

Andy Warhol's name resonates well beyond limited art circles. His silkscreen works of people, products, and events of the 1960s made him a central figure in the Pop Art movement. His name quickly became a name brand as his enterprises expanded from art and advertising into fashion, underground music, independent filmmaking, magazine publication, and television. For the first time, Warhol's late and most prolific period is considered through a survey of painted works. *Andy Warhol: The Last Decade*, which premieres in Milwaukee, is the first U.S. museum exhibition to examine Warhol's final years.

In the last chapter of his forty-year career, Warhol was producing paintings like never before. He participated in the leading edge of the painting revival of the 1980s, revisiting his Pop Art innovations while forging a new synthesis of painting and screenprinting. He introduced abstraction into his artistic vocabulary with series such as the *Oxidation Paintings*, *Shadows*, *Yarn*, *Rorschachs*, and *Camouflage*; produced his signature "fright wig" self-portraits; and revealed his Catholicism in *Black and White Ads* and the ambitious series based on Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*.

In 1979, Warhol had a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art of his portrait works, which the critics dismissed. On the other hand, his exhibition of *Shadow* paintings in the same year was applauded for its experimentation. These paintings, based on shadows from the artist's office, were far different than his commercial portraiture. His peers also praised the work, including Julian Schnabel who stated, "Andy's greatest contribution is in the traditional area called painting."

The fulcrum of Warhol's late period was his close collaboration with Jean-Michel Basquiat, an experience that led Warhol to return to painting by hand. Warhol was introduced to Basquiat in 1982 and the two immediately bonded. Francesco Clemente later joined them as a collaborator. Inspired with new painterly ideas, Warhol moved from a Factory space into an expansive Ballroom. Instead of mass production, there was independent discovery with new styles, techniques, and subjects.

Warhol made more work than at any other time in his career in 1985–86. His "fright wig" self-portraits, which he manipulated to elude one reading of his identity in favor of multiple versions, were among these works. His paintings also mushroomed to monumental proportions in his new studio, culminating in his largest series, *The Last Supper*. In full command of his repertoire, Warhol duplicated and manipulated images of the iconic work by da Vinci. The picture itself permeates pop culture, but of course, it also has a big star in the lead role. This series began as a commission from an Italian dealer, but it was important to Warhol, as well. This final series by Warhol reveals a little known side of the artist before his tragic death in 1987.

The lead sponsors for *Andy Warhol: The Last Decade* are Sue and Bud Selig and Debbie and Mark Attanasio. Additional support is also generously provided by Donald and Donna Baumgartner, Christine Symchych, Joanne Murphy, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Johnson and Pabst LGBT Humanity Fund, Tony and Sue Krausen, the Milwaukee Art Museum's Friends of Art, and an anonymous foundation. The exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities.

*Andy Warhol: The Last Decade* is organized by the Milwaukee Art Museum and guest curated by Joseph D. Ketner II, Lois and Henry Foster Chair in Contemporary Art, Emerson College, Boston. The exhibition is coordinated at the Milwaukee Art Museum by John McKinnon, assistant curator of modern and contemporary art.

*(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)*