

ANDY WARHOL



Andy Warhol, Self-Portrait, 1986

Machines have less problems. I'd like to be a machine, wouldn't you? —Andy Warhol, 1963

In the future everybody will be world famous for 15 minutes. —Andy Warhol, 1975

Andy Warhol became fabulously famous for his 1960s pop art. He produced big, bold images of the popular, the famous, and the stuff of our consumer society. His multi-image portraits of famous people—Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, Jacqueline Kennedy—and of common products—Campbell's soup cans, Brillo pad boxes, Coca Cola bottles—are among the most powerful icons of twentieth-century American art.

Andy Warhol was born Andrew Warhola, the son of Czechoslovakian immigrants, in 1928. He grew up poor (during the Depression) outside Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with his parents and two brothers. As a child, Warhol (he later dropped the final "a") recalled having a few friends but also feeling "left out." He suffered briefly from a nervous disorder that caused muscle spasms and kept him isolated. He liked spending time on his own, coloring, taking snapshots with a small camera, and even making films with a movie camera given to him by his mother.



Andy Warhol, *Self-Portrait*, 1964



Andy Warhol,

Self-portrait wearing sunglasses



Andy Warhol, *Julia Warhola*, 1974

Warhol and his mother Julia were very close. She once assured him, "Andy, just believe in destiny . . . in a dream [and] you will do something, great, crazy, terrific." His mother was right. After graduating in art from Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1949, he moved to New York City, where he would have quick success as a commercial artist. He designed window displays, illustrated magazine articles, and drew record album jackets. His mother arrived in New York during his early years there, moved in with him and stayed for almost thirty years.



Andy Warhol, Green Marilyn, 1962



Andy Warhol, Brillo Box, 1964



Andy Warhol, Untitled, Harper's Bazaar illustration, 1958



Andy Warhol, Campbell's Soup Can I (Black Bean), 1968

In the 1960s, Warhol decided to abandon commercial art to focus on making serious visual art. While he hand-painted his first works, he soon developed a silk-screen process that allowed his staff of assistants to mass-produce the startling images of consumer products and brilliant movie star portraits. These works took the art world and the public by storm. Warhol exhibited in galleries around the U.S.—and the world.



Andy Warhol, Mao Tse-Tung, 1972



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In the 1970s, he went on to become what he called a "business artist." At his studio, The Factory, he and his assistants made silk-screen photo portraits of anyone who could afford to commission one. Warhol made a fortune: he shopped, collected jewelry and art, and surrounded himself continually with friends and celebrities.

Andy Warhol died in 1987 at age 59. Unconventional, smart, edgy, innovative—Warhol's legacy is everywhere: on posters, book covers, greeting cards, and gallery walls. He even has an entire museum, called The Warhol, devoted to his life and work. (You can check it out at <http://www.warhol.org/>).