

# Sotheby's

## Contemporary Art Evening Auction

New York | 11 Nov 2014, 06:30 PM | N09221



**LOT 7**

**ANDY WARHOL**

1928 - 1987

**SELF-PORTRAIT**

signed on the overlap

acrylic and silkscreen ink on canvas

22 x 22 in. 55.8 x 55.8 cm.

Executed circa 1966-67, this work is stamped by the Andy Warhol Art Authentication Board and numbered A101.062 on the overlap.

**ESTIMATE 3,000,000-4,000,000 USD**

Lot Sold: 3,245,000 USD

### **PROVENANCE**

Leo Castelli Gallery, New York (LC #861)

N. Richard Miller, Philadelphia

Stephen Mazoh and Company, Inc., New York

Private Collection (acquired from the above in 1974)

Christie's, New York, May 10, 2006, Lot 148

Acquired by the present owner from the above

### **LITERATURE**

## CATALOGUE NOTE

"If you want to know about Andy Warhol, then just look at the surface of my pictures, my movies and me and there I am; there's nothing in between." (the artist cited in Gretchen Berg, "Andy: My True Story," in *Los Angeles Free Press*, March 17, 1967, p. 3)

If Andy Warhol's serial depictions of Elizabeth Taylor, Marilyn Monroe, and Jackie Kennedy decisively declare and eternally reinforce their celebrity, his Self-Portraits at once construct and immortalize his own fame. Utterly epochal, not just within his esteemed corpus but within the full scope of Pop culture in the second half of the Twentieth Century, Warhol's 1966-67 Self-Portrait series "is probably the most well-known of the three versions he produced during the 1960s and, with his Self-Portrait of 1986, one of the most representative and iconic images of the artist." (Georg Frei and Neil Printz, eds., *The Andy Warhol Catalogue Raisonné: Paintings and Sculptures 1964-1969*, Vol. 02B, New York, 2004, p. 227) The present example is exceptionally mesmerizing for its stunning chromatic vibrancy; as if casting his features in an infrared glow that presaged his later Reversal paintings, Warhol here immediately and unequivocally monumentalized his visage and, thereby, the persona he strove so deliberately to create.

In the present work, the physical composition of Warhol's face is difficult to distinguish, with physiognomic features and abstracted zones of silkscreened color merging completely. Yet, despite only trace outlines that arise out of the interplay between the midnight dark tones on the right and the blaring red on the right which serve to delineate his features, the resounding power of the source image immediately evinces our unquestioning recognition. As the artist declared, "I'd prefer to remain a mystery; I never like to give my background and, anyway, I make it different all the time I'm asked." (Andy Warhol in *Exh. Cat.*, Stockholm, Moderna Museet, Warhol, 1967) The present work is a particularly resonant exemplar of this essential ambition; adopting a deliberately staged pose that at once monumentalized and mythologized the vision of himself that he broadcast to the world, Warhol adamantly and categorically denied any insight into his true character, banishing all possible trace of shyness or vulnerability from the composition, and leaving us only with an enigma.

Warhol first pursued self-portraiture at the encouragement of the legendary dealer and early champion of Pop Art Ivan Karp, who told him, "People want to see you. Your looks are responsible for a certain part of your fame – they feed the imagination." (Ivan Karp cited in Carter Ratcliff, *Warhol*, New York, 1983, p. 53) For more than twenty years of his prodigious mature career, from the earliest Self-Portraits in 1963 to the final haunting examples of 1986, Warhol determinedly and serially chronicled his own likeness, creating a group of works that chart the course of his own legendary status. Each early foray into self-depiction was different in style and technique, with the 1963 and 1964 series reading retrospectively as obvious stepping-stones in a progression toward a truly paradigmatic form: "the 1964 Self-Portraits are warm-ups for the ones that Warhol made two years later, which now serve as icons of the Pop era – blank, yet intricately articulate, with their rough screen-printing, garish colors, and the peculiar dignity with which Warhol rests his chin in his hand." (Ivan Karp in *Ibid.*, p. 52) At once iconic and iconoclastic, the seminal 1966-67 works achieve the artist's ultimate goal, for within their borders Warhol captured the most alluring and elusive star in his firmament of celebrity: himself.

More than any artist before him, Warhol's image, identity and constructed public persona were inextricably bound to his art, making the Self-Portraits among the richest and most fertile sites for his artistic invention. Witnessing the conjunction of Warhol's celebrity subject matter and his personal fame, they result in an ironic layering of subject and author. Renowned for his candid depictions of stage and screen luminaries, Warhol capitalized on the mechanics of an increasingly consumer-driven society when he packaged and commodified Marilyn, Jackie, and Liz as marketable icons. Openly acknowledging the artifice and deception inherent in any form of representation, Warhol, in his 1960s Self-Portraits, presented himself as a constructed fiction, a series of personas as affected and contrived as his own public image. In doing so, his 1967 statement, grossly disingenuous at the time, finally came true: "If you want to know about Andy Warhol, then just look at the surface of my pictures, my movies and me and there I am; there's nothing in

between.” (the artist cited in Gretchen Berg, ‘Andy: My True Story,’ in Los Angeles Free Press, March 17, 1967, p. 3)



Fig. 1

Andy Warhol, circa 1965 Photo by Popperfoto/Getty Images



Fig. 2

Andy Warhol, Shadow (Red), 1978 Private Collection © 2014 Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York