

A Portrait of the Artist in Society: Warhol Paints Warhol

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ABSTRACT

In the early 1960s, Andy Warhol began to develop a distinctive public persona that was characterized to a great extent by a watchful, aloof nature. He used his persona to promote himself in the art world and to a general audience. Throughout his career, Warhol completed a number of self-portraits which he used to further emphasize his public image. Three such images, dating to 1964, 1965-67, and 1981 consecutively, are the focus of this thesis. These self-portraits appear at important points in Warhol's life and they function as markers that indicate his persona and career goals at the given time. In addition, it can be said that some of Warhol's more personal concerns are revealed in these images. Common themes of rebellion, homosexuality and Warhol's own perception of his place in the art world are found in all three of these images.

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Introduction

Warhol's self-portraits give us a unique insight into the artist's image of himself and his quest for fame. They complement the other activities he embarked on at the same time. Sometimes these activities included creating other Pop paintings, making films, society portraiture, or just existing in the public eye. In most of the literature about Warhol, his self-portraiture is dealt with in a cursory way at best, or avoided altogether in favour of discussions of his sixties Pop images. In this thesis I wish to deal directly with Warhol's self-portraits in the contexts of his personal and public personae (as indicated by Warhol's own writing and comments by his friends and partners) and in contrast and comparison to other works of art produced by the artist at the same time. Through this venue, I will present some possible interpretations of Warhol's self-portraits, with a focus on specific examples from 1964, 1965-67, and 1981. I also hope to show some degree of change and development in Warhol's public persona as it is revealed in the self-portraits and through the contexts in which they were produced and presented.

The stories surrounding Andy Warhol and creating his myth are easily accessible by all who begin any research into the artist's work and life. He so fully fashioned around

himself a life for public consumption that it was bound to become fictionalized even in his lifetime. D. E. James comments, "Our postmortem commentary on Warhol is the occasion for the projection of fantasy and desire, or other connections we might have made in our own lives...but it is unusual, indeed remarkable, for its extensiveness, for its occurrence on all cultural levels and for the variety of Warhols it projects."¹ The legendary anecdotes about Warhol's behaviour give the prospective researcher an almost complete (and false) sense of knowing the artist before even beginning. This I must recognize in my own writing and approach him cautiously, aware of the pitfalls awaiting the unwary art historian who believes all of the legends uncritically.

Warhol maintained a persona for almost thirty years, exercising absolute control over the understanding of himself and his image by the public. His stubborn silence and refusal to substantiate any claims about his art or his person created a situation where the public had to go elsewhere for their information about him. Because Warhol was alive at the time that most of the available writing on him was published, he was hypothetically fully capable of responding to this

¹ David E. James, "I'll Be Your Mirror Stage," *PopOut-Queer Warhol*, eds. Doyle, Jennifer, J. Flatley and Jose Esteban Munoz (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996) 32.

writing by talking about himself and his work openly. Nevertheless he chose not to pursue this course of action. Literature regarding Warhol written while he was still alive sat under a dark cloud, because there was always the chance that Warhol would refute the arguments. The fact that he did not do this does not matter. The tension was still there. Warhol's silence gave him the subtlest and most potent control over a whole body of intellectual and popular thought. Anything written about someone still living without substantiation from that individual risks open rebuttal and rejection by the subject.

Perhaps in response to this, even after his death many books have been published containing interviews with people who knew and/or worked for Warhol. This approach to Warhol's life saves the authors from some criticism because they discuss Warhol from the standpoint of their personal observation of, and relationship with him. Among these personal memoirs are Patrick Smith's *Warhol: Conversations About the Artist* (1988), *The Autobiography and Sex Life of Andy Warhol* by John Wilcock (1971), and a recent book called *Unseen Warhol* by John O'Connor and Benjamin Liu (1996).² The

² Patrick Smith, *Warhol: Conversations About the Artist* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1988); John Wilcock, *The Autobiography and Sex Life of Andy Warhol* (New York: Other Scenes Inc., 1971); John O'Connor and Benjamin Liu, *Unseen Warhol* (New York: Rizzoli International, 1996).

first two books, compiled before Warhol died, are more helpful than the last for precisely the reason that Warhol was still alive at the time the interviews were being done. Those interviewed had no problem telling the interviewers what they did and did not like about Warhol. The last book is less candid; it is a bit of a memorial in the sense that people think twice about speaking ill of the dead. These books are the most useful in trying to get a complete view of Warhol as artist, employer and friend (sometimes all three at once). They provide valuable insights into the man that are sometimes at variance with the view which the theorists and critics have developed by reading Warhol's art and watching his public persona.

Invaluable for anyone who needs to deal with biographies of artists past and present is the book Legend, Myth and Magic in the Image of the Artist, by Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz.³ It has put into words my latent suspicion of the written life, and I use it as reminder for myself that what I read is always filtered through the author and through those whom the author has consulted, especially if the artist represented was not. (This is too often the case with the eloquently silent Andy Warhol.)

³ Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth and Magic in the Image of the Artist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

I acknowledge that my sources are biographies that more often than not accept Warhol's own self-mythologization. In addition, they further add to this legend their own anecdotes, thereby building upon the fallacies; they do not necessarily portray the person as even Warhol may have intended himself to be understood. I believe (although Warhol himself would not have admitted this, nor would he have ever confronted someone who misunderstood his actions) that he did have a distinct view of himself that may have differed, perhaps substantially, from those expressed by others. My own ideas are obviously included. There does not seem to be any reason why I should not offer yet another opinion. It seems rather fitting that I add yet another interpretation to the shelf already fully stocked with Warhol Soup. Regardless, Warhol's own self-opinion, or view of what he should be like (especially in public), would have guided him in his structuring of his public persona. The truth therein, amusingly enough, lies with the entity that was the artist's own creation. A close look at the public persona as created and acted out by Warhol and witnessed by others, taken in conjunction with Warhol's own words and publications, should provide enough information to suggest possible reasons for the way that Warhol represented himself in his art.

Portraiture in general as a subject of painting has a long history. Primarily, it was and is used to record for

posterity an individual's physical features, social status and (ideally) personality. A good portrait painter is said to be able to capture the spirit of the individual and bring it forth in a portrait. The act of making a portrait has been described as

...a collaboration , an exchange, ultimately a relationship [between the artist and subject].... There is an identification with each other's values and a sensitivity to the other's honesty, talent, morality, and aesthetic sense.... Portraiture is the visualization of the artist's experience of the sitter.⁴

When Warhol turned his artist's eye on himself, the relationship described here becomes a partially interior one. In addition, motivations must be looked for in the context of Warhol's public life and the social agenda that he had in pursuing celebrity status.

Warhol was no stranger to the portrait. In secondary school, budding artists are encouraged to challenge their hand and eye by drawing and painting faces and bodies. During his years as a commercial artist in the nineteen fifties, Warhol did hundreds of drawings of his friends, and also of

⁴ Victoria Kogan, "Inside/Out: Getting into the Act of Portraiture," *InsideOut: Self Beyond Likeness* (Newport Beach, CA: Newport Harbour Art Museum, 1981) 12.

movie stars.⁵ During the nineteen sixties, he became famous for his portraits of Marilyn Monroe, Liz Taylor and Elvis Presley, in addition to the Campbell's Soup Can paintings. In the seventies he turned his energies to society portraiture, and is credited by many authors as having single-handedly resurrected the endeavour.⁶ I believe that the positive critical response to his Pop period series of Marilyn and Liz may have encouraged Warhol to consider portraits in general, including self-portraits, as viable (and lucrative) subjects for his paintings. Ivan Karp, who worked for Leo Castelli, Warhol's dealer in the early sixties after he left Eleanor Ward, says that he gave Warhol the idea to paint himself. According to his story, Warhol asked him for an idea for his next series. Karp responded: "What's left for you? Do yourself."⁷

The self-portrait as a subject for painting has its own

⁵ See interviews with Charles Lisanby, Alfred Carlton Walters, Steve Bruce, and others in the chapter entitled "Associates and Friends of the 1950s", in Patrick Smith, *Warhol: Conversations About the Artist*. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1988) 131ff.

⁶ For example: Robert Rosenblum, "Andy Warhol: Court Painter to the 70s," *Andy Warhol: Portraits of the 70s*, ed. D. Whitney (New York: Random House, 1979) 9.

⁷ Patrick Smith, "Interview with Ivan Karp," *Warhol: Conversations about the Artist* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1988) 218.

history. It has been noted that the rise of abstraction in the modern period has resulted in a lack of figural self-portraits by known artists, giving rise to the concept that an artist's abstract oeuvre can be used as a sort of collective self-portrait that becomes more complete as he or she ages.⁸ This may to some degree explain the modern critic/historian's lack of interest in figural/realistic self-portraiture. Linda Nochlin discusses the chronic historical tendency to view forms of realism in general as "inferior to more idealized art forms."⁹ Particularly in the Modernist era in which Warhol began producing his self-portraits, abstraction was seen as what Nochlin calls the "law" and realism as the "criminal."¹⁰ The assertion in Modern art of the flat surface of the canvas over the 'illusion' of realistic painting, which defies the integrity of the picture plane to simulate a three-dimensional space, perpetuated a lack of interest in the latter. Self-portraiture, since it is a picture of a person, creates some degree of illusion and hence denies the two-dimensionality of the canvas. For this

⁸ Sean Kelly, "Introduction," *The Self-Portrait: A Modern View* (London: Sarema Press, 1987) 6.

⁹ Linda Nochlin, "The Realist Criminal and the Abstract Law," *Theories of Contemporary Art*, ed. Hertz (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985) 26.

¹⁰ Nochlin 28.

reason, the accusation of realism being a " 'translation' of ready-made reality into art"¹¹ applies to self-portraiture. Realism is however the product of a series of choices made by the artist and as such self-portraits are less obvious than they may appear. The image of the artist is invariably twisted by his or her own hands. It is therefore a challenge to dissect the portrait and separate what is affected from what is genuine, and to articulate the spaces between the two.

Since portraiture is supposed to illuminate the personality of the sitter, it is useful to learn something of Warhol's influences and temperament first. A short analysis of Warhol's earliest self-portraits provides some background information about the artist's personality. Some general psychological theory relating to the study of the Self provides a useful way in which to understand these particular self-portraits. According to psychologists Philip Burnard and Paul Morrison, people often tend to look at themselves or parts of themselves as objects, disassociating their physical being from the their emotional understanding of what constitutes the self.¹² This perspective conceivably gives the

¹¹ Nochlin 25.

¹² P. Burnard and P. Morrison, *Self-Disclosure: A Contemporary Analysis* (Aldershot, England: Avebury, 1992) 29.

artist the distance necessary to draw himself or herself as one would another person or object. Self-portraits from Warhol's student period are far more personal than the ones that he would later produce in his Pop Art career; it is in these early works that one can see the fragility of his sense of self, and perhaps set up a framework through which to try to understand how Warhol's self-opinion influenced his later self-portraiture as an adult.

Somewhat unfortunately, it is necessary to rely almost entirely on his biographers and the words of friends and family to reconstruct Warhol's past. Warhol said very little about his childhood, and openly admitted to giving out false biographical details to interviewers.¹³ There are only a few published self-portraits from Andy Warhol's pre-Pop Art days. I have found three published works from this period. The first is dated to his secondary school years, about 1942. It is a pencil drawing of Warhol's head only. (Fig.1) The second is a 3/4 length image in pencil and watercolour, dating to about 1948, at the time he was attending Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh. (Fig.2) The third is a tempera painting on masonite, entitled The Broad Gave Me My Face, But I Can Pick My Own Nose, dating to 1948-1949. (Fig.3) It is difficult to isolate any particular interpretation of the

¹³ Gretchen Berg, "Nothing to Lose: Interview with Andy Warhol," *Cahiers du Cinema in English* 10(May 1967): 39.

first two self-portrait drawings. They are most likely to have been exercises. They are not unusual in form or style. They are simple line drawings, and do not hint at ulterior motives for their production. Some reflection may lead one to interpret the self-portrait drawings as attempts by Warhol to understand himself. In drawing pictures of himself, Warhol may have been hoping (subconsciously) to produce images of himself that would explain his existence as the person that he was.

According to Andy's college friend from Carnegie Tech, Jack Wilson:

"[Andy] loved to do self-portraits then. He drew himself more than anybody...And at times, when he drew the model Kitty, Kitty would look like him. And he had a certain nose-he would catch that in his self-portrait...He really captured himself in his portraits. He drew himself very accurately."¹⁴

By this account, one would expect to find Warhol still executing self-portrait drawings at least for a short while after college. It does not seem characteristic of an artist to abandon an endeavour so thoroughly ingrained in one's artistic habits simply because of a change of house. Nevertheless, according to Margery King, assistant curator at The Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, probably less than ten self-portrait drawings survive amongst hundreds of others

¹⁴ Patrick Smith, "Interview with Jack Wilson," *Conversations* 17.

portrait paintings/silkscreens of the 1960s were done at the suggestion or commission of others, attests to Warhol's later apparent lack of interest in himself as artistic subject-matter.

Charles Lisanby, a friend of Warhol's in the 1950s, describes a man who was completely lacking in self-confidence about his physical appearance and stamina.¹⁸ Warhol put a great amount of faith in the power of physical beauty. He stated: "If a person isn't generally considered beautiful, they can still be a success if they have a few jokes in their pockets. And a lot of pockets."¹⁹ That is, Warhol suggested that a less-than-beautiful person has to make more of an effort to develop a number of marketable strengths to become successful, thus compensating for a lack of physical attractiveness.

Warhol believed himself to be just such a person and consequently he developed a work ethic that carried him through his successful career. His great success in such diverse areas as art, music and television production speaks loudly for the effectiveness of Warhol's industry and

¹⁸ Smith, "Interview with Charles Lisanby," *Conversations* 138.

¹⁹ Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975) 67.

dedication to his job. His friend and fellow artist Philip Pearlstein remembers Warhol the commercial artist as "a workaholic who sat at a table and worked all day and often late at night..."²⁰ Warhol himself would inadvertently express his own position in an interview: "I'm trying to do a business here at the Factory and a lot of people just come in and sit around and do nothing. I just can't have that...."²¹ Warhol put the loungers to good use, however, involving everyone in the production of his paintings and movies. By immersing himself in his projects, Warhol may have been compensating for his own sense of physical unattractiveness.

Warhol's feeling of being unattractive was not entirely of his own fabrication. When the artist was a child, he had two bouts with chorea, a disorder that affects the central nervous system²², that left him pale, with "large reddish-brown blotches on his face, back, chest, arms and hands."²³ When he was an adolescent, his nose grew rather bulbous and red, provoking his family to call him "Andy the Red-Nosed

²⁰ Bockris 81.

²¹ Gretchen Berg, "Nothing to Lose: Interview with Andy Warhol," *Cahiers du Cinema in English* 10(May 1967): 40.

²² Bockris 37. It is also known as St. Vitus' Dance.

²³ Bockris 40.

Warhola."²⁴ In his book, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, he writes: "I really look awful...I play down my good features and play up the bad ones..."²⁵ and "I believe in low lights and trick mirrors. I believe in plastic surgery."²⁶ Warhol's beliefs were based in part on his comparison of himself with the unreal beauty of the Hollywood stars he spent hours watching in movie theatres as a child.²⁷ As discussed above, Warhol seemed to believe that people who did not possess a beautiful face could only become successful with hard work. By extension, Warhol probably felt that Hollywood stars were famous because they were beautiful, and he seemed to appreciate this. This unreasonable comparison between himself and popular celebrities would affect how he chose to represent himself in his art.

While still a student at Carnegie Tech, Warhol submitted in March, 1949, a painted self-portrait to the

²⁴ Warhol, *Philosophy* 63-64.

²⁵ Warhol, *Philosophy* 113.

²⁶ Warhol, *Philosophy* 51.

²⁷ Victor Bockris describes Andy's interest in the cinema shows as a child: "they became his passion, a necessity, an escape...Andy pursued [the entrance fee] with dogged determination, helping [his brothers] sell peanuts at the ball games...or getting it from his mother." Bockris, *Warhol* 41.

annual juried art show held by the Pittsburgh Artists Association. Entitled The Broad Gave me My Face, But I Can Pick My Own Nose, the painting immediately caused a scandal.²⁸ The jury, which included George Grosz and Joe Jones, an American Regionalist painter, debated all day about whether or not it should hang in the show. Grosz defended the painting, and it was finally decided that it should hang in an exhibition of rejected works. Warhol pulled the painting out from this exhibition and showed it at the local Arts and Crafts Centre gallery, where the scandal he had conjured up seeped into the public press and his work drew a great crowd to the show.²⁹

The painting itself is handled in an expressionistic style using muddy colour. It depicts the skinny body and oversized head of a young man with an extremely large and bulbous nose. He sticks his finger up his nostril while looking defiantly out at the viewer. This painting evidently had a number of incarnations, as schoolmate Jack Wilson remembers seeing a bust-length version on this same theme.³⁰

²⁸ Bockris, *Warhol* 75.

²⁹ Smith, "Interview with Jack Wilson," *Conversations* 16.

³⁰ Smith, *Conversations* 16.

It is quite different from Warhol's self-portrait drawings because it is very distorted and grotesque, whereas his drawings may be considered quite accurate. One wonders if Warhol knew ahead of time that George Grosz was going to be on the jury for the show. It would not seem out of character for him to tailor his painting to appeal to Grosz's artistic sensibilities, forged in Germany in the Expressionist period. The emphasis on the distorted body, head and nose belie Warhol's concern for his appearance; the title hints at Warhol's specific dislike of his nose, and it embodies a self-defensive affirmation of his control over his looks.

Warhol's unhappiness with his body thus manifested itself long before he ever moved to New York. Further examples of Warhol's apparent obsession with his appearance manifest themselves in the 1950s, showing that his concern was not merely an adolescent preoccupation. Two photos of Warhol, touched up by the artist himself, are published in the catalogue of the 1989 *Retrospective*. In one, Warhol has coloured over his profile nose to make it smaller. In another picture, he has slimmed his nose, and drawn in some hair over his receding hairline.³¹ This reveals a man of considerable insecurity. Warhol also attempted to improve his appearance

³¹ Both pictures are published in Andy Warhol, *Andy Warhol: A Retrospective*, ed. Kynaston McShine (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1989) 406.

in real life, as well. He apparently had some kind of dermabrasion done on his face to try to change the appearance of his skin, the pallor of which was reddened with broken blood vessels.³² In Warhol's own words, he had it "sanded."³³ There is some disagreement about whether or not Warhol had rhinoplasty.³⁴ I tend to doubt that he did, considering that his nose always seemed to look the same in pictures, and in addition I point to his well-documented fear of hospitals and surgery.³⁵

Warhol was obviously from an early age quite concerned with his appearance. His later Self-Portraits show some attempts by Warhol to compensate for his insecurities. Warhol carefully controlled his appearance, either by his chosen clothing, pose or formal treatment of the resulting image.

³² Smith, "Interview with Charles Lisanby," *Conversations* 134-135.

³³ Warhol, *Philosophy* 63-64.

³⁴ In Warhol, *Retrospective* page 406, a time line reports he has the shape of his nose "changed." Victor Bockris, *The Life and Death of Andy Warhol* (New York: Bantam Books, 1989) 90, says he had his nose "scraped," but implies that he had to wait for scars to heal on his nose, which a nose-job would not require.

³⁵ Warhol expresses this fear himself in Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol Sixties* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980) 187. David Bourdon comments on Warhol's avoidance of his personal doctor, in *Warhol* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989) 404.

Thus he used "low lights", "trick mirrors," and "plastic surgery" to affect and alter his image in the photographs before the final silkscreens were printed. For example, in his 1965-67 portraits, he removed much of the grey areas of facial detail from the copy of the original black and white photograph, thereby slightly abstracting his features, and notably reducing the size of his nose. (Fig.9)

In addition to supplying some degree of information about Warhol's emotional concerns, the Self-Portraits tell us something of Warhol's motives within the broader context of his fine arts career. The self-portraits seem to freeze his identity in time. According to Manuel Gasser,

"...the artist always appears in a self-portrait at a peak in his human and artistic life....[A] self portrait is not just a picture but the epitome of some whole stage in a man's development and, very often, the summing-up of a man's life in its entirety."³⁶

That is, when the artist has reached a certain stage of development in his life or work or both, he acknowledges it with a painting of himself. This is true of Warhol on several occasions. Gasser also maintains that artists who do a number of self-portraits throughout their careers, are attempting to "correct or cancel the impression given by the earlier

³⁶ Manuel Gasser, *Self-Portraits From the Fifteenth Century to the Present* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963) 9.

work..."³⁷ So the self-portrait represents the artist's construction of himself at a particular time, and this is changed and/or updated by the next self-portrait. Warhol's self-portraits allow one to gauge the evolution of his sense of himself and his outward persona throughout his career. In addition, one can get a sense of how Warhol felt about his position in the art world and in the public eye at given points in time.

