

Beethoven by Warhol

Exhibition at the Beethoven-Haus Bonn
9 September 2026 to 5 April 2027

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Beethoven by Warhol

The special exhibition documents Andy Warhol's remarkable artistic engagement with Ludwig van Beethoven. Its story begins as early as 1979 and culminates in Warhol's four-part screenprint portfolio **BEETHOVEN** (1987), whose creation and historical context form the focus of the exhibition. Initiated by the Bonn gallerist Hermann Wünsche and inspired by postcards from the Beethoven-Haus Bonn, the series was produced shortly before Warhol's sudden and unexpected death on 22 February 1987. With the **BEETHOVEN** series, Warhol demonstrated for the final time the full expressive potential of his distinctive portrait technique, based on photographic source material and realised through the photomechanical silk-screen process. He first used this method in 1962, when commissioned by RCA Records to design the cover for a new album by the American saxophonist Paul Desmond. It would become the defining hallmark of his artistic practice.

In **BEETHOVEN**, Warhol once again transforms a celebrated figure into an icon. He approaches Beethoven in much the same way as the countless stars of mass media whom he had portrayed throughout his career. His source material consisted of postcards reproducing one of the most widely circulated portraits of Beethoven, together with the autograph manuscript of perhaps the

composer's most famous piano work, the so-called *Moonlight Sonata*. Characteristically, Warhol first transformed these postcard images into halftone photographic images before printing them onto paper or canvas, some of which had been prepared with bold fields of colour. Individual elements – such as the hair, hands and scarf – are heightened through striking, flat areas of contrasting colour. He then adds a contour drawing derived from the portrait and, for the first time, overlays Beethoven's musical manuscript across the image as a visual meta-commentary. Beethoven had never before been seen in this way. Warhol transforms him into a contemporary pop icon. With this, his final screenprint series, he created what has become the defining twentieth-century image of Beethoven – one that reflects the composer's enduring appeal well into the present day: Beethoven for everyone.

The exhibition brings together an exceptional selection of works on paper and canvas alongside a wealth of ephemera – including photographs, visitors' books, admission tickets, posters and related material – much of it little known and some of it presented to the public for the first time. To place the BEETHOVEN portfolio in a broader artistic context, the exhibition also features a selection of record covers designed by Warhol, illustrating both the evolution of his artistic practice and the significance of BEETHOVEN within his oeuvre. A further section is devoted to the collaboration between the Bonn gallerist Hermann Wünsche and Andy Warhol, from which numerous other, more and less familiar works by the artist emerged. Visitors are also invited to explore additional

works by Warhol in the museum's permanent exhibition. They stand in deliberate tension with the museum's biographical and historical presentation, inviting visitors to engage more deeply with the dialogue between Warhol and Beethoven that the artist so compellingly initiated.

The special exhibition is held under the patronage of the Minister of State for Culture and the Media.

Room: Special exhibition

Silke Bettermann

From Composer to Pop Icon – The Genesis of Andy Warhol's BEETHOVEN Portfolio

Andy Warhol's influence on the visual arts – and on popular culture more generally – has been profound and far-reaching ever since the 1960s, extending well into the present day, despite the fact that the New York artist (b. 1928) died on 22 February 1987. His artistic legacy continues to resonate in the work of artists such as Jeff Koons (b. 1955), Mariko Mori (b. 1967), and Res Ingold (b. 1954), while numerous authors associated with postmodern pop literature may likewise be regarded as his successors through their distinctive modes of self-representation and their perspectives on contemporary culture. Even more enduring, however, has surely been Warhol's influence on art in its popular manifestations. Through his work, it underwent a fundamental reorientation, with the result that images in Warhol's unmistakable style have become ubiquitous in homes and offices around the world, while computer-generated image manipulation in the manner of Warhol has even found its way into digital gaming. A particularly striking example of the extraordinary appeal of Warhol's work to

a broad audience is his BEETHOVEN portfolio, produced in late 1986 and early 1987. Today it ranks among the most widely recognised depictions of the composer worldwide and is regarded as one of the very few modern reinterpretations of Beethoven's historical likenesses that convincingly succeeds in translating them into a contemporary visual language.

Warhol's interest in Beethoven's appearance – and thus the origins of his Beethoven serigraph – can be traced back to 1979. It arose in connection with an exhibition of his work held at the Hans Schüller furniture store in Bonn, for which the artist travelled from New York. On the day of the exhibition opening, Warhol visited, among other places, a fashion boutique in Bonn, where he struck up a conversation with its owner, the German-Chinese businessman Sing Yang Chin. Chin later recalled that the artist enquired about Bonn's principal sights and asked him to obtain a selection of postcards depicting the city's best-known landmarks. Chin gladly complied and presented the postcards to the artist later that evening. According to his recollection, they included postcards depicting Beethoven as well as, most likely, photographs of the Beethoven-Haus. It is therefore clear that Warhol already displayed a general interest in Beethoven at this early stage. A more sustained engagement with the composer's image, however, did not begin until approximately seven years later, at the initiative of the Bonn gallerist Hermann Wünsche (1941–1993), who was a close friend of the artist. According to Hans G. Tuchel in *Warhol Made in Germany*, the publication

edited by Wünsche, the gallerist conceived the idea of commissioning Warhol to create a portrait of Beethoven for the celebrations marking Bonn's 2000th anniversary in 1989. Evidently, Wünsche discussed the project with Warhol on numerous occasions. A series of surviving Polaroid photographs demonstrates that these conversations were by no means exclusively serious in tone. Rather, they reveal that Warhol's approach to Beethoven could also be relaxed and playful. The photographs show Wünsche and Warhol posing humorously with a small bust of Beethoven produced by the English porcelain manufacturer Robinson & Leadbeater.

As Tuchel relates, Andy Warhol devoted approximately a year to developing his projected portrait of Beethoven. His starting point was a number of historical representations of the composer. Among the visual sources that, according to Tuchel, informed the project was Beethoven's death mask. However, the evidence currently available does not substantiate this claim. The second historical model with which Warhol undoubtedly engaged is more securely documented: the Beethoven Monument by the sculptor Ernst Julius Hähnel (1811–1891), situated on Bonn's Münsterplatz. Unveiled in 1845 during the first Beethoven Festival, the monument presents the composer in a dignified, representative pose, with a facial expression that perfectly reflects nineteenth- and early twentieth-century conceptions of Beethoven's artistic genius and personality. The composer is depicted with strongly defined features modelled on his 1812 life mask and with a luxuriant mass of

curly hair. Warhol visited the Rhineland on numerous occasions – notably in 1976 while preparing his portrait of Willy Brandt and later for the openings of several exhibitions of his work – making it highly probable that he was familiar with Hähnel's monument. It was not, however, Warhol's practice to work from studies made from life or preparatory sketches when developing his own compositions. Instead, he relied on photographic reproductions, whether taken by himself or supplied by others. Rejecting the notion of an aesthetic shaped by individual artistic style, he deliberately embraced mechanical reproduction as an integral element of artistic creation. Far from being merely acceptable, the use of photographic reproductions became a defining principle of his work. To enlarge these small-format photographs to a scale suitable for his serigraphs, Warhol used an overhead projector, which enabled him to project the images onto a larger surface and trace their outlines. Among the surviving papers from Hermann Wünsche's estate is a photocopy of a photograph depicting the upper section of Hähnel's Beethoven Monument. Alongside the image appears Warhol's handwritten inscription: 'Hermann [i.e. Hermann Wünsche] / Andy Warhol'. This documented source, unquestionably known to Warhol, presents the monument in a slightly upward frontal perspective and corresponds closely to a large-scale drawing produced in the artist's studio that is now in private ownership. Warhol's engagement with the Bonn monument, however, extended beyond this single study. A second original drawing, now preserved in the collection of the

Beethoven-Haus Bonn, depicts essentially the same section of the monument while subtly varying both the angle of view and the positioning of the statue.

Alongside Hähnel's monument, Warhol also explored another historical representation of Beethoven that Tuchel does not mention, although the artist's engagement with it is documented by several surviving drawings. He worked from a series of photographs of a bust created by the Cologne-based sculptor and medallist Johann Baptist Schreiner (1866–1935), executed in two versions between 1907 and 1909. Both versions are today preserved in the Stadtmuseum Bonn. Like many sculptural representations of Beethoven, Schreiner's bust was based upon the composer's life mask, the most authentic record of his features. Its notably austere facial expression, particularly the firmly closed mouth, follows the life mask closely and at the same time reflects the widely held perception of the composer as a man of resolute character. According to an article published in the *Bonner Rundschau* on 22 May 1970, the workshop of the Rheinisches Landesmuseum Bonn (now the LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn) produced 145 plaster casts of Schreiner's bust on behalf of the organisation Inter Nationes. These were distributed to German embassies and Goethe Institutes throughout the world. It is therefore likely that photographs of the sculpture were readily available to Warhol. The circulation of such images within the Bonn and Cologne region is further confirmed by a surviving postcard in the collection of the Beethoven-Haus, depicting the bust in frontal view.

