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Towards a Democratic Art, Warhol and The Simulacrum
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Introduction

1962 in America was the climax of the Cold War. It was also the year in which the artist Andy Warhol brought many of his important ideas in painting to fruition. Warhol has been written about in an enormous amount of published material; autobiographies, biographies, exhibition catalogues and many texts devoted to more specific analysis. In this vast array of printed texts very little indeed is devoted to Warhol in order to position him in the broad historical context of America in the period in which he grew up and made his art.

The following two chapters attempt to do this in relation to the underlying dynamic of democratic forces, for example, between the individual and the wider community. This examination is set into the historical perspective of its time during the 50s and 60s when America felt itself under threat. An aggressive communist ideology had already triumphed in China and now Indochina was at risk. The Soviet Union was perceived to be ahead in crucial areas such as space technology and had rapidly expanded its nuclear capabilities; the Cold War was in full swing. The fear surrounding these events and the peripheral worries surrounding the effects of radioactivity and the vastness of nuclear power all contributed to a climate saturated with acute anxiety. Warhol's work is permeated with this atmosphere.

Warhol went out of his way to be enigmatic whilst protesting there was nothing in his art but what you saw on the surface. His cryptic utterances and the accessibility of his images has left a rich field for theorists to plant psychoanalytic, referential, post-structuralist and other ideas in order to harvest lengthy treaties on Warhol's art. Some of the ideas are looked at in chapter three. This chapter also looks at the legacy of Plato's

Theory of Art in relation to the idea of the simulacrum; it queries too the effect Plato's ideas had on art and the politics of the everyday.

The last chapter deals with the idea of death in Warhol's images; what did he mean by saying that everything he was doing was death? The significance of the accident in relation to his silkscreen technique is also investigated to see if it relates to the idea of death in the image. Two other artists who have used accident and chance in their work are briefly looked at.

Warhol is one of the most important artists of the past thirty years. His paintings remain relevant even though few commentators would agree on why. His popularity too continues unabated as proved by the record attendance at I.M.M.A.'S 1997 Warhol exhibition entitled *After The Party*.

Chapter One

Liberty, Democracy & Individualism in America

Very soon after the expedient alliances between the Soviet Union and western democracies came to an end, after the Second World War, the earlier confrontational positions began to re-emerge along ideological battle lines. The Soviet Union and other communist countries formed the Soviet Block countries in the east and America together with a scattered group of democracies formed the western democracies. With the added new ingredient of the atomic weapons this confrontational approach led to the era of the Cold War. The climax of the Cold War period was between 1960 and 1962; this was the most dangerous time of all. This short period was so tense that even minor events such as an incident on the border between East and West Berlin deteriorated very soon into a nuclear stand-off with each side threatening mutual annihilation. After 1962 the tension eased considerably leaving a space for diplomacy and common sense to temper and compromise where necessary.

To some extent the ideological battles of the Cold War era mirror events in fifth century Greece when the very concept of democracy was forged in a period of intense conflict and change. The idea that the authority of the state was there essentially to put into effect the will of the majority was opposed by those who preferred a concept of a state ruled by a select hierarchy versed in philosophy and science; a state run on utopian principles. This original confrontation between two ideologies; one an egalitarian and pragmatic system, the other a system aspiring to utopian standards became superseded by

other historical events but then re-emerged as an important dynamic in Enlightenment concerns.

In certain accounts of western civilisation liberty has been presented as an intrinsic ingredient from Plato right up to today where it is thought to reside in western democracies. The American 20th century version of civilisation maintains that ideas central to democracy began with the Greeks and led eventually to contemporary liberal democracy. David Gress who maintains that liberty grew in the west because it fed the interests of power challenges this version of events. Gress traces the development of centrist liberalism in America to after the First World War thence to its universal acceptance after the Second World War culminating in its decline after 1965 due in part to the Vietnam war and its divisive effects on American Society. The various discourses, which contested what Gress calls the 'Grand Narrative', were already undermining it well before 1965. These discourses eventually permitted a variety of theories to emerge in a new post-modern era.

The 'Grand Narrative' to which Gress refers is the account of western identity, which defined liberty as a philosophical principle with its genesis in Classical Greece. This essentially abstract idea of liberty had, it was thought, always to be defended against the changing realities of events, which sought compromise leading inevitably to change and a consequent dilution of principle. The favourite Greek in the Grand Narrative' was Socrates who appeared in it as: "...the inventor of moral individualism..."(Gress 1998 p.41) America's preference for this particular aspect of Classical Greek tradition as opposed to the Christian tradition can be explained when it is observed how compatible this reading of ancient individualism is with an ideology of materialism linked to

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economic growth and how inconvenient in this respect Christian teaching is. Whilst remaining essentially faithful to Christian religion America had necessarily to adopt what was a contradictory stance by maintaining both a materialistic ideology and a Christian morality. A crucial testing of these contradictory positions surfaced in 1961 during the nuclear shelter debate when Americans materialistic individualism was measured against the Christian virtue of love thy neighbour.

Conor Cruise O'Brien in his series of Massey lectures for the University of Toronto also traces American democratic roots via the Enlightenment to "Plato's Socratic dialogue". (O'Brien, 1995, p. 156) The writer worries that this Enlightenment tradition of democracy may not be as robust as the longer more entrenched traditions of nationalism and religion. O'Brien maintains that following the First World War democracies were so repulsed by the horrors it unleashed that thereafter peace was their goal but this peace is problematic; a classic example being the appeasement of Hitler in the years immediately before the Second World War. In relation to this he believes that the main problem today for democracies is the appeasement of the popular voter as revealed in the endless series of popularity contests to elect politicians and leaders. This inbuilt tendency, O'Brien says, has become more and more central with the advent of mass communications such as Television, radio, magazines and so forth. In America a president tends to heed the opinion pole ratings; which in turn reflect how well he has performed before the media. In these circumstances an honestly held conviction, which subsequently shows up as not popular, may be played down or dropped altogether. This relentless seeking after popularity is a serious problem for democracies generally and especially for America as a kind of flagship democracy.

Of the few presidents of America who have defied this kind of popular pressure O'Brien cites Dwight Eisenhower as a good example, giving the Suez Canal Crisis in 1956 as an incident in which the President went completely against what was calculated by Britain and other countries to be in his best political interests. Another example of this, which O'Brien does not mention, but which had an important bearing on American nuclear arms and the balance of power in the late 1950s was Eisenhower's resistance to his own generals urging him to act militarily against the Soviet Union. He told them: "You can't have this kind of war....there just aren't enough bulldozers to scrape the bodies off the streets."(Sherry, 1995, p.218)

At the heart of American democracy is the Declaration of Independence and at the heart of that is the Enlightenment tradition. These Enlightenment ideas are more firmly established in America than anywhere else because they are entrenched in "...the massive edifice of sacral nationalism." (O'Brien, 1995, p.59) This merging of rationalism with the religion of nationhood along with the powerful force of Christianity is illustrated in Eisenhower's introduction of a National Prayer Breakfast in 1953 in the Cold War era. The assumption is that: "God had to be on the side of the United States against godless communism" (O'Brien, 1995, p.60)

Chapter Two

Warhol Democracy & the Cold War

For a time in America during the 1950s the perception was that democracy was being undermined in a relentless ideological infiltration of its institutions; Hollywood was just one example exposed as being a hotbed of Marxism. The reality, however, was that following its enormous military and economic efforts during the Second World War, the Soviet Union was exhausted and had little scope for further military expansion. The West nevertheless looked with anxiety and fear at the vulnerability of such areas as Indochina as possible sites for communist infiltration.

One scenario envisaged, in which the communists whether Chinese or Russian, got a foothold in one country in Indochina, thus leading to the collapse, one by one, of all the rest became known as the Domino Theory. Fear of communism was not confined to countries near China or Russia; America had an anti-red purge in the fifties led by Senator Eugene Mc Carthy and his committee for the investigation of un-American activities. Eric Hobsbawn points out that of the democracies in the world, in the era dealt with here only America elected a leader, John F. Kennedy, on an anti-Communist platform, despite the fact that the danger within the country was virtually non-existent. Clearly Kennedy played politics whilst engaged in an attempt to demonstrate that there was an immediate threat, whereas the issue was not the menace of the communists but; "…..the maintenance of a real U.S supremacy." (Hobsbawn, 1995, p.237) The actual

danger was nuclear annihilation if things went wrong and this became a real possibility through Kennedy's engagement in political brinkmanship.