Warhol's public image was very important to him and it is therefore obvious that a series of publicly displayed paintings featuring his own face would be carefully considered and produced for certain effects. They will necessarily be self-conscious portraits. The methods of display are also important to consider, because Warhol was very much an installation artist. To him, a gallery show was a complete entity, not just a collection of separate pieces. In Chapter Two I attempt to place Warhol's 1965-67 portraits into the context of the Montreal Expo 67, where these images were displayed in the American Pavilion. In this context, I believe Warhol sent his self-portraits as a sort of stand-in for the artist himself. Inevitably he would show himself with a demeanour similar to that he would adopt if he were there in person.

³⁷ Gasser 13.

Warhol built up an aura of mystery around himself from the time he arrived in New York City in 1949 until his death in 1987. As a commercial artist, he developed a fey, childlike image that he used to his benefit to obtain commissions as an illustrator of magazines like *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*, as well as jobs as a window dresser for stores like Bonwit Teller's and Tiffany's. As a budding fine artist in the early 1960s, he further developed a stylized image to increase interest in himself, first on the part of potential dealers in New York City, and soon after, to intrigue the American public. As mentioned above, Warhol claimed later in life that he always attempted to emphasize the unattractive aspects of his physical appearance. Accounts tell of him wearing makeup and of the notorious silver wig adopted to hide his prematurely greying, balding head.³⁸ Warhol probably chose to wear the wig instead of a toupée because it was shocking. Warhol was in his early thirties when he began to wear it. His youthful face would make the wig seem even more artificial. The artifice is doubled if it is seen in contrast to his public persona, for which he cultivated a mindless vacuity and teenage blandness best captured in his favourite exclamations, "Gee" and "Wow." It was to a great extent his persona that drew attention to Warhol and made him famous.

³⁸ Bockris, *Warhol* 29 & 404.

Andy Warhol was unusual in the art community in New York in that he lived a somewhat openly (although coded) gay lifestyle. He never hid his preferences, although he never broadcast them either. *Pop Out: Queer Warhol* (1996) is an outstanding collection of essays that drag Warhol's Queerness out of the confines of the discussion of his private life and into his art.³⁹ In the standard literature, Warhol is never particularly spoken of as gay, but rather as asexual, if the issue is dealt with at all. Most books, even those which masquerade as biographies, neglect to mention his homosexuality. Warhol however, always the enigma, evaded the homosexual label in general by presenting himself as a voyeur of all risqué and underground activities, gay or otherwise.⁴⁰ Warhol's self-portraits carry certain allusions to his gay orientation. I have made some attempt to identify these references and make sense of them. However, these aspects of Warhol's self-portraits merit further elaboration in the future.⁴¹

³⁹ Jennifer Doyle, J. Flatley and Jose Esteban Munoz, eds, *Pop Out-Queer Warhol* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996).

⁴⁰ See Stephen Koch, *Stargazer: Andy Warhol's World and His Films* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973) for a discussion of Warhol as a voyeur.

⁴¹ The question of identity and its social and political ramifications is a key topic in Queer Theory. Debates, such as that in the United States over queer demands for recognition as a "special rights" group, indicate that one's

Taking my cue from the cautious approach suggested by a reading of Kris and Kurz, I will not presume to provide definite answers in this thesis. Instead, I feel that it would be beneficial to explore a number of different approaches in an open-ended manner to facilitate and stimulate further research. In particular, further research could be done to relate the issues and concepts that appear in this thesis to the Postmodern understanding of Identity, commodity culture and the points at which these two intersect. Warhol's public persona and his self-portraits appear to address issues popular with Postmodernist theoreticians. Warhol's insistence on his empty image, and his apparent drive to market himself as such, suggests, among others, readings of the artist in the context of commodity culture and the primacy of the aesthetics that sold Warhol to

identity has scope outside of the personal. See Paisley Currah, "Politics, Practices, Publics: Identity and Queer Rights," *Playing with Fire* (New York: Routledge, 1997) 231-266.

The extent to which identity is a construction of the self, society and the result of political motivations remains unresolved. Often collections of essays divide the works under headings like "Sociological Perspectives on Homosexual Desire," "Queer Sociological Approaches: Identity and Politics" and "Identity and Society," indicating social and political roles in creating and maintaining a queer identity. See Steven Seidman, Ed., *Queer Theory/Sociology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996).

The (queer) political ramifications of Warhol's unique persona would make an interesting counterpart to a discussion of his self-portraits.

the world.⁴²

In summary, I believe that Warhol's self-portraits are indicative of aspects of his private and public personae. Warhol carefully constructed a public persona that brought him fame and notoriety, while keeping his private thoughts well to himself. This greatly affected his choices when creating his self-portraits. They were produced at certain points in his career as an artist and a person; they self-consciously attempt to provide the viewer with an image of the artist as he saw himself, and as he wished to be seen. Warhol produced these paintings while making other art; in comparison, the images of himself display some distinct characteristics, while maintaining ties with this other contemporary work. Sometimes, Warhol's public life as an artist and as a celebrity at the times that these self-portrait paintings were completed stimulated his decisions to depict himself. At other points, his private life had more influence on his choices. While being careful to recognize the pitfalls of heroization and mythologization of the artist, I will consider the self-portraits as important

⁴² For some discussion of Postmodernism see Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); and Madan Sarup, *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World* (Athens, GA.: The University of Georgia Press, 1996).

indicators of Warhol's desires to be seen as an artist, a celebrity, and a human being.

Chapter 1: Warhol Joins the Wild Ones

During the 1950s, the New York art scene was dominated by the Abstract Expressionists. Their large-scale abstract paintings, once ground-breaking, became the standard against which the work of all new artists were judged. Around 1960, their hegemonic presence was challenged by a group of young artists who concerned themselves with depictions of banal objects from everyday life, such as advertising and comic books. Christened "Pop Art," this new style utilized realism to portray its subject matter. Andy Warhol emerged from this group, which included artists like Roy Lichtenstein and Jim Dine, to become one of the most celebrated Pop artists with his Campbell's Soup Cans paintings in 1962. Warhol's style, which emulated the repetitive effects of mass production, was perfect for Pop art and functioned to bring the artist a fair amount of fame. To keep up public interest, Warhol quickly began to fashion a public life for himself that appeared to coincide with his art.

Warhol's Self-Portraits from 1964 are a physical projection of his public persona. (Fig.4) They encapsulate his intense desire to be famous, the driving force behind almost all of Warhol's public actions and statements. At this early stage in his fine art career, Warhol needed to establish himself as standing apart from the recent art

historical past; he rejected the Abstract Expressionist concept of the artist as an isolated, socially outcast genius, at the time ingrained into the art cultural world-view. By doing so he ensured his place in the art world as a rebellious character, as notorious for his persona as for his artworks. Not satisfied with fame in this small area of the public domain, Warhol also attempted to break out of the restrictive art world and into a state of celebrity that reached well into American popular culture. To accomplish this, Warhol adopted aspects of movie-star personae, particularly the Rebel image used by Marlon Brando and James Dean. By linking himself to the image of the strong, silent Rebel, Warhol seemed to be trying to capture the attention of the general populace who so intently devoted themselves to the cult of movie-star personality. He projected this image clearly in his Self-Portraits of 1964. (Fig.4) Underlying the Rebel image was an intimation of criminality that Warhol also explores indirectly. Warhol expressed, like the characters he imitated, a sense of his own out-cast identity as not only an artist in society (generally understood by tradition to be exiled from the rest of society) but also as a gay man in America living, by definition of the law, as a felon. Warhol's Self-Portraits therefore are the artist's image of himself as an artist and person living at a certain period of time, while simultaneously capturing his desire to be famous for this constructed image.

These self-portraits were the result of a commission from Mr. and Mrs. S. Brooks Barron of Detroit.¹ Instead of using only one photo of himself and creating a singular image, or repeating the same image a number of times as he was famous for doing, Warhol chose to use four panels and struck four different poses. He took the photos in a photobooth.² The backgrounds of the four panels are painted in flat colours, screened over with the image in black. The screen prints are taken directly from the photographs, without cropping off the black frames of the originals. The photo-booth source is emphasized where Warhol chose to cut each into an individual screen. Occasionally he cut off the top of his head or the bottom of one image, and it makes its way onto the neighbouring panel.

The viewer might inquire, why does Warhol use four different images of himself when he is known for repeating one image many times? Author Cecile Whiting, in discussing

¹ Suzanne F. Hilberry, "Two Andy Warhol Self-Portraits," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 50.4(1971): 63-64. Warhol did more than the four portraits that went to the Barrons, however, I believe that it is most likely that he experimented with a number of colours images before he chose those he would give to the couple. Therefore, he would have had a number remaining, and Warhol may even have made more for himself. I think, though that the commission was the initial inspiration behind the series.

² Hilberry 64.

the myth of the Hollywood star, writes: "The existence of the public image in the mass media rests upon the foundation of [a] supposed private life, a private life which legitimates the reality of the public image."³ She also discusses a popular method by which a series of photographs of a star in various poses is used to imply spontaneity and naturalness to "give us the sense that we are glimpsing the private, fun-loving" side of that person.⁴ Whiting describes this tactic of media presentation as "...the popular press's strategy of presenting serial images of the star in order to gain insight into the multiple moods of the individual subject."⁵ It is well documented that Warhol read and collected fan magazines and press reports on celebrities from cinema and popular music.⁶ The format, if indeed it is a typical one as Whiting maintains, would therefore be well-known and recognised by Warhol. His use of the photo-booth may have been inspired by these kinds of celebrity photo series. Choosing a series of

³ Cecile Whiting, "Andy Warhol: The Public Star and the Private Self," *Oxford Art Journal* 10.2(1987): 58.

⁴ Whiting 60.

⁵ Whiting 66.

⁶ See Whiting, 63; In Patrick Smith, *Warhol: Conversations About the Artist* (Ann Arbor, Mich: U.M.I Research Press, 1988) a number of Warhol's friends from his commercial years especially commented on this obsession of Warhol's.

images for a self-portrait allowed Warhol to create a narrative that functioned to illustrate something about himself and his career goals that he wanted the viewer to identify.

Having a photo taken in a booth is a unique situation for the person involved. Because there is no person behind a camera telling you to smile or making you laugh, you become well aware of yourself and of the camera lens. Whether you are ready or not or indeed whether you are there or not, this machine will take a picture. This knowledge creates a certain amount of tension for the sitter who wonders when will the bulb flash and how long until the next one. Also, as the seats in the booth are rather uncomfortable, the photos that come out of a booth set-up often reveal the sitter's self-consciousness. They almost always appear awkward and uncomfortable, the consequence of a slightly negative experience. In order to combat this, the sitter must take an aggressive stance against the entire photo-booth set-up.⁷

⁷ Since its early development, photography has been criticized for presenting a fragmented vision of the world. The stopped-motion images of Muybridge in particular were singled out by artists and philosophers alike. Rodin asserted that: "...it is the artist who is truthful and it is photography which lies, for in reality time does not stop..." and the intermediate gestures and positions taken, for example, by a person walking do not register distinctly on the human eye. Therefore it follows that photographs are not truthful to the human experience. Aaron Scharf, *Art and Photography* (New York: penguin Books, 1986) 222-226.

Warhol's use of the photo-booth asserts the presence of

Warhol first used photo-booth pictures in his art in a layout for *Harper's Bazaar* in 1963.⁸ The idea of using a photograph for a portrait from a photo-booth was put to early use by Warhol for his commissioned portraits of Ethel Scull in 1963.⁹ (Fig.5) Ethel Scull related the story:

"[Andy] came up for me that day, and he said, 'All right, we're off.'

And I said, 'Well, where are we going?'

'Just down to Forty-second Street and Broadway.'

I said, 'What are we going to do down there?'

He said, 'I'm going to take pictures of you.'

I said, 'For what?'

He Said, 'For the portrait.'

I said, 'In those things? My God, I'll look terrible!'

He said, 'Don't worry,' and he took out coins. He had about a hundred dollars' worth of silver coins, and he said, 'We'll take the high key and the low key, and I'll push you inside, and you watch the little red light.'

He said, 'Just watch the red light,' and I froze.

the machine in the creation of the image of Ethel Scull. The harmonizing poses that Ethel Scull struck in the photo-booth act to bring her image closer to our concept of a person. Scull's exaggerated poses do not allow the camera to record the intermediate gestures she made to bring herself into each position. At the same time, these poses refer to the sitter's need to use them as an act of human resistance to the machine taking her picture. This asserts the primacy of the machine's role in the manufacture of her image. To the contrary, Warhol allowed the machine to capture him in mid-gesture, which acknowledges the presence of the machine in his portraits.

⁸ "Illustrated Biography," *Andy Warhol: 1928-1987-Works from the Collections of Jose Mugarbi and an Isle of Man Company* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1993) 113. Also see Patrick Smith, "Interview with Gerard Malanga," *Conversations* 181.

⁹ Ethel Scull was the wife of Robert Scull, owner of a New York taxi company. Robert Scull has been described as "a flamboyant pioneer of collector of Pop art." Bourdon, *Warhol* 158.

I watched the red light and never did anything. So Andy would come in and poke me and make me do all kinds of things, and I relaxed finally."¹⁰

The portrait is entitled Ethel Scull 36 Times, but as Whiting notes, there are only 35 panels in total. "All 35 panels together constitute a mosaic, a 36th portrait of Scull."¹¹ Like the Marilyn Monroe 'candid' series mentioned earlier, this series is to be taken as one big portrait of many aspects of the person who is Ethel Scull.¹²

The anticipation of the consecutive flashes allows the sitter to act in a four-frame play for the camera. Always at the back of one's mind there must be the question of how to

¹⁰ Donald Hall and Pat Corrington Wykes, eds, *Anecdotes of Modern Art: From Rousseau to Warhol*. (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) 364-365. Although the source is unclear, it seems that this was a statement made by Ethel Scull in the documentary film *Painters Painting* by Emile De Antonio (released in 1973) and transcribed by Hall and Wykes. A description of the documentary appears in Caroline Jones, *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) 98-105. Mention of Ethel Scull talking in front of her painting appears on page 103.

¹¹ Whiting 73.

¹² An important topic in Postmodern theory is Identity. Questions revolve around identity construction and the roles that society and culture, including commodity culture, play in the formation and maintenance a person's sense of self. Theorists attempt to explain how one understands and asserts Identity publicly and privately. See Madan Sarup, *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1996) for a discussion of a number of Postmodern scholars' ideas about Identity construction in contemporary society.

pose before the next picture is taken. The tension caused by this awareness creates a certain amount of energy and movement in the final outcome. In her multiple portrait, Mrs. Scull is seen striking a variety of poses: laughing, thinking, fixing her hair, wearing sunglasses and generally making faces at the machine-run camera lens. It is similar to Warhol's own multiple self-portrait. Reading across, Warhol puts his hand up to his tie in the first image. In the second, he moves his hand away to reveal that he has undone his shirt button and skewed his tie to one side, while he stretches upward and tips his head to one side. The third image, he tilts to the other side, lips somewhat apart. In the final photo, a rather messy-looking Warhol slouches down in his seat, regarding the viewer through his sunglasses.

For Scull, the lack of a person behind the camera posed her some anxiety (She "had great visions of going to Richard Avedon" and when she got into the booth she "froze"¹³) Confronted by a machine, Scull was at first highly conscious of her situation and herself in it. She could only remember the order Warhol gave her, to watch the red light. She did so to the detriment of the resulting photographs. Our concept of the photographer is here illuminated. He or she is the personality that brings out our own, a stimulus by which our

¹³ Hall and Wykes 364.

character reveals itself. When confronted with a machine-operated photo-booth, our first instinct is to respond to the machine as we would any other. We turn it on and wait for it to stop doing whatever it is supposed to be doing since that is the nature of most 'automatic' machines. We are not often engaged mentally by machinery, as we are in the presence of a camera in a photo-booth. As she relates, Ethel Scull still required Warhol's interference until she began to enjoy herself. Once she did relax, we see that she had fun and became rather uninhibited as she played at being glamorous. In addition, once Scull was comfortable, she could act for herself, without the interference of another personality behind the camera, making decisions for her.

In his Self-Portrait, Warhol's sullen face and strange posturing portray the self-possessed actions he took before the inanimate machine. As opposed to Ethel Scull's tactics of "humanizing" posturing, the artist utilized the de-humanizing aspect of sitting in a photo-booth to his advantage and made it a central part of the image. Warhol becomes as inhuman and machine-like as the mechanical photographer. It is not a surprise that Warhol played on this. Only a year earlier in 1963, he made one of his most famous statements: "I want to be a machine."¹⁴ Here in this portrait Warhol allows a machine

¹⁴ G. R. Swenson, "What is Pop Art?" *ARTnews* 62(Nov 1963): 26.

to reproduce his image and then used the silkscreen technique to print it, thereby disassociating himself as much as possible technically from his own portrait.¹⁵ Warhol, in some ways, reflects the machine that is taking his picture.

Ethel Scull relaxed by disengaging herself in a manner similar to Warhol, from her sense of Self.¹⁶ She must have

¹⁵ The disassociation of the artist's "hand" from the work produced is generally found in Pop Art. Pop Art is characterized by the re-presentation of objects from consumer culture in a fine art context. Artists used techniques of mass-reproduction, such as silkscreening and Ben-Day dots, to indicate the objects' birth on a production line. The symbolic meaning and broad gestures in paint of some Abstract Expressionist works are denied by the Pop artists who assert the mass-produced object and reflect the anonymous hand of the commercial graphic artist. For discussions of Warhol's work in the context of the Pop Art movement, see Lawrence Alloway, "Popular Culture and Pop Art," *Studio International* 178, no. 913 (July/Aug 1969): 17-21; John Coplans, "The New Paintings of Common Objects," *Artforum* 1 (Nov 1962): 26-29. For compilations of critical writing that include this approach, see: Steven Henry Madoff, ed, *Pop Art: A Critical History* (Berkeley: Univ. Of California Press, 1997); Carol Anne Mahsun, ed, *Pop Art: The Critical Dialogue* (Ann Arbor: U.M.I. Research Press, 1989); Alan R Pratt, ed, *The Critical Response to Andy Warhol* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997).

¹⁶ Walter Benjamin addresses disengagement in terms of film actors. He first quotes Pirandello: " 'The film actor feels as if in exile-exiled not only from the stage but also from himself'....for the first time...man has to operate with his whole living person, yet forgoing its aura. For aura is tied to his presence...his creation is composed of many separate performances." Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1968): 231-232.

A similar situation occurs when one performs for an automated camera. Ethel Scull had to pose dramatically in order to convey a sense of her humanity, or aura, which is lost to the camera.

been terribly uncomfortable sitting in a booth in designer clothing in Times Square, even then a dirty and threatening area for a monied woman to find herself in. The resulting poses are interesting because they reflect her experience with the ways in which the media and fashion magazines portray women. Scull tapped into her experience with mass-produced images and their implications, such as those illustrated in the Cecile Whiting essay, to pose herself before the machine's eye. What results are her glamorous poses: pursed lips and sucked-in cheeks; hand at her throat, chin up and head thrust forward, laughing, like Marilyn Monroe. All are very studied and self-conscious. Mrs. Scull's response was elicited by the solitary presence of the machine. In spite of Warhol's occasional interference to draw out specific aspects of her personality, Scull had to rely mostly on her knowledge of media-constructed personalities for reference. These highly stylized images are perceived by the public as machine-like identities because we receive only the mass-produced and distributed end-product of a personal interaction between two people and a camera. The general public never gets to relate to the image as an interaction that occurred without them, and the final outcome is therefore received as an object, akin to other machine-made objects. To relate to a machine, one must think in a machine-like manner. Consequently, the machine-products most similar in form to oneself must necessarily be images of public

celebrities of all kinds. Ethel Scull performed as a "star" for the camera, adopting mass-produced poses and personalities manufactured by the media and assimilated by the mass audience. This may have been part of Warhol's intent, to flatter his patron by making her a 'star.'

