



TRANSCRIPTION OF SOUNDTRACK

LEGO® Art – 31197
Andy Warhol's Marilyn Monroe

 **SOUNDTRACK**
Only in English

0001 00:00:01:05 00:00:03:17

[Lucia]: I think those Marilyn pieces are really brilliant.

0002 00:00:03:19 00:00:07:21

[Devan]: I think it makes me think about the significance of having an iconic image.

0003 00:00:07:23 00:00:14:09

[Blake]: The Marilyn rose a kind of hinge for everything that Andy Warhol ever did. She represents so much.

0004 00:00:14:11 00:00:23:01

[Lucia]: Because they got sloppy sometimes the lines, you know. Around the lips would get messy and it would look almost like this sort of reapplication of lipstick or makeup.

0005 00:00:23:03 00:00:26:20

[Blake]: The nice thing about the Marilyn is that he also did them in lots of different versions.

0006 00:00:26:22 00:00:31:03

[Jessica]: The work still remains so contemporary when you look at it.

0007 00:00:32:18 00:00:49:06

[Andrea]: Imagine crafting your own wall art. Maybe it's a passion that fascinates you. Or maybe it's the promise of an immersive creative experience like no other. A piece of iconic art that you can build for yourself. Relax and reconnect with your creative side.

0008 00:00:52:06 00:01:02:23

We've created unique soundtracks curated around the world of art, music, and movies, and in this soundtrack, we're going into the life and work of Andy Warhol.

0009 00:01:03:11 00:01:13:23

We'll hear from two Warhol experts. One of them just wrote a biography about Warhol, and one of them is curator at the Andy Warhol museum in Pittsburgh.

0010 00:01:14:00 00:01:19:11

We'll also speak to two talented younger artists and hear how they're influenced by Andy Warhol.

0011 00:01:19:13 00:01:30:19

And then we'll be joined by the LEGO® designers who created the LEGO® Art pictures of the Marilyn portraits and get a peek behind the curtain of what it's like working at the LEGO® Group.

0012 00:01:30:21 00:01:41:16

You can listen as you build at your own pace and get the inside story. Ready to dive in? I'm Andrea Collins. Welcome to LEGO® Art.

0013 00:01:45:08 00:02:01:12

Our first guest is Blake Gopnik. He's an art critic from New York, and just published a giant 1,000-page biography about Andy Warhol. So in his own words, he knows everything about Warhol. Blake what can you tell us about the book?

0014 00:02:01:14 00:02:21:06

[Blake]: Well, it tries to be comprehensive. It tries to literally cover Andy from cradle to grave. And it tries to be as much about the art as about the man because the art is why we care about the man. And in this one rare case, the man is one of the works of art. He created himself as a kind of living sculpture.

0015 00:02:21:08 00:02:25:14

[Andrea]: What was it that made Andy Warhol so unique and different in his time?

0016 00:02:26:07 00:02:44:06

[Blake]: Well, up until the time of Andy Warhol, the main mode of producing art was to say how can I make my pictures look different from the pictures that came before? How can I have a new style? How can I even have a new way of talking about the world through style?

0017 00:02:44:08 00:02:58:13

But with Andy Warhol, all of a sudden, style just becomes so much less important. It becomes so much more about simply holding things up to be noticed to holding up a can of Campbell's soup, almost unchanged really, and saying, look at this, think about this.

0018 00:02:58:15 00:03:07:09

It's really the first example of what we now call appropriation. Taking things straight from the world, unchanged, and putting them into your art.

0019 00:03:07:11 00:03:16:15

Taking Marilyn Monroe from a kind of, uh, unimportant studio photograph, and holding her, up putting her in your art, and saying "Look at this."

0020 00:03:17:04 00:03:26:16

[Andrea]: We're also joined by another art expert, Jessica Beck, who is working as a curator at the Andy Warhol Museum, located in Pittsburgh where he grew up.

0021 00:03:27:09 00:03:36:24

Since arriving at the war hall in 2014, she has curated many projects. And her area of focus is Andy Warhol and contemporary art.

0022 00:03:37:01 00:03:46:22

Outside of the museum, Jessica has served as a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Mellon School of Art. Jessica, what would you say was unique about Warhol?

0023 00:03:46:24 00:04:07:16

[Jessica]: I think, you know, the thing about Andy Warhol and the reason why he was a truly unique artist, I think, and particularly, he ended up, you know, his legacy is an international legacy, but he really, truly tapped into an American fantasy. And I think that's part of the enduring quality of his work, um...

0024 00:04:07:18 00:04:18:18

You know, he his work deals with, um, a fascination with celebrity,

and products, and concepts that transcend class in America, which is really important to his story.

0025 00:04:18:20 00:04:38:04

Particular American fantasies around success and notoriety and celebrity, also bodily perfection, the figures and all of his work are kind of have this perfect skin or wrinkle-free faces. All of his portraits were sort of touched up, um, as he said in the '70s.

0026 00:04:38:06 00:04:39:13

[Andrea]: Blake would you agree on that?

0027 00:04:39:15 00:04:54:00

[Blake]: There's so many different American fantasies. He certainly tapped into a bunch of them. The fantasy of consumer goods available to all. The fantasy of celebrity available to all for at least 15 minutes a person.

0028 00:04:54:02 00:04:54:15

[Andrea]: <chuckles>

0029 00:04:54:17 00:05:08:11

[Blake]: Uh, there's so many different aspects of American life that he tapped into. And sometimes, quite critically, sometimes his goal wasn't necessarily to celebrate American life but also really to put it under a microscope and ask us "Is this how life should be lived?"

0030 00:05:08:13 00:05:10:03

[Andrea]: What were some of those instances?

0031 00:05:10:05 00:05:40:09

[Blake]: Well, you know, when you look at his most famous and first really major body of work, those Campbell's Soup Cans, you have to ask yourself. Is he saying isn't it wonderful that everyone can have a can of soup? Or is he, in fact, saying, look at American society, it's reduced to offering people cans of soup rather than real food for their soul? And the great thing about Andy Warhol is you can never finish coming down on one side or another. When you take up one of those arguments, you've got to also entertain the opposite one.

0032 00:05:40:11 00:05:59:14

[Jessica]: Um, you know, though a lot of the criticism of the early Campbell's Soup paintings, there was this sense almost that people thought Warhol was, um, making fun of the art world, or that it was a joke in some way. I think there was some confusion, there was a sense of like what should we make of these paintings.

0033 00:05:59:16 00:06:18:13

Yeah, the Campbell's Soups were seen, especially that Ferus Gallery Exhibition, Warhol's first exhibition in California in which he painted all of the varieties, the 32 varieties of Campbell's Soup. And they were small canvases that then sat on a wooden ledge on the wall and went around the gallery.

0034 00:06:18:15 00:06:38:18

Um, so, yeah, it wasn't...
I don't think it was, you know, unanimously brazen in any way.
Um, but there was some skepticism on how serious Andy Warhol was.
Was he a serious painter? Is he— is he taking...
is he making a big joke about the art world,
um, with these Campbell's Soup paintings?

0035 00:06:38:20 00:06:59:09

The same— the Marilyn paintings also were famously said to be...
Michael Fried wrote, um, an article or a review
of I think that stable gallery exhibition
in which they were featured and said something like
this work will never endure time
or this work will never outlast this moment
which is really interesting to think.

0036 00:06:59:11 00:07:09:07

[Andrea]: Wow. "This work will never endure time.
This work will never outlast this moment."
Someone actually said that about the Marilyn Monroe paintings?

0037 00:07:09:09 00:07:19:22

Well, here we are more than 50 years later
and they were chosen to be the first pieces of LEGO® Art.
I think it's so interesting how some experts can be so wrong.

0038 00:07:19:24 00:07:29:20

Warhol's art definitely endured time,
and is still very relevant today.

Let's talk more about why that is
and bring in our two next guests.

0039 00:07:29:22 00:07:46:00

[Devan]: My name is Devan Shimoyama
I am a visual artist living and working
in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
I primarily do painting and some installation based work.
And I also teach full-time at Carnegie Mellon University,

0040 00:07:46:02 00:07:51:09

[Lucia]: Um, my name is Lucia Hierro.
I'm a Dominican-American conceptual artist based in New York.

0041 00:07:51:11 00:08:05:14

[Andrea]: Lucia and Devan are two younger artists that are influenced
by Warhol's work.
Like Jessica Beck, Devan is also from Pittsburgh,
and he actually did his first solo show at the Andy Warhol Museum.
So Jessica, can you help me introduce him?

0042 00:08:05:16 00:08:42:11

[Jessica]: Yeah I met Devan in 2016 and we worked together
for about a year and a half almost two years on an exhibition,
uh, called Devan Shimoyama Crybaby, his first solo show.
And I met him here in Pittsburgh and we did a studio visit,
and on my first studio visit with him,
I was amazed at the resonance of... or the similarities, um,
between Warhol's 1974 series of the Ladies and Gentlemen portraits
that he did and some of Devan's portraits,
self-portraits that he was creating at the time.

0043 00:08:42:13 00:09:07:07

And I was just immediately struck by the sophistication in his painting practice. He's quite young and has a very clear vision which was really surprising and fascinating and intriguing, so I immediately said I wanted to work with him, and asked him, you know, if he would come to the museum, and we walked through the collection and I showed him these Ladies and Gentlemen paintings.

0044 00:09:07:09 00:09:23:04

[Andrea]: In a YouTube video that was released by the Andy Warhol museum at the time of Devan's show, Jessica also said that the Warhol museum was the perfect place for Devan to have his first solo show and that Devan's work brings Warhol's work to life.

0045 00:09:23:06 00:09:46:22

[Devan]: That is extremely generous, um, you know, working with Jessica was so amazing to be able to do that. I feel like we have this really great harmony throughout the entire trajectory of the show. There was a lot of like really significant moments, um, that I felt like she had this true deep understanding of Warhol in this way in which I hadn't experienced in learning about Warhol in school.

0046 00:09:46:24 00:10:11:05

Most of the time you learn about Warhol, you think of, uh, his Marilyn portraits or those kinds of versions of his kind of like pop culture lens but, uh, working with Jessica, I got to really see some of the weirder, darker underbelly of his practice and I feel like some of that stuff,

uh, really relates to my work. A lot of the stuff that didn't get a lot of, um, you know, publicity back when he was alive.