Warhol's surviving drawings reveal that, as with Hähnel's monument, he experimented extensively with different viewpoints. They depict Schreiner's bust from a slightly elevated viewpoint, seen either from the left or from the right, or in a direct frontal view, as in the aforementioned postcard.

Ultimately, however, Warhol abandoned this motif as well and selected as the basis for the final version of his Beethoven portrait what is unquestionably the most famous historical image of the composer: the portrait depicting Beethoven holding the manuscript of the *Missa solemnis*. This slightly less-than-life-size portrait was painted in late 1819 and early 1820, when Beethoven was forty-nine, by the Mainz-born portrait painter Joseph Karl Stieler (1781–1858), who later became court painter to the King of Bavaria in Munich. The painting was commissioned by Franz (1765–1844) and Antonie (1780–1869) Brentano of Frankfurt, close friends of Beethoven who also enjoyed connections with Stieler. After considerable effort, the artist succeeded in arranging a personal meeting with the composer and persuading him to sit for the portrait. Four sittings took place between February and April 1820, during which the painting was largely completed. Immediately after its completion, the portrait was shown at the spring exhibition of the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, where it attracted considerable public attention. Its favourable reception led to numerous reproductions throughout the nineteenth century, and by the first half of the twentieth century it had become exceptionally well known. More

than any other likeness, Stieler's portrait has shaped the public image of Beethoven down to the present day. Beethoven himself also appears to have held the portrait in particularly high esteem. According to his secretary, Anton Schindler (1795–1864), the composer regarded it, "with every justification, as the most successful" of all his portraits. He presented friends with copies of the lithograph produced after the painting in 1826 by Friedrich Dürck (1809–1884). After remaining in private ownership for more than 150 years, Stieler's original painting entered the collection of the Beethoven-Haus Bonn in 1981, where it remains today.

Warhol himself is unlikely ever to have seen the painting in person, as no visit by the artist to the Beethoven-Haus has been documented. By the 1980s, however, a variety of postcards reproducing the portrait – in both colour and black-and-white – were widely available, providing readily accessible source material for his screenprint. It is highly probable that Warhol worked from a black-and-white postcard published by the Beethoven-Haus and readily obtainable in Bonn. This conclusion is supported by a photocopy preserved among the artist's surviving source materials, which appears to have served directly as the basis for the screenprint. The photocopy is mounted, together with a second photocopy, on a single sheet of card. The latter shows the opening of the third movement (*Presto agitato*) from Beethoven's autograph manuscript of the so-called *Moonlight Sonata* (*Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27 No. 2). The autograph manuscript of the sonata, composed in 1801, has been

in the possession of the Beethoven-Haus since 1898 and ranks among the institution's most celebrated musical manuscripts. From the 1920s onwards, several facsimile editions were published, while the museum also issued postcards reproducing the opening of the third movement. (The first and final sheets of the autograph are lost, meaning that neither the opening of the first movement nor the conclusion of the last survived.) One such postcard survived in Hermann Wünsche's estate and lends further support to the assumption that Warhol used precisely this image as the source for the manuscript element incorporated into his composition.

In his interpretation of Beethoven, Warhol transformed Stieler's portrait into the boldly coloured, flat pictorial language that had become the hallmark of his artistic practice. Vibrant, freely chosen colour combinations are combined with sharply defined contour lines, while the entire portrait is overlaid with an enlarged fragment of Beethoven's musical manuscript reproduced from the postcard. It is precisely this fusion of an authentic historical portrait with the composer's own handwritten score that constitutes the most original and innovative aspect of Warhol's invention. Among the many modern attempts to represent Beethoven visually, his serigraph stands apart through this unprecedented synthesis of image and music. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, artists had repeatedly grappled with the question of how a portrait of Beethoven might transcend the mere depiction of his physical features and instead communicate something of his music and artistic personality. Many

incorporated the titles of his best-known compositions into decorative bands of text surrounding the portrait, while others included selected passages of musical notation in the background. Warhol's solution, by contrast, was entirely unprecedented: he combined a portrait of the composer directly with one of his autograph musical manuscripts, thereby according equal visual significance to the music and the man. The resulting image proposes an interpretation in which Ludwig van Beethoven can never be understood independently of his work. Characteristic of Warhol's artistic vision is the fusion of two of the most familiar documents of Beethoven, both of which were widely disseminated through photographic reproduction during the twentieth century.

The design of the portrait as a serigraph was entrusted to the New York artist and master printer Rupert Jasen Smith Jr. (1951–1989), with whom Warhol had worked closely with since 1977. Appointed with both 'Master Printmaker' and 'Art Director' of the Factory, Smith became one of Warhol's most trusted collaborators. Warhol valued his contribution so highly that he permitted Smith's printer's mark to appear immediately beside his own signature on jointly produced editions – an exceptional acknowledgement of the printer's creative role in the conception and realisation of these works. Smith's contribution to the BEETHOVEN portfolio was likewise of fundamental importance. His involvement extended far beyond the technical process of printing, particularly with regard to the colour design of the individual screenprints. Altogether, he produced seventy-two

different colour combinations for the portrait and seems to have played a key role in selecting the four versions ultimately included in the published portfolio. This unusually collaborative mode of working was entirely consistent with Warhol's conception of artistic production and, above all, with his desire to challenge traditional notions of artistic individuality. In an interview with the journalist Gene Swenson for *Artnews* in 1963, Warhol famously remarked: "I think it would be so great if more people took up silk screens so that nobody would know whether my picture was mine or somebody else's."

Today, the BEETHOVEN portfolio – reproduced in countless editions, variations and adaptations – is among Warhol's most widely recognised late works. Although Rupert Jasen Smith had completed the printing early in 1987, Warhol died before he was able to sign the editions personally. Consequently, the published impressions bear the estate stamp together with the signatures of the printer, the executor of the estate and the publisher. Like Warhol's portrait series devoted to figures such as *Joseph Beuys* (1921–1986), *Goethe* (1749–1832), *Ingrid Bergman* (1915–1982) and *Hans Christian Andersen* (1805–1875), the Beethoven portrait belongs to a group of commissioned works that demonstrate the artist's remarkable ability to respond to almost any occasion. As Henry Geldzahler noted in his introduction to the *Catalogue Raisonné* of Warhol's prints, such works could simultaneously address the specific circumstances for which they were created and acquire a significance that extended beyond them. Stylistically, the series belongs to

the group of screenprints produced in 1986, including *Cowboys and Indians* and *Martha Graham*. At the same time, the all-over graphic structure that overlays the portrait recalls elements of the late *Camouflage* series and, in particular, *Joseph Beuys in Memoriam*. Owing to the universal familiarity of its source image, the brilliance of its colour schemes and the striking superimposition of musical notation upon the portrait, the BEETHOVEN portfolio is widely regarded in the scholarly literature as one of the outstanding achievements of Warhol's final creative period. It also marks a return to the directness and visual clarity of the screenprints of the 1960s.

By incorporating Beethoven into the pantheon of subjects that populate Warhol's oeuvre, the American artist – whose lifelong fascination with celebrity shaped virtually every aspect of his practice – placed the composer alongside the iconic figures of twentieth-century mass media. Warhol's ambition to extend art beyond the confines of galleries and museums into the wider sphere of popular culture here finds expression through a historical figure. Beethoven is transformed into a modern celebrity: not merely a great composer, but a cultural icon whose image functions according to the same mechanisms of recognition and repetition as those of the stars of film, music and politics. Viewed in the context of the personalities whose public profiles were amplified through Warhol's portraits after 1979, Beethoven assumes his place in the international pantheon of celebrity beside Marilyn Monroe (1926–1962), Judy Garland (1922–1969), Madonna (b. 1948), Grace Jones (b. 1948),

Joseph Beuys, Ozzy Osbourne (1948–2025) and Mao Zedong (1893–1976). Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the global culture of celebrity has expanded to an unprecedented degree, making Warhol's conception appear more relevant than ever. His portrait of Beethoven links the composer directly to the visual culture of a media-saturated, globalised world. Celebrities have long embodied society's aspirations towards distinction, individuality and success. Through their continual circulation within the mass media, they acquire carefully constructed public images that both elevate and distance them from the historical individuals behind them. These images, enriched by anecdotes, myths and endlessly repeated narratives, can eventually eclipse the complexity of the person they represent. In Beethoven's case, such a process had already begun during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Through his deliberate exploitation of publicity, reproduction and the mechanisms of the commercial art market, Andy Warhol not only anticipated but actively shaped today's culture of celebrity. The countless authorised and unofficial reproductions, adaptations and appropriations of his Beethoven portrait – still encountered in galleries, auction houses and online art markets throughout the world – provide compelling evidence that the composer lends himself exceptionally well to this retrospective construction of stardom. The international success of Warhol's Beethoven portrait ultimately lends renewed force to one of the artist's most provocative convictions: that art proves itself as 'good art' only when it succeeds within

the commercial world. If one accepts this proposition, then it applies not only to Warhol's own work, but – perhaps unexpectedly – to the music of Beethoven as well.

