

# [Andy warhol’s influence on labels and packages today essay](https://assignbuster.com/andy-warhols-influence-on-labels-and-packages-today-essay/)

[Art & Culture](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/art-n-culture/)

According to an article on the Gold Coast, April 17th 2008 by Marina Saint Martin, Andrew Warhola was born in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania in 1928 to an immigrant couple, whose origin was Slovakia. He studied in his home town until he was 21 and graduated from Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University), with a bachelor’s degree in pictorial design. He later migrated to New York where he worked as a commercial artist and designer for some of Manhattan’s major fashion stores, labels and advertising agencies.

Although he won several awards from the Art Director’s club as well as the American Institute of graphic arts, Warhol turned his interest seriously to fine art and his work was exhibited in various well known places as well as museums. Warhol started as a business artist and illustrator and was also a designer. He was always aware of the trends and fashions of his time and had an open obsession to new ideas.

He was also a writer, a photographer, a sculptor, a magazine editor, a television producer, an exhibition curator, and one of the most significant and aggressive filmmakers of the New American Cinema group of the early 1960s. In the 1960s, his work excelled and still remains memorable to many. He became famous in the New York art scene especially in 1962 when he exhibited his work at the Stable Gallery.

His exhibition featured his paintings of Coca-Cola, Dance Diagram, Do It Yourself, Elvis, Marilyn and disaster paintings. He used simple ordinary daily life objects to create art like televisions, baths, soup cans, cars and coca cola bottles. Some of his paintings that involved pop culture include the Campbell’s Soup Cans, the ‘ Disaster’ works and the ‘ Marilyn’s’ by use of simple material. This was unique in his time. When his 32 Campbell soup cans were exhibited in 1962 in Los Angeles, his fame rose above other artists.

Warhol’s early pictures used graphic motifs taken from advertising and comics. He got inspiration by drawing comics and changed the small illustrations into paintings. In 1961, Warhol exhibited some of his work on a window display at Bonwit Teller department store. As much as his images were taken from other sources as well as other people’s work, many still loved his work. He surprised many by his unique and satirical use of simple soup cans and other supermarket objects. This made him appear in press many times.

He used the same themes in print media as well as television and soon his images became ordinary through repetition. He was a major icon in the American commercial society that appreciated all types of fame from living people to logos and brands. The soup cans for example represented the similarities that lay in society. For example same brands, surfaces, fame and size. These were all similar attributes in both rich and poor families. He centered his work on advertising and later used the same theme to create star portraits like Liz Taylor, Jackie Kennedy Onassis, Marilyn Monroe and Marlon Brando. Later in 1966, he exhibited silver balloons in his factory. Warhol created art for his own gain, taking advantage of the fashion and trend of his time and transforming them into art forms.

This made his products sell faster. He also used popular images, like Marilyn Monroe, Campbell’s Soup tins and even the Barbie Doll. This way, his work still remains iconic in the art scene and is used in advertising.

His images are able to create attention and interest. As much as he was famous among the young and the trendy, not everyone liked Warhol. Some critics dismissed his work as a hoax, toying around with art. Warhol on the other hand did not deny the claims, rather in his response said, ‘ art is what you can get away with’.

He still worked hard to make a breakthrough amongst his critics, but still even after his successful exhibitions in 1964, not many would pay high prizes for his fun filled paintings. However, his work was neither an apology nor a justification. It was an awakening to the people, to appreciate what was going on around them. He made people realize so much around them that could actually be used to carry meaning. He inspired realism that existed around us by just staring out the window of a moving bus or even on a television screen.

He created meaning out of meaningless objects and the simplicity of his work aroused curiosity and interest. This is why his work still remains remembered even now since it is used in the graphic art scene. In 1968, however, Warhol was shot by Valerie Solanas, the creator and only member of the Society for Cutting up Men. He barely survived the attack, but suffered the effects of the attempted assassination for the rest of his life.

Still, he went on with his work, this time exceeding boundaries of creativity and technology. He looked at things with a whole new perspective, and once said he saw art in everything around him. He said, ‘ I don’t know where the artificial stops and the real starts’. He shared his traditional ideas with students and apprentices, and as an icon from the 20th century, he was invited everywhere, showed his work around the world and drew huge crowds. Some people described his work as ‘ asexual’ though scholars and biographers oppose. However, Warhol in his career produced a series of male nudes, hence some of his work drew from the gay underground culture and even his gay movies premiered in gay theaters.

Some of his work was viewed as being too openly gay, hence was not exhibited. Warhol however maintained his sexuality as well as his religious beliefs private and ambiguous to society. He died in 1987, when he was at the prime of his career from a routine gall bladder surgery. He was also concerned about death; hence many of his pictures had dark relations.

Death in America series 1963-68, for example is a piece of art that represents the times after the world war two in America. Other examples were, Mrs. Kennedy after the assassination of her husband, ‘ mug shots’ of criminals, he also drew pictures of accidents as in 129 Die in Jet-Plane Crash (1962), criminal funerals, and race riots as in Red Race Riot (1963). He is still relevant to society and art and his work has a lot of influence in modern art especially in graphic design; merging celebrity into fine art. Various celebrity paintings like the Marilyn Monroe portraits as well as the Campbell soup are still very attractive to many, maybe because they are not just art images, but also define an area in which they were done and act as a stepping stone from one culture to another. He also drew an electric chair, Orange Disaster (1962-63) which told more about the mass media than capital punishment as many would expect. He also exhibited his flowers in 1965 in Paris and this is when he announced that he was retiring from painting and starting on film making.

