

Warhol: Headlines

Exhibition on Headlines and Mass Media

Andy Warhol (1928–1987) is considered one of the twentieth century’s most important artists and a co-founder of Pop Art. Throughout his career, he devoted himself to in-depth investigation of the mass media and the star cult. Now for the first time, with the exhibition “Warhol: Headlines” (11 February – 13 May 2012), the MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main will pay tribute to the large group of works in which he used or made reference to headlines. This comprehensive show was made possible by international cooperation between the National Gallery of Art in Washington, The Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, the Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna in Rome and the Frankfurt MMK.

Warhol’s interest in headlines can be traced back to his work as a graphic designer for advertising in 1950s New York, when he witnessed journalists in the process of selecting and presenting their reports. “By revolving around Andy Warhol on the threshold from successful New York graphic designer to even more famous visual artist in the 1950s and ‘60s, the exhibition takes us back to the roots of the Pop Art movement”, comments MMK director Dr Susanne Gaensheimer.

One of Warhol’s magnum opera, *Daily News* (1962), formed the point of departure for the international exhibition project. With this painting, which has been in the MMK holdings since 1981, the artist conducted a radical inquiry into the role of the mass media in society. The discrepancy between the “merchandise value” and the “true value” of an artwork is a chief focus of the Warhol oeuvre.

Featuring *Daily News* and three further paintings, the exhibition is the first ever to unite all four of the headline works hand-painted by Warhol in the early sixties. Shown side by side with numerous original newspaper pages as well as photos and drawings by the artist, these paintings enable the visitor to undertake direct comparisons between the various stages of his appropriation of the media. His manifold preoccupation with news and headlines is also reflected in forms of expression that came to bear in later stages of his oeuvre – silkscreens, sculptures, videos, sound works, etc. The objects on view in the show thus shed light on his fascination with the ever more influential media in the sixties, while also giving expression to his critical handling of it. Repeatedly directing his attention to subjects of pop culture, he collected comic books, newspaper clippings and press photos from magazines and movie theatre programmes.

With the aid of various media dating from some four decades of Warhol’s career, the show elucidates how he extracted such fundamental themes as celebrities, death, catastrophes, and current events from the media and epitomized their depiction in his works. His critical interest was directed not only towards the mechanisms of the mass media, but also the marketing of individual fates in the press. The fifteen-minute fame which – according to one Warhol comment – everyone is

capable of achieving at least once in a lifetime is reflected visually in news coverage, a medium with an equally brief lifespan.

In his ground-breaking preoccupation with the mass media, Warhol was not only a pioneer in his own time, but is also still highly relevant in ours: the headlines he chose for his works in the sixties were so timeless that they still appear in similar form in the media today. This theme has likewise remained a concern of art. The MMK collection, for example, encompasses works by such artists as Christian Boltanski, On Kawara, Isa Genzken, Thomas Demand, Sturtevant or Hans-Peter Feldmann in which they allude to the mass media in a manner echoing Warhol's approach.

"Warhol: Headlines" is being presented successively at altogether four internationally acclaimed museums. The MMK will be the only German exhibition venue. It is particularly conspicuous that very many of the early Warhol works to be placed on view at the MMK belong to private European – and above all German – collections. "By presenting works from the holdings of such major collector figures as Karl Ströher of Darmstadt, Peter Ludwig of Cologne, Lucio Amelio of Naples, Erich Marx of Berlin and Hubert Burda of Munich, the show thus also pays homage to the recognition Warhol received in Europe very early – from the 1960s onwards", MMK curator Dr Mario Kramer points out.

Concurrently with the exhibition "Warhol: Headlines", further works from the MMK's extensive Pop Art collection by important exponents such as Roy Lichtenstein, Jasper Johns and James Rosenquist will be featured on the third upper floor of the museum building.

Advance ticket sales

Admission tickets are now on sale at "Frankfurt Ticket", tel. 069-1340400, online www.frankfurtticket.de and all the usual advance ticket sales offices.

Catalogue

The exhibition is being accompanied by a catalogue published by Prestel Verlag and containing a foreword by Dr Susanne Gaensheimer and Dr Mario Kramer as well as contributions by John J. Curley, Anthony E. Grudin, John G. Hanhardt and Matt Wrbcian.

Paperback, 224 pages, format 24 x 30.5 cm

224 colour illustrations, German/English, € 39.95

Sponsors

The exhibition is being made possible with support from the Terra Foundation for American Art and the Freunde des MMK. The show's media partners are Welt Kompakt, Interview Magazine Germany, hr2 Kultur and Journal Frankfurt.

Press office:

Christina Henneke

Telephone +49 69 21237761

Daniela Denninger, Julia Haecker

Telephone +49 69 21235844/ Fax +49 69 21237882

presse.mmk@stadt-frankfurt.de