

Press Release

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Warhol's Beethoven: Beethoven-Haus Bonn Reveals the Full Story Behind an Iconic Pop Art Portrait for the First Time

**Special Exhibition for the 2027 Anniversary Year
Beethoven by Warhol
September 9, 2026 – April 5, 2027 in Bonn**

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Bonn, 23 July 2026 – As part of the 2027 Anniversary Year, Beethoven-Haus Bonn bridges the worlds of the First Viennese School in classical music and New York Pop Art. To mark the 200th anniversary of Ludwig van Beethoven's death (26 March 2027) and the 40th anniversary of Andy Warhol's death (22 February 2027), the museum brings these two exceptional artists together in a unique special exhibition.

Based on extensive research, the exhibition traces, for the first time, the fascinating story behind the creation of Warhol's iconic 1987 Beethoven portraits, which rank among his last works. Supported by the Minister of State for Culture and the Media and the Gielen-Leyendecker Foundation, the exhibition sheds light on the artist's creative process over several years, from his first ideas to the four-part *BEETHOVEN* portfolio, which has had a lasting impact on the modern perception of Beethoven.

Warhol, Beethoven and Bonn

Under the title **Beethoven by Warhol**, the exhibition presents more than 100 objects from regional and international collections. A special focus is placed on the creation of the renowned four-part *BEETHOVEN* silkscreen portfolio, completed shortly before the artist's sudden death on 22 February 1987. It not only ranks among Warhol's last silkscreen printed works and marks the culmination point of his commissioned portrait series, but is also regarded as an icon of Beethoven's perception in the twentieth-century. The source material for the portfolio – both the famous portrait of Beethoven by

Joseph Karl Stieler and the autograph manuscript of the so-called Moonlight Sonata – come from the collection of Beethoven-Haus Bonn. Highlights of the exhibition include previously unpublished works by Warhol on paper and canvas, trial proofs, and numerous items of ephemera relating to the genesis of the Beethoven portrait (photographs, invitation cards, posters and other archival material). Further sections of the exhibition focus on record covers designed by Warhol and his collaboration with the Bonn gallerist Hermann Wünsche. From the 1970s onwards, Wünsche brought the Pop Art pioneer to the Rhineland on several occasions and presented the Beethoven portraits to the public for the first time at the Beethoven concert hall in 1989 as part of the celebrations marking Bonn's 2.000th anniversary.

Held under the patronage of the Minister of State for Culture and the Media, Wolfram Weimer, the special exhibition offers new perspectives on Warhol's distinctive artistic engagement with Ludwig van Beethoven and documents a defining chapter in the cultural history of Bonn, the federal capital of the so-called „Bonn Republic“.

Visitor Information

The special exhibition can be visited from September 9, 2026, to April 5, 2027, with the admission ticket to the Beethoven-Haus Bonn museum (Bonngasse 20).

Opening hours: Wednesday to Monday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m

The exhibition will be accompanied by an extensive program of guided tours, workshops and lectures. Further information about the special exhibition as well as advance tickets are available at **www.beethoven.de/by-warhol** (tickets from €12). Tickets will also be available at the museum ticket shop, subject to availability.

Wolfram Weimer, Minister of State for Culture and the Media and patron of the exhibition, says:

"This exhibition is a wonderful prelude to the 2027 Beethoven commemorative year, in which Germany marks the 200th anniversary of the Bonn composer's death. Andy Warhol brilliantly captured the worldwide fascination with Beethoven in his iconic portrait. It is the perfect moment to dedicate an exhibition of its own to this portrait for the first time."

"Almost everyone knows Warhol's portraits of Beethoven, yet their connections to Bonn, the Beethoven-Haus, and Warhol's oeuvre as a whole have never truly been explored. We are now dedicating a major special exhibition to them, taking over our entire museum. Featuring numerous previously unseen objects, the exhibition reveals for the first time how, shortly before his own death, Andy Warhol arrived at an entirely new and contemporary vision of Beethoven," emphasizes Beethoven-Haus Director **Malte Boecker**, highlighting the significance of the show.

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Press materials for free use can be found here:

www.beethoven.de/presse_warhol

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Beethoven-Haus Bonn

Founded in 1889, the Beethoven-Haus Bonn association is considered the leading international Beethoven center. Its mission is to keep Beethoven's life, work, and legacy alive. The cultural institution includes the world's most significant Beethoven collection, the museum in Beethoven's birthplace with some 100.000 visitors per year, a musicological research department alongside a library and publishing house, as well as the Chamber Music Hall named after Hermann J. Abs. Supported by hundreds of friends, patrons, and members from over 20 countries, and funded by the Federal Government, the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), the Rhineland Regional Association (LVR), and the Federal City of Bonn, the Beethoven-Haus fulfills a cultural mandate of national and international importance. The violinist Daniel Hope has been its president since March 2020.

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Andy Warhol, Beethoven, 1987 (Polaroid taken at the Warhol factory; TP 41/72; Synthetic polymer paint on HMP paper), Original artwork and image details © 2026 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS).