

Brooklyn Museum

Teacher Resource Packet

Andy Warhol: The Last Decade

June 18–September 12, 2010





Andy Warhol

The Last Decade

About the Exhibition

Andy Warhol: The Last Decade is the first U.S. museum survey to examine the late work of American artist Andy Warhol (1928–1987). The exhibition includes nearly fifty paintings that reveal the artist's vitality, energy, and renewed spirit of experimentation. During this time Warhol produced more works, in a considerable number of series and on a vastly larger scale, than at any other point in his forty-year career. It was a decade of great artistic development for him, during which a dramatic transformation of his style took place alongside the introduction of new techniques. Warhol expanded upon his artistic and business ventures with commissioned portraits, print series, television productions, and fashion projects, but he also reengaged with painting.

About the Artist

Born Andrew Warhola in 1928, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Warhol began his career as a commercial illustrator after graduating from the Carnegie Institute of Technology and moving to New York City in 1949. In the early 1960s, Warhol began mechanically transferring images borrowed from popular culture to create vibrant new works that would alter the course of American art. He drew on consumer culture and the mass media, from Campbell's Soup cans and Coca-Cola bottles to Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley. Although Warhol hand-painted some of his artworks, many were created using an application technique known as screenprinting, whereby photographic images could be transferred onto canvas or paper. This process allowed him to generate artworks easily and inexpensively in large quantities. The mechanical nature of screenprinting parallels the factory production of consumer goods; in fact, Warhol referred to his art studio as "The Factory."

In the late 1970s, Warhol developed a new interest in abstraction, first with his *Oxidations* and *Shadows* series and later with his *Yarn*, *Rorschach*, and *Camouflage* paintings. His return to the hand-painted image in the 1980s was inspired by his collaborative works with the artists Francesco Clemente, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Keith Haring. Warhol created several television series during the last decade of his career, including *Fashion*, *Andy Warhol's T.V.*, and a series that aired on MTV, *Andy Warhol's Fifteen Minutes*. In addition, he founded *Interview* magazine, which included conversation-style celebrity interviews. Warhol died in 1987 from complications following gallbladder surgery.

About Pop Art

Warhol was a leading artist of the Pop art movement. “Pop” is derived from the word *popular*. Artists who worked in this style blurred the lines between fine art and commercial culture through their depiction of familiar everyday objects and images. Pop art originated in Britain in the mid-1950s and emerged in the United States later in that decade. Pop artists reacted to ideas set forth by Abstract Expressionist artists and art critics of the 1940s and 1950s who emphasized the expressive nature of painting and regarded pure abstraction as the essence of good art. In response, Pop artists presented accessible, recognizable, and realistic imagery drawn from popular culture and often created works using mechanical production. Other Pop artists include Pauline Boty, Chryssa, Jim Dine, Niki de Saint Phalle, Robert Indiana, Yayoi Kusama, Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, Patty Oldenburg, Marisol, James Rosenquist, and Tom Wesselmann.

Collaborative Paintings

In the 1980s, Warhol collaborated with Francesco Clemente, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Keith Haring on a series of paintings. The idea first came from the Swiss art dealer Bruno Bischofberger, who commissioned Clemente, Basquiat, and Warhol to create four paintings each and then circulate the canvases to the others to add their contributions. Later, Warhol and Basquiat created collaborative paintings while working in the same studio. Although the two artists were of different generations and had opposite working habits and styles, they were good friends and respected each other's work. They rarely painted at the same time. Warhol had a strict working routine, whereas Basquiat, the younger of the two, was more impulsive. Basquiat's style expressed fluidity and improvisation, with graffiti-like elements. It was during these collaborations that Warhol returned to painting by hand, applying paint directly on the canvas with a brush rather than using the screenprinting process.

Questions for Viewing

Choose an artwork by Andy Warhol that interests you. What do you notice?

Warhol included vibrant colors in his art. Often, he used a palette (or set) of complementary colors in order to make each color vibrant or stand out. Complementary pairs include blue/orange, yellow/purple, and green/red. Which colors did Warhol use in the work you selected? Is there a complementary-color pairing?

Warhol often depicted famous people and consumer products from the time period in which he lived. Does the artwork you have chosen include such images? What are they? Find images of these objects or people on-line and compare them to the images you see in Warhol's artwork. What differences can you find? What is similar? How does Warhol's presentation of the image alter its meaning?

Warhol's artwork was either hand-painted or screenprinted. Look closely at the surface of the work you selected. What technique did Warhol use? Explain your answer.

Do you think Warhol created this artwork on his own? To help you decide, look closely for evidence of two different styles. In your opinion, does the artwork look unified? Explain your answer.