A particular worrying period was the late fifties and early sixties when Russia launched sputnik, resumed testing ever more powerful nuclear weapons and provocatively walled off East Berlin. For the first time Russia appeared to be outdistancing the West in technology and in particular, space technology. On the cultural front in aesthetics "....an especial and constant attraction for theorists."(Lunn, 1982, p.5) Marxist writers such as Brecht, Adorno, Benjamin and Lukacs were gaining ground in academic discourse in America and especially in France. Plainly the Cold War was being fought on many fronts. In the period from 1961 to 1962 the Cold War, which had been relatively evenly managed by successive U.S and Russian governments up to then, suddenly looked as if it might get out of hand and despite all efforts slide inexorably into full nuclear war. In November 1962, *Newsweek* magazine wrote that the world had been "........close to the nuclear brink."

In an interview with Gene Swenson in 1963, Andy Warhol (1928-1987) begins the conversation with his own interpretation of democracy and communism: "Someone said that Brecht wanted everybody to think alike, I want everybody to think alike. But Brecht wanted to do it through communism, in a way. Russia is doing it under government. It's happening here all by itself without being under strict government; so if it's working without trying, why can't it work without being communist?" (Crow, 1947, p.66) In America, in the period under discussion, the mass media was the system in which politicians strove for popular control. J. F. Kennedy was acknowledged as a highly skilled practitioner in the art of rhetoric and was also a figure who looked well on

television; two very important accomplishments in a country with in 1959: ".. 143 million radios..." and ..."50 million televisions." (Belgrad 1998, p.224) However, with all of Kennedy's undoubted glamour and his rhetorical abilities he and his administration was unable, despite the advantage of a climate of fear and anxiety, to convince the American population in 1961 that the building of nuclear bomb shelters was a patriotic duty; an ultimate defence of democracy.

The public's revulsion in America in 1961 over the nuclear shelter issue and their awakening, after a long period in the fifties when the realities of nuclear weapons was never really faced up to, was a decided victory for democracy. It revealed to the government a strong desire for compromise on nuclear arms, not confrontation. This desire for compromise was however postponed in 1962 when Kennedy showed on T.V. what appeared to be hard evidence, in the form of photographs, of Soviet missile bases in Cuba. Kennedy got popular support for his tough stance against Khrushchev's continued determination to send missile equipment to Cuba. The subsequent crisis almost plunged the world into nuclear war. Eric Hobsbawm maintains the whole crisis was unnecessary because Kennedy had already been told that the Soviet Missiles "...made no difference to the strategic balance though a considerable difference to presidential public relations." (Hobsbawm,1994, p.230) The secret deal which Kennedy made with Khrushchev to remove missiles from Turkey if he removed the missiles from Cuba ensured that both sides could legitimately claim victory so that: " Khrushchev regarded the settlement as a great victory for his diplomacy." (Isaacs, p. 203) The deal was not revealed in the American media and Kennedy's party, the democrats, went on to huge electoral success in the Senate elections ten days after the crisis.

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In the early 1960s in America the present and the future were full of the possibilities of instant death. In this climate of fear and anxiety to consume unthinkingly was at least an alternative. Warhol at the end of his thoughts on democracy and communism in the Gene Stevenson interview says: "Everybody looks alike and acts alike, and we are getting more and more that way. I think everybody should be a machine, I think everybody should like everybody. (T.Crow,1997, p.66) To simulate reality like a machine, to be a machine in a society where to consume is one of the few palatable realities is Warhol's way of responding as an artist.

The Dada artists responded to the massive slaughter of the First World War by repudiating any notion of progress for humanity. Any society, they believed which could tolerate killing on such a scale, was along with its arts, to be despised and ridiculed. The word Dada means infantile sound and the Dada code was not to have a code. It eschewed manifestos and instead preferred absolute nonsense. A revival and a renewed interest in the Dada movement had already taken place in America when the Arensberg Collection of Dada works went on public display in 1954. In 1959 R. Sabel published his book on Marcel Duchamp. Alternative concepts such as these were already undermining the hegemony of Abstract Expressionism and its claim to be a peculiarly American movement somehow free of the everyday politics of compromise. Pop was kitsch because it brought everyday aspects of consumerism into art, according to Clement Greenberg.

The idea of the purity of mathematics and geometry which Plato sought to incorporate into his Republic in his search for the "…ideal, eternal, unchanging Form…" (Gottlieb 1947,p.24) reappeared towards the end of the 19th century but this time it was applied to art.; the purity of Einstein's Theory of Relativity and Poincare's essays on

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geometry influenced cubism (Millar 1997,p.41) A strain of this idea of art as something pure and associated with laws, as in Greenberg's ideas on flatness, of two dimensionality, remained as a strong current in painting up to the 1960s. The overturning of pure science into the utter negativity of nuclear bombs equally undermined the notion of a 'pure' art.

"Entire generations grew up under the shadow of global nuclear battles which, it was widely believed, could break out any moment and devastate humanity." (Hobsbawm, p.226) To say that Andy Warhol's work is essentially democratic, in view of the accessibility of the image, is not to restrict this accessibility to any one social stratum. Quite the reverse is true, for soon after the initial shock of the images in the early 60's commentators from a wide variety of academic and non-academic backgrounds began to read a range of values and significance, some bad some good, into his work. There was in the period a particularly urgent need to define democracy in America: the defence of democracy in 1962 came perilously close to whether or not Americans were prepared to wage thermo-nuclear war with losses estimated at between one million and one hundred million dead in America alone. Warhol was about fourteen when American planes dropped the first atomic bombs on Japan and later, during the very climax of the subsequent Cold War period from 1960 to 1962, he was making his most important work.

The political and social dimensions of the period in question can be examined for their probable impact on Warhol; a whole nation was traumatised as it found itself on the brink of a war with consequences of such awful potential it raised questions of human sanity. Warhol grew up during this anxious time but he mentions the bomb only briefly and only one of his images among the many hundreds of images actually depicts an atomic explosion. However, the bomb and its psychological effects,

permeate his images, he is after all a child of the atomic age, which began in 1945. It seems extraordinary therefore that, apart from Thomas Crow, hardly any mention is made of these momentous events in American history by the writers in the huge mass of published material on Warhol. For example, Victor Bockris in his biography does not mention it nor does David Bourdon in his 432-page volume entitled "Warhol " and published in 1989.

There was a linkage during the Cold War period in which democracy, consumer goods and high technology stood for the American way of life and nuclear deterrence was a necessary means of securing it. In 1959 Vice President, Richard Nixon insisted that it was not communism but America's:"...44 million families with their 56 million cars, 50 million televisions and 143 million radios...." that constituted the true "...classless society." (Belgrad p.224) To consume was to be democratic and so when Warhol seemed to metamorphose himself into pure product: "I want to be a machine" etc. he produced images which were so accessible they appeared banal and superficial but which, quite to the contrary, accurately reflected a complex relationship between the need to consume and the life and death issues of a nation on the brink in 1961-62 of nuclear war.

Warhol had just finished high school when American planes dropped atomic bombs on the civilian targets of Hiroshima and Nagasaki thus exploding the usual Second World War demarcations, often illusory, between military and civilian targets. From then on throughout the post-war period as the nuclear capabilities of East and West became ever more massive and ever more immediate, advanced technology threatened instant retaliation, instant annihilation.

In 1950 America was just beginning to come to grips with the new realities of the atomic bomb:"...The grim reality is that in the case of a massive atomic attack the main problem will be, not how to save the greatest number of lives, but how to prevent the heartbeat of the nation from stopping..." (Henriksen, 1997, p. 94) A feeling of confusion arose about the atomic bomb during the 1950s era of the Cold War, Americans felt a mixture of pride and guilt about it. Pride in American power and its use for the defence of the democratic world masked other feelings of anxiety and remorse about the bomb which were difficult or impossible to express without appearing to be unpatriotic.

