ANDY WARHOL—FROM A TO B AND BACK AGAIN, THE FIRST MAJOR REEXAMINATION OF WARHOL'S ART IN A GENERATION, TO OPEN AT THE WHITNEY ON NOVEMBER 12

NEW YORK, JUNE 20, 2018 — UPDATED OCTOBER 23, 2018 — Andy Warhol—From A to B and Back Again—the first Warhol retrospective organized in the U.S. since 1989, and the largest in terms of its scope of ideas and range of works—will be an occasion to experience and reconsider the work of one of the most inventive, influential, and important American artists. With more than 350 works of art, many assembled together for the first time, this landmark exhibition, organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, will unite all aspects, media, and periods of Warhol's forty-year career. Curated by Warhol authority Donna De Salvo, Deputy Director for International Initiatives and Senior Curator, with Christie Mitchell, senior curatorial assistant, and Mark Loiacono, curatorial research associate, the survey debuts at the Whitney on November 12, 2018, where it will run through March 31, 2019. Following its premiere at the Whitney, the exhibition will travel to two other major American art museums, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (May 18, 2019–September 2, 2019) and the Art Institute of Chicago (October 20, 2019–January 26, 2020).

While Warhol's Pop images of the 1960s are recognizable world-wide, what remains far less known is the work he produced in the 1970s and 80s. This exhibition positions Warhol's career as a continuum, demonstrating that he didn't slow down after surviving the assassination attempt that nearly took his life in 1968, but entered into a period
of intense experimentation, continuing to use the techniques he'd developed early on and expanding upon his previous work. Taking the 1950s and his experience as a commercial illustrator as foundational, and including numerous masterpieces from the 1960s, Andy Warhol—From A to B and Back Again tracks and reappraises the later work of the 1970s and 80s through to Warhol’s untimely death in 1987.

"Perhaps more than any artist before or since, Andy Warhol understood America's defining twin desires for innovation and conformity, public visibility and absolute privacy," noted De Salvo. "He transformed these contradictory impulses into a completely original art that, I believe, has profoundly influenced how we see and think about the world now. Warhol produced images that are now so familiar, it's easy to forget just how unsettling and even shocking they were when they debuted. He pioneered the use of an industrial silkscreen process as a painterly brush to repeat images 'identically,' creating seemingly endless variations that call the very value of our cultural icons into question. His repetitions, distortions, camouflaging, incongruous color, and recycling of his own imagery anticipated the most profound effects and issues of our current digital age, when we no longer know which images to trust. From the 1950s until his death, Warhol challenged our fundamental beliefs, particularly our faith in images, even while he sought to believe in those images himself. Looking in this exhibition at the full sweep of his career makes it clear that Warhol was not just a 20th century titan but a seer of the 21st century as well."

Occupying the entirety of the Whitney’s fifth-floor Neil Bluhm Family Galleries, the adjacent Kaufman Gallery, the John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation Lobby Gallery, the Susan and John Hess Family Gallery and Theater, Andy Warhol—From A to B and Back Again will be the largest exhibition devoted to a single artist yet to be presented in the Whitney’s downtown location. Advance tickets are available at whitney.org/visit.

Adam D. Weinberg, the Alice Pratt Brown Director of the Whitney, commented: “This exhibition takes a fresh focus, while continuing the Whitney’s decades-long engagement with Warhol’s work which we presented in 1971 in a traveling retrospective and in Andy Warhol: Portraits of the 70s organized by the Whitney in 1979-80. Few have had the opportunity to see an in-depth presentation of his career, and account for the scale, vibrant color, and material richness of the objects themselves. This exhibition, to be presented in three cities, will allow visitors to experience the work of one of America's greatest cultural figures firsthand, and to better comprehend Warhol’s artistic genius and fearless experimentation.”

“Modern art history is full of trailblazers whose impact dims over time,” said Scott Rothkopf, the Senior Deputy Director and Nancy and Steve Crown Family Chief Curator. “But Warhol is that extremely rare case of an artist whose legacy grows only more potent and lasting. His inescapable example continues to inspire, awe—and even vex—new generations of artists and audiences with each passing year.”

