Fifteen minutes and then some: an examination of Andy Warhol's extraordinary commercial success

Alycia Faith Reed

University of Iowa
FIFTEEN MINUTES AND THEN SOME: AN EXAMINATION OF ANDY WARHOL’S EXTRAORDINARY COMMERCIAL SUCCESS

by

Alycia Faith Reed

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Art History in the Graduate College of The University of Iowa

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Thesis Supervisor: Professor Craig Adcock
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This is to certify that the Master’s thesis of

Alycia Faith Reed

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the Master of Arts degree in Art History at the May 2012 graduation.

Thesis Committee:

Craig Adcock, Thesis Supervisor

Dorothy Johnson

Julie Berger Hochstrasser
To Mom, who loved Andy first.
Some company recently was interested in buying my “aura.” They didn’t want my product. They kept saying, “We want your aura.” I never figured out what they wanted. But they were willing to pay a lot for it.

Andy Warhol, The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)
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INTRODUCTION

Business art is the step that comes after Art. I started as a commercial artist and I want to finish as a business artist. After I did the thing called “art” or whatever it’s called, I went into business art. I wanted to be an Art Businessman or a Business Artist. Being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art. During the hippie era people put down the idea of business – they’d say, “Money is bad,” and “Working is Bad,” but making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art.

Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)*

Throughout the 2000s, the Andy Warhol Foundation found itself mired in scandal. Joe Simon-Whelan, owner of a purported 1965 Warhol self-portrait, accused the Foundation and the Andy Warhol Authentication Board of refusing to authenticate his *Red Self-Portrait* (Fig. A1) in 2001 (and again in 2003) in an attempt to control the Pop artist’s financial market.¹ Soon the allegations of wrongdoing were played out publicly in the pages of the *New York Review of Books*, including letters to the editor from: Joel Wachs, president of the Andy Warhol Foundation; Richard Polsky, author of *I Bought Andy Warhol* and *I Sold Andy Warhol (Too Soon)*; and art historian Sarah Whitfield on behalf of the Comité René Magritte, the Francis Bacon Authentication Committee, and the Arshile Gorky Foundation.² The battleground at the *New York Review of Books* can be traced back to the 2009 article “What Is an Andy Warhol?” by Richard Dorment, which discusses the difficulties of determining the


authenticity of works by an artist famous for his mechanical approach to art-making.3

Because authenticity plays a major role in the determination of a work’s monetary value, the heated exchanges in the *New York Review of Books* come as little surprise. However, filing the *Red Self-Portrait* case under the heading of “authenticity issues” would be to leave many of the case’s complex implications unexamined. Namely, that authenticity alone is not capable of accounting for the disparity in price between an authenticated Warhol and an unauthenticated Warhol, but that the right *kind* of authenticity is capable of accounting for such a difference: authenticity connected to a marketable brand. The visibility and popularity of the Warhol “brand” extends beyond the reaches of the art establishment to commercial goods bought by the general public – t-shirts, posters, album covers, magazines, etc. – because they wish to identify with the artist and his reputation. The demand for Andy Warhol–related art and merchandise is the product of a highly successful artistic branding that has resulted in making Warhol and his distinctive aesthetic identifiable and attractive to demographics both in and out of the art world.

Authenticity by itself does not make art valuable. Any design school has hallways full of drawings and paintings that are both authentic and cheap, not because the art is without artistic merit but because their creators cannot command high prices. Such an observation – that a famous artist generates more money than an obscure artist – is fairly self-evident, but the issue here is *how* a famous artist became so. Even within the realm of successful artists,

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3 Richard Dorment, “What Is an Andy Warhol?” *New York Review of Books*, October 22, 2009. The article was written in response to the controversy surrounding the rejection of Joe Simon-Whelan’s work. The Authentication Board has rejected all ten of the self-portraits in this 1965 series and they have been removed from Warhol’s 2004 catalogue raisonné. Rainer Crone, who worked with Warhol on his 1970 catalogue raisonné (which has a reproduction of a *Red Self-Portrait* from this series on the cover), is quoted here: “I am aware of no other instance in which a revised catalog raisonné omits a hitherto accepted work without explanation.”
Warhol must be ranked in the top tier. In 2008, Warhol’s singular *Eight Elvises* (Fig. A2) sold for a staggering $100 million in a private sale, a benchmark achieved by few of even the most eminent artists. Such an event was no fluke. Warhol’s works consistently bring millions at auction and in private sales, making Warholian authenticity (the Warhol brand) among the most coveted in the contemporary market. The stakes when evaluating potential Warhols are so high that, following numerous scandals including the Joe Simon-Whelan case and spending close to $7 million in legal fees, the Andy Warhol Authentication Board shocked the art world by announcing its plan to disband.⁴ Clearly, Warholian authenticity means serious business, serious lawsuits, and serious money.

With Warhol firmly positioned atop the art market food chain, the questions “Why Warhol? What sets him apart from others?” develop. However, one must concede that Warhol is not without equal in the art world, even within Pop Art. During his lifetime, Warhol’s works were consistently sold at lower prices than those of Roy Lichtenstein, Jasper Johns, and Robert Rauschenberg – a fact that greatly vexed Warhol.⁵ Although none of these artists have sold a painting for more than *Eight Elvises*, they are still capable of overtaking Warhol at auction. At Christie’s in November 2011, Lichtenstein’s *I Can See the Whole Room! … and There’s Nobody In It!* sold for $42.3 million, marking a record high for the artist, while Warhol’s *Silver Liz* and *Four Campbell’s Soup Cans* sold for $16.3 million and $9.8 million.

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⁴ Eileen Kinsella, “A Matter of Opinion,” in *Art News* 111 (February 2012): 50-52. As printed in this article, the justification in disbanding was the Foundation’s desire to “focus on supporting artists and artistic expression.” The situation was a shock to the art world because Warhol’s “works continue to be at the forefront of the contemporary-market boom, often reaping tens of millions of dollars at auction.”

respectively at the same event. Additionally, although Warhol’s $100 million price tag for *Eight Elvises* was an achievement, it was not an unprecedented event. Warhol’s great success within the art world, while impressive and even rare, is not unique.

Outside of the art world, however, Andy Warhol has a level of commercial appeal that is arguably unmatched by any other twentieth-century artist — and even outstrips many other artists whose works have been established for decades or centuries. Warhol paraphernalia is varied and abundant. The Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, one of the few American museums dedicated to the exhibition of works by a single artist, sells calendars, posters, books, stationery, magnets, nightlights, mouse pads, and key chains (among other items), all bearing either representations of the artist or reproductions of his works. The Incase Company, maker of accessories for portable electronic devices, has created an Andy Warhol line of bags, laptop/tablet sleeves, and phone cases. The Unemployed Philosophers Guild, retailer of highbrow gag gifts, sells Warhol cards, finger puppets, and stuffed toys called “Little Thinkers.” The Photo Booth program, a standard application preinstalled in every Apple computer, includes an effect labeled “Pop Art” which divides the user’s

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6 Carol Vogel, “Postwar and Contemporary Artworks Draw Record Prices at Christie’s,” *New York Times*, November 8, 2011, accessed February 2, 2012, www.nytimes.com. Though the Warhols sold for far less than the Lichtenstein, they were still within the auction estimates. Lichtenstein’s record price of $42.3 million is less than half of Warhol’s record $100 million.

7 Tom Armstrong, “Director’s Foreward,” in *The Andy Warhol Museum* (Pittsburgh: The Andy Warhol Museum, 1994), 7-8. “The Andy Warhol Museum represents a singularly important event in American art history: the creation of the first museum devoted entirely to the work of an American artist of the postwar generation. That Andy Warhol should receive this validation is fitting, primarily because his life and work embody many of the characteristics of his time: the extraordinary ambition of his generation, the excesses of popular culture, and the remarkable scope and originality of intellectual exploration and innovation that marked this period.”
photograph into Warhol’s signature multi-colored panels. An American alternative rock band has named itself the Dandy Warhols.\(^8\) Warhol is business, and business is good.

Some of the most compelling evidence can be found through searching the website of major poster retailer AllPosters.com, promoted as “the world’s largest poster and print store,” which offers everything from fine art prints to film/concert posters to cheesecake and beefcake pin ups. Searching the names of the Pop artists among the 1,219,103 items currently filed under “art” yields 133 items for sale related to Roy Lichtenstein, two related to Tom Wesselmann, 38 related to James Rosenquist, and five related to Claes Oldenburg. Other Pop artists, such as Robert Indiana (38 items), Richard Hamilton (97 items), and David Hockney (56 items) can also be found among the many images for sale. The numbers vary, from just a couple from the less popular Wesselmann to many from the sought-after Lichtenstein, but even Lichtenstein cannot begin to match what a general search for “Andy Warhol” will uncover: \(4,539\) items. Such a number is nearly double what the company offers by Claude Monet (2,623) and Vincent van Gogh (2,737), over double that by Gustav Klimt (1,735), over four times that by Pablo Picasso (1,021), roughly six and a half times that by Paul Cézanne (732) and Salvador Dalí (685), and over 73 times more than that by Jackson Pollock (62).\(^9\) Warhol roundly trounces any other artist in terms of items offered. The earlier question – “Why Warhol?” – becomes even more critical when these numbers are

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\(^9\) These searches were executed at www.allposters.com, using a general search of the artists’ first and last names, e.g. “Roy Lichtenstein,” on February 7, 2012. The items offered are not all distinct – some may be the same image in different sizes, matted, or framed. However, this is true not only for Warhol but for every artist listed here and does not account for the 4,406-item difference between Warhol and Lichtenstein.
compared. No other member of the Pop movement (arguably within the art world, but more certainly outside the art world) can match Warhol in terms of marketability.

Answering the question “Why Warhol?” requires a set of criteria capable of (1), accounting for the disparity between Warhol and the other producers of Pop, and (2), qualifying Warholian appeal. For this examination, the realm of advertising theory and practice provides the terms of analysis. Because it is concerned with moving products and attracting consumers, advertising theory offers a set of conditions designed to distinguish between effective and ineffective marketing techniques. The vast difference in quantity between Warholian merchandise and merchandise related to other Pop artists indicates a difference in marketing and branding techniques. Many companies also use Warhol and his imagery to promote products/services and to alter company image in television commercials and print campaigns, indicating that advertising firms themselves recognized Warhol’s marketing efficacy. When applied to Warhol as a branded artist, advertising theory creates an explanation for the gap between Warhol and the other Pop artists, as well as the gap between Pop art and Abstract Expressionism. The elements of commercial branding (targeted demographics, subject matter, modes of production, critical response, overall image, and cultural atmosphere) must be assimilated into art historical discussion in order to analyze Warhol’s extraordinary marketability, and all play a part in this attempt to analyze Warhol’s appeal. The increasing awareness in the business world of the role emotions play in marketing is another key issue that separates Warhol from other artists in terms of marketing techniques.

Identifying certain artists as “branded” is not a new thought. In his book *The $12 Million Stuffed Shark*, Don Thompson applies the term to auction houses, art dealers, and artists.
Friends may go bug-eyed when you say “I paid five point six million dollars for that ceramic statue.” No one is dismissive when you say “I bought this at Sotheby’s,” or “I found this at Gagosian,” or “This is my new Jeff Koons.” Branding is the end result of the experiences a company creates with its customers and media over a long period of time – and of the clever marketing and public relations that go into creating and reinforcing those experiences.¹⁰

While Thompson gives this general definition of branding, he does not go into the details of just how the branding process works commercially, the means by which an artist might become branded, and the degrees of brandedness an artist might achieve. His discussion of Warhol in a later chapter on Warhol, Jeff Koons, and Tracey Emin contains little more than surface reiteration of Warhol’s general biography; no examination of branding techniques is explored. Warhol’s rise to fame is charted, but Thompson makes no attempt to analyze how and why Warhol became branded. He uses the advertising term but does not accompany it with advertising theory.¹¹ Discussing Warhol’s fame through biography is insufficient; biography provides no terms for analysis and the result is a reductive, circular understanding: Warhol is famous because he is branded, and branded because he is famous.

