

ANDY WARHOL A RETROSPECTIVE

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ANDY WARHOL'S ONE-DIMENSIONAL ART: 1956–1966

BY BENJAMIN H. D. BUCHLOH

"If you want to know all about Andy Warhol, just look at the surface of my paintings and films and me, and there I am. There's nothing behind it."

"My work has no future at all. I know that. A few years. Of course my things will mean nothing."

—Andy Warhol¹

A calling card designed by Andy Warhol on a long sheet of light green tissue paper, mailed to clients and patrons, advertising and design agencies about 1955, depicts a circus artiste holding a giant rose. Her tightly cropped costume reveals a body tattooed with over forty corporate logos and brand names (plate 25). The body displays such brands as Armstrong Tires and Wheaties; Dow chemicals and Pepsodent; Hunts Catsup, which would literally pop up as a three-dimensional can in *Andy Warhol's Index (Book)* in 1967; and Chanel No. 5 and Mobil, which would resurface thirty years later in his portfolio of silkscreen prints titled *Ads*.² The artiste's face carries a single tattoo, ennobling her doll-like features with a laurel wreath around the letter *L* for Lincoln (the car). The lower part of the costume carries an inscription in the *faux naïf* script which had already endeared its author to his art-director clients, simply stating: "Andy Warhol Murry Hell 3-0555," the artist's telephone number.³

It would seem that even at the beginning of his various careers, Warhol "embodied" the paradox of modernist art: to be suspended between high art's isolation, transcendence, and critical negativity and the pervasive debris of corporate-dominated mass culture—or as Theodor W. Adorno has put it, "to have a history at all while under the spell of the eternal repetition of mass production"⁴—constitutes the fundamental dialectic within the modernist artist's role. Its origins in Romanticism and its imminent disappearance are invoked in War-

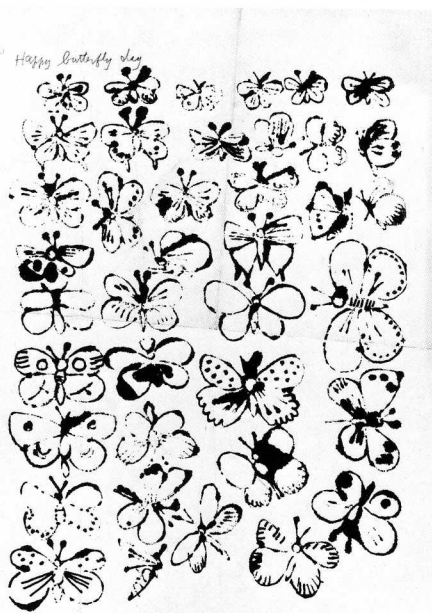
hol's ironic reference to the *saltimbanque* muse and her corporate tattoos. That this dialectic might originate in two types of collective consumption has been recently suggested: "With the aid of ideal types two distinct consumer styles may be seen emerging in the 1880's and the 1890's: an elitist type and a democratic one. For all their differences in detail, many, if not

but of spirit—superior individuals who would forge a personal mode of consumption far above the banalities of the everyday. Democratic consumers sought to make consumption more equal and participatory. They wanted to rescue everyday consumption from banality by raising it to the level of a political and social statement."⁵

It will remain a mystery whether Warhol attempted to reconcile these contradictions in his own life by changing his professional identity from commercial artist to fine artist in 1960.⁶ By 1959 Warhol had become very successful in the field of advertising design, earning an average annual sum of \$65,000 and numerous Art Directors Club medals and other tokens of professional recognition. Warhol's own later commentaries on commercial art and his motives for abandoning it are designed to construct a field of blague that seems to address the impertinence of the interviewers' inquisitiveness rather than the question itself.

Nevertheless, by 1954–55 Warhol had already shown his ambitions toward fine art: in order to distinguish himself within the mundane world of commercial design he (fraudulently) claimed success in the realm of fine art, which he would only attain ten years later. In a folder produced as a promotional gift for one of his clients, *Vanity Fair*, Warhol declared "Happy Butterfly Day" (figure 1), and in a gold-stamped text: "This *Vanity Fair* Butterfly Folder was designed for your desk by Andy Warhol, whose paintings are exhibited in many leading museums and contemporary galleries."⁷

This reference to the museum as the institution of ultimate validation is deployed again thirty years later by Warhol (or on his behalf), in rather different circumstances. Toward the end of his career it would seem that Warhol had successfully integrated the two poles of the modernist dialectic, the department store and the museum (what he once called "his favorite



1. Andy Warhol. Sketch for "Happy Butterfly Day" brochure. c. 1955. Ink and pencil on paper, 12 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (32.1 × 23.8 cm). The Estate of Andy Warhol

most, of the experiments in consumer models of those decades fall into one or the other of these categories. Both the elitist and the democratic consumers rebelled against the shortcomings of mass and bourgeois styles of consumption, but in seeking an alternative they moved in opposite directions. Elitist consumers considered themselves a new type of aristocracy, one not of birth

places to go to"). In the "1986 Christmas Book of the Neiman-Marcus Stores" a portrait session with Andy Warhol was offered for \$35,000: "Become a legend with Andy Warhol. . . . You'll meet the Premier Pop artist in his studio for a private sitting. Mr. Warhol will create an acrylic on canvas portrait of you in the tradition of his museum quality pieces."⁸ By contrast, on the occasion of his actual debut in the world of high art, his appearance in "New Talent U.S.A.," a special issue of *Art in America* in 1962, Warhol (equally fraudulently) described himself as "self-taught."⁹