Warhol, by 1952, had established a career working as a commercial artist at the centre of the world's media business in New York City. He also had his first solo exhibition in this year. His early drawings indicate superb draughtsmanship; for example his self-portrait of 1948. Later as a commercial artist he showed outstanding ability as a book illustrator and designer of a whole range of products. The ability to produce subtle and witty drawings and paintings helped Warhol in his ambition to be successful in the New York of the 50s where hard work, talent and luck were the very least of the ingredients leading to achievement. However, according to official government publications in 1954: "American cities were vulnerable..., if successfully attacked with the latest type of H-bomb, their populations would be virtually exterminated." (Henriksen, 1997, p. 99)

The above story appeared in the popular magazine *Newsweek* as part of the ongoing Cold War debate on civil defence issues. The poets and writers of America's beat generation, such as, Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg were aware of the strange mix of excitement, fear and guilt which the bomb had on the psychology of Americans in this

time of intense growth in materialism and individualism. Ginsberg's poem of 1955 "Howl" speaks of the "..best minds of my generation destroyed by madness." A later beat poet Gregory Corso wrote in 1958 a poem called "Bomb" in which fear, novelty and desire were all associated in an extremely neurotic mix. This neurosis was partly the result of a playing-down of the fear of possible instant annihilation, however, after September, 1957 when it was revealed that the Soviet Union had developed long range intercontinental missiles this fear had to be faced; these new long rang missiles completely undermined U.S. civil defence strategy. The Eisenhower post-war period of cold war politics played down the threat in an effort to maintain some kind of mutual balance of power between Russia and America so as to prevent an arms race, however, this policy became increasingly untenable with the expansion and development of the Soviet nuclear arsenal.

The novelist Nevil Shute produced an international best seller with his novel 'On the Beach' in 1957. It dealt with the aftermath of a nuclear war in which the protagonists, a group of people in Australia, waited with an almost insane resignation for the arrival of certain death in the form of radioactive clouds spreading slowly over the globe. It was made into a very moving and depressing film in 1959. From 1960 that careful handling of a Cold War strategy came to an end: from now on the bomb hysteria would build and build to a crescendo which brought the Nevil Shute scenario to within the bounds of reality. Russia had developed the Megaton bomb, which was 5,000 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb; it had also shot down an American spy plane on the eve of a summit in Paris between Khrushchev and Eisenhower in early 1960. On the strength of these events John F. Kennedy was elected on an aggressive anti-Communist platform in

1961. The confrontational approach of Kennedy to the Soviet Union became very quickly apparent when on July 1961 Kennedy made a speech, which must have terrified those watching it on T.V. He urged the nation to prepare for nuclear war: "To recognise the possibilities of nuclear war in the missile age without our citizens knowing what they should do and where they should go would be a failure of responsibility. In the coming months I hope to let every citizen know what steps he can take without delay to protect his family in case of attack." (Henriksen, 1997, p. 200)

For Andy Warhol, 1960 was a crucial time in the development of his style, he produced two paintings six feet high of Coca-Cola bottles. One was painted with the gestural marks reminiscent of the Abstract Expressionists, the other looked like an ordinary advertising logo with no attempt to interfere with its media type of representation other than the fact that it was an outsize simulation of the original. Unlike the expressionistic Coca-Cola bottle this one was meant to be understood instantly; its value was its immediate accessibility.

Kennedy urged Americans to build nuclear fall-out shelters. His speech started what Henriksen calls the 'Shelter craze' and massive amounts of civil defence literature were distributed on what to do in the event of nuclear attack. The media ran daily stories on the shelter panic such as 'The Sheltered Life' in Time Magazine, it also warned of fake radiation salve and fallout suits. The civil defence published 'The Family Fallout' shelter booklet listing inexpensive basement conversions and more expensive concrete bunkers with all Modern conveniences (see PL. I). At the Texas State Fair the fallout shelter exhibition drew record crowds. One of the biggest issues debated in the national

Preparing for the Worst

American consumers, preparing for the worst, were urged to equip themselves and their families to last out the aftermath of nuclear explosions.

RIGHT: *Part of a display at New York's Grand Central Station which showed a shelter designed to accommodate a family of five or six during weeks of radioactive fallout.*

FALLOUT SHELTER

ABOVE: *The black-and-yellow Fallout Shelter marker made its appearance in every US city and town.*

LEFT: *A leading California swimming pool, patio, and barbecue dealer found business booming when he offered to build shelters for his customers. His slogan: "Due to known conditions, ACT NOW!"*

Suppose an H Bomb Dropped!

4 wheels to survive!

ATOMIC BOMB SHELTERS financed BY the GOVERNMENT STOP for DETAILS!

SWIMMING POOLS

Cutaway sections of a basement shelter, from a US Office of Civil Defense booklet, *The Family Fallout Shelter*, published in 1959.
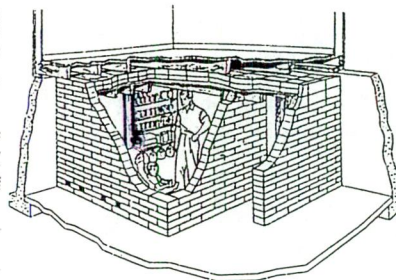
Figure 2—Basement Concrete Block Shelter

PL. I *America Prepares for Nuclear War*

press was whether or not to stock the shelter with guns to kill your neighbours should they attempt to force entry when the bombs started to fall. A priest, writing for a Jesuit periodical, stated that these people should be shot like any trespasser. These moral dilemmas triggered a national debate about democracy and moral values. For example, do citizens have the right to protect themselves and their families, by force if necessary, against less resourceful neighbours? The stark reality began to emerge of a country forced to choose between the concept of a morality, which prized individualistic enterprise and resourcefulness against the essentially Christian concept of love your neighbour or community. The intensity of the debate started a revulsion against shelter morality and by January 1961 it forced the Kennedy's administration to change the emphasis to 'community shelters.' But by then popular reaction against shelters was widespread.

Confrontation looked increasingly likely as 1961 wore on. In August Khrushchev erected the Berlin Wall to prevent a haemorrhage of refugees fleeing to the West and this provoked Kennedy to say that the defence of Berlin was crucial to the entire free world. When the Soviets then resumed nuclear testing, stopped since 1958, a serious crisis seemed inevitable. *Time Magazine* talked of the Cold War turning hot and in an article it listed essential shelter items such as a fifty-dollar burial suit containing chemicals to keep smells down. It was the Cuban Missile crisis however, which brought the two superpowers so close to the brink of nuclear war that it seemed to shock them into a realisation that events had gone too far. In October 1962 American spy planes had photographed Soviet missile sites in Cuba and Kennedy issued an ultimatum to Khruschev to remove them. Not only would Khruschev not remove them but more

missiles were on their way to Cuba. Kennedy said America was willing to go to war on this issue and ordered a blockade of the coast around Cuba. The Russian navy ships continued to steam towards inevitable confrontation and it seemed that both nations had gone too far to pull back without an unacceptable loss of pride. *Newsweek*, the American magazine, wrote of this profoundly anxious period describing the population living by their radios and television sets following events and believing that this time it might be the real thing.

The Cuban Missile Crisis began in early October 1962 and was over by the 29th of that month. In the interview which Warhol gave to Gene Swenson in 1963, Swenson asked him when he started the Death series and this is what he replied:

"I guess it was the big plane picture, the front page of a newspaper: 129 Die. I was also painting the Marilyns. I realised that everything I was doing must have been Death. It was Christmas or Labour Day – a holiday – and every time you turned on the radio they said something like, '4 million are going to die.' That started it"

The date on the newspaper, *The New York Mirror* is clearly indicated in the picture *129 Die*: it is June 1962, only a few months to the culmination of years of mass hysteria over the nuclear threat. Death is, of course, no respecter of status, gender, wealth or anything else and if, in Warhol's society, democracy was a flawed concept which did not deliver universal equality or the general good, then the relatively new awareness of instant annihilation brought its own brand of an ultimate egalitarianism.

Chapter Three

Warhol, The Simulacrum and other Theories

In Gilles Deleuze's treatise entitled "Plato and the Simulacrum" he contests Plato's concept of the priority of : the original over the copy, essence over appearance, the model over the simulacrum. Deleuze maintains: " The simulacrum is not a degraded copy. It harbours a positive power which denies the original and the copy, the model and the reproduction". (Deleuze 1967, p.53.)

