

ANDY WARHOL

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THE APPARENT RETURN OF REPRESENTATION

Ambivalence structures in Warhol's early work

You see, to pretend something's real I'd have to fake it. Then people would think I'm doing it real.

Andy Warhol¹

I

It is a well-known feature of modern art that its innovative creations cancel the current view of art and at the same time extend it. This process of destruction and phoenix-like regeneration of art seems so blatant in Warhol's case that it is impossible to agree about whether his innovations can be counted as meaningful self-renewal of art. The abrupt change from the Abstract-Expressionist painting of the New York school, with its high ideals and awareness of a historic mission, to a pictorial language that seems to exhaust itself in the endless repetition of trivialities and thus to question everything that had been achieved in the logical development of painting by Pollock, Kline, Rothko, Newman etc. seems too nihilistic. The confrontation between the two diametrically opposed views of what "painting", "the panel picture", "the artist" actually is becomes all the more significant because it was the first that came up *inside* American art and largely independently of European influences – despite the earlier existence of English Pop Art. All at once two views of painting were confronting each other that were both perceived as genuinely American.

This "querelle américaine" made a crucial difference to the way in which Pop Art was looked at, especially Warhol, who occupied the most challenging position. The consequence was a view that Warhol saw largely as a negation – a negation of the originality and uniqueness of the picture, a negation of (high) culture, a negation of the achievements of abstraction. And there was something else: suddenly the whole development scheme of modern painting was called into question. The influential critic Clement Greenberg had defined this scheme so conclusively in terms of post-war American art as the increasing essentialization that manifested itself in taking the picture back to the anti-illusionistic, self-referential "literality" of the surface.² Warhol was the aggressive example of an artistic practice that could not be categorized as part of this development, but which seemed to represent a regression into an abandoned stage of art, currying favour with mass culture.³

The polemic debates of the 60s merely seem a part of history today. Assessments have become more objective and more sophisticated. Detailed biographies have carefully documented his working-class origins, his training, his successful period as a graphic artist in advertising and his rise to international stardom – which in Warhol's case always means writing a brief social history of art and its reception as well – and an abundance of important details have come to light. Analyses that concern themselves with influences, models, personality structure etc. also sometimes produced material about the development of the formal language and the background to the choice of subjects. Despite this the view stubbornly persists that Warhol is the negation of everything that defines art as such. It is the basis, spoken or unspoken, of almost all interpretations. A distinction has been made only to the extent that various suggestions came up to analyse and make understandable the "emptiness" of the works, about which as such there is no doubt. The plane of observation thus shifted from the plane of the pictures to the plane of the artist, emphasizing Warhol's own "emptiness" (his inability to experience, his cynicism, his post-modern dandyish nature, and above all his famous wish "to be a machine"). Or they changed to the plane

of the cultural and social context, in which the same "emptiness" was discovered (in the form of consumerism, decadence, loss of critical thought etc.).⁴

Any profound analysis of the aesthetic structure of Warhol's work is correspondingly rare. It was scarcely perceived that the change to representation, reproduction and to the trivial is more mediated, the semantics, syntax and pragmatics of the works is more ambivalent, than a polar perspective of this kind can reproduce. On closer consideration the pictorial language is seen to be a multi-layered response to the situation in the late 50s, when Abstract Expressionism had run into a blind alley because of self-imposed reductionism and was about to abandon both its critical and "sublime" dimensions as decoration and academicism. The crisis of the tone-setting avant-garde produced a number of art forms that could not be accommodated in Greenberg's development logic. As well as Pop Art these included the Happening, Minimal Art or Concept Art. Warhol's works have to be seen in the context of this mood of radical change. They turned Abstract Expressionist painting upside down, but without falling back on an antiquated state of the artistic discourse. The point of his work is precisely that Abstract Expressionism is subjected to fundamental criticism while at the same time important aspects of its aesthetic procedure are picked up. The modernistic trait of outdoing what had happened immediately before can be detected, and not by chance, in a way that relates revealingly to the Happening, Minimal Art and Concept Art. Warhol undermines the opposition whose one pole he is supposed to occupy in such an exemplary fashion.⁵

It is also necessary to examine the opposition scheme because Warhol does not gain his standpoint from reaction to the artistic practice of the previous generation alone. The return to representation and the use of reproductive techniques is directed neither against abstraction as such nor against art as a whole, but above all shows a shift in artistic interest. The medium's continuing self-questioning – Greenberg's formalism saw this as the duty of painting – is expanded by turning to events and things that do constitute our everyday experience but are excluded from art by abstraction in particular. In this Warhol appears as a seismograph of changes brought about by the establishment of mass communication. Warhol sees images of Kennedy's death or sputnik signals from space that seem to shake the world, shrunk to a "global village", *simultaneously* as key experiences of perception, rather than the decentred structures of Pollock's canvases, which were making the art world hold its breath. Central to Warhol's work is the question *what* and *how* communication can be made under these circumstances, and what is called "authentic perception", something that art likes to insist on, in view of such phenomena. Warhol's subversions become accessible only when they are understood as part of both an *internal-artistic* and an *external-artistic* change.

The design of Warhol's work is most readily perceived by looking at the work as a whole. Above all the pictures and the films must be seen as an expression of one and the same artistic process. One peculiarity of dealing with Warhol lies in separating, consciously or unconsciously, the various media in which he worked. In exhibitions, if they are shown at all, the films are presented at the most in a subsidiary programme that only a few visitors to the exhibition are aware of. Also, shortened and therefore distorted versions are usually shown. There is no direct juxtaposition of films and pictures, so that it is left to the individual to establish the link between them. This may be something to do with technical difficulties in the exhibition, but it is significant that the same situation is found in Warhol literature. There seems to be a division of labour: art critics and art historians deal with the pictures, while the films (which generally receive less attention) are left to the appropriate specialists, who rarely bother to look at the pictures. Any consideration of the links between the two forms is thus excluded from the outset.⁶

But it is justifiable in every respect to treat the films in the same way as the pictures. It is not just that the two media are conceptually interlinked in Warhol's case.

What seems even more important is that two of the characteristics that make the pictures seem so scandalous, the reproductive approach and the return to representation, are not conspicuous in the films and do not represent the breaking of a taboo. Films almost always copy reality, and the medium is concerned with reproduction from the beginning. But if these characteristics are removed as classifying qualities, criteria of evaluation can again come into play that seem unnecessary in the case of an artist like Warhol. All that remains to do justice to the special quality of the films is to examine their creative design. If this means a more traditional way of looking at them that can only be an advantage at the outset. Beyond the polarity of abstract and representational, original and reproductive, "high" and "low", which is always linked with high judgements, the possibility of evaluation that is linked more closely to *artistic* questions begins to emerge. This may well also be why even in the early 60s Warhol the *film-maker* was considered an outstanding avant-garde artist and as early as 1964, a year after his first film received the "Independent Film Award" given by the New York magazine "Film Culture", while the *panel pictures* were not acknowledged as an artistic achievement (and not just as subversive provocation) until much later, and much more hesitantly. For these reasons the pictures and the films are going to be analysed within common boundaries and by the same criteria; also is the usual order reversed for once, and the films are considered before the pictures.

II

What Warhol was trying to move toward in the films was a stillness.