Warhol's inverted bluffs (of the commercial world with fine-art legitimacy, the high-art world with brutish innocence) indicate more than a shrewd reading of the disposition of commercial artists to be in awe of museum culture, which they have failed to enter, or, for that matter, its complementary formation, the disposition of the high-art connoisseur to be shocked by anyone who has claimed to have broken the rules of high art's tightly controlled discursive "game." Such strategically brilliant blagues (earlier practiced by Charles Baudelaire, Oscar Wilde, and Marcel Duchamp and brought up to late twentieth-century standards by Warhol) indicate Warhol's awareness of the rapidly changing relationships between the two spheres of visual representation and of the drastic changes of the artist's role and the audience's expectations at the beginning of the fifties. He seemed to have understood early on that it would be the task of the new generation of artists to recognize and publicly acknowledge the extent to which the conditions that had permitted the formation of the Abstract Expressionist aesthetic, with its Romantic roots and notions of the transcendental critique, had actually been surpassed by the reorganization of society in the postwar period: "It was the Second World War . . . which cut off the vitality of modernism. After 1945, the old semi-aristocratic or agrarian order and its appurtenances were finished in every country. Bourgeois democracy was finally universalized. With that, certain critical links with a pre-capitalist past were snapped. At the same time, 'Fordism' arrived in force. Mass production and mass consumption transformed the West European economies along North American lines. There could no longer be the smallest doubt as to what kind of society this technology would consolidate:

an oppressively stable, monolithically industrial, capitalist civilization was now in place."¹⁰

This new civilization would create conditions in which mass culture and high art would be forced into an increasingly tight embrace, and these would eventually lead to the integration of the sphere of high art into that of the culture industry. But this fusion would not merely imply a transformation of the artist's role and changing cultural practices, or affect images and objects and their functions within society. The real triumph of mass culture over high culture would eventually take place—quite unexpectedly for most artists and critics—in the fetishization of high art in the larger apparatus of late twentieth-century ideology.

Allan Kaprow, one of the more articulate members of that new generation of artists, would grasp this transformation of the artistic role a few years later: "It is said that if a man hits bottom there is only one direction to go and that is up. In one way this has happened, for if the artist was in hell in 1946, now he is in business. . . . There is a chance that the modern 'visionary' is even more of a cliché than his counterpart, the 'conformist,' and that neither is true."¹¹

As his calling card suggested, Warhol was uniquely qualified to promote the shift from visionary to conformist and to participate in this transition from "hell" to business: after all, his education at the Carnegie Institute of Technology had not been a traditional fine-arts studio education and had provided him with a depoliticized and technocratically oriented American version of the Bauhaus curriculum, as it spread in the postwar years from László Moholy-Nagy's New Bauhaus in Chicago to other American art institutions.¹²

In fact, when reading early interviews with Andy Warhol one can still find traces of the populist, modernist credo that seems to have motivated Warhol (and Pop art in general), and both aspects—questions of production and reception—seem to have concerned him. For example, he remarked in a little-known interview of the mid-sixties: "Factory is as good a name as any. A factory is where you build things. This is where I make or *build* my work. In my art work, hand painting would take much too long and anyway that's not the age we live in. Mechanical means are *today*, and using them I can get more art to more people. Art should be for everyone."¹³ Or, when addressing

the question of audiences for his work, in one of his most important interviews in 1967: "Pop art is for everyone. I don't think art should be only for the select few, I think it should be for the mass of American people and they usually accept art anyway."¹⁴

One of the first corporate art sponsors and one of the major supporters of Moholy-Nagy's work in Chicago, as well as a fervent advocate of the industrialization of modernist aesthetics in the United States, was Walter Paepcke, president of the Container Corporation of America. He had (prematurely) anticipated in 1946 that mass culture and high art would have to be reconciled in a radically commercialized Bauhaus venture but, in his view, purged of political implications concerning artistic intervention in social progress. The cognitive and perceptual devices of modernism would have to be deployed for the development of a new commodity aesthetic (product design, packaging, and advertisement) and would become a powerful and important industry in postwar America and Europe, without, however, resolving the contradictions of modernism. In the words of the "visionary" businessman: "During the last century in particular, the Machine Age with its mass production procedures has seemingly required specializations which have brought about an unfortunate divergence in work and philosophy of the individual producer and the artist. Yet artists and business men, today as formerly, fundamentally have much in common and can contribute the more to society as they come to complement their talents. Each has within him the undying desire to create, to contribute something to the world, to leave his mark upon society."¹⁵

