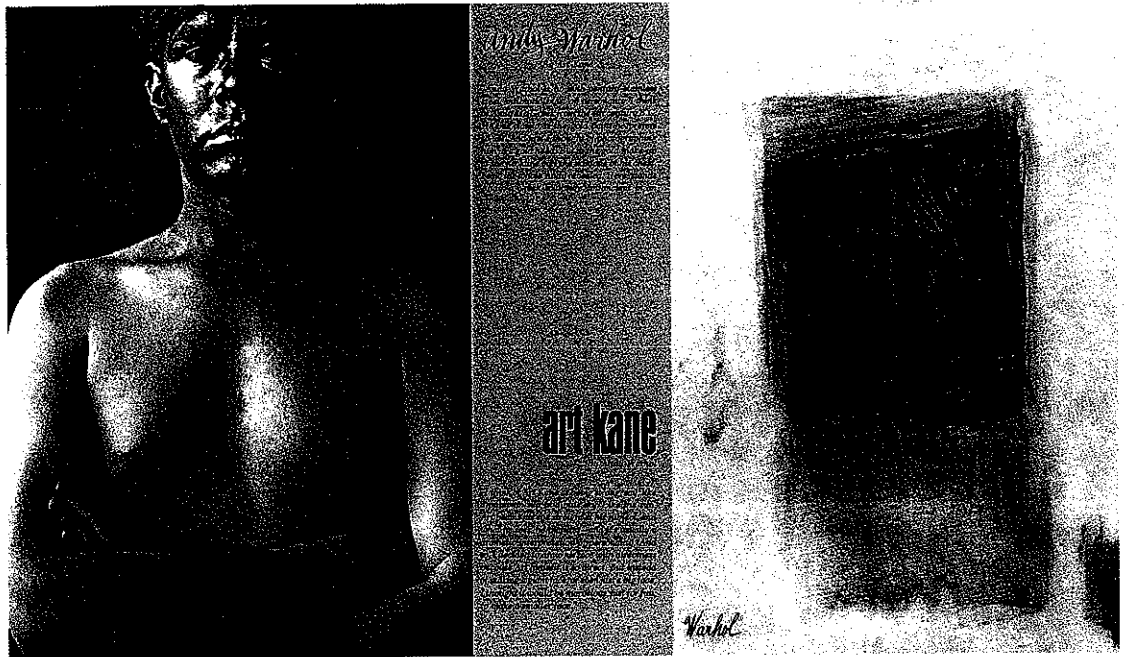# WARHOL AMONG THE ART DIRECTORS

THOMAS CROW

Fig. 1
Andy Warhol by Art Kane, 1962 © Art Kane
Archive (left)
Drawing of Art Kane by Andy Warhol (right)
Promotion for Champion Papers, 1962,
for *Harper's Magazine*
The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding
Collection, Contribution The Andy Warhol
Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

Early in 1962, the up-and-coming commercial photographer Art Kane photo-graphed his colleague and friend Andy Warhol. At the cusp of the latter's self-transformation into a fine artist and exemplar of Pop, Kane posed him naked from the waist up, arms crossed over his midsection, and covered in gold paint from hairline to collarbone.

Kane was actually bringing two different career perspectives to this particular session: in the early 1950s, while still in his twenties, Kane had graduated from doing page layouts at *Esquire* (New York's great incubator of design talent) to becoming art director of the teen fashion and lifestyle bible *Seventeen*. Kane's predecessor at the magazine, Joan Fenton, had given Warhol an illustration as-signment during his early years hustling work in the city. No more would have been required for him to be acutely attentive to Kane as a power in the publish-ing world. But in the intervening years, their respective vocations had converged in a way that made them more like peers, with Warhol becoming the more senior figure of the two.

Kane had attended Cooper Union in the same period as the future Push Pin Studio partners Milton Glaser, Seymour Chwast, and Edward Sorel, sharing with them an orientation toward expressive illustration and typography. But from 1957 or so, he began making the transition from editorial design to a full-time identity as a photographer. During his six years at *Seventeen*, he would have been on the receiving end of Warhol's habitual gifts of hand-drawn keepsakes to anyone in a position to offer him work. By 1962, he had ascended the freelance ladder him-self, and his affinity with Warhol, the equivalently successful illustrator, extended to warm familial roots in the immigrant working class. Born Arthur Kanofsky in the Bronx, he devoted some of his most accomplished early photographs to portray-ing his father, Herman, behind the wheel of a taxicab (in one, an interior mirror reveals the son behind the viewfinder of his 35mm SLR).[1]

As Warhol was well known for sharing his Lexington Avenue townhouse with his Slovakian immigrant mother, the pairing of the two would have made sense on many levels to the agency that put them together. Kane's Warhol portrait came about as a commission for an advertisement extolling the superiority of certain coated and embossed papers manufactured by the Champion Papers company for use in offset printing (fig. 1). It took the form of a heavy-stock insert placed in the pages of a number of magazines. While the two featured professionals would have been readily recognizable to the readers of *Advertising Age*, the insert also featured in the April 1962 issue of *Harper's Magazine*, a periodical then as now directed to a well-educated general readership. The reference to the paper's suit-ability for both photograph and artwork corresponded to the differing media in which Kane and Warhol specialized.[2] And the structure of the ad was symmetri-cal in that Warhol supplied an answering portrait of Kane, shown in profile with trademark horn-rims, rendered in vigorous dark graphite over a rust-colored wa-tercolor ground. That compressed rectangular vignette is in turn suspended over a slightly larger field of thin ochre wash, the ensemble surrounded by more wash in a complementary-colored blue-green.