It is only since the 1960s writes Michael Camille, that the simulacrum has been revised by artists, critics and philosophers in response to the explosion in the technology of reproduction in the media and elsewhere and its intrusion into every facet of everyday life. He refers to: ".a breakdown in the solidity of the real". (Camille, 1996, p. 31.) The artists who are identified as the first to engage in this revival of the simulacrum are the artists of the Pop Art movement and in particular Andy Warhol. A retrospective analysis of Warhol and Pop Art by post-structuralist theorists interpreted the movement and its products as reducing the author/artist imput to a mere surface involvement. Roland Barthes thought Pop Art de-symbolised the object, it was he thought: "...an avant-gardist disruption of representation." However, Jean Baudrillard saw Pop Art as a "...total integration of the art work into the political economy of the commodity sign." (Foster, 1996 p.128)

From the Renaissance period and again with the French philosopher Descartes in the 17th Century the idea of the purely autonomously motivated human being had been a

tenacious idea; individualism of this kind admitted to little in the way of environmental influence. Then at the end of the Nineteenth century came Freud, who significantly undermined this idea with his Theory of Psychoanalysis. Structuralists, and then the post-structuralists continued in this vein. Derrida, Lacan, Deleuze and Baudrillard were instrumental in a sustained attack on ideas surrounding the autonomous self throughout the sixties and seventies. These decentring concepts of postructuralism also deny that any overall patterns or grand narratives can be discerned in history; denied also are notions of the progress of human beings and it further questions: "...concepts of causality, of identity, of the subject and of truth." (Sarup, 1993, p.3.) As with any such wide-ranging debates there are those within post-structuralism who differ and even contradict certain positions.

Friedrich Nietzsche investigated and wrote at length on Plato's ideas. To invert Platonism was a strategy, which he identified as the task of modern philosophy. Later philosophers such as Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida accepted the challenge to overcome Platonism, however, they approached the project in different ways. Nietzsche's ambition was to overcome Platonism on both its moral and metaphysical ground whilst Deleuze critiques the representational conception of thought and replaces it with the concept of "thought without image" (Patton 1994, p.145). Derrida, on the other hand attempts to undermine Platonism from within, for example when Plato argues in The Republic that the artist "....represents what the other two make." The 'other two' being God and the carpenter; the artist's representation: "...stands at Third remove from reality?" (Lee, 1955, p.363.) Artists are thus condemned to be mere copyists and imitators. Derrida maintains that this concept of imitation depends on the difference

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between what is copied and the thing itself. He argues that: "mimesis is thus an inherently ambivalent concept." (Patton 1994, p. 149.) Deleuze disagrees with this idea of ambivalence and instead maintains that it is not the same difference in each case. The apparent identity of simulacra and what they simulate is of secondary importance, Deleuze says it is their difference, which is significant. For Deleuze repetition in simulacra does not mean repeating exact copies: "Art does not imitate, above all because it repeats..." he says. (Patton, 1994, p. 154.)

Deleuze locates simulacra strategies in contemporary art in the work of Andy Warhol and other artists. The following discussion will therefore focus on Deleuze's ideas on the simulacrum and its bearing on Warhol. It will also touch on Michael Foucault's ideas on the autonomy of the individual and Jean Baudrillard's thoughts on the wider effects of the simulacrum. Also pertinent to this discussion is AC Danto's treatise on Plato's Theory of Art and some other interpretations of Warhol's images.

Deleuze's project set out to overturn Plato in order to invert the hierarchy established by him between copies and the simulacra. The role of Platonism, in this respect, is to make reality a hierarchy within ourselves thus turning important aspects of life into mere copies or imitation of the actual, the real. This suppresses difference in favour of logic based on identity or resemblance. In Plato's Theory of Art his idea of the Forms are a key element to do with representation and the forming of images. In Plato's theory everything is referred back to the Forms. It attempts to separate the realm of ideas from the sensuous realm of appearance. On the other hand, Deleuze, by asserting the primacy of the simulacra:

"…makes the same and the similar, the model and the copy, fall under the power of the false (Phantasm). It renders the order of participation, the fixity of distribution, the determination of hierarchy impossible. It establishes a world of nomadic distributions and crowned anarchies." (Patton 1994, p.152)

Deleuze further says that art must inject itself into daily life, its materialism, its standardisation, so that difference can be extracted from it and thus make these two extremes 'resonate', that is between the habit forming series of consumption and the more instinctual series of "…destruction and death". (Foster, 1996, p.68) Accepting the primacy of the simulacra therefore undermines ideas surrounding the artist as someone solely responsible for ideas and products; it distributes ontological motives and shares these with environmental, political, economic and other effects of everyday life.

With the advent of Pop, art for the first time became conscious of its simulacra production, for example in the work of Andy Warhol series and repetition are important. Warhol's work reproduced images of images taken from daily newspapers and magazines. He highlighted and valued those techniques such as the photographic silkscreen method, which removed virtual autonomous control by the artist over the image. He valued the appearance of the machine image and with this in mind his studio was referred to as the Factory. The transition from hand painting, which Warhol practised right up to 1962, to the more mechanical silkscreen method was one of his most significant discoveries and perhaps the most important development in his entire career. Warhol exhibited his silkscreen pictures for the first time in the Stable Gallery show in November 1962 immediately after the high point of the Cuban Missile Crisis, which was over by October, 1962. In the Stable Gallery show amongst the images were: his

silkscreen Marilyn series, the Coca Cola bottles series and the beginning of the disaster series, in this case, one of the car crash images. So Warhol exemplifies in many ways specific simulacra ideas surrounding series and repetition and more general post-structural views on deconstructing the individual. Foucault, for example, maintains that the idea of individuality, of the 'original' self, is no more than surface 'effects' of an anonymous system of language or thought within theories and systems of knowledge. It is not individuals that invent these systems or epistemes but rather the other way around; it is we who are conditioned by pre-existing epistemes. (Sheridan, 1980, p.9)

Jean Baudrillard is probably the most influential of the writers using the simulacrum as a theoretical idea, among contemporary artists. Baudrillard projects simulacrum effects into a future as well as a contemporary world. His argument is that every aspect of our lives has been so invaded by mass consumerism and the mass communication media that we can no longer distinguish reality from simulated images. He further claims that advertising and publicity is on the same level today as politics. People have become weak and passive almost completely determined. From a background of a belief in Marxism, Baudrillard now, "......repudiates Marxism altogether ...." (Sarup, 1996, p.108) After all, Marx believed advertising, media information and communication networks to be a non-essential part of capital. These processes Marx said would consume representation. Unlike Deleuze there is no evidence in Baudrillard's writings of the 'positive power' of the simulacra. He says that people no longer believe in art: "....but only in the idea of art (which for itself of course is not aesthetic but ideological)." He goes on later in this article to say that Warhol made art "....virtually obsolete." (Zurbrugg, 1997, p.17)

For Baudrillard America is the mecca of simulacra; nothing is what it appears to be, Las Vegas, New York, Disney World all have little or no contact with reality preferring to engage with a huge façade of simulacra. This view of the simulacra takes an extremely negative angle; it imagines America wallowing in a consumerist dream of unreality and predicts a future of spectacular superficiality. In a country such as this democracy is necessarily redundant; people are too passive, too entrenched in consumer unreality. Writing about Baudrillard's book entitled *America* John Docker believes his analysis to be a "…modernist cliché…" essentially a colonialist view that envisages a contemporary primitivism operating in this outpost of the New World. (Docker, 1994, p.106)

Of course Baudrillard would be correct in his analysis of Warhol if all that his images project is a machine like imitation or a kind of consumerist nihilism. But this is not the case, for example, Warhol's subtle undermining of images in the *Gold Marilyn* (1962) (PL. II) reveals a definite intervention by the artist. The two tondi in this diptych use silkscreen and gold paint and one of them is left completely empty; it reflects Deleuze's remarks on the need for art to inject itself into the materialism of life, you cannot get a better symbol for materialism than gold. Marilyn Monroe's suicide in August 1962 must have increased what was already an atmosphere of dread and anxiety at the height of the tensions of the Cold War with the Cuban Missile Crisis just two months ahead. Taking all this into consideration the absence or 'death' of the image in the second tondo is singularly apt. Monroe was an icon; a consumable product and her face appeared everywhere in the media. It made her famous but it also reduced her to a narrow mostly erotic dimension. This arbitrarily imposed iconic image is again

PL. II *Gold Marilyn* (1962)
Silkscreen ink on synthetic polymer paint on canvas;
two tondi, each 17 ¾" (45.1 cm) diameter

unerringly implied in Warhol's 1962 *Turquoise Marilyn* (PL. III) with its crude off register overlaying of the colour on which is superimposed a monochrome head of the dead movie star. Similarly with Marilyn x 100 (1962) (PL. IV) showing fifty monochrome heads on the right hand side and fifty coloured heads on the left, the implication is ambiguous; a multiplied image is an indication of fame, everybody knows your face but the other effect of so many heads is to neutralise any empathy with the image.