Thirty years later this dogged entrepreneurial vision found its farcical echo in Warhol's triumphant proclamation of diffidence at a moment when he had replaced the last remnants of an aesthetic of transcendence or critical resistance with an aesthetic of ruthless affirmation: "Business art is the step that comes after Art. I started as a commercial artist, and I want to finish as a business artist. After I did the thing called 'art' or whatever it's called, I went into business art. I wanted to be an Art Businessman or a Business Artist. Being good in Business is the most fascinating kind of art."¹⁶

That triumph of mass culture over traditional aesthetic concepts produced two new types of

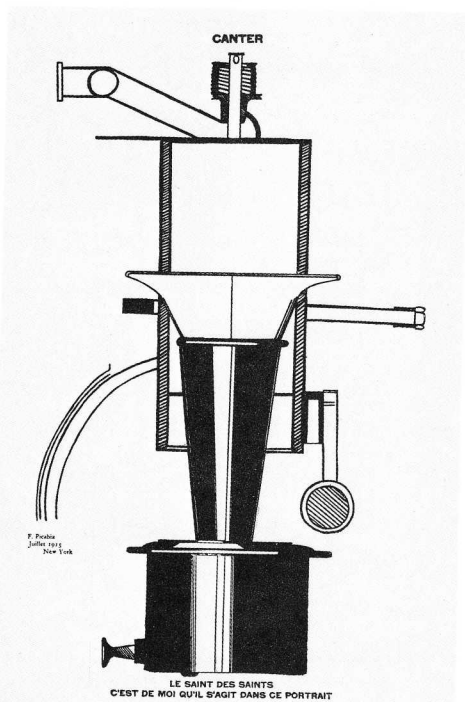
“cultural” personalities. The first were the admen, who would become passionate collectors of avant-garde art (in order to embrace the “creativity” that would perpetually escape them and to possess privately what they would systematically destroy in their own “work” in the public sphere). The second type was represented by such artists as James Harvey, who, according to *Time* magazine, “draws his inspiration from religion and landscapes. . . . At nights he works hard on muscular abstract paintings that show in Manhattan’s Graham Gallery. But eight hours a day, to make a living, he labors as a commercial artist.”¹⁷

When Harvey, who had designed the Brillo box in the early sixties, encountered his design on 120 wood simulacra by Warhol (and/or his assistants) at the Stable Gallery in New York in 1964 (plate 182), he could only deflect his sense of profound crisis of artistic standards by threatening Warhol with a lawsuit.

Warhol, by contrast, was fairly well prepared to reconcile the contradictions emerging from the collapse of high culture into the culture industry and to participate in it with all the skills and techniques of the commercial artist. He had freed himself early on from outmoded concepts of originality and authorship and had developed a sense of the necessity for collaboration and a Brechtian understanding of the commonality of ideas.¹⁸

COMMERCIAL FOLKLORE

Warhol’s career, in fact, seems to exemplify each stage of the high-culture/mass-culture paradox, from its division through its eventual fusion, in his easy transition from one role to the other. In his early career as a commercial artist he featured all the debased and exhausted qualities of traditional concepts of the “artistic” that art directors and admen adored: the whimsical and the witty, the wicked and the *faux naïf*. One of the resources for such an artistic realm of pleasure was the aristocratically refined preindustrial charm of rococo and neoclassical drawing, as had already been the case in twenties Art Deco advertisement, packaging, and book illustration. The other resource was a particularly charming variety of folk art with which dozens of artists in America—since Elie Nadelman—had identified, at least as collectors. After all, the folk-art object, with its peculiar form of an already extinct creativity,



2. Francis Picabia. *Le Saint des Saints*. 1915. Ink on paper. Whereabouts unknown



3. Marcel Duchamp. *Bicycle Wheel*. 1951 (third version, after lost original of 1913). Assemblage: metal wheel mounted on painted stool; overall, 50½" (128.3 cm) high. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection

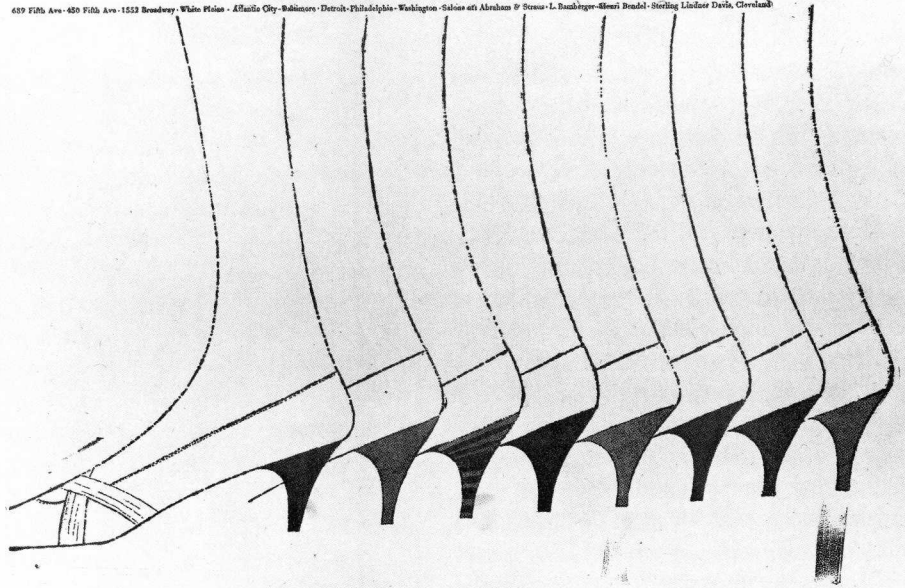
seemed to mirror the fate of traditional artistic creativity. Warhol’s success as a commercial designer depended, in part, on his “artistic” performance, on his delivery of a certain notion of creativity that appeared all the more rarefied in a milieu whose every impulse was geared to increase commodification. Warhol introduced precisely those noncommercial elements (false naïveté, the charm of the uneducated and unskilled, his illiterate mother, preindustrial *bricolage*) into the most advanced and most sophisticated milieu of professional alienation: advertising design. Warhol was fully aware of this paradox and phrased it in his famous early interview with Gene Swenson in a language that reveals the extent to which its speaker had internalized the lessons of John Cage and transposed them into everyday experience: “It’s hard to be creative and it’s hard also not to think what you do is creative or hard not to be called creative because everybody is always talking about that and individuality. Everybody’s always being creative. And it’s so funny when you say things aren’t, like the shoe I would draw for an advertisement was called a ‘creation’ but the drawing of it was not. But I guess I believe in both ways. I was getting paid for it, and I did anything they told me to do. I’d have to invent and now I don’t; after all that ‘correction’ those commercial drawings would have feelings, they would have a style. The attitude of those who hired me had feeling or something to it; they knew what they wanted, they insisted, sometimes they got very emotional. The process of doing work in commercial art was machine-like, but the attitude had feeling to it.”¹⁹

By contrast, his successful debut as an artist in the sphere of fine art—and here the paradox becomes fully apparent—would depend precisely on his capacity to erase from his paintings and drawings more completely than any of his peers (Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg in particular) the traces of the handmade, of artistry and creativity, of expression and invention. What appeared to be cynical “copies” of commercial art early in 1960 scandalized the art world, whose expectations (and self-deceptions) at the moment of the climax of Abstract Expressionism were shaken even more since it had forgotten or conveniently disavowed the work of Francis Picabia (figure 2) or the implications of Marcel Duchamp’s Readymades (figure 3).

The notorious anecdote in which Warhol showed two versions of a painting of a Coca-Cola bottle to Emile de Antonio in 1962, one gesturally dramatic, carrying the legacy of Abstract Expressionism, the other cold and diagrammatic, making the claim of the Ready-made, now in the domain of painting (plate 91), attests to Warhol's uncanny ability to produce according to the needs and demands of the moment (and to his technical skills to perform these tasks). It also seems to betray a brief instance of hesitation in Warhol's calculation of how far he could really go with the breakdown of local painterly conventions and the infusion of commercial design devices in order to make his entry into the New York art world. After all, at the time his status in this realm was tenuous at best. As late as July 1962, what was to have been Warhol's first New York exhibition—at the prestigious Martha Jackson Gallery—had been cancelled with the following argument: "As this gallery is devoted to artists of an earlier generation, I now feel I must take a stand to support their continuing efforts rather than confuse issues here by beginning to show contemporary Dada. The introduction of your paintings has already had very bad repercussions for us. This is a good sign, as far as your work and your statement as an artist are concerned. Furthermore, I like you and your work. But from a business and gallery standpoint, we want to take a stand elsewhere. Therefore, I suggest to you that we cancel the exhibition we had planned for December 1962."²⁰

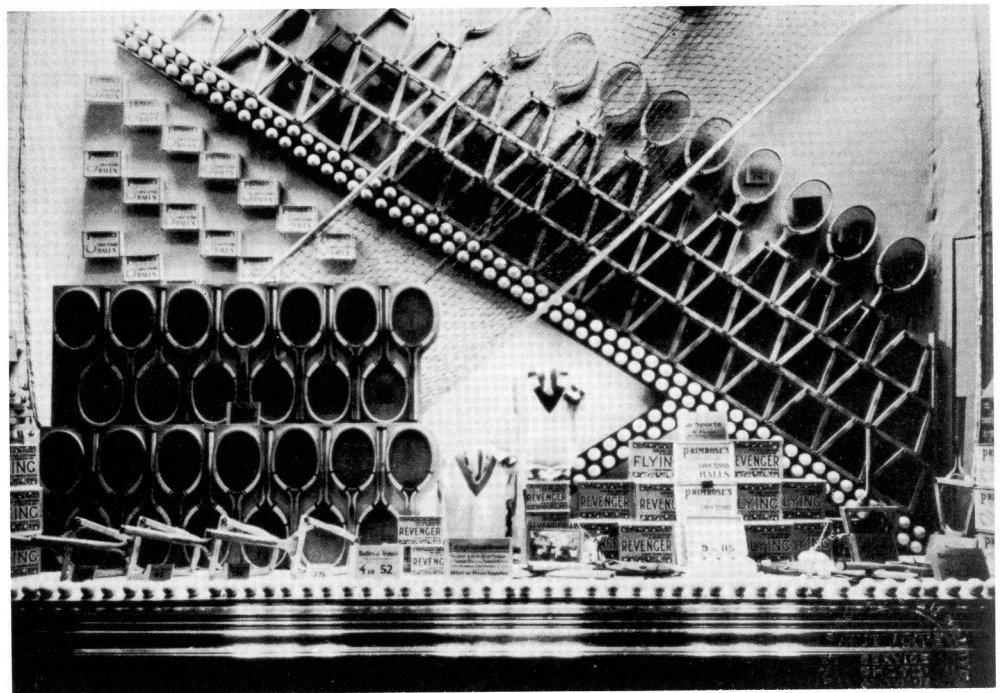
In fact, Warhol's early "art" work (between 1960 and 1962) was characterized by an apparent lack of painterly resolution, often misread as a parody of Abstract Expressionism. His pictures were painted in a loose, gesturally expressive manner, but their imagery was derived from close-up details of comic strips and advertisements.²¹ De Antonio (in several recollections identified as a "Marxist") gave him the right advice (and so did the dealer Ivan Karp, who also saw both paintings): destroy the Abstract Expressionist Coca-Cola bottle and keep the "cold," diagrammatic one.²²

