

ARTFORUM

Jack Bankowsky



Jack Bankowsky, *Artforum* editor at large, is a critic and independent curator.
Photo: Timothy Greenfield-Sanders

3

"ANDY WARHOL: THE AMERICAN INDIAN PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS" (SKARSTEDT GALLERY, LONDON) Russell Means, the charismatic, self-promoting Oglala Sioux activist (and movie star), passed away just as Skarstedt settled into its new London digs with a show devoted to Warhol's 1976 portrait series of the most famous American Indian since Sitting Bull. Talk about timing! The death notices splashed across the papers lent the proceedings a frisson of immediacy—and an inevitable poignancy. Who knew that these paintings, long unrivaled in the hall of fame many believed the artist's latter oeuvre to be, would one day look like masterworks? Standing before these likenesses, I was swept up in the perfect Warholian storm of hustle and heroism that made this victim/victor of the American dream the artist's ideal sitter.



3. Andy Warhol, *The American Indian (Russell Means)*, 1976, silk-screen ink on canvas, 84 x 70". From the series "The American Indian," 1976.