Intro

- 1 Anonymous photographer
Warhol and Wünsche
with a Beethoven bust
by Robinson &
Leadbeater in the Red
Room of the Factory
Five Polaroid photos,
1986/87
Private collection
- 2 Beethoven bust by
Robinson & Leadbeater
Terracotta,
late 19th century
Beethoven-Haus Bonn
- 3 Sales catalogue of the
Robinson & Leadbeater
manufactory
Late 19th century
Facsimile
- 4 Timothy Hursley
Andy Warhol Factory –
Fred Hughes' office with
the Beethoven bust
shown on the Polaroids
Photo, 1986/87
Beethoven-Haus Bonn
- 5 Beethoven-Haus Bonn
Postcard showing
Naoum Aronson's
Beethoven bust, with a
handwritten dedication
by Warhol and Wünsche
Private collection
Stefan Unkelbach

1979, Art in the Furniture Store

- I Andy Warhol
Sunset (Portfolio)
Silkscreen, 1972
Private collection
- II Andy Warhol
Sunset (Portfolio)
Silkscreen, 1972
Private collection
- III Andy Warhol
Sunset (Portfolio)
Silkscreen, 1972
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- IV Andy Warhol
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Silkscreen, 1972
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- V Galerie Hermann
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Poster for the 1979
Warhol exhibition at
Schüller furniture store
Reprint
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- VI Andy Warhol
Fiesta Pig
Silkscreen, 1979
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- VII Andy Warhol
Campbell's Soup Can
(Tomato)
Silkscreen on shopping
bag, c. 1966 (signed)
Private collection

- 6 Galerie Hermann Wünsche
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- 7 Galerie Hermann Wünsche
Invitation card to the 1979 Warhol exhibition at Schüller furniture store
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- 8 Hermann Wünsche (editor)
Andy Warhol: Das graphische Werk 1962–1980 (signed)
Bonner Universitäts-Buchdruckerei, 1981
Private collection Hans Schüller
- 9 Album of photos of the 1979 exhibition opening
Private collection
- 10 Anonymous photographer
Album and photos of the exhibition opening 1979
Private collection Hans Schüller
- 11 Möbelhaus Schüller
Guest book beginning with the 1979 exhibition
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- 12 Hermann Wünsche
Invitation to a Disco-Night after the exhibition opening 1979
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- 13 Anonymous photographer
Making-of, Andy Warhol, Fiesta Pig, ca. 1979
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- 1986/87, The Project
- VIII Johann Baptist Schreiner (1866–1935)
Ludwig van Beethoven
Marble, 1907
Bonn City Museum
- IX Ernst Julius Hähnel (1811–1891)
Model for the Beethoven monument on Münsterplatz in Bonn
Plaster, bronze-coated, 1844
Beethoven-Haus Bonn
- X Andy Warhol
Beethoven statue by Ernst Julius Hähnel on Münsterplatz in Bonn
Drawing, synthetic polymer paint, 1986
Beethoven-Haus Bonn
- XI Andy Warhol
Beethoven statue by Ernst Julius Hähnel on Münsterplatz in Bonn
(with coffee stain)
Drawing, synthetic polymer paint, 1986
Private collection

- XII** Andy Warhol
Beethoven bust by Johann Baptist Schreiner
Drawing, synthetic polymer paint, 1986
Beethoven-Haus Bonn
- 14** Beethoven statue by Ernst Julius Hähnel on Münsterplatz in Bonn
Photocopy of a photo, "Hermann" (i.e. Hermann Wünsche) and "Andy Warhol," written by Andy Warhol, 1985/86
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- 15** Partial view of the Beethoven statue by Ernst Julius Hähnel on Münsterplatz in Bonn
Photo, 2nd half of 20th century
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- 16** Portrait bust of Ludwig van Beethoven by Johann Baptist Schreiner
Photo postcard, 1st half of 20th century
Beethoven-Haus Bonn
- 17** Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac
Invitation card for the exhibition "Andy Warhol. Portraits", with a drawing of the Beethoven bust by Andy Warhol
Salzburg, 2005
Beethoven-Haus Bonn
- 1987, BEETHOVEN
- XIII** Andy Warhol
BEETHOVEN
(Trial proof 20/72)
Silkscreen, 1987
Private collection
- XIV** Andy Warhol
BEETHOVEN
(Trial proof 41/72)
Silkscreen, 1987
Private collection
- XV** Andy Warhol
BEETHOVEN
(Trial proof 58/72)
Silkscreen, 1987
Private collection
- XVI** Andy Warhol
BEETHOVEN
(Trial proof 62/72)
Silkscreen, 1987
Private collection
- XVII** Andy Warhol
BEETHOVEN
Silkscreen from the portfolio of four prints, 1987
Private collection
- 18** Andy Warhol
Source material for the Beethoven portrait (front and back), photocopies mounted on cardboard, 1985/86
Facsimile
Original: Pittsburgh, Penn.; Andy Warhol Museum Archives, T608

- 19 Beethoven-Haus Bonn
Ludwig van Beethoven
with the manuscript
of the Missa solemnis,
photo postcard
after the painting by
Joseph Karl Stieler
Bonn, 2nd half of
20th century
Beethoven-Haus Bonn
- 20 Beethoven-Haus Bonn
Ludwig van Beethoven,
Piano Sonata
"Sonata quasi una
Fantasia" Op. 27 No. 2,
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after the manuscript
from 1801
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20th century
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- 1989, Bonn's 2000th Anniversary
- XVIII Galerie Hermann
Wünsche / Stadt Bonn
Exhibition poster,
signed by Leonard
Bernstein
Beethovenhalle, 1989
Beethoven-Haus Bonn
- XIX Galerie Hermann
Wünsche
BEETHOVEN
Portfolio prints in
postcard size, 1989
Alfons Mirgel Bonn
- XX Galerie Hermann
Wünsche
Printing plates for the
portfolio in postcard
size
Alfons Mirgel Bonn
- 21 Stadt Bonn
Flyer for the 2000th
anniversary celebration,
1989
Beethoven-Haus Bonn
- 22 Galerie Hermann
Wünsche / Stadt Bonn
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- 23 Anonymous
photographer
Hermann Wünsche in
New York putting up
posters on the
Beethoven monument
in Central Park
Photo, c. 1989
Private collection
Corinna Heumann
- 24 Galerie Hermann
Wünsche
Guest book, ending with
the 1989 exhibition
Private collection
- 25 Anonymous
photographer
Photos of the opening
of the 1989 exhibition
Private collection

- 26 Michael Sonderrmann
Leonard Bernstein at
the exhibition "Andy
Warhol. Ludwig van
Beethoven" as part of
the Beethoven Festival
in Bonn, 1989
Contact sheet and
photos
Stadtarchiv und
Stadthistorische Bibliothek
Bonn

1981, The Fascination of Hair

- XXI Christopher Makos
Altered Images
Silkscreen on
wallpaper, 1981
Beethoven-Haus Bonn,
donated by Corinna Heumann

- XXII Christopher Makos
Altered Images
Contact sheets with
grease-pencil
annotations, 1981
Private collection

- XXIII Christopher Makos
Altered Images
Photo, 1981
Private collection

Room: Music room

Guy Minnebach

Forty Years of Warhol's Artistic Development Reflected in His LP Cover Designs

"Andrew Warhola is a young man from Carnegie Tech with an unusual technique. Might be said to be a combination of the old and the new. It is to be hoped that he will quickly get beyond the field of record and album covers." (Carnegie Tech was the Carnegie Institute of Technology. Warhol studied at its School of Fine Arts, which is now part of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.)

This short text in the trade magazine *Advertising Agency and Advertising & Selling* (July 1950), is believed to be the earliest mention of a young Andy Warhol as a commercial artist. It was illustrated with a small impression of *Night Beat* (NBC radio), the earliest depiction of a Warhol record sleeve design in a magazine. Warhol of course grew to become one of the most famous, radical and consequential artists of the 20th Century, who drastically changed the way we look at art. But fortunately, he also never abandoned the field of record cover design. In his entire professional and artistic career, spanning four decades, he illustrated or created around sixty album covers.

In the 1950s, when he was a penniless free-lance illustrator, to earn an income (or as Warhol liked to say: to bring home the bacon). Later, when he was a celebrated and well-to-do artist, still for the money of course, but more than that: he loved the wide distribution of his work, some records sold hundreds of thousands of copies. He wanted his art to be affordable to everybody, not just to the few.

A chronological overview of Warhol's prolific output of record sleeve designs, at the same time serves as a showcase of the artistic processes he went through over four decades.