Such an issue is a theme throughout much of the Warhol scholarship: biography trumps all. Warhol’s early life, mysterious persona, scandals, celebrity friends, and colorful anecdotes have been the subjects of numerous volumes, such as: David Bourdon’s Warhol, Victor Bockris’s Warhol: The Biography and The Life and Death of Andy Warhol, Bob Colacello’s Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up, Fred Lawrence Guiles’s Loner at the Ball: The Life of Andy


¹¹ Ibid., 73-84. Thompson finishes this short chapter: “Warhol, Koons, and Emin are great examples of ‘You are nobody in contemporary art until somebody brands you.’” This summation does not quite line up with the content of the chapter, and in context is tantamount to stating: “You are not famous until you are famous.” Warhol, Koons, and Emin are indeed all branded artists, but Thompson simply says so without arguing why.
Warhol, and Tony Scherman and David Dalton’s Pop: The Genius of Andy Warhol. Another category of Warhol literature encompasses publications which tend to analyze Warhol’s work through biography, like Gary Indiana’s Andy Warhol and the Can that Sold the World, Steven Koch’s Stargazer: The Life, World, and Films of Andy Warhol, Steven Watson’s Factory Made: Warhol and the Sixties, and Carter Ratcliff’s Warhol. Warhol’s interviews have been published in Kenneth Goldsmith’s I’ll Be Your Mirror: The Selected Andy Warhol Interviews, and interviews about Warhol have been published in Patrick S. Smith’s Warhol: Conversations About the Artist, John O’Connor and Benjamin Liu’s Unseen Warhol, and John Wilcock’s The Autobiography and Sex Life of Andy Warhol (which, despite its title, is not an autobiography nor an exposé of Warhol’s sex life). Other books related to Warhol, like Factory crowd member Ultra Violet’s Famous for 15 Minutes: My Years with Andy Warhol and Richard Polsky’s two books, I Bought Andy Warhol and I Sold Andy Warhol (Too Soon), are really more about the authors than about Warhol. Some of the more analytical publications include: Arthur C. Danto’s Andy Warhol; the collection of essays edited by Annette Michelson in an October publication, Andy Warhol; Gary Garrels’s edited volume, The Work of Andy Warhol; Kelly M. Cresap’s Pop Trickster Fool: Warhol Performs Naivete; and Peter Kattenberg’s Andy Warhol: Priest.12 While these thoughtful examinations of various aspects of Warhol and his oeuvre tackle important and often

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12 Kenneth Goldsmith, preface to I’ll Be Your Mirror: The Selected Andy Warhol Interviews (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2004), xxxii, makes reference a Benjamin Buchloh interview with Warhol that was reprinted in the Annette Michelson, ed. Warhol (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001): “I was leafing through a compilation of essays about Warhol released by October magazine and the last piece in the book was an interview with Andy by the art critic Benjamin Buchloh from 1985. It seemed that the more pointed Buchloh’s questions became, the more elusive Andy’s answers were. Buchloh would hit harder and Warhol would get slipperier, repeating things he’d said many times before as if Buchloh’s questions were irrelevant. In the end, I realized that by saying so little, Warhol was inverting the traditional form of the interview; I ended up knowing much more about Buchloh than I did about Warhol.” As Goldsmith’s experience indicates, even interviews by first-rate thinkers like Buchloh can be deceptive, leaving the viewer with less concrete information about the artist and more concrete information about the person leading the interview.
complex facets of the enigmatic artist, none have any in-depth examination of what makes Warhol so appealing and marketable.¹³

Even *Andy Warhol Enterprises*, the publication accompanying the Indianapolis Museum of Art’s exhibition of the same name, only touches on the application of branding techniques despite being concerned with the business/monetary side of Warhol’s art empire. Allison Unruh and Sarah Urist Green, curators of the exhibition and editors of this volume, end the book’s introduction with this reference to Warhol’s brand:

> Cutting across his numerous types of projects . . . Warhol proved to have an intuitive sense of his power as a “brand,” well before there was any comprehensive theorization of the idea of branding. The brand of “Warhol” can legitimately be claimed to be his greatest creation – one which continues to warrant further examination as it still resonates so powerfully in today’s culture.¹⁴

While branding is mentioned in the introduction, the idea of Warhol’s brand is not explored further in any of the essays beyond general allusions and discussions of Warhol’s interest in money as subject matter. Additionally, Elizabeth Currid’s book, *The Warhol Economy: How Fashion, Art, and Music Drive New York City*, contains little discussion of Warhol at all, let alone discussion of Warhol’s brand.

A book that deals with advertising’s role in Pop’s popularity, although not specifically as it pertains to Warhol, is Christin Mamiya’s 1992 *Pop Art and Consumer Culture*. Mamiya addresses the importance of advertising and the booming consumer culture of the 1960s in the success of the Pop artists, but the book is limited in a number of ways. First, it deals with Pop in general from 1958 to 1968, rather than the specific success of Warhol with

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¹³ This list is not exhaustive, but it gives a good idea of the range of Warhol literature in general.

which this thesis is concerned. Warhol, Lichtenstein, Rosenquist, Oldenburg, and others are often discussed as one cohesive cultural phenomenon, perhaps because during this period Warhol’s legacy had not quite transformed into the complex entity it would later become. Mamiya addresses the fact that Pop was not as unified a movement as the preceding Abstract Expressionism, yet often speaks of the Pop artists as though they were all working in the same vein. The varying degrees of financial success, continued relevance, and merchandizing suggests that, although many Pop artists were using popular imagery derived from advertisements and other low sources, they were not all using that imagery in the same way or to the same effect.

Second, as this book was published in 1992, it cannot address developments in Warhol’s marketability during the past twenty years or the recent advances in advertising theory. I argue that Warhol’s success vastly outstrips that of the other Pop artists, evidenced by Warhol’s superstar status in the art market and the proliferation of Warhol merchandise in recent years.\(^{15}\) In fact, the skyrocketing of Warhol auction prices did not happen until over a decade after *Pop Art and Consumer Culture* was published. Additionally, as the book is about Pop art generally, it does not sufficiently address Warhol’s economic impact. Mamiya briefly mentions some of the products Warhol endorsed later in his career, but does not analyze what would attract a company to Warhol or what the company hoped to achieve by the association.

Third, *Pop Art and Consumer Culture* is largely concerned with the advertising campaigns of the products utilized in Pop and of the artists’ comments on those campaigns through their artworks, but it does not address the influence that Pop art had on advertising

\(^{15}\) Mamiya acknowledges that Warhol is likely the most famous of the Pop artists, but does not go into any extensive analysis.
itself. As will be discussed, Warhol did more than comment on Campbell’s advertising when he began making soup cans – he uprooted their very advertising strategy and changed the demographic of Campbell’s imagery. Most important, Mamiya also tends to focus on the art historical implications of Pop’s involvement with consumerism and advertising rather than Pop’s popularity outside of the art world; the issue is touched on, but not deeply analyzed. The same can be said for the brief references to Abstract Expressionism throughout the book, which acknowledge that Abstract Expressionism did not connect with the public like Pop Art. Mamiya does not really delve into the issues behind this chasm (beyond saying that AbEx was concerned with the art elite and anti-consumerism). I argue that Abstract Expressionism established a complex but cold relationship with the public that made the warm reception of Pop art possible. Many of the same issues with which Mamiya grapples will be explored here, but the analysis will be directed primarily toward the commercial merchandising and general reception of Warhol and the Pop artists, as opposed to that of the Abstract Expressionists.¹⁶

As one of the biggest names in the contemporary art market and in American popular culture at large, Warhol has been discussed at length in academic books, catalogues, museum publications, journal articles, and collections of essays. His sexuality, religion, childhood, appearance, romantic entanglements, famous friends, and persona have been investigated and reinvestigated. Art historians, critics, and philosophers have analyzed Warhol’s impact on the art world and the implications of his style. Clearly, as the books and products continue to pile up, the Warhol brand can claim one of the top spots in both the art world and in popular American culture. But despite the thousands of pages written about

the artist and the ever-increasing amount of Warhol merchandise, an attempt to qualify and account for his superlative artistic branding has not been attempted. I believe that, by using contemporary advertising theory, Warhol’s merchandizing success can be explained.
CHAPTER I

“I MEAN, HOW CORNY”: THE BRANDING OF ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

The Pop artists did images that anybody walking down Broadway could recognize in a split second – comics, picnic tables, men’s trousers, celebrities, shower curtains, refrigerators, Coke bottles – all the great modern things that the Abstract Expressionists tried so hard not to notice at all.

Andy Warhol, *Popism: The Warhol Sixties*

Andrew Warhol – unusual, unattractive, and uncooperative – danced so often on the edge of failure while studying design at Carnegie Technical Institute that instructor of pictorial design, Robert Lepper, labeled him the student least likely to succeed.¹ Warhol struggled his way through classes while a slim majority of the Carnegie faculty saved him from expulsion every time he came under fire. He could not express himself successfully with words (either spoken or written), he often failed to follow directions, and some of the older instructors found the young man who would become Andy Warhol careless and untalented. Even after establishing himself as an innovative artist and garnering the approval of his instructors at Carnegie Tech in the later years of his education, Warhol found ways to cause controversy. Warhol split his audience once again when he submitted a self-portrait entitled *The Broad Gave Me My Face, But I Can Pick My Own Nose* (Fig. A3) to an exhibition juried by the Pittsburgh Associated Artists in 1949. Half of the jurors found the work lewd, and half (including George Grosz) unsuccessfully lobbied to include the work in the exhibition.² Clearly, reactions to Warhol’s early brand were mixed.


As American advertising has evolved through the decades, the branding concept has grown in importance and execution. Early poster advertisements gave way to more sophisticated designs in the 1920s and 1930s, where slogans were replaced by customer testimonials of a product’s uses. During this period, and in the decades that followed, the belief that ads were a social mirror reflecting the realities of everyday life prevailed. Roland Marchand quotes a statement made in 1926 by the N. W. Ayer and Son advertisement agency in the opening of his 1985 book, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*: “Day by day a picture of our time is recorded completely and vividly in the advertising in American newspapers and magazines.” As Marchand goes on to argue, this statement is inaccurate; advertising marketed an idea, not reality, even during this early period. Rather than an indicator of society, advertising became a medium of control, manipulating the desires and aspirations of the public instead of reflecting them. The advertising literature of today reads nothing like the bold and proud statement from N. W. Ayer and Son. Instead, it is glutted with propaganda aimed explicitly at controlling and influencing American consumers: Dan Hill’s *Emotionomics: Leveraging Emotions for Business Success* and *About Face: The Secrets of Emotionally Effective Advertising*, Matt Oechsli’s *The Art of Selling to the Affluent: How to Attract, Service, and Retain Wealthy Customers and Clients for Life*, A. K. Pradeep’s *The Buying Brain: Secrets for Selling to the Subconscious Mind*, and Roger Dooley’s *Brainfluence: 100 Ways to Persuade and Convince Customers with Neuromarketing* are just a few of the

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3 See Roland Marchand, introduction to *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), xv-xxii, for a more detailed exploration of this period. Marchand began his investigation into Depression-era American advertisements with the mistaken assumption that the ads before, during, and after the Great Depression would display the major cultural shifts occurring during this time. While others, such as Robert Lynd, argued that this indicated that the Depression had a negligible effect on American values, Marchand found that “another, more disconcerting, hypothesis could not be ignored: perhaps the ads did not provide an accurate reflection of social reality after all.”
many books applying psychology and neuroscience (with studies and numbers to back up their methods) to the advertising game. Manipulation has come down to a science.

At first, the connection between advertising theory and the commercial success of Andy Warhol may not be clear. After all, high art discussions tend to avoid in-depth analysis of Warhol in business terms; references to Warhol as a business artist are common, but discussion of what this “business artist” status amounts to is not. Of course Warhol used commercial imagery in his works, but that is no guarantee of a link between the theories of the commercial world and Warhol’s success. One could argue that a common thread links Warhol’s beginnings in the commercial art world and his later success, but even this is questionable. While Warhol made his start in New York as a highly sought-after commercial artist, he was not in charge of designing campaigns or making major decisions. He did what he was told:

He went out of his way to please art directors. “He was a cottonball,” recalled one, Peter Palazzo at I. Miller. “He did anything I asked him, anything. Whatever I told him to do, he’d say, ‘Oh, that’ll be fun.’” He never fought with art directors, never tried to usurp their decisions.4

Warhol was merely a middleman between those in charge and their audiences and, if the testimony of those for whom he worked can be believed, he was uninterested in gaining power for himself. The argument herein is not necessarily that Warhol learned the secrets of consumer manipulation while working commercially through the 1950s, but that his success both as a commercial artist and as a fine artist can be explained in such terms. Knowingly or unknowingly, Warhol utilized contemporary advertising tactics during his rise to fame – tactics that were not used as effectively by his peers.

Another argument countering the position that Warhol learned how to market from his years as a commercial illustrator is that the contemporary branding techniques that match up with Warhol’s successes were not standard during the 1950s. Harry Walker Hepner’s 1956 *Modern Advertising Practices and Principles* devotes a chapter to branding and brand loyalty, but the entire “brand” concept is very unlike that which is espoused in contemporary advertising guides. Don Thompson’s twenty-first century summation that “branding is the end result of the experiences a company creates with its customers and media over a long period of time” was not yet practiced to the extent that it would be later. Brands in the 1950s were considered “an integral part of the system that gives [the consumer] the privilege of free choice in the market place.” Branding was a means through which the population was able to identify trustworthiness and quality – even a type of protection for the consumer. This sentiment is evident in a Campbell’s soup advertisement (Fig. A4) that ran in 1962, which makes reference to a jingle from a 1916 Campbell’s advertisement: “We

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5 The change in branding techniques relates to the general change in advertising. Dan Hill, *About Face: The Secrets of Emotionally Effective Advertising* (London: Kogan Page, 2010), 1: “Twentieth-century marketing (may it rest in peace) was largely about being on-message, about getting talking points consistently right. . . . In contrast, 21st-century marketing will be very different. With ever-gathering force during the past two decades, breakthroughs in brain science have confirmed what we all instinctively know in our gut but often don’t admit to in business: people are primarily emotional decision makers.” This point will be especially important in analyzing Warhol’s appeal.

6 Thompson, 12.

7 Harry Walker Hepner, *Modern Advertising Practices and Principles* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956), 141. Hepner’s attitude seems to be that brand loyalty is something to be earned, not strategically gained through emotional manipulation. Branding, then, is a sign that the company takes pride in its work: “The consumer puts his confidence in the products whose trademarks and names he has learned to respect. He knows that the maker has put his name or trademark on the product and thereby made himself responsible for the quality of the product.” On page 142, Hepner quotes the U.S. Department of Commerce’s stance of trademarks from 1953: “The primary function of a trademark is to indicate origin. However, trademarks also serve to guarantee the quality of the goods bearing the mark and, through advertising, to create and maintain a demand for the product.”
blend the best with careful pains / In skilful combination / And every single can contains / Our business reputation.” The Campbell’s brand was a testament to the soup’s quality.

When Hepner details the three functions of a brand’s trademark, blatant manipulation and consumer deception is not among them.8

A trade symbol has three major functions: (1) It indicates the source of the product. (2) It is an advertisement. (3) It arouses mental imagery favorable to the product. Generally, it should be easy to read and speak, be easily recalled, have a selling idea, be suitable for a line of products, be appropriate for use in export trade, and have pictorial qualities.9

Ads themselves were promoted as informative, promotional, and commercially encouraging. This vague third function, which (as will discussed later) became so important as the twentieth-century continued, is not further developed in this chapter. Hepner’s book is a technical volume aimed at those involved in the profession, not a promotional vehicle aimed at persuading the general public of advertising’s innocuousness, so its lack of attention is not a tactical move. While Marchand may have discovered that advertising during the first half of the twentieth century was more manipulative than documentary, Hepner’s handbook would suggest that the manipulation was not purposefully misleading.