0047 00:10:11:07 00:10:24:00

And so, uh, that included the Ladies and Gentlemen series which resonated with my practice through and through, and I thought it was really incredible to be able to see my work hanging alongside some of those works in the museum.

0048 00:10:24:02 00:10:28:23

[Andrea]: How does it feel to have your work, you know, exhibited alongside Warhol's?

0049 00:10:29:16 00:10:58:16

[Devan]: I never really even expected to actually have an exhibition there in any, way any work in there. Um, when Jessica came to talk to me about doing the exhibition, proposing a show for the museum, I, even at that point, at most thought, oh, maybe I could do a project space downstairs in the lobby or something around the windows, but, you know, so it's... it was a pretty major, major achievement and something that I think, um, is really significant.

0050 00:10:58:18 00:11:25:18

Also being an artist of color in that space, um, is so substantial. I got to live in the town, uh, where my first museum show was, which was really fortunate so I got to see a lot of passersby walking through the museum. I would visit frequently and seeing more people of color in the museum. Identifying with the work that was

presented there was really potent to me
and then seeing them think
about Warhol in a new way, maybe a little differently.

0051 00:11:26:08 00:11:34:01

[Andrea]: Yeah.

Do you think that you would have been a
different artist if it wasn't for Warhol?
Or how much do you think he has inspired you?

0052 00:11:34:19 00:11:58:22

[Devan]: I think I think that the art world, in general, would be vastly different,
a vastly different landscape without Warhol.
I think there's certain artists that kind of make big shifts,
um, culturally or even globally in
a lot of ways. Like I think about, um, his effect as a ricochet
throughout other even continents, even people receiving that work
and how, um, you know, when it gets to other places,
how it fits their culture at that time.

0053 00:11:58:24 00:12:29:17

Um, so I do think that, uh, the impact that
Warhol had was on a scale that was so
vast.

And maybe during a time also in which we
were able to really digest and, um, like...

It's during a shift in popular culture where it
starts to become

slightly more global, um, and I think that,
you know, the art world, in general,
maybe wouldn't be intersecting as much as it
does currently with sort of like celebrity culture fashion,
other markets, music, industries.

0054 00:12:29:19 00:12:59:15

I think that that sort of, uh,
that model that he set up with his studio, um,
with making material out of just like culture itself,
uh, was just like... I don't know, it's just
incredible and I think that, um, you know,
the... dealing with the multiple,
people are doing print making in this
big scale, um,
making commodities, and you know, I think that
the art world would just be a different place.
Maybe I'd be a jewelry maker but still
an artist on the inside but wouldn't be
brave enough to say it, I don't know.

0055 00:12:59:17 00:13:04:00

[Andrea]: What about you Lucia? For people who
haven't seen your art, can you describe what you do?

0056 00:13:04:02 00:13:09:22

[Lucia]: Whoo, that's a doozy always. Explaining art is,
is sometimes like explaining a joke.

0057 00:13:09:24 00:13:10:20

[Andrea]: <laughs>

0058 00:13:10:22 00:13:31:09

[Lucia]: At the moment, for the past few years
have been working
with digital printing on fabric, and
I use those prints in various forms,

I make sort of collage assemblage work with...
with those images and... I also make some sculptural works
with them as well.

0059 00:13:31:11 00:13:33:17

[Andrea]: What does Andy Warhol mean to you?

0060 00:13:33:19 00:13:53:20

[Lucia]: Andy to me is...
it's a sort of, uh, BC/AC thing.
It's like before Andy Warhol and after Andy Warhol.
He definitely marks a shift in the art world,
and I see him as being the person that
made it possible for me to be doing what I do now.

0061 00:13:53:22 00:13:57:12

[Andrea]: Why do you think his art is still so relevant today?

0062 00:13:57:14 00:14:13:11

I think it's more relevant than ever
because there's like Uniqlo Andy Warhol T-shirts
and all that stuff that, you know...
They think probably the most
well-known artist to the general public
that doesn't really know much about art.

0063 00:14:13:23 00:14:33:17

And I think it's precisely because of that...
that I will count him in there as one of my favorite artists.
He was just so influential and he
changed the scene so much that we don't

even realize that the art market,
as it exists today, was highly affected by his presence.

0064 00:14:33:19 00:14:34:14

[Andrea]: Jessica?

0065 00:14:34:16 00:14:59:04

[Jessica]: Yeah, definitely.
I think this
this concept of... again. self-fashioning or branding,
it really has become part of art practice,
contemporary practice today to have an online presence
whether that be through a website or an Instagram account,
understanding how to market your work as
an artist or kind of concepts that were all built into his career.

0066 00:14:59:06 00:15:13:01

Um, but this pop sensibility, this idea of pop portraiture
for sure comes out in someone like Devan Shimoyama's practice,
a younger painter that focuses on black portraits.

0067 00:15:13:03 00:15:44:10

Um... but I think that
artists that also work with commercial products
or similarly to Warhol's Coca-Cola,
early Coca-Cola paintings from 1962 that
there's this sense, you know, that anyone
can drink a Coke,
this famous Coke that, you know, the same
Coca-Cola that Elizabeth Taylor is drinking
is the same Coca-Cola that I can drink,
this

kind of democratic American idea around certain products.

0068 00:15:44:12 00:15:53:24

And that comes out as a sort of biography story or an identity story in, um, Lucia Hierro's work.

0069 00:15:54:01 00:16:08:23

[Andrea]: That's right. Lucia, maybe you could talk a bit more about that. Looking at your work you often use objects and icons from society, is there a link between that sort of work and what Warhol was doing with the Campbell's Soup Cans and Coca-Cola that Jessica was talking about?

0070 00:16:09:14 00:16:31:11

[Lucia]: There's a similar... Yeah, there's a similar parallel. I think it's almost using his work as a point of departure or artists like him where they were thinking about commerce and specifically Andy thinking about fine arts and commerce which was not something that people were consciously doing.

0071 00:16:31:13 00:16:45:02

People weren't, you know, Rauschenberg and Johnson, they weren't really doing institutional critique when they started. But I think Andy was doing institutional critique before he knew to call it that.

0072 00:16:45:04 00:16:52:01

[Andrea]: Is it correct to say that your art might be in some ways a modernized method of Warhol's work?

0073 00:16:52:24 00:17:19:12

[Lucia]: I think it's a version for sure, yeah. I think it's oddly, uh... that's the thing I tend to think that this has to be called something else because the pop art that him and his contemporaries pioneered has evolved in such a way, thanks to social media and in the digital sphere, that it definitely is something else, something sort of neo something.

0074 00:17:19:14 00:17:39:11

But I'm also looking at it from a postcolonial lens so to speak. And I think that's a differentiation between the work. Although I feel really connected to Andy in the sense that we're both first-generation immigrants, and that has a real effect on the way that we're looking at America and its relationship to our countries of origin.

0075 00:17:39:13 00:18:16:05

[Jessica]: You know, Warhol has a particular, um, again, has a very particular American sensibility of understanding, the idea of commerce, the market value of art practice, and so his early years in New York as a commercial artist, an illustrator, working for magazines and working with ad agencies and understanding how images operate on a market system and what sells essentially, and also understanding how to work collaboratively.

0076 00:18:16:07 00:18:40:23

I really think that those years in the 1950s in New York when he's working with a bunch of advertising agencies and he's hearing feedback from the editors. And the kind of difference between Warhol and some of his other colleagues at that time was that he was often open to changing or making edits to his drawings so this sense that he's working with other people and he's taking feedback from other people, he always incorporated that into his practice.

0077 00:18:41:00 00:19:09:02

When you get to the 1960s with something like screen printing, that is actually like a group, that has to be a group effort, essentially,

because it's very hard to screen print on your own especially with large screens so, um... I think, you know, Warhol understood this, again, this marketability, uh, that is in... that can be sometimes inherent to art making and he incorporated that throughout the rest of his life.

0078 00:19:09:04 00:19:33:08

He struggled with that concept of just being a commercial artist or just being seen as a commercial artist but, ultimately, it's why I think he is still so contemporary, why the work remains to feel contemporary. You know, it's not just that Warhol's name prevails or the legacy prevails, it's that the work still remains so contemporary when you look at it.

0079 00:19:33:10 00:19:39:16

[Andrea]: Let's hear from Blake Gopnik on this. So why do you think Warhol is still so relevant here in the 2020s?

0080 00:19:39:18 00:19:58:12

[Blake]: The thing about Andy Warhol's art is that it exists in so many different versions of itself. I mean, there's a Campbell's Soup Cans he starts with which are just hand-painted pictures of cans of Campbell's soup. Then there's the silk

screens that he does a little bit later
of celebrities, Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley.

0081 00:19:59:11 00:20:14:02

Then he does a novel which is simply 24 hours of
someone talking, basically unedited.
Um, he did TV shows, he did, uh, every kind of work of
art you could imagine. He did sculpture.

0082 00:20:14:04 00:20:36:09

The sheer range of his work is
unparalleled and it gives license
to today's artist to do
more or less whatever they want to do.
After all, Andy Warhol was a filmmaker,
he was a painter,
he was a printmaker, he was a TV producer,
he was a movie producer,
he starred even on the love boat, a
terrible 1980s sitcom.

0083 00:20:36:11 00:20:50:05

He really allowed himself to do anything,
and most importantly,
he declared that anything he did counted as art.
And ever since then artists like Jeff Koons
or Damian Hirst
took that same kind of license.

0084 00:20:50:07 00:20:56:07

[Andrea]: He's really one of those artists that makes
you feel like you as a person aren't doing enough. <laughs>

0085 00:20:56:09 00:21:04:14

[Blake]: Yeah, he was, uh, among other things, famous or infamous,
at least in his immediate circle for
being the world's worst or best workaholic.

0086 00:21:04:16 00:21:05:09

[Andrea]: <laughs> Yeah.

0087 00:21:05:11 00:21:30:07

[Blake]: He really worked non-stop.
He made a quantity of images
that you can't imagine.
I mean in the 1950s
he wasn't the most famous commercial
illustrator by any means,
but he got to be one of the very richest ones
just by
turning out more illustrations than
anyone else could ever have imagined
turning out. I mean I've gone through his
invoices and he sent out invoices
sometimes
two or three every single day of the
week.

0088 00:21:30:09 00:21:33:07

[Andrea]: Wow. Let that be a lesson to all of us
entrepreneurs.