Roland Tavel⁷

The most striking feature of the films⁸ is their peculiar quality of working against their own medium. Warhol develops a syntax that deliberately evades the elements that usually make the film distinct from other visual media (e.g. its functional and dramatic possibilities). In the first place this is because subjects are chosen that are able to manage with a minimum of plot: a sleeping man (John Giorno in *Sleep*) (fig. 1), a man eating (Robert Indiana in *Eat*) (fig. 2) or a man smoking (Henry Geldzahler in the film of the same name), or even a building, which naturally remains completely motionless, while just the seasons change (the Empire State Building in *Empire*) (fig. 3). The films do represent a happening in time and are thus fundamentally narrative, but they eschew anything that can be considered filmic narration, i.e. organic development of a plot with a beginning, a middle and an end. It is obvious even after a few minutes what events or non-events are to be expected, although the films have substantial running times (*Henry Geldzahler* 100 minutes, *Sleep* six hours, *Empire* eight hours). The film action cannot be distinguished from elemental everyday actions and situations. Warhol says that his best actor is the one who blinked only three times in ten minutes. When asked if he was confusing blinking with acting he answered yes.⁹ This indifference-process is related to that of minimally structured Happenings or Events. They may contain instructions like: "One foot forward. Transfer weight to this foot. Repeat as often as desired" or "Opening a closed window. Closing an open window"¹⁰ where Henry Geldzahler, curator of 20th century art at the Metropolitan Museum, New York, is given the simple instruction to sit in front of the camera and smoke a cigar.¹¹

If the Happening is concerned with the tension between the difference and indifference of art and life¹², Warhol does not evoke this tension only in the filmed event (is Henry Geldzahler's smoking an everyday incident and thus life, or is it acting and therefore art), but also in the result, the film. Here the corresponding question arises of whether the latter is art or non-art (e.g. a form of documentary film). Despite this important distinction, which results from the live nature of the Happenings and the representation character of Warhol's films, both are related in that they both aim at the dialectic of *changing from one to the other* (difference) and *simultaneity of both* (indifference).



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Andy Warhol,
Saturday Disaster [Samstags-Disaster], 1964,
Siebdruckfarbe auf Acryl auf grundierter
Leinwand, 302 x 208 cm.
Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University,
Waltham, Massachusetts

Andy Warhol, *Saturday Disaster*, 1964,
silkscreen ink on acrylic paint on primed
canvas, 118 7/8 x 81 7/8".
Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University,
Waltham, Massachusetts

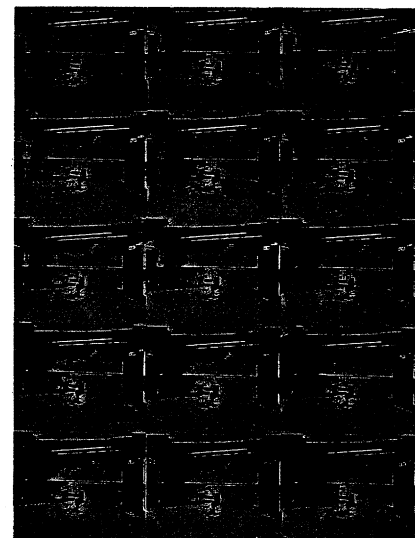
In both cases it is also the viewer who has to choose between the two ways of taking the film, as the work does not make a preliminary decision.¹³

The elemental everyday quality and poverty of action in the filmed events finds its counterpart in the nature of the film. The first crucial element here is that the camera confronts what is filmed directly. Usually it remains completely motionless during filming. If it is moved, however, then it is exclusively on its own axis. The same is true of the camera angle, which is only rarely somewhat altered by a zoom. *Empire*, for example, has precisely the same camera setting for the whole of its eight hours. When the film is projected there is a direct correspondence between the camera's fixed view of the object and the viewer of the *film's* perspective, which remains the same – a correspondence that does not occur in a traditional film, when the viewer is first standing in a bedroom and then with the protagonists in a car while at the same time remaining motionless in his seat.

Warhol also chooses not to use editing and montage, which permit the condensation of time and the establishment of a narrative structure – indeed the very things in which film semiologists see the actual language-character of the medium. The reels of which the film consists are shot in one go and also shown as a whole. In this way they follow the principle of synchrony, i.e. the time they represent corresponds both to the time needed to shoot the film and the time needed to watch it.

And so Warhol calculates the greatest possible closeness of art and reality not only in the content of the film, but at the same time in his decisions about shooting and projecting. An artistic transformation of reality scarcely takes place. The semantics and syntax of the film correspond with that of the documentary "cinéma direct", which aims to make us forget the medium in favour of what is represented. According to Warhol's statements his films are then no better and no worse than what they show.¹⁴ It is possible to treat what is projected like something that is physically present, e.g. to go away and come back again without having missed more *film time* than precisely the *time of your own absence*. Warhol perceives his films as a kind of permanent background, and this is how they are shown in the Factory. The films are projected in part of the space along with everything else that is going on, without demanding more than absent-minded attention¹⁵: "You could do more things with my movies than any other kinds of movies: you could eat and drink and smoke and cough and look away and they'd still be there."¹⁶ People do essentially the same thing *on the screen and in front of the screen* – eating, drinking, smoking etc. The filmed people are different from the real people only through the fact of being there as a filmed double. But a description of this kind considers only one pole of the films. The other one is a blatant anti-illusionism that makes the viewer clearly aware of the difference between cinema and reality. Thus the films, to start with the most striking feature, are of a quality that is wretched when measured by normal standards. This applies to picture and sound, which is usually incomprehensible (where the films are not silent anyway, which in the epoch of the sound film is in itself a considerable alienation). The medium thrusts itself in front what is seen like a clouding filter. Additionally the leaders are not cut off at the beginning and end of the individual reels. This means that the film is interrupted at regular intervals and reduced for a few moments to what it materially is: a mere strip of celluloid. And finally camera panning and zooming are used so arbitrarily and erratically that they do not serve to make the film's events any clearer, but to a certain extent in a formalistic reorientation to themselves the zoom simply expresses itself as a zoom and the pan as a pan.¹⁷

More subtle and less immediately obvious devices are used to work against filmic illusion. The crucial feature for the aesthetic of the silent films (which include *Sleep*, *Eat*, *Henry Geldzahler* and *Empire*) is that although they were filmed at a speed of 24 frames per second they are projected at 16 frames per second. This "ritardando" by a third, although merely the result of an adjustment to the projector, creates an enormous



9
Andy Warhol,
Orange Disaster [Oranges Disaster], 1963,
Siebdruckfarbe auf Acryl auf grundierter
Leinwand, 269,2 x 208,3 cm.
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
New York
Andy Warhol, *Orange Disaster*, 1963,
silkscreen ink on acrylic paint on
primed canvas, 106 x 82".
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
New York

effect. The slowing down is too gentle to be perceived as a technical manipulation, for which reason the expression "slow motion", which is most usually used in film literature, is inappropriate in this case. Instead the viewer, who because of the filmic structure is convinced that he is present at a real-time incident, ascribes the measured quality of the event to the person or object being filmed, which seems to exist in a sphere of extended being. A kind of "magic realism" with an almost hypnotic effect develops.¹⁸ Warhol's frequent interventions into chronology are aimed in the same direction. In *Eat*, for example, Robert Indiana does nothing but eat a single mushroom for 45 minutes. But this mushroom refuses to get any smaller, and constantly renews itself. Warhol ran the ten reels of which the film consists on a random principle. And *Sleep* lasts for six hours only because the individual reels are shown several times in a different sequence. This explodes even these minimal dramatic structures. The relationship of part and whole is cancelled, and the films become fundamentally open to endless lengthening. Warhol emphasized this by the way in which he provided the silent films with sound on certain occasions. At the première of *Sleep* he put two transistor radios on the stage, tuned them to different stations and let them play continuous rock music. He found a different variant for the presentation of his films at the 1964 New York Film Festival. He asked composer La Monte Young to write a soundtrack that could be used equally well for all the four films. Like the composer's other work it consisted of a single endless electronically generated note.¹⁹

Chelsea Girls, Warhol's most complex film, has anti-illusionism almost built into its programme. The film lasts for over three hours, and consists of twelve 30-minute reels which, following Warhol's usual procedure were shot at one go and had nothing else done to them. They contain twelve scenes, all set in the "Chelsea" artists' hotel in New York, but beyond this do not form a coherent dramatic whole. *Chelsea Girls* is designed for double projection, i.e. two spools are screened simultaneously alongside each other. The two screenings, which compete from the outset because they are concurrent, are now brought into conflict with each other by means of various other devices. Firstly the reels are staggered in terms of time. One begins when the other has already been showing for five minutes, and ends when the next scene is already showing alongside. Secondly, sound is available from only one reel at a time. As each reel starts with its sound, the sound changes side each time a new reel starts and turns the other one, whose sound had been heard so far, into a silent film. And finally four reels were shot in colour and eight in black and white. The projection sequence is fixed in such a way that all the possible combinations are produced: two black and white, two colour, and one colour and one black and white.