Warhol's art is steeped in the everyday and the values that go with it. It breathes the ephemeral and the political. Its very accessibility undermines hierarchical interpretation. So if his images are about death, about the Cold War or about how Coca Cola tastes the same no matter whether the President of America drinks it or a poor person drinks it, the images themselves accommodate this range of views and the viewer decides which is right for them.

Plato's Theory of Art is crucially implicated in concepts which attempts to exclude art from politics. In Plato's Republic philosophy became a means to prove rather than persuade by rhetoric and as art and rhetoric go hand in hand they both must be banished from the state. Arthur C. Danto defines Plato's motives as the beginning of a philosophical disenfranchisement of art. His Theory of Art is nothing less than an enterprise in which art is seen as the enemy. (Danto, 1988, p.67.) In the debate about who is best suited to guide the state, it is of course the philosophers who are shown to be the most suitable; the philosopher deals in essentials, in concepts, whereas the artist deals in the shadowy sphere of mere appearances. Their art is twice removed from the original;

PL. III *Turquoise Marilyn* (1962)
Silkscreen ink on synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6 cm)
Collection Stefan T. Edlis

PL. IV *Marilyn x 100* (1962)
Silkscreen ink on synthetic polymer paint on canvas,
6' 9" x 18' 7 ½" (205.7 x 567.7 cm) Saatchi Collection, London

a person engaged in craft can make a bed, which is a copy of an original, whereas an artist who paints a bed makes a copy of a copy. " So representative art is an inferior child born of inferior parents." (Lee, 1955, p.371.) Danto's intention in his essay: The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art is, he says, to relate the 'shabby' history of philosophy and art and to reveal it as a major political strategy to : "…emasculate or to supersede art." (Danto 1998,p.76.)

Foucault disapproved of totalizing theories such as those espoused by Plato. He believed that Marxism was a form of tyranny in which the basis of political power had become a "science of sciences" (Sarup, 1993, P. 83.). This 'science' was understood only by an elite cadre versed in its complexities. Foucault's own idea on power, for example, was not to be identified with the state –"Power is an effect of the operation of social relationships between groups and between individuals." (Sheridan 1980, P. 218.) His genealogy of difference works against grand historical systems to reassert knowledge, which is unrelated to so called scientific proofs. Illustrating the hold that science has had for political theory Aristotle complained that for Plato's followers: "…mathematics has come to be the whole of philosophy." (Gottlieb 1997, p.25)

The post-structuralist reading of Warhol by Foucault and Deleuze is a critique of the Platonic notion of representation, but there are many other readings of Warhol besides these. One of these is Thomas Crow's analysis of Warhol's early work. This referential interpretation is closely allied to the popular American tradition of truth telling. Likewise Hal Foster puts forward a thesis that Warhol can be understood in both simulacra and a truth telling referential way. "Both camps make the Warhol they need, or get the Warhol they deserve; no doubt we all do" (Foster 1997, p.130) Crow is one of the few

commentators on Warhol to mention the Cuban Missile crisis, although he mentions it only in passing. His main concern is to place Warhol as less of an automaton simply reflecting on a society saturated by the sheer weight of its own materialism, an image, incidentally, which Warhol himself helped to foster by his writing and his frequently monosyllabic utterances. Crow maintains that the early work of Warhol has been neglected by successive analyses which all tend to interpret the text rather than looking at the paintings themselves. This writer believes that "Warhol produced his most powerful works by dramatising the breakdown of commodity exchange." (Crow, 1997, p. 20) Crow describes the careful selection of the images by Warhol then the cropping of the images; both of these operations involving very specific decisions. His selection, for example, of the images for the car disaster series was very particular in as much as these images were frequently searched out by him from the press agencies themselves, often proving to be too bizarre to print by the same publishers. These images including the Marilyn images and many others in this early work are really images, Crow maintains, which promise the viewer fulfilment but which deliver simultaneously a message of pain and death. In other words the mass-produced images deliver our wants and desires but this delivery is marred by the simultaneous inclusion of a reality we had literally not bargained for. The price of these Warhol images includes a reminder of the fallibility of both image and viewer.

Taking the above into consideration Warhol's early work and 1962 in particular assumes a most singular importance; it was the year the artist produced his first silkscreen paintings, his first *Campbell's Soup Cans* (hand painted), the *Do It Yourself* pictures (hand painted), the first *Elvis* and *Marilyn* pictures, the *Dance Diagrams* (hand painted)

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and the first *Disaster pictures*. 1962 saw a huge output in work plus the major development of the silkscreen process; all this too during the high point of national trauma with the Cuban Missile Crisis. June 1962 was also the period identified in the Gene Swenson interview as the exact point when Warhol realised that everything he was doing was about death; the painting of *129 Die* which sparked this moment of realisation is dated June 1962.

Although Warhol resisted the pseudo scientific type of formalism which Clement Greenberg was promoting with his ideas on flatness he was nevertheless flirting with painterly painting in the period 1960 to 1961 and was still hand-painting serial-type images up to 1962, as with *Two Hundred Campbell's Soup Cans* (1962) (PL. V). Ideas of originality and of uniqueness and autonomy stubbornly remained despite the exactitude of the hand painted Campbell's Soup Can pictures. The discovery of the serial and of repetition were major steps for him during this period, however, direct hand painting contradicted the very notion of consumer-type repetition.

The discovery of the silkscreen technique in 1962 gave the impression of the complete removal of the artist from the 'making' of the picture. This removal which is deemed crucial by post-structuralists is not as complete as it appears or indeed as Warhol himself would like; "I want to be a machine" is quite different to I am a machine. Thomas Crow has pointed to a very definite but subtle involvement in Warhol's choice and arrangement of images, for example, in the cropping, the careful selection, the specific colour tones etc. Baudrillard, on the other hand, writes that Warhol has made art 'obsolete' and that there is no longer a belief in aesthetic art. Deleuze writes about the 'positive power' of simulacrum art; a definition, which can embrace both Francis Bacon
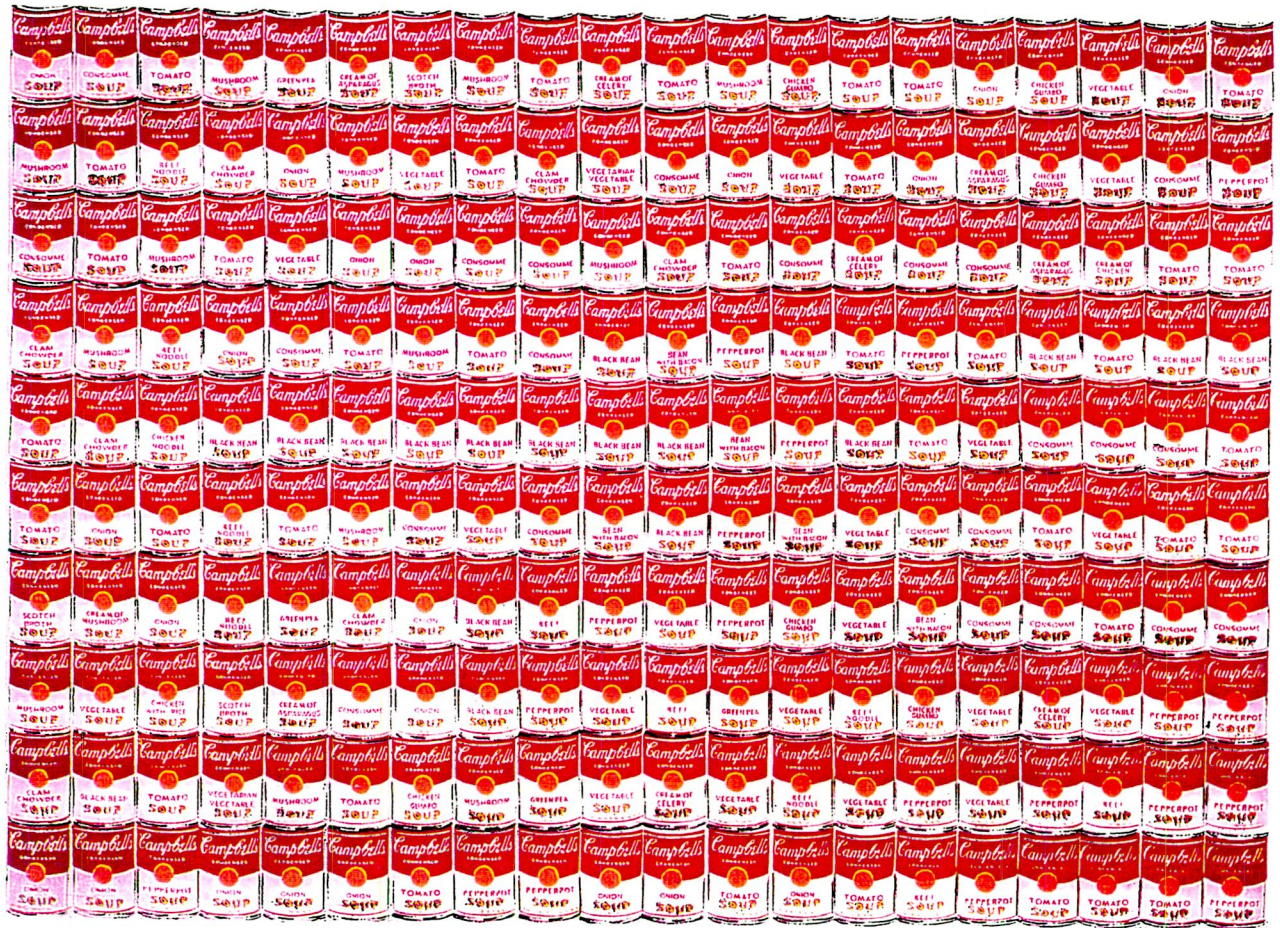
PL. V *Two Hundred Campbell's Soup Cans* (1962)
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas,
6' x 8' 4" (182.9 x 254 cm)