Activities

Art and Writing Activity

The artist Keith Haring said, “The quality of [Warhol's collaborative] paintings mirrors the quality of the relationship. The sense of humor that permeates all the works recalls the laughter that surrounded them while they were being made.”¹ Discuss the meaning of this quote. Then work together with a partner (or partners) to create an artist book that combines your unique styles, following a process like that used by Warhol and his collaborators. Using a durable, unlined journal or artist's pad, draw and write freely in the book for one day. The next day pass the book to your partner. If there are multiple partners, continue to pass the book on until everyone has contributed. The goal of this activity is to respond to what has already been drawn in the book. Discuss this process with all of the participants. How did it feel to allow someone to respond to, draw over, or change your work? How did seeing someone else's imagery and writing inspire you? Did this activity allow you to feel more connected or disconnected from your collaborators? Explain your response.

1. Joseph D. Ketner II, *Andy Warhol: The Last Decade*, exh. cat. (New York: Prestel Publishing, 2009), p. 205.

Media Activity

Warhol's television series *Andy Warhol's Fifteen Minutes* featured celebrities discussing lifestyles and cultural interests of the 1980s. Think about contemporary teen lifestyles and identities (sports, music, fashion, religion, and relationships). Work in groups to select a lifestyle or identity issue relevant to teens. Create a short video segment to explore the characteristics and qualities that define the issue you have chosen. Incorporate a range of perspectives rather than one point of view. Consider casting, setting, recording, editing, and distribution (see below).

CASTING

Identify a cast to feature in the film, including narrators, interviewers, and interviewees. Research and write a script with accurate information for the narrator to use as an introduction. Create a list of questions for the interviewer to ask.

SETTING

Identify where the interviews and/or narrations will take place. Decide whether to have an on-site location or still background.

RECORDING

Choose your video and audio equipment (cellular phone, Webcam, digital camera, camcorder, etc.). Remember to test image and sound to ensure quality and technical compatibility.

EDITING

Use Windows Movie Maker or iMovie to edit video footage. Consider adding special effects, animation, sound effects, and still images.

DISTRIBUTION

Discuss where and how to present your film. Consider using social networking resources to encourage others to discuss and respond.

E-mail a copy of your film to teen.programs@brooklynmuseum.org. Selected films will be posted to the Brooklyn Museum Teen Facebook page. Visit the page at <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/brooklynmuseumteens?v=info&ref=ts>.

Resources

<http://edu.warhol.org/>

This online resource created by The Andy Warhol Museum celebrates the life and work of Andy Warhol. The site offers resources and lesson plans for educators teaching in the arts and humanities. It includes in-depth unit lesson plans, one-day activities, and artist biographies in English, Spanish, and Russian. Visit the Education pages of the Web site to find information on school, youth, and family programs, as well as activities highlighting the works and processes of Warhol and other relevant artists. Site resources include lesson plans for grades K–12 and color images of Warhol's work, in PDF.

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/episodes/andy-warhol/a-documentary-film/44/>

This Web site highlights an episode of PBS's *American Masters* documenting the life and career of Andy Warhol. It features a biography of Warhol, an interview with the film's director (Ric Burns), and classroom lessons for educators.

Ketner II, Joseph D. *Andy Warhol: The Last Decade*. Exh. cat. New York: Prestel Publishing, 2009.

This is the companion catalogue to the exhibition *Andy Warhol: The Last Decade*, organized by the Milwaukee Art Museum. The catalogue features color images of works from the exhibition and essays by Keith Hartley and Gregory Volk, and contributions by Keith Haring, Julian Schnabel, and Bruno Bischofberger.

Warhola, James. *Uncle Andy's: A Faabbbulous Visit with Andy Warhol*. New York: Putnam, 2003.

Written and illustrated by James Warhola, nephew of Andy Warhol, this award-winning book explores the life and work of the famous artist from a child's perspective. James Warhola recalls his eclectic childhood, including his father's career as a junkman and a surprise visit to the home of his uncle and grandmother in New York City. The book explains how his father's and uncle's relationships with objects enabled the young boy to believe that anything can become art.

This resource was written by Cheri Ehrlich and Keonna Hendrick, with assistance from Alexa Fairchild, Education Division; and Sharon Matt Atkins, Exhibitions Division.

Andy Warhol: The Last Decade is organized by the Milwaukee Art Museum. The exhibition was curated by Joseph D. Ketner II, Henry and Lois Foster Chair of Contemporary Art, Emerson College, Boston. The Brooklyn Museum presentation is organized by Sharon Matt Atkins, Associate Curator of Exhibitions, Brooklyn Museum.

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Cover (detail) and page 2: Nat Finkelstein (American, 1933–2009). *Andy Being Photographed*, circa 1966, printed 1987. Gelatin silver print, sheet 19 3/4 x 24 in. (50.2 x 61 cm). Brooklyn Museum, Gift of the son of Abe and Esther Finkelstein, a Brooklyn cab driver and his wife, 87.150.6

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