0089 00:21:33:09 00:21:34:06

[Blake]: Yeah, absolutely.

0090 00:21:34:08 00:21:43:06

[Andrea]: <laughs> Now, do you see the influence of his art and his way of working, um, in works from younger artists today? And if so, in what way?

0091 00:21:44:09 00:22:00:17

[Blake]: Well, you could say that every single young artist who picks up a video camera, uh, is really following in his footsteps and I happen to believe that video art is our greatest form of art today. I mean Andy was the very, very first person to use a video camera to make art with. And that's kind of amazing.

0092 00:22:00:19 00:22:26:24

In fact, he was about as early as you could because portal video cameras had barely been invented when he started. And, in fact, his love of technology is something that's not really understood so the whole interest in technology that young artists have, uh, can be traced back right to Andy Warhol and of course their interest in pop culture which is overwhelming for young artists really has its roots in Andy Warhol and of course the whole pop art movement.

0093 00:22:27:17 00:22:32:13

[Andrea]: Coming up. Much more about the Marilyn Monroe portraits from our four guests.

0094 00:22:32:15 00:22:37:03

And then we'll bring in LEGO® designers Kitt Kossmann and Christopher Stamp.

0095 00:22:37:20 00:22:46:00

They'll share what went into the work of recreating the Marilyn Monroe portraits in LEGO® Art. And it wasn't as simple as you might think.

0096 00:22:46:02 00:22:53:20

[Kitt]: When we rescaled the Mary Monroe picture, we had to get the size of her head right for our pixelations.

0097 00:22:53:22 00:23:00:15

[Christopher]: So it's very strange how just moving one pixel left or right can change the shape of the face drastically.

0098 00:23:00:17 00:23:03:12

[Andrea]: There's so much more to come. Stay with us.

0099 00:23:06:05 00:23:13:19

[Andrea]: Andy Warhol really changed the concept of being an artist. How was he different? Blake Gopnik?

0100 00:23:13:21 00:23:33:14

[Blake]: Well, because he really conflated being an artist with being a celebrity, and he made that conflation of the two categories, his central artistic, gesture if you like, I mean, Salvador Dalí was also a famous, uh, celebrity artist and so was Frida Kahlo, but their art was kind of free-standing.

0101 00:23:33:16 00:23:54:14

They used their persona, you could say, to sell people on their art whereas it was kind of the other way with Andy Warhol. He produced the art to sell people on the persona. The art becomes a kind of stand-in for him. If you see a Marilyn, you're as likely to think, "Oh, that's that thing made by Andy Warhol," as to think "Oh, Andy Warhol is that guy who makes Marilyn Monroe paintings."

0102 00:23:54:16 00:23:58:06

[Andrea]: Mm. How did he really get in with the celebrity crowd?

0103 00:23:58:21 00:24:16:07

[Blake]: Already at the time that Andy was an illustrator, he already was starting to move in to the worlds of a higher New York culture because he was

producing illustrations of luxury goods. And he was always interested in climbing into a higher level of society.

0104 00:24:16:09 00:24:17:04

[Andrea]: Mm.

0105 00:24:17:06 00:24:29:01

[Blake]: He comes from the really poorest, most disadvantaged working-class background, so he was always interested in mixing with high society, and celebrity was certainly part of that.

0106 00:24:29:03 00:24:40:16

You know, it takes him a while to really start mixing with celebrity proper, and that really happens in the '70s. When he starts doing portraits of celebrities, he obviously becomes part of their world as well.

0107 00:24:40:18 00:25:02:19

I personally believe that his interest in celebrities always came with a certain distance from them. That is, they were always something closer to art supplies for him or the subjects of his art than his real friends. I don't think his interest in celebrity was the kind that a fanboy would normally have.

It was more sophisticated. It was more about an artist looking at the world.

0108 00:25:02:21 00:25:06:16

[Andrea]: Jessica Beck, what do you think made Warhol different as an artist?

0109 00:25:06:18 00:25:23:12

[Jessica]: I think the biggest thing with Warhol, the most unique thing about him, was that he wasn't afraid to take risks. And you see that strength in his work from the very beginning until the very end of his career.

0110 00:25:23:14 00:25:48:17

So if you think of Warhol growing up in Pittsburgh to this very working class upbringing immigrant, upbringing, he's, you know, first-generation born here in Pittsburgh, um, is able to go to Carnegie Tech which is now Carnegie Mellon, um, the only child, um, and of his two other brothers that was sent to school.

0111 00:25:48:19 00:26:17:14

And his mother fosters this, uh, creative spirit in him, and he makes it to New York with very little money, and somehow, in that first decade, becomes a celebrated commercial artist.

You know he starts working for Glamour Magazine, um, and makes a name for himself, he buys a townhouse, he makes enough money to travel around Europe and Asia, and his mother eventually moves with him in New York.

0112 00:26:17:16 00:26:42:07

So there was always this sense where he's just going after this vision or this dream, and he's not risk averse. You know, he's open to experimentation, he's open to failing, uh, so, you know, he experimented with book publishing. Throughout his career, not all of those books were successes during his lifetime.

0113 00:26:42:09 00:26:59:22

Uh, he experimented with filmmaking, and television, and photography, and, obviously, painting. But even moments of performance and even working with, uh, you know The Velvet Underground at a seminal moment in their career.

0114 00:26:59:24 00:27:14:17

So I think the biggest thing with... is that Warhol just really, uh, was open to experimentation and risk and the other... the other honest quality here is that he just really loved to work.

0115 00:27:14:19 00:27:16:05

[Andrea, Jessica]: <laughs>

0116 00:27:16:07 00:27:21:12

[Andrea]: It sounds like he was also really confident. You have to be confident to try all of those things, right?

0117 00:27:21:14 00:27:51:02

[Jessica]: You know, I think that's one of the really peculiar parts of Warhol's story, is that there is this, uh, confidence, for sure, and almost a fearlessness especially with his sexuality in the 1950s, at a time when homosexuality was still considered, uh, you know, was policed in New York. So for Warhol, to do early drawings of boys kissing or nude drawings of men in the 1950s is really kind of revolutionary.

0118 00:27:51:04 00:28:17:16

But, um, I think the interesting thing about Warhol is he's confident, but also very vulnerable and quite shy at the moment, different moments, in his life. And if you think of him physically, uh, you know, he was shot in 1968, he grew up, um, quite frail with an illness

at a young age, he wore two pays all of his life, and post shooting he wore corsets because of a hernia after the surgery.

0119 00:28:17:18 00:28:34:18

So if you think of him kind of underneath his, if you want to call it, his Andy Warhol suit, um, there's a lot of vulnerability I think underneath all of that. But, for sure, there's a sense of, um, confidence and maybe it's just he's Leo major...

0120 00:28:34:20 00:29:01:16

[Andrea]: <laughs> There's a lot to unpack here. How he moves from Pittsburgh to New York with very little money and becomes a celebrated commercial artist and makes a name for himself working in advertising and for Glamour Magazines, his mother moves in with them, how he puts on a persona in the Andy Warhol suit, his techniques and his willingness to take risks experimenting with many different media... we'll get into all that.

0121 00:29:01:18 00:29:08:21

But let's dive a bit deeper into the part about taking risks. Blake Gopnik, what can you add to that?

0122 00:29:08:23 00:29:38:16

[Blake]: One of the greatest things about Andy Warhol as an artist is the risks he took from the very beginning. I mean, one day, when he was in college yet, the students were all asked to do a self-portrait, and they all painted their self-portrait as you'd imagine. And when Andy showed his to his classmates, they said, "Wait. Who's that girl? Is that your sister?" And he said, "No, I've always wanted to know what I look like as a girl." So right there, he's already doing gender-bending even as a college student.

0123 00:29:38:18 00:30:04:13

And he went on to always take risks like that whether it was risks around his own homosexuality, whether it was risks about what counts as art. I mean those Campbell Soup Cans that we love so much today, those Marilyn's that we like so much, were greeted when they first came out as absurdly, uh, impossible objects, as objects that couldn't possibly qualify even as art.

0124 00:30:04:15 00:30:19:04

[Andrea]: Mm. Looking at the work of our two younger artists Devan Shimoyama and Lucia Hierro, it looks as if they're also taking risks in the way they work and the materials they use. Would you agree on that, Devan?

0125 00:30:19:18 00:30:51:14

[Devan]: Yeah, I use a lot of materials that are sort of familiar to me, around me a lot, um, I think of Basquiat as having done similarly, and I think that there's something about the urgency to use what's around you or what's most familiar to you. Um, it immediately imbues the work of art with a certain history and understanding of how those things exist in your day-to-day life, and then changes the way that you're interacting with the painting or receiving information in that way.

0126 00:30:51:16 00:31:07:23

So if I'm using a craft material or if I'm using a giant brooch that my great-grandmother wore at church, you know, I think that that sort of holds a certain weight to it and that is then automatically in the painting itself. So there's a real energy to ready-made materials.

0127 00:31:08:00 00:31:10:22

[Andrea]: What about you, Lucia? Are you also a risk-taker?

0128 00:31:11:17 00:31:33:14

[Lucia]: Uh, I'd, I'd like to think so. The, the sewing and all of that,

uh, could easily, and especially as a woman, could easily just be seen as a sort of craft woman's work and be devalued even further because of it. But I think that there's something to be said about using this material and the way that people relate to it.

0129 00:31:33:16 00:31:38:08

[Andrea]: Jessica and Blake, can you guys tell me something about Andy's revolutionary techniques?

0130 00:31:38:10 00:32:06:10

[Jessica]: Um, yeah, Warhol always worked in, um, a type of practice that dealt with making multiples. So whether that be his early drawing technique that he created in the 1950s called the blotted line technique, in which he could trace an image and then outline the image in Dr. Martin's dye, stamp it with a piece of paper and have multiple versions of the same shoe.

0131 00:32:06:12 00:32:25:01

Um, screen printing techniques were considered commercial techniques at the time that he was using that practice on his paintings. He actually taught Robert Rauschenberg how to screen print, and had Rauschenberg over to a studio

to show him his brand-new paintings in 1962.

0132 00:32:25:03 00:32:44:19

So there's always a sense with Warhol where he is almost working in what appears to be a mechanical way or somehow erasing the hand but he's not doing that really, he's putting a lot of work into the painting process and image making throughout his career.