and Andy Warhol. Paul Patton writes that under the influence of Deleuze and others, modern art sees its task not as "...the representation of appearances, but as their repetition: not as the production of copies, but as the production of simulacra." (Patton, 1994, p.143)

Hal Foster accepts both a referential and a simulacra reading of Warhol but unfortunately predicates this on a third reading; that of Traumatic Realism which, he believes, will connect the two. The joining of these two perfectly acceptable interpretations with yet another type of grand narrative undermines both. Jaques Lacan's ideas on the Freudian concept of trauma are used by Foster for this third interpretation. This account sees repetition as a missed encounter with the real: "As missed the real cannot be represented; it can only be repeated.." (Foster, 1997, p.132) This attempt by Foster to undermine two views, separate, perhaps contradictory with another bridging but deeper more scientific interpretation illustrates the lure of the encompassing theory.

The dynamic, which drives the accessible nature of Warhol's images, is the same dynamic that resists by absorption ideological interpretation. These ideologies fail because they cannot engage with the ephemeral or ambiguous. Ideological viewpoints find it difficult to get a firm grip on Warhol's images precisely because they accommodate so readily separate, often opposing interpretations. Clement Greenberg said; "...our culture, on its lower and popular levels, has plumbed abysses of vulgarity and falsehood unknown in the discoverable past..." (Harris, 1993, p.56) For him Warhol was kitsch, Formalism could not deal with him, his images were open to too many viewpoints. The geometry of Pythagoras was to Plato what the theory of 'flatness' was to Greenberg, both theories rejected the everyday with its divergence, ephemerality,

opportunism and the politics of compromise. However, this democratic dynamic of the everyday leaves Warhol open to accusations of crudeness and voyeurism. For example with the image of the crash silkscreen of 1962 entitled, *Five Deaths on Red* (PL. VI); do we hide our interest or do we look with a mixture of guilt and pleasure? These images demand an ambiguous response, for how else are we to live with, or hold at bay, a knowledge which disgusts, except to acknowledge its ubiquitousness. Alternatively we may put our faith in a future where science and an enforced pedagogy will help perfect a better society, one based on ideology and not on the democracy of communal separateness.
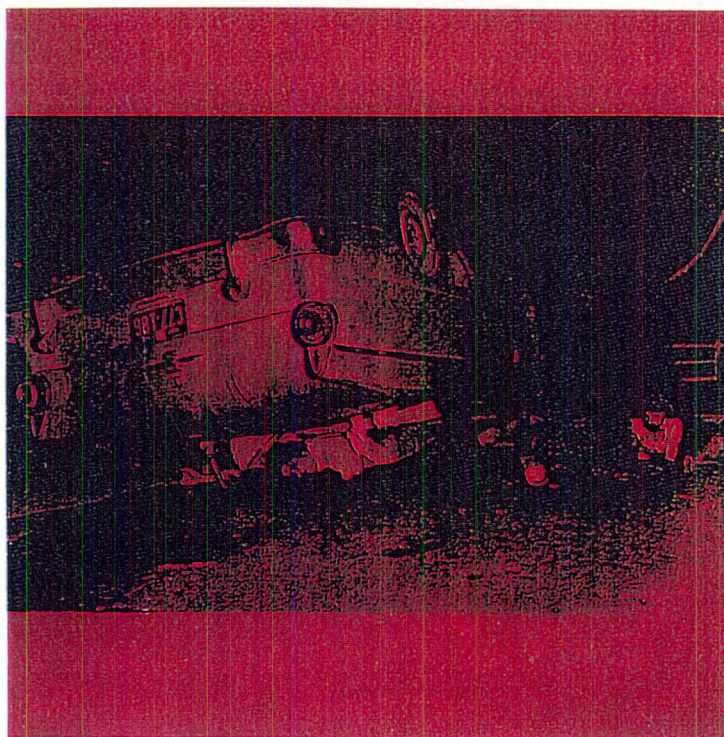
PL. VI *Five Deaths on Red* (1962)
Silkscreen ink on synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 30 x 30 " (76.2 x 76.2),
Collection Stellan Holm, New York

Chapter Four

Death and Accident in the Image

In 1997 the Irish Museum of Modern Art put on an exhibition of Andy Warhol's works from 1956 to 1986. The show was called After the Party. Declan Mc Gonagle, the curator of the museum, wrote in the introduction that Warhol, "….raises questions about tradition, the role of the artist and mass culture in society …" (Crow, 1997, p.6.) The exhibition unexpectedly broke all records for attendance for an exhibition at the museum. Thirty five years earlier an American art critic called Michael Fried said; "…even the best of Warhol's work can much outlast the journalism on which it is forced to depend." (Bourdon, 1989, p.134) This statement seems premature with the benefit of hindsight. If Warhol's work was mere 'journalism' his continued relevance in the recent history of art has proved that particular critic wrong. Warhol's personality was obsessive, opportunistic; his lifestyle was calculated on becoming famous. All in all his life was so utterly opposite to the more acceptable myth of the constantly anguished, often hard-drinking persona of the Abstract Expressionist artists, such as Jackson Pollock, that Michael Fried could be forgiven for getting it wrong.

An important aspect of Warhol's images is their ability to absorb a variety of interpretations, ranging from positive to negative; deep to superficial. It is extraordinary how these images of 'journalism' can remain powerful and relevant. These images allow multiple readings, for example: simulacra, referential, psychoanalytical and others. There is no one correct way of interpreting Warhol. This particular reading has so far

concentrated on the prevalence of the post-war threat of nuclear war in America and the fitful rise year by year of a resulting trauma to its eventual peak with the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. This trauma, I suggest, affected Warhol's work and 1962 is coincidentally the year in which his most important ideas in painting reached fruition.