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8 Contemporary advertisers often get into legal trouble for misleading claims, and one of the first examples took place in this pivotal late 1950s – early 1960s time period, cited in Anthony Pratkanis and Elliot Aronson, *Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion* (New York: Henry Holt, 2001), 116: “The first court cases involving deceptive advertising in the United States occurred in the late 1950s and early 1960s. One of the most important cases was brought by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) against Colgate-Palmolive, the makers of Rapid Shave. In one of their television commercials, an actor was shown squirting Rapid Shave onto sandpaper and then, moments later, shaving it clean with just one stroke. When the FTC attempted to repeat this demonstration, they found that sandpaper could not be shaved clean unless moisturized for an hour. Indeed, the makers of the original ad had used Plexiglas covered with sand, not sandpaper."

9 Ibid., 148.
A year after Hepner’s book was published, Vance Packard published *The Hidden Persuaders*, a volume revealing the hidden use of manipulation in advertising. The big revelation of *The Hidden Persuaders* was that consumers do not make purchases based on reason, but rather on emotion. Reciting the virtues of a product was not enough because the product was not all the consumer purchased. Instead, Packard revealed, effective advertising appealed to eight “hidden needs”: emotional security, reassurance of worth, ego-gratification, creative outlets, love objects, sense of power, sense of roots, and immortality.10 Advertisements had, of course, always sold a measure of fantasy. Campbell’s soup ads of the 1940s portrayed happy, healthy, beautiful young wives feeding their cheery husbands and children Campbell’s soup (Fig. A5), and luxurious table settings of expensive china, silver, and crystal bearing hot, enticing soup (Fig. A6). “All car ads,” according to Larry Dobrow, “were pure fantasy – before the creative revolution” of the 1960s.11 The advent of marketing research and emotionally targeted campaigns changed how advertisements were designed. A product’s *image* took the place of a product’s practical reputation.

This upheaval in the ad world came toward the end of Warhol’s commercial success. In 1956, Warhol was the darling of New York’s fashion illustration industry, making some $100,000 a year.12 He had already discovered what the advertising world was still learning to accept: image is everything. Indeed, Warhol’s success both in and out of the high art world does not jibe easily with Hepner’s stance that branding was communication of quality. In interviews and in his publications, Warhol made no concerted attempt to assert his artistic

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superiority in his varied career; if anything, he would seem often to undermine any attempt to make his artistic product serious. For example, in a 1963 radio interview with Ruth Hirschman, Warhol claimed that his Elvis show at the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles took him “five minutes to do” and declined to discuss his eight hour film Sleep beyond saying that “nothing really happens. Just somebody sleeping for eight hours.” He also did not attempt to elevate himself above the other Pop artists; in Popism, Warhol writes about using comic book imagery at the same time as Lichtenstein without making any accusations or backhanded remarks. In fact, Warhol seems to admire Lichtenstein:

Ivan [Karp] had just shown me Lichtenstein’s Ben Day dots and I thought, “Oh, why couldn’t I have thought of that?” Right then I decided that since Roy was doing comics so well, that I would just stop comics altogether and go in other directions where I could come out first – like quantity and repetition.

Warhol’s method flies in the face of 1950s fantasy branding techniques. While branding in the ad world was evolving, branding in the art world was likewise experiencing its own transformation. Coming to the art world, Warhol came up against the branding techniques of Abstract Expressionism, the dominant American art movement of the time.

Before delving too deeply into the branding of the Abstract Expressionists, however, the definition and parameters of artistic branding must be established. To be famous or to attract millions of dollars at auction is not quite the same as being a branded artist, even though money and fame undoubtedly accompany any branded artist. The term “brand”

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13 Ruth Hirschman and Andy Warhol, “Pop Goes the Artist” in I’ll Be Your Mirror: The Selected Andy Warhol Interviews, 31 and 40. Factory favorite Taylor Mead is also involved in this interview, eventually all but taking over for Warhol. Mead answered questions in depth, often with Warhol chiming in briefly to agree with whatever Mead said.

14 Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, Popism: The Warhol Sixties (New York: Harcourt Books, 1980), 22. Karp originally tried to convince Warhol that he could continue using comic imagery because Lichtenstein’s usage was so different from Warhol’s. Warhol refused, and Karp eventually agreed “the territory had been preempted.”
implies a kind of trusted legacy, both in and out of the art world, specifically rooted in the origin of a work of art. The works of a hot contemporary artist may be offered at Christie’s and Sotheby’s, but their current success is no guarantee of long-term name recognition. A branded artist has a reputation established enough to assuage buyers’ fears that he/she is in danger of future irrelevance. Steady interest, such as in publications, journals, auctions, and merchandise, protects against the fading of a branded artist. For a solid foothold, this reputation must extend out of the elite art world. Warhol’s merchandizing is a successful example. Warhol may attract millions of dollars for his fine art works, but very few people can afford them. Inexpensive merchandise (such as posters, tote bags, and t-shirts) allows those who cannot afford a real Warhol to identify with his brand and continue his visibility. Branded artists like Warhol are those whose image and name are such that a wide audience wants to associate with them. By expanding into the awareness of the average consumer and appealing to the emotions of the public, Warhol became not only artistically significant, but also culturally significant. In the most successful cases, works will be worth millions not only because of their historical impact, artistic achievement, or even aesthetic pleasure, but also because the artists who created them are branded – with a name like Monet, Picasso, Pollock, or Warhol, it has to be good.16

15 Thompson, 242. “We never read about the four out of five contemporary works that collectors bring in, and Christie’s or Sotheby’s, or even Phillips or Bonhams, reject for their evening auction. Even artists whose work makes it to auction can have short-lived popularity. Fewer than half of the modern and contemporary artists listed in a Christie’s or Sotheby’s modern and contemporary auction catalogue twenty-five years ago are still offered at any major auctions.”

16 Ibid., 68-9. Thompson tells the story of a portrait of Stalin owned by Sunday Times writer A. A. Gill. In 2007, Christie’s refused to auction the painting due to its subject matter. After Gill asked Damien Hirst to paint and sign a red nose on Stalin’s face, Christie’s agreed to sell the work on an estimate of £8,000-12,000. The painting sold for £140,000 because Damien Hirst signed it. Such is the power of the branded artist.
In order to account for this type of branding among the Abstract Expressionists, one returns to the advertising “experience” concept. While the experience of products was not as important or as nuanced in the commercial realm as it would be in the second half of the twentieth-century, experience had long been a major part of art branding. Museum exhibitions, gallery openings, critical response, auctions, and interviews made up much of the experience of art audiences. The rise of Abstract Expressionism marked the first time the United States was a major art center, and the new work set the standard for American artistic branding and experience. Following the Second World War, the United States was the world’s superpower and New York became a new cultural capitol, instituting an artistic hierarchy that would last until the beginning of the 1960s. The New York School was serious, introspective, artistically tortured, hard drinking, physically violent, and homophobic – characteristics with which subsequent artists like Warhol, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and others would grapple when they made their own attempts at fine art careers.17

The art world was set apart from – set above – the commercial world, evidenced by the later reluctance of Johns and Rauschenberg to put their names on their commercial endeavors.18 Any explicit relationship with commercial art was tantamount to artistic suicide for any up and coming artist while the Abstract Expressionists ruled the scene. Unlike the

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17 Hal Foster, survey in *Pop*, ed. Mark Francis (London: Phaidon, 2010), 18. “Warhol was an acclaimed illustrator, Rosenquist a billboard painter, Ruscha a graphic designer and so on. As might be expected, then, Warhol and company faced some resistance from an art world dedicated to the lofty principles of Abstract Expressionism.” The truly dedicated artists of the Abstract Expressionist movement were considered above such low culture.

18 Fred Lawrence Guiles, *Loner at the Ball: The Life of Andy Warhol* (London: Bantam Press, 1989), 125. Johns and Rauschenberg worked together under the pseudonym “Matson Jones” to remove themselves from the stigma of a commercial career. At this time, Warhol was far more successful financially and was considered more reliable than his contemporaries, but Rauschenberg and Johns were well regarded.
Pop artists who would follow, the Abstract Expressionist crowd and its champions were interested in elevated endeavors beyond mass culture and consumerism. In Clement Greenberg’s famous essay, “Avant-Garde and Kitsch,” the critic decried all the common cultural elements celebrated by the Pop artists, such as

popular, commercial art and literature with their chromeotypes, magazine covers, illustrations, ads, slick and pulp fiction, comics, Tin Pan Alley music, tap dancing, Hollywood movies, etc., etc. For some reason this gigantic apparition has always been taken for granted.\(^{19}\)

One cannot expect the masses to understand or patronize Abstract Expressionism, because theirs is the realm of kitsch, of low-culture, of that which AbEx opposed. Abstract Expressionism’s products were for the art elite. The objective of the movement was, in the words of David and Cecile Shapiro, “to erase the past and invent an original culture. They hoped to achieve greatness by means of a revolutionary upheaval parallel to their revolutionary political sympathies.”\(^{20}\) These grand aspirations fueled competition, both artistically and physically, among the artists. Warhol’s own comments on AbEx rivalries are among the most entertaining:

The world of the Abstract Expressionists was very macho. The painters who used to hang around the Cedar bar on University Place were all hard-driving, two-fisted types who’d grab each other and say things like “I’ll knock your fucking teeth out” and “I’ll steal your

\(^{19}\) Clement Greenberg, “Avant-Garde and Kitsch (1939)” in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 9. Greenberg is merciless: “Kitsch is mechanical and operates by formulas. Kitsch is vicarious experience and faked sensations. Kitsch changes according to style, but remains always the same. Kitsch is the epitome of all that is spurious in the life of our times. Kitsch pretends to demand nothing of its customers except their money – not even their time.”

girl.” In a way, Jackson Pollock had to die the way he did, crashing his car up.\textsuperscript{21}

The persona of the Abstract Expressionists led to a national image of the lot of them as rogue cowboy-types, especially Jackson Pollock as the movement’s poster boy.\textsuperscript{22} Even the title of Pollock’s 1985 biography by Jeffrey Potter, \textit{To a Violent Grave: An Oral Biography of Jackson Pollock}, plays dramatically with this reputation.

The experience of Abstract Expressionism, both in its years of dominance and in contemporary culture, is mixed. On one hand, the movement is one of the most important of the twentieth-century. It helped to establish New York as a new center for avant-garde art and involved some of the most famous artists and expensive artworks of the twentieth-century. Works by both Pollock and de Kooning have sold for far over Warhol’s record $100 million and are among the costliest paintings ever sold.\textsuperscript{23} At prices this high, artistic branding would seemingly be at its best. Critiques of the time, too, were overwhelmingly

\textsuperscript{21} Warhol, \textit{Popism}, 15-6. This, Warhol says, was the state of affairs for the entirety of his commercial career during the 1950s. “The toughness was part of a tradition, it went with their agonized, anguished art.” Warhol also quotes artist Larry Rivers, who comments on what constitutes Pollock’s brand: “[Pollock] was a star painter all right, but that’s no reason to pretend he was a pleasant person. Some people at the Cedar took him very seriously; they would announce what he was doing every single second – ‘There’s Jackson!’ or ‘Jackson just went to the john!’”

\textsuperscript{22} David Anfam, \textit{Abstract Expressionism} (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990), 8-9. Anfam specifically singles Pollock out in terms of public reception of the Abstract Expressionists: “Efforts to stereotype Pollock and by extension the works of his colleagues started soon enough with photographs originally meant to accompany a 1949 \textit{Life} magazine story. In conjunction with the skeptical article published that year they pictured an aggressive brooding figure who would have been identified with the emergent wave of hooliganism in American then and whose creations epitomized the destructive, violent chaos of ‘modern’ art.”

positive; truly critical essays became more and more rare as the movement took hold, as
David and Cecile Shapiro noted in the introduction to their book *Abstract Expressionism: A
Critical Record*. So complete was Abstract Expressionism’s monopoly on the American art
world that the Shapiros suspect no one wanted to publish articles opposing the movement.24
Jackson Pollock became a kind of masculine artistic icon. Pollock’s home and studio have
been turned into a museum, the Pollock-Krasner House & Study Center, where director
Helen A. Harrison has spotted men dressed as Pollock roaming the grounds.25 Like Hepner’s
definition, Pollock’s trademark image became synonymous with AbEx, masculinity, and
artistic compulsions. The persona of Abstract Expressionism was its own advertisement,
promoting an artistic brand of virility to a nation still high on its military victory in WWII.

Yet, for all of its strong personas, media coverage, and cultural influence, the
seriousness of Abstract Expressionism has had difficulties establishing itself in the realms
beyond the art world. The position of Clement Greenberg, one of AbEx’s strongest
supporters, is explored by David and Cecile Shapiro:

> By definition [avant-garde art] is difficult. It *should* be difficult. Its
difficulty guarantees that the masses will shun it and the elite support
it. Thus, the reaction of the audience becomes a litmus test for the
art.26

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24 Shapiro and Shapiro, 22-23. Those critical essays that did get published have rarely been
referenced in AbEx literature. The Shapiros cite a piece written in 1959 by John Canaday for
the *New York Times* (found on 119-21 of their book) for which the author received over 600
letters and at least one death threat.

Director of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center on Long Island reports seeing,
periodically, men dressed like Pollock in blue denim and smoking cigarettes accompanied by
friends with cameras visiting Pollock’s old property.” www.pkhouse.org for more
information on the house itself. See also Helen A. Harrison, *Such Desperate Joy: Imagining

26 Shapiro and Shapiro, 18.
While Greenberg’s opinion is not necessarily representative of the entire movement, it is not an entirely inaccurate portrait of Abstract Expressionism’s reputation. David Anfam:

Yet for all its cachet, Abstract Expressionism will probably never quite find the audience that embraces Impressionism nor the outright popularity enjoyed by Salvador Dali or David Hockney. For that it remains a shade too serious, strange and extreme, like Cubism itself.27

Not only has Abstract Expressionism not experienced the popularity Anfam ascribed to Impressionism, Dali, and Hockney, it has experienced a kind of cultural resistance.