0133 00:32:44:21 00:33:17:18

[Blake]: Hm. I'm not sure that Andy Warhol was interested in the painting process the way traditional artists were, that is taking up a brush and making marks with his hand. I think he was, actually wildly against that. But he was very, very interested in the process of finding new ways of applying paint to surfaces and his, of course, great innovation was to use the silkscreen which had been used either for kind of very high printmaking or the lowest of low commercial art, and using that to make this particularly new kind of thing called pop art.

0134 00:33:17:20 00:33:41:09

And everyone has always imagined that because he used silk screening

which can be used for industrial processes that somehow he was engaged in mass production, but that wasn't true. Almost every silkscreen he made, every pop silkscreen he made at least, was, he probably held the screen down himself, he did a lot of the what they call the squeegeeing himself, he was deeply involved with maybe one or two assistants.

0135 00:33:41:11 00:34:10:06

But there was never an assembly line but he loved to pretend there was an assembly line. And that's his really great, uh, innovation, was to dare to pretend that his art was made by a machine. To pretend even that it looked like it was made by machine, to talk about it in those terms. Even though if you look at, uh, the Marilyn Monroe painting or Elvis Presley painting, and we call them paintings even though they're silkscreened, they're very messy, they're not at all slick and machine-like.

0136 00:34:10:08 00:34:20:07

So you can tell immediately that they're handmade because they're in a sense so badly made. But somehow or other, the very fact of using a silk screen spoke to people about mass production.

0137 00:34:20:09 00:34:48:15

[Jessica]: But the other the other thing I should mention is technology was always something that Warhol was interested in whether that be with his, uh, filmmaking practice in the 1960s or the television episodes that he created in the '80s where the cameras that he started purchasing, the automatic cameras that he was using, um, in the late '70s and early '80s. It was always an interest in a small compact automatic camera that he could take anywhere and, um, always with him so...

0138 00:34:48:17 00:34:50:15

[Andrea]: Hm. Yeah. Just like a phone.

0139 00:34:50:17 00:34:52:20

[Jessica]: Yeah. <chuckles> Exactly.

0140 00:34:52:22 00:35:00:05

[Andrea]: And speaking of that, if he was alive today, how do you think he would embrace modern technology and social media?

0141 00:35:00:07 00:35:00:22

[Blake]: Oh, whoa.

0142 00:35:00:24 00:35:04:21

[Andrea]: Let's go around the table with this and start with you Lucia. What do you think?

0143 00:35:04:23 00:35:10:12

[Lucia]: I... I think he would have the most followers ever.
I think he would crash Instagram

0144 00:35:10:14 00:35:12:14

[Andrea, Lucia]: <laughs>

0145 00:35:12:16 00:35:32:11

[Lucia]: I think there would just... I think he, in
and oddly,
I think he would want to break that
apart.
I think that should Andy have existed,
there would be no...
no number count of media followers? I
think he would have obliterated that and
totally sort of democratized it.
In... in that sense, there would be no blue checks.

0146 00:35:32:13 00:35:46:01

[Blake]: The problem with
talking about Andy Warhol liking
anything we know about today
is that he always wanted to be ahead of the curve.
So if I've heard of Instagram,
Andy Warhol wouldn't have been interested anymore.
Once Blake Gopnik has heard of something,
it's too late in the game to get involved.

0147 00:35:46:03 00:35:46:24

[Andrea]: <laughs>

0148 00:35:47:01 00:36:08:01

[Blake]: I think he might have been interested in something
like virtual reality.
Um... what else might he be interested? He
would have been interested in the latest
cutting edge technology always,
but only to corrupt it. He would have
been a normal Instagrammer.
After all, he had, you could say that he
had invented Instagram already with his use
of everyday snapshots in the 1970s and '80s,
so he was done with that

0149 00:36:08:03 00:36:28:07

If he were
still alive today,
he'd be doing something so
exciting that you and I can't even imagine
what it would be. I mean, that's
the amazing thing about Andy Warhol.
Until July of 1962, if you'd asked
someone "Could Campbell's Soup Cans be painted as art?"
They would have said, "No, absolutely not."
You can't imagine what Andy would do next
and that's what makes him such a great artist.

0150 00:36:28:09 00:36:31:04

[Andrea]: So right. If we've heard of it, then it's passed.

0151 00:36:31:06 00:36:41:24

[Blake]: Yeah, absolutely, and that was
certainly his view.

He hated anything that he called corny, and I think a good definition of the corny is something that's been done so much it no longer has any real cultural interest.

0152 00:36:42:01 00:36:51:15

[Devan]: I think about that sometimes, actually, and I thought about it, uh, most recently when I was looking through, um, another photographer.

0153 00:36:51:17 00:37:20:05

Uh, their Instagram presence a couple years ago was, uh, really kind of pushing the boundaries of what Instagram was for and our expectations of that and I thought, you know, they were doing these really warped self-portraits on their social media, and I was like this is kind of strange and unusual to see this prominent photographer, um, doing this thing on social media and just kind of playing and... and not giving any explanation as to what they're doing and allowing people to sort of receive it as they will.

0154 00:37:20:07 00:37:40:15

Um, and this is Cindy Sherman I'm talking about, by the way, uh, just to like put the name out there. But, you know, I found it fascinating to see someone just doing something against the grain of what everybody else

was doing. And I could see Warhol having maybe done that at the beginnings of Instagram. <laughs> You know, I feel like maybe now he'd already be like past tick-tock and all whatever else is coming out.

0155 00:37:40:17 00:37:41:11

[Andrea]: <laughs>

0156 00:37:41:13 00:37:53:05

[Devan]: So I kind of agree with that. Like I feel like, at this point, he wouldn't be really doing anything on Instagram. I think he'd be in some other, uh, maybe VR, other technologies that are, um, upcoming, yeah.

0157 00:37:53:07 00:38:00:08

[Andrea]: Yeah, again if he was using Instagram, like you said, it would be, in a way, that was the opposite of how the everyday person would use it.

0158 00:38:00:10 00:38:00:24

[Devan]: Yeah.

0159 00:38:01:01 00:38:16:22

[Lucia]: And I think... I think you would make full use of... everything. Everything available, VR, all of it,

because that's just sort of
was, his nature, was to go to the fringes and...
he would have made
all sorts of movies too by now.

0160 00:38:16:24 00:38:40:10

[Jessica]: Yeah, you know, the thing about
social media
on technology right now that's actually
very fascinating is that you have this,
uh, close proximity or what feels like
close proximity to celebrities, and politicians,
and brand influencers,
or you know the average person can look at
photos of Kim Kardashian
in her kitchen, um, on social media.

0161 00:38:40:12 00:39:02:00

So Warhol was always fascinated by that
that idea of proximity
to wealth and celebrity and fame,
and this kind of concept of fame.
And also this concept of self-fashioning or, uh,
publicizing, creating publicity about yourself,
having your photo taken where I loved having this photo taken.

0162 00:39:02:02 00:39:28:24

Um, so he lived, in a way,
especially that final decade when he...
when the technology of cam... of cameras
had become small,
and, you know, James Bond like you could
put in your pocket and

take several rolls of film very quickly.
Warhol loved that and he did take
multiple rolls of film on a daily practice.
Yeah, Warhol definitely would have had
a social media presence.

0163 00:39:29:01 00:39:34:13

[Andrea]: I wonder if he would be following anybody
or if he would be one of those users that doesn't follow anyone.

0164 00:39:34:15 00:39:35:11

[Lucia]: <laughs>

0165 00:39:35:13 00:39:38:22

[Andrea]: I think it would be more like that...
or it would be something very obscure.

0166 00:39:38:24 00:39:44:16

[Lucia]: Yes, yes.
He would... he would be friends with some
of the cast of Rupaul's Drag Race, and...

0167 00:39:44:18 00:39:45:20

[Andrea]: <laughs>

0168 00:39:45:22 00:39:48:15

[Lucia]: And that's about it. Like there wouldn't be anybody...

0169 00:39:48:17 00:39:49:10

[Andrea]: Yes.

0170 00:39:49:12 00:39:52:01

[Andrea, Lucia]: <laughs>

0171 00:39:52:03 00:39:55:02

[Lucia]: He would never follow a celebrity back ever.

0172 00:39:55:04 00:39:56:05

[Andrea]: Yeah, you're so right.

0173 00:39:56:07 00:39:57:16

[Lucia]: <laughs>

0174 00:40:01:24 00:40:11:03

[Andrea]: Money was tight when Andy Warhol came to New York in 1949 with only 200 dollars in his pocket. Jessica Beck, what can you tell us about this time?

0175 00:40:11:05 00:40:31:12

[Jessica]: Yeah, um, so Warhol graduated from Carnegie Tech which is now Carnegie Mellon, and he went to New York with a classmate and friend Phillip Pearlstein, who's actually still alive and painting, became a famous figurative painter most notably in the 1970s.

0176 00:40:31:14 00:40:54:11

Um, and they shared a small room in an apartment.

And Warhol, uh, you know, he and Phil Pearlstein used a rolodex from a professor from Carnegie Mellon to get interviews at ad agencies to start making money. And Warhol ended up being very successful very quickly.

0177 00:40:54:13 00:41:19:09

And, again, I think that's because he had this habit of making lots and lots and lots of options for the editors through their early photographs. You can see him in his bedroom doing these early drawings, these 50s drawings, these advertisement drawings, and there's paper everywhere, and at the Andy Warhol Museum, we have hundreds and hundreds of these drawings and left over from that period,

0178 00:41:19:11 00:41:47:01

So I think the thing with Warhol at that moment in the 1950s, is he was very hungry for notoriety and success because while he was getting paid and doing these advertisement drawings, this advertisement work, he was also doing things like making handmade artist books and sending them to Diana Vreeland, uh, the head of Vogue, and, uh, Truman Capote, kind of courting Truman Capote at a young age.

0179 00:41:47:03 00:41:58:04

So there was this sensibility of him wanting to expand his social network and build a network that would get him into the art world, into the blue chip art world.

0180 00:41:58:06 00:42:02:07

[Andrea]: Blake Gopnik, what can you tell us about where he lived when he came to New York?

0181 00:42:02:09 00:42:28:01

[Blake]: You know, when he started off in New York, his first for a month or two, he lived in a cockroach-infested kind of classic little artist tenement apartment down in what we call Alphabet City. Then he had this... The second place he lived was also a sublet but it was one end of the loft that belonged to a radically avant-garde dancer called Franziska Boas, and her piano player was actually the great, great modern composer John Cage.

