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THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

ANDY WARHOL: THE MEDIA MADE MAN

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Introduction.

"I see everything like this: the surface of things, a kind of mental braille, I limit myself to passing my hand over the surface of things. I consider myself an American artist."¹

This thesis is concerned with the interaction between the artist and the mass media. This relationship is a relatively recent phenomenon that was characterized in many ways by the work of American artist Andy Warhol.

Few artists more vividly personify this relationship and the glamour of the art world. In the sixties Warhol was Pop Art incarnate and in the eighties he remains as much a media star as ever. Warhol probably did more than any other artist in the Pop Art movement in setting and then stretching the parameters through his involvement with a wide range of different media.

Because of Warhol's inextricable link with the Pop Art it is necessary to initially discuss the reasons for the movement's development and its ideological concerns, so that Warhol's links with it becomes clearer. Then I will be dealing with Warhol's Pre-Pop Art background and how it shaped his later obsession with stardom, his innovative use of images from everyday life and his role as a shrewd observer of popular culture.

Warhol was true to his times when he started using the mass

media to explore a new and emerging American culture. The newly available techniques and materials allowed Warhol to subtly comment on the mass media's sociological effects, particularly the introduction of silkscreen printing.

This was to play a significant role in Warhol's appropriation of imagery. They always originated from stereotypes and never from his imagination because the images he used were photographically based. The medium of photography was to become an increasingly important factor in Warhol's painting. First through second-hand sources, later through his own photographs. There was also the important demystifying effects photography would bring to fine art because of the medium's authenticating power.

Since Warhol's introduction of photography, his sociological concerns have become an increasingly important element throughout his fine art career. This is confirmed most explicitly in his preoccupation with portraiture, it spanned almost two decades. Warhol's careful selection of photographic images often focused on current and contentious issues.

His interest in the medium of photography and the sociological implications of using it worked in tandem with his growing interest in film production. Of all Warhol's media forays, his film making has the closest affinities to his painting.

"I really feel that painting and photography are closely allied 'cause I'm me!"²

Footnotes.

¹Achille Oliva, Warhol Verso de Chirico, p. 79

²Walter Burns, American Artist, p. 24

I The Development of Pop Art Imagery and Ideology.

"What must be kept in mind is that Pop Art is not a school or movement in the limited sense that Fauvism, say, or Cubism were. The now traditional idea of an art movement is of something which - consciously or unconsciously - embraces one solution, to the art problems of any given situation, in preference to any others. It is something contained and can be described, with reasonable precision, in terms of aims and achievements. Pop Art, on the other hand, has no programmatic aims and its achievements are open-ended." ¹

Pop Art should be understood as a general term describing a tendency which built up over a long period of time and which reached a high pitch intensity in the late fifties and early sixties. To deal with Pop Art's development it is necessary to give a brief historical outline of the movements evolution which was instigated by the effect of two major occurrences; the decline of Abstract Expressionism and the growth of the mass media and advertising. The phrase Pop Art was coined in 1956 by Lawrence Alloway, but as a coherent international movement it encompasses a period of 1960 to 1965.

Pop Art's origins were rooted in Cubist collages, which incorporated elements of mass media material, either through reference or directly. In Europe leading fine artists have used collage elements since 1912. The collage technique

developed by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque was employed by many Dadaists for their own subversive ends. Marcel Duchamp, Kurt Schwitters and the Dadaists were exploring art through ready-mades and objects trouvés, and banal imagery during World War I. They imitated the effects of engraving, popular illustrations, photographs and mechanical drawing in much the same way as Pop artists would during the sixties. Kurt Schwitters began producing his "merz" works (a name derived from the word commerz), which combined elements such as poetry, typography, advertising, and refound objects to produce a complete and interrelated art form.²

One particular collage of his called 'For Käte', (plate 1) incorporated comic strip images as early as 1947; this was one of the most convincing Pre-Pop prototypes.

From an American point of view the most important precursor is probably Stuart Davis, who in the 1920's was producing paintings of individual commercial objects as an entire subject. His most direct work 'odol', (plate 2) is a labelled disinfectant bottle. Plainly visible and inscribed "it purifies". Later Davis began to further abstract the signs and lettering of an urban environment and incorporate them into a more forceful and general scheme. These bold and flat images may well have acted as a catalyst for American Pop painters; Roy Lichtenstein acknowledges the influence of Davis in the evolution of his comic book style paintings.³



Hunt Jewellers 1947

PLATE 2



The ideas of two Europeans, Fernand Leger and Marcel Duchamp relate to Pop Art. Duchamps influence is linked to his intellectually impersonal ready-mades. Leger's work was emotionally detached and his paintings had many Pop qualities, for example; he used strong forms, simulated metal surfaces, mechanical line, garish colour and a clean schematic and often heavy handed style. Their combined effect did not influence younger artists directly, but they helped to mould an aesthetic situation conducive to Pop Art.

Duchamps ideas were also triggering reactions in America around 1958; artists were combining surrealist concepts with an Abstract Expressionist style. This resulted in the assemblage works of Robert Rauchenburgs 'found objects' and also in the works of Jasper Johns. He was producing significant links with Pop Art by painting two dimensional images such as the American flag to produce paintings with out any spacial illusion: flatness and frontality were to become one of Pop Arts most striking formal characteristics. This resulted from the imitation of ready-made images.

Johns painted this kind of subject matter as a reaction against the subjectivity of Abstract Expressionism. For this reason Johns provided a significant point of departure for Pop Art in New York.

At this time there was also a growth in the mass media and advertising as a major influence in American society. Mass media processes and techniques, for example; photoscreen

printing and synthetic paint also became economically available to artists.

During Pop Art's instigation, visual imagery had over taken the word in the communication of messages and ideas through mass media outlets, such as advertising, bill-boards, comic books, films and television. The general public was constantly bombarded with visual images not only^{on} the streets but at home and at work. It was becoming an integral part of every ones daily experience because the nature of the imagery was strong and easy to assimilate, designed for ease of communication. It became a visual language that society was becoming increasingly familiar with. This is why Pop Art was the first genuinly non-elite movement in modern art, it had fewer of the esoteric qualities of previous movements.⁴

The Avant-garde composer John Cage encouraged artists in the 1950's to wake up to the life they were living, then to paint what they saw around them. While in the process they should try and embrace the ludicrously sexualized environments of affluent America. Andy Warhol more than any other contemporary painter embodied Cages affirmation that life needs no aesthetic mediation, that it was rewarding simply as it is. Cage found this operative particularly in Warhols serial images.

"Andy has fought by repetition to show us that there is no repetition really, that everything we look at is worthy of our attention. That'a been a major direction for 20th century art, it seems to me."⁵

The effect of advertising was to create a fictional world that paralleled reality; one full of glamour and escapism. Some British artists became infatuated with the America they received second hand through hyped-up magazine and film material which portrayed it as a consumer paradise. This second hand experience of America produced a watered down and romanticized version of what was to emerge there.

Pop art was an Urban art, for the city and about it. It must be significant that it developed in the worlds two biggest, most commercial, extravagant and busy capitals: London and New York. Pop Art was born initially in England, but the nucleus was focused in New York. This consisted of four hard-core artists, Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Tom Wesselmann, and James Rosenquist, who developed an idiom special to America. They all employ more or less hard-edge, commercial techniques and colours in order to convey their unmistakably popular representational images, though stylistically their work is not necessarily similar. They all deal with the issues of merchandising by focusing on advertising imagery, newspapers and comics; pictures emblematic of American life.

The licence to turn to the world of media had to some extent emerged from an atmosphere surrounding Happenings and Junk environments. Although the four New York artists had not directly participated in these events installations, they were not immune to its appropriation of American Popular culture.

"I feel I'm very much a part of my time, of my culture, as much a part of it as rockets and television." ⁶

Pop is not a new American realism, but, it does bear a very distant relationship to the romantic realism of Edward Hooper and Reginald Manshoy, and the social expression of Ben Shan.

