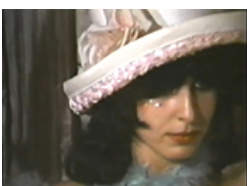


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Colette in *Justine and the Boys*, 1979



Jeff Koons and Colette in *Justine and the Boys*, 1979



Artist Jim Sutcliffe in Colette drag in *Justine and the Boys*, 1979



A scene from *Justine and the Boys*, 1979, by Robert Polidori, with artists Taro Suzuki and Joe Lewis



Richard Prince in *Justine and the Boys*, 1979



Alan Jones, right, as the art dealer in *Justine and the Boys*, 1979

NOT A CAMP CLASSIC

by Charlie Finch

Last December, the most irritating art film of all time, Robert Polidori's 1979 bomb, *Justine and the Boys*, starring Colette, Jeff Koons and Richard Prince, was posted on YouTube. In four months, 45 people have managed to make it all the way through all five parts.

Shot in performance artist Colette's longtime Pearl Street "environment," which was destroyed by the wrecking ball in 2007, *Justine and the Boys* features the bare-breasted performance diva, then 26, mimicking the nagging persona that Holly Woodlawn perfected, while artist Jim Sutcliffe does a drag version of Colette doing a reverse drag of Holly. All the while, loud hammering, bad disco music and a mercifully out-of-sync soundtrack add to the viewer's headache-in-waiting.

Those wondering why Jeff Koons adopted a robotic public persona need only observe his naturalistic effort in the first 20 minutes of this vid disaster. Seated on the edge of Colette's silk-lined bathtub, while the droll diva primps herself fully clothed in a bubble bath while wiggling her boobies, Koons, 24 at the time, is a dead ringer for today's teen sensation Justin Bieber. Dressed in a sharkskin suit with matching tie, Koons answers the phone, reads an art magazine and banters with Colette, observing that her puke blue nail polish is "a nice color," referring to her garish red lipstick as "painting yourself" and reminding the brunette tubette that he has "to leave in 10 minutes."

Nevertheless, Koons is a refreshing ingénue compared to an uncomfortable Richard Prince, playing Colette's husband, who arrives midway through this abortion, dressed like a riverboat gambler, desperately trying to interject one of his flat "jokes," as artist Taro Suzuki does a Bruce Lee imitation and Colette plays horrible air guitar for a bunch of queeny admirers. The whole effect is akin to watching some D-list actors try out for a 1950s vampire film, yet both Koons and Prince have a touch of James Dean about them, when dodging the pratfalls of their untalented companions.

Polidori's film ends with long-disappeared critic Alan Jones leading a few "collectors" through Colette's satin and pink body of work, quoting one price as "\$37,000," sucking in his cheeks and fondling his second-hand overcoat, while a skeptical galleriste rightly dismisses Colette's efforts as "a gimmick." Throughout the chaos, a tall tuxedoed gentleman stands around silently with a twinkle in his eye, wondering if he rang the wrong apartment buzzer, avoiding the mugging boobs and flying boobies.

If he made it through this awful film, perhaps you can, too. And at least you'll get a glimpse of the boy who once was Koons.

A new exhibition by Colette "Girl Talk: Colette," Apr. 22-May 22, 2010, is currently on view at Pavel Zoubok Gallery, 533 West 23rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10011.

CHARLIE FINCH is co-author of *Most Art Sucks: Five Years of Coagula* (Smart Art Press).

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