Something that has already been observed in terms of panning and zooming and the provision of "sound" for the silent films is repeated on a more complex plane. Warhol deconstructs the medium and makes the viewer aware of its components (the mechanics, the camera, the reels, the colour, the sound etc.) one at a time. This recombination of the elements runs counter to the synthesis to an organic whole that first enables a conventional film to achieve dramatic fiction. Warhol replaces this synthesis by putting independent units together; they are placed alongside and behind each other in a serial, anti-compositional and virtually unlimited sequence. This reveals the concrete structure of the way in which both the individual unit and the whole sequence came into being.

Thus the syntax of the film reveals qualities of the kind familiar from Minimal Art, despite all material differences. For example, Donald Judd's series of identical boxes show the same tension between development and repetition, bearing the stamp of a completed whole and virtually infinite expandability that can also be seen in the series of reels in Warhol's films, always the same length and often with practically the same content (fig. 4). The fact that such a relationship is possible at all between a medium that is as such representative, narrative and composing and a cultural language

the attempts to exclude representation, narration and composition from its own works is significant. It points to the kind of ambivalence that is a characteristic of the films. The indifference with which Warhol directs his camera at people and objects ("... it's so easy to make movies, you just shoot and every picture really comes out right"²⁰), means that the viewer's perception swings ceaselessly between a structurally indifferent registration of the object represented and an object-indifferent registration of the structure. The films are judged in a correspondingly conflicting way. They may seem to one person to be a reduction of the medium to a concrete, self-referential surface, but Jonas Mekas, who was director of the New York "Film-Makers Cooperative" in the 60s, which premièred most of the films, placed them in the tradition of documentary, "cinéma vérité", which aimed at objective representation of the object.²¹ But if the films "document" something, then it is neither the reality nor the concrete qualities of the medium. It is the process of filmic representation itself that they take as their subject, in that their mimetic and concrete-self-referential structure compels constant redetermination of the relationship between the two. "All my films are artificial, but then everything is sort of artificial, I don't know where artificial stops and real starts." (Andy Warhol).²²

III

If one looks at the pictures from the point of view of the films similar qualities emerge. In their case too the "code" of the medium ("painting") is often broken and the works harnessed to a dialectic that cannot be removed or resolved on one particular side. Let us first take an example from the extensive range available that is particularly close to the films in both form and content: *Ethel Scull Thirty-six Times* (fig. 5). This work is Warhol's first commissioned portrait and dates from the same year (1963) as the first films. It consists of 36 panels in the same format; together they reach the considerable dimensions of 202 x 363 cm. The panels have different coloured grounds and show Ethel Scull, the wife of a New York taxi operator and contemporary art collector, in a different pose in each case. The picture gives the impression of being put together from individual images from a filmic portrait, as Warhol realized not only with *Henry Geldzahler*, *Eat*, or *Sleep* (which are all also portraits) but of the kind that he used to shoot, as so-called "Screen Tests", of every new visitor to the Factory.²³ For the latter the stereotypical instruction was to remain as still as possible and look, without blinking, into the camera, which was placed head-on, for the duration of the shot (three minutes: the length of a reel of film), but Warhol drove Ethel Scull to Times Square, sat her in an automatic photo booth, put the money in and said: "Now smile and start talking."²⁴ After initial consternation (she had expected an extensive photographic sitting and so had put on an expensive model dress) Ethel Scull responded quite effusively to this challenge. About a hundred pictures were produced, and in them she laughs, runs her hands through her hair, seems lost in thought, put on her sunglasses and takes them off again – all as though she were engaged in lively conversation. If Warhol provokes a return to the quasi-fixed image in the moving medium of film then conversely in the static medium of photography he provokes a quasi-dramatic incident.

But in a similar way to *Eat* or *Sleep*, the chronological sequence of the machine-generated pictures is broken again when they are arranged to form the composite picture. Closer examination shows that Warhol used only 25 shots for the 36 panels. Eleven panels therefore represent repetitions (some reversed) and they appear to follow no discernible rule. Likewise there are only 25 different ground colours, by which means Warhol avoids printing the same photograph twice on the same ground. And so despite the repetitions the picture does not contain any identical panels. A subtle play of original and reproduction, difference and indifference comes into play. Is the reversed repetition on a different ground "the same image"? The question can be answered in both the negative and the affirmative, according to the concept of "image" on which the decision is based. The ambivalence of multiplicity and redundancy and the

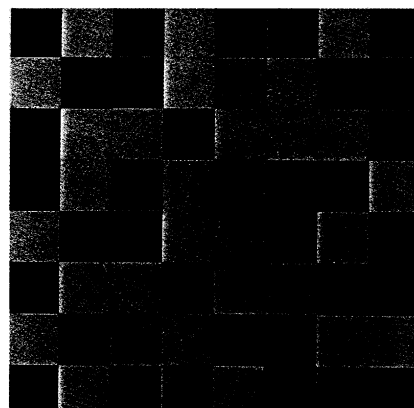
random quality of the arrangement undermine the first impression that *Ethel Scull Thirty-six Times* reproduces a meaningful event. They are much more the aesthetic equivalent of what this actually was: abrupt gesticulation in the face of an uninvolved and immobile camera, a play-through of a limited repertoire of stereotyped poses on the basis of a request to present oneself as a show. Warhol uses the apparent approach to film narrative to redefine the process of creating a portrait. If a traditional portrait is a synthesis of the way the portraitist (painter or photographer) experienced the subject during the sittings, then Warhol's portrait shows how Ethel Scull made *herself* into an image. At the crucial moment of the creative process at which reality (Ethel Scull) became an image, Warhol is literally standing outside the event: in front of the photo-booth in which the transformation is occurring of *its own accord*. Dialogue between artist and model is replaced by the monologue of self-representation.²⁵

Warhol only appears to return to the almost forgotten genre of the commissioned portrait. By splintering the representation process and firstly delegating it to a machine, but above all giving it back to the model herself ("Now start smiling and talking"), he undermines it at a crucial point. He himself is effectively active only on the periphery, he feeds the machine with coins *beforehand* and modifies the results *afterwards*, selects, crops, enlarges, breaks down into dots, selects grounds and formats, prints and finally fits the whole thing together. The way in which Warhol does this serves less to say something about the subject than to reveal the representation process as such and to identify the image as a portrait and a non-portrait at the same time. (We shall return to the fact that the broken-off interaction between Warhol and his model nevertheless tells us something about the client later.)

Once the ambivalence of Warhol's return to representation is recognized, the crucial features of his working process, reproduction and seriality, appear in a new light. They are recognizable as a process that means that the retreat from abstraction does not simultaneously turn into traditional, reproductive painting.