To continue this investigation let us look closely at the aspect of death in Warhol's early paintings. David Bourdon, in his comprehensive study, benefits from direct personal contact with Warhol to the extent of participating in some pictures; he attempts in his book to give a balanced judgement of the artist's life and work. He quotes from an interview he had with Henry Geldzahler in 1987 in which Geldzahler remembers a crucial meeting with Warhol for lunch on June 4th 1962. Warhol was in good spirits. After four years of waiting he had finally secured a one-man show at the Ferus gallery starting that July. Geldzahler told Warhol that he was overdoing it on consumerism in his paintings: "....I said, its enough life. Its time for a little death." (Bourdon, 1989, p.118) He then showed Warhol the New York Mirror with the headline *129 Die* on it. Carter Ratcliff in his book on Warhol quotes him as saying that it was: "...Henry who gave me the idea to start the death and disaster series." (Ratcliff, 1983, p.37) Bourdon describes 129 Die as the last of his hand painted newspaper pictures and by far the most powerful of the three. In the Gene Swenson interview a year later in 1963 Warhol mentions that he started the death series and mentions the New York Mirror headline with 129 Die on it : "....I realised everything I was doing must have been death." (Crow, 1997, p.69)

On the other hand: "Throughout the era the Cold War with the Soviet Union dominated newspaper headlines." (Belgrad, 1998, p.224.) So why, when the possibilities of death from nuclear war is widely feared and written about, does Warhol need a

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reminder with a headline about a faraway plane crash in France to think of death? Perhaps this quotation can be addressed whilst considering the general atmosphere of the era (PL. VII): "Advertisers and political leaders alike linked nuclear deterrence with consumer goods to define an 'American way of life' in which high technology symbolised both the benefits of democracy and the means of securing it.." (Belgrad, 1998, p.224) On this analogy technology meant the bomb but it also meant democracy, the consumption of goods; so admitting that the bomb is evil necessarily betrays America, democracy and the consumer society. In a climate such as this, is it so remarkable that consumer and supermarket item become associated with death? Earlier in 1958 Linus Pauling, one of the most eminent scientists in America, challenged Edward Teller, the nuclear scientist responsible for developing the hydrogen bomb, to a television debate on genetic mutation. David Belgrad writes that the television debate raised the deeply upsetting: "Spectre of mutant children..." (Belgrad, 1998, p.225.) This gained an enormous public response at the horror of such a scenario. So the American public was constantly made aware in newspapers, magazines and television of the utter disaster nuclear war would bring in its wake. The confusion over how to condemn it without seeming to be unpatriotic was widespread and genuine.

For Warhol the linking of death with supermarket goods is only explicitly made in his images of the *Tuna fish Disaster* series made in 1963. Bourdon refers to the series as: "...a perverse and sardonic follow-up to the artist's earlier and comparatively 'benign' cans of Campbell's Soup" (Bourdon, 1989, p.148) Warhol was already painting consumer goods such as soup cans and Coca Cola bottles early in 1962 well before his

PL. VII *Three New York Mirror Headlines* (1962)
129 Die in Jet (Plane Crash), (1962)
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas,
8' 4" x 6' (254 x 183 cm)
Museum Ludwig, Cologne

meeting with Geldzahler so he had already embraced the American dream and was genuinely surprised to find death in it. Perhaps Geldzahler's intervention with the newspaper in 1962 simply made Warhol confront what was already there and, "...that everything I was doing must have been death." The horror and vastness of nuclear war could not be easily faced or imagined, instead it bred neurosis, denial and morbidity, Warhol's one image of an atomic explosion made in 1963-4 *, for example, looks oddly remote, even tame compared to his disaster series started in 1962.

According to Bourdon, Warhol started to use silkscreen towards the end of April 1962 (not as Warhol claimed elsewhere that it was August 1962) when he produced a painting entitled *200 Hundred Dollar Bills***. He practised during the course of 1962 three different methods of painting: hand painting with the opaque projector, stencil painting and silkscreen . These different methodologies were not step by step advances so that he did not abandon hand and stencil work for silkscreen in that order. His technique was to paint first the colour with a fast drying acrylic then overlay with the oil based ink silkscreen. The result was a removed, mechanical look to these mass produced images, which was enhanced where they were repeated again and again on the one surface, or in serial images as in the single image *Campbell's Soup Cans*, which he exhibited at the Ferus Gallery in July 1962. The genesis for the serial idea can easily be seen in the earlier Storm Door pictures; one is from 1960, the other 1961 (PL.VIII & IX). They are exactly the same compositionally except that the 1960 picture is painted with the drips reminiscent of Abstract Expressionism, the other, of 1961is pristine, assertive, more mechanical.

* Bourdon's book dates it as 1963-4, however it is dated as 1965 in the M.O.M.A retrospective of Warhol in 1989.

** Marco Livingstone in the M.O.M.A retrospective agrees with this date.

PL.VIII *Storm Door* (1960)
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 6' x 60" (182.9 x 152.4 cm)
Collection Robert and Meryl Meltzer

PL. IX *Storm Door* (1961)
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 46 x 42 1/8" (117 x 107 cm) Courtesy Thomas
Ammann, Zurich

The gradual and careful experimentation of Warhol's ideas is further observed in the three newspaper paintings: one of 1961, the other two made in 1962, all containing traces of hand painting. Having finally discovered the ultra mechanical silkscreen technique, Warhol, against what might appear to be the relentless progress towards purely mechanistic results, was paradoxically quite definite in his desire to keep accidents. This is exemplified in the incident where Nathan Gluck observing the direction of Warhol's methodology tried to show him how to achieve a more exact registering of the layers and no doubt was surprised when Warhol said: "I kind of like it that way." (Livingstone, 1989, p.70) These accidents are interventions by the artist in as much as he had the power of decision over whether these images should be retained or discarded. Although Warhol made much of the fact that his assistants had as much autonomy over the resulting images, it was Warhol who decided which pictures to show.

Andrew Sinclair writing about accident in terms of a very different artist, Francis Bacon, cites his throwing of paint, his use of dust from the floor or a drop of water from a leaky skylight. Bacon himself called it: "....a continuous question of the fight between accident and criticism." He also said that painting was a visual shock without a story. There was nothing in it: "...except what people want to read into it." (Sinclair, 1993, p.269) Sinclair quotes Gilles Deleuze's disinclination to accept Bacon's belief in the role of chance in his work, for Deleuze: "The artist did not fill a blank space, he emptied it, uncluttered it, dusted it off. He did not reproduce a model, he had *donnees* or gifts of ideas." (Sinclair, 1993, p.261) Accident or chance are mental choices of the artist and as such are as much tools as brushes; or the pressure on the ink being impressed from a silkscreen on to a canvas.

Another artist who uses randomness and chance as an important element in his work is Gerhard Richter. This artist supports Deleuze in his insistence that accident and chance are really disguised choices to be used by the artist: "Chance as theme and as method. A method of allowing something objective to come into being; a theme for creating a simile (picture) of our survival strategy." (Richter, 1995, p.178) Richter's methodology for his abstract pictures is to heavily mediate an initially autonomous application of colour and gestural paintwork by applying a silkscreen type of technique used by Warhol, but unlike Warhol, the method is applied to the surface of the wet oil paint. The pressure and movement of the squeegee bar with its length of rubberised and therefore pliable inset, allows for a variety of different pressures. However these different pressures can only be measured in the most arbitrary way and are virtually impossible to calibrate. Richter seeks further to avoid ritual entering into his practice by stopping at arbitrary times in the various work regimes; the sudden breaking off and interruption of these methods brings rewards such as the avoidance of a preoccupation with judgement and skill.

Richter praises Warhol for not making 'art' which he believes is a necessary requisit if an artist is to break significantly with traditional constraints. Warhol, he maintains: " …is not so much an artist as a symptom of a cultural situation…" (Richter, 1995, p.180.) Warhol's avoidance of artistic themes makes him an artist. Like so many others who seek to analyse Warhol, Richter admits to the presence of contradictions in this enterprise when any kind of deep analysis is attempted. So whilst Richter believes that some of Warhol's works are among "…the most impressive things done over the past

thirty years," he continues with a seeming contradiction: "….he was still only a mediocre artist." (Richter, 1995, p.180)

Accident in Warhol's work further mediates the choosing of one and rejecting of another in an assembly line of images with the artist intervening in a crucial way. Whereas on an industrial factory assembly line the product showing a difference to other products would be discarded, for Warhol's factory this difference is a reason to select it. There is an avoidable intervention in the early hand painted, projector-assisted images, but the more mechanical silkscreen images do not have this. Significantly though, what replaces it is the accident. The accident in Warhol's silkscreen process compensates for the mechanical; it allows the artist a certain remove from the relentless subjectivity of art making.