The high art dislike of commercial culture which was dominant during the 1950s has translated to a general lack of commercial Abstract Expressionist products. While the Art Institute of Chicago’s online store offers a Warhol tote bag, scarf, silk tie, and umbrella in a matching, brightly colored checkerboard pattern (Lichtenstein, too, has a tie bearing a comic book style brushstroke), the store offers only a block of adhesive notes and a framed reproduction of Pollock’s Greyed Rainbow. At the Museum of Modern Art’s online store, Pollock posters and books are available, but Warhol posters, books, notebooks, coffee table-style books and several different types of stationery are available. The Pollock-Krasner House & Study Center has no online store, while the Andy Warhol Museum sells notebooks, posters, books, figurines, stationery, magnets, watches, and nightlights. Allposters.com files a total of 696 items under the “Abstract Expressionism” heading and 5,111 items under “Pop Art.”28 Among non-museum offerings, Abstract Expressionist commercial merchandise is

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27 Anfam, 7.

28 Quite the contrary, however, is the Guggenheim’s online store, which sells a Pollock watch and tie, a single Lichtenstein print, and nothing at all related to Warhol. Offers vary from institution to institution, but Warhol merchandise generally outnumbers that for any single Abstract Expressionist artist, and often outnumbers that of all the Abstract Expressionists combined. These searches were accurate as of February 13, 2012. Please see www.artinstituteshop.org, www.guggenheimstore.org, www.momastore.org, and www.warholstore.com for current offerings.
even more difficult find. Quite the contrary, it is difficult to find a commercial product that has not been given the Pop treatment. Unsurprisingly, commercial and novelty goods related to AbEx and its adherents are not as marketable outside of the art realm as those of Pop.

On occasion, the resistance to Abstract Expression takes on its own aggression. Two recent documentaries play with the skepticism with which the movement is often met: 2006’s *Who the #$&% Is Jackson Pollock?* and 2007’s *My Kid Could Paint That.* *Who the #$&% Is Jackson Pollock?* chronicles the adventures of foul-mouthed truck driver Teri Horton, who bought an Abstract Expressionist-style painting for five dollars at a junk store only to discover that what she and her friends considered to be a hideous piece of garbage could be worth millions of dollars if she could prove Pollock painted it. Horton:

> I saw this big canvas with just paint all over it. No picture. It was ugly. There was nothing to it. It was just all these different colors all over a canvas. I mean, to me, a painting has to have something that you can look at and say, “Oh, that really looks cool,” like Norman Rockwell or something like that.\(^\text{29}\)

Various other interviewees throughout the documentary echo Horton’s ignorance of Pollock and her opinion that Abstract Expressionism is ugly. The serious explanations of Pollock’s method made throughout the film – “Energy made visible,” said Pollock collector Ben Heller, and “He was selecting images through his subconscious mind,” said Pollock’s friend and fellow painter Nick Carone – seem to deflate when Teri Horton exclaims, “Who the fuck is Jackson Pollock?” and declares that she and her girlfriend had intended to throw darts at it before discovering it might be worth millions. The film centers on the charmingly crass Horton as she butts heads with dealers, historians, and other experts in her quest to prove the authenticity of her painting. The documentary pokes fun at the art establishment,

\(^{29}\) Teri Horton in *Who the #$&% Is Jackson Pollock?*, written and directed by Harry Moses (Los Angeles: Picturehouse, 2006), DVD.
such as playing a piece of bouncy clarinet music while former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Thomas Hoving, stares at the work, turns his head upside down, runs his hands over the piece, and adjusts and readjusts his thick glasses.\textsuperscript{30} The members of the art world come off very badly in the documentary, and seem dismissive and even disdainful of anyone not initiated into the art elite.

Yet, the art elite have every reason to pay little attention to the opinions of those who have not studied art. Horton’s protestations that the work is absolutely a Pollock are meaningless because she is an entirely unreliable source; she and her friends had no idea who Pollock \textit{was}, let alone that his works are among the most coveted in the world. The interviewees who dismiss her opinion are quite right to do so given her lack of expertise. Still, whether or not the work is a Pollock, the average person’s reactions to Abstract Expressionism are perhaps not too far removed from Horton’s.\textsuperscript{31} Such is indicated in the title, if not always the content, of \textit{My Kid Could Paint That}, which plays on the clichéd remark that anybody could complete an abstracted work of art. In \textit{My Kid Could Paint That}, the critically and financially successful abstract works of four-year-old Marla Olmstead come under fire when her father is accused of interfering with her artwork. While the film leaves the viewer with the impression that Marla executed the works under the direction (and possibly with the interference) of her father, a failed painter himself, the title is apropos


\textsuperscript{31} For the purpose of this thesis, the validity of the claims made on either side of the debate is irrelevant. The issue is how the everyman is depicted responding to Abstract Expressionism, and how the audience to whom this documentary was marketed reacted.
because the sentiment expressed is familiar— even if the kid in this case could, in fact, not paint that.

The general population is often suspicious of art that they feel could be completed by anyone. Michael Kimmelman, chief art critic for the New York Times, addresses this problem in an interview filmed for My Kid Could Paint That:

In a case like Marla, because it touches on all sorts of deep-rooted issues about whether modern art is real or not, it has a kind of strange, hypnotic appeal to it. So I wrote something [for the Times] . . . about the complications of abstract art. Why people don’t seem to really feel that there is some way of judging what’s good, what’s bad. There is this large idea out there that abstract art, and modern art in general, has no standards, no truths, or something. And that if a child can do it, that it sort of pulls the veil off this con game, and shows that somebody who’s four years old can do something that’s every bit as good as what a famous artist who sells pictures for millions of dollars can do. That idea that art is not really about some truth, but it’s about some lie that’s being foisted on the public. There’s a debunking quality to it, that this seems genuine and honest, but that abstract art in general, and modern art, is one kind of racket, is a put-on.

If this were not enough condemnation, Elizabeth Cohen, writer for the Press & Sun Bulletin who wrote up the first article on Marla Olmstead, says that her own mother disliked Pollock because she felt as though his paintings were saying, “You’re stupid and I’m not, and there’s people smarter than you who get me.” Such sentiments are not unusual or new; in fact, Bradford R. Collins writes: “Without exception, the historians of Abstract Expressionism insist that the popular press was consistently hostile to the movement around 1950.”

Collins also refers to a 1948 article published in Life magazine, “A Life Round Table on

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32 Michael Kimmelman and Elizabeth Cohen, interviewed in My Kid Could Paint That, directed by Amir Bar-Lev (New York: Sony Pictures Classics, 2007), DVD.

Modern Art,” in which the panel made up a list of tips for the “layman” who struggles, including an item reading:

- He should look devotedly at the picture, rather than at himself, or at any aspect of his environment. The picture must speak. If it conveys nothing to him, then he should remember that the fault may be in him, not in the artist.34

When sentiments like this are published, reactions like that of Elizabeth Cohen’s mother seem unavoidable. The public interprets such a statement as the artistic version of, “It’s not me, it’s you who’s stupid.”

In some ways, the reputation of Abstract Expressionism outside of the art world is a public relations nightmare. The movement breaks all three of Dan Hill’s rules relating to the elements of branding, published in his book *Emotionomics: Leveraging Emotions for Business Success:* (1) reflected beliefs, (2) belonging, and (3) telling a story.35 First, Hill writes that a company must be aware of the beliefs of its demographic and work to protect them, lest the company separate from its audience. Such a position mirrors the Packard hidden needs of emotional security, reassurance of worth, ego-gratification, and sense of power. Avant-garde Abstract Expressionism was a fierce disruption rather than a strengthening of artistic expectations. Hill argues that the link between beliefs and a product’s image leads customers to establish brand loyalty, or the unthinking and often irrational consumption of a good or service. AbEx was never able to forge those bonds with the general population because the population’s beliefs were not only unsupported by the movement, but were largely

34 This section, quoted in Collins, 286, was originally published in Russell W. Davenport, “A *Life* Round Table on Modern Art: Fifteen Distinguished Critics and Connoisseurs Undertake to Clarify the Strange Art of Today,” *Life,* October 11, 1948, 56-68, 70, 75-76, 78-79. Strangely, the long and detailed article regarding the seriousness of high art is interspersed with the kinds of kitschy advertisements that would later be utilized by the Pop artists.

interpreted as being *attacked* by the movement. Abstract Expressionism left many ordinary Americans feeling insecure at best, and defensive at worst.

Second, Hill writes that a company should create an identity that fits consumers so that they feel that they *belong* with the product. In *About Face: The Secrets of Emotionally Effective Advertising*, Hill refers to his company’s (Sensory Logic) findings regarding the effect of the familiar on consumers:

> We’ve often seen a surge in both emotional engagement and positive feelings when something very familiar comes on screen, even if the treatment isn’t that special.\(^{36}\)

In advertising, familiarity encourages positive relations between a company or product and a consumer. Abstract Expressionism’s unfamiliarity has the tendency, demonstrated in Elizabeth Cohen’s statement that Pollock’s paintings made her mother feel “stupid,” to alienate consumers who are not members of the art elite instead of making them feel as though they belong in the same realm as the artwork. Again, this is breaking the rules of Packard’s hidden needs, including the previously mentioned emotional security, ego-gratification, and sense of power. Abstract Expressionism also does not follow the conditions related to the need for a sense of roots, or tradition. Because it had little aesthetic similarity to the previously prevailing American art styles, the general population had little reason to feel bonded to the movement.

Third (though this is the most successful of the three elements for the Abstract Expressionists), the movement failed to, as Hill puts it, tell a story that would attract consumers. A company must have a strong personality with which the population wants to associate to engender loyalty. As has been discussed, Abstract Expressionism has a cast of colorful characters whose temperamental exploits have become the stuff of legend, but this

\(^{36}\) Hill, *About Face*, 46.
story/personality has not been effective enough to overcome its failure in the first two elements and it was not fashionable as the 1950s came to a close. By the rise of the Pop movement, the aggressive personality of the Abstract Expressionists had become more caricature than character. Warhol ridiculed the idea of the Pop artists behaving toward each other the way the AbEx crowd did:

The art world sure was different in those days. I tried to imagine myself in a bar striding over to, say, Roy Lichtenstein and asking him to “step outside” because I’d heard he’d insulted my soup cans. I mean, how corny.37

Additionally, even in its heyday, advertisers did not embrace Abstract Expressionism or specific artists in the 1950s the way they would Pop art and Warhol in the 1960s. Visual and textual allusions to Pop art in various advertisements could be found within the pages of magazines like Life. During the 1950s, advertisements simply did not make reference to Abstract Expressionism.

Of course, to condemn Abstract Expressionism because it does not follow what contemporary advertisers identify as key points in marketing would be to ignore what the movement wanted to accomplish. These artists did not want to be involved in consumerism, so judging them on those grounds would be ahistorical. In the realm of high art, which the Abstract Expressionists wanted to occupy, the Abstract Expressionist brand was and is still taken very seriously, and is perhaps even gaining ground outside of the art world.38 The atmosphere the AbEx crowd established in the American art market and in the American public, however, contributed to the social scene that allowed for the explosion of Pop when

37 Warhol and Hackett, 18.

38 Shapiro and Shapiro, 3. “Most men and women born since Abstract Expressionism became a factor in American art accept its legitimacy without question. Many of them, indeed, have been among its strongest supporters.”
Abstract Expressionism’s hold on the art world loosened as the revolutionary 1960s arrived. The popularity of Abstract Expressionism among painters transformed the anguished, highly personal gesture of the original generation into what William Rubin called a “formula,” and the movement no longer held the attention of the nation.\(^{39}\) Pop was on its way and it was bringing a whole new art world with it.

CHAPTER II

“PARTS OF THE STARS”: THE BRANDING OF ANDY WARHOL

Come writers and critics who prophesize with your pen / And keep your eyes wide, the chance won’t come again / And don’t speak too soon, for the wheel’s still in spin / And there’s no tellin’ who that’s it’s namin’ / For the loser now will be later to win / For the times they are a-changin’.

Bob Dylan, “The Times They Are A-Changin’”

At a May 2007 Christie’s auction of post-war and contemporary art, Andy Warhol was the star. Lot 15, Warhol’s gruesome *Green Car Crash (Green Burning Car I)* (Fig. A7), was the sole subject of a 106-page catalog. The work sold for $71,720,000, more than doubling both the $25-35 million estimate and the second most expensive work of the night. The second most expensive work was also a Warhol, *Lemon Marilyn* from 1962 (Fig. A8), which sold for $28,040,000.¹ De Kooning, Johns, and Donald Judd rounded out the rest of the top five, with another Warhol (a self-portrait) ranking sixth (it sold for $8,216,000). Three other Warhols sold that night, two bringing more than was estimated, and all breaking the million-dollar mark.² In *I Sold Andy Warhol (Too Soon)*, Richard Polsky marvels at the *Green Car Crash*’s place in the sudden skyrocketing of contemporary art prices and noted that such a market did not exist when Warhol entered the fine art game in the early 1960s.³ Arriving during the heyday of Abstract Expressionism, Warhol ventured into a high art world that at

¹ Richard Polsky, introduction in *I Sold Andy Warhol (Too Soon)* (New York: Other Press, 2009), 1-4. The previous record for a Warhol painting was $17.3 million. “As a thirty year veteran of the art world, I had never seen anything like the marketing effort behind *Green Car Crash*. Everything felt so over the top. As I thumbed the catalog’s pages, I marveled at all of the superlatives used to describe the painting: *masterpiece, extraordinary, powerful, challenging, and provocative*. There were scholarly essays, which spoke of the painting in solemn tones, as if it were the Holy Grail” (p. 1).


first wanted very little to do this him. He was commercial, fey, superficial, and cultivated a
dull-witted persona. The art world of the 1950s, of Greenberg, of Pollock, and of serious
introspection had no place for such an artist. But the cultural shifts of the 1960s created a
new artistic space for the Pop movement and a new artistic role for Warhol to fill. In 1982,
Robert Hughes wrote in the New York Review of Books about the changes during the post-war
period:

By today’s standards, the art world was virginally naïve about the
mass media and what they could do. . . . “Publicity” meant a notice in
The New York Times, a paragraph or two long, followed eventually by
an article in Art News which perhaps five thousand people would
read. . . . One might woo a critic, but not a fashion correspondent, a
TV producer, or the editor of Vogue. To be one’s own PR outfit was,
in the eyes of the New York artists of the Forties or Fifties, nearly
unthinkable – hence the contempt for Salvador Dalí. But in the
1960s, all that began to change, as the art world gradually shed its
idealist premises and its sense of outsidership and began to turn into
the Art Business.4

The times, they were a-changin’.