Pop artist's were dealing with more objective concerns than had previously been the case in modern American art to this point in time. They referred to American economic prosperity through the manifestations of industrial images, materials and methods of manufacture. Pop Art was a phenomenon that was constantly changing; it was moulded by a complex interplay of choice and chance. It was an art of acceptance, not rejection. This acceptance is represented by its ability to encompass a range of imagery taken from everyday sources which had previously been excluded from the sphere of fine art.

The modern media of the 50's, for example, television, advertising, comic books, had become key transmitters of values in American life. Information came to people primarily second-hand, through media sources. They were the nearest thing to models for personal and public modes of thought and behaviour. This continual media conditioning was probably a major reason for Pop Arts cool acceptance of the worlds of advertising and mass media and its transitory nature. This fashioned a dialogue between the widely understood language of popular culture and the mysterious and often incomprehensible world of fine art.

Pop ideology related to an acceptance of modern industrial society with all its crudity and ugliness. Pop artists presented visual images of this society which focused attention on its values, but made little explicit social comment. The movement was celebratory, the artists liked what they were doing because it was emblematic of aspects of the culture around them which they enjoyed: its speed, energy, eroticism and enthusiasm for novelty. In avant-garde terms Pop Art's most important aspect is irony. The public tended to be impervious to this because the images were often received literally and therefore out of context, for example, an Andy Warhol soup can painting would be viewed as little more than an enlargement of an advertisement for the product, even though the artist incorporated many subtle changes. One of the most significant alterations was the one of traditional fine art materials: paint on canvas but incorporating it with commercial printing techniques. There is also the irony of bringing it into the context of a gallery situation because the commercial source image is transformed into high art by having it exhibited in a gallery. All Warhol's work reflects his awareness of the role of consumerism in American society. No image is more indelibly associated with Warhol than the Campbell's soup can, (plate 3) it was probably the most famous Pop Art emblem of the sixties.

Pop artists did not envisage themselves as destroyers of art because of the source they referred to or the techniques they used. The artists dealt with the world as it was, they accepted their environment.

PLATE 3



The mass popularity of this new art precipitated a subtle shift in the role and expectations of artists, works were heralded almost as soon as they were produced. They recieved renown and financial success at an early age. These artists moved from being outsiders to being insiders in high society.

Many artists in Europe and America hit upon a similiar style and theme at around the same time, independently of each other, due to the combined consequences already mentioned. Henry Geldzhaler curator of twentieth century art at the Metropolitan Museum once described the beginnings of Pop Art this way: "You Pop artists in different parts of the city, unknown to each other, rising out of the muck and staggering forward with your paintings in front of you."⁷

I Footnotes.

- ¹Christopher Finch, Pop Art Object and Image, P. 6.
- ²H R Rookmaker, Modern Art and the Death of a Culture, P. 20.
- ³Barbra Rose, American Art Since 1900, P. 67.
- ⁴Marshell Mc Lahan, Understanding Media, P. 63.
- ⁵Mario Amaya, Pop as Art, P. 23.
- ⁶Robert Bernstein, Andy Warhols Screenprints, P. 15.
- ⁷Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, Popism: The Warhol Sixties, P. 4.

II Warhol's Background and Pre-Pop Art Influences.

Throughout his fine art career Warhol has shown a single minded consistency, not only stylistically but in re-occurring subject matter. Immense publicity and public interest in Warhol's work and lifestyle was generated phenomenally quickly at the start of the Pop Art boom. Andy Warhol is today an artist the American public is familiar with but this does not mean that the work is widely loved. He has remained surrounded in controversy and for this reason he is rarely out of the media spotlight. Warhol attracted alot of personal interest because of his seemingly cool and detached attitude to his life and work and an alarming reticence. Even after prolonged exposure by the media his personality has remained veiled. This is probably because he has consistently projected a character which exemplifies some of the essential aspects of post-modern society, for example; Warhol represents a de-personalized and value free-man; he never makes earnest statements about his work and he converses entirely in trivialities. Warhol plays the role of an archetypical contemporary man, he and his work seem to be inextricable. For this reason the public and critics suspect his work to be one big confidence trick; he deliberately attacked all the sacred shibboleths of art.

Although Warhol talks a great deal about himself it is only in a flat and often contradictory manner; that of an American conversational style. His paintings are like his biographical ramblings, they are filled with facts and empty self revelations:

"If you want to know all about Andy Warhol, just look at the surface of my paintings and films and me, and there I am. There's nothing behind it."¹

This seemingly absolute impenetrability of Warhol's surface is what gives it persistent interest. Warhol's imagery seems to conceal something basic and perhaps disturbing about Western industrial society and us.

To gain an understanding of how his detached and impersonal images relate to himself what he was trying to achieve with his endlessly repeated images, it is necessary to view his work with the same logic and from his point of view. To appreciate his early ambitions and sensibility it is a requisite to re-count the youth he so doggedly tried to cloud.

"I never give my background and any way I make it up all different every time I am asked."²

Lila Davis a friend who went to art school with Warhol at Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh; recalls him as a shy withdrawn boy from a relatively poor immigrant family. Warhol's father was at various times a construction worker and coal miner who died when Warhol was nine. He came to America like many East Europeans to earn a fortune and send for his family. It took nine years of menial labouring before his wife could join him.

Warhol's youth and early adulthood coincided with a new and increasingly consumer oriented society, one important by product of this was advertising. There is a body of thought held by social psychologists and anthropologists, that visual advertising subconsciously creates false wants and needs. Products are shown in a desirable context. If you buy the product you are likely to attain the glamour and prestige of the situation depicted.

The consumer is invited to live an unreal life through advertisements, and by accepting these images he can achieve a greater sense of social reality. Advertising helps us make sense of our environment because it validates a consumer life style by associating goods with personal and social meanings and those aspirations and needs that are not fulfilled in real life. Advertisers play a major role in shaping societies, values, habits and direction. The fact that Warhol was brought up in a low income family would have increased his desire to live a 'typical' American lifestyle because advertisements identify people by the products they consume. When Warhol is taken in the context of his withdrawn personality and background, the endless rows of canned food would have a mesmeric beauty. The canned was emblematic because it signified wealth, abundance and psychological security.

Warhol's film star portraits could symbolize a mass yearning for power and status far beyond the reach of millions. The American death series focused on the sensationalised deaths

related to a consumer society, for example; death by electric chair, car crash, plane crash, suicide. These are the sort of deaths that hold a morbid fascination for people who read newspapers. Warhol reminds the viewer of the eyes promiscuity, its attraction to imagery of every sort: informative, shocking or simply pretty. Warhols initial art training was in fine art. It was at the painting department at Carnegie that Warhol got to know Philip Pearlstein. He was one among many students who had ambitions in the fine arts. Pearlstein recalls that, although Warhol had trouble at Carnegie mainly in his academic courses, he did graduate after four years on schedule with hopes of becoming an art teacher in a public school. During the summer holidays Warhol had worked in a local department store, part of this job involved arranging window displays. He was also paid to look through high fashion magazines for ideas. This experience must have been instrumental in developing Warhols sense of style and the possibility of other careers in the visual arts.

