

Andy Warhol (1928-1987)

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Just as W.C.Handy took the everyday music of the African-American people and popularized it as a style, Andy Warhol took things that were a popular part of modern everyday life and turned them into "Art" ---more precisely "Pop Art". What do you understand by "Pop Art"? Is it the art of making pop-up books and cards? Pop Art actually stands for Popular Art. Pop art as a rebellion against the Abstract Expressionist style of painting that dominated the art world of the 1950s. (*Show chart for pop art characteristics.*)

What kind of everyday items did Andy Warhol use as his subjects? One of the first paid "assignments": he got was to draw something that you and I wear to school everyday. Can anyone guess what that might be? Shoes. This incidentally was also one of his favorite things to draw at that time.

Andy Warhol was born in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania in 1928. So he was as American as could be. His parents were immigrants from Czechoslovakia. His real name was Andy Warhola, which he later shortened to Warhol. Even as a child he loved to draw and his mother encouraged him. Though poor, his parents saved money to send him to Art College at the Carnegie institute of Technology. After graduation he started developing the blotted line technique and used it for a lot of illustrations and advertisements. He would draw a picture in pencil on nonabsorbent paper. Then he would ink his drawing with a fountain pen. The next step was to press the inked drawing on a more porous or absorbent piece of paper. He would then sometimes color it with water colors. (*This can be used very easily with kids of all grades as an art project should you choose to do so.*)

He was soon the busiest and wealthiest illustrator in New York City. But Warhol wanted more. He wanted to be famous. He wanted to make his art different from that of others. He wanted it to stand out.

He started by painting....Let me show you a picture and see if you can identify the product just from the packing. (*Show soup can without labels.*) Yes, Campbell Soup cans on blank backgrounds to make them stand out. Once he liked an image, he used it over and over in different combinations. He painted Brillo soap boxes. He painted dollar bills. (*He wanted to be rich and made no effort to hide that.*) He used to say, "I like boring things, I like things to be the same over and over". He painted the soup cans and dollar bills to look like they were printed by machine.

How do you think some people at first reacted to his one many exhibitions in New York in 1962? They were shocked. They thought that people went to museums to escape from the commercialism of television, movies and advertising. Why go to an art museum to look at soup cans?? But Warhol said that he painted soup cans because they reminded him of his childhood when he ate it everyday.

Then he turned to making painting of entertainers and public figures. *(Show painting)* Does anyone know who the lady in the painting is? Marilyn Monroe. During the 1950's Marilyn Monroe was the ultimate symbol of Hollywood glamour. She played the beautiful, but not very bright blonde. Even though she started out as a real person, the advertising and publicity industry had turned her into a product. After her tragic death in 1962, Warhol began working on his Marilyn series.

This painting is called Marilyn Monroe Diptych. "Diptych" is a picture or series of pictures painted or carved on 2 hinged tablets. Which sides of the painting do you like better? *(Most students like the left side better)* If I showed you these two products, which would you want to buy? Which? Color attracts the eye!!! The image he used here was publicity still from "Niagara", 1953. Seeing an image over and over desensitizes the viewer, as the images are difficult to focus on individually. In this painting, he has placed her images together in endless rows. Probably the idea of mass produced consumer products!! The back and white faces in the right panel start to lose definition and seem to be fading off the edge. The painting looks really flat. The colors, though bright, are highly unrealistic. The portraits are not flattering. He used to say, "When you see a picture over and over, it doesn't really have an effect anymore".

The method he used to make this painting was called Silk Screening. It is a stencil method of printing flat-color design through a piece of silk or other fine cloth that allowed Warhol to repeat images over and over. He would send photographs to commercial silk screens shops to have the photographic images transferred to silk screens. He called his studio "the factory" and the operation a human printing press. Once the prepared silk screen was returned to Warhol from the shop, he could print the images directly on to un-stretched canvases laid out on the ground.

Project idea: Younger kids could use rubber stamps to stamp images in rows till ink runs off. Then start next line with a different color. Older kids could use shaped potato pieces or sliced Okra dipped in paint for similar effect. Your own Pop art is now ready.

Later he continued to portray pop-culture legends. He made a few films in his lifetime like "Empire". He died in New York in 1987 following routine surgery.

One of his most famous quotes was, "**In the future everybody will be world famous for fifteen minutes.**"