

Follow the Money: Andy Warhol's American Dream

HOOD
MUSEUM OF ART
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The American Dream, Warhol-Style, on View at the Hood This Summer



Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, is delighted to present the intimate summer exhibition *Follow the Money: Andy Warhol's American Dream*, a special opportunity to engage with the work of this transformative artist and pop personality. On view from July 17 through September 19, *Follow the Money* is an animated combination of paintings, photographs, and prints of coins and dollar signs as well as images of people both famous and unknown. A free illustrated brochure accompanies the exhibition, and art historian Trevor Fairbrother, the guest curator, will deliver a lunchtime gallery talk on Tuesday, July 27, at 12:30 PM in the Hood's Harrington Gallery. Small in scale and focused in content, *Follow the Money* permits a uniquely in-depth

perusal of Warhol's seemingly limitless inventiveness.

Andrew Warhola grew up working class and Byzantine Catholic, the youngest son of immigrants who settled in Pittsburgh. In 1949, after graduating from the Carnegie Institute of Technology with a degree in pictorial design, he left home for New York City. He promptly changed his name to Andy Warhol and blossomed as a commercial artist. Illustrations in *Harper's Bazaar*, newspaper ads for I. Miller shoes, album covers for CBS Records, and window displays at Bonwit Teller brought him financial success.

Warhol's life ultimately unfolded as a rags-to-riches saga. Born and raised in slums, he owned a townhouse on the Upper East Side when he died. Throughout his career he worked every bit as hard as his industrious Slavic parents. Belief in the American Dream, a depression-era expression of hope in a "better, richer, and happier life," crested in him during his early years. Sugary sentiment had its place in Warhol's repertoire; however, his core remained hard-bitten. He was not blind to the violence and brutality that permeate many American lives, and already in 1963 he made photo-based silkscreen paintings of car crashes, race riots in Alabama, and the electric chair at Sing Sing Correctional Facility.

So, while the American Dream appealed to Warhol, he, like a wise peasant, settled for a bittersweet one: you have to work, you deserve some fun, and you shouldn't get suckered. In his 1975 book *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, he put his twisted gloss on the old-school work ethic: "During the hippie era people put down the idea of business—they'd

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say, 'Money is bad,' and 'Working is bad,' but [I believe] making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art."

Highlights of this exhibition exemplify Warhol's artistic responses to the knotty relationships between power, money, celebrity, and American culture. Some speak for themselves: a dollar sign, a coin, and a rehabbed townhouse with a "For Sale" sign. A print of the Indian head nickel (minted from 1913 to 1938) held potent childhood associations, both nostalgic and commercial, for the artist, in addition to being a mesmerizing example of graphic design.

Warhol took the Polaroid photo of Carolina Herrera during the session that marked the beginning of a potential portrait commission. Herrera, the fashion designer and entrepreneur who dressed Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis in the 1980s, impressed him with her stylish hauteur, and he showed her to be a subject worthy of Manet or Picasso. In 1979 the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, exhibited a decade of Warhol's portraits derived from Polaroid snapshots; the occasion drummed up new clients for him but drew only lukewarm critical responses. Still, it was already true that here was no ordinary portraitist but instead the media icon who, a decade before in 1968, had unleashed the prescient phrase, "In the future, everyone will be world-famous for fifteen minutes."

About the Hood

The Hood Museum of Art is dedicated to teaching and promoting visual literacy for all of its visitors. This dynamic educational and cultural facility houses one of the oldest and largest college collections in the country, with more than 65,000 objects acquired since 1772. Among its most important works are six Assyrian stone reliefs that date from around 900 BCE. The collection also presents art from other ancient cultures, the Americas, Europe, Africa, Papua New Guinea, and many more regions of the world. The Hood seeks to inspire and educate through direct engagement with works of art and offers access to the rich diversity of its collections through ongoing highlights displays, special exhibitions, an online collections database, and a wide array of programs and events.

Image credit: Andy Warhol, *Carolina Herrera*, November 1978, Polacolor ER, 4 1/4 x 3 3/8 in. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College: Gift of the Andy Warhol Foundation; 2008.3.14