The crucial point in terms of reproduction is that Warhol handles screen-printing in the same dilettante manner as the camera technique in his films. The poor quality is intentional. In order to give an impression of inadequacy the photographs to be used are subjected to various quality-reducing manipulations in their translation to the print screen (reduction to dots, underexposure to heighten contrasts etc.) and more "flaws" and irregularities are consciously provoked in printing.²⁶ As in the films the intention is to allow the medium to appear in its materiality. It should be made obvious that the pictorial process is *split in two*: that Warhol is not the author of the representation of reality but simply the person who takes over the existing representation "ready-made" and places it in new contexts. For all their "realism" the images always reveal as well that they are not images about reality but *images about images*. Certainly that is only the first, the formal plane. For even the photographs that Warhol uses are contradictory in their relationship with reality. Let us take, as an obvious example, the *Marilyn Portraits* (plates 7–9) Even the picture of Marilyn Monroe on which they are based, a publicity still for the film "Niagara", feeds on the tension between the realism vouched for by the medium and the fictitious quality of a pure "image" construct. The experience of the photograph swings between the *known difference* of "image" and reality and the *visible indifference* that exists between the two. Faced with the actual *image-reality* represented by the phenomenon of a "star", it seems logical to create a portrait of this image rather than the person herself. Warhol does this in a way that accentuates the imaginary and incomprehensible qualities of the star. The explosiveness of the *Marilyns* lies in the impossibility of ever being able to grasp the firm ground of reality behind the intertextuality of "images", but nevertheless still having to assume a reality (or an original) behind the reproductions, as otherwise the concept of "reproduction" would be meaningless. Warhol's method of replacing the relation that normally exists in art between the *empirically experienced world and pictorial representation* by the

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Ellsworth Kelly, *Colours for a Large Wall*
[Farben für eine große Mauer], 1951,
Öl auf Leinwand, auf 64 Holztafeln montiert,
239 x 240 cm.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Ellsworth Kelly, *Colours for a Large Wall*, 1951,
oil on canvas, mounted on 64 wooden panels,
94 1/4 x 94 1/2".
The Museum of Modern Art, New York

relation between *different images* gains its actual content dimension when faced with the question of what the images of Marilyn Monroe actually communicate.

Mutatis mutandis something like this could be identified in most of Warhol's images, especially in those that are created using models that are published *en masse*, whose content everybody knows, without ever having seen them with their own eyes. As well as the *Star-Portraits* these include the *Jackie Series* (plates 26–27), which deals with events surrounding the murder of President Kennedy (events which represented a political upheaval and mark the high point of television as a medium to almost the same extent, as the longest live broadcast in its history), the series of *Disaster Paintings* (plates 10–19), the *Mao Pictures* (plates 52–54), etc..²⁷ But even the example of *Ethel Scull Thirty-six Times*, which does not fall into this category of work, is revealing here. The 36 or 25 images of Ethel Scull merely betray her willingness to reduce herself to a brilliant surface – but a surface which she herself was convinced was “enchanted”, and that would make her grandchildren “proud of their grandmother”.²⁸ In the same way she also decided to give her portrait to the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York only on the condition that it is permanently on show. The mondaine world's credo of treating the staged show-side as the only authoritative reality is also Ethel Scull's credo. Warhol's ability to reveal representation processes (in this case: self-representation), gives the image a psychological sharpness that it seems to lack at first glance. Pictures like the *Marilyns* or *Ethel Scull Thirty-six Times* are anyway a suitable aid to reconsidering Warhol's “superficiality”.

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The conflict between reproductive presentation of reality and mere intertextuality of images is further sharpened by the combination of reproduction and seriality. Within the various forms of seriality that have been developed since the late 19th century, Warhol's position is distinguished by two qualities. One is the linking of seriality and reproduction itself – which is logical to the extent that every reproduction carries seriality within it by its very conception. The second is that his pictures are serial *within the picture*, in which an identical motif is printed a number of times all over the surface of a single canvas. The effects of this process on the individual reproduction and on the image as a whole are of elemental simplicity, but at the same time have far-reaching consequences. The grid shape of the juxtapositions weaves the structure of the individual images into an ornamental texture whose fundamental feature is to remain external to the object of the picture. The serial repetition leaves the thematic context from which the image originates out of account, but at the same time it establishes a new context by means of the arrangement itself. But this affects only the form of the images, as the repetition creates only redundancy (and definitely not a context) in terms of content. The transformation of the image that begins with this enhances the presence of the image as a *surface*, while removing its presence as a copy. This is an effect that Warhol is not the only artist to use. The collages by the German artist Peter Roehr, for instance, which date from the same time, should also be remembered (fig. 6). But most frequently he finds a use for advertising. Here the serialization occurs either within the design, or as a subsequent measure, with posters pasted twice and three times one after the other, for example, or monitors with a commercial running on them piled up into great towers and walls. The repetition, which produces no more information, makes what is shown seem more interesting formally and thus grabs our attention – the primary aim of any advertising (fig. 7).

There is one group of works in particular for which Warhol prefers to use the serial images within the picture approach, and that is the *Disaster Paintings*, which are based on press photographs of car accidents, suicides, the electric chair etc. So let us look at some of the *Disasters* in terms of the serial effect. *Saturday Disaster*, 1964 (fig. 8) for example, shows the *most minimal form* of seriality: the doubling of the image. But that is already enough to start up the described transformation. Warhol places the two reproductions one on top of the other, not next to each other. This means that the hang-

ing bodies combine to form a dominant central axis that dominates the reproductions and together with the contrasting horizontals of the image borders and the motor car gives the picture as a whole a clear order – an order that stands in strange contradiction to the chaotic content of the picture. In *Orange Disaster*, 1963 (fig. 9) we notice that in the pictures of the electric chair the horizontals and verticals and the light and dark section of the individual reproductions join to form a pattern in which the electric chairs occupy the centres like the medallions in a Persian carpet. Another variant can be seen in *Suicide (Fallen Body)*, 1963 (plate 14), where the picture-object is overformed by the surface ornament to such an extent that it almost disappears. As a last example let us consider the case in which something analogous happens in language. In *Tuna-fish Disaster*, 1963 (plate 15) the newspaper pages reporting the death of two women from tuna fish poisoning are made into a collage. This happens in such a way that not only repeats the tins and the two portrait heads but combines the fragments of sentences from the picture caption into a continuous line: "Seized shipment: did a leak kill . . . Seized shipment: did a leak kill . . . Seized shipment: did a leak kill " – and this line itself is repeated twice. The effect is to wipe out the statement and transform it into a kind of concrete poetry.

But the crucial factor is that the gross subject matter of the *Disaster Paintings* not only cuts out the content side of the images but above all makes ornamentalization or a poetic transformation seem especially inappropriate. In this Warhol's pictures are clearly different from Peter Roehr's comparatively lyrical sheets or even from the agreeableness of advertising. Once more – this time in *extremis* – it is to be noted how Warhol intensifies the ambivalence of the image and makes what is represented contradict the concrete texture of the surface.²⁹

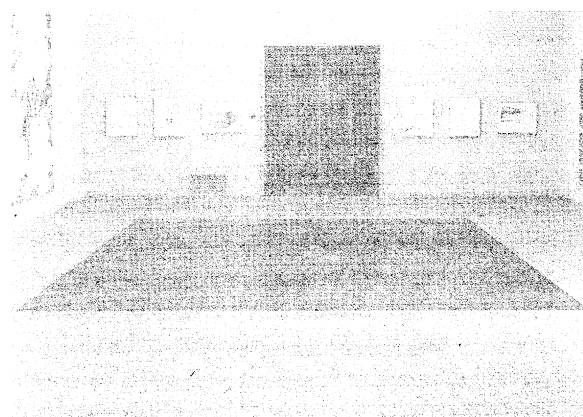
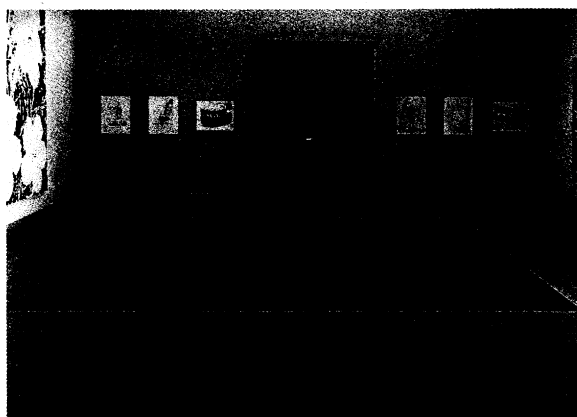
"The turn away from the representational and one of the first steps into the realm of the abstract was in terms of drawing and painting the exclusion of the third dimension, i.e. the attempt to keep the 'image' as painting on a surface." (Wassily Kandinsky).³⁰ Kandinsky's seminal description of abstraction's concerns is helpful in once more clarifying Warhol's multiply refracted representation process. By replacing "painting" with "reproducing", Warhol includes the third dimension in his painting again, in order to exclude it at the same moment, as his pictures obviously deal with a reality that has already been reduced to two dimensions rather than empirically experienced reality. Besides, they relate to phenomena whose reality was *always* perceived in the mode of the picture, indeed whose reality may be dubious beyond the pictures in some cases. And finally the grid-style serialization causes the attachment of the image to the surface of the painted ground while at the same time relativizing the (three-dimensional) content. Warhol subjects the anti-illusionistic representation-criticism as formulated by abstraction to criticism of its own, but without going over to the other side that abstraction was intended to overcome. The pictures continue to float between illusion of