The Abstract Expressionist influence on the early stages of Pop manifested in the
works and in the behavior of the new generation. Johns and Rauschenberg hid their
involvement in commercial work through the use of the pseudonym “Matson Jones” and
tried to avoid being associated with the openly homosexual members of the commercial and
fashion worlds.5 So powerful was the homophobia of the 1950s art scene that Johns and
Rauschenberg avoided Warhol at openings, despite his desperate desire to associate with
them. Although Johns and Rauschenberg were homosexuals with connections to

Alan R. Pratt (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997), 149. Obviously, Dalí set a kind of
standard for public persona in the twentieth century and even made an appearance on the
popular television program, What’s My Line? and produced a line of perfumes for men and
woman in lip-shaped bottles with nose-shaped stoppers and other surreal shapes.

5 Bockris, 129.
commercial art, they shied away from any public acknowledgement of either. Warhol’s being gay and commercial was bad enough, but he was *openly* both. Emile de Antonio (filmmaker, artists’ agent, and a friend of Johns and Rauschenberg) explained their reluctance to socialize with Warhol:

First, the post-Abstract Expressionist sensibility is, of course, a homosexual one, but these two guys wear three-button suits – they were in the army or navy or something! Second, you make them nervous because you *collect* paintings, and traditionally artists don’t buy the work of other artists, it just isn’t done. And third . . . you’re a commercial artist, which really bugs them because when they do commercial art – windows and other jobs I find them – they do it just ‘to survive.’ They won’t even use their real names. Whereas you’ve *won* prizes! You’re famous for it!6

Warhol exaggerated the characteristics that made him undesirable, while artists like Johns and Rauschenberg were still working within many of the boundaries set by the Abstract Expressionists.

Warhol also dealt with Abstract Expressionism very differently from his neo-Dada/proto-Pop predecessors. Johns and Rauschenberg critiqued the Abstract Expressionist persona and ideology in its own terms. Johns’s 1960 *Painting with Two Balls* (Fig. A9) is a clever attack on the masculinity associated with action painting, but the critique is manifested within the conditions of Abstract Expressionism itself: Johns painted an abstract work to attack abstract work. Rauschenberg, too, engaged directly with Abstract Expressionism by incorporating the work of one of Abstract Expressionism’s heroes into his oeuvre; 1952’s scandalous *Erased de Kooning* has been called “iconoclastic” by Lucy Lippard, indicating the prestige of Abstract Expressionism and the difficulty artists faced in opposing

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6 Warhol and Hackett, 14.
the reigning movement. On the contrary, Warhol used Abstract Expressionist indexical trace in his early comic book and Pop works (1960-1), not because he wanted to mount an assault on the movement, but because he thought that it was the only way to sell a work. In fact, according to Ruth Kligman, a fixture of the abstract art world, Warhol “was fascinated with de Kooning and Pollock . . . he wanted to be a part of that lineage.” Warhol’s only attack on Abstract Expressionism was his lack of capitulation to their artistic and masculine ideals, and that was quite enough. The Abstract Expressionists in general looked down on Warhol, and, on one occasion in 1968, a drunk de Kooning reportedly attacked Warhol as a “killer of art.”

As early as 1958, though, a cultural shift against Abstract Expressionism’s rule began. While much has been made of the internal restlessness of the art world that led to the overthrowing of AbEx, the face of American culture itself went through a period of

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7 Lucy Lippard, introduction in Pop Art, ed. Lucy Lippard (New York: Praeger, 1970), 22. Rauschenberg saw the act as poetry. He had first tried erasing his own works, but found that he had to erase something important to make it matter. As de Kooning was arguably the most important Abstract Expressionist at that time, Rauschenberg thought it had to be a de Kooning. See “Robert Rauschenberg – Erased de Kooning,” [n.d.], video clip, accessed February 12, 2012, www.youtube.com, in which an older Rauschenberg discusses the piece. This video also highlights the difference between Rauschenberg and Warhol in terms of personality. Rauschenberg is warm and thoughtful, laughing personably throughout his retelling of asking de Kooning for a work to erase. Warhol was consistently cold, detached, and obtuse in interviews.

8 Warhol stopped using the Abstract Expressionist brushstrokes after Emile de Antonio told him to pursue his clean, mechanical aesthetic.

9 Bockris, Warhol, 162. Kligman was a muse of sorts for such AbEx greats as Franz Kline, de Kooning, and Pollock. She and Warhol were friends until she married in 1964.

10 Bockris, Life and Death, 244-5. Tom Hedley, an editor at Esquire magazine, saw de Kooning yell at Warhol at a party hosted by Larry Rivers. De Kooning reportedly said: “You’re a killer of art, you’re a killer of beauty, and you’re even a killer of laughter. I can’t bear your work!”
transformation.\textsuperscript{11} Christin Mamiya points to the increasingly corporate nature of American businesses and mass production as an engine of cultural change, as well as the growing awareness that advertisers needed to establish more developed desire for their products. Such changes help to account for the flourishing of consumerism during the late 1950s and early 1960s. The ever-mounting importance of advertising in the daily lives of Americans, then, led to the kind of public mentality that made Pop Art appealing.\textsuperscript{12} Packard’s 1957 rule of playing to a demographic’s needs applies to Pop art. Pop, by associating with advertising seen in everyday life, spoke to the public. Yet, Pop Art cannot be explained just by burgeoning American consumerism. As the 1960s began, nearly half of the American population was under the age of twenty-five, a fact that shook up and then reformed advertising, as Larry Dobrow explains:

\begin{quote}
The conventional buttoned-down minds that were in control of the [advertising] business couldn’t communicate effectively with the new, young, increasingly skeptical consumer of the sixties. As a result, agencies began to entertain the prospect of employing writers and artists who didn’t fit into any previously known mold.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

The state of American advertising mirrored the state of American art. The young population felt little affinity toward Abstract Expressionism, with its tortured stars and elitist reputation. America’s youths were attracted to counterculture, and they were drawn to a form of art that threatened Abstract Expressionism’s monolithic presence.

\textsuperscript{11} See Bourdon, 62-4.


\textsuperscript{13} Dobrow, 9 and 11.
Another factor in Pop Art’s popularity is its intellectual availability. Warhol commented, perhaps not inaccurately, on the state of the American public’s awareness of art at this transitional time:

In the late post-Abstract Expressionist days, the days right before Pop, there were only a few people in the art world who knew who was good, and the people who were good knew who else was good. It was all like private information; the art public hadn’t picked up on it yet.14

Abstract Expressionism and the public never fully established positive relations, leaving the vernacular imagery of Pop art open to cull favor as advertising took an increasingly visible role in American life and an increasingly important role in the shaping of the public’s perception of itself. Not all vernacular imagery, however, is created equal and not all of the Pop artists enjoyed the same level of success.15 While some of Warhol’s images – Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley, Campbell’s soup cans and Brillo boxes – have become Pop art icons, not all of Warhol’s works have become cultural symbols. Green Car Crash, for example, may have sold for more than $71 million, but it is largely unknown to the general population. Lemon Marilyn, which sold for less than half that sum is far more recognizable as a Warhol. Those images that have attained art historical celebrity have done so because of a combination of product reputation, experience, and Warhol’s increasing status as an American institution.

14 Warhol and Hackett, 10.

15 Not every piece of commercial art would have been suitable for Pop works, as evidenced by an interview conducted by Patrick S. Smith with Nathan Gluck, one of Warhol’s most important assistants. See Patrick S. Smith, “Commercial Art Assistants,” in Warhol: Conversations about the Artist (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), 67. “Andy told me to ‘go to the supermarket and find me some boxes.’ So I went to the supermarket and – dumb me! – picked out very nice boxes. . . . And Andy said, ‘No. No. No. Not like these.’ And then he did Brillo, Kellogg’s Corn Flakes, and Mott’s Apple Juice.” Warhol had a particular aesthetic in mind and did not randomly choose his subjects.
Warhol’s subject matter was often already recognizable, distinctly American, and effectively branded. Coca-Cola, the source of perhaps Warhol’s first real purely Pop work, has been the subject of books like Mark Pendergrast’s *For God, Country, and Coca-Cola: The Definitive History of the Great American Soft Drink and Company That Makes It* and Frederick L. Allen’s *Secret Formula: How Brilliant Marketing and Relentless Salesmanship Made Coca-Cola the Best-Known Product in the World*. Such titles indicate both the “American-ness” of Coca-Cola and the efficacy of its marketing campaigns. The Campbell’s company has been written about in Douglas Collins’s *America’s Favorite Food: The Story of the Campbell Soup Company* and Martha Esposito Shea’s *Campbell Soup Company*, a book in the Images of America series – again, bringing attention to Campbell as an American company. Even Marilyn Monroe has been explicitly labeled American in S. Paige Baty’s *American Monroe: The Making of a Body Politic*. Elvis Presley, Elizabeth Taylor, Brillo boxes, Jackie Kennedy, and the American dollar sign all indicate not only Warhol’s interest in popular culture, but in *American* popular culture specifically. While Warhol also created works of Mao Tse-tung, Queen Elizabeth II, and other figures, it is his images of American popular culture that have often been elevated to the realms of cultural icons.


17 See Warhol, *Popism*, 6, for his story of Emile de Antonio telling him that his Coke painting with Abstract Expressionism brushstrokes was “a piece of shit” and to pursue the crisp aesthetic of the other, more mechanically conceived Coke painting beside it.

The Campbell’s soup can is among the most identifiable Warholian artistic subjects, a status referenced in the title of Gary Indiana’s *Andy Warhol and the Can that Sold the World* and in the cover design of *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, which mimics the can’s signature red and white arrangement (even Warhol’s name is in the Campbell’s script).¹⁹ Warhol’s first major scandal surrounded the 1962 exhibition of 32 *Campbell’s Soup Cans* at the Los Angeles Ferus Gallery. The line between art and commodity was blurred at this show through the displaying of the various paintings on a shelf – and further commented upon and mocked by a nearby gallery dealer who filled his own window with real Campbell’s soup cans.²⁰ Over the years, a mixed critical response has given way to the establishment of the *Campbell’s Soup Cans* as some of the most marketable images of archetypal Pop art.²¹ Allposters.com, MoMA, and the Warhol Museum all sell a variety of items bearing the soup can image. Warhol, in choosing Campbell’s, elected to associate himself with an established, distinctly American company whose products were already elements of Americana.

Long before Warhol made the symbol his own, Campbell’s had been carving out a position in the average American home and capitalizing on the hidden needs of consumers.


²⁰ Bockris, *Warhol*, 149, quotes Irving Blum: “People walking into the gallery were extremely mystified. The artists in California were provoked by these paintings but they tended to shrug, not really condemn. There was a lot of amusement. A gallery dealer up the road bought dozens of Campbell’s soup cans, put them in the window, and said ‘Buy them cheaper here – 60¢ for three cans.’ That was publicized. So there was a lot of hilarity concerning them. Not a great deal of serious interest.”

²¹ A brief but amusing article in *Life* magazine, which includes several nice full-color images, discusses not the Ferus exhibition, but a 1964 supermarket-style exhibition at Paul Bianchini’s New York gallery. One of Warhol’s soup cans was among the most expensive displayed at the gallery; it could be purchased for $1,500. Real cans of Campbell’s soup signed by Warhol could be purchased for $6 and Brillo boxes could be purchased for $350. See “You Think This Is a Supermarket?” *Life*, November 20, 1964, 138-140, and Calvin Tomkins, “Art or Not, It’s Food for Thought,” *Life*, November 20, 1964, 143-4: “Besides, supermarket food is so America.”
Through the 1940s, Campbell’s print advertising emphasized the American roots of the company and the relationship between the soup of the past and the soup of the present. A 1946 ad (Fig. A10) is flanked by a housewife of 1776 (clearly playing on the historically significant year) and a housewife of 1946, each cooking chicken noodle soup in her own way: the woman of 1776 in a big pot, the woman of 1946 with a can of Campbell’s. World War II also strengthened the relationship between America and Campbell’s, with advertisements proclaiming that Campbell’s chicken noodle soup was “as American as Yankee Doodle” (Fig. A11).22 Campbell’s directly referenced the impact of the war and the power of soup to defeat the Axis, appealing to the thousands of families whose sons, brothers, husbands, and fathers were fighting overseas. In fact, Claude R. Wickard, secretary of agriculture, made a photographic appearance over the words “FOOD IS WINNING THE WAR” in a 1943 advertisement (Fig. A12). The ad acknowledges food rationing and shortages, even stating that Campbell’s would not be as readily available as it usually was because it was needed overseas. Campbell’s offered comfort; our boys were eating well no matter where they were stationed (Fig. A13), and that was solace for the nation. When Campbell’s began running post-war ads (Fig. A14) declaring that Campbell’s tomato juice was again fully stocked in grocery stores, the accompanying sentiment seemed to be that the abundance of Campbell’s products was a sign that the nation was returning to normal once again – “Back before the war, when Campbell’s Tomato Juice was in full supply, folks made it the largest-selling tomato juice in America. So no wonder, with stocks full again, they’re coming back to Campbell’s.” Campbell’s status as America’s most beloved soup was solidified by

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22 Another advertisement (published in *Life* magazine on January 31, 1949) also plays with the Yankee Doodle association with the jingle: “I’m Yankee bold, and Yankee brave, / A Yankee Doodle dandy; / Take my advice – for soup that’s nice / Keep Chicken Noodle handy!”
1950 when Campbell’s advertising asserted that 27 million Americans had soup every day for lunch.