If Warhol's drawing relies on contrasting layers of delicacy and vigor, the en-tire exercise of the Champion Papers advertisement overlays and conflates nearly every aspect of Warhol's complex practice and social identity. Still firmly envel-oped in the commercial world, he, like Kane, steps readily into the role of pitchman for a product. The merchandise in question, however, is not just any expedient con-sumable but material of a certain artistic refinement and authority in itself. Because the paper is itself the substrate of the ad, the reader is in a position to judge the truth of the copywriter's claims with his or her own eyes and fingers. And its insert

1 The literature on Kane is sparse. See John Poppy, *The Persuasive Image: Art Kane* (New York: Crowell, 1975).

2 *Harper's Magazine* (April 1962), p. 102: "Through photography, Art Kane has revealed the true spirit of Andy Warhol. With illustration, Warhol has captured an image of Kane. And here, both works are faithfully reproduced in thought and style on Champion Papers Wedgwood® Coated Offset Embossed. And its superbly coated surface takes color seriously, typography with 20-20 clarity."

form invites the owner of the magazine to remove the ad and treat it as itself a work of art in multiple form. And each artist is quoted on the subject of the other in a way that reinforces the status of the ad as the mass-produced equivalent of one of Warhol's own trademark keepsakes.

Their two statements, while no doubt crafted with ad-professional assistance, are striking in the way that each seeks to amplify the charge of meaning in the portrait of the other. Kane begins by exempting his friend from the clichés of Kennedy-era commercial glamour:[3] "Andy Warhol is no 20th century stainless steel, antibiotic, blast-off personality." One might see in this breezy string of adjectives the basic stereotypes of Pop Art before the category can rightly be said to exist in the American art world. Instead, he ascribes to his subject (as well as to his own representation) the aura of timeless artistic value: "I think of Andy as a Greek from the 4th century B.C. He's as classic as the gold paint he prefers to use. And first I thought of photographing him as a gold head. But as the gold make-up at the neckline met the skin tone of his chest, I saw the whole Andy revealed. Here stands Andy, a Greek sculpture, an ancient in an atomic world."

While Kane was thinking of the drawings of gilded shoes, boots, and ephebic males that Warhol had produced in the 1950s as personal side-projects alongside his commercial commissions (actually rendered in a form of bronze leaf called "Dutch metal"), he might also have been forgiven for thinking of the remunerative career that his friend had been able to generate from what looked like a casually offhand technique.[4] The archaic manner of the pose and image, Egyptianizing as much as Greek, also appears to jibe with the later Warhol's famously sphinxlike refusal to reveal himself in words, but the latter's own tribute to Kane is gushingly metaphorical and professionally chatty by turns:[5] "I think of Art Kane as being strong, say, like a pumpkin beam in a blue sky. Like the sun, Art beams his eye straight at his subject, and what he sees, he pictures—and it's usually a dramatic interpretation of personality. And so, I decided to draw his face with directness because Art himself is so direct. But instead of making a giant face, or even just a big face, I though it would be marvelous, just for fun, to make a smaller face."

Neither of them says a word about the product, which preserves the fine-art feel and authority of the sales pitch, but via the convincingly sincere aesthetic effort evident in each image, quite apart from their verbalizations, they become one with Champion Papers, delivering an endorsement, demonstration, and palpable manifestation of the product at a level beyond the powers of any mere endorsements. It is more than tempting to discern in both portraits anticipations of the work that in a matter of months would begin to make Warhol exponentially famous far beyond the commercial community evoked in the ad: his rendering of Kane compresses a likeness into a heavy black emblem imposed over a field of somewhat arbitrary color; its blocky shape lends it the character of a reproducible unit. The famous *Gold Marilyn* of 1962 similarly isolates a rectangular, stamplike effigy of the dead star's face in the middle of a larger, amorphous ground. But it is Kane's rendering of Warhol—with its stillness, symmetry, and masklike opacity—that appears to manifest the more profound anticipation of that elegiac painting.

What does the Champion ad suggest about the ways that Warhol's unending commercial career might be better understood? As the paintings that Warhol made with his Factory assistants between 1962 and 1966 have risen to their present heights of critical and art-historical estimation, his earlier career as an illustrator has become a correspondingly serious field for re-examination. But as Warhol the successful fine artist of the 1960s stands apart from his former peers in the commercial realm, so the work of the 1950s becomes annexed to the later career and

3 Ibid., p. 101.

4 See Donna DeSalvo, ed., "Success is a job in New York": The Early Art and Business of Andy Warhol, exh. cat. Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, New York, et al. (New York: Grey Art Gallery and Study Center; Pittsburgh: Carnegie Museum of Art, 1989), p. 50; Kane is quoted as wanting to capture Warhol's "insertion of his audacity," which he dates to the first gold drawings: "the combination of the golden boy and the implication of golden boy. Golden-inspired period of Greek homosexuality turned over in my head and made me want to do a portrait of Andy in gold."