“As a company serving customers and clients across the globe, Bank of America understands how the arts create meaningful connections between people, communities, and cultures. We are proud to be working with the Whitney Museum, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago on this important Warhol retrospective. And, we remain committed to projects like this that are born of our pledge to have a sustainable positive impact on economies and societies around the world," said Rena M. de Sisto, Global Executive for Arts & Culture, Bank of America.

Through his carefully cultivated persona and willingness to experiment with non-traditional art-making techniques, Andy Warhol (1928–1987) understood the growing power of images in contemporary life and helped to expand the role of the artist in society, making him one of the most distinct and internationally recognized American artists of the twentieth century. This exhibition sets out to prove that there remains far more to Warhol and his work than is commonly known. While the majority of exhibitions, books, articles, and films devoted to Warhol’s art have focused on a single medium, subject, series, or period, Andy Warhol—From A to B and Back Again will employ a chronological and thematic methodology that illuminates the breadth, depth, and interconnectedness of the artist's production: from his beginnings as a commercial illustrator in the 1950s, to his iconic Pop masterpieces of the early 1960s, to the experimental work in film and other mediums from the 1960s and 70s, to his innovative use of readymade abstraction and the painterly sublime in the 1980s. The show's title is taken from Warhol's 1975 book, The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again), an aphoristic memoir in which the artist gathered his thoughts on fame, love, beauty, class, money, and other key themes.

Building on a wealth of new materials, research and scholarship that has emerged since the artist's untimely death in 1987, as well as De Salvo's own expertise and original research conducted by the Whitney's curatorial team, the checklist of works has been carefully selected from amongst the thousands of paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, films, videos, and photographs that Warhol produced during his lifetime.
Early Work
The exhibition covers the entirety of Warhol’s career, beginning with a concentrated focus on the commercial and private work he made between 1948 and 1960. Arriving in New York from his native Pittsburgh in the summer of 1949, Warhol began his career in an advertising world that was increasingly technological, and, concurrently, an art world obsessed with originality and the authenticity of the hand-made mark. The 1950s were a foundational period for the artist, a young gay man, beginning to find his way in the city. Though far less known than his later work, the commercial art that Warhol produced during his first decade in New York lays the groundwork for many of the themes and aesthetic devices that he would develop throughout the length of his career.

Hand-Painted Pop and Photo Silkscreen Paintings
The show then focuses on the transitional, hand-painted, and hand-drawn works that Warhol produced in an attempt to further establish his career as a fine artist in the early 1960s. Most of Warhol’s best-known series date from the six-year span between 1962 and 1968, a period of intense creative activity and innovation sparked by his discovery of the photo silkscreen. Many of the first paintings that Warhol produced with this technique depict celebrities like Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, Elvis, and Marlon Brando, their images culled directly from Hollywood glossies or tabloid newspapers. Though they allow themselves to be read as a celebration of celebrity culture, the specter of death, in the form of Monroe’s recent suicide and Taylor’s highly publicized health crises, haunt many of these celebrity paintings, and place them in direct conversation with Warhol’s influential Death and Disaster series, which he premiered in Paris in 1964. Warhol had a remarkably keen sense of the topical, and consistently chose subjects that related to the most newsworthy events of the time.

Warhol’s engagement with exhibition design and strategies extends throughout the entirety of his career and, in addition to the artist’s celebrity portraits and Death and Disaster paintings, the exhibition will include in-depth presentations of his Thirteen Most Wanted Men, 1964, and Flowers paintings, 1964-65, that replicate, as much as possible, his highly innovative original installations. In keeping with Warhol’s original installation, forty Flower paintings that have been secured for this exhibition will occupy the entirety of a single gallery, creating an immersive environment. The works will be hung on walls covered in Cow Wallpaper, an element that Warhol exhibited both on its own in his second solo exhibition at Castelli in 1965, and as a backdrop for his paintings, most famously in his 1971 Whitney retrospective.

