

## the Andy Warhol Family Album

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# Biography



## Andy Warhol 1928-1987

### Early Life

Andy Warhol (Andrew Warhola) was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on August 6, 1928. His parents, Julia and Ondrej Warhola were Carpatho-Rusyns who immigrated from what is now known as eastern Slovakia in the early 1920's. Andy was the youngest of three brothers.

He grew up during the Great Depression in the urban surroundings of a smoky industrial city. At an early age he showed a wonderful talent for drawing. Due to an illness at the age of 6 he was confined to bed; his mother and brothers would entertain him for hours by showing him how to draw, trace and print images. Andy loved to draw throughout his childhood. He attended Holmes Elementary School and Schenley High School and graduated at the young age of 16 in 1945, finishing 51st in his class of 278 graduates.

When Andy's father died in 1942, his main wish was that Andy continue his education to college. In 1945, Andy was accepted at Carnegie Institute of Technology (presently known as Carnegie-Mellon University). He would be the first of his family to ever go beyond high school. He almost failed his first year, but a sympathetic professor provided him with another chance by allowing him to enroll in a summer class. During that time, Andy helped his oldest brother, Paul, huckster fruit and vegetables from a truck. Every opportunity Andy had he would do quick, on-the-spot sketches of the customers. These sketches not only helped him to be readmitted but they also won him a small scholarship. During another summer break, he worked at a prestigious department store creating window displays. It was there that he was introduced to the world of high fashion, which would later influence his interest in becoming an illustrator. Carl Schaefer, who cultured Andy's keen sense of design and ability to create visually.



He quickly became popular among his classmates for his unique solutions. One professor who was displeased with his non-conformity said that, "Andy Warhola was last on the list to amount to anything!" But another teacher said he was "the only student that had a product to sell." Upon graduation in 1949, Andy and fellow classmate and artist Philip Pearlstein boarded an overnight train to New York City to pursue the world of art.



### Illustrator 1950s

Though he started to drop the "a" from his name occasionally during his college days in Pittsburgh, he made it more official by signing his first commissioned illustrations, 'Andy Warhol.' For many years there has been much speculation regarding just why he changed his name but it simply proved easier to say. With his portfolio of samples Andy quickly received illustration work from all of the major fashion magazines, including Glamour, Vogue, and Harpers Bazaar. Andy's "blotted line" technique and his superb draftsmanship caught the eyes of numerous art directors. Throughout the 1950s he was prolific in illustrating fashion ads, books, record albums and many other promotional items. He also worked to create innovative advertisements for I.Miller, a popular shoe company. The advertising world of the 1950s groomed him well for his venture into the art world of the 60s.



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### Fine Artist 1960s

Following a decade of enormous success as an illustrator, Warhol looked toward Fine Art as a larger challenge. In 1960 he purchased a four-story townhouse and experimented with using advertising and comic strip imagery as his Art. The subject matter was untraditional and unique at the time. These early Pop paintings had a loose, unfinished look. Over the next several months his painting style would evolve into being more flat and graphic. One consistent aspect, though, was that the images were known to everyone in everyday life.

In April, 1961 Warhol had his first opportunity to show his new art. He designed a fashion window at Bonwit Teller's Department Store that used five of his paintings as backdrops for the dressed mannequins. Throughout 1961 Warhol continued trying different techniques and added to his repertoire of popular imagery. The Campbell's soup can became his primary subject and gained him his greatest notoriety. He and several other artists working on similar themes but in different styles were linked together in a new art movement called **Pop Art**.

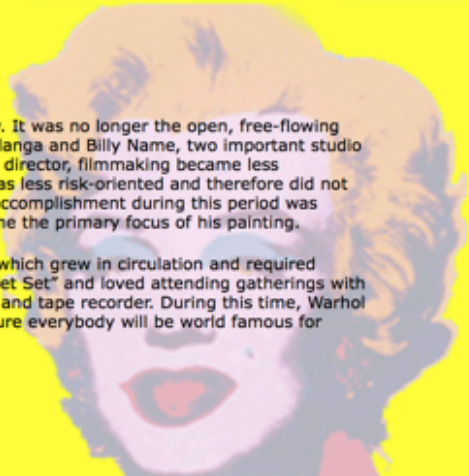
On July 9, 1962 Warhol had his initial major exhibition at the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles. Magazines such as Time, Life and Newsweek ran articles about the show. Today, the complete set of 32 soup can paintings from that exhibit can be seen at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Also in 1962, Warhol discovered that the silkscreen process was the perfect method to repeat his images. It was an extension of earlier print methods that he had utilized in his days as an illustrator. He worked incessantly and filled his townhouse with many canvases. To paint larger works he rented a studio and hired an assistant named Gerard Malanga.



### Post-Pop Period 1970's-1980's

In the following years, The Factory changed considerably. It was no longer the open, free-flowing mecca that it had been in the previous years. Gerard Malanga and Billy Name, two important studio assistants, left for other pursuits. With Paul Morrissey as director, filmmaking became less experimental and more commercial. Warhol's painting was less risk-oriented and therefore did not shake the art world as it had in the 60s. The important accomplishment during this period was Warhol's reinvention of the society portrait; it now became the primary focus of his painting.

In 1969 Warhol also began a magazine called Interview which grew in circulation and required much of his time. Warhol became a part of New York's "Jet Set" and loved attending gatherings with celebrities. He documented such events with his camera and tape recorder. During this time, Warhol also stated his most famous quote which was "in the future everybody will be world famous for fifteen minutes."



Warhol was a passionate collector his entire life, viewing beauty and art in such everyday objects as cookie jars, toys, jewelry, watches, and antiques. He also collected Native American artifacts, early arcade equipment including carousel horses and many other artists' work.

In 1987 Warhol was hospitalized to have an infected gall bladder removed. Though the routine operation was successful, he died mysteriously during the early morning of February 22, 1987. He was 58 years old. The Warhol Foundation for the Arts was established from his estate and in 1994 the Warhol Museum opened in his childhood City of Pittsburgh. It houses the largest collection of his artwork.

Andy Warhol was an artist, filmmaker, photographer, author, editor, and cultural icon. In the years since his untimely death, his importance has grown to stratospheric proportions. He is now regarded as one of the most major artists of the Twentieth Century.

