



## WHO'S NEXT?

"MY PHOTOGRAPHS ARE ABOUT YOUTH CULTURE AND THINGS THAT YOU DO when you're young," says Ryan McGinley, 25, who is currently showing a retrospective of his work at the Whitney Museum, where many of his pictures, taken with a spontaneous savoir faire, feature his friends in the buff. "Sex is a big part of it, and so is experimenting with drugs. That ties in with the theme of the show—my work is about saying that we *are* young and that we're just learning to live life."

The show, entitled "The Kids Are Alright," takes its name from a series of McGinley's self-published books, compiled both as gifts for his friends—who, having been photographed incessantly, wanted to see his pictures—and as a promotional tool he'd send out to his favorite artists and magazines. They worked, and now so does McGinley, in his day job as photo editor for bluntly outrageous Brooklyn monthly *Vice*, and by shooting the stars for *Index*. The biggest collector of his work is Sir Elton John—Anna Sui is a close second. Among his many ongoing projects, he includes "The Puking Series" (self-portraits in which he photographs himself vomiting) and "The Polaroid Project" (snapping candid portraits of clubbers on the town against a white background—a sort of anti-party party picture). So strong is his personal philosophy, it bleeds into his editorial work. "I would like to shoot Macaulay Culkin," McGinley says. "He represents something to me—in the way that I'm talking about elements in my work, having important symbols or whatever, like a BMX bike or a Converse shoe. He represents this kind of boy who sums it all up for my generation." "Crash" pictured above from the exhibit "The Kids Are Alright," Whitney Museum of American Art, 945 Madison Ave., (212) 570-3676. Feb. 1–May 18. ★ BY JONATHAN DURBIN