What is most obvious in these early pairs of hand-painted depictions, such as *Storm Door*, 1960 and 1961 (plates 100, 101), or *Before and After 1, 2, and 3* (plate 79), is that Warhol's technical expertise as a commercial artist qualified him for the diagrammatic nature of the



I. Miller says: lowered heel—highest fashion. Why? Because the Middling Heel alone can make the slender taper of a shoe even slenderer, more tapered. It also makes for a lovely, effortless stance—the only perfect stance for the unstressed, easy elegance of new clothes. We love the way the Middling Heel looks, the way it feels, the way it walks and dances. Come see it on pumps, street sandals and evening slippers at I. Miller!

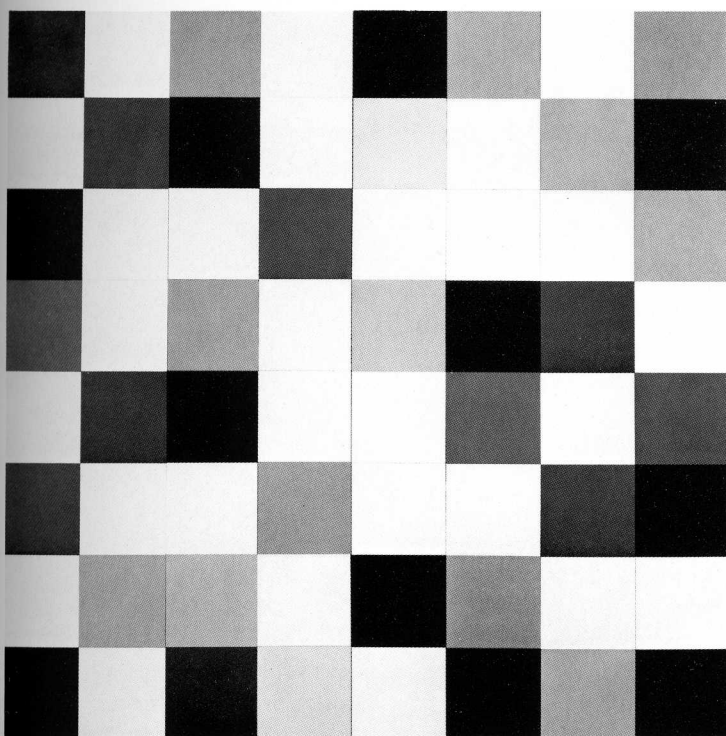
4. I. Miller advertisement by Warhol, *The New York Times*



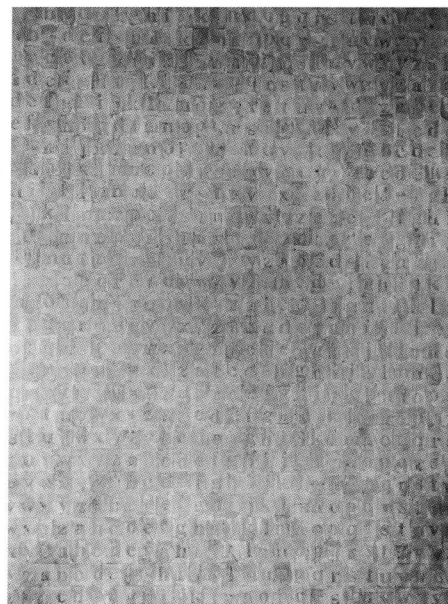
5. Window display design, Les Grands Magasins du Printemps, Paris. c. 1908

new painting in the same way that his traditional artistic inclinations had once qualified him for success in the world of commercial design. It frequently has been argued that there is very little continuity between Warhol's commercial

art and his fine art,²³ but a more extensive study of Warhol's advertisement design would, in fact, suggest that the key features of his work of the early sixties are prefigured: extreme close-up fragments and details, stark graphic contrasts



6. Ellsworth Kelly. *Colors for a Large Wall*. 1951. Oil on canvas, mounted on sixty-four wood panels; overall, 7'10¼" × 7'10½" (239.3 × 239.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the artist



7. Jasper Johns. *Gray Alphabets*. 1956. Encaustic on newspaper on canvas, 66 × 46" (167.6 × 116.8 cm). Private collection

and silhouetting of forms, schematic simplification, and, most important, rigorous serial composition (figure 4).