1950s: Blotted Lines

In the Summer of 1949, freshly graduated from art school, Andy Warhola (who would soon drop the last "a" from his name) moved from his industrial hometown Pittsburgh to New York, to work as a freelance illustrator. He was nicknamed 'Raggedy Andy' because of his shabby clothes and broken shoes, but the New York art directors liked the portfolio of the shy artist. It took Warhol just a few weeks to land jobs for a couple of magazines (*Glamour*, *Harper's*) and for Columbia Records. Columbia had introduced the new vinyl LP format at 33 rpm in 1948 and was in the process of reissuing important recordings that had been available before on heavy 78 rpm shellac records. The cover design for these re-releases was quite simple: titles and a small drawing in black, and geometric shapes in just one colour. Warhol delivered spot drawings for two of these Columbia LP's, released in the fall of 1949

(Carlos Chavez, *A Program Of Mexican Music*; Prokofiev, *Alexander Nevsky*).

Art directors especially loved his signature drawing technique: the blotted line. Warhol made a drawing on a sheet of non-absorbent paper. With adhesive tape he attached a sheet of absorbent paper next to it, like a sort of hinge. He partly inked the drawing and gently pressed the second sheet on top of it, then patiently repeated this process until the whole drawing was blotted. The resulting 'blotted line' on the second sheet looked fragile, fractured. The blotted drawing is a mirror image of the ink drawing and is the actual 'original' that was delivered to his customers. Often the ink drawing was thrown away. It was in fact a primitive form of printing, which enabled Warhol to rapidly create multiple versions of one drawing, or to use the same figure for different purposes. Clearly a precursor to his future use of screenprinting in his art. Nearly all record cover illustrations Warhol did in the Fifties, were blotted line drawings.

Very early in his career Warhol received important assignments from two radio stations, NBC and CBS, that both involved advertisements as well as record cover art. In February 1950 NBC launched a campaign to find sponsors for their radio shows. They sent out record boxes to various companies, with a complete radio show and a sales pitch. Companies that were not interested in sponsoring, just threw them in the trash, which explains the extreme rarity of these boxes. An NBC promotional sheet held in the archives of the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh shows that Warhol made illustrations for at least

twelve radio shows, but only two titles with a Warhol illustration on the cover have surfaced as a box set so far: the radio play *Night Beat* (three known copies), and news show *Voices and Events* (only one known copy, which is on view at this exhibition).

In 1951 CBS Radio broadcast a documentary series called *The Nation's Nightmare*, about organized crime in America. For the announcement of the episode about *Traffic in Narcotics*, CBS bought a full-page advertisement in *The New York Times*, for which Warhol made a bold illustration of a man injecting heroin. He won his first professional medal for this drawing, awarded by the Art Directors Club of New York. At the end of the series, a vinyl record was released with the two most successful episodes: *Traffic in Narcotics* and *Crime on the Waterfront*, both illustrated by Warhol on the LP cover.

Another of Warhol's methods for his 1950s drawings becomes clear: he traced photos out of newspapers or magazines such as *LIFE*. A 'gentle' form of appropriation, whereas later in his Pop Art he would bluntly take found images to make them his own. On the cover of *Night Beat*, the man anxiously speaking in a telephone is based on studio stills of Burt Lancaster in the film noir *Sorry, Wrong Number* (1948). The drug addict for *The Nation's Nightmare*, is based on two different sources: an educational photo series of a man shooting drugs, while the head is copied from a Pulitzer Prize winning press photo of a robber who holds a boy at gunpoint. The drawing of an orchestra on Mozart's *4 Divertimenti* (Epic, 1955), is traced from a painting by French impressionist Edgard Degas, *L'Orchestre de L'Opéra*.

The largest number of commissions for album cover art in the 1950s, came from art director Robert M. Jones. The two Columbia covers already mentioned, and after switching labels, numerous covers for RCA records. Either for classical records (Mendelssohn, Liszt, Gershwin, Tchaikovsky, Strauss, Ravel, Rossini among others) or jazz (Joe Newman, Artie Shaw, Count Basie). Warhol's cover illustrations mostly depicted the theme of the record (ballet scenes, hands playing an instrument, flowers and fireflies...). In two cases Warhol's drawing accompanied a black and white photograph of the performing artist (Joe Newman, *I'm Still Swinging*; Vladimir Horowitz, *Piano Music of Mendelssohn and Liszt*).

For the 55th anniversary of RCA records, in 1955, the label released a luxurious series of classical records, among which Ravel's ballet *Daphnis and Chloe* performed by Charles Munch and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The gatefold cover had a booklet inside, with Warhol illustrations of ballet scenes. It is remarkable that for producing his blotted line drawings, Warhol would make one ink drawing on top of another. Only two large papers with ink drawings were needed, to create four pages in the booklet.

The self-titled *Count Basie* album (RCA Victor, 1955) was the very first time Warhol made a portrait of the artist for an album cover. A blotted line drawing of Basie, coloured with grey wash, was based on a record company picture of Basie that is printed at the back of the album. It is Warhol's first commercially released celebrity portrait. In an article in the renowned Swiss design

magazine *Graphis* (Nr 73 Sep/Oct 1957), art director Jones defended the art of illustration against the upcoming trend of colour photography in record cover design. He showed Warhol's *Count Basie* cover illustration as an example. "Those who are interested in graphic design are hopeful that the new record buyer will eventually seek a more sophisticated artform than the colour photograph." Of course, photography would ultimately win the battle. Warhol himself did not mind that much, though, he would soon adapt and embrace the new trend, and use photography to his advantage in his own art.

A collaboration with art director and designer Reid Miles resulted in stunning cover illustrations for the jazz labels Blue Note Records and Prestige, in 1957 and 1958, and as was recently discovered by Guy Minnebach, one for Cadence records: *Al Escobar* (1958). Miles was Blue Note's art director, who gave the label its distinctive visual look, mainly using session photographs by label owner Francis Wolff. He exceptionally asked Warhol to make drawings, based on photos of the performing artists by Wolff: *Kenny Burrell* (1957) and *Johnny Griffin, The Congregation* (1958). Neither was pictured very recognizably: the Kenny Burrell drawing heavily focussed on the hands and guitar, Johnny Griffin is pictured with his saxophone and in a colourful flowery shirt, but his face is cut off above the mouth. For another Kenny Burrell album, *Blue Lights* (1958), Warhol made a sensual drawing of a reclining woman, suggested to be naked, yet wearing high heels. Very atypical for Blue Note, in those years. On all three records Warhol was, for the very first time, not just

credited as illustrator, but equally to Miles: Cover design Andy Warhol and Reid Miles. The drawing on the cover of three boys playing horns on *Trombone by Three* (Prestige, 1957) was based on figures in a medieval drawing of King David and musicians, in a style rarely used by Warhol. Another remarkable Warhol and Miles collaboration was the cover art for *The Story of Moondog* (Prestige, 1957): no drawing at all, just a text, completely in Julia Warhola's elegant handwriting. Warhol made regular use of his mother's calligraphic skills, to accompany his illustrations in fashion magazines and shoe advertisements. For her work on *The Story of Moondog*, she received a design award, simply awarded to "Andy Warhol's Mother". The *Al Escobar* illustration with a drawing of a Latin orchestra is Warhol's most colourful illustration on a 1950s record cover. An alternative design for this cover is part of the collection of Tate and The Galleries of Scotland, in the UK.

1960s: Pop Art, Bananas & Zippers

In the 1960s Warhol transitioned from successful commercial illustrator to the undisputed king of Pop Art. He rocked the artworld with paintings of Campbell's soup cans, Coke bottles, Brillo box sculptures or Marilyn Monroe portraits. Even more shocking than the subjects and imagery, was the use of a new technique: in 1962 he started to use photographic silkscreening in his paintings, which allowed unlimited mechanical reproduction of the same image. He challenged the idea of authorship, and of the uniqueness of a work of art. Warhol also cultivated

a new persona: he became the enigmatic artist wearing silver wigs, sunglasses and leather jackets. He loved to play dumb and answered reporter's questions with "Uh Yes", "Uh No". Or let other Factory members answer for him. Mid Sixties were the years of the Silver Factory, his studio where Warhol and a bunch of assistants worked on his paintings and made underground movies. It was famous for its wild parties, attended by uptown socialites as well as downtown misfits and wannabe superstars. The Sixties were also the decade where Warhol almost died, in 1968, when he was shot by a disgruntled feminist actress. Only a handful album covers were produced in this period, but each one is an important landmark in Warhol's creative process.