5 Champion Papers advertisement, Harper's Magazine (April 1962), p. 101.

divorced from efforts of other commercial artists working alongside him, that is, from the work that informed and lent definition to Warhol's own. If he carried sublimated aspects of the illustrator's repertoire into the next decade, then he carried those points of reference forward as well. So it becomes imperative to search out more peers, models, and rivals like Kane, beginning at the start of Warhol's New York career, and then to track the rapid evolution of illustration and design between 1949 and 1962, if his self-transformations are to be comprehensible beyond the enigmas of an individual temperament. The little drawing of Kane belongs to what was a distinctly diminishing category in Warhol's overall artistic output, while Kane's portrait of him signals what would become over the course of the 1960s an ascendant practice, with his friend becoming a photographer of choice for the new rock music aristocracy, among other celebrity subjects. The Champion Papers insert thus represented a certain contest of media within the realm of commercial design, one that—as will emerge below—may have propelled Warhol to redefine himself as a gallery artist.

Before Art Kane, the precociously successful art director Tina Fredericks (the youngest in the history of Condé Nast) was the first to recognize the distinctive gifts of the young Pittsburgh transplant to the New York fashion and publishing scene. As their relationship continued, she came to value Warhol over his peers for his unfailing adaptability: "he was so willing to go with you, like he was willing to do anything, and that's very different from most people." Other illustrators, in her experience, "come in, bringing themselves and their work and their 'thing.' And you either buy it or you don't. Andy seemed [she pauses] almost nonexistent."[6] Familiar anecdotes attached to Warhol's transition between the commercial and fine-art spheres emphasize his tendency to look for a point of entry in some unoccupied niche. In late 1961, his first canvases of comic-book characters failed to gain him a place at the Leo Castelli Gallery because the dealer had already taken on Roy Lichtenstein (Warhol, then lacking a serious gallery, may have tipped his hand too early, showing the paintings in a Bonwit Teller display the previous April (plate 33), only to have Lichtenstein trump him after the fact with *Look Mickey*, completed in July). Competing anecdotes ascribe one early example of serial repetition in his painting, the *Dollar Bill* canvases of 1962, to the prompting of a dealer, whether it was Eleanor Ward of the Stable Gallery or the lesser-known Muriel Latow, who has also been credited with the idea for his most renowned motif, the can of Campbell's soup.[7]

Warhol's behavior in these cases represents a fairly straightforward transfer of the kind of professional striving and open compliancy that had impressed commercial patrons like Fredericks and Kane, but which violated in nearly every respect the conventions of creative autonomy that governed negotiations in the fine-art sphere. It took the erstwhile Knoll furniture salesman Irving Blum in Los Angeles (a prankster not above having himself photographed standing next to a stranger's parked Rolls Royce or hobnobbing with fashion models on a borrowed yacht) to see Warhol's attitude as a potential strength rather than a debility. As a result, Warhol's first major exhibition would take place at the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles in advance of his stepping up to Stable and ultimately to Castelli in New York.

Warhol's strength in weakness opened up the established art world in unprecedented ways, so much is clear in hindsight. But what the keen-eyed Blum saw in him represented an array of skills acquired in the commercial design world from which both artist and dealer had emerged. Prominent among Warhol's aptitudes was a measured attitude toward the value of originality, that is, just how much and how little of that perceived quality he required. One early exercise in negotiating that continuum gained him a medal from the New York Art Directors Club in 1952.

6 Quoted in Patrick S. Smith, *Warhol: Conversations about the Artist* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), p. 101.
7 Ibid., pp. 91, 189.

"THE NATION'S NIGHTMARE"

TRAFFIC IN NARCOTICS

CRIME ON THE
WATERFRONT

Fig. 2
The Nation's Nightmare, record album
cover CBS Radio, 1951

His entry in the competition was a poster advertising a CBS radio series, titled "The Nation's Nightmare," on drug addiction and delinquency, which later appeared as a record album sleeve bearing the same design (fig. 2). In answer to his brief, Warhol came up with ink and wash drawings of leather-jacketed (white) toughs in what might be termed the prevailing manner of social concern, one indelibly linked to the signature style of Ben Shahn.

The CBS art directors Lou Dorfsman and William Golden had for some time been employing Shahn, who was embracing the wide audiences for postwar graphic design as an extension of the populist principles that had made him a standard-bearer for the American political left. Shahn's principled reputation and fine-art credentials made him an ornament for a broadcast organization aiming for a prestige identity above the level of its competitors. But the Cold War political climate was rapidly changing the competitive field. The art director Peter Palazzo, a crucial sponsor for Warhol, describes the beginning of their relationship: "I first met Andy around 1950–51, when he did a few drawings for *American* magazine. . . . The magazine was produced by the government and sent overseas. We used him primarily because he has a style that was very reminiscent of Ben Shahn, [who] was a lot more expensive and [who was] not available."[8]