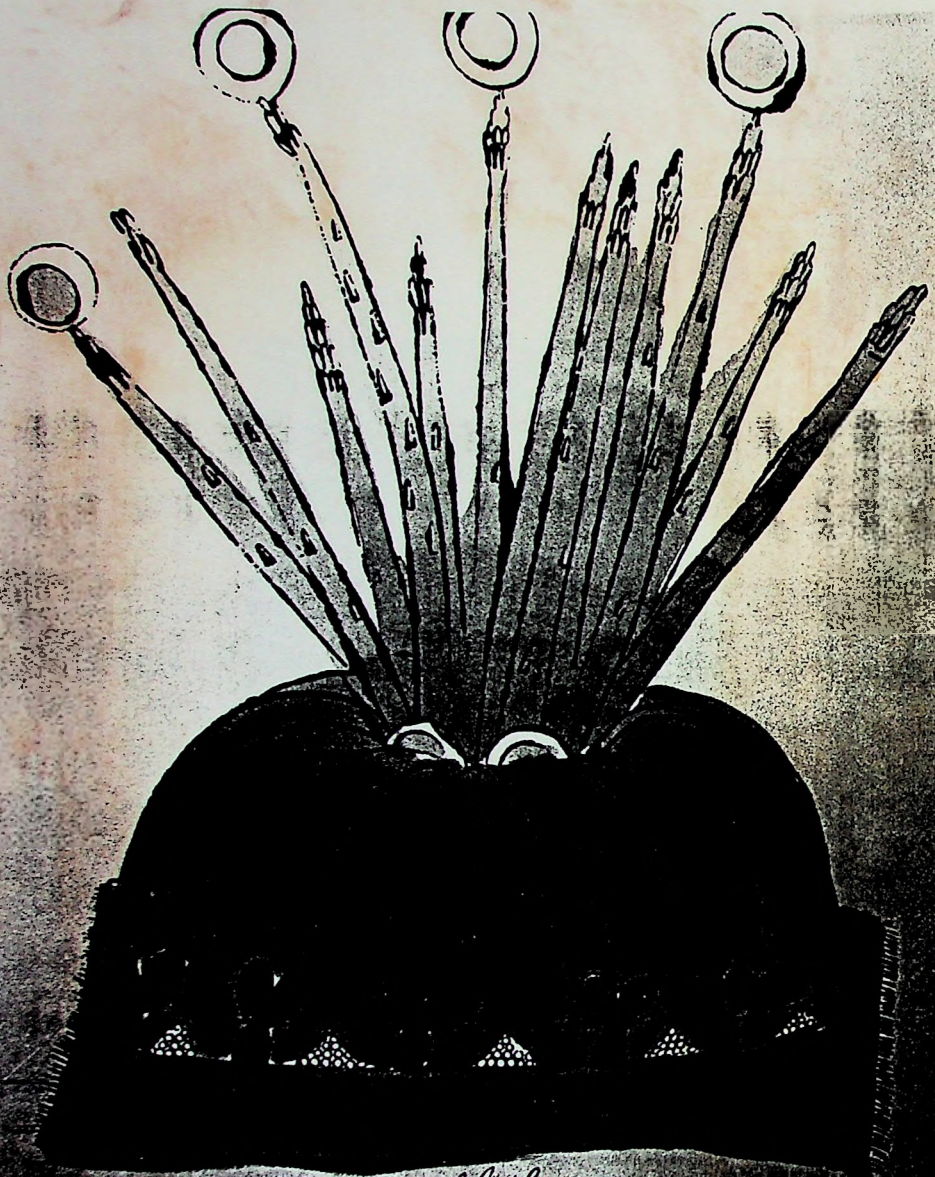
Pearlstein recalls talking Warhol into going to New York the summer after his graduation. On arrival he began showing his portfolio to Manhattan art directors. His appearance in contrast to other aspiring commercial artists was shabby; his portfolio consisted of a paper bag, he wore sneakers and was shy. Nevertheless he tried to make a favourable impression with secretaries, assistant art directors and anyone who could help him. The fact that he soon began to get commissions emphasizes Warhols ability from the outset to create the right look. One

of his first assignments was for 'glamour' magazine, this emphasizes the strength of drawing.

After about eight months Warhol left Pearlsteins apartment and moved into what was more or less an art commune, filled with young people all new to the city and most importantly ambitious. This environment seems to have stimulated his desire for success in the commercial arts.

Warhols drawings were characterized by a reticent elegance almost verging on naivete. (refer to plate 1 and 2) Throughout his commercial career in the fifties his published drawings use a device similar to the monotype transfer process. First he drew his characteristically tentative line in black ink on glazed, non absorbant paper. Then he would press the design against an absorbant sheet. This produced a spontaneous looking result because of the unpredictability of the way the ink spread. Art directors in the fifties found his virtuoso like control of this method, adaptable to nearly any purpose, from a record sleeve to shoe advertisements.

In 1953 Warhol took on an agent, Fritzie Millar. Three years later he had made such an impact that the Art Directors Club gave him an award for distinctive merit in an I Millar shoe advertisement. He went on to garner many more prizes. Warhol had now reached a crest in his career as a top illustrator, but this increased his appetite for success. The financial aspect of this was only part of what he sought; he yearned for the public recognition that only the fine arts could bring.



salade de alf Landon

Take a bunch of asparagus with very clear jelly and place in the bottom of a glass of spring lobster tail decorated with capers. Fill the glass with green asparagus tips, hard boiled pineapples, and kidneys mixed with bacon and double cream. Serve immediately and turn out on a napkin. Very popular at political dinners in London.

PLATE 2



So around this time Warhol began pursuing another career, that of a serious artist. His efforts in the fifties were overshadowed by the heroics of Abstract Expressionism.

The start of the sixties marked a dramatic turning point for Warhol. He made the decisive change from commercial artist to painter by ceasing his commercial activities.

In Warhol's autobiographical book 'Popism' Warhol credits film maker and artists agent, Emile de Antonio as supplying most of his fine art training.

"De (Antonio) was the only person I know of to see commercial art as real art and real art as commercial art and he made the whole New York art world see it that way."³

Antonio saw the future of American art in Warhol's impersonality. He gave Warhol the support and confidence he needed to make the break from commercial to fine art. Antonio also introduced Warhol to Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg and Warhol admired their work enough to buy it. At this time they were the 'hottest' young artists around and the only ones offering any alternative to the prevailing style of Abstract Expressionism. Warhol appears to have grasped immediately the far reaching implications of their work. What appears to have intrigued Warhol was their incorporation of various aspects of commercial design, for example; simple forms with vigorous but controlled brush work. These two painters synthesized Expressionist

techniques with new philosophical ideas, recalls endorsing it by saying:

"Gee, I can do that."

Warhol used to frequent many of the New York galleries in the late fifties. On a visit to the Leo Castelli gallery Warhol asked their new director and talent scout Ivan Karp if there was anything of unusual interest in the gallery. Karp showed him a painting by Roy Lichtenstein; it was a painting of a cheap black and white advertisement rendered in a hard edge style. Warhol was stunned by its similarity to his work, and invited Karp to see his studio. Here Warhol showed him paintings of his cartoon subjects, some messy, some articulate. Karp preferred the latter, echoing a judgement already made by Warhol's friend Emile de Antonio.

At this time Leo Castelli was the only dealer willing to show what very soon became known as Pop Art. Castelli had already taken on Lichtenstein and could not exhibit Warhol's work because of its similarity. Warhol's cartoon style paintings were seen publically before Warhol had seen Lichtenstein's work. He produced a series of paintings for a department store window. One of them, 'Saturday's Popeye' 1960, (plate 3) was a direct predecessor of his later controversial and notorious Campbell's soup can paintings. They had a semi-imagestic clarity; paint drips question the reality of the second-hand source material. Warhol avoided the pictorial refinement that provides Lichtenstein

PLATE 3



with his associations of good taste and high style. By Warhol's own admission the jolt of Lichtenstein's authoritative painting style made him drop his draughtsmanly type scrawl that characterized his early comic style paintings. One year later he still retained some drips and smudges, but by 1962 Warhol had arrived at a totally impersonal finish that was more in tune with his source material.

II Footnotes.

1 Carter Ratcliff, Warhol, P. 9.

2 Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, Popism: The Warhol Sixties. P. 3.

3 Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, Popism: The Warhol Sixties. P. 4.

III The Sociological Implications of Using The Mass Media As a Source material.

Modern advertising is a product of the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century. Visual communication became increasingly mechanized and sophisticated and in the process advertising became a more integral part of American society. Advertising techniques were based on an imperfect knowledge of human desires, wants and psychological investigations; factors that were constantly up-dated and improved. The use of advertising could make a product become instantly desirable and marketable to the general public, such is the power of the medium. The general visual principles of advertising were geared towards simplicity because to work effectively it first has to attract the viewers attention. If the advertiser cannot do this then anything else he does is meaningless. For this reason the American environment has become a jungle of attention getting devices. Advertising publicity needs the viewers intentness only long enough to get the message across. These are concerns Andy Warhol utilized throughout his career, his paintings have a similar simplicity and directness.