Warhol’s Films
By as early as 1963, Warhol was widely considered one of the leading figures in the New York art world, but as the decade progressed, he would come to be equally well known as an avant-garde filmmaker. Initially, filmmaking served as an extension of Warhol’s practice, a means to visually capture portraits of friends, intimate encounters, and scenes from his daily life. Within a short span, however, Warhol’s film production became more complex, incorporating scripts, location shooting, and a rotating cast of underground actors and Factory “Superstars” like Viva, Taylor Mead, Paul America, and Edie Sedgwick. Warhol also experimented with the form itself, and with elements such as duration, projection speed, sound, spontaneous panning and zooming, in-camera editing, combining film and video, and projecting multiple reels at once. Claire K. Henry, assistant curator of the Andy Warhol Film Project, has chosen a group of seminal films that will be shown on a continuous loop in their original 16mm format within the galleries, in dialogue with Warhol’s related paintings from the same period. Henry is also organizing a series of screenings of Warhol’s films to be shown in their original 16mm format in the Hess Family Theater. The Andy Warhol Film Project was founded in the early 1980s by former Whitney curator of film and video John G. Hanhardt, in collaboration with The Museum of Modern Art, after an agreement was reached with Warhol to release his films for study and preservation. A core element of its mission is the publication of a multi-volume catalogue raisonné of Warhol’s films. The first volume, Andy Warhol Screen Tests: The Films of Andy Warhol Catalogue Raisonné, written by the late Callie Angell, appeared in 2006 and is widely regarded as a seminal work of film scholarship. A team of esteemed film scholars is working with Henry on the second volume, covering the period 1963 to 1968.

The full film schedule is available at whitney.org/warholfilm.

After 1968
Warhol’s experiments with new technologies and modes of viewing are an important, but often overlooked aspect of his career. To provide a better context for these experiments, a section of the show will include work ranging from Warhol’s early experiments with optical painterly effects, fluorescent pigments and UV light, to the experimental and diaristic videos, books, prints, photographs, and sculpture that he made in the years following his near-fatal shooting in 1968.
Beginning in 1972, Warhol renewed his studio practice and became increasingly involved with more conventional mediums like painting, drawing, photography, and printmaking. Though hardly traditional, most of his subjects of the ensuing decade also conform to the standard genres of portraiture, still life, landscapes, and the nude. The exhibition explores ways in which he developed ideas across the full range of his activities. Along with highlighting Warhol’s cross-media approach, the works will touch on many of the consistent themes of Warhol’s work: sex, death, politics, identity, and the tensions created by the combination of painting and photography. Works will include key examples from the *Hammer and Sickle* series, the *Skulls*, and Warhol’s expansive *Ladies and Gentlemen* paintings, a suite of portraits of figures from New York’s transgender community.

**Portraits**

Warhol made hundreds of portraits during his career, with subjects ranging from his close friends and family to patrons, artists, gallery owners, fashion designers, socialites, politicians, actors, athletes, musicians, and dancers. It was the artist’s intention to display them together as one monumental “Portrait of Society.” Attempting to realize Warhol’s ambition to the greatest possible extent, a section of the exhibition will include approximately seventy-five of Warhol’s portraits, arranged in an evenly spaced grid that fills the entirety of a single gallery. Key among the paintings in this section are portraits of Warhol’s gallery partners *Ileana Sonnabend*, 1973; *Leo Castelli*, 1975, and *Thomas Ammann*, 1978; notable figures like *Dennis Hopper*, 1971, *Roy Lichtenstein*, 1976, *Muhammad Ali*, 1977, *Chris Evert*, 1977, and *Liza Minnelli*, 1978; fashion designers *Halston*, 1975, *Tina Chow*, 1983-84, and *Stephen Sprouse*, 1984; and Warhol’s mother, *Julia Warhola*, 1974. The display will highlight the ways in which Warhol’s portraiture predicted contemporary modes of social networking, providing a better understanding of social media’s current impact on the creation of identity and notions of the self.

**Late Work and Collaborations**

The work of Warhol’s last decade was not well-received by critics when it was first exhibited and, even now, debate about its importance continues. A major goal of this exhibition is to re-evaluate this body of work, and to position it not as a departure, but as the final step in an artistic evolution originating in Warhol’s earliest work of the 1950s.

Following a major retrospective at the Kunsthau Zürich in 1979, Warhol began seriously revisiting the major subjects of his work from the 1960s: *Marilyn*, the *Mona Lisa*, cows, flowers, soup cans, commercial packaging, and his own self-portrait. In many cases, these new paintings, collectively known as the Reversals and Retrospective series, employ the same silkscreens that he used some fifteen to twenty years prior, often with the colors reversed or printed in close-tone, near-monochromatic configurations. Understanding the relationship between these works and their 1960s counterparts is crucial, but they are almost never exhibited together. This exhibition will give the American public a rare opportunity to consider these works within the scope of Warhol’s larger oeuvre.