Either Palazzo or the interview's transcriber misstates the actual name of the publication. Under the title *Amerika*, the magazine packaged a variety of reprinted and original material translated into Russian for distribution in the Soviet Union, one of its chief purposes being to downplay social problems in the United States.[9] Shahn had for some years been the object of FBI surveillance as a suspected subversive, so what Palazzo does not add is that the artist's unavailability to such an official propaganda organ surely lay in his being caught up in the blacklisting campaigns being mounted by the McCarthyite extreme right. At the same time that Warhol was receiving his reward for *The Nation's Nightmare,* CBS was taught a lesson in the new climate when Shahn was commissioned to provide illustrations promoting the network's television coverage of the 1952 political conventions—a landmark event in the televisualization of politics, as growth of set ownership had for the first time created a potential audience of national significance. The network's choice came under fierce attack in July of that year from a vigilante organization called American Business Consultants, publishers of the newsletter *Counterattack,* which aimed to alert companies to alleged Communists and Communist sympathizers among their employees. Its readers were exhorted to write CBS and the corporate sponsor of the coverage to decry their "carelessness in helping to finance a leading, continual supporter of Communist Party causes." After a face-saving defense from the network president, Shahn's illustrations were withdrawn, and he would not again be employed by CBS.[10]

Nothing in these observations is intended to place Warhol in a questionable moral position. Shahn was working for CBS at the same time he was and on higher-profile projects. Warhol's immediate and salient problem had been to parlay his admiration of Shahn (whose work he collected) into a manner that was both reassuringly familiar to the master's admirers yet different enough to be taken as more than a cheaper knock-off. When his friend and Carnegie Tech classmate George Klauber declared that "people used him when they couldn't get Ben Shahn," he voiced precisely the snap judgment that Warhol had to overcome if he was to emerge as a genuinely desirable talent in his own right.[11]

The drawings assembled for the *Nation's Nightmare* poster and the later record release of the series present an early but decisive answer to that dilemma. The *mise-en-scène* is the tough Brooklyn docks, summarily indicated by the spare, angular outlines of the freighter linking the two figural vignettes. But that marker

8 Ibid., p. 108.

9 See Walter S. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945–1961* (New York: St. Martin's, 1997), p. 118.

10 See Howard Greenfield, *Ben Shahn: An Artist's Life* (New York: Random House, 1998), pp. 276–82; also Frances Pohl, *Ben Shahn: New Deal Artist in a Cold War Climate* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), pp. 118–20.

11 Quoted in Smith 1988 (see note 6), p. 28.

of industrial grit and criminality (three years before the Elia Kazan–Marlon Brando film sensation *On the Waterfront*) at the same time projects a calligraphic, insubstantial lightness that extends from the contours of the addict at the top through the brawling pair of traffickers at the bottom. His means lay in the technique that would serve him throughout the 1950s, namely, his blotted-line process whereby the direct application of ink onto one surface was folded over a second, leaving behind a line of arrestingly uneven width, saturation, and consistency.

This technique is commonly mentioned in biographies and art histories devoted to Warhol but far less often described in any detail. Unlike a traditional counterproof, it was not done all at once, image to image, but rather put together piecemeal. Frequently, as only a small part of each drawing could be blotted at any one time, he would tape the surface intended for direct application of India ink onto the receiving one in a hingelike arrangement so that he could repeatedly lift and lower the inked surface while preserving his registration on the sheet beneath.[12] The apparent continuity of any final contour was thus the outcome of an additive process, yielding a suspended chain of beadlike spots rather than the staccato broken line of Shahn.

Without that delicacy of effect, it is questionable whether the sensitivities of a 1950s mass audience could have tolerated the confrontational brutality of the needle plunging into the pale inner arm. Warhol thought and rethought that particular vignette, judging from surviving studies that depict the addict looking forward and down at the point of insertion, rather than away and over his shoulder.[13] In the unused version, Warhol also permitted himself a blond prettiness to the boy that becomes a compressed semi-simian caricature in the final version, with the largest area of the head devoted to the picturesquely patterned thatch of hair and the place of the countenance replaced by an elegantly economical configuration of ear and strained tendon in the neck. The wash passages efficiently evoke the crumpled folds of a hoodlum's black leather, but achieve that effect via a paradoxical delicacy more conventionally associated with a floral watercolor than an urban documentary. As Warhol's later assistant Nathan Gluck would describe his typical approach with ink and colored washes made with Martin's dyes: "He'd put it on very heavily, and then it would sort of thin out, and sometimes you'd get these blotty effects, as if you'd put some watercolor, and it would sort of flow. He liked that sort of unevenness."[14]

Also in 1952, Warhol took the place that Shahn had occupied in the educational and promotional materials produced for the Upjohn pharmaceutical company under the direction of the German refugee designer Will Burtin. His representation of a gnarled and distorted hand graced the cover of an Upjohn pamphlet devoted to rheumatoid arthritis (fig. 3). In this case, "graced" seems the right word, in that the blotted line conveyed disfigurement and distress without the rebarbative sting of the grotesque.

There would be truth in a maxim that Andy Warhol regularly found his own way by doing what others told him to do. His student portfolio placed him as a willing replacement for the "unavailable" Ben Shahn. He was thus challenged to craft an identity for himself in a realm of documentary subject matter that was not temperamentally his own. To that end he refined a technique that had to possess a kind of antithetical strength in order to counter and persuasively replace the expectations of incisive draftsmanship that came with Shahn's characteristic themes. Once in place, however, those procedures launched him into the more compatible sphere of fashion, where an audience of art directors and consumers were more than prepared to savor the nuance and undisguised artifice that came to the fore when liberated from any requirements for didactic impact or strenuous expression.