The late fifties and sixties were a period of unprecedented economic prosperity for America. This resulted in an increasingly consumer orientated whose wealth was generated by a vicious-circle of production and marketing techniques. This pervasiveness would have made it impossible to avoid some form of publicity. Advertisers claim they have an important influence

on every ones lives, even if it is at a subconscious level. The nations familiarity with one particular form of visual imagery has made advertising, in a sense the 'official art' of industrial nations.

A Warhol epigram 'Pop is liking things' reflects his initial fascination and celebratory attitude with even the most mundane things. On the surface Warhol appears to accept what he finds in the world; he does not involve himself in a subjective critique of this new Pop culture. Warhol functions as a mirror reflecting what he finds in a proudly non-judgemental way. This cool and detached attitude was probably influenced by his commercial art background.¹

Warhol is a more analytical and sophisticated thinker than his apparently vacuous personality implies. He was perceptive about the role of consumerism and the mass media in the sixties. He was also aware of the pressures of being successful and the danger of becoming an institution, rather than fight this Warhol made success his art form. Instead of being manipulated by the art world, critics, dealers and collectors, Warhol used them as the basis for his art work.

Warhols first successful work consisted of sculpture in the form of 'Brillo' boxes, and screen printed painting of contemporary icons of the time, for example; Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, Jackie Kennedy. These printed works were often made with the help of assistants, this was one of the reasons

for his work being avant-garde. It raised the question of whether or not the works were unique and if not did it matter? and also did it matter that Warhol himself may not have made them?. The small group of critics and dealers of the time who initiated the Pop Art movement by promoting their work made criticism of it almost irrelevant because of the collectors who were providing so much financial support.

The methodology of business began to pervade the art world and Warhol reflected these developments because his work dwells on the intersection between art, life, and business. His work is on the border of fine art, commercial art, fashion and replication. For this reason Warhol and his soup cans have become famous together, so that each is an advertisement for the other; in essence Warhol became a product of American society. 'Fame' is an important pre-occupation in American culture, it is the reason celebrities, commercials and talk shows are the most widely shared images in America.

Warhol does not naively idealize the images he puts on canvas. He knows what he is handling; his commercial art background gave him this knowledge. The advertisements Warhol selected were not the tasteful ones he used to produce, the sort that were made by well known designers who claim to be artists in their own right. Warhol used the tasteless ones that would be consumed by a mass audience.

Warhol separated himself from reality by using the barrier

of commercialism, for example; the unique product is replaced by the multiple. This repeated work represents a state of indifference, an angle from which Warhol can view the world. The ostentation of the multiple paintings reflects the premise of consumption that American civilization revels in. The cynical eye of Warhol reinstates the objective condition of the average American, by using images which are not outside of American reality but within. Warhol expresses the inexpressive faces of the man in the crowd, who is thrown into his daily solitude and anonymity. Many aspects of American culture are reproduced with the same gelid cheerfulness by way of the mechanical process of silkscreening. By using this mechanized process Warhol confirms and accepts the state of manipulation of everything and of man as well, without the possibility of an alternative. This is probably his works greatest failing.

The pop artists were the first groups of artists concerned with the direct use of advertising and mass media material. Inevitably there was some time lag in the explicit impact of mass media techniques on fine art; this is largely due to technical reasons. Until the early sixties technology for the simulation of mass media techniques was economically beyond the reach of the fine artist. Media saturation was at the time a large part of everyones experience of reality. Great events happening on either side of the world, had become immediate through the scanned image of television or the coded photograph sent by radio to newspaper offices. The artists problem was to find a means to explore this new dimension of reality, the most convenient was the relatively new silkscreen

process and he was one of the first to use it in a fine art context.

Warhol's use of the silkscreen seems to be a logical conclusion to his commercial art days when he used a monotype printing process. His growing detachment from any expressive use of paint culminated in his use of a rubber stamp technique in 1962. This process resulted in his gridded paintings, that is; row upon row of Dollar bills, Coke bottles and other familiar images. He soon abandoned this method because he thought it was too home-made; "I wanted something stronger that would give an assembly line effect." At around this time he started using the silkscreen process; a convenient method for transferring a photographic image to canvas, and it also made him turn to a particular kind of imagery; the newspaper and magazine photograph.

From now on Warhol could assume the role of art director, his involvement in painting became less and less, all he had to do was select an image and send it to a commercial silkscreen shop, though initially the screens were hand cut. Still later that year he turned to the photosilkscreen method, this made it possible to present a full range of light and dark tones. It allowed him to use a new kind of imagery more directly and more forcefully because of the processes similarity with industrial printing techniques and assembly line effect that reflects his awareness of the role of consumerism.

The fact that Warhol was using traditional supports to paint on, but industrial techniques in a gallery situation, softened the subversiveness of what he was trying to do. It was also another way of being rapidly accepted into the art market.

The actual use Warhol made of silkscreening belies his stance of almost total detachment from the process. But, he did subvert the mechanical effect of the medium by emphasizing printing flaws such as uneven and off registration. At the same time he challenged the uniqueness of individual easel painting and the mystique that surrounds the artists hand. This approach undermines concepts inherent in Western art since the Renaissance; for example, Warhols flower series consisted of over nine hundred paintings of the same image but in different sizes and colours, this implies the possibility of producing paintings, Ad Infinitum.

Andy Warhol was probably one of the first fine artists to consciously attempt to make art more accessible to a mass audience. During the sixties, Tom Wolf in an essay 'The public is not invited' identified constituents of the art world at ten thousand people. The public buys books in hard cover and paper backs by the millions: the public buys records by the billions and fills stadiums for concerts. The public affects taste, theory and artistic outlook in literature, drama and music. The same is not true of the visual arts; it is the people of the art world who are the taste makers and buyers. The divorce between the artist and the public began in the age

of specialization, but it was not significantly bridged in the electronic age simply because the artist wanted to work with the media. Ironically the prolific amount of work Warhol was producing remained economically outside the reach of the average American, Warhol's rise to stardom resulted in equally inflated prices.

The cerebral approach to the problems associated with popular culture distinguished British Pop Artist from their American counterparts. The American either tended to be neutral towards their sources or celebratory. They accepted the fact that the public was familiar with and expected changing styles and fashions.

The mass media explosion in the sixties certainly seems to have influenced Warhol, this is apparent in the following account by Henry Geldzalher; "In his house on 89 Street he'd have Rock and Roll going, and he would have the television on, opera playing, and he'd be painting and we'd be talking, and there'd be magazines passing back and forth, looking at the television, listening to the opera." Many of Warhol's images obviously originated from this media, particularly television. It has probably done more to alter the direct discursive relationship of images to the real world than any other invention this century. The intimacy of television probably makes it the most important source of visual information we receive every day.²

American television is renowned for its visual 'garbage', this was partly due to the lax advertising restrictions. A viewer would have no way of paying equal attention to all the surplus. The most memorable images are those which most nearly resemble a sign, that is; an image that is clear, simple and repetitious.

In Warhol's best work he fuses technique and imagery as subjects and in doing so focuses on important issues of contemporary society to reveal the impact of the mass media on cultural values. Warhol has used relatively few images considering the quantity of work he has produced. The few he has selected, for example; 'Race Riot', and 'Jackie's' reveal a genius for selecting highly charged photographs. They are presented so that they transcend their original function as documentary news items, to become archetypal images that capture essential issues of American social and political issues. Later in the seventies Warhol used the works of fashion and show business as subject matter; he was ruthless in exposing the machinery of glamour but there was still little sign of subjectivity of judgement.