0182 00:42:28:03 00:42:48:17

So in that loft, Warhol I think was exposed for the first time to really radical avant-garde and that... that matters a whole lot to what came after. You know, he started off awfully poor but it wasn't long before he started pulling in the contracts within weeks really of arriving in New York.

He was getting awfully good contracts for, uh, for commercial work.

0183 00:42:48:19 00:42:58:20

And before long, he was getting rich enough to get his apartment to move up in the world, get better and better apartments, and eventually, uh, pay for it to be decorated in the latest cap style.

0184 00:42:58:22 00:43:11:21

He bought himself, you know, sterling silver cutlery, he really moved up in the world. And then in 1960, kind of just the moment before he stops making pop art, he's already rich enough to buy this fancy townhouse on the upper east side.

0185 00:43:11:23 00:43:29:21

[Andrea]: And in this fancy Victorian townhouse, he started out making his art in his living room. He outgrew that very quickly and got an old abandoned very leaky firehouse instead. But then, in early '64, he found a big old factory space. What can you tell us about that?

0186 00:43:29:23 00:43:59:13

Some people have said it was a hat factory, other people said it was a shoe factory. There's no evidence for either. But it was a big, scruffy factory, and he

turned that into what he called the, capital f, Factory, and that was the name of his studio.

And he got one of his helpers, one of his followers, one of his acolytes, named Billy Name to cover every surface with either silver foil, with aluminum foil, or with silver paint, and it became the silver factory.

The space that reflected everything that was going on inside it.

0187 00:43:59:15 00:44:04:14

[Andrea]: Well, then, we all have what we need to be, uh, Warhol wannabes in our kitchen drawer.

0188 00:44:04:16 00:44:16:09

[Blake]: In the kitchen drawer. He eventually got it supplied for free. He buy one of the big by Alcoa, the big aluminum maker, because he started out using the cheapest tin foil on the planet and they decided that they could supply him with something better.

0189 00:44:16:11 00:44:19:18

[Andrea]: When you get successful, you get the good aluminum foil.

0190 00:44:19:20 00:44:22:20

[Blake]: And he got free Campbell's Soup, too. He can't have laughed at that.

0191 00:44:22:22 00:44:35:19

[Andrea]: <chuckles> Um, I know that you were saying that, you know, he would throw out so many projects because he would want to just see which one's stuck and which ones could bring in in some extra money, but how would you describe him as a businessman?

0192 00:44:35:21 00:44:49:01

[Jessica]: I'm... I think, you know, the interesting thing about Warhol is... there's this sense to look at his career that, you know, he took the bus to New York and became famous as soon as he hit the sidewalk. But that's... that's not true at all.

0193 00:44:49:03 00:45:15:08

You know, it really took a full decade, it was a whole 10 years before anyone was really paying attention to Andy Warhol and he had a lot of rejection. So I think that goes back to this idea of Warhol not being afraid of risk. Um, we have several of the early rejection letters, um, in the archives of the Andy Warhol Museum, uh, from different projects that he was trying to do whether that be with the advertisement work or shows that he was trying to be a part of.

0194 00:45:15:10 00:45:34:18

He was famously rejected from the Tanager Gallery for his early boy book drawings for instance, so in that first decade, he makes a ton of money in advertising work. So much so that he's able to buy a townhouse and move his mother Julia Warhol from Pittsburgh to come and live with him in New York.

0195 00:45:34:20 00:46:01:24

And when he gets to 1962, he's doing these hand-painted paintings and he's doing his now iconic Marilyn Monroe and Jacqueline Kennedy paintings but he's still doing advertisement work. So he's finally getting the gallery exhibitions that he wants in California, at the Ferus Gallery for his silver Elvis paintings, in New York with the Stable Gallery, and then eventually with Leo Castelli.

0196 00:46:02:01 00:46:23:17

But in that '60s period, he didn't completely abandon the advertisement work. It's still there, um, because it's still making him money, and that's kind of an interesting part of Warhol's story, is that while he's navigating this blue chip gallery world

even throughout later parts of his career, he's still doing advertisement work.

0197 00:46:23:19 00:46:41:11

[Blake]: Well, it's funny, you know, there's a story that Andy Warhol was a sellout and a cheapskate, I guess. To a very limited extent, he was, but people often imagine that by becoming a pop artist, a famous pop artist, he became rich or that he only became a pop artist to become rich and that's kind of absurd.

0198 00:46:41:13 00:46:59:15

In 1960, if you told someone you were going to become a fine artist in order to get rich, they would have laughed at you. Right, that was a way to lose money quickly not to make money. And that's what happened even to Andy. You know, he was doing really well as an illustrator and he took a pretty big hit to his income when he decided to be a fine artist instead.

0199 00:46:59:17 00:47:14:16

Um, throughout the '60s, he never makes a whole lot of money selling his art. He starts making bits and pieces of money through some of his avant-garde films to his own surprise as much as anyone's. But then in the '70s, he starts making money,

um, through his society portraits.

0200 00:47:14:18 00:47:25:13

[Jessica]: Um, he does hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of portrait commissions, and that money feeds other creative projects for him. Warhol TV, Interview Magazine.

0201 00:47:25:15 00:47:47:11

So there's always a sense of Warhol that he's doing the gallery work, he's doing the blue chip world work, and he's... also always has somewhat of a side hustle, you could call it, advertising work or commercial commissions, um, he even, uh, becomes part of a modeling agency in the '80s.

0202 00:47:47:13 00:48:02:19

So there's always a sense with Warhol that, uh, you know, he was very money conscious, and I think that comes from not growing up with money. And so always wanting to have that, um, security blanket, a financial security blanket.

0203 00:48:02:21 00:48:05:08

[Andrea]: Yeah, how important do you think money was to him?

0204 00:48:05:22 00:48:17:09

[Jessica]: Oh, yeah, I think it was many things. I think money with Warhol was a fascination.

He loved being around wealthy people, he was sort of fascinated by wealth and old money.

0205 00:48:17:11 00:48:40:24

John Gould is one of his... is this late boyfriend. Um, John came from an old-money new England family, and Warhol was kind of fascinated by that sort of upbringing and the people around him, uh, Bridget Berlin, uh, came from a very, very wealthy upbringing. Uh, so Warhol was fascinated by people with money or people that grew up with money.

0206 00:48:41:01 00:49:04:07

But, you know, by 1979 up until 1987, Warhol has this Interview Magazine that becomes a real business, and he has people on the payroll, so you can hear later in his career, other people that worked with him, like, someone like Vincent Fremont talking about Warhol, feeling responsible financially for these people. It's almost, it was, he essentially had a business at that point.

0207 00:49:04:09 00:49:04:20

[Andrea]: Hm.

0208 00:49:04:22 00:49:25:03

[Blake]: It's funny it depends who you ask some people think that Andy Warhol was a terrible skin flint

but lots of people say he was also absurdly generous, um, you know, at least on occasion he would pay for his assistant Gerard Malanga to take a cab all the way up to a far point in the Bronx. That must have been, you know, a very expensive cab ride.

0209 00:49:25:05 00:49:38:22

You know, I think, I think there's a like with many of us, there's an exquisite mixture, there's certainly records of him being cheap, and he did like to have money. He grew up unbelievably poor and there's no doubt that one of his goals in life was to make money.

0210 00:49:38:24 00:49:55:11

But I would say that took a second place to his central goal in life which was to be the most exciting, important, most avant-garde artist anyone could imagine. That's what he really cared about. But he also wanted to make money at the same time. And there aren't a lot of artists who achieve the two things.

0211 00:49:55:13 00:50:05:24

[Andrea]: Hm. What would you say was the piece that really got the ball rolling for him that really led him to just explode into the scene?

0212 00:50:06:01 00:50:19:14

[Blake]: I guess the first time that Andy Warhol got really big exposure was actually funnily enough not in New York, the center of the American art world, but in Los Angeles in July of 1962, when he shows all 32 of his first Campbell Soups.

0213 00:50:19:16 00:50:33:08

That... that gets him coverage, uh, in Los Angeles especially, but in all sorts of art magazines. At seems so ridiculous that people give it big coverage, and then the Marilyn painting gets get some coverage, he becomes famous amazingly quickly.

0214 00:50:33:10 00:50:51:17

Doesn't mean he became rich amazingly quickly because of his fame but he becomes famous for being the wackiest artist in America. And famous for being one of the strangest characters in the art world, and he... he played with that, he liked that, rather than hiding from it the way a lot of artists might have done.

0215 00:50:51:19 00:51:05:24

[Andrea]: So being this wacky character as Blake puts it was a big deal to Warhol. The whole thing about becoming this persona and putting on the Andy suit is what we're going to hear more about in the next part of this LEGO® Art soundtrack.

0216 00:51:06:01 00:51:10:16

After that, we're also going to be speaking with our guests about the Marilyn portraits.

0217 00:51:10:18 00:51:16:21

[Lucia]: One of Andy's greatest gifts and feats is sort of that immediacy and repetition.

0218 00:51:16:23 00:51:19:08

[Blake]: It still stands as a kind of celebrity portrait.

0219 00:51:19:10 00:51:22:21

[Devan]: so I don't know it really changes the way I look at everything looking back at that.

0220 00:51:22:23 00:51:26:21

[Jessica]: The work still remains so contemporary when you look at it.

0221 00:51:26:23 00:51:27:20

[Lucia]: They're pretty brilliant.

0222 00:51:27:22 00:51:37:22

[Andrea]: And also bring in the two LEGO® designers who created the mosaics that you might be working on creating in LEGO® bricks right now. And hear their thoughts on Warhol.

0223 00:51:37:24 00:51:43:20

[Kitt]: I think this pop art had always fascinated me. It's very timeless, and very modern still

0224 00:51:43:22 00:51:47:10

[Andrea]: And what it's like recreating the portraits in LEGO® Art.

0225 00:51:47:12 00:51:50:21

[Christopher]: This was a very different type of LEGO® puzzle.

0226 00:51:50:23 00:51:53:18

[Andrea]: There's so much more to come. Stay with us.

0227 00:52:05:11 00:52:13:12

[Andrea]: Let's talk a bit about sculpting his persona. Jessica Beck, why do you think it was so important for him to be that character?