The sense of composing depicted objects and arranging display surfaces in serially structured grids emerges after all from the seriality that constitutes the very nature of the commodity: its object status, its design, and its display. Such seriality had become the major structural formation of object-perception in the twentieth century, determining aesthetic projects as different as those of Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin, on the one hand, and Busby Berkeley, on the other. Amédée Ozenfant had rightfully included a serial commodity display in his 1931 book *Foundations of Modern Art* (figure 5). And by the mid-fifties the serial-grid composition had regained the prominence it had enjoyed in the twenties: Ellsworth Kelly's serial arrangement of monochrome display panels such as *Colors for a Large Wall*, 1951, and Johns's *Gray Alphabets*, 1956 (figures 6, 7), for example, prefigure the central strategy of Warhol's compositional principle as do, somewhat later, the serially structured arrangements of ready-made objects by Arman in Europe (figure 8).

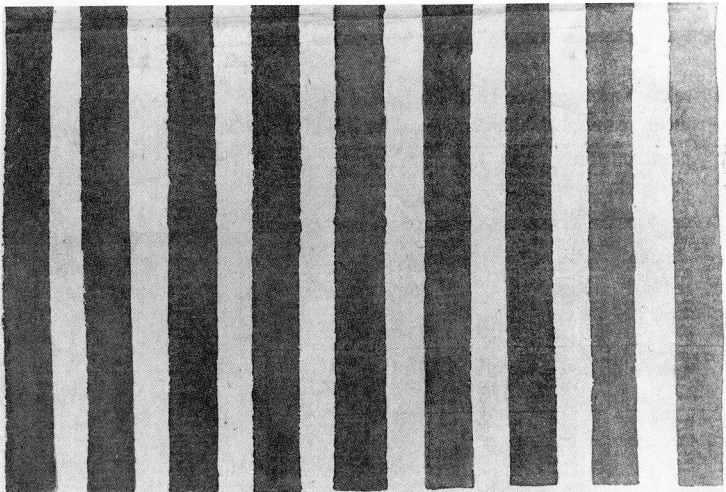
And, of course, the opposite is also true: Warhol's real affinity for and unusual familiarity (for a commercial artist) with the avant-

garde practices of the mid-fifties inspired his advertising design of that period and imbued it with a risqué stylishness that the average commercial artist would have been unable to conceive. Two outstanding examples from Warhol's campaigns for I. Miller shoes in *The New York Times* of 1956 confirm that Warhol had already grasped the full range of the painterly strategies of Johns and Rauschenberg, particularly those aspects that would soon determine

his own pictorial production. The first one (figure 9) features the careful overall regularization of a nonrelational composition (as in the obvious example of Johns's *Flag* paintings after 1954), a strategy which would soon be mechanically debased in Warhol's hands and be depleted of all of Johns's culinary, painterly differentiation. And the second one (figure 10) shows the impact of Rauschenberg's direct imprinting techniques and persistent use of

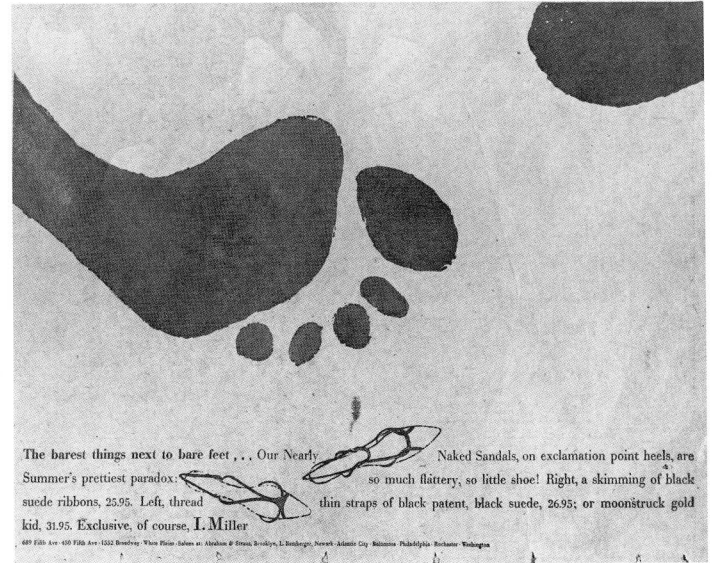


8. Arman (Armand Fernandez). *Boom! Boom!* 1960. Assemblage of plastic water pistols in a plexiglass case, 8¼ × 23¼ × 4½" (21 × 59 × 11.2 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Philip Johnson