Warhol through his persona "I want to be a machine", and appropriation of industrial techniques reflects the detachment that consumerism brought with it. This detached presence conceals any kind of depth in his paintings, their flatness reflects his concern for the surface. Warhol's cynical^{eye} reinstates the objective condition of the average American; this inexpressiveness is reflected by way of the mechanical process of silkscreening. In this way Warhol confirms and accepts the state of manipulation

of everything. This is his great failing because man is presented without possibility of an alternative, he has to accept the irreversable role of consumed man, without the possibility of an alternative.³

III Footnotes.

¹Ralph Pomeroy, The Importance of Being Andy, Andy, Andy. P. 15.

²Gregory Battcock, The New Art. P. 75.

³Nicolas Calas, Icons and Images of the Sixties. P. 8.

The photographic image as a source material for his art work. The manipulation of the mass media, provided Warhol with an important precedent for more recent appropriation of such imagery. This example helped to define Warhol's desire to effect a direct relationship between high and popular culture and also between the techniques of artists and those of professional designers.

During the sixties Warhol, called the "vocabulary of commercial photography from newspapers and magazines. Warhol was utilizing the same sources that were an intrinsic part of mass communication in American society. This was the first time in American history that millions of people were experiencing the same images and information. These photographic images carried a political value because they can portray a set of attitudes about how the world is or could be. Warhol was selecting and painting this highly emotive imagery, for example, the "diamonds" series. But, Warhol claims that he is totally detached from these images and that there were no political motives for painting them. The judgments Warhol made about his culture remain ambiguous. It was neither celebratory nor critical.

IV The Photographic Image In Painting.

In the sixties Warhol in company with other Pop artists brought the subject matter of contemporary life into mainstream painting. From 1962 until the present day, Warhol has used the photographic image as a source material for his art work. The manipulation of the mass media, provided Warhol with an important precedent for more recent appropriation of such imagery. This example helped to deflate Modernisms desire to effect a strict distinction between high and popular culture and also between the techniques of artists and those of professional designers.

During the sixties Warhol, culled the vocabulary of commercial photography from newspapers and magazines. Warhol was utilizing the same sources that were an intrinsic part of mass communications in American society. This was the first era in American history that millions of people were experiencing the same images and information. These photographic images carried a political value because they can portray a set of attitudes about how the world is or could be. Warhol was selecting and painting this highly emotive imagery, for example; the 'disaster' series. But, Warhol claims that he is totally detached from these images and that there were no political motives for painting them. The judgements Warhol made about his culture remain ambiguous, it was neither celebratory nor satirical.

A more general result of using the same photo-silkscreen technique became apparent in the demystification of image making and the role of the artist in society. It helped a mass audience to understand the medias impact on their lives and identities. Warhol was communicating to the public in a visual language that was now becoming familiar to every one.

Part of an artists training is to restructure and manipulate the content of imagery, this makes them a potential radical force because they can restructure visual reality; this was Warhols forte. The adaption of cool, detached techniques mimicking those of commercial art recieved particular abuse from critics because it came as a severe challenge to the notion of artistic originality and authorship. Warhol's photo-silkscreen paintings were often denounced as mere enlargements of other images, so close to the original that his art was pointless. But in defence of this Warhol brought to his work a sophisticated level of formalist invention as well as exaggerating the problems associated with mass-printing. Probably more importantly, Warhols choice of imagery produced a new kind of subjectivity, one that reinforces the importance of the medias coverage in shaping the publics response; and one that did not reside with the artists expressive gesture. From a present day perspective it is clear that Warhol chose mass produced imagery as a vehicle through which to explore contemporary culture.

In a subtle but definative way, Warhols imagery transfered subjectivity to the viewer. His particular pictorial treatment of the subject was the same, whether it was a car crash or a soup can, this offered the viewer with an open and decipherable commentary on the depicted scene. This encouraged viewer participation because of the public and standardized nature of the imagery, for example; any American could talk about a painting of Marilyn Monroe in a way not possible with, for example; Abstract Expressionism. This is because Warhol was reflecting general experiences rather than individual ones.

Socially these implications were more far reaching because they involved cultural rather than personal symbols. This encouraged a diverse audience to make judgements and form opinions, thus shifting the interpretation for each individual viewer; the more public the imagery, the deeper the link with the individual viewers experience.

The medium of photography allows Warhol to involve himself with a rediscovery of a commonly shared American Environment and to identify with its particular reality. It also permitted him to depict things previously considered unworthy of notice in the sphere of fine art: advertising, magazine and newspaper illustration, food, filmstars and horrors associated with modern technology. Warhols introduction of photography shook the time honoured methods of painting and creativity; Warhol did very little to an image once he had selected it.

Warhol's pictorial language consists of stereo-types, for example:

the commodities he paints are absolutely impersonal, machine made objects, untouched by human hands. The visual strength of his paintings use the time tested skills of advertising that cares more for the container than the things contained. Warhols acceptance of popular habits and heroes show his acceptance and preference for the actuality of our immediate experience.

The introduction of photography allowed Warhol to challenge the idea of the unique hand made object. For the pioneers of the New York School, a painting reflected the artists personal state, his historical moment and transcendent yearnings or all three.¹

Warhol exchanged this romantic concept for a depersonalized even mechanical model and in the process invented a new kind of object: the multiple painting. This allowed the same image to be repeated indefinitely. Silkscreen technology was essential for this kind of painting, it throws traditional ideas of originality into an ironic light.

This irony permeates into the fact that his paintings are produced by a mechanized process and that his stated desire was to be a machine, but Warhol produces images that are immediately recognisable as his own.²

IV Footnotes.

¹Harold Rosenberg, Discovering the Present. P. 25.

²Carter Ratcliff, Warhol, P. 36.

Warhol's life was a constant struggle. This aspect of his work remained constant throughout his painting career and in the many different ways he used. His first commercial work depicted commercial products. Warhol then started to depict himself and deal with other concerns; these fall under two themes, the disaster series dealing with human vulnerability and portraits of famous personalities. Later his work in particular reveals unintentionally the most basic human needs; for example, eating, sleeping, etc.

Typically his paintings are simple, often repetitive in design, uncomplicated in technique, and aesthetical and executed in execution. These qualities have made his work visually powerful and philosophically complex.

Both Warhol and Robert Rauschenberg have characterized themselves as reporters of modern society, yet their intentions are not so clearly laid out. Warhol's work is more complex than descriptive representation or aesthetic explanation.

Warhol's work deals with the underlying structures of our time. He fulfills the need for art to act as a mirror to an ever-changing society. While he may be considered the most important of artists, he drew his subject matter from his own

V Two Decades of Portraiture.

From a sociological point of view, Warhols art works are manifest with an intense curiosity about people and their behaviour in contemporary life. This aspect of his work remained constant throughout his painting career and in the many different media he used. His first screenprinted works depicted consumer products. Warhol then started to branch out and deal with other concerns; these fall under two themes, the disaster series dealing with human vulnerability and portraits of famous personalities. Later his film work in particular records uninterruptedly the most basic human tasks; for example, eating, sleeping, etc.

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Both Warhol and Robert Rauchenberg have characterized themselves as reporters of modern society, but their intentions are not to clearly list current events. Warhols aims are much subtler than discursive description or didactic explanation.

Warhols work deals with the under-lying structures of our time, he fulfills the need for art to act as a mirror to an ever changing society. While he may be considered the most impersonal of artists, he draws his subject matter from his own

experience; the secondhand experience an American shares through the media.

It is part of modern societies mandate for art to be avant-garde, experimental and forward looking rather than being tradition bound. This role Warhol does and does not fulfill. In terms of technique and modes of presentation Warhol was innovative, but the themes of the subject matter he used refer to the European traditions of still life, portraiture, and disasters, though the subject matter of Warhols work refers to consumerism in America.

Warhol paints the life of contemporary American man, who emerged with the new systems of communication and marketing; a man who lives in an environment of images. Warhol appears to be searching for the true face of contemporary man. During the early sixties Warhols early work encompasses the extremities of the population. From the celebrity pin-ups came the inspiration for his portraits of Jackie Kennedy, Elizabeth Taylor, Elvis Presley to mention the most famous. Warhol at this time new celebrities only through the media just like the majority of the population. Marilyn Monroe's death was to act as the trigger for this series of paintings. At the other end of the spectrum were the anonymous but sensationalized victims of car crashes and executions.