Tracking Warhol’s consistent responsiveness to current events and culture until the end of his life, the exhibition will focus on two of the most pressing issues to appear in Warhol’s work of the 1980s: the politics of the Cold War and the rapidly escalating AIDS crisis. In 1984, Warhol began a series of hand-painted, mostly black-and-white images of newspaper advertisements and Cold War infographics, similar to those that he made at the start of his career as a fine artist in 1961. However, unlike his early work, the slogans, graphics and imagery that appear in paintings like *Repeal and Sin No More!, 1985-86, “Are You Different” (negative), 1985-86, and Somebody Wants to Buy Your Apartment Building!, 1985-86*, attest to a deep sense of anxiety and dread. The sense of foreboding is compounded when these works are considered alongside Warhol’s contemporaneous paintings of Cold War maps and infographics such as *Map of Eastern U.S.S.R. Missile Bases*, 1984-85, *Map: Soviet Footholds*, 1985, and *Map: Nicaragua and Honduras*, 1984-85.

Warhol served as an important precursor for many artists who came to prominence in the early 1980s, most notably Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring. To highlight the reciprocal nature of these influences, the show will include a selection of Warhol’s collaborations with these artists, including *Paramount*, 1984-85, an important painting made by Warhol and Basquiat that complements both artists’ work from this period, and uniquely illustrates their shared sensibilities. Also to be shown will be one of Warhol’s final works, *Camouflage Last Supper*. The Last Supper paintings were initially commissioned to hang across the street from the Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan while da Vinci’s original mural was undergoing conservation. Though it was not part of this original commission, *Camouflage Last Supper* is exemplary of the series and provides a profound culmination to many of the major themes of this exhibition: authorship and historicity, abstraction and figuration, immediacy and mediation, spirituality and the sublime.

**About the Artist**

Andy Warhol was born Andrew Warhola in Pittsburgh, PA, in 1928. In 1949 he graduated from Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University) with a Bachelor of Arts in pictorial design. Shortly after graduation, Warhol moved to New York City, where he would live the rest of his life, and began what would become a vaunted
career as a commercial artist, for which he earned numerous awards and accolades. Despite his commercial success, Warhol was determined to pursue a career as a fine artist. He first exhibited his work at the Hugo Gallery in 1952, though he did not gain recognition in the fine art world until 1962 when the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles staged his groundbreaking exhibition of Campbell's Soup Can paintings. Through the 1960s Warhol exhibited at Ferus, Stable Gallery, Castelli Gallery, Sonnabend Gallery, and internationally to great acclaim. He established "The Factory" in 1964, a year after he began his pioneering work in film. In 1965 Warhol announced his "retirement" from painting to pursue filmmaking full-time; underground films such as Empire (1964) and The Chelsea Girls (1966) remain some of his most influential works.

In 1968 Warhol was shot in a near-fatal assassination attempt, but by 1969 he had founded Interview magazine and his interest was reignited in producing work across all media, including sculpture, video, and performance. In 1975 Warhol published The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again), and by the late 1970s had expanded his practice to cable television shows with Andy Warhol's Fashion, Andy Warhol's Fifteen Minutes, and Andy Warhol's T.V. Warhol's work of the late 1970s and 1980s exhibits an increased interest in abstraction and collaboration, and often reflexively returns to his own earlier work and iconography. The late work speaks to his voracious interest in current events, and his enthusiasm for young artists from the East Village scene such as Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat, with whom he collaborated. In February 1987 Warhol died after a brief illness following routine gallbladder surgery. The Andy Warhol Diaries, his infamous account of his own life from the mid-1970s up to his death, was published posthumously in 1991.

Major exhibitions during Warhol's lifetime include his first institutional solo exhibition at the ICA Philadelphia in 1965, a 1968 exhibition at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, a 1970 retrospective organized by the Pasadena Art Museum which traveled, including to the Whitney in 1971, and Andy Warhol: Portraits of the 70s organized by the Whitney in 1979-80. The final exhibition of his work during his lifetime, at Robert Miller Gallery, New York, in January 1987, debuted a new series of stitched photographs. Warhol's work is collected by significant institutions across the globe, including major repositories at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Tate; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; The Art Institute of Chicago; the Museum Brandhorst, Munich; the Museum Ludwig, Cologne; the Marx Collection at the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; and the Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh.