Warhol’s use of established imagery encouraged the development of emotional bonds between the artwork and the audience. By the time Warhol began painting and drawing the Campbell’s label, the soup cans had been present in stores and in popular magazines for decades. The ties forged by the associations with tradition and with America transferred to Warhol’s images; the Campbell’s soup can became archetypal American Pop because the can was archetypal American commercial imagery. The link was even more personal when Warhol stated that he decided to create Campbell’s works because he ate soup for lunch every day for twenty years with a sandwich, making him one of the 27 million to which Campbell’s advertising referred.23 Warhol was not just an artist creating works of high art in an elite world, but was just like the rest of us, eating a can of Campbell’s soup every day. The repetitive imagery of the *Campbell’s Soup Cans* was also a familiar sight, although it was a sight that had, up to that point, gone largely unnoticed; Henry Geldzahler wrote that “we have seen Campbell’s soup ads, but never in the isolation and starkness of Warhol’s presentation.”24 Warholian seriality is found in various Campbell’s print advertisements, such as an early 1937 advertisement with a shelf of cans behind a grocer and a row of soup drawings across the bottom (Fig. A15) and in another even more striking advertisement of soup rows from 1947 (Fig. A16). Warhol utilized the commonplace and

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23 Andy Warhol in Glenn O’Brien, “Interview: Andy Warhol,” in *I’ll Be Your Mirror*, 242. “I had Campbell’s soup every day for lunch for about 20 years. And a sandwich.” Gary Indiana claims that a Factory insider revealed that Warhol actually hated Campbell’s soup, but the assertion is not cited. See Gary Indiana, *Andy Warhol and the Can that Sold the World* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 106. “One thing he didn’t want in his life was to actually eat Campbell’s soup, since he’d had it for lunch every day throughout twenty years of grinding poverty. One of Warhol’s Factory familiars recalls that Andy hated Campbell’s soup.”

24 Geldzahler, 34.
translated it into high art, aided by the preexisting relationship between the public and the imagery.

The same could be said for Warhol’s many *Marilyns* coming directly on the heels of her untimely death. The emotions connected to the late actress encouraged connections with Warhol’s works. Indeed, in 1962 Michael Fried was so concerned about the ties to Marilyn Monroe that he assumed future generations, ignorant of her story,

...will not be as moved by Warhol’s beautiful, vulgar, heart-breaking icons of Marilyn Monroe as I am. These, I think, are the most successful pieces in the [current show at the Stable], far more successful than, for example, the comparable heads of Troy Donahue – because the fact remains that Marilyn is one of the overriding myths of our time while Donahue is not.

As Tony Scherman and David Dalton have noted, Fried did not take into account that Marilyn’s iconic status would last, but Fried was quite right that the *Marilyns* would have more staying power than the *Troy Donahues*. The success of Warhol’s imagery hinges on a delicate balance of subject matter, treatment, and degree of public involvement. Troy Donahue was, as Fried noted, not on the cultural level of Marilyn Monroe so the *Troy Donahues* have not become as iconically Warholian. Artistic success has translated into commercial success; Warhol’s *Marilyns* are marketed on many goods – shirts, posters, note cards, etc. – but the *Troy Donahues* are not. Fried also underestimated the power of Warhol’s own myth to contribute to Marilyn Monroe’s popularity and marketability in the art world.

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26 Tony Scherman and David Dalton, *Pop: The Genius of Andy Warhol* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 125-6. Scherman and Dalton also note that Warhol’s treatment of Marilyn is “wholly artificial. The colors are those of advertising, which Andy knew how to deploy as well as anyone.”
Many other Pop artists, such as Richard Hamilton and Allan D’Archangelo, completed works of art involving the film star, but Warhol’s *Marilyns* are the most iconic.

Still, while his taste in subject matter was not infallible, Warhol had a good eye for picking out the pop culture figures that would become iconic. His famous *Elvis* series, the sole subject of a 1963 exhibition at the Ferus Gallery, was based on a promotional still from the 1960 B movie *Flaming Star*, one of Elvis’s failed attempts to become a serious actor. The movie has been largely forgotten, but Warhol’s image of Elvis as the gun slinging character has endured and set the record for the highest priced Warhol work to date. Warhol’s best known celebrity works involve singular celebrities who were significant at the moment he chose them and whose significance persisted and even grew in the decades that followed. Marilyn Monroe, Elvis, and Liz Taylor are no longer people; they are cultural idols.

Warhol chose Marilyn because she was, unmistakably, Marilyn Monroe (and she had just died, becoming “forever Marilyn,” in an unfortunate sense, as she had looked in 1953); Elvis because no other Elvis existed; and Liz because, with the exception of Faye Dunaway, Liz Taylor was the last true Hollywood movie star.

A piece of Warhol merchandise decorated with his images of Marilyn Monroe associates the owner with Warhol, Monroe, and the cultural signs connected to them.

While subject matter is of course an important element of Warhol’s marketability, one has to wonder to what extent Warhol’s involvement encouraged the establishment of iconic status. In *America’s Favorite Food*, Douglas Collins is dismissive of Warhol’s impact on the marketability of the Campbell’s image. In reference to then-president W. B. Murphy’s

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concern that Warhol’s works “might do some harm to the company’s reputation,” Collins writes:

In some limited sense . . . Murphy’s concern was well founded; Warhol and the Campbell’s Soup can had become forever allied, at least in the minds of art historians. “Tomato soup will never just be tomato soup again,” declared the art critic Ivan Karp, a comment that . . . turned out to be, at least in terms of general consumer appreciation, ridiculous. . . . Furthermore, despite executives’ concern, Warhol’s work had no discernable effect upon the prosperity or reputation of the Campbell Soup Company. Earnings continued to rise, as they had throughout most of the company’s history; there was no falloff in the sales of Tomato or any of the other soups.29

Collins seems to believe that, (1) the Campbell’s image was already iconic before Warhol decided to use it, (2) the connection between Campbell’s and Pop art is largely in the realm of art history, (3) that Warhol’s use of the image had no effect on the Campbell’s soup experience, and (4) that any effect Warhol could have had on the product’s appeal would have been negative. Collins’ trivializing attitude toward Warhol’s Campbell’s Soup Cans, however, is countered immediately after this passage when he mentions the Warhol work commissioned by the Campbell Soup Company in 1985. Such a commission would indicate that Warhol’s presence did have an important effect on the company’s reputation – and that the effect was positive. (This is further enforced by the eleven-page spread Collins dedicates to Warhol’s Campbell’s works.)30 Even the forward of this book, written by Nathalie Dupree, contradicts Collin’s dismissal:

While studying for my advanced certificate in culinary arts at the Cordon Bleu Cooking School in London, I became homesick. Off I trotted to the posh store Harrod’s – or was it Fortnum and Masons?


30 Ibid., 188-99.
– and bought a can of Chicken Noodle Soup. . . One day a man turned to me and said, “Did they copy that can from the artist Andy Warhol or did he copy it from them?” I laughed and said Campbell’s came first.31

Collins is not wrong that the Campbell’s image was iconic before Warhol’s usage; the red and white label had been a staple of grocery stores and home pantries for decades. But Collins does not address Warhol’s power to transform the way that icon operated in popular American culture. As Dupree’s forward suggests, Warhol’s impact on the Campbell’s label is more than art historical fantasy.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Campbell’s targeted demographic was clearly housewives and mothers. Advertisements extolled the virtues of soup for pleasing hungry husbands and raising healthy children. Campbell’s was a product deeply connected to the tradition of American housewives and was as good as homemade. The housewife fantasy did not stop at family and tradition; in some cases, the soup was even offered as a luxury item suitable for fancy dinner parties. In an early 1947 advertisement (Fig. A17), a glamorous woman in a finely furnished house stands in front of her fancy dining room, complete with French doors and a chandelier, and declares, via accompanying text, that cream of mushroom soup is “a ‘must’ for entertaining.” The advertisements sold a fantasy life of being a perfect mother and hostess. Even if one did not hold lavish parties, possessing a can or two of cream of mushroom soup meant that one could entertain at a moment’s notice if necessary (or could fantasize about being the kind of woman of whom such entertaining was expected). The soup was a conduit of domestic fantasy. The can itself, though always present, was not a feature of the ads; the main narrative was one of domestic bliss, courtesy of the Campbell Soup Company. The ads of the 1940s tended to include drawings

31 Nathalie Dupree, foreword to America’s Favorite Food, 7.
specifically of the women themselves cooking for their loving families or encouraging their female audience to “admit that we can’t make vegetable soup any better than Campbell’s!” (Fig. A18). Such a sentiment absolved housewives of any guilt they may have felt in serving canned soup rather than homemade. In the 1950s, figural images of the consumer waned, but the emphasis was still on the soup or its quality components rather than the Campbell’s image. The fantasy of the elements of the 1940s, however, still lived on through the 1950s (Fig. A19). Campbell’s frozen Green Pea with Ham Soup was not a last minute dinner, but rather a special meal worthy of being served in elaborate chinaware and served with a silver ladle.

The Campbell’s advertisements of the 1960s prior to Warhol’s Campbell’s show at the Ferus bear the overall hallmarks of the advertising revolution. The ads were cleaner, more dynamic, bore less text, and had more visual impact. The major change in Campbell’s advertising, however, did not arrive until 1965 when Campbell’s ran an advertisement that directly referenced the can’s role in Pop art (Fig. A20): “Any contemporary collection of the creative masterpieces mother cooks up in the kitchen will no doubt include a can of Campbell’s Tomato Soup.” Far from Collins’ statement that Warhol had little impact on the consumption of Campbell’s, this advertisement indicates that Warhol and Pop had enough influence to change the marketing of the soup. The configuration of small works in this advertisement also contributes to the fresh, dynamic feel. The consumer’s eye moves in circles around the ad, from one Pop-like work to the next, finally coming to rest on the large Warhol-esque can weighing down the bottom before circling around again. While this advertisement does not mention Warhol anywhere, it is clearly referencing, not just Pop art in general, but Warhol in particular. In 1966 and 1967, Campbell’s began to incorporate the red and white label into their advertisements, not only on the soup cans themselves, but on
mugs full of soup (Figs. A21-A22). The familiar label, the grocery store icon, was now being
displayed as a consumable entity. These advertisements no longer mention mother in the
kitchen, father coming home to a delicious Campbell’s meal, or hungry but healthy children.
Campbell’s was moving away from an image of domestic bliss toward a more modish image.

Through 1968-70, the market on Campbell’s merchandise seemed to explode. Not
only did Campbell’s continue to advertise with signature mugs (Fig. A23), but the company
also began to make this merchandise available for purchase: mugs, tote bags, towels, bowls,
dresses, and, perhaps bizarrely, even a music record (Figs. A24-A29). Lest one think that this
emergence of Campbell’s goods was entirely unrelated to the popularity of Pop art, a 1968
advertisement for soup bowls specifically refers to the products as “Campbell’s Pop-Art”
bowls (Fig. A30). Collin’s protestation that Warhol had no effect on Campbell’s
marketability is countered by this frank affiliation with the movement. This venture into
selling Campbell’s products was not, however, the first time Campbell’s merchandise had
been marketed. Through the 1950s, multi-page spreads offered dozens of items starring the
Campbell’s kids, the chubby-cheeked cartoon characters who had accompanied Campbell’s
advertisements for decades: Campbell’s kids fabrics, wall decals, play cooking sets, pretend
vacuums, doll carriages, party napkins, miniature china cabinets, placemats, books, wall
plaques, trucks, squeeze toys, and footed pajamas. The 1950s marketed Campbell’s goods to
children and their mothers, which was fitting because of the overall Campbell’s marketing to
housewives. At that time, Campbell’s had been presented as a homey, wholesome product
suitable for children’s consumption. The 1960s marketed Campbell’s goods to a new
demographic.

The Campbell’s consumer of the 1940s and 1950s was no longer the subject of
Campbell's merchandizing in the post-Warholian age. For example, although the figure in
the advertisement for the Campbell’s “Can Bag” (seen in Fig. A25) is shown only from the waist down, she is clearly a fashionable young woman. She wears a short skirt, knee socks, and hip shoes. She is not a housewife cooking in the kitchen, but a modern girl headed to the beach with her towel, radio, and oversized sunglasses. The “Souper Dress” advertisement (Fig. A28) targeted the younger generation even more clearly. The young woman, looking en vogue in her Campbell’s paper dress, lounges on color coordinating pillows and chats on the phone. The bowl of soup to her right is a visual afterthought, tied to the Campbell’s theme but unnecessary to communicate the message of the ad. The 1969 advertisement for a Campbell’s soup towel (Fig. A26) divorces itself entirely from the 1950s image. The towel is presented as a status symbol: “A guaranteed conversation-starter, sure to attract crowds and crowds of devastatingly attractive males!” The audience is still presumably largely female; the ad does not say the towel will attract the opposite sex, but specifically males. The owner of such a towel is not a housewife or mother, but is a young woman on the lookout for a wild time at the beach, surrounded by “crowds and crowds of devastatingly attractive males.” These advertisements for dresses, bags, and towels have little to do with the actual soup products. They are selling the Campbell’s image. Warhol may not have been the only factor in expanding Campbell’s advertising and merchandizing, but he was an important link between Campbell’s 1950s happy housewives and Campbell’s 1960s fashionable females.