Paul Desmond's jazz album *Take Ten*, released by RCA Victor in 1963, has on its cover a silkscreened high-contrast photo of Desmond and his saxophone, on a fiery coloured background. A remarkable transitional work, combining old and new: in the early Sixties Warhol used similar coloured striped backgrounds in gouache for his commercial work for fashion magazines, and the photo-screened head shot heralded his coming art. The archives of the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh have Warhol's invoice, for a "record album in hot colors", dated April 1962, as well as an RCA Records payment slip. Although the album was released in 1963, the cover was already finished the year before, according to a production note by producer George Avakian. Reason for the delay in release was Desmond's extensive touring with the Dave Brubeck Quartett. In the summer of 1962 Warhol

started to make silkscreen paintings with repeated head shots of young actors Natalie Wood, Warren Beatty or Troy Donahue. Desmond's portrait dates from that period, or even before. According to Warhol biographer Blake Gopnik, on his website Warholiana.com, the Desmond cover "may very well show us the first photo silkscreen Warhol ever made of a human face".

In 1963 Warhol created the ultimate Pop Art record cover, with the words "Giant Size \$1.57 each", a blown-up supermarket price-tag. Rather than just record covers, these are considered an art edition. Warhol manually silkscreened the text on each record cover, on white or a sprayed colour background. The vinyl contained interviews with eleven artists who participated in the exhibition *The Popular Image*, held at the Washington Gallery of Modern Art from April 18 to June 2, 1963, including Jim Dine, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Rauschenberg and Warhol himself. The interviews were recorded – and the record published – by Billy Klüver, a Swedish engineer who would later work with Warhol on the production of his floating silver clouds. It is not known how many copies exactly Warhol has printed, or how many were sold at or after the exhibition. Eight years later, in 1971, Warhol took 75 covers from the stash of remaining copies, to turn them into a signed and numbered art edition. This often leads to confusion in Warhol literature or catalogues, but all unsigned as well as later signed copies were made in 1963 and are part of Warhol's very first published silkscreened prints, each of them unique.

The cover Warhol created for *This is John Wallowitch* (Serenus, 1964) was in line with his next defining step in portrait making: the use of photobooth pictures. Composer and pianist John Wallowitch was the brother of Warhol's former boyfriend, photographer Edward Wallowitch. The cover of the LP is a grid of 48 black and white pictures of John Wallowitch, in suit and tie, looking in different directions. But strangely, like Johnny Griffin's Blue Note cover, in every picture the face is cut off above the mouth. In 1963 Warhol used photobooth pictures for portrait commissions, and a famous series of photobooth self-portraits.

Warhol published two Pop Art books that each contained a record with early Velvet Underground content. *Aspen* was an art magazine in the form of a box, filled with various objects. Its *Fab* issue (1966), designed by Andy Warhol and David Dalton, contained the flexi disc *Loop*, the very first Velvet Underground release. In 1967 the pop-up book *Andy Warhol's Index* housed a cardboard picture disc with a Lou Reed photo.

Four years apart, Andy Warhol designed two of the most iconic record covers in rock history: the 1967 debut album *The Velvet Underground & Nico* and The Rolling Stones' *Sticky Fingers* in 1971. Both with an interactive, voyeuristic element and not-so-subtle homo-erotic innuendo: a peelable banana on the first, and a pair of jeans you could unzip, on the latter. In 1966 The Velvet Underground became the Factory house band, managed by Andy Warhol. Rather than just giving concerts, they were part of his touring multimedia

show called *The Exploding Plastic Inevitable*; with film projections and erotic whip dancing while they were playing. The music of The Velvets was radically different from anything else in pop or rock music at the time. The two frontmen were Lou Reed and John Cale. Reed wrote poetic lyrics about drugs, sadomasochism, prostitution and drag queens. John Cale was a classically trained avant-garde musician, playing long drones and extended notes on electric viola. To many listeners, the combination was shocking. To “make them look better on stage”, Warhol combined the band with Nico, a German blonde with a deep voice and a Marlene Dietrich accent. Warhol “produced” the Velvet’s debut album, not in the sense that he did any technical mixing, but the band could benefit from enormous freedom just by Warhol’s presence: he would instruct the technicians: “I like what they’re doing, don’t change a thing.” It took the Velvets a year to get a record contract, their demo was rejected by several labels, but eventually the album was released on Verve in 1967. According to Lou Reed, in a TV-documentary: “It all could happen because of Andy. I don’t know if we would have gotten a contract if he hadn’t said he’d do the cover.” That cover is a signature Warhol artwork: a white cover with a peelable sticker of a silkscreened yellow banana, and the instruction: Peel slowly and see. When peeled, a pink fleshy banana shows, proudly upright. Only Warhol’s name is mentioned on the front cover, not the band. A lot of people at the time would think Warhol was the performing artist.

Sticky Fingers was the first release of the British rock band The Rolling Stones on their own label Rolling Stones Music. Warhol's cover design consisted of a black and white photo in close-up, of a well-endowed man's jeans. When you opened the real zipper, you could see the man's white underwear. It wasn't exactly a gatefold cover, the front was glued unto the second cover, which enlarged the sensuality of the act of peeping. Although it was largely assumed that singer Mick Jagger was the model on the jeans and briefs pictures, he was not. A lot of names of Factory regulars circulate, but the identity of the model(s) has to this day never been publicly revealed. The technical production of both the peelable banana and the working zipper were done by Craig Braun's company. For the *Sticky Fingers* packaging Braun and Warhol were nominated for a Grammy (but did not win).

Warhol and Mick Jagger developed a solid friendship throughout the years. Warhol's admiration for Jagger's sensual looks and raunchy performance style, would inspire him to create several portrait paintings of Jagger, a portfolio of ten silkscreen portraits and another record cover design in 1977, *Love You Live*.

1970s & 1980s: Business Art & Celebrity Portraits

Having barely survived the shooting at the end of 1968, Warhol drastically changed course. He started to run the Factory as an enterprise, at a different location and with a different, more serious entourage, who would take over important tasks. "Business art is the step that comes

after art”, he wrote in *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)* (1975). “Making money is the best art.” Activities of the Andy Warhol Enterprises Inc. included the publishing of *Interview* magazine, painting, movie production, music videos and in the 1980s Warhol even had his own cable TV show. But the main source of income of the enterprise, throughout the 1970s and 80s, were Warhol’s portrait commissions. Socialites, art collectors, fashion designers, captains of industry, nobility and even royalty: everyone who could afford it, could have his or her portrait made in typical Warhol style. Which in a certain sense meant become “iconized” like Marilyn Monroe or Liz Taylor. Early 1970s Warhol charged \$25.000 for a portrait, and \$15.000 for each additional panel in different colours. Prices went up to \$30.000/25.000 in later years.

Starting point of each silkscreened portrait was a photograph, usually pictures Warhol took of the sitter in front of a white background, with a Polaroid Big Shot camera. Sometimes over a hundred of them. The best shots were then enlarged in high contrast, black and white on acetate. Warhol would manually get rid of all imperfections in the acetate, making his subjects – especially the women – as beautiful as possible. His portraits were an Instagram filter “avant la lettre”. Colouring and painting techniques would differ over the years, including finger painting, the use of coloured art paper for collages, and drawing in graphite of parts of the portrait, which were screened over the photo to give it more depth and detail, and extra colour. The distinctive

polaroid photography and the graphite drawings, originally just stages of a process, became desired art objects on their own, fetching very high prices at auctions if the subject is a celebrity.

Warhol's usual size for the celebrity portraits was 40 × 40 inch. The square shape of an LP cover was ideal to present smaller versions, in 12 × 12 inch. Some of the cover portrait commissions Warhol received, later resulted in LP cover art. Paul Anka's album *The Painter* (United Artists, 1976) has two different Warhol portraits on front and back. In his Warhol biography *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up* former *Interview* magazine editor Bob Colacello recalls that when Warhol travelled to Las Vegas to the singer's place, Anka "did take all four portraits and used one of them on his next album, titled Portrait [sic], for which he paid an additional fee". Diana Ross privately ordered four portraits: one of herself, and one of each of her three daughters (then around 10–12 years old). She wrote a check for \$95,000. In *The Andy Warhol Diaries*, entry of Friday, October 2, 1981, Warhol recalls: "Diana Ross came at 3:00 and she loved all the portraits, she said, 'Wrap them up'. And she wants me to do the cover for her next album." In the following year the album *Silk Electric* is released, with four versions of the Diana Ross portrait on front, back and in the gatefold. The invitation card for the launch party of Aretha Franklin's album *Aretha* (Arista, 1986), reads: "We are pleased to present a private showing of 'The Aretha Series', 6 portraits of The Queen of Soul by Andy Warhol."

On three occasions Warhol abandoned the square format and used multiple panels to create one image. For the Rolling Stones album *Love You Live* (Rolling Stones Records, 1977) he made a portrait of Mick Jagger biting the hand of his daughter Jade, spread over front and back cover of the double album. In the centre a double spread with a collage of all band members biting each other. For *Soul Vacation* (Epic Japan, 1983) by Rats & Star, a Japanese doo-wop band consisting of 10 members, Warhol made a portrait with a photo collage of the four lead singers on front, and drawings of the six other members at the back. Together the two panels form one portrait. Oddest case is Miguel Bosé's *Made in Spain* (CBS, 1983): the singer is pictured five times, in one portrait spread over front and back. Not a repetition of the same image, as one would expect from Warhol, but five different portraits. Warhol's studio also directed two music videos for Bosé, one for the Spanish market, and one in Italian.