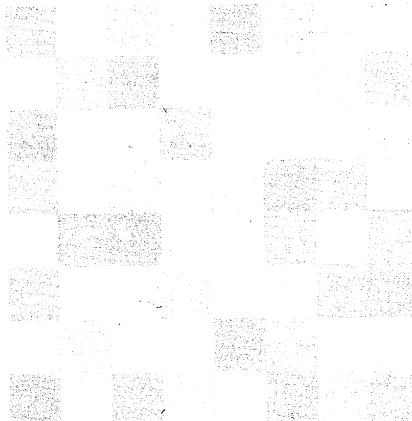
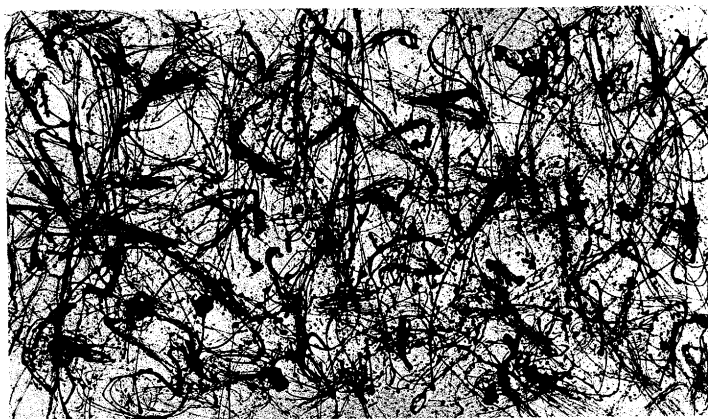
51

11

Carl Andre,
10 x 10 Altstadt-square. Düsseldorf, 1967,
Stahl, 100 Platten, je 50 x 50 x 0,5 cm,
insgesamt 500 x 500 x 0,5 cm.
Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel,
Kunstmuseum

Carl Andre, 10 x 10 Altstadt-square. Düsseldorf
[10 by 10 Old Town Squares. Dusseldorf], 1967,
Steel, 100 plates, 19 3/4 x 19 3/4 x 3/8",
installed 198 x 198 x 3/8".
Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel,
Kunstmuseum





depth and "the attempt to keep the 'image' as painting on a surface"³¹, between representation and non-representation, between painting and non-painting. "Pop Imagery, as I understand it . . . is a way of getting around a dilemma of painting and yet not painting. It is a way of bringing in an image that you didn't create." (Claes Oldenburg).³²

The pictorial structure, especially that of the works that are serial within the picture, thus takes up the grid structure developed by colour-field painters like Ellsworth Kelly or Ad Reinhardt in the 50s and adopted and refined by Minimal Art in the 60s (figs. 10, 11, 4). At the same time many of the pictorial patterns, e.g. in *Suicide (Fallen Body)*, 1963 (plate 14) or *Optical Car Crash*, 1962 (plate 10) are reminiscent of the polyfocal "all-over" devised by Jackson Pollock (fig. 12) or Clifford Still.³³ The point of these echoes, which is also significant for what is represented, lies in uniting things that are apparently not capable of being united. The abundance, certainty and completeness of representational art is melded with abstract pictorial languages that not only attempted to overcome traditional representational art with their emptiness (in the semantic sense), uncertainty and openness, but seem diametrically opposed to Warhol's artistic activities.

At this point the function of picking up trivialities – with the ability to be copied, and reproduction, the third "scandal" in the pictures – finally emerges. Only a motif that is familiar because of its reproductive omnipresence can cause both the *object itself* and also the fact of being first and foremost a picture to strike the eye forcefully. Its triviality reveals the change of representation by speaking first not about the object, but about the way in which it is communicated. It is precisely the use of a motif that seems in itself to forbid repeated copying, indicates a conceptualization "of painting" in which *representation itself* becomes the subject. Warhol's adoption of the trivial occurs neither in a populist turn away from élitist art and towards mass culture – the pictures are too wrapped up with the artistic context for that. Nor is it with the intention of revaluing the popular and raising it to the level of high art – again the pictorial motifs are too clearly anti-artistic for that. It occurs much more with the aim of creating a complex figurativeness by the crossing of "high" and "low" that requires knowledge of both sides and compels definition of its condition.

Warhol continues the modernistic outdoing of what has gone immediately before but gives it another, unexpected turn. The ambivalence structure of the works means that outdoing as such is subjected to criticism at the same time. The categories "author", "painting", "representation", "original", "innovation" and finally "art" are brought into play in such a way that negation and affirmation balance each other. Thus the view that Warhol is an early representative of post-modern art practice seems indeed justified.

At the same time Warhol's aesthetic concept would be misunderstood if it appeared exclusively as a strategy for securing a position for himself within contemporary art by skilful subversion of existing artistic procedures. Both the films and the pictures, by blending closeness to reality and distance from reality, the unmediated and the much-mediated they touch a nerve of the times. At the beginning it was mentioned that the late 50s and the 60s in the United States in particular were marked by the rise and explosive spread of the visual mass media. Illustrated magazines were at the peak of their circulation figures, crucially encouraged by record spending on advertising caused by the post-war production boom. "Life", the leading example, had a print-run of about eight million and a readership of over 40 million in America alone in the mid-sixties. It is a magazine that apart from the advertising consists almost exclusively of photographs. At the same time television established itself generally in this decade. In 1950 only eleven per cent of American households had a television, by 1960 it was 88 per cent. Average consumption of this medium was already between four and five hours per day at this time. It has been known for a long time that this brought about radical changes in world- and self-perception, even if the effects were assessed differently. However, the direct and overwhelming response to Marshall McLuhan's "Understanding Media – The Extensions of Man" (published 1964)³⁴ shows the extent to which contemporaries were already aware of it. Concepts like "mass media", "information age" or "global village" that are commonplaces today were introduced into linguistic usage by MacLuhan, the father of communication- and media-theory, at that same time. Warhol's works that appeared simultaneously, seen in this way, are a phenomenology of media transformation and perception of reality. For like them the mass media too have the trait of being transparent *and* opaque, unmediated *and* mediated, realistic *and* with their own inherent laws. And they share with Warhol's pictures the fact that they show the encyclopaedic abundance of what is represented in a stencil-like grid that is always the same. Warhol brings up one of art's old questions again, under changed conditions: the question about the relationship of appearance and being. Many of the works seem like experimental apparatus to research what "representation" might mean in view of the new forms of technical and media appearance. They unroll the problem again from its very beginning to a certain extent, as though photography and film were new inventions whose peculiarities and use had still to be practised. It has rightly been said of the films that they effectively went right back to the Lumière brothers, who began to explore the medium that was still at its earliest stage by using primitive documentation of the simplest possible everyday situations.³⁵ "Movies bring in another whole dimension. That screen magnetism is something secret – if you could only figure out what it is and how to make it. . . But you can't even tell if someone has it until you actually see them on the screen. You have to give screen tests to find out." (Andy Warhol).³⁶

Warhol's strength lies in combining these various artistic and extra-artistic planes. Contemporary art discourse, cultural testimony and seminal questions about the image and its relationship with reality are inextricably entwined in them. This complexity is also the reason why Warhol can be read and evaluated in so many different ways, he can appear as a cynic to one person, a social critic to the next, and as an outstanding artist to a third, and none of these views is right or wrong in itself. And it explains how the pictures, despite their complexity and regardless of their apparent "impossibility", enjoy incomparable circulation and are appreciated by people who otherwise take very little interest in art. "I like to be the right thing in the wrong space and the wrong thing in the right space . . . because something funny always happens. Believe me, because I've made a career out of being the right thing in the wrong space and the wrong thing in the right space. That's one thing I really do know about." (Andy Warhol).³⁷

Vgl. David Bourdon, wie Anm. 11, S. 158.

