











Cover: Andy Warhol, *Shadows* (detail), 1978–79. Dia Art Foundation. © 2011 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: Bill Jacobson.

Above: Andy Warhol in the 1979 installation of *Shadows*, 1978–79, at Heiner Friedrich Gallery/Dia, 393 West Broadway, New York City. Photo © 1979 Arthur Tress. Courtesy Vault Gallery. Works by Andy Warhol © 2011 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

ANDY WARHOL

SHADOWS

September 25, 2011–January 15, 2012

Andy Warhol, the chronicler of an era, was known for admitting his “fondness for dull things,” which by the early 1960s corresponded to his use of photographic reproductions of found imagery culled from newspapers, magazines, and image archives.¹ Focusing his attention on “ready-made” icons of popular culture, Warhol ingeniously compiled over the course of his career a pictorial repertoire that included consumer products, portraits of celebrities, socialites, and criminals, and snapshots of car accidents, electric chairs, and race riots, which were transferred onto canvas using commercial silkscreen techniques. It has frequently been claimed that Warhol’s contradictory statements and fluctuating declarations of intention, which permeated his career, were mere “acts” within a carefully tailored self-parody. Perhaps to Warhol’s own astonishment, his deployment of superfluous and what he considered ordinary subjects would become a powerful model of political subversion for a generation defined as much as by Hollywood and popular music as by the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement. In hindsight, Warhol’s oeuvre, which materialized in a wide range of media including drawings, prints, silkscreened

canvases, Polaroid photographs, and black-and-white prints, as well as Super 8 and 16mm films, remains to this day unrivaled for its copiousness. Contrary to his professed emptiness—he once said, “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”—Warhol’s working process and the “assembly line” of his Factory heralded with unprecedented irreverence and irony quite deliberate social and political transgressions.²

In 1978, at age 50, Andy Warhol embarked upon the production of a monumental body of work titled *Shadows* with the assistance of his entourage at the Factory.³ The series formalized earlier explorations with abstraction, seen the previous year in the *Oxidation*, *Rorschach*, and *Camouflage* paintings.⁴ In contrast to the *Oxidation* or *Piss* paintings, achieved through a process of staining in which a canvas coated in copper reacted to the acidity of urine spilled or dripped on it, the *Shadows* panels are silkscreened canvases. To locate the radical implications of Warhol’s *Shadows*, one must begin with the work’s form: the *Shadows* series was conceived as one painting in multiple parts, the final number of canvases determined by the dimensions of an exhibition space. The canvases were installed edge to edge, a foot from the floor, in the order that Warhol’s assistants, Ronnie Cutrone and Stephen Mueller, hung them.⁵

The canvases, which were primed and coated with acrylic paint prior to the printing of the image, show Warhol's signature palette of bright hues with cheerful excess. While the color palette used for the grounds of the *Shadows* includes more than a dozen different hues, certain colors—the translucent violet of *Lavender Disaster*, 1963, or the aqua green of *Turquoise Marilyn*, 1964—that are characteristic of his larger body of work are present. Unlike the surfaces of earlier paintings, in which thin layers of rolled acrylic paint constituted the backgrounds onto which black pixilated images were silkscreened, the backgrounds of the *Shadows* canvases were painted with a sponge mop, the streaks and trails left by the mop adding “gesture” to the picture plane. Seven or eight different screens were used to create *Shadows*, as evidenced in the slight shifts in scales of dark areas as well as the arbitrary presence of spots of light. The “shadows” alternate between positive and negative imprints as they march along the wall of the gallery.⁶

Despite the apparent embrace of repetition, Warhol's “machine method” is nothing but handmade. A significant and intriguing fact about *Shadows* is the irreproducibility of its assumed reproduction, a point that problematizes his infamous aesthetic of “plagiarism” and positions Warhol's project as one that is primordially pictorial. This revelation, previously inferred by curator Donna De Salvo in the catalogue

for the Tate Gallery's 2001 retrospective of Warhol's work, is crucial to our absorbing this monumental series thirty-two years after it was created. As De Salvo observed, “each of the visual strategies operative in these paintings is the same as those used some 17 years before. As with the earlier silkscreen paintings, although we at first believe each canvas to be the same—a belief emphasized here by the repeated patterns of the shadow—they are not.”⁷ Far from replicas, each *Shadow* corresponds to a form that reveals, with precision and self-awareness, its space, directing the spectator's gaze to light, the central subject of the series.⁸ In focusing on the shadow to devise light—that is to say, sparks of color—Warhol returns to the quintessential problem of art: perception. As he asserted, “when I look at things, I always see the space they occupy. I always want the space to reappear, to make a comeback, because it's lost space when there's something in it.”⁹

Yasmil Raymond
Curator
Dia Art Foundation

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WARHOL PROGRAMS

Hal Foster, Thursday, September 29, 7 pm, Ring Auditorium
Hal Foster, noted Warhol scholar and Chair, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University will talk on “They Were All Diseased: Distress in Warhol, Early and Late.”