In the Cold War era the long historical reliance on technology led to a potential situation, unprecedented in history, of an accident or simple misunderstanding leading to nuclear holocaust. Instant response would leave no time for diplomacy and very little time for face saving strategies. In this scenario high technology and accident meant death; in Warhol's silkscreen process the accident is the art.

Conclusion

The Enlightenment tradition introduced new ideas but also renewed many of the early Greek concepts. This later tradition influenced the content of the American Declaration of Independence with important concepts such as liberty and freedom of expression. Totalitarian regimes throughout history have sought to dispense with democratic structures replacing them instead with utopian concepts, usually at the expense of individual freedom, this latter traded off against the common good. Community dynamics are also associated with religion; in America the most powerful religious group are the Christians.

Andy Warhol was raised as a Catholic and even if he was not an ardent one he shared a Christian morality with the majority of Americans. This part of Warhol was in opposition to another equally integral aspect of him, his individualism. Warhol prospered in the aggressively cosmopolitan city of New York; he was a self-made man. By the time he was thirty-two he was wealthy enough to buy a house there. According to Robert Rosenblum he maintained: "..a quiet, surreptitious devotion to the Catholic Church." (Herbenick, 1997, p.42) Warhol's devotion to business is well documented. These two devotions are mirrored in a significant way to the oppositional dynamics so dramatically encountered during the Shelter debate in 1961 when an ardent, unbending individualism was pitted against the Christian belief of love thy neighbour.

This divisional dynamic is reflected in Warhol's art. A picture from his disaster series, the silkscreen picture entitled *Five Deaths on Red* (1962) (PL. VI) depicts people trapped beneath an overturned car. This crude reality engages a macabre side of the human psyche, however this engagement is shared in an extraordinary duality with a

feeling of acute empathy as well. Warhol's art is his ability to make images, which have this kind of schizoid balance or opposed but interlocking dynamics. This flickering duality can often lead to contradictory analysis and commentary, for example Gerhard Richter says that Warhol has produced "..some of the most impressive work over the past thirty years." (Richter, 1995, p.180) Yet he describes Warhol as a 'mediocre' artist. The often contradictory feeling in front of a Warhol image, this flickering of emotions is not uncommon to viewers. The images instant accessibility is a mixture of an unpleasant recognition, a part of our psyche normally mediated in some way but now given permission through an aesthetic channel, which usually allows a degree of removal. Our instant recognition allows no time for us to erect barriers; our horror at seeing the trapped women in Five Deaths (1963) (PL. X) is paradoxically made banal by its association with a newspaper format.

Finally amongst the vast array of published material on Warhol very little is mentioned about the possible effects of the Cold War on his work. An enormous amount of work has gone into aesthetic discourse, interpreting textual evidence such as Warhol's own writing and into concerns surrounding the idea of the simulacrum or traumatic realism. Virtually no connection is made to the pervading atmosphere of dread which surrounds especially the period 1960-1962 when crisis after crisis developed, culminating in the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. Warhol says he realised that his work was about death and pinpoints this realisation to June 1962 the date of his painting *129 Die*.
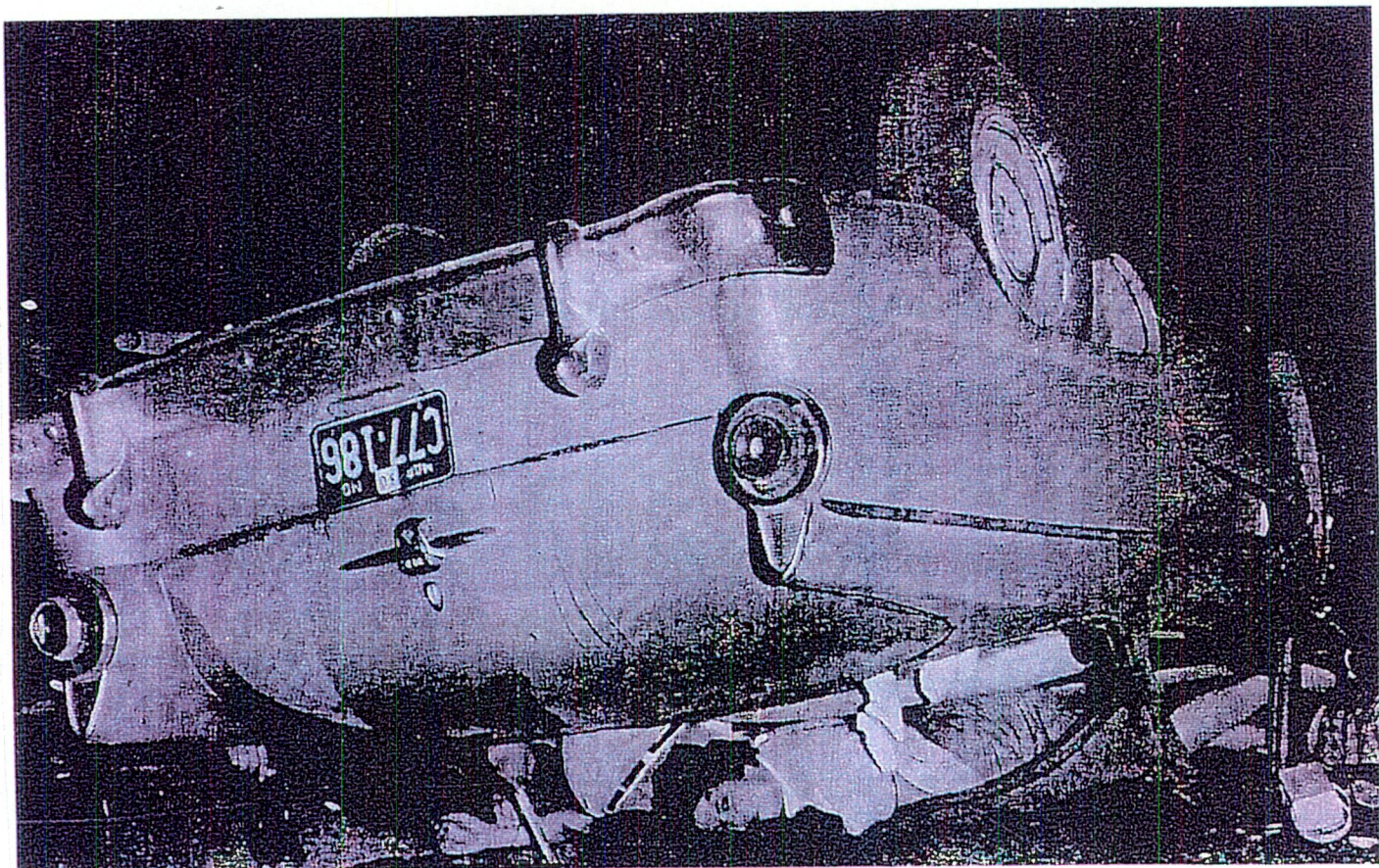
PL.X *Five Deaths*(1963)
Synthetic Polymer paint and silkscreen on canvas, 20 x 30" (50.8 x 76.2 cm.) The Andy
Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, Founding Collection, Contribution The Andy Warhol
Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

It seems extraordinary that at the absolute apex of more than a decade and a half of increasing fear and anxiety surrounding nuclear war, that Warhol would need reminding either by Henry Geldzahler or the headline *129 Die* of the possibility of death permeating his painting. The very climate of the time breathed not just death but instant death from the skies. No wonder Americans fell back on Christianity. Religion had taken a secondary place in the increasingly consumer-led economy up to this point. Death is after all the ultimate leveller and Warhol impregnated his painting with it.

The concept of democracy was thoroughly tested in America in the period 1960-62 when Americans had to decide on a community oriented society based essentially on Christian morality or a corporate capitalist society based to a large extent on aggressive individualism. The Shelter debate in 1961 concentrated the public's mind to an almost unprecedented degree. The crucible in which these forces collided was the climax of the Cold War era. It produced Andy Warhol and paradoxically strengthened democracy through a compromise between religion and a particularly ardent individualism. This compromise is reflected in Warhol's art between a transcendental High Art and the expedient dynamic of the everyday.

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