

Gavin Turk looks a scream ...

**CAROLINE
BOUCHER**

Gavin Turk – Me as Him

Riflemaker Gallery, London W1,
until 8 September

IF YOU SPED past these seven screenprints in the window of a gallery, you'd probably assume they were Andy Warhol self portraits. They share a little of the colour spectrum, the close-up intensity of the full-on face, the staring eyes.

And as art always comes full circle, here we are back again in London: the Warhol *Fright Wig* series was originally commissioned by the London dealer Anthony d'Offay and shown here in 1986. Months later Warhol was dead in a New York hospital after a routine



Me as Him (self-portrait camouflage on pink and blue), 2007, by Gavin Turk.

gallstone operation went wrong. He had insisted on wearing his wig throughout his stay in hospital.

Turk has taken the Warhol self-portraits as the basis of these works – an ironic homage and continuation of both artists' trait of reworking a found object (household products, the astonishingly arrogant blue plaque saying 'Gavin Turk worked here 1989-91' that failed him in his final degree show at the

Royal College of Art) and a natural progression of Turk's 1994 *Camouflage* self-portrait, the sinister *A Man Like Mr Kurtz*. Ironically, when Turk's career as a YBA was taking off and his Sid Vicious figure was the talk of the town, Warhol's catalogue was in decline (partly precipitated by the Warhol foundation desperately undervaluing his work to avoid onerous death duties).

Turk's series of seven heads are ranged round the small room. His face, full on, with hair spiked up into peaks and mournful, intense eyes, pretty much fills the canvas. The basic face shot is identical in each picture but each is worked in a different colour combination and drizzled, as were the Warhol originals, with a swirling camouflage pattern which comes to rest at a different point on each face. This subtle change combined with the different colours of each picture radically alters each work: for instance the pink face with a grey/beige camouflage overlay has a tender luminosity entirely absent from the orange with red/brown-overlay portrait, which has thoroughly menacing overtones. You find yourself in the middle of the room, turning in slow circles, watched by the seven pairs of solemn eyes.