

Y8 Textiles Article 2

What Was Andy Warhol Thinking?

Soup cans, movie stars and dollar signs... explore the ideas and themes behind Warhol's iconic artworks

Andy Warhol is known for his bright, colourful paintings and prints of subjects ranging from celebrities including Marilyn Monroe and Mohammed Ali, to everyday products such as cans of soup and Brillo pads. But behind these iconic images are some surprising approaches and ideas.



FAME, CELEBRITY AND FASHION

From a young age Warhol was infatuated with fame, fashion, celebrity and Hollywood. As a boy living in Pittsburgh he found escape from his ordinary working class life in popular teen magazines and by collecting autographs from film stars. In the early 1960s, while living and working in New York, he began a series of portraits of stars including Elizabeth Taylor, Elvis Presley and Jackie Kennedy.

He used photographic [silkscreen](#) printing to create his celebrity portraits. This meant he could directly reproduce images already in the public eye, such as publicity shots or tabloid photographs. The technique also allowed him to easily produce multiple versions and variations of the prints. When the film star Marilyn Monroe died in 1962 Warhol almost immediately started making portraits of the actress.

One of the canvases is vibrant and bursting with energy, representing the star's flamboyant public personality. The other is monochrome and sombre, the uneven application of ink causing her face slowly to disappear. The two contrasting sides of this work capture the contrast between Marilyn's artificial public persona on the left and the harsh reality of her troubled private life on the right.