Lesser known than Warhol's involvement with the Velvet Underground, he managed another musician in the 1980s: Walter Steding. Steding – who passed away in 2025 – was a painting assistant at the Factory, but also an avant garde pop musician, often performing solo with his electric violin at venues like New York's famous punk club CBGB's, as opening act for Blondie or The Ramones. For one record with his band The Dragon People, the maxi single *The Joke*, Warhol and Steding created their own record label: Earhole productions. For the cover Warhol made a typical graphite drawing of Steding, traced from

the publicity photo printed at the back of the record. For promotion on MTV, the Warhol studios also produced two music videos for Steding's next singles *Dancing in Heaven* and *Secret Spy*.

Andy Warhol notoriously was unhappy with the way he looked: his round nose, baldness and after the shooting, the shape of his scarred torso. He found pure beauty in the face of Blondie's singer Debbie Harry, who became a muse. He put her on the cover of *Interview* magazine and asked her to host his Andy Warhol TV show. In her autobiography *Face It* (Harper Collins, 2019), Harry recalled: "The idea of Andy's doing my portrait came up; somewhere, at some point, Andy had remarked that if he could have anyone else's face, it would be mine." A series of at least eight portraits was made in 1980, of which Debbie Harry bought one. But it wasn't until the release of the Blondie album *Greatest Hits: Deluxe Redux*, in 2014, that her portrait was used as album cover art. In a 2020 TV-interview with Dan Rather, Debbie Harry lovingly mentions that her portraits were the only ones in which Warhol painted the reflection in the pupils of each eye in the shape of a heart. Another Debbie Harry album, *Rockbird* (Geffen, 1986), had important Warhol involvement for its cover art, although he was not the designer. It was the work of fashion designer Stephen Sprouse, mutual friend of Warhol and Debbie Harry. Photography was done by the New York studio Guzman. Debbie Harry stands in front of a Warhol Camouflage painting, dressed in a matching camouflage suit especially designed for her by Sprouse and Warhol. Together they also designed some

outfits for Harry, to wear in video clips for the album's hit singles. Stunning outtakes of the Guzman photo session also show Debbie Harry's face painted in "full camouflage", almost disappearing in Warhol's painting. Which would have made the cover look totally Warhol, matching his 1986 camouflage portraits of Joseph Beuys, camouflage versions of the Statue of Liberty and the Last Supper, and camouflage self-portraits. A perfect example of the extent Warhol would go in collaborating.

Although the focus here is on record covers, it is worth noting that Warhol also produced portraits of famed musicians for magazine covers, a selection of which is included in the exhibition. The very first Warhol portrait on a magazine was a blotted line drawing of dancer and choreographer Doris Humphrey, on the February 1959 issue of *Dance Magazine*. The pioneer of modern dance had died two months earlier.

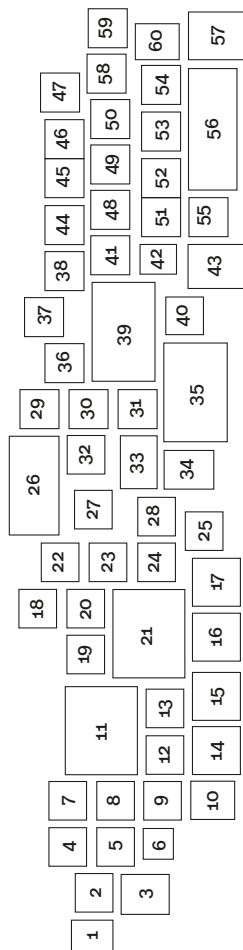
For magazine commissions in the 1980s, unlike most of his portraits for album covers, Warhol did not photograph his subjects himself. Pictures were provided by the publishers. For the dust jacket of the book *The Beatles* by Geoffrey Stokes (Rolling Stone Press) Warhol made a colourful collage of the Fab Four, based on publicity head shots Dezo Hoffman took in 1963. Buyers of the first edition found a second jacket as a gift, the Beatles portraits without the lettering, an original Warhol ready to frame. The book was published in October 1980 and was in the shops just weeks before the assassination of John Lennon (December 9, 1980). In 1986 Warhol would also do two

cover portraits for the posthumous Lennon album *Menlove Ave* (Capitol/EMI), on demand of his widow Yoko Ono. She provided Warhol with the famous Lennon portrait by Iain Macmillan.

The iconic Michael Jackson portrait on the cover of *Time Magazine* (March 19, 1984) showed him at the peak of his *Thriller* fame. While on the original Matthew Rolston photo shoot Jackson wore a white shirt and pullover, Warhol turned these in hot red, mimicking Jackson's jacket in the *Thriller* video.

Less known is the posthumous portrait Warhol made of Sid Vicious, former member of the British punk band Sex Pistols, for the Canadian art magazine *File Magazine* (#25) in 1986. Warhol did not use a high contrast print of Roberta Bayley's original photo but instead drew a portrait with synthetic polymer paint and a coloured art paper collage.

1949–1960 1961–1969 1970–1986



Beethoven by Warhol

1949–1987, Warhol & Music

Unless otherwise indicated, all objects: Guy Minnebach Collection

- 1 *Opera News*, Dec. 1, 1958
Mozart, *The Magic Flute*
- 2 The Philadelphia Orchestra et al.
Sergei Prokofiev,
Alexander Nevsky,
Cantata Op. 78
Columbia, 1949
- 3 Samuel Barber and
Gian Carlo Menotti
A Hand Of Bridge
Vocal score,
G. Schirmer, 1960
- 4 *The Nation's Nightmare*
CBS Radio, 1951
- 5 Vladimir Horowitz
*Piano Music of
Mendelssohn and Liszt*
RCA Victor, 1953
- 6 Arturo Toscanini et al.
Rossini, *William Tell*
Overture
RCA Victor, 1954
- 7 Bernhard Paumgartner
et al.
W.A. Mozart,
4 Divertimenti
Epic, 1954
- 8 *Voices and Events*
NBC Radio, 1950

- 9 *Night Beat*
NBC Radio, 1950
- 10 *Dance magazine*,
Feb. 1959
Doris Humphrey cover
- 11 Andy Warhol
*Ballet Dancers in
Landscape – Study of
Daphnis and Chloe*
Ink and graphite on
paper, ca. 1954–1955
- 12 Jan Smeterlin
Chopin: Nocturnes
Epic, 1955
- 13 Carlos Chávez et al.
*A Program of Mexican
Music*
Columbia, 1949
- 14–17
Blotted Line
drawings from the
booklet:
Charles Much and
the Boston Symphony
Orchestra
Maurice Ravel,
Daphnis and Chloe
RCA Victor, 1955
- 18 Kenny Burrell
Kenny Burrell
Blue Note, 1957
- 19 Count Basie and his
Orchestra
Count Basie
RCA Victor, 1955
- 20 Moondog
The Story of Moondog
Prestige, 1957
- 21 Andy Warhol
*Couple in Landscape –
Study of Daphnis
and Chloe*
Ink and graphite on
paper, ca. 1954–1955
Private collection, Salzburg
- 22 Jay Jay Johnson,
Kai Winding,
Bennie Green
Trombone by Three
Prestige, 16 RPM, 1957
- 23 Al Escobar
Untitled
(*Rhythmagic* Vol.2)
Cadence, 1958
- 24 Johnny Griffin
The Congregation
Blue Note, 1958
- 25 Kenny Burrell
Blue Lights, Vol. 2
Blue Note, 1958–1961
- 26 Verve publicity poster,
1967
- 27 Paul Desmond
Take Ten
RCA Victor, 1963
- 28 John Wallowitch
This is John Wallowitch
Serenus Records, 1964

- 29-31
*The Velvet Underground
 & Nico*
 Verve, 1967
- 32 *Giant Size \$1.57 each*
 Cover hand-screened
 by Andy Warhol in 1963,
 11/75
- 33 *Andy Warhol's Index (Book)*
 Random House, 1967
- 34 *Aspen*, Vol. 1, No. 3
 The Fab Issue,
 Dec. 1966
- 35 The Rolling Stones
Love You Live, 1977
 Printing proof of outer
 gatefold
- 36-38
 The Rolling Stones
Sticky Fingers
 Rolling Stones Records,
 1971
- 39 The Rolling Stones
Love You Live, 1977
 Printing proof of inner
 gatefold
- 40 The Rolling Stones
Love You Live
 Rolling Stones Records,
 1977
- 41 Diana Ross
Silk Electric
 RCA, 1982
- 42 Postcard with Mick
 Jagger portrait (1/10)
 Multiples Inc & Castelli
 Graphics, 1975
 ArtBonn.de
- 43 *FILE Magazine*, #25, 1986
 General Idea, Canada
 Sid Vicious cover
- 44 Liza Minnelli
Live At Carnegie Hall
 Altel Sound Systems,
 1981
- 45 Miguel Bose
Made In Spain
 (front cover)
 CBS, 1983
- 46 Miguel Bose
Milano - Madrid
 (back cover)
 CBS, 1983
- 47 Blondie
*Greatest Hits:
 Deluxe Redux*
 Noble ID, 2014
- 48 Walter Steding and the
 Dragon People
The Joke
 Earhole productions,
 1980
- 49/50
 Paul Anka
The Painter
 United Artists, 1976