0228 00:52:13:14 00:52:35:20

[Jessica]: Well, you know Warhol grew up, uh, when he grew up, when he was quite young, he had this illness called St. Vitus' Dance and, uh, he, because of that and other issues that he had, this really blotchy skin, so he was often made fun of for his blotchy skin and his red nose. So he's very sensitive about his appearance.

0229 00:52:35:22 00:52:57:14

And so when he gets enough money in New York,

he starts buying toupees,
eventually, later in his life, he buys
very fancy toupees from, I think, Italy.
We have wigs, um, you know, they were special made, um,
and in that '60s moment, that silver wig
is the freight wig, um, is a very dramatic
kind of appearance that he creates.

0230 00:52:57:16 00:53:19:08

But
each decade with Warhol, there's a
different look that he, um, solidifies.
So in the '60s, it's the striped boat neck
shirts with the black jeans and the
leather jackets,
and then eventually, um, in the late '70s, early '80s,
he's wearing cowboy
boots and jeans all the time.

0231 00:53:19:10 00:53:50:21

And there's this early interest
in a perfect
image or a beautiful... have wanting to
have a beautiful face or,
um, you know look like celebrities in the
magazines,
um, so I think that's why,
you know, Warhol was able to harness
those fantasies so well in his art practices.
Because he shared those same
desires that we all have
where we sort of compare ourselves to
advertising images or
celebrity images.

0232 00:53:50:23 00:53:54:11

[Andrea]: Do you think that worked?
Do you think it made him more famous?

0233 00:53:54:13 00:54:21:24

[Jessica]: I think that, for sure, his, um, Andy suit, you could call it,
with the wig and the, um, the different fashion statements that he made,
that he consistently wore the same thing
for different periods, um, very much
became part of his brand.
And again I think that Warhol understood
the concept of branding very well, and consistency,
and, um, he loved having his photo taken.

0234 00:54:22:01 00:54:44:20

Um, you can see, uh, photos
by Edward Welawicz in the 1950s,
um, Duane Michals, another famous
photographer, Otto Fenn,
all of these photographers, you know, Warhol
just like loved having his photo taken
so in the 1960s, he has people around all the time
taking photos of him and then later,
he's happy to be recorded on the TV episode.

0235 00:54:44:22 00:54:58:19

So there was he had this real fascination
with, um,
you know the mediated image or seeing
yourself in photographs or on TV.
And so I think that that worked, <laughs> the branding.

0236 00:54:58:21 00:55:19:15

[Andrea]: The look that he had in the '60s also became known as "Cool Andy". And even though this was pretty early in his career as an artist, he was already a celebrity himself. There was an incident that you describe in your Warhol Biography, Blake, where he was surrounded by fans at an opening of a show in Pennsylvania. Can you tell us what happened?

0237 00:55:20:06 00:55:47:10

[Blake]: Yeah, in the fall of 1965, uh, the Institute of Contemporary Art, uh, at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia decided to have a, uh, what they called a survey show of Andy Warhol's art, but he'd only been making art for three years so it wasn't much, much of a retrospective. Um, so we're gonna have this show and he was already pretty famous by then but he didn't even realize how famous he was. You know, this is the moment of Beatlemania, and what he realized is that he had created Andy mania.

0238 00:55:47:12 00:56:15:09

He showed up for the opening. Already the previous night, the private opening of his show had been so crowded that works of art got damaged by people banging into them. So for the actual opening of the show,

they had taken down all the art. So you could say that the only artwork on view was Andy Warhol himself. And he showed up in what became his classic outfit, you know, sunglasses, leather jacket, he even had safety pins in the collar of his shirt, the way a punk might have done 15 years later.

0239 00:56:15:11 00:56:40:00

Um, and he showed up and was absolutely mobbed by his fans to the point where he had to flee up this... this staircase in the middle of the room and kind of take refuge at the top of it from these fans who insisted on having you know their, uh, their subway tickets signed and the can of Campbell's Soup that they brought with them signed by Andy Warhol. And he was actually a little bit afraid of the the commotion that his celebrity caused.

0240 00:56:40:02 00:56:55:00

[Andrea]: Oh, wow, that's so interesting because nowadays, you know if you're an instant success because you look at how many people are, you know, following you online. But then, you wouldn't have really been able to gauge until, like you said, it comes to your public event.

0241 00:56:55:02 00:57:09:02

[Blake]: Yeah, all of the great celebrities of the earlier part of the 20th century, Charlie Chaplin, even the Beatles, were shocked at how popular they were. They would show up, and all of a sudden, there'd be a million girls screaming at them and they'd say what is going on.

0242 00:57:09:04 00:57:18:06

Well, I think, uh, Andy was even more shocked because when you're a movie star or a rock star, you kind of expect that might happen, I mean, it had happened to Elvis.

0243 00:57:18:08 00:57:30:09

But when you're a high-end fine artist making what's actually extremely sophisticated conceptual art to discover that they're a bunch of teenagers, you know, screaming your name does come as a surprise.

0244 00:57:30:11 00:57:34:10

[Andrea]: Yeah, do you think he liked that or do you think it scared him?

0245 00:57:34:22 00:57:41:13

[Blake]: I think he liked Andy mania as yet another one of his art supplies or even one of his works of art.

0246 00:57:41:15 00:57:57:08

He just loved the idea that, um, that he had caused this to happen in society and, uh, an artist, um, called Joseph Boyes in the 1980s came up with this notion of social sculpture. That one of the things an artist could do would be to intervene directly in the world around them.

0247 00:57:57:10 00:58:11:12

Well, I think Andy got to that notion before he liked the idea that Andy mania was his intervention into the normal life of his culture and his society, not just something that lives in museums but something that lives in popular culture.

0248 00:58:11:14 00:58:18:08

[Andrea]: Is that the moment he really stepped in to his persona and became Warhol?

0249 00:58:18:10 00:58:33:02

[Blake]: You know, it's funny everyone imagines that the person making, uh, any world's most famous pop art, the Marilyn's, the Campbell's Soups, was the Andy Warhol we know and love, that is the guy in the leather jacket, uh, with the weird affectless stare and the sunglasses.

0250 00:58:33:04 00:58:54:08

But actually, that doesn't come along and he doesn't invent that, that living sculpture really until his show in Philadelphia in the fall of '65. That's really when he takes on that look, uh, in a kind of full bore mode. Um, and then, of course, it sort of survives for— for forever afterwards, because that's the Andy Warhol we think we know.

0251 00:58:54:10 00:59:08:06

So he really has to adopt that persona that costume, he said much later in life that he got tired of wearing his Andy suit. And it's really true that at a certain point, it just became a costume that he was clothed in at all times.

0252 00:59:08:08 00:59:11:12

[Andrea]: Hm. It almost makes me think of Karl Lagerfeld.

0253 00:59:11:14 00:59:29:16

[Blake]: Uh, the funny thing is there's so many people that Andy knew who seemed to have picked up where he left off. Uh, Karl Lagerfeld, I'm not sure Karl Lagerfeld would have been, uh, such a character, would have turned himself into such a character without the influence of Andy Warhol who he actually met very early on in his career.

0254 00:59:29:18 00:59:46:13

Uh, Lou Reed, the great musician who's, uh, whose band The Velvet Underground was actually produced by Andy Warhol said that he was watching Andy Warhol turn himself into a character. He said he was watching him like a hawk and, of course, Lou Reed becomes a famous character in rock and roll as well.

0255 00:59:46:15 01:00:10:23

I think Lou Reed the character and Lou Reed the person are closer to each other than Andy Warhol the celebrity artist was to the real Andy Warhol. When Andy Warhol got home at night, his old mother was there to greet him. Many mornings, they'd say a prayer together before he went, left his nice, tidy, little home and went off to the factory to live a wild life, or to pretend to live a wildlife at least.

0256 01:00:11:00 01:00:16:21

So Andy Warhol the artist and Andy Warhol the good son at home were very different characters.

0257 01:00:16:23 01:00:29:11

[Andrea]: Yeah, tell us a little bit more about the difference between public Andy and private Andy. I heard that he would ignore old friends in public at events and then call them to chit chat when he came home. Is that right?

0258 01:00:29:13 01:00:51:15

[Blake]: Yeah, Andy Warhol's old friends from the '50s, people like, uh, like the art critic David Bourdon knew Andy before he became kind of mute, so when they saw him in the 1960s, they couldn't quite understand why he would barely talk, why he seemed to be snubbing them, why he would put on this kind of this this anomie, he'd be removed from the world.

0259 01:00:51:17 01:01:16:13

And then as soon as he got home, he'd call him and maybe he was back to his old gossipy character. Um, he, he had to inhabit that persona as Andy Warhol the silent fool in a way in public. But when he was in private, even with old friends, he could— he could take down, off that mask that he'd worn when he met them, you know, just earlier that evening, and become the Andy that they've known.

0260 01:01:16:15 01:01:30:09

Everyone said, who knew him really well, said there were these two Andys. The Andy for public consumption and then the gossipy, verbal, uh, quite literate, almost intellectual Andy that he could be with really close friends.

0261 01:01:30:11 01:01:40:16

I mean, he was really good friends with a famous Shakespeare scholar, and that scholar said that they actually discussed Shakespeare. They go to plays together and Andy was as good at talking about Shakespeare as anyone else he knew.

0262 01:01:40:18 01:01:43:06

[Andrea]: Wow. And then also really good at gossiping.

0263 01:01:43:08 01:01:56:05

[Blake]: And he was a ferocious gossip. I've listened to some tapes of him gossiping, it's... it's a little match. But of course, the thing is he can go from gossip to sophisticated talk about art, uh, you know, at the drop of a hat.

0264 01:01:56:07 01:02:10:09

And often, with Andy, they're the same thing. Because the gossip sort of becomes an art supply, his place in the world of celebrities, place in popular culture. The things he was gossiping about become so much part of his art that it's hard to tell him apart.

0265 01:02:10:11 01:02:21:13

[Andrea]: It's so fascinating he's such a true trendsetter, you know.

It's like he probably
sometimes knew he was doing it and
sometimes he didn't even know he was doing it
and I think that's what makes him so intriguing.