We cordially invite you to visit the Shoe Salon at Henri Bendel where slenderly elegant shoes by I. Miller, David Ecos, and Ingenué are now to be seen in addition to the beautiful Belgian imports for which Bendel has always been famous.
I. Miller at Henri Bendel 10 West 57th Street

9. I. Miller advertisement by Warhol, *The New York Times*



The barest things next to bare feet . . . Our Nearly Naked Sandals, on exclamation point heels, are Summer's prettiest paradox: so much flattery, so little shoe! Right, a skimming of black suede ribbons, 25.95. Left, thread thin straps of black patent, black suede, 26.95; or moonstruck gold kid, 31.95. Exclusive, of course, I. Miller
 487 Fifth Ave. • 610 Fifth Ave. • 1222 Broadway • 7000 Fifth Ave. • 100th Street • 11th Street • 12th Street • 13th Street • 14th Street • 15th Street • 16th Street • 17th Street • 18th Street • 19th Street • 20th Street • 21st Street • 22nd Street • 23rd Street • 24th Street • 25th Street • 26th Street • 27th Street • 28th Street • 29th Street • 30th Street • 31st Street • 32nd Street • 33rd Street • 34th Street • 35th Street • 36th Street • 37th Street • 38th Street • 39th Street • 40th Street • 41st Street • 42nd Street • 43rd Street • 44th Street • 45th Street • 46th Street • 47th Street • 48th Street • 49th Street • 50th Street • 51st Street • 52nd Street • 53rd Street • 54th Street • 55th Street • 56th Street • 57th Street • 58th Street • 59th Street • 60th Street • 61st Street • 62nd Street • 63rd Street • 64th Street • 65th Street • 66th Street • 67th Street • 68th Street • 69th Street • 70th Street • 71st Street • 72nd Street • 73rd Street • 74th Street • 75th Street • 76th Street • 77th Street • 78th Street • 79th Street • 80th Street • 81st Street • 82nd Street • 83rd Street • 84th Street • 85th Street • 86th Street • 87th Street • 88th Street • 89th Street • 90th Street • 91st Street • 92nd Street • 93rd Street • 94th Street • 95th Street • 96th Street • 97th Street • 98th Street • 99th Street • 100th Street

10. I. Miller advertisement by Warhol, *The New York Times*

indexical marking since his collaboration with John Cage on the *Automobile Tire Print* of 1951 (figure 11), a method soon to be emptied by Warhol of all the expressivity and decorative artistry the technique had regained in Rauschenberg's work of the late fifties.

THE RITUALS OF PAINTING

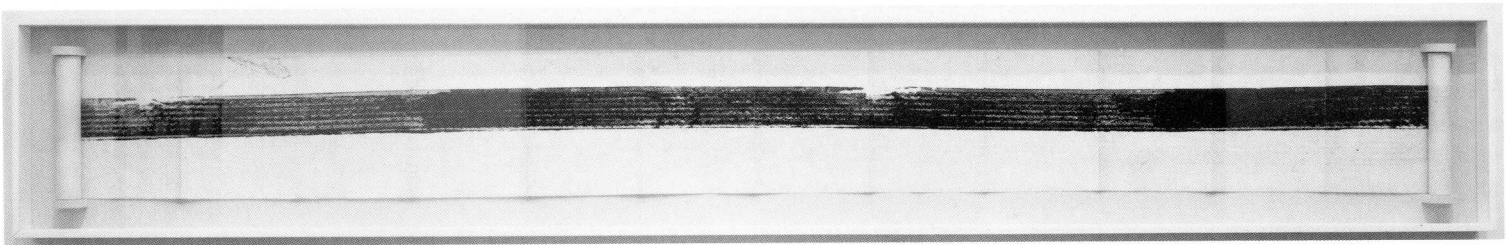
It appears, then, that by the end of the fifties Warhol, both commercially competent and artistically canny, was singularly prepared to effect the transformation of the artist's role in postwar America. This transformation of an aesthetic practice of transcendental negation into one of tautological affirmation is perhaps best articulated by John Cage's famous dictum of 1961 in *Silence*: "Our poetry now is the realization that we possess nothing. Anything therefore is a delight (since we do not possess it . . .)."

The fact that this transformation would dis-

mantle the traditional format of easel painting had already been stated in 1958 in a text by Allan Kaprow ("The Legacy of Jackson Pollock") that seems to have functioned as a manifesto for the new generation of American artists after Abstract Expressionism: "Pollock's near destruction of this tradition [of easel painting] may well be a return to the point where art was more actively involved in ritual, magic and life than we have known it in our recent past. If so, it is an exceedingly important step, and in its superior way, offers a solution to the complaints of those who would have us put a bit of life into art. But what do we do now? There are two alternatives. One is to continue in this vein. . . . The other is to give up the making of paintings entirely."²⁴