It is important always to remember that Warhol's self-portrait was a commissioned painting. For this reason, anything notable that appears in Warhol's photo-booth portraits are a direct result of his own particular agenda. According to one source, the portrait took Warhol almost a year and a half to finish.¹⁷ This implies that he may have been unsure as to how he wanted to portray himself to the Barrons. The couple were art collectors who, in the best tradition, wished to have an image of the artist, their own Andy Warhol, to show to friends.¹⁸ Their interest in the face behind the Campbell's Soup Can paintings is not unusual. As W. P. Frith wrote in the previous century: "I share--in common with all my fellow creatures--the eager curiosity that everyone feels respecting the outward and visible form of the

¹⁷ Hilberry 64.

¹⁸ It is ironic that all paintings by Warhol are referred to as "Warhols." The self-portraits, then are Warhols of Warhol. They are a testament to the artist's success in achieving fame as much for his persona as for his art.

producer of works of genius."¹⁹ That curiosity had not abated when the Barrons commissioned Warhol's portrait.

In the years preceding Warhol's entry into the world of fine art, the Abstract Expressionists and their supporters cultivated the image of the artist as the tormented genius creator. This view of the artist follows a tradition traced by Xanthe Brooke: "[In the eighteenth century the artist] finally emerged as the figure alienated from society, informing the Romantic movement's concept of the artist as genius, marked out by his superior intellect."²⁰ The Romantic painter Fuseli remarked: "It is the lot of genius to be opposed and to be invigorated by opposition."²¹ The Abstract Expressionists carried on the Romantic tradition. They worked in isolation, placing great emphasis on their 'social-outcast' roles. "Artists are loveless and solitary, no matter in what crowds of admirers they may move," wrote one critic.²² Artist David Hare said, "I see no need for a community. An

¹⁹ Xanthe Brooke, *Face to Face: Three Centuries of Artists' Self-Portraiture* (England: National Museums and Galleries On Merseyside, 1995) 8.

²⁰ Brooke 13.

²¹ Brooke 31.

²² Frederick C. Castle, "Threat Art," *Artnews* 64 (Oct 1968): 55.

artist is always lonely. An artist is a man who functions beyond or ahead of his society. In any case, seldom within it...'"²³ Critics such as Clement Greenberg supported the artists' concept of themselves, and saw them as struggling geniuses working in solitude, their

"isolation...inconceivable, crushing, unbroken, damning.'"²⁴

The creative act was considered on par with God-like creation, and Rothko is said to have commented that the artist "feels the solitude of a parent, [and] the responsibility of God..."²⁵ Photographs of the Abstract Expressionist artists, posed or at work, were in demand and widely-distributed for eager art-world followers. Catalogues inevitably had photographs of the brooding artists, and their faces made their way into mass-distributed art magazines, exhibitions and documentaries, thereby allowing a wider range of people the opportunity to glimpse a living ('genius') artist. The photographs themselves, such as those by filmmaker and photographer Hans Namuth, typically "present a

²³ Caroline Jones, *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) 25.

²⁴ Clement Greenberg quoted in Jones 27.

²⁵ Paraphrased in Jones 32.

purely contemplative figure, supremely self-absorbed."²⁶

Caroline Jones illustrated a number of examples depicting the artist, often in a business suit, sitting in his studio. In some, the artist's solitude might be exaggerated by the placement of his chair in the distance, near a window. The artist becomes a silhouette, a shadowy figure brooding in the wide empty space of the room. Others are closer views of the artists, who sit solemnly beside examples of their work. The cult of the genius artist was kept alive and well by the Abstract Expressionists, thereby feeding the publicity that promoted this stereotype.

I believe that it was in this spirit that the Barrons commissioned Warhol for a self-portrait. Warhol's self-portrait was finished in 1964; if one believes the report that it took more than a year to complete, then it would likely have been commissioned in early 1963. At this date, Warhol's name was just beginning to draw wide-spread attention. He was known, along with the other Pop artists at the time, for resurrecting the figural in art after the long reign of abstraction. The Barrons were in a position at the time to evaluate the future importance of Pop Art and acquire new works early on. In 1963, Warhol was establishing himself as one of the more controversial Pop artists, receiving a

²⁶ Jones 32.

large amount of critical attention, and inflaming the ire of many by his behaviour. For the Barrons to choose to ask Warhol for a self-portrait was a great leap of faith on their part. It was likely an informed decision aided by encouragement from a knowledgeable third party, perhaps an art dealer.

It was in the period of 1962 to 1964 that Warhol developed his Pop persona as people know it still today. Warhol's carefully presented persona may have initially appeared as an exaggerated version of an Abstract Expressionist's brooding isolationist mentality. The fact that he cultivated a mono-syllabic interview style consisting of the words "Yes" and "No" (but mostly "No"), could be construed as the idiosyncrasy of an eccentric genius. He seemed unsociable, as many Abstract Expressionist artists tended to appear. In a televised interview, a segment of which is found in the documentary *Andy Warhol* (1989), Warhol answers the interviewer's questions with "Uh, yes" or "Uh, no", to his own amusement and that of art dealer Ivan Karp, who stands beside him.²⁷ In another interview in the same

²⁷ A review of Warhol's guest appearance at a lunch held by the Society of Illustrators in 1965 is a fine record of Warhol's and Ivan Karp's interview game. The unnamed author of the article noted: "In fact, so united were Mr. Karp and his client that they seemed to be playing a ventriloquist's trick on the illustrators: Mr. Karp spoke and Mr. Warhol did not move his lips." In "Soup's On," *Arts* 39(May/June 1965): 16.

film, Warhol famously tells the interviewer: "Why don't you just tell me the words and they'll just come out of my mouth....I think it would be so nice if you'd tell me the answers and I'd repeat them." He barely manages to keep a straight face before the camera and the increasingly irritated interviewer.²⁸ In addition, Warhol himself admitted to providing different, conflicting biographical details to individual interviewers.²⁹ Warhol practised an aloof manner, reputedly derived in part from an appreciation of the mannerisms of his friend, fellow Stable Gallery artist Marisol.³⁰ From his actions and affectations, critics and writers began to describe Warhol's image as that of a mindless teenager, his mind a seeming "tabula rasa,"³¹ a "de-

²⁸ In the documentary, *Andy Warhol*. Dir. Kim Evans. R.M.Associates, 1989.

²⁹ Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975) 79.

³⁰ Victor Bockris, *Warhol* (London: Frederick Muller, 1989) 161-162.

³¹ David Bourdon, *Warhol* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989) 110.

celebrated Peter Pan,"³² and an "idiot savant."³³ It was this image that stayed in people's minds, both in and outside of the art world, and would form the basis of Warhol's persona as it is still understood today.

His position in the art world newly established, Warhol was still considered on the fringes of that society.³⁴ Warhol tells his own anecdote in *POPism*:

The painting style that everybody accepted and that dominated the art scene was still Abstract Expressionist....The resentment against Pop artists was something fierce, and it wasn't coming from just art critics or buyers, it was coming from a lot of the older Abstract Expressionist painters themselves.

This attitude was brought home to me in a very dramatic way at a party given by an Abstract Expressionist painter, Yvonne Thomas, mainly for other Abstract Expressionist painters. Marisol had been invited, and she took Bob Indiana and me with her....When we walked into that room, I looked around and saw that it was chock full of anguished, heavy intellectuals.

Suddenly the noise level dropped and everyone turned to look at us....I saw Mark Rothko take the hostess aside and I heard him accuse her of

³² B. O'Doherty, "Narcissus in Hades" *Art and Artists* (Feb 1967): 13.

³³ Mark Francis, "The Democracy of Beauty: An Introduction to the Collections of the Andy Warhol Museum," *The Andy Warhol Museum Inaugural Publication* (Pittsburgh, The Andy Warhol Museum, 1994) 114, and Hal Foster, "Death in America," *October* (Winter 1996): 37.

³⁴ According to art dealer Ivan Karp, Warhol, Lichtenstein and Rosenquist were all considered 'outsiders' by the fine arts society as late as 1970. In Smith, "Interview with Ivan Karp," *Conversations* 216.

treachery: 'How could you let *them* in?'³⁵

According to Warhol, this party was held in 1963 or early 1964. It indicates that the artist was considered as important as the art that person produced. If the art was controversial, the artist was viewed with suspicion and hatred in some cases.³⁶ Gallery owners who promoted Pop art were faced with this negative and hostile reception. The Pop artists were seen almost like criminals, procuring realism to corrupt the noble Abstract art that dominated in the realm of polite society.³⁷ Dealers faced the problem of how to sell the art in light of such violent reactions. In fact, Pop did not at first sell very well at all. Both Irving Blum and Eleanor Ward, two gallery owners who showed Warhol's work at this time, attest to the lack of sales his shows generated, in

³⁵ Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol Sixties* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980) 34-35.

³⁶ In 1968, Frederick Castle wrote of the art world's reaction to the attempt on Warhol's life: "...one could see behind the superficial gloom a hint of pleasure that the art world was perhaps to be freed from its greatest influence...the tireless Warhol, who is always doing things that have never been done and remarking with high good humour that everything is different than it was." Castle 54.

³⁷ This is not a new sentiment. The history of the value of realism is traced by Linda Nochlin in her essay, "The Realist Criminal and the Abstract Law," *Theories of Contemporary Art*, ed., Richard Hertz (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985) 25-47. She comments on the "built-in antagonism between Modernism (read as Abstraction) and 'realist purity,'" 28-29.

spite of immense attendance.³⁸

Even as late as 1964, those who promoted Warhol's work tended to try to validate it by linking it directly to emotional expression, in an attempt to connect it positively to the work of the Abstract Expressionists. An advertisement for Eleanor Ward's Stable Gallery in April 1964 supports this assertion.³⁹ (Fig.6) At this early point in Warhol's career, his face (image) is linked directly to his art, and through

³⁸ Irving Blum gave Warhol his first solo exhibition at the Ferus Gallery in California of the hand-painted Campbell's Soup Cans (1961), and also showed an entire exhibition of silver Elvis paintings in 1963. He reports selling only 6 of the 32 soup can paintings, and none of the Elvis paintings during the time the show was on, in Patrick Smith, *Warhol: Conversations About the Artist* (Ann Arbor, Mich: U.M.I Research Press, 1988) 191-197. See also John Coplans, "Andy Warhol and Elvis Presley," *Studio international* 181.930(Feb 1971): 49-56.

Eleanor Ward represented Warhol from late 1962 to mid-1964. Her Stable Gallery showed Warhol's Brillo Boxes, (1964) which she tactfully said were "very difficult" to sell in an interview published by John Wilcock, *The Autobiography and Sex Life of Andy Warhol* (New York: Other Scenes, 1971) np.

Ivan Karp, who worked for Leo Castelli in the early sixties, remembers it being almost impossible to sell Warhol's Disaster paintings, especially the Race Riots, Car Crashes and Electric Chairs. In Smith, *Conversations* 220.

³⁹ This advertised Warhol's exhibition of Brillo Boxes and other boxes. Warhol informed the gallery owner, Eleanor Ward, who had been representing Warhol as a painter since 1962, and she was apparently "aghast," because he had only just been accepted as a painter in the art world. She had distinct doubts about the concept, but let him go at it anyways. See Victor Bockris, *Warhol* (London: Frederick Muller, 1989) 189. In light of this information, this advertisement can be read as a sort of deferral before the event, a defensive strategy to deflect the perceived looming criticism and poor sales.

inference in the text accompanying the photo, it is admitted that this image had been having a great effect upon the reception of his work. The advertisement consists of a head and shoulders photo of Warhol, smartly (unthreateningly) dressed in a tuxedo and bow-tie. He stares at the camera, his eyes lidded heavily. At the bottom is a sliver of text entitled "The Personality of the Artist," by G. R. Swenson, part of which reads:

I want to be a machine,' the painter has said, misleading many; his work does suppress those symptoms of modern art--personality and creativity--which have been sanctified to the point of blasphemy.

Art criticism has been resistant to allowing the object to *make feelings*....The paintings and boxes of Warhol are feelings, as much as paint in Abstract-Expressionist painting is paint; the artist's works have almost nothing to do with his white streaked hair or his pale skin....⁴⁰

This advertisement tells us a number of things about the art market at the time, and Warhol's place in it. Swenson's text addresses a number of concerns and attempts to assuage the fears of potential buyers. Warhol had been criticised for taking personality out of his art, but Swenson expressed concern that the point had been reached where the worship of personality verged on religious blasphemy. The implication is that Warhol's art and Warhol himself are somehow more pure in their elimination of the artist's hand. Swenson suggests

⁴⁰ G. R. Swenson, "The Personality of the Artist," inside back cover of *Art International*, April, 1964. Text and photo by G. R. Swenson.

that Warhol's objects should be seen as expressive of feelings, independent of Warhol's own, but feelings nonetheless in the purest sense of the tradition. Warhol was known for his eccentric demeanour, made public by his penchant for attracting media attention. Swenson also implied in this text that Warhol's art existed independently of him as a person. Thus he suggested that buying a piece of Warhol's art would not create any uncomfortable associations that might harm the buyer socially. If Warhol was not linked directly to the art he produced, then by extension, the purchaser was free of any negative associations with the artist.

In effect, Warhol and his work were being directly associated with the acceptable art of the recent past. In the photo, Warhol wears a tuxedo, a dress suit, similar in spirit to the business suits the Abstract Expressionists tended to wear for portrait photographs.⁴¹ The artist is made presentable and therefore more accessible and approachable to wealthy potential buyers. Some authors equate the Abstract

⁴¹ Caroline Jones, in *Machine in the Studio*, discusses the calculated appearances of the Abstract Expressionists, she says: "It should be noted that the official' portraits of the Abstract Expressionists often showed them in suits and ties, a stance that Barnett Newman in particular tried to enforce." Page 432, note 157. Jones notes beside a film still of Newman, that he wears the same bowtie, monocle and suit he had donned for a previous documentary (page 87, illus 2.4) It indicates that Newman consciously presented himself in a certain way for the mass audience.

Expressionists' use of the business suit in public with their desire to be 'proletarian.'⁴² I think, however, that it was meant to give them an air of respectability and to act as a manifestation of their own sense of self-importance.

Similarly, the tuxedo projects onto Warhol a certain monied elegance and refinement that was likely calculated to appease and reassure buyers of his position in the art world as an important figure. In contrast to Warhol's more well-known attire of paint-splattered work pants and unkempt shirt⁴³, this depiction of him seems to be an attempt to sell a conservative image of the artist to the art-buying public, an image that reminds them of the socially and culturally acceptable artists of the forties and fifties. The use of the tuxedo was a measure taken to counter the extremity of Warhol's newly established and threatening public image. In addition, Swenson remarks that Warhol's art is able to make

⁴² Jones 241.

⁴³ I believe this appearance, especially at art 'functions' like gallery show openings, etc., illustrates Warhol's desire to be seen as a working artist in spite of his comments about wanting to be a machine, and so on. It links directly to photographs of Jackson Pollock working, covered in paint. I think Warhol wanted to be associated with that kind of devotion to art-making, and chose to illustrate it instead of saying it. A photograph by Bob Adelman in Victor Bockris' book, *Warhol*, shows Warhol at a gallery opening with Rauschenberg and Lichtenstein. Warhol wears a sweatshirt and t-shirt while his companions wear dress shirts and Lichtenstein, a suit jacket.

feelings.⁴⁴ This recalls Meyer Schapiro's statement: "The object of art is...more passionately than ever before, the occasion of spontaneity or intense feeling."⁴⁵ Schapiro was speaking about Abstract Expressionist art, but Swenson could very well have harnessed this quote for his own discussion in the Stable Gallery advertisement.

As for the Self-Portrait of 1964, although Suzanne Hilberry says Warhol took a year and a half to do the portrait⁴⁶, I believe that he probably executed it in 1964, after taking a year or so to ponder the task. With this in mind, we can compare the two images of Warhol: the Stable Gallery advertisement, and Warhol's own perception of himself as reflected in the self-portrait.

In the latter, Warhol presented himself in a manner similar to his style he was well known for during his commercial art years: a button-down shirt, a tie (quite

⁴⁴ Inside back cover of *Art International*, April, 1964. Text and photo by G. R. Swenson.

⁴⁵ Jones 24.

⁴⁶ Hilberry 64.

askew) and a trench coat. By many accounts⁴⁷, during his commercial art years, Warhol cultivated a naive persona, bringing flowers to secretaries, and generally ingratiating himself with Manhattan art directors in the 1950s. He affected a sloppy, unkempt look, consisting of old beaten-up running shoes, dirty chinos, and a tee-shirt or button-down shirt and tie. He toted his portfolio around in a paper bag.⁴⁸ According to a friend, his ties were always askew, with one end extremely long and the other "up to his chin."⁴⁹ He nicknamed himself "Andy Paper Bag"⁵⁰ and sometimes "Raggedy Andy."⁵¹ Warhol was extremely well-known in the commercial art world by the end of the fifties. David Bourdon describes him as "...something of a celebrity--an award-winning, widely admired illustrator with a distinctive drawing style."⁵²

⁴⁷ Almost all of Warhol's employers in the fifties remember his image kindly. See Smith, Chapter 4: "Art Directors," *Conversations* 99-130.

⁴⁸ Bockris, *Warhol* 81.

⁴⁹ Bourdon, *Warhol* 39.

⁵⁰ Patrick Smith, "Interview with Robert Galster," *Conversations* 154.

⁵¹ Bockris, *Warhol* 81.

⁵² David Bourdon, "Andy Warhol 1928-87," *Art in America* (May 1987): 139.

His appearance underscored his abilities as a commercial artist in the minds of his employers. (Warhol was renowned for his child-like line drawing technique.) It is a practice of professional illustrators to telephone and send small tokens of their work like calling cards to past and potential employers in order to keep their names circulating. Warhol adhered to this tradition, executing his gifts and phone calls in a studied, characteristic style. An early roommate of Warhol's reports hearing the artist on the telephone with art directors saying: "I planted some bird seed in the park yesterday. And would you like to order a bird. And do you have any work for me?"⁵³ It was this untidy, child-like persona that trailed into the early sixties and metamorphosed into the contrary, sullen "teenager" persona of the sixties.

Around 1960, when Warhol had decided to try to pursue a fine art career he also began to change his image accordingly. He may have felt that his carefully cultivated child-like persona would not compare well with the strong, energetic image preferred by the popular artists of the recent past. Warhol disassociated himself slowly from his old acquaintances. Friends noticed "...a *real sharp change* in his contacts and attitudes when he got into...films and into the

⁵³ Smith, "Interview with Joseph Groell," *Conversations* 30.

mass production of three-dimensional art."⁵⁴ For a change in style, Warhol bought silver-blond wigs to wear, began mumbling incoherently when answering questions and exaggerated his "slightly swish dancer's walk and his limp wrists."⁵⁵ Andy had forced his naive child persona to grow up.

We might speculate what the Barrons would have been expecting from Warhol's self-portrait. Formally, they probably would have expected something similar to his movie-star portraits like Marilyn Monroe(Three Times) (1962). (Fig.7) The results may have differed from their expectations. Traditionally, self-portraiture was an opportunity, especially if it was a commission, for the artist to portray himself to the outside world as an intellect, a genius, a socially well-stationed and adept person. The artist could invent himself to a certain degree, and align himself with certain ideologies if he were so inclined. Self-portraits were serious affairs if commissioned from important people, since any number of individuals of similar rank might see the work. A self-portrait commission acted as an advertisement for the artist's abilities. Warhol therefore had the opportunity to portray himself however he

⁵⁴ Smith, "Interview with George Hartman and Buddy Radish," *Conversations* 121.

⁵⁵ Bockris, *Warhol* 137.

wished. The decisions he made while preparing the Self-Portrait series must therefore be considered.

If we accept the image of Warhol in the advertisement as one that projects how certain people in the hierarchy of the art world may have wanted Warhol to look (and by extension act), then the Self-Portrait seems to be of a decidedly contrary nature. It can be read as a narrative: Warhol, dressed in a respectable suit and tie for the occasion, sits down to have his photo taken. Immediately, he loosens his tie, pulls it askew, stretches his neck (after being tied up so uncomfortably), and finally, slouching sullenly without removing his sunglasses, he is ready to have his picture taken. Taken as a complete whole, the four paintings work together to create one impression of Warhol in which he was indicating his discomfort with the idea of presenting himself in a traditional manner for the Barrons and others. He has taken the opportunity to respond to the expectations of those in the art world, and redirect them to an understanding of his own position in it. The well-established Abstract Expressionists' suit and tie costume, donned for special occasions and official portraits, is worn by Warhol, but his gesture rejects it. He seems to want to present himself as a new brand of artist, with his own style that recognises the past but asserts his own identity.