The famous people who appear in Warhols paintings owe their career achievements to the pervasiveness of the media. The

black victims of the Birmingham race riots have become immortalized due to Warhols careful selection of a horrific image taken by a photo journalist (Refer to plate 1).

On the surface, Warhols stylistic simplicity and removed technique give the impression that his concerns lie with the irony of reproducing the same picture taken from, for example; a newspaper and more or less exaggerating the flaws of mechanical reproduction: the lurid colours associated with glossy fashion magazines and printing inks, the off register images and smudged areas, that of bad printing.

In these so called 'paintings', the only painting involved was applying paint on a roller, directly onto canvas and then printing directly onto this. Essentially he was using a fine art format with a media style flair.

Disaster Series:

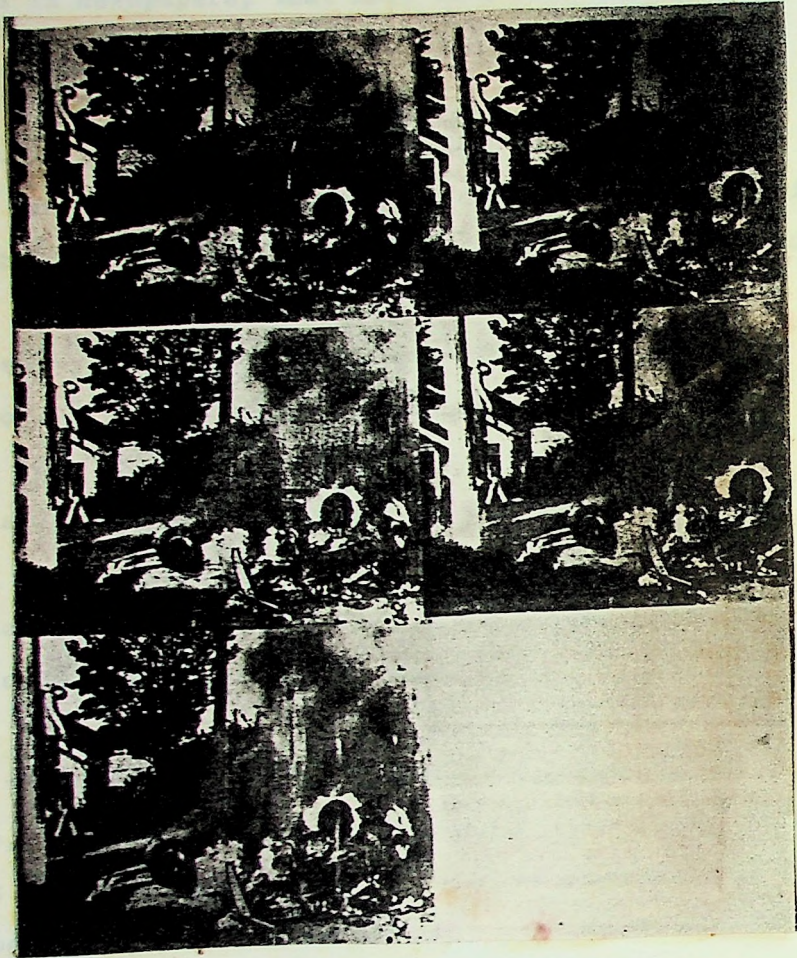
Warhol's friend, Henry Geldzalher was the inspiration behind the 'disaster' series of paintings. It was inspired by a newspaper headline in 1962 about a horrific airplane crash.¹

An analysis of one of these paintings of violent death reveals what the series is about. 'White disaster 1963', features a disinterested spectator strolling off the picture frame on the far side of the road, in the foreground is the instrument of death a recently crashed and burning car. In front of the consumer wreck hangs a body from a telegraph pole (Refer to plate 2).

PLATE 1



PLATE 2



The disaster series comments on technological societies attitudes to the horrors of modern life. He does this by aligning himself with the spectator: Warhol was using the horror and sensationalisms found in newspapers, that have such a strong appeal to the public.

This particular image derives its strength from a deliberate conflict of immediacy and detachment; a traditional method of tragedy. The immediacy of the image is heightened by the fact that it has been transferred directly to the canvas. The transference of photojournalism to a fine art context gives both a curious authority which Warhol has become skilled in exploiting. The two forms of immediacy presented are the snap-shot aspect and sensationalism of the subject.

The technical device of multiplication of the same image on canvas is to distance a horrific image.

Looking at the canvas initially the subject matter is not discernable, because the flat repetitions of the image produce an abstract and decorative quality. This is retained on closer inspection because it is visually difficult to focus on any one image for long due to the proximity of the image.

The disaster paintings because of their execution, become one of the few forceful statements on this aspect of American life to be found in recent American painting. It represents the artificial emotion that is received from so many sources everyday through the media.

When you see a gruesome picture over and over again, it does not really have any effect (page 98. Lucy Lippard). Warhol's intellectual detachment is tied up with the aesthetics of boredom, a condition with which most Americans are familiar with through watching television newsreels. The monotonous repetition of newsreel produces a numbing detachment from events of violence. Here Warhol does succeed in transferring this effect to his own medium.

The Sixties.

The portraits Warhol produced in the 1960's were of familiar celebrities, their social value is rooted in the posterity of this visual diary. They are essentially paintings for posterity. The portraits of Jackie Kennedy (plate 3) were started just before the assassination of her husband President John F. Kennedy. Warhol continued this series with portraits of the newly bereaved Jackie. In some of these multiple paintings he combined both "before and after" images to produce a penetrating study of not only the anguish of a bereaved wife but that of a nation. In these paintings Warhol makes use of an implied narrative to call attention to a sequence of events surrounding the moment recorded by the camera.

Warhol used the photographic image as a valid medium for recording the human form, everyone was familiar with the glamour portraits of Vogue or the journalistic photography of newspapers.

PLATE 3



The use of a photographic image has important psychological connotations, that is; a mechanical image is regarded as the truth. It tells us not only about the kind of information we are receiving but about images Americans receive every day through the medium of television; a constant alternating between enticing commercials and horrific news coverage of the Vietnam war. The constant barrage of this kind of material has an anaesthetizing effect. The visual images are accepted as real 3D facts. In reality this is a counterfeit experience whether it concerns the life of a superstar or anonymous suicide. They become fictions. This distancing of the original event reinforces the inaccessibility of people such as Elizabeth Taylor, whom very few people see at eye level.

A new and growing television generation was emerging when Warhol started his photo-silkscreens, Warhol was one of these proselyte, he used to work with the television on, but the volume turned down. In regard to this new media conditioning the fact that Warhol can simultaneously paint Warren Beatty, Troy Donoghue, Marilyn Monroe, race riots and fatal car crashes makes Warhol's personality appear less cool and detached and more like a voyeur of contemporary life in which the fashionable and horrible co-exist.

These kinds of social studies have relations with the nineteenth century social painters. For example, Manet, whose range extended from the Haute-monde of famous people, luxury edibles and to contemporary tragedies of the time, all of which were painted

with the same cool and detached palette. The subtly cool aesthetic with which Warhol and Manet view current events is often deeper and more cutting than Expressionist attempts with the same subject matter. With paintings like the race riots and Jackie portraits, Warhol reveals a genius for selecting highly charged photographs.

This type of moral anaesthesia becomes more detached and ironic through the manipulation and look of commercial photography as a new visual vocabulary to be explored as an aesthetic language, for example, the blurring of printers ink, bad registration, the 'dot' grain due to enlargement. The often arbitrary change from one colour filter to another, the new plastic spectrum of chemical hues - these products of photographic printing and retouching are emphasised and often isolated. Warhol was playing up an aspect of this ever increasing removal from the initial source of the photograph: the actual event. This was used as cosmetic retouching might be in regard to a fusion of beautiful and ugly paint surfaces.