12 See Charles Lisanby, quoted in ibid., p. 134; also remarks of former assistant Nathan Gluck, pp. 56–57.

13 See Kynaston McShine, ed., *Andy Warhol: A Retrospective*, exh. cat. Museum of Modern Art, New York (New York: MoMA, 1989), p. 101, pl. 22.

14 Quoted in Smith 1988 (see note 6), p. 61.

Current Concepts and Methods in Cortisone Therapy
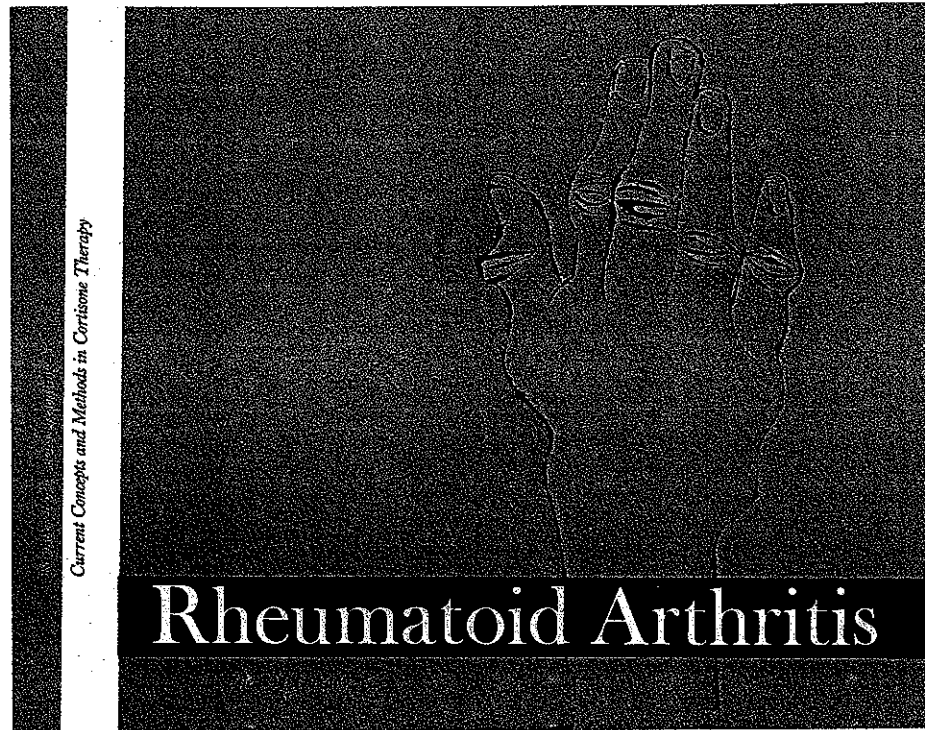
Rheumatoid Arthritis

Fig. 3
Rheumatoid arthritis brochure for
Upjohn Company, 1952
The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh;
Founding Collection, Contribution
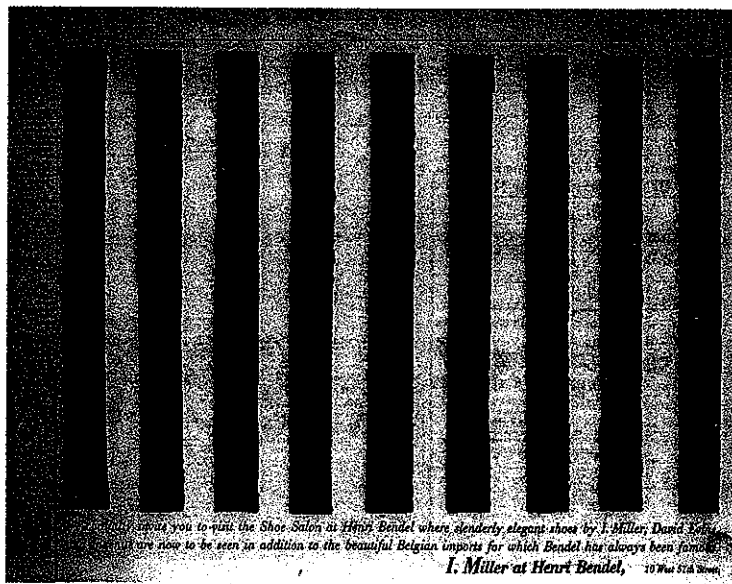The Andy Warhol Foundation for the
Visual Arts, Inc.

Fig. 4
I. Miller advertisements, late 1950s
The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh;
Founding Collection, Contribution
The Andy Warhol Foundation for the
Visual Arts, Inc.