The critical writing of the time was giving Warhol and his fellow Pop artists extensive press. Warhol was often singled out, but in general, the attention focused on the Pop artists as a group. Much of the writers' energies were taken up with discussions of style and explanations of intent. Answering the question: "Is this art or not?" was a preoccupation, and more often than not, the Abstract Expressionist past loomed large over authors' judgements.⁵⁶ Warhol's portrayal of himself, struggling to loosen his tie and free himself from discomfort, can also be read as a marker for his life situation at the time. Warhol, it can be said, was expressing his desire to be seen in a manner of his own choosing, not as a suited version of the generic Artist. In fact, one might not know that the man in the paintings was an artist, since Warhol does not include the tools of his trade or anything about his career in the photo. This creates a certain amount of ambiguity which allows viewers to posit their own interpretations of the individual represented. The viewer is guided by the narrative quality, but as we will see, the implied actions can be interpreted almost *ad infinitum*.

⁵⁶ I refer readers to two exceptional compilations of critical writing: Carol Anne Mahsun, editor, *POP ART: the critical dialogue* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1989), in particular Max Kozloff's article entitled "Pop Culture, Metaphysical Disgust and the New Vulgarians," if only for its title, and Alan R. Pratt, ed., *The Critical Response to Andy Warhol* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997).

Warhol's failure to characterize himself as an artist in the portrait coincides with his increased visibility as a 'personality' in New York city social life. This marked the beginning of Warhol's reach past the art world and into the minds of the average American. By 1964, Warhol had established his first Factory studio and was producing *risqué* 'underground' films. The Factory attracted a myriad of people from all over the social scale, from wealthy socialites like Jane Holzer and Edie Sedgewick to amphetamine abusers like Ondine. His avant-garde entourage and unconventional social life were just beginning to attract a great amount of attention from the popular press, making Warhol known to the general populace. Warhol attended all manner of social functions, from the Opera to art gallery openings to movies and night clubs, often covering a number of these in the same night. He was everywhere, all of the time, not wanting to miss a thing.⁵⁷ The edges were being blurred between the man famous for being an artist and the man who died famous for being his own famous self. The 1964 Self-Portrait, therefore acts as a marker for this change in Warhol's life as a public figure. He was still known chiefly as an artist, but at the same time was starting to pull at the ties that bound him to that traditional existence,

⁵⁷ Bourdon, *Warhol* 140.

subject to the whims of rich buyers and fickle dealers. Warhol began to assert, quietly yet insistently, his own interpretation of what an artist should be. In his Self-Portrait, Warhol crystallizes for the world an image of his persona as it was understood by the artist himself at that point in his career. Jonathan Flatley writes: "Like a *prosthesis*, his self-portraits extended his person into the public sphere, the realm of fame, giving the public a product on which to feed its imagination."⁵⁸

Pendant to Ethel Scull's adoption of the poses of glamorous movie-stars and fashion models, Warhol plays the "Rebel." His 1950s "look" of dirty shoes, slouchy clothes and generally unkept exterior is according to Victor Bockris based on a style adopted from Marlon Brando.⁵⁹ The adoption of a sullen silence was a key characteristic of Rebel characters like Brando. In his book *POPism*, Warhol commented on the observed effects of his silence: "I learned that you actually have more power when you shut up, because at least that way

⁵⁸ Jonathan Flatley, "Warhol Gives Good Face," *POP OUT: Queer Warhol*, eds., Jennifer Doyle, J. Flatley and Jose Esteban Munoz (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996) 113.

⁵⁹ Bockris, *Warhol* 81.

people will start to maybe doubt themselves."⁶⁰ Warhol conveys his silence in his self-portrait by creating a barrier against which viewers will stumble and doubt themselves. He wears sunglasses, which prevent interaction with his eyes because eyes can often be as eloquent as words. His sullen, slightly frowning face works to dissuade the viewer from approaching that portrait, thereby strengthening the implication of silence. At first glance, it seems that one cannot get close enough to Warhol to engage in 'conversation' with the image. He acts like the sullen, brooding film stars James Dean and Marlon Brando, key 'Rebel' figures of the fifties.

It was essential that Warhol cultivate a 'Rebel' image for himself as he pursued fame on a national scale. Achieving such fame was quite different from Warhol's notoriety within the confines of the art world. In America, the most renowned of all famous people were (and still are) often movie stars. For Warhol, who wanted to become as famous as a movie star, the search for celebrity naturally meant that he had to pursue the affectations and develop a persona similar to the most famous and popular among them. At the time, the most famous rebel-character movie actors included James Dean and Marlon Brando. Warhol had copied the latter in creating his

⁶⁰ Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol Sixties* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980) 108.

personal style of the fifties. Both are subjects of Warhol's silk screen paintings from around 1963. Although these actors had reached their height in the early fifties (Dean having died in 1955)⁶¹, Warhol clung to his identification with them when he set out to update his persona a decade later, and portray it in his 1964 Self-Portrait. Warhol described both of these actors as people "with the kind of screen magic that'd appeal to both men and women."⁶² Both played characters who were loners and trouble-makers. Todd Gitlin called them "refusers, defined by what they were not. Their halting speech was a sign of their essential confusion and passivity....They said no, therefore they were."⁶³

Warhol, playing the part of the Rebel artist, became one who refused to leave his mark on his own canvases, who refused to speak except in a halting, quiet voice, who passively asked interviewers to give him the answers to their questions, who, when he did speak said only 'Yes' and 'No.'⁶⁴

⁶¹ Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1987) 31-32.

⁶² Warhol and Hackett, *POPism* 239.

⁶³ Gitlin 33.

⁶⁴ The "refusal of meaning and the spoken word" is considered by Baudrillard to be a "stratgey of the masses" by which they resist the mechanisms of the system which demands

Thus he fashioned himself as a living movie character. The chance to do a self-portrait provided Warhol with the opportunity to photograph himself acting out his new 'Rebel' persona, and ironically have it 'bought,' in more than one sense of the word, by those against whom he was rebelling. Warhol, like his movie-character role models, made a show of rebelling against icons of the Establishment, which for him included the art world and the Abstract Expressionist domination of it. I believe, too, that it extended over to his patrons, who commissioned his portrait in an act of philanthropy which defined the system that could not entirely embrace his work.

Contained in the image of the Rebel is an understanding of criminality, whether or not it is acted upon. In the case of James Dean and Marlon Brando, their fifties movie characters, such as those in Rebel Without a Cause and The Wild One, were examples of 'juvenile delinquents,'⁶⁵ committing random acts of sometimes violent disruption

that each person be both subject and object. The culture of media, which maximizes speech and therefore the production of meaning, is countered with passive "hyperconformism." A refusal to react or to engage in the frenzy of verbosity becomes a form of resistance against the system that requires such engagement. Jean Baudrillard, "The Implosion of Meaning in the Media," *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans, Sheila Faria Glaser (Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1994) 85.

⁶⁵ Gitlin 31.

against no-one in particular.⁶⁶ Warhol was at the time enjoying disrupting the art world like a *nouveau* Marlon Brando, but still, this does not make him a criminal. However, as a homosexual in the United States in the early sixties, Warhol was living the life of a felon. It is from this angle that a different interpretation of his Self-Portrait series can be explored.

John D'Emilio, in *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*,⁶⁷ describes the aspects of society that shaped gay identity and the gay subculture: "in the Judeo-Christian tradition, homosexual behaviour was excoriated as a heinous sin, the law branded it a serious crime, and the medical profession diagnosed homosexuals and lesbians as diseased."⁶⁸ Exposure meant punishment and ostracism, maintaining a sense of ever-present danger for the closeted individual. The police engaged in entrapment and were known to enact any number of

⁶⁶ According to Marlon Brando, The Wild One was controversial at the time it was made. He wrote about it, saying "A few nuts even claimed The Wild One was part of a Hollywood campaign to loosen morals and incite young people to rebel against their elders." Quoted by Mick Farren, "The Motorcycle Jacket," *ICON* (Feb. 1998): 41.

⁶⁷ John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States 1940-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

⁶⁸ D'Emilio 13.

codes against homosexuals to justify arrest. Medical professionals described homosexuality as a "dread disease" up until the 1970s.⁶⁹ Warhol could not have avoided these stigmas, nor could he have failed to grow up noticing that his desires were counter to those deemed acceptable by society. Simon Watney tells us that:

Not for nothing did Warhol joke as a child that he came from another planet....For this is exactly how queer children feel, as if we come from another planet Planet Queer. How do you explain about yourself to yourself, let alone to others, when you have absolutely no legitimate or legitimating model for your own most intensely personal feelings about other people and the world?⁷⁰

It cannot be reiterated enough that Warhol never actually came "out" by definition; he himself never spoke publicly about his sexuality, preferring to maintain the mystique of ambiguity.⁷¹ However, his silence, it can be inferred, was likely to have been affected by these religious, medical and political biases.

⁶⁹ D'Emilio 14-16.

⁷⁰ Simon Watney, "Queer Warhol," *POP OUT: Queer Warhol* 24.

⁷¹ Victor Bockris reports that an unnamed man claims to have had sexual encounters with Warhol between 1961 and 1963. John Giorno, known for his non-speaking role in Warhol's movie, *Sleep*, also claims similar experiences. Bockris, *Warhol* 173-175. Robert Fleisher mentions that Warhol would talk about his sexual partners in the 1950s, in Smith, *Conversations* 115. These experiences, however, remained part of Warhol's private life and any professional relationships that Warhol established were kept at a distance from it.

I think that it is possible to look at Warhol's Self-Portrait from the angle of his sexual identity, especially as it was understood by the mass media and American culture at the time. Warhol was also a rebel in the art world because, although he kept his private life to himself, he displayed his sexual orientation in an adoption of stereotyped mannerisms. Homosexuality was certainly not absent from this cultural institution, but it was always a particular issue for Warhol. In *POPism*, the artist wrote, he was told by a friend that Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg did not like him because he was "too swish." He noted:

You'd have to have seen the way all the Abstract Expressionist painters carried themselves and the kinds of images they cultivated, to understand how shocked people were to see a painter coming on swish. I certainly wasn't a butch kind of guy by nature, but I must admit, I went out of my way to play up the other extreme.⁷²

Although Johns and Rauschenberg were also gay, they found it distasteful that Warhol would affect obvious and stereotypical effeminate mannerisms that were equated with homosexuality.⁷³ It has been intimated by Simon Watney that

⁷² Warhol, *POPism* 11-13.

⁷³ Kenneth Silver, "Modes of Disclosure: The Construction of Gay Identity and the Rise of Pop Art," *Hand-Painted Pop: American Art in Transition*, ed. Russell Ferguson (New York: Rizzoli Int'l, 1993) 194. In this essay, Silver discusses the underlying homosexual themes in a number of Johns' works and alludes to the relationship between Johns and Rauschenberg.

Leo Castelli, a prominent New York gallery owner who first represented Roy Lichtenstein, may have refused to take Warhol on because of his gay demeanour.⁷⁴ Therefore, Warhol's image was not accepted by his peers early on in his career, effectively keeping the artist from finding a gallery to represent him and from making friends with other older, established artists.

Presenting himself as a James Dean/Marlon Brando type of character, Warhol was aligning himself with movie star characters but also with their acceptability by the masses. That is, Warhol saw those men drawing as much male attention as female. By presenting himself as a character of this sort, Warhol may have been attempting to draw male attention. Warhol's adoption of this form of rebellious image can also be linked to Warhol's paintings, Thirteen Most Wanted Men. (Fig.8) This monumental work was commissioned by the architect Philip Johnson for the 1964-65 World's Fair held in Flushing Meadow, New York. It consisted of pictures of thirteen men, all at some point wanted by the FBI, on 25 panels. Warhol used mug shots to make his silkscreen images. He was asked by those in charge of the Fair to replace them,

⁷⁴ Simon Watney, "Queer Andy," *POP OUT: Queer Warhol* 25. Warhol approached Castelli Gallery in 1961, but after a number of visits by employee Ivan Karp and Castelli himself, he was not asked to join the gallery. Bourdon, *Warhol* 83-84. Warhol was finally taken on by Eleanor Ward at the Stable Gallery in the summer of 1962. Bourdon, *Warhol* 130-131.

but in the end, the panels were left in place and painted over in silver instead.⁷⁵ The images themselves were all outdated at the time Warhol used them, as many of the subjects had either been captured and served their sentences or acquitted of their charges.⁷⁶ The panels are arranged so that the mug-shots look at each other and off the edge of the panels out to the world.

Richard Meyer offers an interpretation of this work by first asking that question: "*If the outlaws pictured here are no longer being pursued by the FBI, by whom are these men most wanted by now?*"⁷⁷ Meyer suggests that one possible answer is Warhol himself.⁷⁸ The act of "wanting," becomes a play on words and alludes to both the FBI's desire to apprehend criminals and to (homo)sexual desire. The interchange of looks amongst the criminals in the paintings may also allude to male cruising. Warhol's use of criminals in this arrangement makes reference to the criminal status of

⁷⁵ A. Kagan, "Most Wanted Men: Andy Warhol and the Anti-Culture of Punk," *Arts Magazine* 53.1(Sept 1978): 119.

⁷⁶ R. Meyer, "Warhol's Clones," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 7.1(Spring 1994): 96. See also Smith, *Conversations* 170.

⁷⁷ Meyer 96.

⁷⁸ See also Robert Pincus-Witten, "Pre-entry: Margins of Error," *Arts* 63(Summer 1989): 57-58.

homosexuals at the time, and that wanting men constituted a form of criminality.⁷⁹

Warhol aligned himself with this kind of criminal-rebellion in a number of ways in his own portrait. Andrew Kagan reasons that Warhol identified with these criminals because he felt himself to be operating as an artist, typically seen as working somehow outside of normal society, "outcast, but famous for it."⁸⁰ However, in addition to this, Warhol was also an outcast in the art world and society in general because of his sexuality. In this light, Warhol's photo-booth Self-Portrait narrative tells a new tale. Warhol's sunglasses hide his face as if he were trying to avoid recognition. His clothes in disarray can tell a story of one who is fleeing from something or someone in great haste. Even Warhol's sullen expression and shirt and tie outfit echo those of the mafiosi depicted in Thirteen Most Wanted Men. In his *Philosophy* book, the artist talks about criminality: "Nowadays if you're a crook you're still considered up-there...you're a big celebrity and nobody even looks down on you because you're a crook....This because more

⁷⁹ Meyer 99.

⁸⁰ Kagan 120.

than anything people just want to be stars."⁸¹ Also wanting to be famous for just about anything, Warhol offered an image of himself as a Rebel and by extension, a kind of criminal.

The connection between the portraits and his sexual identity is not overt. However, taken from the perspective of his contemporary and controversial series Thirteen Most Wanted Men, it is possible to pick up an underlying tone that connects them. Warhol created his Most Wanted Men series and finished his Self-Portraits in the same year. In 1963, he had attended a retrospective of Marcel Duchamp's work in Pasadena, California, the invitation for which was printed up like a Wanted poster, and included mug-shot style photographs of Duchamp on it.⁸² It is possible that Warhol recognised that the format of photos from a photo-booth closely resembled the mug-shots he was using to complete his series for the World's Fair. The final self-portrait images had almost directed themselves into being. With such inspiration about, Warhol could hardly have ignored the endless possibilities and the chance to be subversive in the face of paying customers. The idea of men being 'Wanted,' for Warhol, as a gay man, constituted a joke, a *double entendre* that carried with it an indivisible relationship between

⁸¹ Warhol, *Philosophy* 85.

⁸² Bourdon, *Warhol* 170.

criminality and sexuality. By portraying himself as a criminal in the manner of his Most Wanted Men series, Warhol indicated both his wanting and its criminal status. His wanting men made Warhol a criminal in the eyes of the law. Also, Warhol places himself in the same position as one of the Wanted, both criminally (as he is a Wanter) and sexually (offering himself as a "Wantee").

To sum up, the receipt of a commission for a self-portrait by the Barrons in 1963 or so gave Warhol an opportunity to explore his newly-evolved persona. The year and a half that it took him to complete the series indicates that Warhol probably took some time to decide how he wanted to present his public image for the buyer and all potential viewers. The artist-patron relationship is a small-scale version of the celebrity-audience one. Warhol saw that he had begun to capture an audience, and the Barrons' commission indicated to him that people were interested in his person. With the knowledge of an audience waiting, Warhol could present himself however he chose for his patron. He recognised and used this opportunity to promote the image he was developing in an attempt to achieve wide-reaching fame in America.

Choosing to represent himself as a Rebel, Warhol was able to position himself and identify his function within the

art world. The format of a series of images taken together to make up a self-portrait was chosen by Warhol because it functions as a mini-narrative that can be read in a number of ways. Warhol enjoyed the mystique of his ambiguous persona, and his Self-Portrait series from 1964 maintain this agenda not only in its serial format but by its machine-made quality. The machine-taken photo-booth pictures used in the silkscreens allude to Warhol's expressed desire to "be a machine," thus providing a continuity that reinforces the artist's stiff, cool and silent public image.

In addition, there are definite, but not overt, homosexual undertones and implications in his Self-Portrait. Part of Warhol's persona had garnered him negative response in the art world and society at large. In his Self-Portrait Warhol dealt with the part of his personal life that had a drastic effect on his public reception, both as a gay man in American society, and a "swish" artist in a macho cultural milieu. He wanted to be perceived as different from the artists that came before him, namely the Abstract Expressionists. By comparing this work to others that he was doing about the same time, it is possible to determine that Warhol was dealing with issues of his rebellious nature as a criminal in the context of his homosexuality.

Chapter Two: The Reigning Queen of Expo 67

Once Warhol had tentatively secured his place and reputation in the art-world, he expanded his reach for fame to encompass all of American society.¹ As Carter Ratcliff noted, "Art-world eyes cannot see what Andy saw: the top of the art-world is not very high up."² To be famous as a 'top artist' in the art-world is a negligible fame in comparison to being a 'top celebrity' on a national or international level. In other words, being recognized by the (relatively small) art-world provides less fame than being recognized by the general public. Warhol once said that he'd rather be famous than a great artist.³ He has since come to be considered a very important artist; he succeeded in capturing fame by turning his attention to more than painting. By 1967,

¹ Bradford R. Collins convincingly suggests that Warhol pursued fame because of his lack of confidence in his appearance. He writes: "Fame, in our culture at least, changes one's appearance because it alters others' perceptions." B.R. Collins, "The Metaphysical Nosejob," *Arts* 62(Feb 1988): 54. Warhol understood famous people to be beautiful and knew that others would find him so if he were also famous. He called this a person's "aura." Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol* (New York: Harcourt-Brace-Jovanovich, 1975) 77.

² Carter Ratcliff, "Andy Warhol: Inflation Artist," *Artforum* vol.23(March 1985): 75.

³ Thierry De Duve, "Andy Warhol, or The Machine Perfected," trans. Rosalind Krauss, *October* 48(Spring 1989): 13.

Warhol's name was connected with film-making, fashion, music and multi-media production, each venture making Warhol more celebrated than the last.⁴ He and his entourage were given extensive press attention. Warhol and Edie Sedgwick both appeared in national magazine articles on food and fashion respectively.⁵ Warhol was no longer simply associated with art. His name and face were in demand and rapidly being spread across the country. With his constructed persona, Warhol thrived "on the imaging [he] directed at the desires of consumers."⁶ In the words of Arthur Danto, Warhol had a "spontaneous intuition that not to be received as an image in the common consciousness is to be bereft of the only reality that matters."⁷ The International Exposition of 1967 held in Montreal (Expo 67) provided Warhol with a unique opportunity to present his art to the world. Always the opportunist,

⁴ See also William Fever, "Andy, Inc.," *Artnews* (Feb 1989): 95-97.

⁵ Ninette Lyon, "Robert Indiana/Andy Warhol. A Second Fame: Good Food," *Vogue* 145(March 1 1965): 14-186. The title itself implies that the artist is (or should be) known for more than his art. The Edie Sedgwick article appears in *Life*, November 26, 1965, and is referred to by David Bourdon, *Warhol* 214.

⁶ Tim Cone, "Art and the Law: The Most Fascinating Kind of Art," *Arts Magazine* 64(Jan. 1990): 26.

⁷ Arthur C. Danto, "Who Was Andy Warhol?" *Artnews* 86.5(May 1987): 128.

Warhol used this venue to promote himself internationally as a famous American, sending a set of six Self-Portraits to be displayed in the American Pavilion.