In early 1963, Warhol found that his town house had become unworkably cluttered. His next studio was an abandoned fire house, here he found it necessary to hire an assistant to help him with the demands of the silkscreen process.

His growing reputation and the demand for his work forced him to move to a large studio loft. This studio became the notorious 'factory'. With an 'open-door' policy, Warhol would

attract an extraordinary collection of art fans, hangers-on and habitués. Warhol appears to have thrived in the atmosphere of uninhabited social freacks. He had also been very open to suggestions concerning his work, though it is impossible to identify all of these, the most significant suggestion was for his first show in New York. The owner of the stable gallery; Elenor Ward offered Warhol a show if he would paint a two dollar bill she had just taken out of her wallet.²

Warhol followed her advice and recieved an immediate and powerful response from the Manhattan art world.

The increasing publicity Warhol was receiving was attracting a large number of 'crazy druggy people' but without them 'jabbering away and doing insane things, I would loose my creativity. After all they had been my total inspiration since 1964'.³

The Seventies.

In 1965 Warhol retired from painting because he says he found people more interesting than painting and he wanted to spend all his time around them.

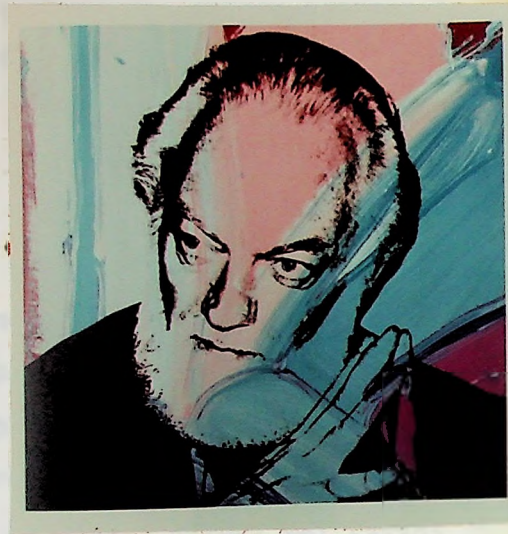
The decade started with Warhol's recovery from a near fatal assasination attempt. Upon his recovery there was a strict security system monitoring who was allowed in, there were no drugged people wandering in. The seventies marked a new approach for Warhol to portraiture. The photographs Warhol had been using previously

were not his own, he culled them from magazines and newspapers. Many of the celebrity portraits of the sixties had the print quality similar to a newspaper he might have used like the New York Post. They had the debased quality of cheap newsprint. Those of the seventies belong to the glossy domain of Richard Avedon and Vogue.

These beautiful people have replaced any concern for middle America and the anonymity associated with it. The success Warhol achieved in the sixties was supersonic, by the early seventies he was no longer a mere cult figure but a celebrity among celebrities. He no longer had to get his photographs of superstars from magazines because he was now being hounded by prospective sitters for him to immortalize their fabled faces in the history of art. He was now in a position to be an ideal 'court painter' of the seventies; of aristocracy, wealth, high-fashion, art and brains. Warhol was fulfilling the role Robert Mapplethorpe was, in the medium of photography. Mapplethorpe by analogy had become the contemporary equivalent of a court photographer to an American avant-garde rooted in new music and visual arts. He reflects the values underlying the New York intellectual fashion in the late seventies and early eighties.

Warhol's gallery of contemporary faces was instantly captured by a technique that begins with a series of polaroid snapshots of the patron. High wattage spotlights are used to flatten the face (refer to plate 4), Warhol will sometimes use make-up

PLATE 4



to increase this effect. This was also part of a scheme to flatter the subject; Warhol has stated that he considers it part of his job to do this for example; if a patron thinks his nose is too big Warhol will make it appear smaller. This sounds as though Warhol has no artistic integrity, but the result probably reveals more about the patron because he is deciding how he wants to be portrayed.

Warhol's presence is seen more in his new deployment of an astonishing range of colours and textures unseen before the seventies. First he screens the portrait on printed canvas, then paints around and over the image emphasising certain forms or areas with blocks of unrepresentational colour. These colours are applied with loose and often loaded paint that produces an uneven surface when dry. Areas of the earlier screen portraits can be seen. Warhol may repeat this process many times, giving the finished portrait a density and depth unseen before. This new technique and surface demolished Warhol's assessment that there is nothing behind the surface.

It is not possible to say these portraits are supposed to reveal the inner person, for example Mohammed Ali's portrait is extremely simple in composition but it contains a new depth because the technique is more complex: colour has been screened or painted on, or both before and after the screening of the black photo-image. The resulting visual ambiguity causes subtle shifts in gestalt because one face emerges from the mask of another. (plate 5)

PLATE 5



Many layers emerge; in the case of this sportsman, Warhol implies a shift between the person, character and face.

By comparison Warhol's sixties portraits have the look of lower income austerity and dreariness characterized by a spartan simplicity. (refer to plate 6). Warhol's screen works have encompassed more than two decades of post-war America. This contemporary link is broken in regard to a venerable tradition that reached its peak in the late nineteenth century. Warhol himself is hardly unaware of this tradition, as is evidenced in his choices for the 'Raid the ice box' exhibition held (1969 -1970) at Rhode Island School of Design, in Providence. Here Warhol was allowed to select from the storage vaults, he chose among other things, some late nineteenth century American examples of the elegant Brushey portrait traditions of William Merritt Chase and Frank Benson.

It is clear that Warhol has revived the visual qualities of older traditions of society portraiture. More importantly he has overcome a legendary indifference to human facts and in the process he has captured an incredible range of psychological insights among his sitters. From the vacuity of the camera orientated smile of the wife of an international banker to starteling disclosures of mood.

The seventies saw Warhol's involvement with other media. A magazine he became involved with 'interview' was a stylish tabloid, dedicated to a segment of culture where fashion, art, entertainment and society meet.

PLATE 6



V Footnotes.

¹Carter Ratcliff, Warhol, P.37.

²Carter Ratcliff, Warhol, P. 26.

³Carter Ratcliff, Warhol, P. 21.

VI Film.

'With film you just turn on the camera and photograph something. I leave the camera running until it runs out of film because that way I can catch people being themselves. It's better to act naturally than to set up a scene and not like something else. You get a better picture of people being themselves instead of trying to act.'¹

Despite the enormous financial and critical success of Warhol's photo-silkscreen paintings, his artistic concerns from the mid sixties onwards were more and more orientated to film making. In 1971, eight years after making his first film, Warhol had produced over two hundred and fifty.

Warhol's entry into film was shaped by his friendships and encounter's with people in the art world, especially those involved with the Broadway theater. He had also developed friendships with film-makers such as Emile De Antonio and Jack Smith.

Warhol was interested in the improvisational and outrageous aspects of the independent film world; this latter became classified as 'Underground film'. It was concerned with recording realms which at the time were considered taboo, that is, too private, too shocking, too immoral for photographic reproduction.

The first films Warhol produced were shot in the factory. The factory and the people it attracted became an increasingly important in shaping what Warhol filmed. The assortment of personalities he drew to the factory consisted of actors, poets and those on the sexual fringes like transvestites. These people acted as they pleased, Warhol turned his attention to this underground lifestyle, that was developing around him.

He began to film them continuously, at first the films were minimalistic in subject and approach, later they developed into little dramas, for example; a man could act out a fantasy of being Jean Harlow or a woman that, of a high priestess. He used the film medium in a rough and deliberately amateur way, that reflected the street language and drug lifestyle of its characters. These films initially explored the myths and aesthetics created from his unique self-made environment.

In his film and his art, Warhol was fascinated with the borders between the real and reproduced worlds. He began filming by simply placing the camera on a tripod and recording at the push of a button individuals and events as they chanced to happen. Initially there were no planned scenario's, no directions, the camera and by extension Warhol became passive spectators.