About Donna De Salvo
Donna De Salvo, Deputy Director for International Initiatives and Senior Curator, joined the Whitney in 2004 and was appointed the museum’s first Chief Curator in 2006, a post she held until 2015. A noted expert on art of the 1960s, and Andy Warhol in particular, De Salvo was Adjunct Curator for the Andy Warhol Museum and was curator of Andy Warhol: Disaster Paintings, 1963 (Dia Art Foundation, 1986); Andy Warhol: Hand-Painted Images, 1960-62 (Dia Art Foundation, 1986–87); “Success is a Job in New York”: The early art and business of Andy Warhol (Grey Art Gallery, 1989); and a retrospective of the artist's work held at Tate Modern (2002). From 1981 to 1986, Ms. De Salvo was a curator at the Dia Art Foundation, where she worked closely with several artists, including John Chamberlain, Walter De Maria, Donald Judd, Cy Twombly, and Andy Warhol.


Institutional and Curatorial Credits
Andy Warhol—From A to B and Back Again is organized by Donna De Salvo, Deputy Director for International Initiatives and Senior Curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art, with Christie Mitchell, senior curatorial assistant, and Mark Loiacono, curatorial research associate. At the touring venues the installation will be overseen by Gary Garrels, Elise S. Haas Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and Ann Goldstein, Deputy Director, and Chair and Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Hashtag
#WarholxWhitney
Catalogue
Andy Warhol—From A to B and Back Again will be accompanied by a full-color, 400-page, scholarly monograph edited by Donna De Salvo. This catalogue spans all periods of Warhol’s career and unites paintings, sculpture, drawings, prints, videos, photographs, archival and printed material, installations, films, and media works in one volume. Drawing on recent research by the curatorial team at the Whitney and the contributing authors, the publication reevaluates and challenges existing ideas about this ever-relevant artist. A contextualizing essay by De Salvo is complemented by a series of incisive contributions from Jessica Beck, Okwui Enwezor, Trevor Fairbrother, Hendrik Folkerts, Bill Horrigan, Bruce Jenkins, Branden W. Joseph, Barbara Kruger, Glenn Ligon, Michael Sanchez, and Lynne Tillman. Also included are a plate section with 450 images and visual footnotes to a selection of the works to provide insight into Warhol’s sources and process. The catalogue will be published by the Whitney and distributed by Yale University Press.

Press Preview
The press preview for Andy Warhol—From A to B and Back Again will be held on November 6, from 10 AM to 2 PM. To RSVP, media should email pressoffice@whitney.org

Exhibition Support
Leadership support of Andy Warhol—From A to B and Back Again is provided by Kenneth C. Griffin.

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New York magazine is the exclusive media sponsor.

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The opening dinner is sponsored by

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About the Whitney
The Whitney Museum of American Art, founded in 1930 by the artist and philanthropist Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney (1875–1942), houses the foremost collection of American art from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Mrs. Whitney, an early and ardent supporter of modern American art, nurtured groundbreaking artists at a time when audiences were still largely preoccupied with the Old Masters. From her vision arose the Whitney Museum of American Art, which has been championing the most innovative art of the United States for more than eighty years. The core of the Whitney’s mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit American art of our time and serve a wide variety of audiences in celebration of the complexity and diversity of art and culture in the United States. Through this mission and a steadfast commitment to artists themselves, the Whitney has long been a powerful force in support of modern and contemporary art and continues to help define what is innovative and influential in American art today.

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art

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The Whitney Museum of American Art is located at 99 Gansevoort Street between Washington and West Streets, New York City. Museum hours are: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday from 10:30 am to 6 pm; Friday and Saturday from 10:30 am to 10 pm. Closed Tuesday except in July and August, and on select Tuesdays following the opening of Andy Warhol—From A to B and Back Again: November 13, November 20, November 27, and January 1. Adults: $25. Full-time students, visitors 65 & over, and visitors with disabilities: $18. Visitors 18 years & under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 7–10 pm. For general information, please call (212) 570-3600 or visit whitney.org.

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