



ANDY WARHOL'S BIRTHDAY

Andy Warhol, born Andrew Warhola, was born on August 6, 1928, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Slovakian immigrant parents. Andy was the fourth of five children, his father worked as a construction worker, and his mother was a homemaker and they lived in a working-class neighbourhood in Pittsburgh.

Andy was 'dogged' by illness, at the age of eight, he contracted a rare and severe illness called Sydenham's chorea. This left him bedridden for several months, during which time his mother helped fill his days by giving him drawing lessons, which ignited his passion for art. Andy attended Schenley High School in Pittsburgh, where he demonstrated early artistic talent and where he was recognised and encouraged in these abilities. After graduating in 1945, he went on to study at the Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University) in Pittsburgh.

After completing his studies in 1949, Andy moved to New York City, where he began his career as a commercial artist and illustrator. He worked for magazines, advertising agencies, and retail stores, quickly gaining recognition for his unique and imaginative art style.

By the late 1950s, he had started experimenting with Fine Art and had begun producing paintings, drawings, and prints. He found his inspiration in everyday objects and popular culture, leading him to create many of the works that would become iconic representations of the Pop Art movement and synonymous with Andy Warhol.

In the 1960s, he established his now famous studio space called "The Factory." It was a hub for creative collaborations, attracting artists, musicians, writers, and celebrities, alike and it rapidly became a centre for the avant-garde in New York City.

Warhol's fascination with celebrity culture led him to create portraits of many famous personalities, including Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, and Elizabeth Taylor.

Andy Warhol's creativity extended way beyond painting and drawing and he ventured into film, creating the experimental movies "Chelsea Girls" (1966) and "Empire" (1964), a slow-motion film of the Empire State Building.

Andy Warhol, well known for his contributions to the Pop Art movement and his choice of subjects for his art, was heavily influenced not only by celebrity and popular culture but also brand names, crime and for some reason car crashes. Some of his most famous paintings include the following:



"Campbell's Soup Cans" (1961): A series of 32 paintings, each depicting a different variety of Campbell's Soup cans.

See **Christie's Auction**, November 2010 Campbell's Soup Can (Tomato), Lot 12, Hammer price USD \$9,042,500



"Mao" (1972): A series of portraits of Chairman Mao Zedong, the leader of the Chinese Communist Party.

See **Sotheby's Auction**, 2 March 2022, Lot 159, Estimate £500,000-700,000



"Brillo Boxes" (1964): A series of artworks inspired by Brillo soap pad boxes, part of Warhol's exploration of consumer products as art.

See **Christie's Auction**, 24 Jun 2004, Lot 40, Hammer Price £475,650

The market for Warhol's work has existed from day one and interest from buyers is truly international, with his work being sold across the world, where it is both a highlight and a mainstay of all the major and minor auction houses and galleries across the world. His major works continue to change hands for multi-million pound sums and the second and third most expensive Warhol works sold at auction to date are as follows:



"White Disaster" (1963) - Sold November 2022 for £62,218,460.

See **Sotheby's Auction**, 17 November 2022, Lot 114, Hammer price £62,218,460.



"Silver Car Crash (Double Disaster)" (1963) - Sold November 2013 for £58,975,999.

See **Sotheby's Auction**, November 2013, Lot 16, Hammer price £58,975,999.

Behind the scenes Andy Warhol is just as fascinating, here are a few little known facts about him.

Time Capsules:

Warhol was an avid collector and archivist. He had a fascination with preserving everyday items and created what he called "Time Capsules." These Time Capsules were essentially cardboard boxes in which he stored various objects such as newspapers, correspondence, photographs, art supplies, and random items from his daily life. Over the years, he filled over 600 of these Time Capsules, which provide a unique insight into his life and the culture of the time.

Religious Devotion:

Despite his flamboyant and controversial public persona, Warhol was a devout Byzantine Catholic. He attended church regularly, and his religious beliefs played a significant role in his life. He even commissioned religious-themed artworks, including several portraits of Jesus Christ.

Art Collector:

Warhol was an enthusiastic art collector and he had his own extensive collection of art, including works by fellow contemporary artists and art pieces from various periods and styles. Following his death, Sotheby's auction house held a nine-day auction in 1988 where they sold off more than 10,000 items from Warhol's personal collection, which fetched tens of millions of dollars.

Underground Filmmaker:

As mentioned earlier in this piece Warhol is well-known for his contributions to the visual arts and he was also a pioneer in underground filmmaking. In the 1960s, he produced a series of experimental films that challenged traditional cinematic conventions. One of his most famous films is "Sleep" (1963), which depicts his friend John Giorno sleeping for over five hours. Warhol's films often explored themes of monotony, voyeurism, and the passage of time.

Wig-Wearing Icon:

Andy Warhol's signature silver-white wig became an essential part of his public image. He began wearing wigs in the 1960s to create a distinctive look, and it quickly became one of his trademarks. The wig allowed him to transform his appearance and present himself as an enigmatic figure in the art world and popular culture.

Cookbook Author:

In 1959, Warhol and his friend Suzie Frankfurt co-authored a quirky and amusing cookbook titled "Wild Raspberries." The book, which was never intended to be a practical guide to cooking, featured illustrations and handwritten recipes for dishes like "Omelet Greta Garbo" and "Piglet a la Cubist." This limited edition book is now a highly sought-after collector's item.

These lesser known facts highlight the diverse and eccentric aspects of Andy Warhol's life and artistic pursuits. His impact on various forms of art and culture continues to be influential and celebrated to this day.

Throughout his life, Andy Warhol continued to push the boundaries of art, leaving a lasting impact on the art world and popular culture. His early experiences and upbringing shaped his artistic style and many of the themes he explored in his work.