The opportunity to make that leap arose from his former Ben Shahn affinity, in that Palazzo, having exploited this aspect of Warhol's talent at *Amerika* magazine, had since moved on to become art director for the upmarket New York shoe brand I. Miller. Warhol had already done shoes for Tina Fredericks at *Glamour*, and another editor from the same magazine, Geraldine Stutz, had since become retail director for I. Miller, so his constellation of patrons and contacts came together to launch him into high-profile weekly exposure in the Sunday *New York Times* (fig. 4); as Stutz recalled:[15] "Andy was a perfect natural because I knew him, Peter knew him. . . . He had done the shoe things for *Glamour* already." For Stutz and Palazzo, Warhol evolved a mode that combined recognizable uniformity—a cleverly tweaked shoe silhouette that simultaneously, via an imperceptible twist, exposed the trim detail on the toe—with the animating quality of individual life in the blotted lines. In Stutz's words, "everyone understood that it was a breakthrough in advertising. It was something that had not been done before. And that the quality of Andy's work was *beyond* illustration."[16]

This kind of encomium from inside the fashion world may come as no surprise; less expected may be its echo in the critical writing on Warhol by Benjamin H. D. Buchloh. Perhaps the contemporary art historian most sternly vigilant against the blandishments of commercial culture, Buchloh has celebrated these advertisements for Warhol's shrewd assimilation of contemporaneous avant-garde pictorial devices. His essay in the catalogue for the landmark Warhol retrospective exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1989 stands as an equivalent landmark in Warhol's critical history and historiography.[17] It is easy today to forget the degree to which Warhol had generally been taken either as a kind of cultural symptom or as a crass opportunist in what passed for serious commentary before Buchloh's essay was published.[18] Not only did Buchloh definitively break this pattern, he offered a comprehensive template whereby Warhol could be seen to have rehearsed virtually every salient device of advanced art in the twentieth century and to have done so with a disarming sophistication. For the purposes of the present discussion, what is most significant about this critical intervention lies in its attention to the commercial illustrations of the 1950s. As Buchloh argues, "...a more extensive study of Warhol's advertisement design would suggest that the key features of his work of the early 1960s are prefigured in the refined arsenal and manual competence of the graphic designer: extreme close-up fragments and details, stark graphic contrast and silhouetting of forms, schematic simplification, and, most important, of course, rigorous serial composition."[19]

In amplifying this hypothesis, Buchloh adduces several examples from the I. Miller campaign. In his eyes, these layouts "confirm that [Warhol] had already grasped the full range of the painterly strategies of Johns and Rauschenberg—in particular those aspects that would soon determine his own pictorial production." He points to one example that "features the overall regularization of nonrelational composition (as in the obvious example of Johns's *Flag* paintings since 1954)." Another, he argues, "shows the impact of Rauschenberg's direct imprinting technique and persistent use of indexical mark-making since his collaboration with John Cage on the *Tire Print* of 1951."[20]

While Buchloh's general observations are more than persuasive, these particular instantiations of Warhol's debts depend upon certain assumptions that remain open to question. The correct date of the Rauschenberg–Cage *Automobile Tire Print* is 1953, an experiment from their shared stint at Black Mountain College during that year. As discussed above, Warhol had been honing his blotting and imprinting technique over some years prior to that date, so no precedent in Rauschenberg would seem to be relevant (nor would it necessarily have been in

15 Quoted in ibid., p. 104.

16 Quoted in ibid., p. 106.

17 Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Andy Warhol's One-Dimensional Art: 1956–1966," in McShine 1989 (see note 13), pp. 39–61.

18 For one symptom of this low estimation, see Brian Wallis, ed., *Art after Modernism: Rethinking Representation* (New York: Godine and the New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984), an anthology that sought to represent the most advanced thinking associated with a critical postmodernism (including a key contribution by Buchloh). Wallis, having praised Pop Art in his introduction (p. xiii) for having "specifically countered the ideals of modernism," chose nonetheless to begin the section entitled "Dismantling Modernism," with a sloppy, preening essay by Robert Hughes ("The Rise of Andy Warhol," pp. 45–58) that dismisses Warhol's art and person as both venally opportunistic and trivially symptomatic. Reprinted from the culturally middlebrow *New York Review of Books,* Hughes's tract is pleased to regard Warhol's time as essentially over (a verdict that subsequent history has, to say the least, reversed). The piece is sadistically introduced in the Wallis anthology by a frontispiece reproduction of Richard Avedon's 1969 photograph of Warhol's heavily scarred torso, the photographer's originally sympathetic portrayal of Warhol's wounds transformed in this context into an evocation of some undead Frankenstein's monster. The fact that the irreplaceable oral histories compiled by Smith (see note 6), essential to the present study, had to be published by a minor academic press in 1988 represents a further indication of the same period bias. The core issue for comprehending Warhol now lies, to the contrary, in accounting for his apparently unending currency—measured by every new exhibition or film, every reference in fashion or music—for each new generational cohort that encounters the work and the Factory legend.