Andy Warhol: A Documentary Film, 2006, Sunday, October 2 & November 6, 11 am: Part I; 2 pm: Part II, Ring Auditorium
Ric Burns’s exhaustive four-hour portrait can make you an instant Warhol expert. Narrated by Laurie Anderson and including interviews with Irving Blum, Jeff Koons, Wayne Koestenbaum, George Plimpton, and others.

After Hours, Friday, October 14, 8 pm to midnight
This fall, After Hours celebrates *Shadows* with gallery talks, live music, and special performances.

Gallery Event: In the Shadows, Tuesday, October 25, 7 pm, Second Level Galleries
Take an in-depth look at the *Shadows* on this exhibition walk-through with Glenn O’Brien, a member of the Factory and former editor of Andy Warhol’s *Interview*, Dia curator Yasmil Raymond, and others who will explore this monumental artwork from a range of perspectives.

Directions: Empire³
On view beginning November 10, Lower Level
The latest *Directions* exhibition features three time-based media responses to the New York landmark building by artists Andy Warhol, Douglas Gordon, and Wolfgang Staehle.

Kara Walker, Wednesday, January 11, 7 pm, Ring Auditorium
Best known for her room-size tableaux of black cut-paper silhouettes, New York-based artist Walker will discuss Warhol as among her earliest artistic influences.

Friday Gallery Talks, Fridays at 12:30 pm
Meet at the Information Desk
Drop by the Hirshhorn during your lunch break for half-hour gallery talks led by curators, educators, artists, writers, and scholars from a variety of fields.

Visit hirshhorn.si.edu for more information.

Warhol On the Mall is a joint celebration of the artist’s pioneering career with *Andy Warhol: Shadows* and *Warhol: Headlines*, at the National Gallery of Art (September 25, 2011–January 2, 2012)

NOTES ¹Wayne Koestenbaum, *Andy Warhol* (New York: Viking Books, 2001), 10; ²Andy Warhol, *I’ll Be Your Mirror: The Selected Andy Warhol Interviews, 1962–1987*, ed. Kenneth Goldsmith (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2004), 90; ³The *Shadows* were originally exhibited in a solo exhibition presented by the Lone Star Foundation (now Dia Art Foundation) at the commercial gallery Heiner Friedrich, Inc., previously located at 393 West Broadway (the current home of Walter De Maria’s *The Broken Kilometer*) from January 27 to March 19, 1979; ⁴Although Warhol’s signature style of silkscreened paintings was primarily figurative, abstraction, in the form of monochromatic “empty” canvases, had appeared in his work as early as 1963. (See Benjamin Buchloh, “Andy Warhol’s One-Dimensional Art: 1956–1966,” in *Andy Warhol: A Retrospective*, ed. Kynaston McShine, The Museum of Modern Art, 1989.) During the late 1970s, however, Warhol produced a number of “abstract” pictures prior to *Shadows*—including the *Oxidation* paintings, 1978, and a single large canvas titled *Shadow Painting*, 1978—followed by the four-panel series *Diamond Dust Shadow*, c. 1979. Several authors have speculated on his reason for resorting to nonfigurative imagery at this moment in his career. However, the artist’s diary entries on January 23, January 25, and January 27, 1979 provide little insight other than the fact that he resented the poet René Ricard’s declaration that the *Shadows* were merely “decorative.” Warhol told Pat Hackett, “That got me really mad, and I’m so embarrassed, everybody saw the real me, I got red and was telling him off, and then he was screaming things like that... everybody was stunned to see me so angry and out of control and screaming back at him.” (Pat Hackett, *The Andy Warhol Diaries* [New York: Grand Central, 1989], 199); ⁵Hackett, 198; ⁶Warhol’s comment about the exhibition at Friedrich’s gallery, “The show looked good, the gallery’s so big.” (Ibid., 198); ⁷Donna De Salvo, *Andy Warhol Retrospective* (London: Tate, 2001), 50–51; ⁸Warhol instructed that each canvas be hung at eye level, edge to edge and numbered according to their initial placement in the 1979 show; ⁹Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol* (Mariner Books, 1977), 144.

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