Warhol’s commercial appeal is also evident in his many commercial endorsements. Warhol appeared in print advertisements for various products, such as Fredrix artists’ canvas as early as 1963-5 (Fig. A31), for Pioneer electronics in 1975 (Fig. A32), for U.S. News & World Report magazine in 1977 (Fig. A33), for Sony Beta tapes in 1981 (Fig. A34), and for Drexel Burnham in 1985-7 (Fig. A35), as well two Absolut vodka ads in 1985 and 1990
Warhol appeared in numerous television advertisements, too, including an advertisement for Braniff Air with Sonny Liston, in which Warhol talks the ear off of Liston and delivers the tagline, “When you got it, flaunt it.” (Warhol’s voice was dubbed over by another man and thus sounds quite strange.) Warhol also made a cameo in a 1985 spot for Coca-Cola, one of his early art subjects, in which Warhol leans on an elaborate frame with a can of Diet Coke in the middle while drinking another can of Diet Coke on a parade float surrounded by beauty queens. He founded Interview magazine, which became a great success through the 1970s, and produced Andy Warhol’s TV, a half-hour cable program that ran from 1978-80. In the 1980s, Warhol even had a guest appearance on The Love Boat in October of 1985. Victor Bockris:

Andy fretted over his debut on the popular series, telling friends that he was sure “when they see how terrible I am, my whole career will fall over.” But he needn’t have worried. During the taping of the show in Hollywood, according to the pianist Peter Duchin who also appeared in the episode, “Andy Warhol was a bigger star than any of the Hollywood stars. When we went into Beverly Hills he received the most requests for autographs.”

Of course, none of this meant that Warhol’s star power was absolutely accepted throughout western culture, but his large number of successful projects and endorsements indicates that companies and advertisers wanted to associate with Warhol’s overall image. The Braniff Air commercial specifically notes that Warhol and Liston liked Braniff Air’s style. Clearly, hiring

32 To date, a full list of Warhol’s endorsements has not been compiled.


34 Bockris, Warhol, 466.
Warhol to promote a product was effective; his endorsements began almost as soon as he arrived in the world of high art and lasted up until his death. Even when his auction prices did not overtake those of his peers, his celebrity often did eclipse theirs. Again, one returns to the idea that, in and out of the art world, Warhol is business and business is good.

Warhol’s appeal, marketability, and, ultimately, extraordinarily successful branding are rooted in a masterful cultural package that tapped into Vance Packard’s hidden needs, that were exploited in the subsequent decades by advertising firms. Like the best advertising campaigns, Warhol established irrational brand loyalty throughout the art and commercial worlds because his works, associations, and persona were emotionally and socially attractive. Large numbers of people wanted to be part of the Warhol experience while he lived, and that desire has not died with the artist, as evidenced by the huge number of commercial goods associated with him and the astronomical prices his works have commanded. The success of Andy Warhol is not simply the mythic tale of the sickly little boy in bed with his movie star-filled magazines, drawing pictures for prizes from his mother (a tale retold in almost every Warhol biography) becoming a beloved and successful artist, but is also an investigation into the psychology of the audience that accounts for Warhol’s remarkable commercial triumph.35

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35 Packard’s book was the first to establish what has become commonplace in American advertising. While the idea that advertisements are manipulative or that sex sells are not shocking to contemporary audiences, these revelations were far more surprising when they were published. The tactics spelled out in The Hidden Persuaders have been built upon by subsequent writers, but the sentiments often remain startlingly similar. The works of Dan Hill, for example, are not far removed from the original ideas published by Packard. The psychological aspect of marketing is addressed early in Packard’s book, with reference to Dr. Ernest Dichter, who was director of the Institute for Motivational Research. See Packard, 32: “Dr. Dichter is vehement in his emphasis on the emotional factor in merchandising. He contends that any product not only must be good but must appeal to our feelings ‘deep in the psychological recesses of the mind.’ He tells companies that they’ve either got to sell
The first of Packard’s needs is the need for emotional security; his examples revolve around products that had the possibility of providing comfort and/or causing fear, depending on how they were presented. For example, window air conditioners necessitating closed windows could appeal to the desire for safety (closed windows = nothing can enter the home) or they could spark a sense of “latent claustrophobia” (closed windows = one cannot escape). The marketers of such products must be careful not to trigger anything in the consumer that might cause insecurity. Of course, a consumer would hardly decline to buy a window air conditioner by saying “Oh, no, I believe that keeping the windows closed will set off my latent claustrophobia.” These reactions are quick and emotional, as Dan Hill has noted in *Emotionomics*. A consumer may have an instant reaction to a product and never know why that product makes him comfortable or uncomfortable; only after the consumer has reacted emotionally will reason enter the purchasing equation. By then, reason is often unable to overcome irrational emotional responses, or else it is changed by the emotions. If Abstract Expressionism was characterized by tortured introspection, with a laundry list of credentials to justify its position as America’s high art form, Warhol’s Pop was the emotional equivalent. Not only did the artwork itself derive from the familiar, but Warhol’s persona was attractive to a new generation of outsiders who needed a leader. Robert Hughes wrote of those who gravitated to Warhol’s factory:

Those whose parents accused them of being out of their tree, who had unfulfilled desires and undesirable ambitions, and who felt guilty emotional security or go under; and he contends that a major problem of any merchandiser is to discover the psychological hook.”

36 Ibid., 73.

about it all, therefore gravitated to Warhol. He offered them absolution, the gaze of the blank mirror that refuses all judgment.\textsuperscript{38}

Warhol was refuge for the losers, for the outsiders, for those who felt they were without a captain, both in the art world and outside of it. The following generation of artists solidified Warhol’s status as the key American Pop figure in the face of art critics who largely had dismissed him. Warhol’s importance could not be denied when prominent young men like Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring began creating works both with Warhol himself and in his honor; Haring did an entire series of Andy Warhol-related drawings and silkscreens throughout the 1980s (Fig. A38-A39).\textsuperscript{39}

Warhol’s position in the homosexual world, too, is one of paramount importance. In 2003,\textit{Art Journal} published an article by Marc Siegel entitled “Doing It for Andy.” Its opening, as well as its title, speaks powerfully to Warhol’s role:

> When American fags are gossiping amongst ourselves and we want to confirm that someone is one of us, we might say, “She goes to our church.” . . . We would never, however, ask such a question about Andy Warhol. In terms of Andy, our accounts were settled long ago: not only did she go to our church, but she’s one of our most famous members. Indeed, Andy Warhol’s life and work, which spanned the homophobic 1950s and the sexual liberation of the 1960s and 1970s and continued through the post-Stonewall era, play a major role in just about any significant account of twentieth-century queer history.\textsuperscript{40}

Such a declaration plays not only into a need for emotional security, but also into the need for reassurance of worth, Packard’s second hidden need. Here, Abstract Expressionism

\textsuperscript{38} Hughes in \textit{The Critical Response}, 149.

\textsuperscript{39} Keith Haring quoted in Bockris, \textit{Warhol}, 464: “Of all the people I’ve met, Andy made the greatest impression on me. He was the one who opened up the situation enough for my situation as an artist to be possible – the first artist to open the possibility of being a public or popular artist in the real sense of the word, a people’s artist, \textit{really}. He was the validation and most active supporter of what I do.”

\textsuperscript{40} Marc Siegel, “Doing It for Andy,” \textit{Art Journal} 62 (Spring 2003): 7.
failed. The homosexual community (and the American public at large) of the 1940s and 1950s had no home in the art world, a situation that changed with Warhol’s rise to fame. Hill writes that communication today is “about winning hearts and minds,” but this is not only applicable to the marketplace today. Even relatively early in his career, Warhol’s emotional bond with his audience was such that critics and reason could not interfere. As early as 1965, Max Kozloff wrote that “Warholism” was a movement “in which nothing has to be proved or justified, and which is designed to invalidate . . . the critic,” and in 1970 Rainer Crone wrote that, “Warhol arrived at a point where judgments of art critics were irrelevant to his reputation.”  

Following an era in which a critic like Clement Greenberg could make or break an artist’s career, Warhol’s success in spite of critical response is indicative of his audience’s strong emotional attachment. Protestations, like Bosley Crowther’s 1966 New York Times article that claims Warhol’s terrible filmmaking style was influencing young filmmakers to the detriment to the art, fell on deaf ears. The emotional bond forged between Warhol and his audience could not be broken by the objections of critics, and was perhaps even strengthened by the young generation who wanted to associate with counterculture.

Two of Packard’s other hidden needs (needs for ego-gratification and a sense of roots) unite with the needs for emotional security and reassurance of worth and make up what Hill categorizes as “belonging.” Brands are physical indicators used by the public to


42 Bosley Crowther, “The Underground Overflows,” in A Critical Response, 24-6. “It has come time to wag a warning finger at Andy Warhol and his underground friends and tell them, politely but firmly, that they are pushing a reckless thing too far. . . . It is time for permissive adults to stop winking at their too-precocious pranks and start calling a lot of their cut-ups . . . exactly what they are.”
communicate status, beliefs, and membership to social groups. Once Warhol’s targeted audience felt secure, reassured, and gratified, they needed ways to identify themselves as the type of person who associates with Warhol and his reputation. While Warhol’s appeal is wide and potent, it is not universal. Such a caveat does not undermine Warhol’s marketing power; limitations to appeal ensure the select nature of appeal and thus the select nature of belonging to the group associated with the product or persona.

Because brands are social in nature, we rely on them to reinforce our sense of membership in a tribe. Companies whose brand position is so broad that there’s no “us” and no “them” become, in effect, all things for all people, which is impossible and therefore meaningless.43

Here, product experience is masterfully manipulated by Warhol, as the nature and scope of Warholian marketability made it easy and fashionable to associate with the artist. The most successful brandings create an image that transcends the limits of the product and becomes symbolic of a certain lifestyle or societal type. Wearing a pair of Nike shoes, using an Apple computer, or flying Virgin airlines is indicative of more than an exchange of goods or services. Association with brands identifies the consumer with the persona, reputation, and experience of the company.

The experience of Warhol is almost all encompassing, should a consumer want to completely immerse himself in Warhol’s world, due to the diversity of his interests and commercial endeavors. First of all, Warhol’s use of long-established American commercial imagery appealed to the need for a sense of roots; any American who favorably encounters Coca-Cola, Campbell’s, Marilyn Monroe, or any of his other mass media subjects has the potential to feel an affinity with Warhol’s works. The elevation of commonplace elements of daily American life to the realms of high art also contributes to the need for ego-

gratification. After the disheartening relationship with Abstract Expressionism, Pop's emphasis on commercial items may have appealed to a public turned off by the elitist attitude of the art world: this was art they could understand and comment upon, even if they did not like it or believe it really was art. Second, although his emphasis on youth-related counterculture may seem to alienate a huge swath of the American public, half of the population was under twenty-five during his heyday in the 1960s. Warhol's too-cool persona was not targeting the serious art crowd, the kind who hobnob at gallery openings with glasses of wine and intellectual conversation. At that time, Warhol could not be the type of artist who would appeal to the art world or to middle America – he was too bizarre, star struck, homosexual, commercial, and superficial. His audience was the young. The same youths who screamed for the Beatles also screamed for Andy. As Warhol's position in the art world solidified toward the end of his life, he began to transcend youth culture to become an established, marketable symbol of cool culture.44

Warhol's marketability to the young was encouraged by his associations and projects. Quite simply, if one wants to be a Warhol type, all of the elements of becoming that type have already been determined: read Interview, listen to the Velvet Underground (whose Warhol-designed cover for the album The Velvet Underground & Nico (Fig. A40) has become iconic – the Incase company offers a series of products bearing the signature banana), watch underground films, wear cool jackets and sunglasses, and, possibly, embrace free love and drug use. For those who were interested in fashion, Warhol designed clothes bearing

44 Thompson, 13. “Men buy an Andemars Piguet watch . . . even though their friends may not recognize the brand name, and will not ask. But experience and intuition tell them that it is an expensive brand, and they see the wearer as a person of wealth and independent taste. The same message is delivered by a Warhol silkscreen on the wall or a Brancusi sculpture in the entrance hall.”
repetitive patterns of his subjects. For those who were interested in Hollywood, Warhol went to glamorous parties at Studio 54 and photographed rock gods and movie stars. He was in ads, television commercials, television shows, and gossip columns. His gallery openings were like rock concerts of the highest order. Alan Solomon wrote in 1966:

They told me not to come to the patrons’ opening of the Warhol show in Philadelphia. . . . I went down the second night, but I never saw the show. So many people had come uninvited to the patrons’ opening the night before that they expected an even larger, unimaginably large, crowd, many more than the thousand or so who had been sent invitations. They solved the problem of getting all those people in the limited space without damaging the pictures very simply: they took down all the paintings, except one wall of flowers and a pile of boxes. The band was there; you could hear it in the last gallery, but you couldn’t get close enough to see what was happening. Finally, Andy, always late, arrived with his entourage, and his latest superstar, Edie Sedgwick.

Warhol was, for the young crowd who adored him during his life and for those who idolized him following his death, fun. He was fashion and gossip and quips, posters and superstars and glamour, detachment and commercialism and style. He was sex, drugs, and rock and roll.

The power and marketability of Warhol’s associations is indicated in the continuing popularity of the people who were involved with him and the minutiae of his life that has spawned whole books. In perhaps the most obvious example, the glamorous life and early death of heiress and Warhol superstar Edie Sedgwick has made her a tragic cult figure; books like *Edie: American Girl* edited by Jean Stein and George Plimpton, *Edie Factory Girl* by David

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45 See Mark Francis and Margery King, eds., *The Warhol Look: Glamour, Style, Fashion* (Boston, Little Brown, 1997), for essays about and images of Warhol’s fashions.


