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Gagosian Paris to Exhibit Iconic Early Works by Andy Warhol

Silver Screen Juxtaposes Three Silver Paintings from 1963



Andy Warhol, *Silver Liz [Studio Type]*, 1963, silkscreen ink and spray paint on linen, 40 × 40 inches (101.6 × 101.6 cm)
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It was the perfect time to think silver. Silver was the future, it was spacey—the astronauts wore silver suits. And silver was also the past—the Silver Screen—Hollywood actresses photographed in silver sets. And maybe more than anything, silver was narcissism—mirrors were backed with silver.

—Andy Warhol

PARIS, May 2, 2023—Gagosian is pleased to announce *Andy Warhol: Silver Screen*, an exhibition of three early paintings by Andy Warhol from 1963, organized for the gallery by Jessica Beck, formerly of the Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh.

Sixty years ago, in the summer of 1963, Warhol was thinking as both painter and filmmaker, producing silkscreened canvases with multiple images. This was when he received his first camera (a 16mm Bolex that he later used for the *Screen Tests*, cinematic portraits of friends and “superstars”) and his paintings began to mirror the repetitions of filmstrips. At the same time, Warhol worked in a leaky former firehouse on the Upper East Side, eventually hiring poet Gerard Malanga to complete some of his most significant early silkscreened paintings, *Disasters*, *Silver Elvis*, and *Silver Liz*. A year later, Warhol moved to a larger space on East 47th Street. There, lighting designer turned assistant and photographer Billy Name lined the interior in foil and spray paint, creating a reflective environment for happenings, performances, films, and art production. The Silver Factory was born.

By the time Warhol produced *Silver Liz*, Elizabeth Taylor had come to epitomize Hollywood glamor, but she had also been in the news for scandal and illness. This made her a perfect subject for the artist, whose silkscreen depiction of the *Cleopatra* star is derived from a publicity still and echoes the bold styling and square composition of his *Marilyn* silkscreens from the previous year. The canvas embodies Warhol's intersecting absorptions in painting and the movies.

Ethel Scull portrays the eponymous socialite who, along with her husband Robert Scull, assembled one of the first major American collections of Pop and Minimal art. In 1963, Scull commissioned Warhol to paint her portrait; he took her to the photo booths on 42nd Street where Scull played the part of a burgeoning starlet. The portrait *Ethel Scull 36 Times* was made from her animated and lively photo booth strips. Warhol's lesser-seen painting of Scull in silver transforms the socialite into an icon of Hollywood's silver screen, its images' uneven tone again suggesting the flicker of a celluloid reel (Scull was also an early *Screen Tests* subject).

Finally, in *Tuna-fish Disaster*, Warhol focuses on two women made famous by the uncanniness of their deaths caused by cans of contaminated tuna. In eleven paintings derived from the same source, Warhol used a *Newsweek* article from 1963 that paired the victims' photographs with a grim headline. As part of the *Death and Disaster* series, these works comment on the numbing effect of gruesome images in the media. *Tuna-fish Disaster*, however, is unusual in that the article headline and women's faces are featured prominently, tying the work to a specific story while highlighting the commonality of ordinary people being thrust into the public eye during times of crisis or in death. In all three works on view in Paris, Warhol presents a layered view of the promise and perils of fame.

Andy Warhol was born in Pittsburgh in 1928, and died in New York in 1987. Collections include the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Musée d'Art Contemporain, Marseille, France; Tate, London; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main, Germany; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museo Jumex, Mexico City; and Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul. Warhol's work has been the subject of exhibitions in museums and galleries throughout the world, including retrospectives at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (1989) and Neue Nationalgalerie Berlin (2001–02, traveled to Tate Modern, London, and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2002). Recent exhibitions include *From A to B and Back Again*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2018–19); Tate Modern, London (2020); and *Revelation*, Brooklyn Museum, New York (2021–22). Warhol made sixty experimental films as well as the television programs *Andy Warhol's TV* (1982) and *Andy Warhol's Fifteen Minutes* (1986) and was the founding publisher of *Interview* magazine.

Jessica Beck, a director at Gagosian Beverly Hills, is a curator, Warhol scholar, art historian, writer, and lecturer. Formerly chief curator of the Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, she organized numerous exhibitions of Warhol's work there, including *Andy Warhol: My Perfect Body* (2016–17) and *Marisol and Warhol Take New York* (2021–22). Beck has published widely on Warhol, including for the catalogue published to accompany the exhibition *Basquiat × Warhol. Painting Four Hands* at Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris (2023), and was a featured expert in the Netflix documentary series *The Andy Warhol Diaries* (2022).

#AndyWarhol

ANDY WARHOL

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