He however resumed painting in 1966, but this time it was more of contemporary art. In the same year again, he exhibited the Cow Wallpaper and Silver Clouds at the Leo Castelli Gallery. The 1960s were an achievement to him. He however closed the decade with a strange exhibition, Raid the Icebox I, where instead of using real pieces of art, he chose to exhibit broken pieces of art that were in the process of being repaired, ancient footwear and unexpected items. He was focusing on antiques at this time. According to an article that appeared on the February 16, 1980 issue of the English music magazine, Melody Maker written by Mary Harron, Warhol’s soup cans represented everything that was trashy, disposable and produced in large quantities in America. By involving simple items in the supermarket, popular art broke the boundaries of what was regarded as good or bad, beautiful or ugly, art or non art. Popular art therefore introduced freedom of expression and involved realism as well.

Not only is dirt part of us, but also it contains a beauty of its own. Earlier in the years, most artists found no value in dirt. Pop artist on the other hand broke the barriers that were there before, allowing artists to openly appreciate the value of trash. They however did so in a more self conscious way. Commercial pop art is still produced even now. In the era of Warhol, art lost its innocence to popular art that went beyond boundaries. On the contrary, pop art was never extremely popular. Warhol’s silk screens did not become very famous in American art.

However, he was still very famous among many who had seen his work as well as among other artists who still establishing their practices and now enjoying freedom of expression. He was a hustler, as many would say. He swiftly found his way to the attention of media and somehow always got his work acknowledged by the Museum of Modern Art. Warhol was also talented in making social connections especially in his time when art had become fashionable.

Through his tireless efforts, media was able to appreciate pop art, making it a social excitement in New York. Art exhibitions began to overshadow theater shows. His attitude towards art and life in general made him a strong character too. His studio, ‘ The Factory’, was covered with silk screen paintings and it is here that he practiced his free expression of art. Warhol’s work was simple and liberating. He refused to make value judgment of his work, and instead left it for society to judge. He was never sincere or insincere.

This had serious implications, but yet brought about freedom. Many people had become scared of the modern world, but Warhol ignored all these reactions. He was not afraid of alienation or loneliness. Tom Wolfe once said that, ‘ the simpler something is, the more elaborate the criticism it inspires, until the explanation becomes more important than the work itself’. This was a technique seen in pop culture and pop art; simple pieces of art that carry numerous meanings, depending on how the observer interprets them. Popular culture introduced a new approach to fame. Before the invention of movies, radio and television, fame was only achieved through reputation; either through word of mouth or print. One had to do something extra ordinary in order to become famous e.

g. you had to be very talented, or rich, or extremely beautiful to be famous. Through television, many started to appreciate the ability to have news within their reach as well as to watch celebrities. This is still a common practice. Warhol, therefore used television to reach out to his audience and it is still very modern even now.

Andy Warhol’s work in the 20th century brought a lot of changes in the art world which, like most other social groups in society, was evolving to find its place in the society. Popular art opened the eyes of many; to see and appreciate was around them. Use of simple objects made art easy and accessible to upcoming artists.

Warhol understood the media perfectly. He shows us how to make use of the media before they make use of us. His success also helped young artists to appreciate the ability to have an image before venturing into art. To him, morality was not a big issue.

This can still be seen in modern New York art. It is significant in that, no one is self righteous. On the other hand, however, it means that you can never be sincere or insincere.

His influence has made many artists witty, sharp and brave enough to express horrible truths. This means that evil as well as good can be portrayed, without fear of stigmatization. In Marianne Klimchuk’s article, The Front Panel, ancient times packaging designs carried cultural symbols that defined the product, as well as the value of the consumers.

But with the emergence of pop culture, a new direction in packaging design was invented. The interpretation of graphic designs no longer carried symbolic meanings. The initially meaningful and symbolic attachment to art was no longer significant. This can be seen especially in Warhol’s work as well as modern ways of advertisement.

Despite the changes in modern art, pop art is still seen in modern art. For example the packaging designs for Campbell’s Soup. The cans still follow the same formula as their universal competition. Warhol’s focus on the similarities that exist in society can still be seen in today’s rich and poor who buy the same products and value the same brands. Consumers still have an attachment to products that are largely produced. Logos and packaging brands such as the Coca Cola brands are icons of pop art and represent much more than the product they advertise. The way that contemporary artists envision them portrays the presence of the traditional pop culture that still exists in modern art.

Very few artists have managed to change the direction of art from what Warhol created. He embraced popular themes and turned them into fine art by creating the extra ordinary out of the ordinary. Warhol was not afraid to venture into different cultures, societies as well as divisions of art.

What he began, experimented and played around with is now the basis for many artists. Some of the questions he left unanswered are now being answered or at least given consideration. It is upon the modern artists who are in the industry of packaging designs to embrace design, bring fresh concepts and enrich communication to audiences. Packaging design can bring about environmental changes, add value to products and express a unique personality and still be significant to a wide range of customers. Warhol showed us the way. He was able to break barriers.

In our modern life and with available technology, we can take art to a whole new level by adding a higher aesthetic value to our culturally diverse world.