denied without consequence. The media mocked and misgendered people like Candy, while the medical system labeled queerness a mental illness up until 1973. Accessing hormones meant facing stigma, or going underground and risking your life just to feel comfortable in your skin. For someone like Candy, the path to being seen was also one of being continuously misunderstood, exoticized, or erased.

The battle continues today, as trans individuals still fight for their right to healthcare, recognition, and safety. In many places, anti-LGBTQ+ laws are on the rise, with transgender rights under particular threat. In 2023, the *Florida Senate Bill 254* was passed, and prohibits gender affirming care for individuals under 18 and imposes restrictions on adults seeking such care. It also allows the state to take temporary custody of children who may be receiving gender-affirming care. Then, in 2024, a judge blocked the law from taking effect, but the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals later stayed the injunction, allowing the law to be enforced while appeals continue. In September of 2024, The Trevor Project, a leading LGBTQ+ suicide-prevention organization, posted on their Instagram page that the most recent anti-transgender laws have caused a 72% increase in suicide attempts among trans and nonbinary youth. According to Feminist, an Instagram page dedicated to being a global hub for intersectional feminism, in 2024 the Trans Legislation Tracker was tracking 43 bills throughout the United States that all consisted of anti-trans laws and regulations.
Most recently, Connor Ives, an American fashion designer, wore a t-shirt that read "Protect The Dolls", referring to trans women, who are often called "dolls", at the end of his show for London fashion week. Two months later in April, it has become an affectionate way of showing support for transgender women– Singer Troye Sivan wore it at Coachella, and Actor Pedro Pascal wore it for the London premiere of the film Thunderbolts– all just days after the supreme Court ruled that when the *Equality Act* referred to women, it only meant biological sex, and did not include transgender women.
Ives unintentionally turned a one-off statement outfit into a symbol of defiance in the face of a new societal order, sparking a modern awakening in the ongoing fight for transgender rights. Even as visibility grows, the community faces violence, discrimination, and challenges in securing basic rights—echoing the exact same struggles that defined earlier decades. Yet, as Candy did, the community persists, continuing to defy the forces that seek to diminish their existence.

me the happiest person in the world if you would at least call me and let me speak to you one more time. My number is 516 PY 8-4219. I know you'll call — I'll be waiting. Until I hear from you again my love — A thousand luscious kisses —

Candy Darling

SCAN ME

_BM.W

SCAN ME

**Designed, Researched, and Authored Exclusively By:**
Brianna M. Wilkins, BA (*candidate*) in Fine Arts,
Columbia College Chicago, 2025 © All rights reserved

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