51/52

Rats & Star
Soul Vacation
Epic Japan, 1983

53 John Lennon
Menlove Ave
EMI/Capitol, 1986

54 Aretha Franklin
Aretha
Arista, 1986

55 Billy Squier
Emotions In Motion
Capitol, 1982

56 Art print
Second dustjacket for
Geoffrey Stokes
The Beatles
Rolling Stone Press, 1980
Private collection, Bonn

57 Geoffrey Stokes
The Beatles
Rolling Stone Press, 1980
Private collection, Bonn

58 Photo shoot for the
Rockbird LP, 1986
Debbie Harry with full
camouflage make-up
© Guzman

59 Debbie Harry
Rockbird
Geffen, 1986

60 *Time Magazine*,
March 19, 1984
Michael Jackson cover

On the opposite wall:

61 Andy Warhol and
Keith Haring
Silkscreen poster for
the 20th Montreux Jazz
Festival, 1986
ArtBonn.de

62 Portfolio of ten
postcards with Mick
Jagger portraits (2-9/10)
Multiples Inc &
Castelli Graphics, 1975
ArtBonn.de

63 The Rolling Stones
Emotional Tattoo
Germany, 1983
Collection Klaus Knop

64 *Interview Magazine*,
August 1981
Mick Jagger cover
portrait by Richard
Bernstein,
signed and dedicated
by Andy Warhol
ArtBonn.de

Room: Treasury

Thomas Kliemann

The Man Who Brought Warhol to Bonn

A Pioneer with a Vision for Cultural Policy: The Bonn Gallerist Hermann Wünsche

A postcard from Andy Warhol: At the beginning of February 1987, Stefan Unkelbach found a postcard in his letterbox on Breite Straße in Bonn. It had been postmarked in New York on 29 January 1987. "To Stefan, I LOVE YOU" (written in mirror script), "Andy Warhol", it reads, followed by "& Hermann". Warhol and the Bonn gallerist Hermann Wünsche were sending greetings to their mutual friend and Wünsche's close collaborator. On the reverse is an image of the Beethoven bust by Naoum Aronson in the garden of the Beethoven-Haus. This seemingly unremarkable postcard – displayed in the special exhibition gallery – is in fact an important historical document. It not only records the last personal contact between Warhol and the Bonn gallerist, thereby marking the end of the Pop Art star's remarkably fruitful connection with Bonn, which had spanned almost two decades. It also captures a moment whose significance

no one could have foreseen: only a few weeks later, on 22 February 1987, Warhol died unexpectedly at the age of fifty-eight following complications from gallbladder surgery. The postcard also demonstrates that Beethoven was among the final major subjects to occupy Warhol artistically. When Wünsche returned to Bonn from that trip, he already had the first prints of the Beethoven portrait in his luggage – Warhol's 'opus ultimum', as Wünsche himself described it.

While the end of this exceptional relationship between Warhol, Wünsche and Bonn can be dated with remarkable precision, establishing its beginnings is far more difficult. In an interview marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of his gallery, Wünsche recalled that by the late 1960s he had increasingly oriented his programme towards New York. He also mentioned being captivated by works by Robert Rauschenberg during a visit there. Furthermore, when the Merce Cunningham Company performed in Cologne – this can only have been in 1964 – Wünsche negotiated unsuccessfully with Rauschenberg, who was responsible for the company's lighting, stage and costume design, about a contractual collaboration. It is therefore entirely plausible that Wünsche also encountered Warhol during visits to the United States in the mid-1960s. By 1974 at the latest, however, Wünsche and Warhol were discussing an ambitious project in New York: a portrait of the Federal Chancellor, Willy Brandt. Warhol's first appearance in Bonn, at Galerie Wünsche, attracted enormous public attention. According to reports, around eighty press photographers were present

when Brandt and Warhol arrived at the gallery on 18 February 1976. Only three photographers were then permitted to remain while Brandt was photographed upstairs in the gallery. The sitting itself lasted only a short time, resulting in twenty-six or twenty-nine Polaroid photographs. Back at Warhol's Factory in New York, six portraits were produced – five depicting Brandt with a cigarette and one without. They were first exhibited in June 1976 at the residence of the German Ambassador to the United Nations, Rüdiger von Wechmar, in New York, before being shown in July at Galerie Wünsche in Bonn and subsequently at the gallery's Hamburg branch. In early September, Wünsche raffled one of the portraits at the Redoute in Bad Godesberg in aid of UNICEF. The charity lottery proved unsuccessful. Nevertheless, following the highly publicised photo session on Poppelsdorfer Allee, Wünsche had become a household name. Over the following years, the gallerist travelled to New York countless times to visit Warhol. Hans G. Tuchel, a member of Wünsche's staff, estimated that he made well over two hundred flights, often choosing the supersonic Concorde – a fact that even Warhol considered noteworthy enough to record in his *Diaries*. There, Wünsche appears simply as "Hermann-the-German". Around 1980, the personal and professional relationship between Warhol and Wünsche intensified, and Warhol's visits to Bonn became increasingly frequent. Wünsche published what remains the standard catalogue raisonné of Warhol's graphic editions produced between 1962 and 1980, featuring 173 high-quality colour plates; a copy is on display

in the special exhibition gallery. He also inspired Warhol's *German Monuments* series, which ultimately included Cologne Cathedral, the Holstentor in Lübeck, St Michael's Church in Hamburg, the Reichstag in Berlin, and the gatehouse of Drachenburg Castle in Königswinter. The latter was almost certainly intended as a tribute to the castle's owner, Paul Spinat, who, at Wünsche's initiative, had staged a major Warhol exhibition there in 1981, accompanied – appropriately enough – by a special bottling of local Riesling. A photographic series by Christopher Makos, who also supplied the source material for the *German Monuments*, shows Warhol, dressed in jacket and tie, riding a donkey in front of Schloss Drachenburg. Wünsche is likewise regarded as the driving force behind the *Fiesta Pig* and *Trucks* series.

By the time the spectacular Warhol–Brandt collaboration made national headlines in 1976, Wünsche had already an excellent reputation as an art dealer and gallerist in Bonn. He was exceptionally well connected within the city, among the political circles of the federal capital, and in the diplomatic community. The visitors' book of Galerie Wünsche, covering the years 1977 to 1989, bears eloquent witness to these networks. Its final pages were filled during the exhibition in the Beethovenhalle, which is also documented in the special exhibition gallery. Photographs show Wünsche alongside leading figures from the worlds of culture, business, politics and sport. In 1972 he founded the *Club Nachtigall*, which soon became a meeting place for both local and federal politicians in Bonn. At Wünsche's initiative, Warhol's Factory produced

portraits of the legendary Cologne goalkeeper Toni Schumacher, Mildred Scheel, the wife of the Federal President, and the wife of the Bonn patron Bernd Domscheit. Born in Berlin on 31 August 1941, the son of a specialist in diving medicine, Wünsche had been an active figure in Bonn's art world since the early 1960s. Even while still at grammar school he organised exhibitions – first in a garage, later at Kunsthaus Wengerscheid, and finally in his own gallery at the corner of Prinz-Albert-Straße and Poppelsdorfer Allee. Having completed his Master's degree in art history at the University of Bonn under Professor Heinrich Lützeler with a thesis on Georges Braque, Wünsche initially concentrated on prints by French artists. His programme soon broadened considerably. Alongside Braque, Marc Chagall, Jean Fautrier, Joan Miró, Max Ernst and Pablo Picasso, he also exhibited works by Gerhard Marcks, Dieter Roth, Antoni Tàpies, Mark Tobey, Terence M. Costello and Robert Indiana. Later he also introduced Robert Wilson to Bonn, bringing the theatre artist to the city for the production *To Street*.

