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Andy Warhol was an American artist and is regarded as a central figure in the pop art movement. His portraiture reflected society and was made for reproduction. Some of his techniques included painting, tracing, the blotted line technique and silk-screening.

Andy was born in 1928 in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania and from a young age he knew he wanted to be famous, and it showed to be a continuous drive throughout his life. He went to college at Carnegie Institute of Technology where he studied commercial art. (Garrels p37-42)

At age twenty he moved to New York to pursue a career as an artist and his dream of becoming famous. He quickly found his first job at Glamour Magazine as a commercial illustrator. This is where Andy developed his skill using the blotted line technique. The technique requires a preliminary ink drawing on water resistant paper, then by placing a blank piece of paper on top, the drawing gets transferred. He did many drawings of shoes this way and then hand colored them. Sometimes just one or two shoes, other times many shoes randomly placed and a sheet of paper. Andy didn't invent this technique but it became his signature line. It was a simplified drawing that had a printed feel to it. When something is printed it is implied that it is wanted by more than one person. He worked at Glamour magazine for ten years and by 1959 he was the most well known and highest paid commercial artist, although he wasn't respected as a real artist in the art world. (Warhol and Crone p25)

During Warhol's time at Glamour he made use of his resources and created drawings in his spare time to show in a gallery. In 1952 Warhol held an exhibit called "Fifteen Drawings". Unfortunately this was not his break, it was a disappointment, as none of the drawings sold.

Warhol wanted to be respected as an artist and knew that he would have to leave commercial art behind to do so. In 1960 he turned his focus to comic art. Warhol mostly worked from found images. He would enlarge images and project them on the wall. He would then trace the projected image on the wall or paint freehand over the projected image. Sometimes he would use color pencils over his painted image. (Garrels p70-75)

In 1961 he moved away from comic art thinking that he needed something edgier. Warhol got the idea of painting soup cans from a friend. Warhol painted thirty two different varieties of Campbell's Soup cans individually. He eliminated brush strokes and showed a neat almost print like painting.



Campbell's Soup Can

A portrait doesn't have to be of a person, it can be of an object. These soup cans can be considered as series of conventional portraits, although he added his own twist with repetition that hadn't been used. The paintings were put in a gallery in LA. This was his big break and was the first time his art got noticed outside of commercial art. These paintings had form and content. They existed in a culture of reproduction and his art reflected society. He used this technique with many other objects such as a Coca Cola bottles and money. (Warhol Museum Collection p28, 354)

In 1962 Warhol moved to silk-screening as a tool to create art. This was a commercial technique that involved transferring an image onto a fine mesh screen through which ink could be passed to produce an infinite number of copies. You get the same image slightly different each time. As fame was a leading theme, he constantly focused on what was beautiful to him, presidents, heroes and movies stars. The day Marilyn Monroe died Warhol put out a series of prints of Marilyn. He first put down color and silk-screened an ink print over the color. It is a reversal technique of having an under drawing and then painting over that. (Fogle p29, 31)

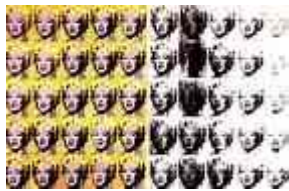
A couple of conventions of portraiture that we have studied are first, that the artist has a sitter at some point in time to create a portrait. Warhol didn't do this; the majority of his works were from found images. Second, the work produced by the artist would make them more popular or famous. In Warhol's case, by 1963 and later he was significantly famous and the people he created portraits of would become famous, or if

already famous, they would have a boost in their career. An example of this was Elizabeth Taylor during her declining movie career, Warhol created a series of prints that revived Taylor's career.



Elizabeth Taylor

He knew how to use color. He had the ability to show repetition within the same subject, finding a single image and endlessly change it. He pushed it as far as he could to find the differences if he added different colors. There is a series of portraits that he put together of 100 images of Marilyn Monroe half in color and half in black and white. It is obviously visible that there are random imperfections that crept into his work because of repetitive use, making slightly different expressions on each portrait. When asked about the imperfections Warhol said, "I like it that way, its part of the art." Warhol made many prints of Marilyn in different colors. The imagery in these portraits with the color implied that everyone wanted Marilyn, but you can't have her, although you can have the portrait that fits your taste whether it was orange, green or blue. He used this method of repetition throughout his career with other portraits he found in magazines, newspapers, or other printed media. (Warhol and Crone p26-29)



Marilyn Monroe

Warhol felt like he was a recorder, a mirror to the world. He encouraged change and broke boundaries. He took simple objects and popularized them in a simple unpretentious way the people could connect with. Through silk-screen he made art of mass produced products and mass produces the art itself. Mass producing paintings was a different approach to portraiture that hadn't been explored. He revised the meaning of art

and what a portrait could be by combining painting with photography in a new way. He used unconventional ways to acquire portrait pictures and by adding color and some artistic character he created his own portrait. You can see this in the portrait of Marilyn Monroe above. Warhol took the idea of art in the age of mechanical reproduction to the extreme, breaking down walls between fine art and commerce. He undermined the conventions of portraiture by not having a sitter or even personally taking the picture. He understood the function of fame in society, and knew that some portraits would leave his audience speechless. (Michelson p21)

By 1974 Warhol had created his business art and did commissioned portraits for the first time in his career. Andy Warhol became famous by producing art from objects or pictures that had already been produced and then he reproduced it himself. He challenged the conventions of portraiture by rarely using a sitter yet his paintings are still considered portraits. Throughout the rest of his career he continued to play with portraiture and the use of color. He would die later in 1987 from a medical accident.

Bibliography

Warhol, A and Crone, R (ed) 1987. *Andy Warhol Picture Show by the Artist*. Rizzoli, New York. 279p

This is a catalog by the artist of selected works, mostly drawings and sketches. The editor later added commentary on Warhol's work through book chapters.

Colacello, B 1990. *Holly Terror, Andy Warhol Close Up*. Harper Collins Publishers. New York. 504p

Colacello was one of Andy's assistants. His book goes into detail about Warhol's work and relations throughout the 12 years he worked for Andy, 1971-1983.

Fogle, D 2005. *Andy Warhol/Supernova: stars, deaths, and disasters, 1962-1964*. Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. 104p

This book brings together twenty six major paintings from a period in American History and captures Warhol's modern process and use of the silkscreen.

The Andy Warhol Museum Collection, 2004. *Andy Warhol 365 Takes*. Harry N Abrams, Inc. 736p

This book is filled with pictures and prints of Andy's works of art. It also includes quotes about how he felt about his art and why he chose to make some prints.

Michelson, A 2001. *Andy Warhol: October Files*. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

This book addresses individual bodies of Warhol's work of the postwar period and how his art has altered the understanding of art in significant ways.

Garrels, G 1989. *The Work of Andy Warhol*. Bay Press, Seattle Washington.

Warhol's work gets analyzed in relation to issues of modernism and mass culture. It suggests that there is ideological and political implications of Warhol's work for current and potential art practices.