Dalton and Nat Finkelstein, and *Edie: Girl on Fire* by Melissa Painter and Davis Weisman would be far less marketable if Edie had never been Warhol’s muse. Edie’s involvement with Warhol and descent into addiction were even the subject of a major motion picture, *Factory Girl*, starring Sienna Miller as Edie and Emmy award-winning actor Guy Pearce as Andy Warhol. Other films involving Warhol and his entourage include: *I Shot Andy Warhol*, directed by Mary Harron, a film about Warhol’s would-be assassin, Valerie Solanas, starring Jared Harris as Warhol; *Basquiat*, directed by Julian Schnabel, starring rock legend David Bowie as Warhol and Jeffrey Wright as Jean-Michel Basquiat; and even *The Doors*, Oliver Stone’s film about the rock band with Crispin Glover portraying Warhol.\(^{48}\)

Warhol’s superstars are not superstars by themselves, but because they are a part of the Warhol legend, the un-riddling of the mysterious art figure whose life was marked by lies and misdirection. Part of Warhol’s attraction is his enigma. Alan Solomon in 1966:

> Everyone has straightened me out about Andy. He is, I am told, actually a degenerate 24 year old, who started painting four years ago, a child prodigy. But, I am told, he is really 44. He has had his face lifted to hide his age. His hair is bleached white to make him look older. Prematurely bald, he wears a wig to make him look younger. His age in truth is a well kept secret. No one I have ever asked, including some people who have been about as close as you can get to him, has any idea how old Warhol really is.\(^{49}\)

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\(^{49}\) Solomon in *Andy Warhol*, 3. See also Mark Lancaster, “Andy Warhol Remembered,” *Burlington Magazine* 131 (March 1989): 198-202, for a posthumous comment on Warhol’s mystery and reputation. “Media coverage [of Warhol’s death] was vast. During the following twenty-four hours we were told that he was aged 55, 57, 58, 59 and 60; that he had done nothing but go to parties for the past several years; the he was famous for painting giant typewriters; that he was heroic; that he had turned the soup can into art; that he had made
Warhol’s tendency to make up in interviews contributed to his mystique, which in turn contributed to the excitement of following him. One revolution of the 1960s was the incorporation of entertainment into advertising, to make the marketing of a product or service as exciting as any direct form of diversion. Warhol and Pop infused the art world with a sense of fun and abandon that had been lost during the serious Abstract Expressionist years, and Warhol’s distant persona fueled his popularity. So powerful is Warhol’s inscrutable persona, even total misrepresentation of the artist’s statements will cause no backlash. In 1966, 23 year-old Gretchen Berg conducted what is often considered one of the most important interviews Warhol ever gave, providing numerous quips that have found their way onto posters and t-shirts, including “If you want to know all about Andy Warhol, just look at the surface: of my paintings and films and me, and there I am. There’s nothing behind it,” a quotation so important that it was printed on the official 2002 Warhol U.S. postage stamp. The interview is fluid, candid, and introspective – quite a departure from his usual difficult and diffident style – edited in a way to remove the interviewer’s presence, reading as one long monologue.51

The problem, however, is that Warhol did not say a single word of the famous “surface” quotation printed above. In fact, many of the quotations come straight from Gretchen Berg’s own mouth, edited in the print version, as archivist Matt Wrbican writes, fame into a work of art; that he was a terrible artist with one idea; that his paintings, on the contrary to what he himself had said of them, had not fallen apart, and, in the last sentence of *The Times* obituary, that ‘He was a slight man who wore a white wig.’”


“to expand and clarify Warhol’s brief comments.” In this case, Warhol’s “brief comments” were “Yeah,” and “No,” affirming what Berg said but not providing the insight himself. While, seemingly, the 2007 revelation that Warhol’s most important interview largely consists of Berg’s voice would be shocking and even upsetting, the art world responded with no uproar at all. In fact, the Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh had an exhibition in 2007 celebrating the revelation, entitled “Gift of Gretchen Berg: The True Story of ‘My True Story.’” As far as the art world and the public were concerned, it made no difference who said the quotations attributed to Warhol. This is the depth of Warhol’s irrational branding: not even the truth matters. While on some level Warhol’s agreement to Berg’s words and utilization of her method indicates that these are, in some way, Warhol’s words, surely Berg’s involvement in the shaping of this interview is significant. After all, if she had phrased her questions differently, scholars might have different arguments regarding Warhol’s artistic mentality, and Warholian merchandise the world over might be decorated with different phrases.

The bonds between Warhol and his audience are rooted in the psychology of effective advertising. The combination of social conditions (an increasingly young public, general unrest in the art world, surges in counterculture and rebellion), emotional attachment (established subject matter, refuge for homosexuals and outsiders), and entertaining persona (superstars, scandals, fashion, irreverence), along with the reproducibility of Warhol’s works,

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52 Matt Wrbican, “The True Story of ‘My True Story,’” in Andy Warhol: A Guide to 706 Items in 2 Hours 56 Minutes, ed. Eva Meyer-Hermann (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2007), 56-57. Wrbican mentions that Warhol began to use Berg’s method of taping conversations and editing them down in his publications, including The Philosophy of Andy Warhol. Many of the statements made in Warhol’s books were said by members of the Factory, which may account for the lack of consistency in sentiment throughout his publications.

created the phenomenon that is Warhol’s commercial success. Warhol offered a brand of artistic coolness that appealed to the 1960s underground movement and has only gained importance and relevance in the following decades. The broad variety of available Warhol goods is both an indication of and a perpetuator of Warhol’s mass appeal. Continued visibility ensures continued presence, and continued presence ensures continued popularity. Business, for the foreseeable future, is good.
CONCLUSION

At the auction last night, my Triple Elvis went for $135,000, so that’s good. It was estimated at $70,000-$90,000. But Thomas Ammann bid $440,000 for one of David Whitney’s Rauschenbergs. . . . Yes, I am happy about the $135,000 price for the Coke Bottle. Thomas told me that the Elvis went for $146,000. And Thomas bought a Flower painting for $40,000. It’s worth a lot more, though. Someday . . .

Andy Warhol, *The Andy Warhol Diaries*

Andy Warhol sells. He sells books, posters, shirts, calendars, and figurines in museum shops, major chains, online retailers, and novelty stores. He sells as a character in movies, as a subject of documentaries, and as a pivotal post-modern artist. He sells at auction and in private sales. He sells as a fashion icon, a gay icon, and an art icon. Twenty-five years after his death in 1987, Warhol has lost none of his cultural cachet. If anything, the Warhol brand is stronger today than it was during his lifetime, the temporal distance cementing his status as an American celebrity to rival any of his subjects. While many other Pop artists have faded into art history, Warhol is as important and influential today as he ever was. The longevity of his commercial appeal is rooted in his execution, whether intentional or unintentional, of contemporary advertising principles meant to establish a comprehensive, emotionally charged relationship between brand and audience. The strength of Warhol’s brand has ensured the continuance of his commercial and cultural presence worldwide.

The relationship between art and advertising has previously been explored in art historical scholarship. Joan Gibbons’s *Art & Advertising* and Michele H. Bogart’s *Artists, Advertising, and the Borders of Art*, for example, both deal with artistic appropriation of advertising, the social implications of high art utilizing popular imagery, and advertising
design’s impact on the art world. These elements are all components in a changing art scene, but they are not the beginning and end of advertising theory’s role in art history. The world of contemporary advertising is capable of furnishing a vocabulary and various sets of rules designed specifically to determine why or why not a product or service is attractive to consumers. Applied to artists, advertising theory could potentially aid historians in accounting for the success of one artist over another. Warhol’s status as the most famous Pop artist, and one of the best-known artists in the world, can be discussed the way one might discuss an especially marketable soft drink brand or a best-selling brand of soup. The study of what makes an artist and his work famous does not only tell us about the art world or the tactics used in consumer manipulation; it tell us about popular culture at specific moments in time and reveals the driving force behind art consumption.

The rise of New York City as a global art center after World War II, the dominance of Abstract Expressionism’s brand of aggressive masculinity, alienation of the general population, poor public relations and response, an explosion of consumerism, and the sudden appearance of a very large, very young demographic paved the way for Warhol’s success. Warhol’s popular subject matter, distinctive dress, amusing and flippant manner, and varied scandals appealed to the counterculture youth of the sixties. Those who wanted to associate with Warhol’s world attended party-like exhibition openings, listened to the Velvet Underground, and read about his exploits in the gossip columns. Warhol’s young audience likely contributed to the overhaul of Campbell’s Soup advertising in the mid-1960s, and his marketability overall led to a lifetime of television appearances, magazine articles, and

endorsement deals. His is a kind of celebrity few artists have ever achieved, and it has lasted and even strengthened in the twenty-five years since his death.

Advertising theory provides a set of tested criteria with which to judge the commercial success of Warhol (for example, adherence to the emotional needs of consumers, such as Hill’s three major categories: reflected beliefs, belonging, and telling a story), but it is not meant to suggest that the model is only applicable here due to Warhol’s use of advertising imagery or his background in the commercial field. Other Pop artists (and subsequent appropriation artists) used similar material and are often discussed in the same terms as Warhol, but none had careers like his; even famed Lichtenstein cannot match Warhol in terms of merchandizing, auction price, or cultural impact. As discussed in the introduction, the artists closest to Warhol’s level of consumer success are Monet and van Gogh, neither of whose style is even remotely close to Pop. Advertising theory can potentially be applied to artists who did/do not use commercial imagery.

Of course, the use of previously successful brand labels and pop culture stars plays a role in Warhol’s success, but this appropriation is not necessary for the use of this model. Many artists’ success in contemporary Western culture could be measured in these terms; the commercial nature of Warhol’s posthumous merchandizing provides a more concrete means of measuring his popularity in comparison to other artists, but these commercial goods are not necessary to create similar models for different artists. Contemporary advertising, delving into the elements of effective manipulation, is aimed at the psychology of audiences beyond their desire for groceries and cars and clothing. Artists become famous because something about their art, persona, myth, and/or philosophy appeals to a demographic.

The emphasis on commercial goods and on the evolution of actual advertising campaigns in this exploration serve to argue for the perhaps unmatched popularity of Andy
Warhol. When an artist spawns as many products and parodies as Warhol, questions of why and how arise. But up to now, Warhol’s impressive commercial résumé of endorsements and artistic merchandise has gone largely unexamined. Even his remarkable high art success has not been widely discussed, although this is perhaps because Warhol’s astronomical price leap has only occurred relatively recently; Olav Velthuis’s 2005 book, *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art*, makes only two very brief references to Warhol (and one of those references is to the Andy Warhol Museum, not to Warhol the artist).² As Warhol’s popularity in and out of the art world continues to grow in strength, the impetus behind that growth raises important questions about artistic success that advertising can perhaps answer.

Some artists are more famous than others. For every man or woman whose name warrants mention in an art historical survey, hundreds of others are forgotten. Even within those who are remembered, relatively few are widely recognized outside of the art world. The study of those who have become cultural icons reveals not only the vicissitudes of an artist’s life and the intricacies of the discipline of art history, but also the social conditions that allow for an artist to become an integral part of a nation’s identity and heritage. The study of Andy Warhol’s truly extraordinary commercial and cultural influence is as much a study of western popular culture/counterculture as it is the study of art history. Warhol is famous because his persona, subjects, works, and myth appealed to the emotional needs of a growing number of young Americans in search of a revolution. His continued relevance and popularity speaks to the depth of his emotional and psychological impact upon those who

choose to identify with his life and art. Warhol’s branding success is, undeniably, any advertiser’s dream.
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Figure A3. Andy Warhol, *Nosepicker I: Why Pick On Me* (formerly titled *The Broad Gave Me My Face, But I Can Pick My Own Nose*), 1948.
Figure A4. Campbell’s soup advertisement, 1962.
Figure A5. Campbell’s soup advertisement, 1941.
Figure A6. Campbell’s soup advertisement, 1941.
Figure A7. Andy Warhol, *Green Car Crash (Green Burning Car I)*, 1963.
Figure A8. Andy Warhol, *Lemon Marilyn*, 1962.
Figure A10. Campbell’s soup advertisement, 1946.
Figure A11. Campbell’s soup advertisement, 1944.
Figure A12. Campbell’s soup advertisement, 1943.
Figure A13. Campbell’s soup advertisement, 1943.
Figure A14. Campbell’s tomato juice advertisement, 1949.
Figure A15. Campbell’s soup advertisement, 1937.
Figure A16. Campbell’s soup advertisement, 1947.
Figure A17. Campbell’s soup advertisement, 1947.
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Figure A19. Campbell’s soup advertisement, 1956.
Figure A20. Campbell’s soup advertisement, 1965.
Figure A21. Campbell’s soup advertisement, 1966.
Figure A22. Campbell’s soup advertisement, 1967.
Figure A23. Campbell’s soup advertisement, 1968.
Figure A24. Campbell’s soup mug advertisement, 1970.
Figure A25. Campbell’s tote bag advertisement, 1968.
Figure A26. Campbell’s beach towel advertisement, 1969.
Figure A27. Campbell’s “Souper Bowl” advertisement, 1969.
Figure A28. Campbell’s “Souper Dress” advertisement, 1968.
Figure A29. Campbell’s record album advertisement, 1969.
Figure A30. Last of a 3 panel Campbell's Soup advertisement for a “Campbell's Pop-Art Bowl,” 1968.
Figure A31. Advertisement for Fredrix artists’ canvas, c. 1963-5.
Figure A32. Pioneer Electronics advertisement, 1975.
Figure A33. Advertisement for *U.S. News & World Report*, 1977.
Figure A34. Sony advertisement for Beta tape, 1981.
Figure A35. Advertisement for Drexel Burnham, c. 1985-7.
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Figure A37. Absolut vodka advertisement, 1990.
Figure A38. Keith Haring, *Andy Mouse*, 1985.
Figure A40. Album cover for the Velvet Underground album, *The Velvet Underground & Nico*, 1967.