Warhol began producing this self-portrait series in 1965. It is the key image in Warhol's self-portrait oeuvre. (Fig.9) It comprises a series of silkscreens derived from a photograph by Rudolph Burkhardt that Warhol sat for and purchased.⁸ The image shows Warhol striking a characteristic pose, one with his fingers covering his mouth.⁹ The series was painted in a variety of colours that often abstract and flatten the image, especially when the photo-image was screened in a colour instead of black. Of all Warhol's self-portraits, this series is the most reproduced and discussed.¹⁰

⁸ Ian M. Thom, *Andy Warhol: Images* (Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1995) 21.

⁹ Victor Bockris, *Warhol* (London: Frederick Muller, 1989) 67. Other articles about Warhol from the period make mention of this specific stance. See for example Ninette Lyon, "Robert Indiana/Andy Warhol: A Second Fame: Good Food," *Vogue* 145(March 1, 1965): 184.

¹⁰ This self-portrait is used to illustrate many discussions of Warhol, including the front cover of *The Andy Warhol Diaries*, edited by Pat Hackett, (New York: Warner Books, 1989), and a brief history of Warhol's career, Jean Mourgue, "Evenement Andy Warhol," *L'Oeil* 472(July 1995): 46-53. Both examples here were published after his death; both use his image from 1965-67 to represent him. This testifies to the longevity and strength of this image in people's minds as representative of Warhol.

Discussions of Warhol's self-portraits are difficult to find, however; the majority of the literature that deals,

These silkscreens reflect Warhol's public image that has survived nearly unchanged to this day.¹¹ The series embodies all of Warhol's artistic and social endeavours up to that point in his career. It includes Warhol's perfected public persona as interpreted by the media, which he taunted and courted into making him famous. It also makes reference to Warhol's activities as an experimental film-maker and the interpretation of his movies and his persona as voyeuristic. It marks Warhol's arrival into American popular culture as a celebrated personality.

A large part of the Warhol literature deals in some way with Warhol's persona as developed by 1965-67. It would be very difficult to propose a totally new interpretation of the artist's public image from this time. In addition, Warhol's persona was not conducive to a singular, narrow reading. As a result, most critical evaluation of Warhol's public self is extremely general. His persona is given no formal context, except perhaps that of the 'public sphere,' or the realm of 'American popular culture.' For example, the critic Mary

however briefly, with these works specifically focuses on the 1965-67 image. See Barbara Rose, "Self-Portraiture: Theme with a Thousand Faces." *Art in America* 63(Jan 1975): 66-73; and Gary Garrels, ed, *The Work of Andy Warhol* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1989).

¹¹ Simon Watney, "The Warhol Effect," *The Work of Andy Warhol*, ed. Gary Garrels (Seattle: Bay Press, 1989) 116-117.

Josephson says that Warhol was a mirror of his times and produced paintings that reflected American culture of the sixties.¹² This is a standard view of Warhol. Josephson's evaluation would therefore be based on his Pop Art paintings, and would offer only a circuitous answer to the problem of contextualizing Warhol's public image. Stephen Koch notes however that Warhol was "an artist for whom the work is almost nothing and its context almost everything."¹³ An examination of Warhol's 1965-67 Self-Portrait within its particular historic context, that of Expo 67, may help us to understand his persona better.

Expo 67 opened on April 28th, 1967, in Montreal. The theme of the world's fair was *Man and His World*, or *Terres des Hommes*, drawn from a book of the same name by Antoine de Saint-Exupery (1900-1945) which meditated upon "the place of man in the universe."¹⁴ The main theme was divided into sub-categories entitled Man the Explorer, Man the Creator, Man

¹² See Mary Josephson, "The Medium as Cultural Artifact," *Art in America* 59(May-June 1971): 41-46.

¹³ Stephen Koch, "Warhol," *The New Republic* 160(Apr 1969): 25.

¹⁴ Robert Fulford, *This Was Expo* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1968) 12.

the Producer, Man the Provider and Man in the Community.¹⁵ Expo 67 attracted sixty-two countries as exhibitors, the largest number ever to participate in a world's fair.¹⁶

Architecturally, the United States pavilion became a focus of Expo 67. The American pavilion was an acrylic and steel geodesic dome created by R. Buckminster Fuller,¹⁷ a highly creative, controversial inventor and self-proclaimed "evolutionary strategist."¹⁸ Twenty-stories high, the dome was a critical success and drew much admiration from visitors from around the world. The theme of the exhibition inside the dome was "Creative America." Seven Boston designers known collectively as the Cambridge Seven were asked to put together the American exhibits. According to one designer, Terry Rankine, "[They] wanted to show the craftsmanship, inventiveness and creativity of the American people."¹⁹ The

¹⁵ John Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions* (London: Studio Vista, 1977) 166.

¹⁶ Fulford 10.

¹⁷ "United States of America: General Description," *Expo 67 Information Manual* (Canada; Information Services-Expo 67, 1967) S134, pp2-3.

¹⁸ Fulford 56.

¹⁹ Fulford 58.

exhibit focussed on American culture of the past and present, especially the popular culture that defined the average American sensibility. The displays incorporated space exploration, popular American cinema, fine art, a children's area, and historical examples of American craftsmanship. They included a Gemini space capsule, film memorabilia, Elvis Presley's guitar, a totem pole from Alaska, and huge pieces of contemporary art.²⁰ Alan Solomon was assigned the task of asking artists like Helen Frankenthaler, Robert Motherwell and Roy Lichtenstein to lend some work. The paintings were hung on long white banners suspended up to ninety feet in the air inside the American Pavilion. Some artists already had large works to lend, but many created something new.²¹ Warhol submitted six, six-foot-square self-portrait canvases, painted especially for Expo.²²

The American Pavilion was highly controversial. The exhibits were generally well-received by everyone except the Americans themselves. Many U.S. visitors were embarrassed and apparently some were heard to apologize on behalf of their

²⁰ Fulford 61.

²¹ Fulford 59-60.

²² David Bourdon, *Warhol* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989) 264.

country. They called the pavilion "a shame and a disgrace," and "a victory for Bolshevism," (since the USSR was thought by some to have put on a better display). In contrast, an editorial in the *Montreal Star* called it "gentle, fun-poking modesty."²³ The exhibit's focus on the popular cultural artifacts of America was an unusual approach for a display at an International Exposition. From the time of the earliest World's Fairs in the nineteenth century, exhibits had focussed on the proud achievements of each country, at first technological and later cultural. Culture was included as an indication of a country's unique lifestyle.²⁴ American exhibits had often included cultural objects, such as Native American arts, but more important were the displays of the newest American inventions like the automobile, the gramophone and other innovations of industrial and agricultural technology.²⁵ In earlier times, the exhibitions had stepped up foreign trade and the American economy by generating interest in American products, and stimulated

²³ Fulford 59.

²⁴ Reid Badger, *The Great American Fair* (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1979) xvi.

²⁵ See John Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions* for a history of World's Fairs and descriptions of displays, including those of the United States.

great pride amongst Americans.²⁶ The focus of the Expo 67 display was on American popular cultural exports instead of technological ones. This was probably the basis of the chagrin felt by many American visitors. The lively, youthful approach to the displays was entirely in keeping with the new focus on youth in America as a target for consumerism and it is likely that the loudest critics of the pavilion were from an older generation. Warhol was yet again involved in controversy.

The inclusion of Warhol's art in the Pavilion certified his importance in both the art-world and the popular culture of the United States. It legitimized him by putting his work in the same show with that of other internationally respected artists. It reaffirmed Warhol's place in art history. His struggle to be accepted by the art world would seem to be nearing an end by 1967. Warhol's work was hung in close proximity to paintings by Motherwell and Frankenthaler at Expo 67. The venue provided the opportunity for international art-world visitors to see this mix of artistic styles hung together as equals, and to begin to contemplate Pop Art seriously as a legitimate style in itself, given respectability by its co-existence with Abstract Expressionist art.

²⁶ Badger 113-114.

Warhol would have immediately recognized the importance of this opportunity for international exposure. I suspect that when Alan Solomon asked Warhol for a submission, he expected him to send Campbell's Soup Cans or some other famous and recognizable Pop subject. But since Warhol deliberately painted and sent self-portraits, it would appear that he had a particular goal at this point in his career. This agenda would be his quest for fame.²⁷

I think that the context of Expo 67 is invaluable to an understanding of the way that Warhol wanted to be seen at the time. Over the course of a year, about 50 million visitors came to Montreal for the Exposition.²⁸ This fact provides the key to understanding Warhol's motivation behind putting his Self-Portraits in Expo 67. He saw the exhibition as a victory of popular media culture over highbrow intellectualism. He wrote: "So this U.S. exhibit was like an official acknowledgement that people would rather see media

²⁷ Warhol wrote: "Everyone always reminds me about the way I'd go around moaning 'Oh when will I be famous, when will it happen?' etc., etc., so I must have done it a lot." Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol Sixties* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980) 82.

²⁸ Information provided on-line at <http://www.sppsr.ucla.edu/expo67/>. Site created, maintained and copyrighted to Jeffrey Stanton. Site visited November 18, 1997.

celebrities than anything else."²⁹ By this time, Warhol was himself one of the media celebrities he was talking about.

Warhol recognized that he was directly associated with the Popular culture represented in the American show. Critic Thomas Crow would later write that Warhol "sanctioned a wide range of experiments in non-elite culture far beyond the world of art."³⁰ In *POPism*, Warhol discussed the road trip across America that he took in October of 1963:

The farther west we drove, the more Pop everything looked on the highways. Suddenly we all felt like insiders because even though Pop was everywhere-- that was the thing about it, most people still took it for granted, whereas we were dazzled by it-- to us, it was the new Art. Once you'd '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.³¹

Warhol felt that he was privy to certain information that the majority of other Americans at the time were not. Thus Warhol, the outsider-Rebel in a straight society, was suddenly an 'insider,'³² knowledgeable about American culture,

²⁹ Warhol, *POPism* 220.

³⁰ Thomas Crow, "Saturday Disasters: Trace and Reference in Early Warhol," *Art in America* 75(May 1987): 129.

³¹ Warhol, *POPism* 39.

³² Jonathan Flatley, "Warhol Gives Good Face: Publicity and the Politics of Prosopopoeia," *POP OUT: Queer Warhol*, eds. Doyle, Flatley, et al (Durham and London: Duke

and aware of the ways in which that culture was developing.

Warhol felt this way particularly in the years leading up to Expo 67, because he had effectively extended his interests beyond the fine arts and was known throughout America chiefly because of these other ventures. A brief look at Warhol's expanded interests and growing fame in the United States is necessary to provide some context in which to understand how Warhol's Self-Portraits were calculated to fit into the American Pavilion at Expo 67.

Warhol had reached the peak development of his public persona he had introduced in the early 1960s. Aside from his art, Warhol had begun to frequent arts events in Greenwich Village with his assistant, Gerard Malanga. Through Malanga he would meet underground film-makers and off-Broadway playwrights whose innovative experiments Warhol borrowed for his own film-making and through which he successfully gathered more public attention.³³ He augmented his Rebel image with a leather jacket, jeans, turtleneck or striped shirt and black boots around 1965. The turtleneck carried Beat and

University Press, 1996) 101-102.

³³ Bourdon, *Warhol* 162.

bohemian connotations³⁴ and allowed Warhol to display his "hipness" and familiarity with other "underground" cultural movements outside of the art world. According to Van Cagle, the striped shirt aligned Warhol with the gay Greenwich Village scene, an easily over-looked reference to homosexuality.³⁵ According to David Bourdon, "Andy, almost always accompanied by a friend or two, went to art gallery openings, Happenings, poetry readings, off-Broadway plays, innovative dance performances, and experimental films."³⁶ Warhol wished to be everywhere, I believe, in the hopes of being recognized, attracting attention to himself and hence becoming more well-known by name and face.

Warhol seems to have hoped that the public would directly connect him with the concept of celebrity. He dressed to evoke memories of Marlon Brando in The Wild One. Warhol fashioned himself as a star-product, who by his very presence made a party a "scene."³⁷ His appearance at nearly

³⁴ Jones 241.

³⁵ Van M. Cagle, *Reconstructing pop/subculture: Art, rock, and Andy Warhol* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications, 1995) 66.

³⁶ Bourdon, *Warhol* 140.

³⁷ Dore Ashton, "Blinding with Gold Dust," *Art International* 7(Summer 1989): 68.

every well-publicized social event in New York City at the time was calculated to offer him frequent opportunities to be photographed and written about in the daily newspapers and national magazines. The press attention was very important to Warhol and his entourage. Isabelle Dufresne, also known as Ultra Violet, described how she and the rest of the Factory members would scan the newspapers everyday for mentions and photographs of themselves. She wrote: "A day with no mention of ourselves is a lost day."³⁸ Warhol commented: "[By 1965] we were getting pretty notorious around town for being at every party, and reporters loved to write us up and take our picture...we looked like 'a story,' but they didn't really know who we were or what we were doing."³⁹ This must have brought Warhol great satisfaction, considering that one would have to have worked very hard to appear to be doing nothing at all. In fact, being famous for apparently no reason would probably have made Warhol almost as happy as he might have been had he been famous for his beauty (like a real Hollywood star). The mass audience was thus manipulated by Warhol and consequently the artist became famous because people believed that he was.

³⁸ Isabelle Collin Dufresne, *Famous for Fifteen Minutes* (New York; Avon Books, 1988) 144.

³⁹ Warhol, *POPism* 120.

Once Warhol had begun to garner reactions to his public persona, he expanded his interests (and potential fame) by delving into other kinds of creative media production.⁴⁰ By 1967 Warhol had been making his own "underground" films for about six years and was widely recognized for them. As early as 1963, Warhol was well-known enough that Tape Recording magazine loaned him a Norelco home video recorder and supplies. He was asked to try them out and review them in an interview published that same year. In the article, Warhol is referred to as a "tape enthusiast and home movie-maker." However, a short paragraph about Warhol and Pop Art was included "for the uninitiated."⁴¹ Within a few years, this added note would be unnecessary.

Between 1965 and 1967 Warhol was directly involved with the rock group, The Velvet Underground. He produced their first album and created a travelling multi-media show called, initially, "Andy Warhol, Uptight" and then "The Exploding Plastic Inevitable [EPI]." This show, which combined music by

⁴⁰ Calvin Tomkins notes that Warhol "preempted" the fine art, rock music, multimedia, cinematic and literary worlds within a decade in his search for widespread recognition. Calvin Tomkins, "The Art Incarnate," *New Yorker* 56(May 5, 1980): 114. Jack Bankowsky wrote that this was "The real Warhol 'trick,' [that] he was able to maintain under the sign of art a whole sphere of activity that traditionally defied that designation." J. Bankowsky, "Words Around Warhol," *Artforum* vol.27(April 1989): 143.

⁴¹ *Tape Recording* 12.5(Sept/Oct. 1963): 15.

The Velvets, dancing, lights and Warhol's cinematic experiments, toured the country evoking strong reactions everywhere it played.⁴² David Crosby said of the show: "It's like eating a banana nut Brillo Pad."⁴³ At a Los Angeles show in 1966, a reporter observed:

For once a Happening really happened and it took Warhol to come out from New York to show how it's done. The Velvet Underground is so far out that it makes the tremendous thumping beat of the great groovy group which opened the program seem passé.⁴⁴

Warhol was well known enough by this time that the reporter did not have to explain who he was.⁴⁵ A rivalry was

⁴² For a history of the Velvet Underground, see Victor Bockris and Gerard Malanga, *Up-Tight, The Velvet Underground Story* (London: Omnibus Press, 1983). This book is a compilation of interviews, press articles, first-hand accounts and a discography. For current interviews with VU members, see Stephen Shore and Lynne Tillman, *The Velvet Years: Warhol's Factory 1965-67* (New York: Thunder Mouth's Press, 1995).

⁴³ From a review of the EPI at UCLA, California, 1966. Apparently many of California's finest musicians were there, including the Mamas and the Papas, and a few members of The Byrds. Bockris and Malanga 42-43.

⁴⁴ Bockris and Malanga 42.

⁴⁵ Warhol was also directly associated with fashion and street style especially because of his silver-painted Factory and distinctive look. Many young fashion designers in New York at the time credited their production of plastic, paper and particularly silver clothing to Warhol's influence. See Joel Lobenthal, *Radical Rags* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1990) 86. From February 21 to May 3, 1998, the Art Gallery of Ontario, in Toronto, Ont., Canada has an exhibition of Warhol's work which links it to fashion. In November 1966

established between the members of the vitriolic New York group (and others that followed suit) and the West Coast blues-based psychedelic bands.⁴⁶ Warhol benefited from having his name attached to the Velvet Underground, which was a controversial band. The Velvets sang about heroin addiction and provoked the ire of some concert-goers and reviewers across the country with their loud and dischordant performances.⁴⁷ As the above report suggests, Warhol was also quite obviously associated in people's minds with outrageous behaviour of a sort that made things "happen." He involved himself in as many aspects of popular media culture as he could. In this way he was presenting himself as an embodiment of popular culture, as a living example of pure Pop. As such, his contribution of six Self-Portraits to the Expo exhibit can be seen as a literal representation of Andy Warhol, Pop artist, but also represent the concept of Warhol as an element of popular culture, indistinguishable from a space

Warhol and the EPI participated in a "Carnaby Street Fun Festival" in Detroit, part of which included a "mod wedding" where Warhol gave away the bride. Warhol, *POPism* 191.

⁴⁶ See Bockris and Malanga 47, and Warhol, *POPism* 190.

⁴⁷ See Bockris and Malanga, *Up-Tight The Velvet Underground Story* for recollections by various members of the Exploding Plastic Inevitable and the VU detailing audience reactions. See discussions of the Chicago audience in June, 1966 (pages 49-51) and the Provincetown, Mass. audience in Sept. 1966, (53-54) both of which seemed to be unreceptive to the performances.

capsule or a Coke bottle.

A story told by the artist in *POPism* demonstrates how well Warhol's strategy was working. In October 1965, Warhol, accompanied by Edie Sedgwick and others from his entourage, went to the opening of his first one-man museum show.⁴⁸ When the entourage arrived, they were surrounded by a screaming, frenzied mob. The two rooms holding the show were so packed with young people (apparently art students and the like) that the art had to be taken off the walls. Warhol and Sedgwick took refuge on an iron staircase; however, access to the upper floor had been sealed off sometime before that and the two were trapped. From the safety of this perch, "Andy 'n' Edie" signed autographs. Two hours later, the fire department broke through the ceiling and the group escaped to waiting police cars. Warhol summed up the experience: "We weren't just at the art exhibit--we were the art exhibit, we were the art incarnate and the sixties were really about people, not about what they did..."⁴⁹

This statement is important because it illustrates that Warhol thought of himself as being more important than his

⁴⁸ This show took place at the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. Bourdon, *Warhol* 213.

⁴⁹ Warhol, *POPism* 130-132.

art. By extension, one could say that Warhol wanted people to know him but was indifferent as to whether those same people knew what he did for a living. Warhol's search for fame without a cause may be his attempt to simulate or mimic the fame of Hollywood stars, who, as was noted previously, he understood as being famous for being beautiful. As illustrated by this event, it seems that Warhol was successful.

Now a nationally famous celebrity, Warhol could submit his Self-Portraits to Expo with an enhanced sense of self-importance, confident that his face would be recognized. At Expo, Warhol had the opportunity to present himself as one of the celebrities that he felt Americans "would rather see." Warhol was already famous in the art world for painting Marilyn Monroe and other movie stars. By submitting a series of self-portraits to Expo, Warhol could play up his own celebrity status by treating his own image like those of the stars he depicted in earlier paintings. Formally, Warhol's picture shares similarities with his Marilyn Monroe (Three Times) and other movie star images. (Fig.7) Unlike his earlier 1964 Self-Portrait, Warhol frames his head close to the edges of the canvas, isolating his face. There is no clue that the image is of an artist, let alone that it is a self-portrait. He used bright, flat colour but did not take pains to paint a flesh tone. He did not single out eyes and lips as he did

with his portrait images of stars. Arbitrary colour reduces the image to near abstraction. Warhol de-emphasized the details of his own face in these paintings,⁵⁰ de-personalizing the image. Warhol focussed on his public (surface) image. The lack of depth suggests his emphatically shallow persona, as the artist who Harold Rosenberg called a "nobody, though a nobody with a resounding signature."⁵¹ Warhol could alternately be seen as "a person being one, very intense thing."⁵² Warhol concentrated his energy on his shallow image and successfully played this role to such an extreme that he appeared to be nothing else. Warhol's understanding of celebrity in general focussed on surfaces, for it was beauty that he recognized as the *raison d'être* of Hollywood stars. Warhol therefore focussed on his own surface as the reality of his paintings and his being. It was in May of 1967 that Gretchen Berg published her interview with Warhol in which he remarked, famously, "If you want to know

⁵⁰ Suzanne F Hilberry, "Two Andy Warhol Self-Portraits," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 50.4(1971): 63.