Together with Hajo Schütze, who had opened a gallery in Bad Godesberg in 1961, Wünsche is regarded as one of the pioneers of the gallery scene in the young Federal capital. From the mid-1960s onwards, he maintained an ambitious exhibition programme and brought a touch of international glamour to Bonn. It was only during the 1970s that the city's gallery landscape truly flourished, with galleries such as Klein, Magers, Pudelko, Linsen, Circulus and Hennemann joining the scene. Yet the visual arts continued to struggle for recognition in the

civil service and university city. The Schauspielhaus in Bad Godesberg opened in 1952, the Beethovenhalle followed in 1959, and the Opera House in 1965. Under the direction of Jean-Claude Riber, the latter developed during the 1980s into the so-called “Scala on the Rhine”, supported by considerable public funding. By contrast, the Municipal Art Museum remained confined to cramped premises in Rathausgasse until its relocation to the Museum Mile in 1992. The Rhineland State Museum, largely destroyed during the Second World War, received a new building in 1967. In 1981, the initiative *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mehr Kunst für Bonn* was established with the aim of creating a Federal Art and Exhibition Hall, a vision that finally became reality in 1992. As early as 1974, however, Wünsche had discussed with Eberhard Marx, Director of the Municipal Art Museum, the city’s lack of a dedicated exhibition hall and the absence of funding for such an institution. During these conversations he coined a phrase that would provoke considerable cultural and political controversy: a “temporary Kunsthalle” (Kunsthalle auf Zeit). Municipal officials rebuked him, arguing that such an initiative would pre-empt the construction of the city’s future permanent exhibition hall. Wünsche first realised this concept in 1974 at the publishing house of the Bonner General-Anzeiger, where he presented 400 works by Salvador Dalí across 1000 square metres. Five years later he was given two floors of the Schüller furniture store, documented in the special exhibition gallery. Renamed the *Bonner Ausstellungsforum* (Bonn Exhibition Forum), the venue displayed around sixty Warhol prints

directly opposite the Municipal Art Museum. Across Germany, Wünsche continued to stage exhibitions in furniture stores from Lübeck to Stuttgart. Four years later, Wünsche had relocated his gallery to the historic Brederhof wine estate in Niederdollendorf. The move was celebrated with an exhibition of Andy Warhol's latest works; even the labels on the wine served at the opening had been designed by Warhol. Once again using his concept of a 'temporary Kunsthalle' – this time in the premises of the General-Anzeiger – Wünsche organised what was then his largest Warhol exhibition. Around 10,000 visitors attended within six weeks, an extraordinary figure by Bonn standards. In 1985, the Brederhof was devoted entirely to Warhol's *Cologne Cathedral*, with seventy variations of the *German Monument* on display. In 1989, Bonn celebrated its 2000th anniversary in the Beethovenhalle with an exhibition centred on Warhol's celebrated Beethoven portrait, a project originally inspired by Wünsche himself.

In recognition for his outstanding achievements, Hermann Wünsche was awarded the Cross of Merit on Ribbon of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1984. The honour reflects the importance attached to his role as an initiator and driving force in the cultural history of the Rhineland.

Alongside Warhol, Wünsche's second major life's work was the study and publication of Salvador Dalí's graphic oeuvre. For his first major Dalí exhibition in 1974, he travelled to Cadaqués to meet the artist in person. In 1979 he received Spain's Order of Civil Merit in

recognition of his presentation of works by Dalí, Joan Miró, Antoni Tàpies and Ricardo Bofill. In 1982, on behalf of the Spanish Ministry of Culture, he organised the highly successful exhibition *Salvador Dalí: Obra gráfica – ciclos literarios* at the Casa del Monte de Piedad, Edificio Arbós in Madrid.

In 1991, Wünsche relocated his gallery from the Bredershof to the Brügelmann House in Cologne. In newspaper interviews he variously cited “personal reasons” for the move, while elsewhere lamenting: “There is a very peculiar provincialism here. The boredom is beyond compare.” He insisted that the decision to move to Cologne had been planned long before the debate over Germany’s capital city. Nor did he conceal his disappointment that Bonn had failed to acquire a single example from the BEETHOVEN series that Warhol had created in honour of the city. Hermann Wünsche died after a long illness in Königswinter in 1993 at the age of fifty-two. This exhibition pays tribute to his life’s work, which has unjustly faded from public memory.

This essay presents an interim report from an ongoing, comprehensive research project on Hermann Wünsche. Detailed annotations have therefore been omitted at this stage. The author wishes to express sincere thanks for valuable information and support to Peter Wierny, Stefan Unkelbach, Malte Boecker, Lars Brandt, Sven Haarmann, Toni Schumacher, Wolfgang Hörnke, Corinna Heumann, Carl Friedrich Schröer and Dorothee van Rey.

1961–1993 Hermann Wünsche:
Warhol's Gallerist in Bonn

- I Andy Warhol**
Willy Brandt
Silkscreen and acrylic
paint on canvas, 1976
Private collection

- II Andy Warhol**
Toni Schumacher
Silkscreen and acrylic
paint on canvas, 1983
Private collection

- 1 Anonymous**
photographer
Making-of, Willy Brandt,
1976
Private collection
- 2 Anonymous**
photographer
Making-of, Willy Brandt,
1976 (signed)
Private collection Dieter Rausch

- 3–4 Bob Colacello**
Andy with West German
Chancellor Willy Brandt,
Bonn, 1976
Exhibition print
© Vito Schnabel Gallery

- 5 Bob Colacello**
Andy at the Hotel Bristol,
Bonn, 1976
Exhibition print
© Vito Schnabel Gallery

- 6 Bob Colacello**
Andy at the Airport,
Bonn, 1976
Exhibition print
© Vito Schnabel Gallery

- 7 Willy Brandt**
Letter to Andy Warhol,
13.07.1976 (carbon copy)
Facsimile
Willy-Brandt-Archiv im Archiv der
sozialen Demokratie der
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Bonn

- 8 Willy Brandt**
Diary 18.02.1976
Facsimile
Willy-Brandt-Archiv im Archiv der
sozialen Demokratie der
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Bonn

- 9 Reinhard Wilke**
Meeting note Andy
Warhol, 13.02.1976
Facsimile
Willy-Brandt-Archiv im Archiv der
sozialen Demokratie der
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Bonn

- 10 Soho News, 1976**
Private collection

- 11 Anonymous**
photographer
Making-of, Toni
Schumacher, 1983
Private collection

- 12 Christopher Makos**
Making-of, Toni
Schumacher, 1983
Private collection

- | | |
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| <p>13 Invitation card
Exhibition Andy Warhol
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of the Order of Merit
of the Federal Republic
of Germany
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| <p>14 Andy Warhol
Drawing for invitation
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of the Cross of Merit on
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| <p>15 Andy Warhol
Commissioned portrait
NN, 1979
Photo
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In memoriam Andy Warhol
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| <p>18 Andy Warhol
Grapes (Bredershof)
Drawing, undated
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| <p>19 Special Edition
Bredershof
Wine bottle label
designed by Andy Warhol
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Das graphische Werk
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Private collection
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| | <p>27 Invitation cards
Andy Warhol, <i>Trucks</i>, 1985
Private collection
Stefan Unkelbach</p> |

- III **Andy Warhol**
*Forecourt Drachenburg
Castle*
Graphite drawing, 1983
Private collection, Königswinter

- IV **Andy Warhol**
Committee 2000
Graphite drawing, 1983
Private collection, Königswinter

The following works are presented
as interventions in the permanent
exhibition:

- 1 **Andy Warhol**
BEETHOVEN (1/4)
Silkscreen and acrylic
Paint on canvas, 1987
Private collection
- 2 **Andy Warhol**
Two Hands (playing piano)
Ink on paper, c. 1954
Collection Guy Minnebach
- 3 **Christopher Makos**
*Andy Warhol riding a
donkey to the
Drachenfels*
Illustration, mid 1970s
Private collection
- 4 **Andy Warhol**
Boys With Horns
Ink and graphite on
paper, c. 1957
Collection Guy Minnebach
- 5 **George DuBose**
*Andy Warhol and
Walter Steding*
Photo, ca. 1982
© George DuBose
- 6 **Kenny Burrell**
Blue Lights Vol. 1,
Blue Note, 1958
Collection Guy Minnebach
- 7 **Andy Warhol**
*Untitled (study for
Blue Lights)*
Ink and tempera on
paper, 1958
Collection Guy Minnebach

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>8 <i>The Genius of Prince:
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Edition</i>
Condé Nast Special
Editions, 2016
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Collection Guy Minnebach</p> <p>12 Andy Warhol
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Graphite on sheets of
bond paper held
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Silkscreen on invitation
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Cathedral", Historic
Bredershof,
Königswinter, 1985
Private collection</p> | <p>14 Promotional poster for
the photography
exhibition "A Private
View" at the nightclub
"The World", New York,
April 1998
Private collection
Stefan Unkelbach</p> |
|---|---|

Presenter:
Beethoven-Haus Bonn
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Silke Bettermann

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**GIELEN-LEYENDECKER-
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Andy Warhol's engagement with Ludwig van Beethoven began in 1979 and culminated in his four-part screenprint portfolio BEETHOVEN in 1987. Marking the bicentenary of Ludwig van Beethoven's death (26 March 1827) and the 40th anniversary of Andy Warhol's death (22 February 1987), this exhibition traces, for the first time, the creation of this body of work and explores the role of Bonn in its development.

Further highlights include Guy Minnebach's record collection, which shows Warhol as a designer of album covers, as well as Warhol's close collaboration with Bonn gallerist Hermann Wünsche.

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