19 Buchloh 1989 (see note 17), pp. 42–44.

20 Ibid.

1951 either). This scenario further depends upon Warhol possessing concrete knowledge of Rauschenberg's and Johns's new works at or near the moment when they were being made—and there is little or no evidence for such contact before their Castelli Gallery exhibitions toward the end of the decade. The most proximate link between the three artists was their common friend and commercial agent Emile de Antonio, but Warhol and de Antonio did not meet until 1958 at the earliest, that is, after the I. Miller campaign had concluded.[21] As to Warhol's deploying Johnsian non-relational compositions (meaning arrangements based on uniform grids and repeated units), his was not in fact the sole or even the primary responsibility for this feature of the advertisements. Peter Palazzo offered this capsule summary of their way of working: "Andy and I would discuss the ideas to make sure they were compatible. I would then make design and composition suggestions in rough form, and Andy would go off and interpret them in his blotting technique method . . . Usually I give an artist the composition, even perhaps, color composition."[22]

It might be objected that every contributor to an admired project gives pride of place in retrospect to his or her own role, but Palazzo's account is supported by Stutz—"they had the concept all set actually before Andy began"—and moreover conforms to established practice in the period, where art directors directed and artists supplied content.[23] The overall conception of the I. Miller advertisements was in every respect a joint project. That recognition, considering the inaccessibility of fine-art parallels like those of Rauschenberg and Johns, leads to the conclusion that Warhol's and Palazzo's incipient avant-gardism arrived via a distributed intelligence readily available within the professional design community itself. And it was this formation, following Buchloh's persuasive recognition that "key features of his work of the early 1960s are prefigured in the refined arsenal and manual competence of the graphic designer," that equipped him for his ultimately decisive impact on the art world of the 1960s.

With even a schematic knowledge of American graphic design in the immediate postwar period, it is not difficult to identify where that distributed intelligence resided. One obvious source would have been the designs commissioned by James Laughlin, poet and Ezra Pound protégé, for his New Directions publishing house, particularly those cover designs supplied by the gifted and sophisticated Alvin Lustig.[24] The mission of New Directions, funded to a great degree by Laughlin's inheritance from his steelmaking family in Pittsburgh, was to supply a growing body of educated readers with paradigmatic modernist or merely recherché literature—drawn from Europe and the Americas—in a format that was both inexpensive and flattering to their cultural aspirations. Lustig mined the devices of the early twentieth-century avant-garde to lend New Directions titles a spare and incisive elegance, playing to the fact that the larger part of the list still carried an exotic charge for American readers.

Warhol in fact contributed both the drawing and lettering for four New Directions titles over a span of ten years. For the first of these—a 1951 edition of Ronald Firbank's *Three More Novels* (its author later elevated by Susan Sontag to "the canon of camp")[25]—he supplied a characteristically blotted-line cupid cocking his bow in the viewer's direction. But the most decisive contribution by Lustig, besides his illustration and typography, lay in the incorporation of photography into cover designs for Laughlin's Modern Readers series. His striking manipulation of black-and-white images owes a patent debt to such exemplars as Man Ray and László Moholy-Nagy, overlaid by evocations of European avant-garde film in the vein of Luis Buñuel and Jean Cocteau.

21 See Smith 1988 (see note 6), p. 189; also Victor Bockris, *Warhol: The Biography* (New York: Da Capo, 1997), p. 129.

22 Quoted in Smith 1988 (see note 6), p. 110.

23 Quoted in ibid., p. 107.

24 On Lustig, see Steven Heller, "Alvin Lustig: Born Modern," in Steven Heller and Georgette Balance, eds., *Graphic Design History* (New York: Allworth, 2001), pp. 147–52.

25 Susan Sontag, "Notes on Camp," in idem, *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Delta, 1966), p. 278.

During the early 1950s, such prominence for photographic images was unusual, not only in publishing but also in advertising, which continued to rely largely upon ingratiatingly drawn and painted accompaniments to the written copy. This was the marketplace that encouraged Warhol's first vocation, but it is worth noting that he maintained a disguised reliance on photographs that stood out for those few intimates who were privy to this side of his practice. "He would take photographs and blow them up," recalled friend and collaborator Ted Carey, "then, simply pencil trace the drawing . . . rub it down on a piece of paper and then do his blot drawing."[26] He made a regular habit of checking out photographs—"hundreds" according to one witness—from the photograph collection of the New York Public Library, then, in an irrational apprehension that his device might be discovered, keeping the photographs long past their return date.[27] Placing these, as well as pages torn from LIFE magazine, on a light-table or opaque projector, he would capture his tracings, which the additive nature of his blotting procedure then allowed him smoothly to synthesize into an apparently seamless final composition.[28]

That expedient could be—and was at the time—ascribed to Warhol's obsession with speed and efficiency of output, in that his native skill in drawing was much admired. As the astute observer he was, however, Warhol would have recognized by the mid-1950s that the balance of power between illustration and photography was shifting, a change that Lustig's Modern Readers book covers had anticipated. In 1956, the Art Directors Club, having boosted Warhol's drawings with a medal in 1952, awarded none to an illustrated entry, and the number of exhibited advertisements for the first time featured a preponderance of layouts based on photographs.[29]

The ascendant medium made possible a more flexible and potentially more striking application of the grid-based, serial compositions that distinguished the layout of Warhol's I. Miller illustrations. In 1955, the year that he and Palazzo began that campaign, the young art director Helmut Krone made a dramatic debut on the New York advertising stage with a full-page advertisement for an unlikely client, the previously unassuming chain of Barton's candy stores (fig. 5). Krone built his composition around a symmetrical pairing of the open candy box, its built-in grid reinforcing the rectilinearity of the whole. The ad copy derived its entire meaning from the visual interplay between the full and empty cartons, the disorder of the empty wrappers below emphasizing the order above. "What Krone did in the Barton's ad," his biographer observes, "was to increase the photograph's inherent veracity by putting everything in the plane of the page, like evidence. The chocolates were just there, they weren't being thrust forward, proffered by an invisible host—coming at you with perspective. The message was cool: take it or leave it."[30]

