



## Art History

Andy Warhol and Pop Art

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Score: \_\_\_\_/5

Directions: Read the following article about Andy Warhol and developments of Pop Art and answer the thought questions below.

### Andy Warhol Biography

#### Painter, Filmmaker (1928–1987)

##### Artistic Career



When he graduated from college with his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1949, Warhol moved to New York City to pursue a career as a commercial artist. It was also at this time that he dropped the "a" at the end of his last name to become Andy Warhol. He landed a job with Glamour magazine in September, and went on to become one of the most successful commercial artists of the 1950s. He won frequent awards for his uniquely whimsical style, using his own blotted line technique and rubber stamps to create his drawings.

In the late 1950s, Warhol began devoting more attention to painting, and in 1961, he debuted the concept of "pop art"—paintings that focused on mass-produced commercial goods. In 1962, he exhibited the now-iconic paintings of Campbell's soup cans. These small canvas works of everyday consumer products created a major stir in the art world, bringing both Warhol and pop art into the national spotlight for the first time.

British artist Richard Hamilton described pop art as "popular, transient, expendable, low cost, mass-produced, young, witty, sexy, gimmicky, glamorous, big business." As Warhol himself put it, "Once you 'got' pop, you could never see a sign the same way again. And once you thought pop, you could never see America the same way again."

Warhol's other famous pop paintings depicted Coca-Cola bottles, vacuum cleaners and hamburgers. He also painted celebrity portraits in vivid and garish colors; his most famous subjects include Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, Mick Jagger and Mao Zedong. As these portraits gained fame and notoriety, Warhol began to receive hundreds of commissions for portraits from socialites and celebrities. His portrait "Eight Elvises" eventually resold for \$100 million in 2008, making it one of the most valuable paintings in world history.

In 1964, Warhol opened his own art studio, a large silver-painted warehouse known simply as "The Factory." The Factory quickly became one of New York City's premier cultural hotspots, a scene of lavish parties attended by the city's wealthiest socialites and celebrities, including musician Lou Reed, who paid tribute to the hustlers and transvestites he'd met at The Factory with his hit song "Walk on the Wild Side"—the verses of which contain descriptions of individuals who were fixtures at the legendary studio/warehouse in the '60s, including Holly Woodlawn, Candy Darling, "Little Joe" Dallesandro, "Sugar Plum Fairy" Joe Campbell and Jackie Curtis. (Warhol was a friend of Reed's and managed Reed's band, the Velvet Underground.)



Warhol, who clearly relished his celebrity, became a fixture at infamous New York City nightclubs like Studio 54 and Max's Kansas City. Commenting on celebrity fixation—his own and that of the public at large—Warhol observed, "more than anything people just want stars."

In the 1970s, Warhol began expanding into new artistic mediums. He put together his first book, *Andy Warhol's Index*, in 1967, and released several other titles such as *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)* and *Exposures* in the 1970s. Warhol also experimented extensively with video art, producing more than 60 films during his career. Some of his most famous films include *Sleep*, which depicts poet John Giorno sleeping for six hours, and *Eat*, which shows a man eating a mushroom for 45 minutes.

Warhol also worked in sculpture and photography, and in the 1980s, he moved into television, hosting *Andy Warhol's TV* and *Andy Warhol's Fifteen Minutes* on MTV.

"Andy Warhol." Bio. A&E Television Networks, 2015. Web. 06 Jan. 2015.

#### Thought Questions:

1. What was Warhol's idea of "pop art"?
2. What were the main subjects of pop art?
3. How did Warhol mix artistic expression with popular culture and social life?
4. How does Warhol's experience show how it is necessary for artist to get involved in more than just one medium?