0266 01:02:21:15 01:02:44:20

[Blake]: Yeah, although for me, what really matters
is that I think...
pretty much whatever he was doing,
he did it because he wanted to make great art.
And he just realized, you know, as early as 1962,
that the definitions of art had to
change and were changing
and you couldn't just take a brush and
start making marks on a canvas anymore.
You had to really open up your mind
to all sorts of things that no one else had thought about.

0267 01:02:44:22 01:03:05:02

So he's really one of the
first conceptual artists of the 1960s
and that becomes a major,
uh, art movement, and he's there
earlier than just about anyone
to realizing that, uh, you don't have to
make objects that just your ideas.
The ideas behind objects or the ideas
that don't even have objects associated
with them at all can be really great art.

0268 01:03:05:04 01:03:11:06

[Andrea]: It's so
interesting that you would say he would

be very gossipy and had a lot to say
about... just about everything.

0269 01:03:11:08 01:03:27:15

I've seen him being interviewed in some old clips
and I've I gotta say that I'm glad I
wasn't the one interviewing him
because he gives these
really short answers.
There's even one interview out there
where he doesn't say a word,
he just brought someone along to answer
questions for him.

0270 01:03:27:17 01:03:42:06

[Blake]: It's funny, in Andy Warhol's very first
published statement,
he sounds perfectly normal, in fact, he
sounds like one of those artists who's
trying to show off how serious they are,
he gives a nice little paragraph about,
you know, the way his art reflects the
decadence of American consumerism.

0271 01:03:42:08 01:03:57:11

But pretty soon after that, he realizes,
no, there's no future in that,
he's not that good at talker anyways.
So he becomes a kind of mute and he plays the idiot.
So usually, if you asked
him a question, he would say things like,
well, he normally
just say yes or no, no matter how

complicated the question was, you know.

0272 01:03:57:13 01:04:17:11

Ask him "Does your Mona Lisa represent the bankruptcy of all of fine art?"

And he would just say something like

"No," or "I don't know."

But even more maddeningly,
he...

he just asked the reporter themselves to provide the answers to their questions.

He'd say "I don't know anything. Can you just answer your own question?" Which, of course, was maddening.

0273 01:04:17:13 01:04:32:09

It was
part of something that went on in the 1960s after all.

The Beatles did it like crazy, you know.

When someone asks, um,

George Harrison, "What would you call that hairstyle you're wearing?"

And George deadpanned an answer he just said, "Arthur."

0274 01:04:32:11 01:04:33:00

[Andrea]: <laughs>

0275 01:04:33:02 01:04:45:02

[Blake]: So, you know, that kind of playing with interviewers was pretty typical.

Warhol may have actually helped get it started because he was one of the first people to torture reporters in just that way,

but he almost never answered a question seriously.

0276 01:04:45:04 01:05:01:00

But, of course, the great thing about that is that it let his art speak for itself.

If the guy who's supposed to be speaking for the art is that a wordless or that dumb, then you have no choice but to go to the art itself.

And I think that was his real goal, was to say "Don't ask me. Ask... ask my art."

0277 01:05:01:02 01:05:20:02

And that was actually on the cutting edge of thinking at that moment.

It was... there was this notion of the intentional fallacy.

That it was a fallacy to imagine that the artist's ideas or even the artist biography mattered at all to understanding the art.

So Warhol was keen to make it clear that you didn't come to him for answers, you went to the art itself.

0278 01:05:20:04 01:05:25:16

[Andrea]: Do you ever think he got tired of becoming a character that he wasn't, you know, fully?

0279 01:05:25:18 01:05:38:18

[Blake]: I think it was exhausting at a certain point and what worries me more about Andy is that, late in life, I think

he himself started having a hard time
distinguishing between the real Andy and the character.

0280 01:05:38:20 01:05:53:12

And I think it becomes kind of poignant late in life,
he seems a little bit lost
in a way he wasn't quite at the beginning.
But I think that happens to
everyone who becomes famous.
I think fame is a dangerous commodity,
and I think Andy was touched by it in a particularly strong way.

0281 01:05:53:14 01:05:59:13

It's like- it's like taking small doses of poison.
You might not die in the end but it
might not be very good for your health.

0282 01:05:59:15 01:06:08:08

[Andrea]: Jessica, I know that you have something
at the Warhol Museum that would indicate
the whole dressing up and wearing wigs.
Also has something to do with vanity.

0283 01:06:08:10 01:06:22:19

[Jessica]: Yeah, we have in the archives of the Andy Warhol Museum
his passport photos from the 1950s,
and he takes his passport photo and pencils
in his balding hairline and chisels out
a thinner nose.

0284 01:06:22:21 01:06:25:16

I think we all wish we could do that to our passport photo.

0285 01:06:25:18 01:06:27:02

[Jessica]: <laughs> Yeah, yeah.

0286 01:06:27:04 01:06:27:21

[Andrea]: Right?

0287 01:06:27:23 01:06:28:21

[Jessica]: Yeah.

0288 01:06:39:23 01:06:54:00

[Andrea]: Let's talk about how some of this was
recreated in LEGO® Art.
And bring in LEGO® Art senior designer Kitt Kossmann
and design lead Christopher Stamp.
It's two dimensional,
which I imagine is different

0289 01:06:54:02 01:06:54:12

[Kitt]: Mm-hm.

0290 01:06:54:14 01:06:55:01

[Christopher]: Yeah.

0291 01:06:55:03 01:06:59:05

[Andrea]: How did that affect the process of
creating it?

0292 01:06:59:07 01:07:14:09

[Kitt]: When we created this, it's, uh, I've been painting paintings before and I really had to use that knowledge that I gained during paintings when I did these ones because it is, uh, flat images and you're working with colors.

0293 01:07:14:11 01:07:41:06

And the thing about mosaics is that you have to step away from them to actually really see what they are. When you are too close up to them, like, it sometimes just look like, uh, ocean of color, so you... so I think the magic about them is that when you move a bit away from them, you can suddenly see what it is, and that is a bit like painting so I really used my... my painting skills when I did these mosaics.

0294 01:07:41:08 01:07:57:07

But it's a very different experience compared to what I've been doing so far. But I knew it from back... <laughs> back then so... So in that... that respect, like, it was nice doing something different than getting back to that media again.

0295 01:07:57:09 01:08:06:19

[Christopher]: I think when I first looked at it, I thought, oh this will be, you know, pretty simple.

It's, it's very... lines of studs, very 2D like you mentioned.

0296 01:08:07:11 01:08:22:16

Because I was a little bit naive as to... the complexities it takes to create art, I think that's the biggest difference between LEGO® Art and other LEGO® products, is that it is... it's more art than design.

0297 01:08:22:18 01:08:36:21

You need to look at it the way you would look at a painting in a gallery rather than necessarily the way you would look at a sculpture. That's pretty like strange just to when you step into it, when you're trying to design it from a mindset standpoint.

0298 01:08:37:11 01:08:44:02

I was very lucky because Kitt was on the team and Kitt's got experience with art and painting previously.

0299 01:08:44:04 01:09:01:14

I think the challenge that I noticed was, you kind of... with most LEGO® products, you... you think about the play experience but then that goes hand in hand with the building experience and the two is kind of 50-50. You need to have fun when you're building it and then you need to have fun when you're playing with it.

0300 01:09:01:16 01:09:12:15

But with this, the building experience to some extent takes a lesser seat, and because you're focusing more on the adults and it's a display piece rather than a toy,

0301 01:09:13:15 01:09:27:02

the visual aspect and that final... that final visual display piece that takes a very much greater role, so you don't need to necessarily build in hidden functions and features.

0302 01:09:27:04 01:09:34:22

The build of it's going to be placing a lot of one by one round plates in a row. That kind of takes care of itself.

0303 01:09:34:24 01:09:52:01

We found that to make that interesting, that was how we use the colors. So for example, you you'll see on some of them that we don't have just a plain background, we tried to mix... maybe include dark blue and black in a pattern to make that build a bit interesting so you don't feel it's repetitive just placing the same color constantly.

0304 01:09:52:20 01:09:58:16

But it was more the use of how we use the colors together to

give it that 3D look.

0305 01:09:58:18 01:10:11:11

So even though you're building something that's- that's very 2D and flat, when you look at that, look at the... at the individual images, when you look at that, then it's very 3D effect.

0306 01:10:12:08 01:10:18:17

That's the change I think. That was the struggle I found because when you build a normal LEGO® model, it's automatically 3D.

0307 01:10:18:19 01:10:33:13

[Andrea]: Mm. In the box in the LEGO® Art set. it's... it comes with a booklet and it says relax and reconnect with your creative side. Can you tell us more about that idea and why do you think it's so appealing to people right now?

0308 01:10:33:15 01:10:56:06

[Kitt]: I think it's very appealing to people because, like, we need some time for ourselves. It can be hard to find that space in a busy day. So, um, I think this is one of the things that this product really do, it can actually give you some time to just dive into... to some arts and crafts.

0309 01:10:56:08 01:11:29:04

Um, so it's almost like mindfulness
and I can also see, like,
we've been like having different people doing this for us,
and they, like, in a way, really get into sin,
if you understand what I mean.
It's like they, uh, that's why... that's just
where you are because you have to...
you're occupied building so... and you're
also occupied listening to a podcast,
so your mind
doesn't really drift off. You're just plain there.
So I think that's, uh, that's really what...
I think is really nice about this product.

0310 01:11:29:06 01:11:40:03

[Christopher]: I agree with Kitt. I think we discussed a lot about
it. We went backwards and forth a lot
about what is the purpose of this product,
who is this product targeted at.

0311 01:11:40:05 01:11:58:20

We never want to do a product just to say we've done it.
That's not kind of the LEGO® approach, but we looked
a lot more at, right now, everybody is so...
they're so busy, they're so rushed, there's...
there's always something to do whether it's work
or taking care of the kids or preparing food
or all of this stuff.

0312 01:11:58:22 01:12:15:03

And we kind of just wanted to celebrate
me time where someone can... can take 20 minutes here
and 20 minutes

there and just grab a cup of coffee
and sit down and build and really just put
the headphones in and celebrate a bit of me time,
a bit of relaxed time.

0313 01:12:15:05 01:12:26:06

[Andrea]: Now, let's talk about, uh, Warhol, who came up with the idea
to recreate, you know, the iconic Marilyn Monroe portrait in LEGO® bricks.
How did you choose that one?

0314 01:12:26:08 01:12:37:18

[Christopher]: Well, because of the medium
and the product line that we were creating being LEGO® Art,
we knew that one of our products had to be art focused.