In spite of Kaprow's acumen, the essay was marred by two fundamental misunderstandings. The first was the idea that the hegemony of Abstract Expressionism had come to an end

because Pollock "had destroyed painting,"²⁵ and because of the vulgarization of the Abstract Expressionist style by its second-generation imitators. This assumption suggests—as historians and critics have argued ever since—that a mere stylistic rebellion against New York School painting and its academicization was the principal motivating force in the advent of Pop art.²⁶ This stylistic argument, descriptive at best, mistakes the effects for the cause, and can be most easily refuted by remembering two historical facts. First, that painters such as Barnett Newman and Ad Reinhardt were only recognized in the mid-sixties and that Willem de Kooning and Mark Rothko continued to work with ever-increasing visibility and success. If anything, by the mid-sixties, their work (and most certainly Pollock's) had achieved an almost mythic status, representing aesthetic and ethical standards that seemed, however, lost and unattainable for the future. Second, the



11. Robert Rauschenberg and John Cage. *Automobile Tire Print*. 1951. Monoprint on paper, mounted on canvas, 16½" × 22' (41.9 × 671.8 cm). Collection Robert Rauschenberg (on extended loan to the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

younger generation of New York School artists, from Johns and Rauschenberg to Claes Oldenburg and Warhol, continually emphasized—both in their works and statements—their affiliation with, and veneration of, the legacy of Abstract Expressionism. Of course, they also emphasized the impossibility of achieving that generation's transcendental artistic aspirations and standards.

The second (and major) misconception in Kaprow's essay becomes evident in his contradictory remarks on the revitalization of artistic ritual and the simultaneous disappearance of easel painting. Kaprow conceives of the ritualistic dimension of aesthetic experience (what Walter Benjamin had called the "parasitical dependence of art upon the magic ritual") as a transhistorical, universally accessible condition that can be reconstituted at any time merely by altering obsolete stylistic means and artistic procedures. Kaprow's ideas of 1958 are in fact comparable to Benjamin's thought of the twenties, when the latter developed the notion of a participatory aesthetic in the context of his discussion of Dadaism. Kaprow speaks with astonishing naiveté of the possibility of a new

participatory aesthetic emerging out of Pollock's work: "But what I believe *is* clearly discernible is that the *entire* painting comes out at the participant (I shall call him that, rather than observer) right into the room. . . . In the present case the 'picture' has moved so far out that the canvas is no longer a reference point. Hence, although up on the wall, these marks surround us as they did the painter at work, so strict a correspondence has there been achieved between his impulse and the resultant art."²⁷

In fact, what *did* occur in the formation of Pop art in general, and Warhol's work in particular, was just the opposite of Kaprow's prophecy: the demise of easel painting, as initiated by Pollock, was accelerated and extended to comprise as well the destruction of the last vestiges of the ritual in aesthetic experience itself. Warhol came closer than anybody since Duchamp (in the Western European and American avant-garde at least) "to [giving] up the making of paintings entirely." What is more, Warhol's paintings eventually would oppose those aspirations toward a new aesthetic of participation (as it had been preached and practiced by Cage, Rauschenberg, and Kaprow) by degrading pre-

cisely those notions to the level of absolute farce.

Tango, for example, had been the title of one of Johns's crucial monochromatic and participatory paintings in 1955, embodying Cage's concept of participation in its invitation to the viewer to wind up the painting's built-in music box (figure 12). Johns explicitly stated that such a participatory concept motivated his work at the time: "I wanted to suggest a physical relationship to the pictures that was active. In the Targets one could stand back or one might go very close and lift the lids and shut them. In *Tango* to wind the key and hear the sound, you had to stand relatively close to the painting, too close to see the outside shape of the picture."²⁸

Seven years after Johns's *Tango* and four years after Kaprow's "prophetic" text, Warhol produced two groups of diagrammatic paintings, the Dance Diagrams of 1962 (plates 160–163) and the Do It Yourself paintings, begun the same year (plates 153–159). These works seem to have been conceived in response to the idea of renewing participatory aesthetics, if not in direct response to Johns's and Rauschenberg's paintings or even Kaprow's "manifesto."

Both the Dance Diagrams and the Do It Yourself paintings bring the viewer, almost literally, into the plane of visual representation in what one might call a "bodily synecdoche"—a twentieth-century avant-garde practice intended to instigate active identification of the viewer with the representation, replacing the contemplative mode of aesthetic experience with an active one. However, this tradition had, in the meantime, become one of the key strategies—if not the principal one—of advertisement design itself, soliciting the viewer's active participation as Consumption.

Accordingly, in Warhol's work, the diagrams that entice the viewer's feet onto the Dance Diagram paintings and engage the viewer's hands to fill in the Do It Yourself paintings are frivolously transferred onto the pictorial plane from the domain of popular entertainment (rituals that are slightly "camp" and defunct: fox trot, tango, etc.). What is more, they seem to suggest that if participatory aesthetics were at so infantile a level as to invite participants to wind up a music box, to clap their hands, or to hide an object (as suggested in some of Johns's and Rauschenberg's work; in fact he speaks admiringly of Pollock's "dance"), one might just



12. Jasper Johns. *Tango*. 1955. Encaustic on canvas with music box, 43 × 55" (109.2 × 139.7 cm). Ludwig Museum, Cologne