⁵¹ Harold Rosenberg, "Art's Other Self," *New Yorker* 47(June 12, 1971): 103.

⁵² Susan Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp,'" *Against Interpretation* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1966) 286. Sontag was offering a general explanation into the "camp character" or "camp person," however, this phrase suits Warhol, too.

all about Andy Warhol, just look at the surface..."⁵³

Inside the U.S. Pavilion hung huge close-up shots of very famous Hollywood stars such as Marlene Dietrich. It is possible that Warhol may have known that the film stills would be in the exhibit, and had this in mind when he created large close-ups of himself to hang in the same building.⁵⁴ Mary Josephson notes that "Warhol's mature physiognomy is directly appropriated from the female stars of the forties-- Dietrich, Crawford, Hayworth. There is the slightly open

⁵³ Gretchen Berg, "Nothing to Lose: Interview with Andy Warhol," *Cahiers du Cinema in English* 10(May 1967): 40.

⁵⁴ See Fulford 65, for a photograph of this part of the exhibit. He comments "It was the movies, after all, that sold the American Dream to the world." (65) Although there is no written proof that Warhol knew these stills would hang in the Pavilion, it seems reasonable to think that he may have been furnished with some kind of description of the proposed exhibits when asked to submit his art for the display.

The United States confirmed their participation in Expo 67 on July 30, 1964, and signed a contract to that end on Oct. 29, 1965. *General Report on the 1967 World Exhibition*, vol.1 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1969) 296. During the period when Expo committees were recruiting countries for exhibits, a collection of documents called the "Exhibitors' Portfolio" was assembled which contained general information about the Expo, and possibly contained each country's proposal plans. I assume this because after a brief introduction of the Department of Exhibitors in the *General Report*, a complete list of the countries involved and their proposals appear on the following pages. *General Report* 249-434.

The American proposal mentions the "American Motion Picture Theatre" exhibit, and briefly outlines its contents, including "photo enlargements." I believe that Warhol would have been informed of the context in which his art would be displayed. Some mention may have been made especially since he had created larger-than-life stills of movie stars in his Pop paintings.

mouth, the lidded gaze, the blankness that encourages projection in a triumphant form of servitude."⁵⁵ Warhol, had early in his life asked a friend to photograph him posing with his hands on either side of his face, like the famous photograph of Greta Garbo by Edward Steichen (1929).⁵⁶ Any similarities between these famous women and Warhol's latest Self-Portrait would have definitely been calculated by the artist. In addition, as discussed earlier, Warhol styled himself as a Marlon Brando of the art-world: his Rebel image based in most part on a decade old cinematic ideal of teenage cool. Warhol's leather and black jeans intimated something dangerous.⁵⁷ Presenting himself in this garb would also emphasize this connection with Hollywood celebrity in the minds of those already familiar with Warhol's face. A visitor might also recognize the similarity in size and format

⁵⁵ Mary Josephson, "Warhol: The Medium as Cultural Artifact," *Art in America* 59(May-June 1971): 42.

⁵⁶ Smith, *Conversations* 140. Garbo's importance as a "Camp" celebrity because of her undisguised personality (that is, she plays herself) on-screen is mentioned in Susan Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp,'" *Against Interpretation* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1966) 286.

⁵⁷ Stephen Koch makes note of the sadomasochistic allusions in Warhol's leather outfits. S. Koch, "The Once-Whirling Other World of Andy Warhol," *Saturday Review World* 1A, Sept 25, 1973, 21.

For more detailed descriptions of sixties fashion culture see Joel Lobenthal, *Radical Rags: Fashions of the Sixties* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1990) and Jane and M. Stern, *Sixties People* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990).

between Warhol's self-portraits and the cinematic close-ups and equate the two. Someone who did not recognize Warhol's face might also suspect that these paintings were of a famous celebrity. If the viewers' curiosities were so piqued, they might have made an effort to find out who was depicted in the paintings. Consequently, Warhol's name and face could conceivably reach an astronomical number of people from all over the world. The fact alone that his portraits hung at the international fair would imply his importance. Someone could have potentially gone home thinking that Warhol was a Hollywood-style celebrity (and maybe even an artist).

The paintings were hung vertically on a long white banner. The resulting effect suggested a roll of processed movie film in which the frames in one small length of the film do not show significant change in an actor's motion. The effect of seriality found in Warhol's art work thus finds parallels in actual film footage.⁵⁸ A vertical strip of Warhol self-portraits recalls both his earlier artwork and a Hollywood film. In turn, this makes reference to Warhol's own interest in film as a producer. By 1967, Warhol was very well-known for his experimental films. Movies such as Empire (1964), Blow-Job (1964) and Sleep (1963) spurred a great deal

⁵⁸ Warhol notes this himself in Gerard Malanga, "An Conversation with Andy Warhol," *The Print Collector's Newsletter* 1.6(Jan-Feb 1971): 126.

of critical response. Empire is an eight hour movie of the Empire State building from one fixed point of view. Motion, sound and plot are distinctly missing from this film. It can be considered a filmed portrait. Warhol would go on to do Screen Tests, a series of short, three-minute close-ups of various persons who sit perfectly still, all action limited to the bat of an eyelash. Any segment of the frames of one of these films would appear very similar to Warhol's Self-Portraits at Expo 67.

Calvin Tomkins has written: "People tend to think of Warhol as a sort of ghostly presence, a pale and languid voyeur who stands in the shadows."⁵⁹ It is probable that the Expo Self-Portrait promoted this idea. Warhol's stance with his fingers covering his mouth has been interpreted to indicate the artist's silence, ironic detachment and self-containment.⁶⁰ It is a loaded gesture that may be directly related to his public persona and his film-making in particular. The ambiguity of this gesture allows a variety of

⁵⁹ Tomkins 114. In Bourdon, *Warhol* 140, David Bourdon discusses how a friend of Warhol in the sixties who was asked to accompany the artist to an art opening or other event, would "find himself all but completely ignored by Warhol, who stood mute and aloof amid a swirl of people, his eyes scrutinizing every action and detail...[Warhol would later call the friend to discuss the party, leaving] his listener feeling like they had attended two different events."

⁶⁰ Hilberry 63.

interpretations. One can interpret this image of Warhol as voyeuristic,⁶¹ as menacing or concentrating,⁶² fearful or critical, calculating or brainless. All of those concepts are derived from previous experience with Warhol's surface persona which he tightly controlled.

The concept of voyeurism, however, implies that the watcher's presence not be known to those he watches. In Warhol's films, it is clear that the actors were well aware of who stood behind that camera (or who did not stand behind the camera, as Warhol was known to start the camera rolling and walk away from the action).⁶³ While the film rolled, actors often talked to people off-camera, and those off-camera sometimes directed the actors. For example, in *Beauty #2*, a man off-camera calls out directions, reads from a book, and apparently "does his best to make Sedgwick [the actress

⁶¹ See Stephen Koch, *Stargazer: Andy Warhol's World and His Films* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973) for an extensive discussion of Warhol as voyeur.

⁶² Carla Gottlieb, "Self-Portraiture in Postmodern Art." *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch XII* (1981): 274.

⁶³ Henry Geldzahler tells of about sitting before the camera while Warhol talked on the phone and did silkscreens in another corner of the Factory in 1964. Patrick Smith, *Warhol: Conversations About the Artist* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1988) 183.

involved] self-conscious" by taunting her.⁶⁴ In the film Blow Job, the viewer observes the face of a man who receives fellatio from an unknown person or persons. It is not difficult to see how these movies may be construed as voyeuristic.

However, Warhol himself is not the voyeur, but the voyeur's metaphorical binoculars. He facilitates the viewer's voyeurism by producing something to look at. According to Eric Gibson, "Time after time he turns the simple act of looking against the spectator, forcing upon him the roles of voyeur and dunce."⁶⁵ The actors are aware of the others in the room while they film their movie, but do not acknowledge the presence of the viewer, or the viewer's responses. It is this confrontation that occurs with the Self-Portrait series. The gesture refers to a certain watchfulness for which Warhol was known. The gaze seems to look directly at the viewer. The viewer could then contemplate the idea that "the image is Andy Warhol."⁶⁶ The audience members who were already aware of

⁶⁴ J. Hoberman, "Bon Voyeur: Andy Warhol's Silver Screen," *The Village Voice* May 17, 1988: 63.

⁶⁵ Eric Gibson, "Looking at Warhol," *The New Criterion* 7(May 1989): 60.

⁶⁶ Paul Bergin, "Andy Warhol: the Artist as Machine," *Art Journal* 25(Summer 1967): 359. Bergin wrote this at the same time in which the late Marshall McLuhan, Professor and Director of the Centre for Culture and Technology at the

Warhol's personality would to a certain degree conflate the image with the knowledge that the image is representative of a living person. It is the same with any image of a celebrity. The viewer carries certain ideas about who that person is and projects onto an image those same characteristics.

In Warhol's Expo Self-Portrait, the flat, unnatural colour schemes alternately draw attention to the painting's physical existence as a flat canvas with colour on it, and the face that looks out from it. A tension is born between the abstraction of the paintings and the awareness of the living, breathing person who was Andy Warhol. This tension acts to reinforce the understanding of Warhol's person as a shallow surface image. These Self-Portraits induce a kind of cinematic suspension of disbelief. The image of Warhol becomes Warhol himself purely on the strength of his persona. A person might then have said of it: "There is Andy Warhol," instead of "There is a picture of Andy Warhol." They are a

University of Toronto, was publishing his theories on the effects of mass media on culture in such books as *The Medium is the Massage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1967). McLuhan's catch-phrase, "the medium is the message," sums up his approach. He claimed: "Societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication." McLuhan, *The Medium is the Massage*, np. The medium used to convey information (such as television) is not a neutral device, but rather, it carries meanings and directs society by its very presence more permanently than does the information it is used to convey.

testimony to how Warhol succeeded in identifying himself with his own image and in making that image recognized by the masses. The self-portraits at the Expo show were intended to make the viewer conflate the image and the person. At Expo, Warhol presented himself as the overseer of the exhibit. He was especially suited to this because of his close ties with popular American culture as its patron saint. Ivan Karp called him "Saint Andrew,"⁶⁷ and Paul Taylor referred to him as the "King (or Pope) of Pop."⁶⁸ Warhol gave himself certain amount of responsibility for the existence of the Montréal pavilion's contents by way of his status as a Pop icon, and therefore sent a stand-in for himself in the form of his Self-Portraits to oversee the event.⁶⁹ Naturally Warhol would

⁶⁷ Ivan Karp quoted in "Saint Andrew," *Newsweek* 64B(Dec 7, 1964): 104.

⁶⁸ Paul Taylor, "Andy Warhol: The Last Interview," *Flash Art* 133(April 1987): 40.

⁶⁹ In a feat attesting to the solidity of Warhol's image by 1967, Warhol took this idea to an extreme in the autumn of that same year, when he embarked on a lecture tour of U.S. colleges. For reasons disputed in the literature, Warhol sent an actor named Allen Midgette in his place. Midgette sprayed his hair silver and gave non-committal answers to student questions. It took four months before someone realized that the man was an imposter. Warhol later wrote: "Who wants the truth? That's what show business is for--to prove that it's not what you are that counts, it's what they *think* you are." Warhol, *POPism* 247-248. See also Bourdon, *Warhol* 266-269.

In addition, rumours continued to circulate that Warhol sent impersonators to parties for him, Stuart Morgan, "Andy & andY, The Warhol Twins: A Theme and Variations," *Parkett* 12(1987): 39.

not miss the biggest continuous party of the year.

Another reason why Warhol may have felt self-important in the context of Expo, why he may have felt like an 'insider,' was the nostalgic quality of the exhibitions. For example, one exhibit dedicated to 'the American Spirit,'⁷⁰ contained election memorabilia, like a small rough wooden bust of Abe Lincoln from 1864, and Chinese paper lanterns with slogans like "Union Forever," printed on them.⁷¹ To represent past political endeavours, the exhibit could have focussed on American political victories and important changes made internationally and at home. Instead the emphasis was on the life of ordinary Americans, their experience of politics through elections and campaigns.⁷² Such nostalgia was related to 'camp,' identified by Susan Sontag in 1966 as an aesthetic of popular culture: "Camp is the consistently aesthetic experience of the world. It incarnates a victory of style over content, aesthetics over

⁷⁰ *Expo 67 Information Manual* S134 p2.

⁷¹ See Fulford 66-67.

⁷² Warhol himself was a great collector of Americana and folk art long before it became popular. His own immense collection included old carousel horses and a cigar store Indian, native arts and furniture. See Michael Lobel, "Warhol's Closet," *Art Journal* 55.4 (Winter 1996): 42-50; and Bourdon, *Warhol* 365.

morality, of irony over tragedy."⁷³ Warhol's art, and Pop art in general, had been subjected to the same sort of critique. For an entire exhibit to encapsulate popular culture as Warhol understood it felt like a victory for the artist. He wrote of his experience of the Expo display: "I remember thinking...that there weren't two separate societies in the United States anymore--one official and heavy and 'meaningful' and the other frivolous and Pop....Pop America was America, completely."⁷⁴ Sontag wrote, "the whole point of Camp is to dethrone the serious....One can be serious about the frivolous, frivolous about the serious."⁷⁵ The exhibits at the American Pavilion were serious about their frivolities. Warhol the insider, co-creator of the popular culture that became America, was at the forefront of the acceptance of this aspect of American identity.

⁷³ Susan Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp,'" *Against Interpretation* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1966) 287. See also Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals & Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1989) for his essay "Uses of Camp."

Sontag's essay has since been criticized and reassessed. The concept of 'camp' has recently been articulated as a homosexual strategy, or process, of a political nature. According to Moe Meyer, "...Camp has for its purpose the production of queer social visibility...." Moe Meyer, editor, *The Politics and Poetics of Camp* (New York: Routledge, 1994) 5.

⁷⁴ Warhol, *POPism* 220.

⁷⁵ Sontag 288.

Warhol was closely associated with popular culture, which Sontag aligned with "camp," which was in turn equated with homosexuality in the 1960s. Referring to this "camp" approach, one (unnamed) embarrassed American critic is said to have considered the Expo show a " 'blatant victory of the homosexual.' "76 Sontag wrote:

...homosexuals, by and large, constitute the vanguard--and the most articulate audience--of Camp....Homosexuals have pinned their integration into society on promoting the aesthetic sense. Camp...neutralizes moral indignation, [and] sponsors playfulness.⁷⁷

Warhol, by concerning himself directly with popular culture and "camp," was able to advertise his own homosexuality even in his paintings of Coke bottles and soup cans. His Self-Portraits far more closely resemble his Pop paintings in form than did his 1964 portraits, thereby emphasizing the artist's desire to be seen as a Pop object. Warhol's Pop paintings and Self-portraits share formal qualities that make them strikingly similar. The most important formal similarity is

⁷⁶ Fulford 59.

⁷⁷ Sontag 290. It seems that Sontag was one of the first people to write about "camp." She is credited with identifying the "camp trace," albeit indirectly, which is recognized as a non-queer appropriation of queer Camp gestures. Meyer 5.

Sontag's work seems to have influenced the understanding of certain elements of popular culture in the nineteen sixties. I question whether the unhappy American at Expo 67 would have called the U.S. pavilion a "triumph of the homosexual" if Sontag had not drawn specific attention to the elements of "camp" a year earlier.

Warhol's serial treatment of both. The serial repetition of his own face puts it on par with a Campbell's Soup Can, a consumable object equally frivolous (and campy) as a subject for his fine artist's canvas as any he had chosen to do before. More directly, Warhol's experimental movies, like Sleep and Blow Job (called by J. Hoberman, "the most conceptual work of porn ever made"⁷⁸), placed the male viewer in a voyeuristic homoerotic position. These films were themselves later considered to have made "a central contribution to homosexual aesthetics."⁷⁹ Public perception would cast Warhol himself in the role of a voyeur of the male body, although Warhol always gave the impression of asexuality, especially during the later sixties. For heightened contrast, he surrounded himself at the Factory with "deviant types of the most flamboyant sort,"⁸⁰ including drag queens and very open homosexuals. The watchful gaze of his 1967 Self-Portraits again refer back to the voyeurism of his movies, but this time an allusion to homoeroticism shifts the reception of the image slightly. By putting his Self-Portraits in Expo 67, Warhol, the Pope of Pop, also took the

⁷⁸ J. Hoberman 63.

⁷⁹ David Ehrenstein, "The Filmmaker as Homosexual Hipster: Andy Warhol Contextualized," *Arts Magazine* 63(Summer 1989): 61.

⁸⁰ Tomkins 114.

position of reigning queen of the American Pavilion.

The invitation to submit paintings to Expo 67 came at the perfect time for Warhol. He had succeeded in becoming famous throughout the United States; now he was given the opportunity to promote not only his work but himself at an international venue. In this context, the Self-Portraits that Warhol painted for the show take on a number of complex layers of meaning directly related to his association with popular culture as an 'insider' and his unending quest for fame.⁸¹ His Self-Portraits watched over the events of the year-long fair, a constant reminder that the nostalgic, campy, Pop quality of the exhibits were due in part to this particular artist's efforts at self-promotion.

⁸¹ According to Ivan Karp, he once asked Warhol what more could he possibly have wanted, being surrounded by beautiful, charming people, and the artist apparently answered "I want more fame," in Smith, Conversations 220. There is no approximate date given for the conversation, but, judging from the context of Karp's other comments, I believe that this would have taken place at least in the seventies or even later.

Chapter Three:

What Evil Lurks in the Hearts of Men...

In 1981, Warhol produced a series of "portraits" which he entitled Myths. They depict American cultural icons produced by popular media systems like Hollywood and comic books. The Myths included images of Superman, Mickey Mouse, Santa Claus, Howdy Doody, Uncle Sam, Dracula, the Wicked Witch, Mammy, The Star (Hollywood-style) and The Shadow. For all but three of the images (Superman, Mickey and Howdy Doody) Warhol had people dress up in costumes for him to photograph. For "The Star," Warhol returned to using stock photographs with a close-cropped image of Greta Garbo as Mata Hari.¹ The pulp fiction hero, "The Shadow," was played by Warhol himself. This image is the focus of this chapter.²

(Fig.10)

In the Myths series, Warhol emphasized his choice to create an image of The Shadow with his own features. He could have made a silkscreen with only the cast shadow on it, but chose to play the character himself. This indicates that

¹ David Bourdon, *Warhol* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989) 386. See also F. Feldman and J. Schellmann, *Andy Warhol: Prints: A Catalogue Raisonné* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1989).

² Ian M. Thom, *Andy Warhol: Images* (Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1995) 103.

the Shadow character had special significance for him, and that he had his own agenda with this particular self-portrait. To the right hand side of the square canvas, crowded close to the edge, is a 3/4 view of Warhol, cropped at his eye. He stares straight out at the viewer. His face is side-lit by a raking, harsh light, leaving one half in dark shadow. In comparison to Warhol's other self-portraits, this one seems very direct in its representation of Warhol as a person. Unlike other self-portraits, Warhol has not doctored the image to a noticeable extent. He has allowed the light to bleach out detail from his face, but we can still make out the rough complexion around the man's chin and the furrow in his brow. These things were removed in the high-contrast photo used in earlier self-portraits such as the 1965-67 one. Warhol invites the viewer to glimpse something of the man behind the shadow.

The rest of the canvas is taken up by the profile shadow that the strong light casts on the wall beside his head. The artist maintained the flat colour backgrounds that he always used in his self-portraits. The space with Warhol's face is under-painted in a flat dark colour, maroon in this instance. The shadow-half is grey, with a lighter aura painted around the line of the profile. Diamond dust covers the space around

the shadow.³ This, along with the painted aura, balances attention between the two halves of the canvas. The shadow takes up more space on the canvas than Warhol's face, and is accentuated by diamond dust. The suggestion is that Warhol's cast shadow or image is more important than his private self. However, Warhol's gaze captures the viewer's attention and reinforces his presence.