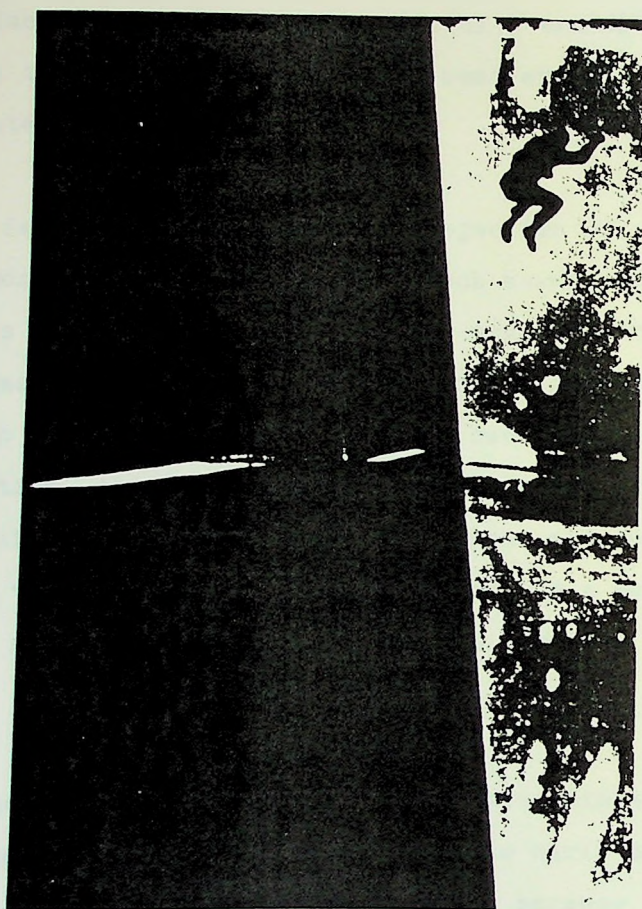
The titles and events Warhol filmed; 'kiss', 'eat', and 'sleep' in 1963 and 'Couch', 'Empire' and 'blow job' in 1964; have a conceptual simplicity. They are minimalistic expressions of a

direct cinema of representation, in this regard Warhol takes film back to its origins and to Lumiere in particular, this would imply an intentional cleaning up of cinema, through literalism. This style of film making later had such a huge effect on commercial cinema. Warhol single handedly succeeded in changing Hollywood techniques, casual style acting and wandering camera movement became fashionable.

This literalism can be found in the mediums of both painting and film. The silkscreen paintings have the authenticity of mass-production, complete with poor registration. This directness and honesty is also apparent in his film work; some are precisely as long, beginning to end, as the subject presented, the film exists in real time. Literalism is further heightened by Warhol's negligible involvement in the process apart from setting the camera up and switching it on. The early films were presented with an empty leader, beginning and end; and also jogging. Warhol acknowledges the process and materials of film in much the same way as he does with the silkscreens.

The films Warhol began to produce in 1963, were distinctly his own. By turning his camera to the world around him, Warhol could re-make it on film by destroying the conventions of film making and the expectations of film-going.

A concern with time also links his paintings and films. The silkscreen process allowed Warhol to depart further and further from the stereotyped juxtapositions of images. A painting such as 'Woman Suicide', (refer to plate 1) is based on a still photograph depicting the implied motion of a fallen woman.



It is possible to trace three ways in which Warhol indicates the passage of time in his paintings: by the static representation of several stages of action; he used multiple (plate 2) superimposition and contraction of motifs for the acceleration of the image repetition sequences. By the confrontation of before and after, as in the Jackie series, (plate 3) which depicts two separate events in her life. Also by the embodiment of the time factor in the representation of a transitory movement from which the preceeding and subsequent events can be deduced (plate 4).

Warhol's film work is most renowned for the projection of solid time on the screen. Not only is the clock uninterrupted but so are the takes (as far as possible). The paradox Warhol made with these films is that they provide an effect similar to a picture hanging on a wall, the viewer was not required to give his full attention the way a conventional film required, for example; you could fall asleep, leave the cinema and come back to the film as though it was a picture hanging on a wall. In this respect the films have a timelessness similar to a painting.

An early silent Warhol film 'haircut' is thirty three minutes long and in black and white. This film and all the early ones change the viewers perception of time and reality, because Warhol has slowed down the media condition pace of action (also Warhol often let films run at slower than normal speed). When the film was first shown it outraged audiences, because it simply shows a friend of Warhol's recieving a haircut; there was no plot, dialogue or acting that characterize commercial film making. 'Haircut' also replaces all of the illusionistic,

Plate 2

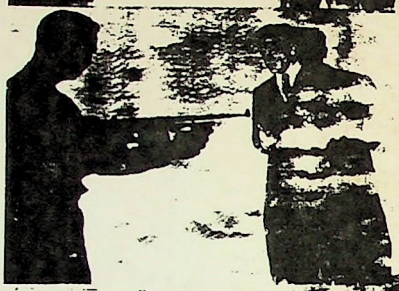
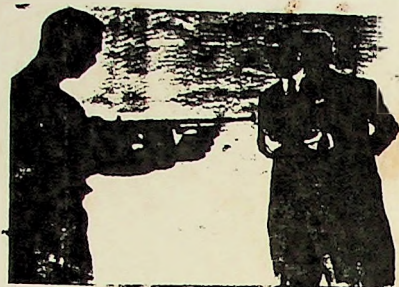


Plate 3



Plate 4



theatrical, entertaining and diversionary activities of commercial film, with a painfully slowed down narrative of an ordinary haircut.

The effect of time is epitomized in Warhol's eight hour film of the Empire State Building. This building was filmed uninterruptedly from dusk till dawn at the same camera angle. The interest is not in looking at the same building from one view point, but the subtle effects of the changing light, both in the sky and in the building.

The viewing of these strangely simple films, provides the viewer with an increased awareness of mans daily activities and the things he sees around him. Warhol exposes many ritualistic events of American man that would normally go unnoticed. The mystery of action is not revealed by spectacular acts. As philosophers have pointed out it is in the difference between natural movements rather than preconcieved acted ones. Warhol for this reason claimed that these films have the same complexity of life itself and could be viewed many times. As a medium film is supremely well equipped to record reality. In these early films Warhol was utilizing the mediums anthropological value.

After the early to mid sixties static films (the most innovative) Warhol went on to recapitalate the short but dynamic history of film. Gradually the films became more and more commercially orientated, sound, colour and more complex plots were introduced. In the late sixties Warhol made factory worker Paul Morrissey film production manager. He had a major part in making the later films more entertaining and commercially successful.

Footnotes.

¹Ian Donaldson, Six Contemporary American Artists, P. 12.

Summary.

Pop Art and Andy Warhol in particular move in the direction of the objective and stereotyped image. The city is a source of imagery that can be taken up in the field of art. In the early sixties, Warhol established the central role of printing in his art by choosing silkscreen as the medium for his works on canvas by using mass produced images as subjects. In his best works, technique and image coincide to focus attention on significant issues of contemporary society and to reveal the impact of mass media on cultural values. In his early paintings second-hand sources such as Warhol's use of highly charged photographs transcend their original function as documentary news items to become archetypal images essential to American political and social history. Later Warhol's work became more subjective because he started using his own photographs. This eliminates a key feature of his earlier work where the fact that the image was borrowed from the mass media contributed a significant layer of meaning.

Throughout his career, he has maintained the image of a perpetual seeker of the fruits of the American Dream and fan of glamorous culture heroes, but at the same time his paintings challenged the assumptions inherent in those ideals.

Warhol's work was integrally linked to the changes occurring in art and society. Subsequently this dictated a shift from the underground to high society, but he remained the elusive voyeur. Because Warhol was acting as an artist, he was able

to release the image from the ambit of mass consumption in order to introduce it to a cultured ambit - that of art, Warhol used style as an instrument to to this. The modern media techniques Warhol used, including film allowed the artist to work subjectively. All of Warhol's art reflects his awareness of the role of consumerism in American society.

"Everyone looks and acts the same way more and more."¹

Footnotes.

¹Carter Ratcliff, Warhol, P. 114.

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