

PRINT SUMMER 1994

## PEOPLE'S PARTIES: BILLY SULLIVAN / MARCELO KRASILCIC

*This week, Jennifer Krasinski, editorial director of Artforum digital, introduces Jack Pierson's "People's Parties: Billy Sullivan / Marcelo Krasilcic" from 1994's summer issue. Pierson's *Silver Jackie, 1991*, is not only the subject of David Rimanelli's essay "Stages of Grief," which appears in this month's issue, but is also featured on the cover.*

Once upon a time, before he was a celebrated artist, Jack Pierson was a wide-eyed newbie in New York with visions of the glitz the city would bequeath him. "*I would step out of the limo in Times Square, pausing to offer my arm to my companion Jerry Hall,*" he fantasized. "*I'd be a big hit and I could have whatever I wanted.*" True glamor is about aura, and no two are exactly alike. In "People's Parties," Pierson writes about the distinct role models he encountered in the work of painter Billy Sullivan and photographer Marcelo Krasilcic. Where Sullivan and his sitters appear to thrive and bask, carefree, in the light of attention, Krasilcic's seem nonplussed, at times utterly unaware. If the artists have one thing in common, it's that they both capture a kind of ease of being. In the words Sullivan offered to Pierson when he needed a little advice: "It's a party. We're all fabulous. Just relax."

—*Jennifer Krasinski*

**I COULDN'T STAND** Billy Sullivan the first time I met him. It was a few years ago, at a chic-ish sort of inner-circle dinner party of the kind I had lately been finding myself at the periphery of—a confab of art/fashion/magazine mavens. The food was superb. Anyway, I was the new blood and the whole thing had me internally thrashing with terror: everyone there had a history with each other, a certain élan, knew the names of



roads in Amagansett. Billy seemed like some kind of leather-boy bullfrog, completely at home croaking away in this pond, where I felt like a turtle trying to make a small raft out of cigarettes rather than pulling into my shell and sinking down down down. (“Rigid” was my middle name.) Of course I resented his comfortableness: I felt like I was eavesdropping even when I was being spoken to directly; this guy worked the room like he was brushing his teeth. The odd thing is that when I was a teenager my arriving-in-New York fantasies ran toward: *I would step out of the limo in Times Square, pausing to offer my arm to my companion Jerry Hall. We’d bump into Pat Ast and decide to go to Reno Sweeney and see our friend Bette Midler. The show would be great, so we’d hang out backstage talking and laughing. Some comtessa or other would find us all amusing and invite us to stay on her yacht in Greece. I’d be a big hit and I could have whatever I wanted.*

This is how it seems in Billy’s pictures. This is the joy in them. This is their fragrance—fun with people, pretty, exciting, glamorous people, and you know he’s had it, and you begin to believe you can too. To some this is perhaps not a priority, but if you come to New York, or if you chose to stay here after being raised here, ten’ll get you twenty that to be around the pretty, the exciting, the glamorous, figures high on your list of desires. It does mine.

The thing I like about Billy’s pictures is that even though they’re done in ink and pastel, they look like they’re lit with a flashbulb, and they probably are. He manages to take these very voyeuristic snapshots of scenes he’s very involved in, rendering them in an amazingly fluid way—like a quick-sketch artist on the Riviera. He makes our memories memorable and our desires desirable.

Now that I’ve let my defenses drop, Billy has become a close friend. To speak of his friendship is to speak of his art. They both say the same thing.

**Me:** I can’t bear them. They’re off my list.

**Billv:** Darling, there’s no point in excluding anyone. *Everyone* likes them. Have a little patience.



**Me:** Well, I don't care—I'm not having them.

**Billy:** Oh, you've got to get over that, doll. Everybody's just trying to have a little fun. It's a party. We're all fabulous. Just relax.

**Me:** Oh, OK.

Marcelo Krasilic's photographs urge me toward another locale of narcissistic identification, another movie I imagine my life to be. A foreign film: *many of us are sharing our youth. We have divided our hope, our sexuality, and our beliefs; we have it all because we have each other. We live together in a big farmhouse and pedal bicycles to the beach. I love him and he loves me but she loves him and yet another loves her, in her blindness to it all, in her sweater. We care about each other, dispassionately dotted around the frame of this world, in this moment before the world begins. Someone stands still. Someone else moves on.*

In the midst of a major blowout between me and my best friend, he screamed at me, "You cast your friends like you're art-directing a picture. Well I refuse to be the *blond beach boy*. I'm not an object like the rest of your 'friends!'" Marcelo could never be accused of this, nor would I be inclined to place him in an earlier genre that focuses on colorful or "interesting" subjects, set up and bathed in pathos as they play out William Burroughs fantasies. The people he chooses to point a camera at aren't especially photogenic; the situations they are found in don't cry out for attention either. But the moments they inhabit have a peculiar sort of intelligent innocence that fills these pictures with an almost gestural-seeming beauty. The art director in me wants needlessly to prop these photographs with worn copies of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, or brighten the wardrobes of Marcelo's friends. The nonchalance of his esthetic frightens me, but the luxury of his emotions can comfort us all.



Top row, left to right:  
Billy Sullivan, *Man and Woman*, 1992-94, ink on paper, 20 1/2 x 17";  
Marilyn Minkin, *James, Earl*,  
November 1993, color print,  
20 x 17"; Marilyn Minkin,  
*Man and Earl*, February  
1994, color print, 20 x 17"; Billy  
Sullivan, *Spencer*, 1993-94, ink  
on paper, 20 1/2 x 17".



Top row, left to right: Billy  
Sullivan, *Black Stage*, 1993-94,  
ink on paper, 24 x 20"; Billy Sul-  
lan, *Matthew*, 1993-94, ink on  
paper, 20 x 17"; Billy Sullivan,  
*Bar May 6*, 1993-94, ink on  
paper, 20 x 17"; Billy Sullivan,  
*The Man*, 1993-94, ink on  
paper, 20 x 17"; Minkin (top, left  
to right): Billy Sullivan, *David*,  
1993-94, ink on paper, 12 x 17";  
Billy Sullivan, *David*, 1993-94,  
ink on paper, 20 x 17"; Billy  
Sullivan, *The Bachelor Party*,  
1993-94, ink on paper, 14 x 17";  
Billy Sullivan, *The Woman*,  
1993-94, ink on paper, 12 x 17";  
Sullivan (top, left to right): Billy  
Sullivan, *Chloe*, 1993-94, ink  
on paper, 12 x 17"; Billy  
Sullivan, *Blue Door 1*, 1993-94,  
ink on paper, 16 x 17"; Billy  
Sullivan, *W*, 1993-94, ink on  
paper, 12 1/2 x 17"; Billy Sullivan,  
*Wanda May*, 1993-94, ink on  
paper, 14 x 17".





**BILLY SULLIVAN / MARCELO KRASILCIC**

# PEOPLE'S PARTIES

**JACK PIERSON**

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Left: Billy Sullivan, *Walker and Ford*, 1993-94, ink on paper, 20 x 17"; right: Billy Sullivan, *Red Wings*, 1993-94, ink on paper, 20 x 24"



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Marcelo Knoflich, *Luís,  
Rafael, Adriano and Ruth,  
Portugal*, 1995, color print,  
20 x 24" Marcelo Knoflich,  
*Tom and Maria, Brazil*,  
1995, color print, 20 x 24"  
Marcelo Knoflich, *80 and  
Marcelo, New York*, 1995,  
color print, 20 x 24"  
Marcelo Knoflich, *80 and  
Luciana, Brazil*, 1990,  
color print, 20 x 24"