In formal terms, Warhol treated The Shadow very differently than he did the other images in the Myths series. In the others, Warhol did under-painting in many colours to emphasize the bright falsity of these icons from popular culture. He also produced screens of hand-drawn outlines to layer on top of the images; this emphasizes their two-dimensionality as paintings as well as their subject-matter: empty stereotypes. Emphasis is placed on the surface trappings (especially of costume) that characterize each icon. For example, In Myths--Mammy, (Fig.11) Warhol has screened the photo-image in black on black. Only the woman's lips, earrings and kerchief stand out from the background. He has screened hand-drawn lines in dark colours to delineate vaguely her eyes and brows, but used bright primary colours to emphasize her kerchief and lips. The woman who posed for the photo disappears and only her costume remains. The Myths

³ Ian Thom, *Andy Warhol: Images* (Vancouver: Douglas and MacIntyre, 1995) 47.

are closely related to Warhol's Pop movie-star portraits. They carry on the style he established in the 1960s, which was characterized by a heavy underpainting of bright colour over which the photo-image was printed, creating a mask-like effect. His distinctive formal treatment of The Shadow, therefore, was orchestrated to contrast to the other stylized, slick images in the series.

This new self-portrait of Warhol as "The Shadow" can be read in a number of ways. On one hand, Warhol seemed to fulfil the audience's understanding of himself as the silent, watchful voyeur by encouraging association with The Shadow character. On the other, his choice of himself as the model for The Shadow is a personal statement by Warhol. The character suggests his constructed personality, the shadowy, elusive shell that constituted his public persona. Simultaneously, however, it contains a new dimension, a suggestion of the person behind the image; an acknowledgement of his own direct role in creating and directing public reception of this image. Previously, Warhol left interpretations of his persona to others, claiming no responsibility for how he was perceived, although he controlled the image through which the persona was constructed. The self-portrait as The Shadow can be seen as a statement about how Warhol saw himself operating within the public sphere: the shadow, or persona dominates, but he is

always right behind it.

In the summer of 1968, Andy Warhol's controversial life almost ended with an assassination attempt by Valerie Solanas, a woman loosely associated with Warhol's Factory. This turn of events caused dramatic changes in Warhol's life. He no longer felt safe in the Factory environment that had for so many years kept him in the public eye. He closed his doors to the drug addicts and downtown hangers-on who had populated the Factory in the early period. A change in the Factory's location just prior to the shooting aided in creating a new, more business-oriented atmosphere.⁴ Warhol's stance towards the public became even more aloof. He wrote about his feelings after the shooting:

Everyone around the Factory was more protective of me too--they could see that I still had a lot of fear, so they turned anybody away who was acting at all peculiar. I found myself spending a lot of time in the little office on the side, hiding in there with the door closed....I was terrified that [someone] would take out a gun and shoot me....⁵

Warhol no longer actively created a "scene." Instead he attended public events, and sat in a corner to watch whatever

⁴ Interview with Billy Name in John O'Connor and Benjamin Liu, *Unseen Warhol* (New York: Rizzoli International, 1996) 43.

⁵ Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol Sixties* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980) 285.

occurred. Daniela Morera, a later friend of Warhol's, describes seeing him at Max's Kansas City, a New York club, around 1970: "He didn't talk, he didn't drink, he didn't do anything. He didn't even move from the corner."⁶ Warhol was at this point a shadow of his former self.

This latest self-portrait addresses the public and critical understanding of Andy Warhol's persona. Previously, Warhol wanted his public character to overshadow his own identity. He achieved this and soon his penchant for saying nothing and doing nothing, even in the most exciting of circumstances, became all that people saw. The self-portrait as *The Shadow* addresses Warhol's image as a passive non-participant.

The *Shadow* character itself was not really much of an American Myth in comparison to the other icons depicted in the series. It was, however, an early example of a mass-marketed fictional being, with its own movies⁷, comic books⁸,

⁶ Interview with Daniela Morera in O'Connor and Liu 125.

⁷ See A. Tollin, "The Shadow on the Silver Screen," W. B. Gibson, *The Shadow Scrapbook* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979) 120-122.

⁸ W. B. Gibson, "The Shadow Comics," *The Shadow Scrapbook* 128.

novels ⁹, radio show ¹⁰, fan club and related paraphernalia.¹¹ The character became an icon of American popular culture. This mass marketing of Shadow products and promotion of the Shadow character was both a product of its popularity and a fuel for it. Warhol grew up with this character. The Shadow was apparently his favourite radio show as a youth.¹² As a fan who listened to the radio shows, probably saw the movie serial and read the comic books, Warhol would have been very familiar with The Shadow. He would know the intricacies of the character itself as it was developed in the various media, as well as the visual appearance of The Shadow through description and illustration. Warhol had always shown an attraction to mass-production and mass consumption. A certain kind of fame was present in the concept of The Shadow in addition to the character itself. Because The Shadow had no face, anyone could identify with him. Anyone could have been the Shadow, working mysteriously under cover of the darkness.

⁹ Frank Eisgruber Jr., *Gangland's Doom: The Shadow of the Pulp* (Mercer Island, Washington: Starmont House, 1985) 59-63. This lists all titles published with dates.

¹⁰ Anthony Tollin, "The Invisible Shadow," W.B. Gibson, *The Shadow Scrapbook* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979) 80.

¹¹ A. Tollin, "Rings and Things for The Shadow Collectors," W.B. Gibson, *Shadow Scrapbook* 158.

¹² Victor Bockris, *The Life and Death of Andy Warhol* (New York: Bantam Books, 1989) 33.

It was not a stereotype per se, but an identity that the public consumed for almost a generation.

Warhol's public persona (which he 'sold' and people 'bought') became stereotyped in his own lifetime. The white wig and monosyllabic conversation were enough to confound audiences for many months in 1967 when Warhol paid a man to impersonate him on a lecture tour.¹³ The audiences were tricked by the trappings of Warhol's image, which they mistook for the man himself. In the 1981 work, we are shown that Warhol's shadow was larger than he was. His celebrity, his Myth, was larger than his person. For Warhol, his persona acted like a shadow, "shielding him at the same time that it present[ed] him."¹⁴ "The Shadow" was a marketed character with no living reality, a shadow with no object to cast it. In this self-portrait, it is made clear to viewers that all we know of the real man who was Warhol are the trappings that compose his Myth. Until now, we could not see the being who cast the shadow, even though he was there. In this new self-portrait, we are also shown the man behind the persona. Indeed, he meets the viewer with a direct stare, but it is

¹³ David Bourdon, *Warhol* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989) 266-269.

¹⁴ J. Flatley, "Warhol Gives Good Face," *Pop Out-Queer Warhol*, eds. Doyle, Jennifer, J. Flatley and Jose Esteban Munoz (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996) 113.

one of confidence and intensity, not fear. Warhol had not engaged the viewer so directly before in a self-portrait. This suggested that Warhol had found new control over his image. He claimed it as his own creation by indicating that the shadowy surface had someone behind it.

The character of The Shadow was a man who used the darkness to protect his identity while he accumulated and dispensed information necessary to bring about a certain end. The Shadow was not just a watcher; he took action. Warhol, too, took action for himself from his position in the shadows. In the 1970s, he began to execute commissioned portraits of wealthy clients. These commissions brought him a great deal of money, and more important, brought him into contact with wealthy, often famous people. In pursuit of portrait commissions, Warhol frequented two clubs, Max's Kansas City and later Studio 54.¹⁵ He considered visits to these clubs as work. Part of his job was to put on what he called his "Andy suit,"¹⁶ and go out for the evening to see and be seen in the right places. He referred to his

¹⁵ Christopher Makos, *Warhol* (New York: New American Library, 1988) 53.

¹⁶ Makos 50.

preparations for a night out as "gluing."¹⁷ In his *Philosophy* book, the first chapter is called "How Andy Puts His Warhol On." It is a conversation between Warhol and an unnamed person. The person complained to him: "You spend so much time at home fiddling around with the colour of your hair...When you stay home from the Factory I think it's because your wig is out being dry-cleaned or dyed."¹⁸ Probably Warhol's term "gluing" refers to his own primping rituals.¹⁹

By the 1980s, his clothing and look became quite conservative. According to Paul Gardner in 1980, Warhol

prefer[red] a personalized version of the Brooks Brothers Look. Hair streaked with grey, granddaddy spectacles firmly in place, he [was]...usually outfitted in jeans, a tweed jacket, striped shirt and tie....he seemed to be making conservatism chic.²⁰

He established a new entourage of friends who included Bianca Jagger and the fashion designer Halston. He associated with

¹⁷ Andy Warhol, *The Andy Warhol Diaries*, ed. Pat Hackett (New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1989) xvi.

¹⁸ Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975) 16

¹⁹ Warhol, it seems, put himself together for public display in much the same way that he painted and layered silk-screened images of stars and cultural objects for display side by side in an exhibition.

²⁰ Paul Gardner, "Gee, What's Happened to Andy Warhol?" *Artnews* 79.9(Nov. 1980): 73.

Jerry Hall and Mick Jagger, Liza Minelli, Lee Radziwill and her sister Jackie Kennedy Onassis, and assorted offspring of families with names like Rockefeller.²¹ Warhol was now moving in New York's high society and it was for this that he soon came to be known. In taking on the Shadow's persona, Warhol alluded to his active role in creating a public image for himself through hard work, even though it may have seemed that he hardly worked at all. Warhol also implied that playing a character is work, and by extension, that he worked constantly to fulfil this role.

The direct gaze that characterizes the self-portrait is also an indication of Warhol's new agenda for making fine art. Warhol was interested in rekindling critical interest in his fine art work in the 1980s. By 1980, Warhol recognized that some art critics considered him *passé* and that his venture into private portrait commissions had put him effectively out of the realm of the avant-garde.²² He looked around and saw many rising young artists producing work at a

²¹ For "an insider's portrait" of Warhol's activities during the 1970s and 1980s, see Bob Colacello, *Andy Warhol: Holy Terror* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990). Colacello's book is filled with gossipy stories involving most of these people. He conveys a sense of the hectic pace that Warhol lived and worked at during these years.

²² For a discussion of the critical dismissal of Warhol as a 'servant of the rich,' see Peter Schjeldahl, "Warhol & Class Content," *Art in America* 68.5(May 1980): 112-119.

rate almost like his own in the sixties, and he commented in his Diary in November 1980: "I got so nervous thinking about all these new kids painting away and me just going to parties, I figured I'd better get cracking."²³ Within the month, he was photographing Howdy Doody for the Myths series.²⁴ At this time Warhol began in earnest to re-establish connections with the art world. He made acquaintance and friends with rising new artists like Julian Schnabel, Keith Haring, Francesco Clemente and Jean Michel Basquiat, among others. He began soon after to paint in collaboration with Basquiat and with Clemente.²⁵ The Shadow self-portrait may have served to indicate to contemporary critics that behind the public image, behind the Andy Warhol who went to parties, was still Andy Warhol the artist. In 1981, when he was working on the Myths series, Warhol seems to have felt eager to step out from the shadow of his own 'party-going' self-image and once again stare the art world in the eye.

²³ Diary entry from November 16, 1980, in Andy Warhol, *The Andy Warhol Diaries*, ed. Pat Hackett (New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1989) 343.

²⁴ Diary entry December 9, 1980, in Warhol, *Diaries* 347.

²⁵ See for example, Victor Bockris, *Warhol*; Bourdon, *Warhol*; Liu and O'Connor, *Unseen Warhol*; Warhol, *The Andy Warhol Diaries*; and Trevor Fairbrother, "Double Feature," *Art in America* (Sept 1996): 76-83, for discussions of Warhol's collaborations and friendships with these young artists.

Warhol seemed to have been personally concerned with his self-portrait in the Myths series. In an interview from 1981 he remarked:

[Interviewer]: " 'Myths' really captures the American spirit from a lot of different angles.

AW: The only one I didn't understand was *The Shadow*, and that was me, so...²⁶

This is a seemingly vague, purely Warholian reply to a very astute suggestion. Another artist might have jumped on this statement and discussed how his chosen icons encapsulate the American spirit. Warhol once mused that he thought of himself as one of the most American of Americans,²⁷ so we might expect that he would comment on this topic, however briefly. Even a Warholian "Yes" would have been a more predictable (by this time, Warhol was rather predictable). Instead, he pointed out to the interviewer that one picture was a self-portrait. On one hand, Warhol could have been showing his "American spirit" by his participation in the series. He himself was a modern American myth. However, Warhol claimed not to understand his presence there. His answer seems almost anxious in its attempt to draw specific attention to this

²⁶ B. Blinderman, "Modern 'Myths': An Interview with Andy Warhol," *Arts Magazine* 56, no.2 (Oct 1981): 144.

²⁷ See both Andy Warhol, *America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985) and Carter Ratcliff, "Starlust: Andy's Photos," *Art in America* 68.5 (May 1980): 120.

Warhol wrote: "Buying is more American than thinking and I'm as American as they come." In *Philosophy* 229.

image. Warhol was not denying its meaning so much as he was asking the viewer to look for its meaning.

In this way, Warhol indicated that he had a reason for putting himself in the series, and he wanted someone to dwell on the meaning of that particular painting. This is apparently in contradiction to his famous sixties' statement:

If you want to know all about Andy Warhol,
just look as the surface: of my paintings
and films and me, and there I am.
There's nothing behind it.²⁸

Warhol, by specifically pointing out his self-portrait as *The Shadow*, implied that there was something behind the surface of this particular image. The first way to view it, therefore, is to consider Warhol in relationship to *The Shadow*.

The *Shadow* as a character has been described and depicted in a number of ways. The *Shadow* was described in *Detective Story Magazine*, as "...a slender man, with blonde hair, tapering fingers, [and] hawklike features."²⁹ Those hawk-like features were often seen in the cover illustrations

²⁸ Gretchen Berg, "Nothing to Lose: Interview with Andy Warhol," *Cahiers du Cinema in English* 10(May 1967): 40.

²⁹ The description of *The Shadow* was gradually released to readers as a series of clues in the magazine issues from February 7 to April 11, 1931. R. Weinberg, "Preface," in Eisgruber 3.

of the pulp novels. (Figs.12 & 13) They usually depict The Shadow lit from the side by a raking light that casts part of his face in shadow. His face is obscured by a scarf, and a wide-brimmed hat covers his forehead down to his eyebrows. The man's aquiline nose is always prominent, large and angular. In addition, The Shadow has small, piercing eyes that often stare sternly out at the viewer.³⁰ In Warhol's self-portrait as "The Shadow," the shadow cast on the wall beside him has a long, straight nose (unlike Warhol's own bulbous one) that very closely resembles the cover illustrations. As previously discussed, Warhol is known to have had a long-standing dislike of his own face and was obsessed with his nose in particular. The emphasis in illustrations on The Shadow's nose may have prompted Warhol to further identify with the character. The visual emphasis on his nose in the self-portrait as "The Shadow" is reminiscent of Warhol's early self-portrait painting The Broad Gave Me My Face, But I Can Pick My Own Nose. This suggests that the artist still had an uneasy relationship with his own body, and the idea of being able to hide in the shadows in order to hide his appearance may have appealed to Warhol.

However, Warhol engaged the viewer with a direct gaze.

³⁰ See Eisgruber, *Gangland's Doom* and W.B. Gibson, *Shadow Scrapbook* for illustrations of the novel covers.

The direct gaze does not appear in his self-portraits of the 1960s. The older images functioned to hide Warhol the person, and to support the concept of his shallow persona. The engagement of the viewer directly by Warhol, in his self-portrait as "The Shadow," is a new element. Perhaps Warhol was feeling more confident about his position in the public sphere as a celebrity. He was famous and maybe he felt that he could reveal his own hand in reaching this goal. His solid presence in the self-portrait as "The Shadow" suggests that Warhol was directly responsible for the public persona. He was very definitely the body that cast the shadow.

If Warhol perpetuated a shadowy presence in public, he also kept much of his private life to himself. In the novels, *The Shadow* rarely reveals his true identity, and when he does, it is only to selected people. Occasionally, *The Shadow* would mention past events in his life, but never in great detail.³¹ His anonymity probably appealed to Warhol, who, as previously discussed, replaced his old identity in the 1950s with that of "Raggedy Andy/Andy Paperbag." This in turn metamorphosed into the Andy Warhol of the 1960s, the identity that he is best known for, and with which he lived until his death. It is apparent from the literature about him, especially from interviews with friends, that Warhol rarely

³¹ Eisgruber 14-16.

let his guard down with anyone. Few people ever saw the inside of his home or met his family.³² He maintained a strict division between his friends and business associates (but he partied publicly with both).³³ Apparently Warhol only told his friends about the death of his mother at least two years after the fact.³⁴

By many accounts he never discussed his childhood or his years in commercial art. For example, in an interview with Patrick Smith around 1978, Warhol seemed to be unhappy to answer questions about his commercial art years. Smith pulled out some photos of his old work in the presence of the dealer Ivan Karp, who had never seen them before. Warhol quickly told him: "Oh, you don't want to see them, Ivan...let's talk about something since Ivan's here."³⁵ It suited Warhol to change the topic because this older art contrasted to all that he worked to create during the 1960s and later. His art

³² Makos 112.

³³ Warhol and Hackett, *Diaries* xiii.

³⁴ Bockris 362. Julia Warhola died on November 28, 1972, in Pittsburgh. Warhol did not attend the funeral, nor did he tell the man he was living with, Jed Johnson, in Colacello 266.

³⁵ Patrick Smith, *Warhol: Conversations About the Artist* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1988) 337.

and his persona, Warhol seems to have known, were considered by people in tandem. To invite a discussion of his early commercial work could have undermined his carefully maintained image. In much the same way would the Shadow have undermined his effectiveness as a crime fighter if he had stepped out from the darkness and allowed his foes to identify him. Both the artist and the character operated most effectively from behind a screen. The Shadow had a physical barrier of darkness, while Warhol had a conceptual shield in the form of his impenetrable public persona. Warhol may have also been recognizing this kinship with "The Shadow" in his choice to make the image a self-portrait.

The Shadow radio plays opened with the famous line, "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows." These words are a stern reminder of human-kind's capacity to do harmful things. In Warhol's lifetime he had had the opportunity to encounter many of the evils that people inflict on one another and on themselves. Warhol himself was accused of causing a great deal of harm to people who moved in his circle.³⁶ Warhol said in 1967, "I still care

³⁶ A biography on Edie Sedgwick by Jean Stein paints Warhol as an amoral man who was directly responsible for her eventual decline and death in the early 1970s. Jean Stein, with George Plimpton, editors, *Edie: An American Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982). Bob Colacello noted that this was a resurrection of "all the old perceptions about Andy's degeneracy and evilness, all the old tales that we had spent a decade eradicating." Colacello 460.

about people but it would be so much easier not to care...it's too hard to care...I don't want to get too involved in other people's lives...."³⁷ The Factory in the 1960s, as has been noted, was a haven for drug abusers and those interested other excessive indulgences. During the Factory years, a number of Warhol's friends and associates fought, took drugs (some of them hard drugs), lived in squalid conditions, committed suicide or died accidentally. Warhol used his aloof persona as a defense mechanism against this activity that went on around him. It also acted to shield the artist from criticism levelled against him in response to the Factory atmosphere. When Valerie Solanas tried to kill him in 1968, he survived but remained uneasy for the rest of his life. Warhol knew what sorts of evil things people do and by relegating himself to the shadows, he may have hoped to avoid some of it himself. As The Shadow character, Warhol placed himself in a position to comment on what he had seen in his lifetime, to indicate a sort of world-weariness and familiarity with his past and present. As The Shadow, Warhol had seen it all and knew everyone's guilty secrets.

For all the seriousness implied in that famous quote, "Who knows what evil lurks...", Warhol allowed the humour

³⁷ Berg 43.

embodied in the other images in the Myths series to also come through in his self-portrait as "The Shadow." The famous quotation can also be taken as a tongue in cheek reference to Warhol's sexuality. Traditionally, the Christian faith regarded homosexuality as a sin, as "evil." Warhol, as The Shadow, knew what evil lurks in the hearts (the supposed centre of emotional love) of men. Warhol was a closeted gay man, therefore he lived in the shadow of social and religious condemnation.³⁸ The Shadow lurked in the darkness to gather information with which to take action against a criminal foe. By affiliating himself with The Shadow, Warhol implied in this self-portrait that he watched (men) from a disguised position, and maintained his prerogative to take action of other sorts in the future. This works to support the public's view of Warhol as a voyeur. However, because The Shadow character always acted on what he saw, Warhol implies this same outcome from his watching by taking on the character's identity. By making an elusive joke, Warhol was affirming his own sexual orientation. His direct gaze is meant to engage the viewer as if to say that he knows that person's guilty (closeted) secrets, too. It may also be meant to imply that Warhol is watching the viewer with romantic or sexual interest. The play on the quotation serves to allow Warhol to

³⁸ By many accounts, Warhol was also a Catholic and a regular church-goer, so he would feel first-hand the prejudice of organized religion.

acknowledge his sexuality to his viewers and challenge them in the same rebellious spirit that he infused his other self-portraits. What was once a subtle and well-hidden aspect of Warhol's self-portraits emerges in the early 1980s as something as close to a statement as Warhol ever got. Who knows what evil lurks? Andy Warhol knows....