Vgl. die Beschreibung Henry Geldzahlers von seinen Erfahrungen während des Gefilmtwerdens, die denjenigen Ethel Sculls in der Photokabine entsprechen dürften: »Andy wasn't behind the camera (also wie bei Ethel Scull, M.L.). He was walking on the other side of his studio, making phone calls and silk-screening. And it was very weird sitting there. The subject was having nobody watching.«; »It had a quality of portraiture that I really hadn't seen before, because within the hour and a half with nobody standing behind the camera, I'd gone through my entire gesture vocabulary, and everything about me that I knew was revealed in the film because there's no way of hiding.« (Zit. nach: Patrick S. Smith, wie Anm. 15, S. 183; bzw.: David Bourdon, *Andy Warhol and the Society Icon*, in: *Art in America*, Nr. 63, Januar/Februar 1975, S. 43.)

Vgl. dazu Marco Livingstone, *Do It Yourself: Anmerkungen zu Warhols Arbeitstechniken*, in: Kynaston McShine (Hrsg.), wie Anm. 4, S. 59–74; sowie: Patrick S. Smith, wie Anm. 15, S. 54–82 (Interview mit Nathan Gluck) und S. 162–182 (Interview mit Gerard Malanga).

Für eine eingehendere Analyse der *Marilyns* und der *Jackies* siehe: Michael Lüthy, *Andy Warhol. Thirty Are Better Than One*, Frankfurt a.M. 1995.

Zit. nach: Victor Bockris, *Andy Warhol*, Düsseldorf 1989, S. 169, bzw.: David Bourdon, wie Anm. 25, S. 42.

Roehrs Collagen zielen auf ein verfeinertes Wahrnehmen von gemeinhin übersehenen sinnlichen Qualitäten der Dinge. »Die Mitte zwischen noch erfahrbarem Gegenstand und schon selbständiger ästhetischer Struktur wird in den Montagen fixiert. Ich glaube, daß jedes Ding erfahrbare Eigenschaften in sich birgt, die wir jedoch selten wahrnehmen. Wenn wir ein Ding mehrere Male nebeneinander oder untereinander (im Raum) und hintereinander (in der Zeit) wahrnehmen, ... bemerken wir diese Eigenschaften.« (Peter Roehr, *Notizen zu den Montagen I*, in: Werner Lippert und Paul Maenz, bearbeitet von Gerd de Vries, *Peter Roehr*, Frankfurt a.M. 1991, S. 28.) Bezeichnend für Roehrs Anliegen ist sein Entschluß, die Photomontagen wieder zugunsten von abstrakt-seriellen Kompositionen aufzugeben. »Roehr hatte sich diesem Material (der Photographie, M.L.) sehr zögernd und skeptisch zugewandt. Er gab schließlich wieder auf, weil es ihm aufgrund seiner ablenkenden Inhaltlichkeit immer unkontrollierbar erschienen war. Da sein zentrales Interesse vorrangig ... den Materialeigenschaften und deren optischer Dynamisierung durch die Wiederholung galt, mißtraute er grundsätzlich der Wirkung, die von seinen »Photomontagen« ausging; er bezeichnete ihre Wirkung abschätzig als »literarisch« (im

Sinne von thematisch-inhaltlich befrachtet) und seinen eigentlichen Absichten gegenüber fremd.« (Paul Maenz, in: Werner Lippert und Paul Maenz, siehe oben, S. 54.) Roehr stößt sich also an der Ambivalenz zwischen Inhalt und Form, die für Warhols Arbeiten gerade konstitutiv ist. Auch die Größenverhältnisse müssen berücksichtigt werden. Sind Peter Roehrs Arbeiten von bescheidenen Dimensionen (unser Beispiel ca. 22 x 23 cm), so erreichen Warhols Tafeln die Formate des »Big canvas painting«: *Tuna-fish Disaster* z.B. mißt 316 x 211 cm, *Saturday Disaster* 301 x 208 cm. Die Leichen in letzterem sind also lebensgroß wiedergegeben, was die Drastik des Gezeigten erheblich steigert.

Wassily Kandinsky, *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*, 4. Aufl., Bern 1952, S. 110ff.

Wassily Kandinsky, wie Anm. 30.

Zit. nach: Bruce Glaser, *Oldenburg, Lichtenstein, Warhol: A Discussion*, in: *Artforum*, Nr. 4, Februar. 1966, S. 21.

Der Begriff »polyfokales all-over« bei: Walter Kambartel, *Jackson Pollock. Number 32.1950*, Stuttgart 1970, S. 15.

Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, London 1964.

Vgl. Jonas Mekas, *Anmerkungen nach einem Wiedersehen mit den Filmen Andy Warhols*, in: Enno Patalas (Hrsg.), wie Anm. 14, S. 69.

Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol. From A to B and Back Again*, New York 1975, S. 63.

Andy Warhol, wie Anm. 36, S. 158.

Michael Lüthy

THE APPARENT RETURN OF REPRESENTATION

quoted from: Patrick S. Smith, *Andy Warhol's Art and Films*, Ann Arbor 1986, p. 146.

Corresponding formulations can be found throughout Greenberg's writing. Passages in *The New Sculpture* are exemplary: "The growing specialization of the arts is due chiefly not to the prevalence of the division of labor, but to our increasing faith in and taste for the immediate, the concrete, the irreducible. To meet this taste, the various modernist arts try to confine themselves to what is most positive and immediate in themselves. It follows that a modernist work of art must try, in principle, to avoid dependence upon any order of expe-

rience not given in the most essentially constituted nature of its medium. This means, among other things, renouncing illusion and explicitness. The arts are to achieve concreteness, 'purity', by acting solely in terms of their separate and irreducible selves. Modernist painting meets our desire for the literal and positive by renouncing the illusion of the third dimension. This is the decisive step, for the representational as such is renounced only in so far as it suggests the third dimension. (...) To render substance entirely optical, and form ... as an integral part of ambient space - this brings anti-illusionism full circle." (Clement Greenberg, *The New Sculpture*, in: id. *Art and Culture. Critical essays*, Boston 1961, pp. 139 and 144.)

Apart from this, a key feature of Greenberg's view is his suggestion that the term "Abstract Expressionism", which he considered unfortunate, should be replaced by "American-Type Painting". By saying this Greenberg effectively gives the Abstract Expressionists a monopoly of American art. The fact that an entirely conflicting style of painting that appears as least as much "American-Type" could emerge only a few years after Greenberg made the suggestion is completely unthinkable for him. (Clement Greenberg, "American-Type" Painting, in: id., as above, pp. 208-229.)

