

# Short research essay on andy warhol and his influences on identity



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Artist Andy Warhol was a pioneer of the pop art movement in the 1960's. He helped to liberate society and crush boundaries in American culture. Warhol's work paved the way for people to embrace and explore themselves as individuals and break the social norms. Prior to the 1960's people in America were very conservative on their views on society and what was socially acceptable. People were divided into categories based on class, gender and race. Warhol broke the mold of modern conformity and challenged idealist visions making alienation, loneliness and being an outcast a trend.

America in the 1960s had an ongoing battle with equality within its culture with race, gender and class being the main catalysts. Warhol's work focused mainly on fame, money and tragedy. He broke down typical stereotypes bringing a sense of social equality to everyone, at least where art played a part. He has been quoted saying " In the future everyone will be famous for 15 minutes. " This is because Warhol made a point to take every day people and mediocre stars such as Edie Sedgwick and turn them in to superstars.

Sending the message to millions of Americans that anyone had the potential to be famous and being eccentric was a good thing. Warhol's work catered to the general public and all members of society, blurring the lines between race, gender and class. You no longer had to be an elitist to enjoy fine art but rather a human being. It was during this time that Warhol started painting iconic American objects such as the Campbell's soup cans, Coca Cola bottles and celebrities such as Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor.

Often poking fun at American consumerism, conformity and the loss of individuality. Warhol changed how the world viewed simple things. Giving  
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the public a new perspective. He was making a bold statement about being different. These prints were his way of pointing a finger and laughing at mass production and traditionalism. Giving the public a chance to view things in a different light and to think outside the box. Warhol liked to push the boundaries and modern America post 1960 was very conservative.

He worked with a wide range of mediums and between 1963-1968 produced over 60 films and countless reels of erotic photography. Many of which drew from the underground homosexual culture and openly explored the complexity of sexuality and desire. The topic of sexuality and homosexuality was a hushed one. Homosexuality was considered a malaise and not as a genuine sexual orientation. Homosexuals were seen as deviates and predators and considered a danger to society. Warhol was openly homosexual and he professed that it influenced his work and his attitudes and relationships to the art world.

Warhol's work and personal influence brought sexuality to the forefront making it more sociably acceptable for people to be openly gay. Leaving them free to explore their sexuality more frankly and honestly. With raunchy films and pornographic images being readily available through art it was deemed socially acceptable on some level and even trendy to break the boundaries of heterosexual marriage. Men and Woman were no longer afraid to embrace their sexual identity but were encouraged to exploit it instead.

Traditional American values related to sex and marriage was pushed aside and a sexual revolution was born. In Conclusion Andy Warhol's work simulated a cultural movement and a sexual revolution in America. Through works like the one pictured (Campbell's Soup Andy Warhol 1968) he was

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able to change how we look at the world. What defined a superstar and made them different from the average person? What was sociably acceptable now? Are we all just pawns in the game of consumerist America? These were all questions Warhol raised and left the public to draw conclusions for themselves.

He pushed so many boundaries with his work. It was no longer a question of race, gender or class but merely what appealed to the naked eye. Everyone's opinion counted and being different was something to be celebrated. Identity was not just categorized into male or female, black or white, rich or poor but had expanded into something much greater. A revolution had been created where sexual orientation was liberated and being the most unique character you could possibly be was sociably acceptable and admired. (Campbell's Soup Andy Warhol 1968)