Krone's success in 1955 was no one-off achievement. With copywriter Julian Koenig, he went on to launch the landmark series of advertisements for Volkswagen—"Think Small," "Lemon"—that brought to the world of advertising a skeptically ironic tone, a confidence in plain photographic documentation, and a strong reliance on modernist visual devices: their hallmark being, to borrow Buchloh's words once again, "stark graphic contrast and silhouetting of forms, schematic simplification, and, most important, of course, rigorous serial composition."[31]

The changes in tone and in mode of address to the consumer wrought by the likes of Krone and Koenig, under the aegis of the Doyle Dane Bernbach agency, have been called the creative revolution in advertising. And it would be fair to say that the new tenor rendered Warhol's accumulated skills as an illustrator increasingly outmoded (while it made Art Kane's newly acquired skills in photographic

26 Quoted in Smith 1988 (see note 6), p. 93.

27 Alfred Carlton Walters Smith, photographs curator at the New York Public Library, quoted in ibid., p. 123.

28 See ibid., pp. 53, 140–41.

29 See Clive Challis, Helmut Krone. The Book. Graphic Design and Art Direction (Concept, Form and Meaning) after Advertising's Creative Revolution (Cambridge, MA: The Cambridge Echorial Press, 2003), p. 22.

30 Ibid.

31 See Eve M. Kahn, "Ad Campaign of the Century," in Heller and Balance 2001 (see note 24), pp. 305–12; also Challis 2003 (see note 29), pp. 53–105.

delicious...
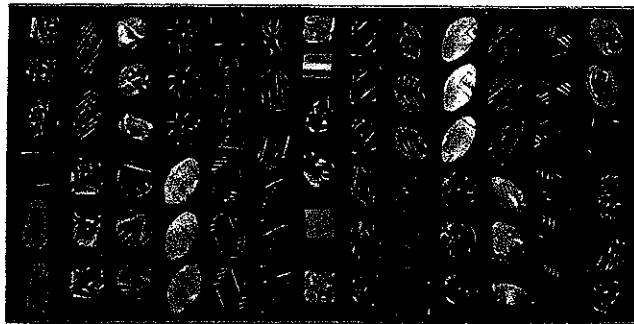
wasn't it?

BARTON'S
bonbonniere
Continental Chocolates

Fig. 5
Helmut Krone
Barton's Continental Chocolate
Shops advertisement
Originally appeared in *The New York Times*, 1955

staging an ascendant asset). Illustration, to be sure, did not retreat entirely, but required stronger justification—as well as new skills in self-presentation on the part of the illustrators themselves. Against Raggedy Andy with his paper-bag portfolio, there had emerged the Push Pin Studio collective, composed of Kane's old Cooper Union classmates, which offered a range of accomplished drawing styles and inventive new typography in the bargain. Its self-published promotional periodical, *The Push Pin Graphic,* allied the work of the group with an eclectic and sophisticated body of knowledge signaled in its varied textual content: from Henry James in Italy to Apollinaire in uniform to a spread of Warhol-indebted Pop shoes accompanying Henry David Thoreau's essay on walking.[32] By comparison, Warhol's missives to art directors, off-center and affecting in the early 1950s, must have seemed increasingly cute and one-dimensional as time went on.

Push Pin was also incubating an alliance between its design sensibility and an irreverently dissenting political attitude, including some of the earliest graphics opposing the war in Vietnam. As photography took over more and more of the spaces available in mainstream design, the niches that remained for sophisticated hand-drawn work on the whole suited this left-of-center sensibility.

In none of these directions would Warhol have been able credibly to follow. Thus the emerging possibility of a Pop Art provided a timely way out of his old profession. The skill and the eye that he carried in reserve lay in his practiced way with manipulating photographs. Turning the table on the newly formidable competition in the realm of illustration, he seized instead upon what was already a commonplace in the advertising of the late 1950s and early 1960s, that is, the unadorned presentation of photographic silhouettes. Disguised by the transposition of his old hand-made blotting technique into photographic silkscreening, it looked like nothing the fine-art world had ever seen.[33]

32 See Seymour Chwast, ed., *The Push Pin Graphic: A Quarter Century of Innovative Graphic Design* (New York: Chronicle Books, 2004).

33 The present essay could not have been written without the benefit of discussions with the students in my colloquium, *Topics in Graphic Design since 1945,* held at the Institute of Fine Arts in spring 2010.

All works illustrated in this book are by Andy Warhol,
unless otherwise indicated in the caption.

The quotations on pages 14–15, 39, 60–61, and 79 of this
book are from Andy Warhol, THE Philosophy of Andy
Warhol: From A to B and Back Again (New York and
London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), pp. 133–4;
p. 100; p. 92; and p. 62.

Note: Many of Andy Warhol's archival materials are still
being processed; information in this book is subject to
change as further research is completed. Contact the
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