3. Laszlo Glozer's summary: "Views were so very fixed, not necessarily on the pictures but on their supposed ideology, on their theses and doctrines and on the permanent discussion, internalized in the course of time, that changes were scarcely perceived. It can be asserted that abstract art perhaps did not keep the world "in suspense", but certainly did that to the cultural scene. The agitated nature of the debates can still be sensed today from the documents. Every unreasonable statement was registered and then accepted, as the new territories or idiocies were within a framework that could no longer be called into question: that of "abstract" art. Abstract design had gained validity as the great stylistic approach of the epoch. Everything was possible in the playground of this mediated art, only one thing was not imaginable - that art could become representational again. This is all very simplified. Nevertheless it seems important to recall how contemporary art was received as the fifties turned into the sixties. It is hard to imagine today that the change that had come about was not perceived until late, in fact it was Pop Art that actually administered the shock. That was the turning point. (...) Nothing was more disturbing than this abuse of the picture. A counter-design was sensed, and it was seen as a desecration, not as a change." (Laszlo Glozer in: *Westkunst. Zeitgenössische Kunst seit 1939*, exhibition catalogue Kölner Museen, Cologne 1981, p. 234.) It should be added that this confrontation describes the American, not the European situation, where in the figurative works of Giacommetti, Bacon or Dubuffet the emotional and spiritual condition of the post-war period was able to rediscover itself in an exemplary fashion.

cf. for example the conclusion of Benjamin H.D. Buchloh's important essay: "Warhol has unified within his constructs both the entrepreneurial world-view of the late twentieth century and the phlegmatic vision of the victims of that world view, that of the consumers. The ruthless diffidence and strategically calculated air of detachment of the first, allowed to continue without ever being challenged in terms of its responsibility, combines with that of its opposites, the consumers, who can celebrate in Warhol's work their proper status of having been erased as subjects. Regulated as they are by the eternally repetitive gestures of alienated production and consumption, they are barred – as are Warhol's paintings – from access to a dimension of critical resistance." (Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, *Andy Warhol's One-Dimension Art: 1956–1966*, in: Kynaston McShine (ed.), *Andy Warhol. A Retrospective*, New York 1989, p. 57) What interpretations of this kind leave open in an explanation of the great success of Warhol's work not only with a wide public but also with numerous collectors and later museums. A view of the kind that Buchloh's essay suggests that they were all "exploitative, destructive and irresponsible entrepreneurs", who liked and bought Warhol for essentially cynical reasons, or "phlegmatic victims of consumerism", who were unable to read Warhol critically, scarcely meets the facts.

5

A summary of the previous advances that show relationships between Warhol's work and those of Abstract Expressionism or Minimal Art is to be found in: Robert Rosenblum, *Warhol as Art History*, in: Kynaston McShine (ed.), as in note 4, pp. 28–30. Unfortunately Rosenblum (like the earlier authors mentioned by him) leaves the topic without addressing the crucial question of how pictures that combine the forms of Abstract Expressionism and Minimal Art with the triviality of soup cans and road accidents are possible at all and how they are to be understood.

6

The authoritative catalogue for the Museum of Modern Art's 1989 retrospective (which was subsequently shown in several European venues) for example refers to the fact that Warhol also made films only in the biographical section. Conversely, the pictures are paid no attention except in a few illustrations that are occasionally strewn around in the most important publications on the film work, by Michael O'Pray or the collections of essays edited by Bernard Blistène and Jean-Michel Bouhours. The latter, under the title *Introduction à la méthode Warhol*, even produces the apodictic sentence: "On peut tout d'abord noter que les films n'ont rien à voir avec les tableaux de Warhol de la même période (ni en ce qui concerne le sujet, ni en ce qui concerne les thèmes ou le traitement visuel ou stylistique des images)." (Adriano Aprà and Enzo Ungari, *Introduction à la méthode Warhol*, in: Bernard Blistène and Jean-Michel Bouhours (ed.), *Andy Warhol. Cinéma*, Paris 1990, p. 124.)

7

quoted from Stephen Koch, *Stargazer. Andy Warhol's World and his Films*, New York 1973, p. 58.

8

In the following I shall consider only those films that were made between 1963 and 1966, i.e. his production that begins with *Sleep* and reaches its climax in *Chelsea Girls*. Warhol, who calls the films of this period his "art movies" (quoted from Stephen Koch, as in note 7, p. 19), increasingly passed the direction over to Paul Morrissey after *Chelsea Girls*. This meant that his more conventional aesthetic, directed at commercial success, got the upper hand, and we do not need to concern ourselves with this here.

9

David Bourdon, *Warhol as Filmmaker*, in: *Art in America* Nr. 59, May/June 1971, p. 49.

10

quoted from: Richard Kostelanetz, *The Theater of Mixed Means*, New York 1968, p. 5, or from Allan Kaprow, *Assemblages, Environments, and Happenings*, New York 1966, p. 276.

11

David Bourdon, *Warhol*, New York 1989, p. 188.

12

"The line between the Happening and daily life should be kept as fluid and perhaps indistinct as possible." (Allan Kaprow, *The Happenings are dead: Long live the Happenings!* in: Jeff Kelley (ed.), *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, Berkeley/Los Angeles 1993, p. 62).

13

"The work of art must now receive its meaning and qualities from the unique expectant (and often anxious) focus of the observer, listener, or intellectual participant. (...) The artist and his artist-public are expected to carry on a dialogue on a mental plane, through a medium which is insufficient alone and in some instances is nonexistent before this dialogue..." (Allan Kaprow, as in note 10, p. 173).

14

quoted from: Parker Tyler, *Drugtime, Dragtime*, in: Enno Patalas (ed.), *Andy Warhol und seine Filme. Eine Dokumentation*, Munich 1971, p. 45.

15

Patrick S. Smith, *Warhol. Conversations about the Artist*, Ann Arbor 1988, p. 199 (interview with Irving Blum).

16

Andy Warhol in: Gretchen Berg, *Nothing to Lose: An Interview with Andy Warhol*, in: Michael O'Pray (ed.), *Andy Warhol. Film Factory*, London 1989, p. 58.

17

"He brought techniques to the open like the zoom. The zoom was being used for various purposes, but he used zoom as zoom. 'Here is a zoom.'" (Jonas Mekas in: Patrick S. Smith, as in note 15, p. 321.)

A particularly "charged" variant of the opposition of film structure and film content should be mentioned at least on the periphery. *Blow Job*, also one of the best-known early films, shows a man who is being given a blow job, as the title says. Or rather, that is precisely what it doesn't show. The picture detail is always the same, and focuses on the head and shoulders of the man, so that the crucial element is missing. After the viewer has watched the action, which he can only follow very roughly from the gradually heightening of the acting, for a long time with increasing impatience, the film breaks off at the end of a reel without the man having reached a climax. *Blow Job* refuses to see what the content promises in terms of both time and space.

18

cf. Jonas Mekas's reminiscence: "Some time in 1965 Stan Brakhage [one of the leading avant-garde film artists of this period, M.L.] came to New York. He had heard about Warhol and his film *Sleep*... on his mountain in Colorado. He appeared in my room at the Film-Makers Cooperative and said: 'I've had enough. I want to look at Warhol's stuff and see what all the fuss is about.' And so he sat down and watched *Sleep* reel by reel. (...) I was just working at the editing table when Stan suddenly planted himself in the middle of the room and started to curse in his booming mountain-dweller's voice. We'd had the wool pulled over our eyes, he said, we were just a lot of fools. And he was going to get out of New York as quickly as he could. (...) I walked up and down the room ten times and listened to Stan's tirade. Suddenly a thought shot through my mind. 'What speed did you project the film at?' I asked, '16 frames a second or 24?' '24', he said. 'Then do us a favour', I asked him. 'I know it's a lot to ask, but sit down again and watch *Eat* and *Sleep* at 16 frames a second. That's the intention.' It says a lot for Stan that he agreed to do us the favour. (...) When we came back quite some time later we found him walking excitedly up and down. At first he didn't say a word. Finally he said that when he had shown the films at 16 frames a second he's suddenly seen a whole new world. He added that Warhol might be an artist who represented an aesthetic tendency that was diametrically opposed to his own, but he was nevertheless aiming at a transformation of reality that was just as splendid and clear as the one that he, Stan Brakhage, was aiming for in his own work. (...) I have never seen him so affected by another aesthetic world as he was on that day after he'd seen Andy Warhol's films." (Jonas Mekas, *Anmerkungen nach einem Wiedersehen mit den Filmen Andy Warhols*, in: Enno Patalas (ed.), as in note 14, p. 56 ff.)