Warhol apparently dropped the references to his outright rebellion in this later portrait. He probably knew that, as a man who consorted with the Shah of Iran and the Reagans at the White House,³⁹ he would confound no-one if he pretended to be acting as a Rebel at this point in his career. However, this Self-Portrait seems to leave less to the imagination in terms of asserting Warhol's role in the production and maintenance of his own image, something which is obscured in the 1965-67 self-portraits. His adoption of The Shadow character causes one to think that he felt safe hiding himself in the shadows. However, unlike his earlier self-portraits, this one reveals that there was a real person hiding in there. The result is a self-portrait that is extremely self-aware and self-conscious. It erects an elaborate screen of character reference between Warhol and the viewer while simultaneously revealing the agent of its

³⁹ Robert Hughes, "The Rise of Andy Warhol," ed. Steven Henry Madoff (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) 383.

construction. The viewer, therefore, might read the image as portraits of Warhol and his Persona, which occupied separate spaces but remained dependant upon one another.

Conclusions

Although Warhol's self-portraits were calculated to supplement his public persona, some of the concerns of the artist are apparent in them too. The images were produced at key points in the artist's career and both his public career goals and his private concerns affected the results. The self-portraits seem to mark points in Warhol's career when he wished to draw attention to himself, as an artist (1964), as a person(a) (1965-67), or both. (1981) Looking at specific examples of self-portraits from 1964, 1965-67 and 1981, we can see that the images are united by underlying common themes that help create an overall image of Warhol's persona and suggest the possibility of glimpsing a more private, hidden Warhol. Some of these themes I have attempted to identify, and they hinge on Warhol's presentation of himself in the context of his position in the art world at the time, as well as the degree of national fame he had acquired, or wished to acquire.

The 1964 image is rakish in its immature posturing. Warhol's insecurities about his tenuous place in the art world are apparent in this portrait. A rebellious attitude comes through in Warhol's posing and facial expression. These are derived from old movie-star rebels like Marlon Brando, and they are used by Warhol to suggest his rebellious

position in the art world at the time. Warhol attempted to take control of his image in the art world by becoming unruly and doing things that other artists before him did not do, personally as well as artistically. His representational art was cause for much consternation in an art world dominated by abstraction at the beginning of the decade. This brought him some attention, which he desired, but at the same time, it threw him into a tenuous position because the respected artistic 'norm' was abstraction, and the behavioral norm, restrained. This self-portrait reflects Warhol's desire to be seen as an artist of consequence (in other words, to be famous) in the art world of the early nineteen sixties.

By the time he produced the 1965-67 Self-Portrait, Warhol had expanded his quest for fame beyond the realm of the art world and into a national arena. The self-portraits of the time period are indicative of his new goals. Warhol became immersed in his own famous public persona. It appears as if he had begun to appropriate the critical responses and readings of his artwork into his persona. Descriptives such as "superficial," or "bland" and especially "accepting" (of media/popular culture without any comment) seem to have been taken up and played up wholeheartedly by Warhol in his public image. His rebellion in this instance is to embrace these concepts and to use them to pursue celebrity status, instead of accepting them as negative characteristics of his art and

his persona. This highlighted both the effects of his art and himself. In his self-portrait, the flat surface treatment and obscured facial features reflect the critics' responses to his art and Warhol's desire to keep people tuned solely to his public image. Whereas Warhol sought to draw attention to himself by implying his rebellious spirit in the 1964 Self-Portrait, by 1967 he appeared to relinquish his hold on his persona in order to allow the audience to assume control of his fame (and by extension his persona), thereby driving him upwards towards higher celebrity.

The 1981 Self-Portrait as "The Shadow" is a more pensive work in which Warhol appears to be returning to a more personal frame of reference. The dual portrait of shadow and man seems to indicate Warhol's mature understanding of his persona and his place as a celebrity. Gone is the youthful rebellion and in its place stands a sense of world-weariness. He reasserts his own face in this image, as the maker/caster of the shadow, which stands for his famous persona. In the 1965-67 portrait Warhol allowed himself to appear to be a blank, flat screen onto which others projected their own concept of who Andy Warhol should have been. This interpretation of Warhol's persona remained intact from that time on, and even followed him to the grave. However, in contemplating the 1981 portrait, Warhol seems to have developed his persona to an extent where he felt he could

again own it and take responsibility for it more openly. He presented in the Self-Portrait as "The Shadow", not a blank screen, but a projected image behind which was seen the man in control of his own shadow.

Consistent throughout these three images are Warhol's references to his homosexuality. Of the underlying subtexts that could be seen to run beneath the surface of Warhol's self-portraits, this one seems to be dominant. In the 1964 work, Warhol ties up his references to homosexuality into his overall rebellious stance towards (it would seem) everything. Again Warhol's place in the art world at the time affected the emergence of this facet of his personality in this portrait. Because he was considered "too swish" in comparison with other, more acceptable fellow artists, Warhol ran into difficulty as he strove for acceptance by his peers. His refusal to try to hide his stereotypical affectations constituted more rebellion on his part. The similarities between Warhol's self-portraits and his Thirteen Most Wanted Men, which carries its own underlying discourse on the position of homosexuality in America at the time, act to reinforce this rebellious nature of Warhol's attitude in the early sixties.

The suggestion of homosexuality appears more playful in the 1965-67 Self-Portrait if one looks at it from the vantage

point of the context of Expo 67, in which six of these images were displayed. By 1967, the word "camp," as described by Susan Sontag, had gained widespread use by people wishing to label certain elements of popular culture. Warhol himself enjoyed the word 'camp' and wholeheartedly embraced it. He named one of his underground movies *Camp*.¹ The camp aesthetic was closely linked in many people's minds with a gay male aesthetic that included a certain exaggerated behaviour and a taste for the products of (American) mass cultural production. Andy Warhol, considered a great influence on popular culture of the sixties, was also a great "camp" personality. At Expo 67, the American Pavilion consisted in part of exhibits dedicated to American popular culture and its products. Its detractors considered it a "triumph of the homosexual" due to the "camp" tendencies of those exhibits. Warhol's entry of his self-portraits into the exhibit at Expo 67 not only revealed his desire to be seen as a product of American popular culture, but also implied his personal taste and by extension his homosexuality. The less intimidating, ironic, and playful nature of the "camp" aesthetic worked well for Warhol because it enabled the public to access him as they would any other product of popular culture. In addition, the camp packaging of his persona made his elusive sexuality, which came out in his underground film-making,

¹ Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol Sixties* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980): 163.

even more ambiguous while simultaneously presenting it in such a way that the mass public might more easily accept.

In his 1981 Self-Portrait as "The Shadow", Warhol again uses humour and irony to make reference to his sexuality. However, this time the reference is far more direct than that in the previous two self-portraits. The famous line "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men..." is the first thing that many people think of when they hear a reference to the character "The Shadow." Warhol would likely have considered the fact that one can twist the words of that phrase to imply some knowledge of men's emotional lives. If homosexuality was considered evil, then evil in the hearts of men could be construed as homosexual desire. Warhol as "The Shadow," is drawing on the public understanding of his persona as a watchful (voyeuristic) one. As a watcher of the evils of men's hearts, therefore, Warhol appears to be referring to his knowledge of gay desire and by extension, his own. The *double entendre* of the famous phrase makes for a good word-game for the viewer. It is sufficient to cover direct references to Warhol's gayness, but with a slight change in emphasis, becomes quite an open one. This is very different from his previous self-portraits because it is somewhat more honest and mature in its directness. Warhol revealed his position for those who wished to see it, and claimed control over it by asserting his presence clearly in

the image. The Shadow is Warhol. He casts the image, and therefore he takes on the implications associated with it.

Self-portraiture is a difficult topic to write about, even if the subject is not Andy Warhol. With Andy Warhol's self-portraits, one is faced with many obstacles to overcome in an attempt to mete out some viable interpretations for them. In the past, scholars have mostly ignored Warhol's self-portraits in favour of his more famous Pop Art images. Writers have been content to group the self-portraits in with his other work, allowing them to share the same interpretations by implication alone. Although opinions exist to the contrary, I believe that Warhol's self-portraits contain more meaning than that found in his Campbell's Soup Cans.² A self-portrait is an image of the artist. Therefore, Warhol (or any artist) must have thought about it in a different way than he would have his soup cans or other Pop images. Warhol was given, or gave himself, the opportunity to present himself in any manner that he wished. It seems that for Warhol, a self-portrait constituted a stand-in for the artist. His choices are therefore calculated to manipulate audience reaction. Personal and career oriented goals manifest themselves visually in these images, betraying

² See Carter Ratcliff, *Andy Warhol* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1983) 52; and Sean Kelly and E. Lucie-Smith, *The Self-Portrait-A Modern View* (London: Sarema Press, 1987.) 24.

Warhol's hand where his technique conceals it. The possibilities for interpretation open up when the subject of a painting is the artist who created it. Warhol's are no exception, and it is important that in the future scholars and critics begin to expand their research and writing about Andy Warhol to include further investigations of these neglected works.

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Figure 1. Andy Warhol. Self-Portrait. Circa 1942.



Figure 2. Andy Warhol. Self-Portrait.
1948.

COLONIAL BOND

25% COTTON/COTON



Figure 3. Andy Warhol. The Broad Gave Me My Face But I Can Pick My Own Nose. 1948-1949.

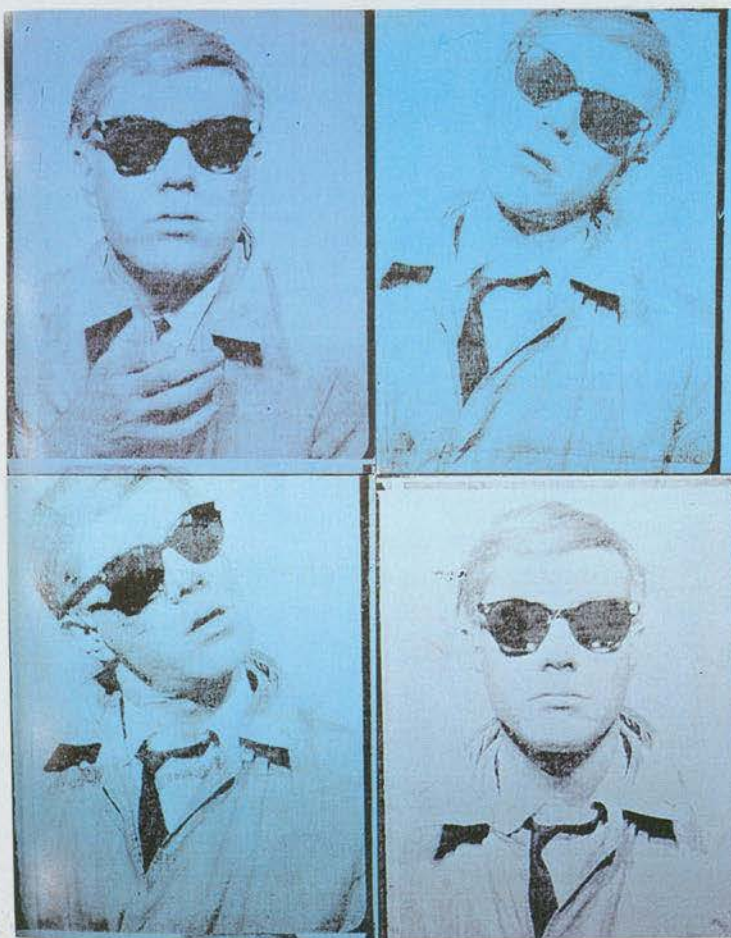


Figure 4. Andy Warhol. Self-Portrait.
1964.

COLONIAL BOND



Figure 5. Warhol. Ethel Scull 36 Times. 1963.



Figure 6. Advertisement for Stable Gallery with photograph of Andy Warhol.

COLONIAL BOND

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Figure 7. Andy Warhol. Marilyn (Three Times). 1962.

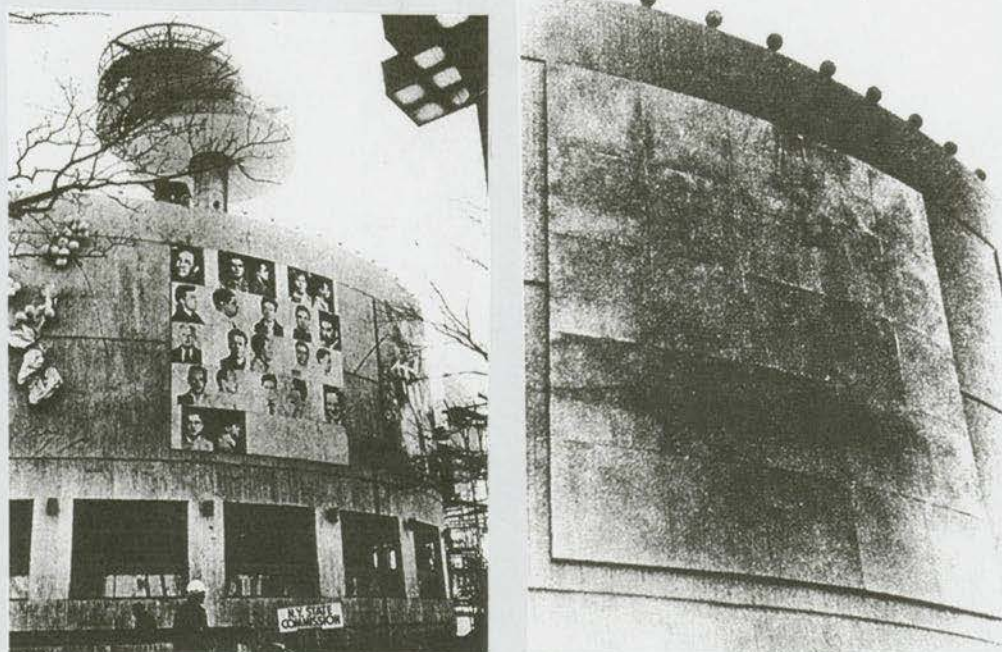


Figure 8. Andy Warhol. Thirteen Most Wanted Men. 1964.



Figure 9. Andy Warhol. Self-Portrait. 1966-67.

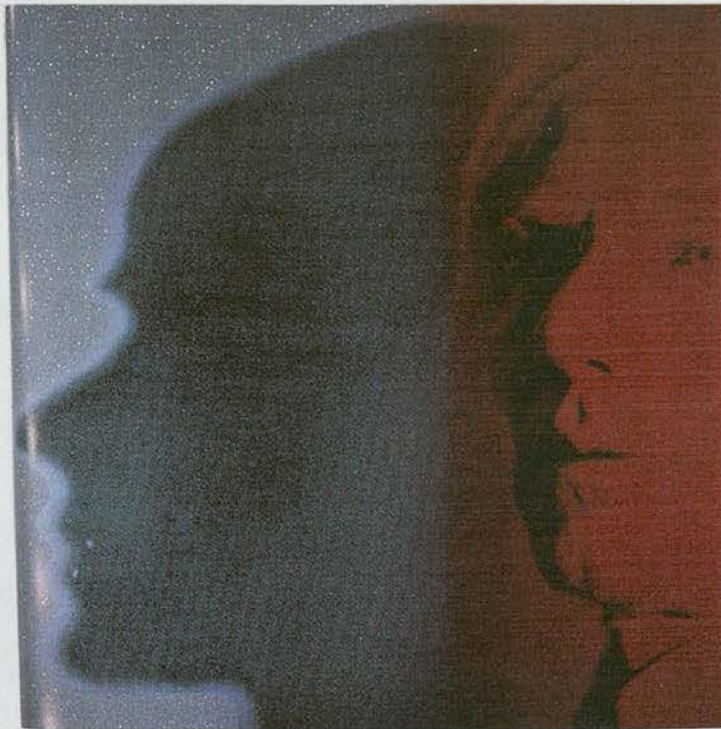


Figure 10. Andy Warhol. Self-portrait
as "The Shadow." 1981.



Figure 11. Andy Warhol. Myths--Mammy.
1981.

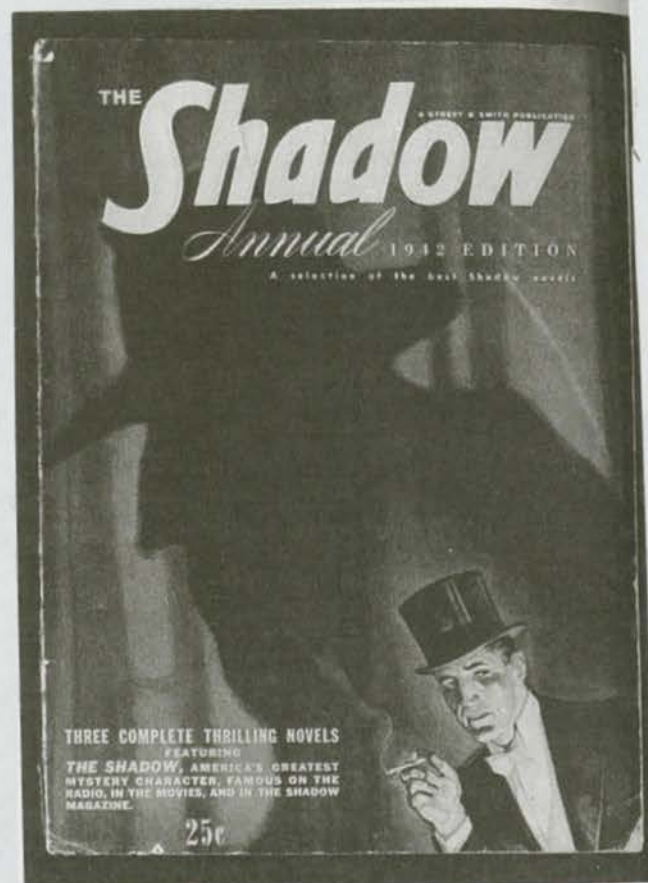


Figure 12. Illustration of "The Shadow" novel cover.

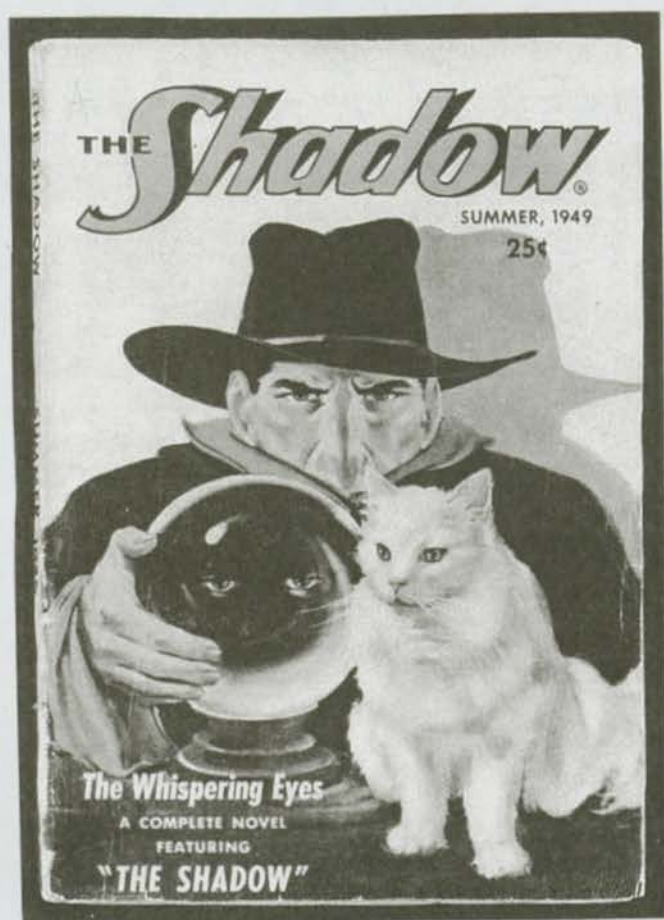


Figure 13. Illustration of
"The Shadow" novel cover.

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A Portrait of the Artist in Society: Warhol Paints Warhol

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May 1998