



## Edinburgh Fringe 2018

### Warhol: Bullet Karma

*Garry Roost*



Genre: [Drama](#), [Solo Performance](#), [Solo Show](#)

Venue: [Grassmarket 3 Sweet](#)

Festival: [Edinburgh Fringe](#)

### Low Down

WARHOL: BULLET KARMA is a solo performance written and performed by Garry Roost as Andy Warhol and a host of his associates. Warhol's father left him a contribution toward his education to go to college. Recognised by his tutor as 'the most gifted and talented student I have ever seen', Andy eventually moved to New York and landed his dream job as a commercial artist. The factory, the extraordinary explosion of ideas and concepts, shook the Pop Art world. Shot by Valerie Solonas. Roost embodies the lives and tragic losses of those who lived or died in the factory. A darkly witty take on the American Pop Art

### Review

Garry Roost is a very talented solo performer who recently toured widely playing Francis Bacon in his play 'Pope Head: The secret life of Francis Bacon'. He now breathes life into another giant of twentieth century art, Andy Warhol. It's a tough challenge; Warhol had a quiet and reserved image in public but privately and at work in his studio, the Factory he became driven with his dream of becoming famous. Roost rises to this challenge with a good approximation of Warhol's voice and multi layered image. Wearing Warhol's trademark sunglasses we get both the quiet almost taciturn

Warhol who interviewers found frustrating and the loud and passionate private artist battling to break down artistic barriers with his vision of a bright almost comic book world.

Other characters are introduced by small changes of specs, a boa, a hat and of course well-defined changes in accent. Both Truman Capote and Francis Bacon have perfectly played cameos. Indeed, Capote comes out with one of the most memorable lines calling Warhol a 'Sphinx without a secret'. For me this is the nub of the play. Was Warhol and artist with no depth? Was he as he himself say just 'surface'? Roost explores this and cleverly makes no judgement leaving us to decide. He lays a very real Warhol out before us warts and all, never sugaring the pill.

I won't go through all the characters Roost plays or the whole story line because I want you to go see for yourself. Most of the facts are well known and documented, however I will say that the shooting was handled superbly, and the portrayal of Valerie Solanas was one of Roosts highlights.

It's a tough call playing a man with such a bland public image, but Roost does bring him convincingly to life and shows us the Warhol that the artist kept hidden. But I would have liked to have seen his eyes now and then, seen the man behind the sunglasses. One of the wonders of solo performance for an audience is the chance to make eye contact with the performer and vice versa, and while Roost did this with the minor characters I felt shut out from Warhol, perhaps that was intentional.

Roost has written a good script that goes along at quite a pace and it has been well directed by Kenneth Hadley but perhaps a few more moments to breathe are needed for both performer and audience, and perhaps some contemporary music, maybe Velvet Underground in those moments to give a sense of the times.

It's a strong performance which will get stronger as the run progresses and certainly warrants a bigger audience than it had when I saw it and certainly deserves to be a recommended show.

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