19

cf. David Bourdon, as in note 9, p. 50; id., as in note 11, p. 190.

20

Gretchen Berg, as in note 16, p. 61.

21

Jonas Mekas, as in note 18, p. 65 ff.; cf. also Paul Arthur, *Flesh of Absence: Resighting the Warhol Catechism*, in: Michael O'Pray (ed.), as in note 16, p. 146.

22

Andy Warhol in: Gretchen Berg, as in note 16, p. 60.

23

Stephen Koch, as in note 7, p. 45.

24

David Bourdon, as in note 11, p. 158.

25

cf. Henry Geldzahler's description of his experience of being filmed, which might well correspond to Ethel Scull's experience in the photo-booth: "Andy wasn't behind the camera. [as in the case of Ethel Scull, M.L.] He was walking on the other side of his studio, making phone calls and silk-screening. And it was very weird sitting there. The subject was having nobody watching." "It had a quality of portraiture that I really hadn't seen before, because within the hour and a half with nobody standing behind the camera, I'd gone through my entire gesture vocabulary, and everything about me that I knew was revealed in the film because I know there's no way of hiding." (quoted from: Patrick S. Smith, as in note 15, p. 183; resp. David Bourdon, *Andy Warhol and the Society Icon*, in: *Art in America*, Nr. 63, Jan./Feb. 1975, p. 43)

26

cf. on this subject Marcus Livingstone, *Do It Yourself: Notes on Warhol's Techniques*, in: Kynaston McShine (ed.) as in note 4, pp. 63 - 78; and Patrick S. Smith, as in note 15, pp. 54 - 82 (interview with Nathan Gluck) and pp. 162 - 182 (interview with Gerard Malanga).

27

For a more detailed analysis of the *Marilyns* and the *Jackies*, see: Michael Lüthy, *Andy Warhol. Thirty Are Better Than One*, Frankfurt a. M. 1995.

28

quoted from: Victor Bockris, *Andy Warhol*, Düsseldorf 1989, p. 169, or: David Bourdon, as in note 25, p. 42.

29

Roehr's collages aim at a refined perception of sensual qualities of things that are generally overlooked. "The mid-point between objects that can still be experienced and an already independent aesthetic structure is fixed in the montages. I think that every object conceals tangible qualities within itself that we seldom perceive. If we see a thing several times alongside itself or below itself (in space) and one after the other (in time) ... we notice these qualities." (Peter Roehr, *Notizen zu den Montagen I*, in: Werner Lippert and Paul Maenz, *Peter Roehr*, revised by Gerd de Vries, Frankfurt a. M. 1991, p. 28.) A typical feature for Roehr is his decision to abandon the photo-montages again in favour of abstract-serial compositions. "Roehr had

turned to this 'material' (to photography, M.L.) very hesitantly and sceptically. He finally gave it up again because it always seemed uncontrollable to him because of its distracting 'content quality'. As his principal interest was primarily ... in material qualities and their optical dynamization by repetition he fundamentally mistrusted the effect that emanated from his 'photo-montages'; he described their effect disparagingly as 'literary' (in the sense of steeped in subject-matter and content) and alien to his own intentions." (Paul Maenz, in: Werner Lippert and Paul Maenz, as above, p. 54.) Thus Roehr takes exception to the ambivalence between content and form that is an essential constitutive element of Warhol's work. Relative sizes must be considered as well. Peter Roehr's works have modest dimensions (our example about 8 3/4 x 9 1/4"), but Warhol's panels reach the format of "big canvas painting": *Tunafish Disaster*, for example is 124 1/2 x 83", *Saturday Disaster* 118 1/2 x 82". The corpses in the latter are thus reproduced life-size, which considerably increases the vivid impact of what is shown.

30

Wassily Kandinsky, *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*, 4th ed., Bern 1952, p. 110 ff.

31

Wassily Kandinsky, as in note 30, p. 110 ff.

32

Bruce Glaser, *Oldenburg, Lichtenstein, Warhol: A Discussion*, in: *Artforum*, Nr. 4, Feb. 1966, p. 21.

33

The concept "polyfocal all-over" in: Walter Kambartel, *Jackson Pollock. Number 32*, 1950, Stuttgart 1970, p. 15

34

Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media – The Extensions of Man*, London 1964.

35

cf. Jonas Mekas, *Anmerkungen nach einem Wiedersehen mit den Filmen Andy Warhols*, in: Enno Patalas (ed.), as in note 14, p. 69.

36

Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol. From A to B and Back Again*, New York 1975, p. 63.

37

Andy Warhol, as in note 36, p. 158.

Mark Francis

KEIN DORT ODER HORROR VACUI: ANDY WARHOLS INSTALLATIONEN

1

Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol. From A to B and Back Again*, New York 1975, S. 143.

2

Gretchen Berg, *Andy: My True Story*, in: *Los Angeles Free Press*, 17. März 1967, S. 3. Zitiert nach: Kinaston McShine (Hrsg.) *Andy Warhol. Retrospektive*, München 1989, S. 449.

3

Gertrude Stein (1874–1946) wurde in Allegheny City geboren, am andern Ufer des Flusses, gerade gegenüber Pittsburgh, dem Geburtsort von Andy Warhol. »In den Vereinigten Staaten ist mehr Raum wo niemand ist als wo irgend jemand ist.« (Gertrude Stein, *Die geographische Geschichte von Amerika*, Frankfurt a. M. 1988, S. 15.)

4

Gertrude Stein, *Jedermanns Autobiographie*, Frankfurt a. M. 1986, Kapitel 4. Der zitierte Satz bezieht sich ganz speziell auf Oakland, Kalifornien, wo Stein aufgewachsen war. [Das Wortspiel mit dem dreifachen there (dt. dort) in »there is no there there« läßt sich im Deutschen nicht mit dem gegebenen Witz wiedergeben, weil das erste there in die idiomatische Wendung there is (dt. es gibt/es hat) eingebunden ist. A. d. Ü.]

5

Das American Museum (1841–68) brannte 1865 nieder, und wurde nach dem Wiederaufbau im Jahr 1868 erneut ein Opfer der Flammen. Danach widmete sich Barnum dem Zirkus und anderen Unternehmungen. Die Reste des Barnum Museums befinden sich heute in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Das Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford wurde 1874 eröffnet. Siehe Lothar Baumgartens Beitrag *unsettled objects* mit seinen 1968–70 gemachten Fotografien dieses ethnographischen Museums in: *America Invention*, Ausstellungskatalog The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 1993.

6

Nathan Gluck in einem Interview von 1978, zitiert nach: Patrick Smith, *Andy Warhol's Art and Films*, Ann Arbor 1981, S. 329.

7

Postkarten, die Tommy zwischen 1950 und 1952 an Andy Warhol geschickt hatte und die sich heute im Archiv des Andy Warhol Museums befinden, deuten darauf hin, daß Warhol in dieser Zeit einen Freund am Black Mountain College hatte. Dank an Brandon Joseph, der mich darauf aufmerksam gemacht hat.

8

Sally Banes, *Greenwich Village 1963: Avant-Garde Performance and the Effervescent Body*, Durham, North Carolina 1993, S. 90.