0315 01:12:38:12 01:12:46:21

And we discussed the medium, we discussed
a lot of the fact that we're building
with one by one pieces
and making some kind of mosaic format.

0316 01:12:48:08 01:12:59:08

And we explored different artists, but the certain artists
that you would need... you would need a million colors,
and maybe it's more than what the LEGO® color palette offers.

0317 01:12:59:10 01:13:12:10

And then there's other color, and there's other artists
that's a bit more timeless.
And when we were thinking about these different, these different artists,
Andy Warhol's name just kept coming back up repeatedly.

0318 01:13:12:12 01:13:36:04

He just seemed to fit the medium that we were creating. And then obviously, choosing Marilyn for us from a standpoint, therefore you're really becoming a bit more, um, interesting and appealing to several audiences because maybe you're a big Marilyn Monroe fan and not so much Andy Warhol, or maybe you're a huge Andy Warhol fan and not so much Marilyn.

0319 01:13:36:06 01:13:54:10

Well, with this product, therefore you can, you can kind of capture the interest of twice as many people. And if you are a Marilyn fan, you can learn a little bit more about Andy Warhol, and if you're an Andy Warhol fan, you can learn a little bit more about Marilyn. So it's also to educate as well a little bit.

0320 01:13:54:12 01:14:19:23

[Kitt]: Yeah, and to add to that, I think also that is one of the most popular. like, images that he'd done and most well-known images that he'd done, uh, so I think it was also quite like a good idea to take that one because like the soup can or the banana wasn't really an option so... and you know this Marilyn Monroe image comes in different colors so it just also suited the concept really well.

0321 01:14:20:00 01:14:37:01

[Christopher]: Absolutely. Especially, what you might find... especially because retro is coming back a little bit or has been back a little while now, some people might know this image, younger generations might know this image but not actually know the artist or the lady in the picture.

0322 01:14:37:03 01:14:42:20

So it's also going to be quite appealing to those people just because it is quite a famous image in itself.

0323 01:14:42:22 01:14:50:16

[Andrea]: Yeah, and like you said, these paintings are so iconic and recognizable. So was there a lot of pressure to get it just right?

0324 01:14:50:18 01:15:13:06

[Kitt]: Uh, it was definitely a challenge to get it right because when we scaled the Monroe picture, we had to get the size of her head right for our pixelations to get all the details in her face right and that, that took quite some tryouts before we got it all right because we needed to get the details right.

0325 01:15:13:08 01:15:23:04

But, and of course, like everybody knows how that image looks

so you would recognize
quickly if it didn't look like her
because you know exactly how it looks.

0326 01:15:23:06 01:15:34:05

[Christopher]: Yeah it's definitely, uh, we...
I don't think, before this project,
that we'd never stared at people's faces in
such a depth,
in-depth way, to be honest.

0327 01:15:34:07 01:15:52:09

And it was very strange because
it kind of goes back to that different mindset
between an artist and a designer,
because you're looking at
Marilyn's face or some of the other faces,
and you're looking at it and you're
thinking, you know, there's something just
about the chin... that's not quite right.

0328 01:15:52:11 01:16:12:10

So you would
maybe need to move the whole picture
slightly one way so that it lined up
better with the pixelation that we have.
Or you might need to, you know,
maybe the eyes aren't quite working
so we need to readjust the scaling to get the eyes right.
And then as soon as you do that,
it has a knock-on effect
on
the chin or the hair or something else.

0329 01:16:12:12 01:16:18:22

So it's very strange how just moving one
pixel left or right
can change the shape of the face
drastically.

0330 01:16:18:24 01:16:19:20

[Andrea]: Mm.

0331 01:16:19:22 01:16:47:03

[Kitt]: Yeah, and especially, I think what I found
during portraits is also that
the chin line can change everything
and it can like sometimes you actually
have to make them is like slightly
bigger or slightly smaller just to get
the
chin line right because sometimes the
chin line ends
between two pixels, and then the head
gets, like, slimmer or bigger than it actually is,
so that can be quite a challenge.

0332 01:16:47:05 01:17:07:01

And also, she has these like...
like sleepy sexy eyes on the picture,
and also to get that part right,
and to get the... there's like these...
the eyeshadow and the lipstick on her
to make that look like the end the original Andy Warhol.
That also was a bit of a challenge.

0333 01:17:07:03 01:17:15:00

So this image is, actually, we're a bit closer on her face than the original image but I think it turned out quite good.

0334 01:17:15:02 01:17:19:14

[Andrea]: Take us through a bit of the process. You know you want to do a certain image...

0335 01:17:19:16 01:17:20:05

[Kitt]: Mm-hm.

0336 01:17:20:07 01:17:22:08

[Andrea]: What's the next step? How do you begin?

0337 01:17:22:10 01:17:36:17

[Kitt]: Oh, when you have to do an image, first of all, you have to find out, uh, how this image is going to work with the amount of pixels that you have available. And the, the images we've been working with so far is 48 times 48 pixels.

0338 01:17:37:18 01:17:57:04

So what we do is that, like, we take, we crop the picture in different ways, and then in an illustrator, there's a function called mosaics, and by doing that you can start to see where the image would turn out the best,

how close you actually need to go to the image.

0339 01:17:57:06 01:18:14:13

And when you've done that, then that image actually has... because it's taken from the original photo, it has a lot of colors in it, so now we have to bring it down to the legal colors, so fewer colors, and that is that is done manually.

0340 01:18:14:15 01:18:42:02

So that's how you do it, and then when you, first, when you've done that and have, like, sit there with the... LEGO® colors, you can start seeing if you're onto something and then Chris and I have developed a skill... <chuckles> doing this process where we kind of paint on top of it to find the lines because what happens when you do these mosaics that, sometimes, you just lose track of the eyes, and the nose, and the mouth.

0341 01:18:42:04 01:18:48:22

You really need to have those lines to put on top of your image to kind of capture that again. and then you start doing some serious cleaning

0342 01:18:48:24 01:18:49:19

[Andrea]: Oh, wow.

0343 01:18:49:21 01:19:10:16

[Kitt]: And when you've done that, then you talk to your colleagues and you discuss, oh is this it and did it do, and then you like build it up, and then you look at it and you say, "Okay, is there some adjustments that we need to do to this or are we there? So that's pretty much the process of making these portraits.

0344 01:19:10:18 01:19:18:19

But, like, the first piece of it, just finding the right cropping and turning it into LEGO® curlers can be quite a hassle. <chuckles>

0345 01:19:18:21 01:19:50:10

[Christopher]: I think the best thing, just touching, just adding to what Kitt was saying, the lucky thing that we had on this project is the fact that we were a two-person team. And I think that was perfect because after your, like Kitt mentioned, we would capture the lines, but after you've spent four hours or three hours even just staring, really zoomed in on this, you look at it so long that you kind of convince yourself, okay, yeah, I've captured it, even though you might have moved away completely from the jawline.

0346 01:19:50:12 01:20:13:23

So it's great then because we could do check-ins where I would look at Kitt's and Kitt would look at mine. And then we would be, say, "You know what, there's something

quite not right just about the nose," and you would... you would look at it with a fresh pair of eyes which was great where you can then kind of look at the whole picture as a whole rather than just focusing on a specific detail.

0347 01:20:14:00 01:20:19:15

[Andrea]: Mm. So what was it like building it and looking at the finished product for the first time?

0348 01:20:19:17 01:20:40:20

Oh, I felt very proud. I was like... that when you, when you do them in in Illustrator, which is the program we are working in, um, they, like, actually, the images are... look really, really good. But when you build them, they just look much better. We, like, we normally say, said, like, if they look good in Illustrator, they're gonna look great when they're built and...

0349 01:20:40:22 01:20:41:08

[Christopher]: Yeah.

0350 01:20:41:10 01:21:05:04

[Kitt]: Because they start, like, they had this special shine to the actual like, uh, place, that we were using and some of the mosaics that are built with the bricks with studs on like small round one place with studs on. And that like when you've built those, they

just like, looked like cross stitches in the right light.
They were, like, they really got beautiful

0351 01:21:05:06 01:21:05:16

[Christopher]: Yeah.

0352 01:21:05:18 01:21:07:00

[Kitt]: So I felt proud.

0353 01:21:07:02 01:21:25:07

[Christopher]: Absolutely. I think the biggest challenge, um, well, not the biggest challenge, the biggest difference with this product line, this is a mainly digital project. Given that... given the size and the time it takes to build one of these, it normally takes you about three, four hours to build... to build a full mosaic.

0354 01:21:25:24 01:21:50:24

We just found that it was more cost effective, um, in terms of at the time we had to just do it digitally. So we would we would look at different color variants and things digitally because we simply... by the time you'd spend four hours building one, then just to realize, actually, I don't want that color, it doesn't really work. So we... we did a lot of the building very late after we'd kind of locked in what we wanted.

0355 01:21:52:17 01:22:11:02

There was one... Actually, with Marilyn Monroe, we couldn't pick out the shade of blue that we wanted, so we knew that we wanted the certain colors for the main image. But when it comes to the alternatives, we couldn't figure out what that extra color we needed to add would be to create the differentiation.

0356 01:22:11:04 01:22:22:12

So that was the only point in the process where we actually physically built the different alternatives because the color on the screen doesn't necessarily, like Kitt mentioned, line up with the physical color.

0357 01:22:23:02 01:22:45:05

So what we had to do is we basically... we had kind of a rack that looked like an old record collection but instead of records, it was basically a pile of these different mosaics. The same image in different colors where we then put them all up together and went through and said what are the pros and cons for each one, which one popped the best. And to find the right shade, to add...

0358 01:22:45:07 01:22:55:10

[Kitt]: Yeah, I remember like we did... we did one and I think it was light aqua... in the face and it just turned out to look like a face mask.

0359 01:22:55:12 01:22:55:22

[Andrea]: Yes.

0360 01:22:55:24 01:23:03:00

[Kitt]: But, like, it didn't... didn't look that great. <laughs> So we ended up taking another color leaving that one out.

0361 01:23:03:02 01:23:28:21

[Christopher]: Yeah, and especially for the main part of Marilyn's face, we... when we do, uh, IP Minifigures, so when we do like a minifigure in Star Wars or superheroes, there's a certain, um, skin tone that we use. We don't use yellow minifigures for those. We tried that color on the faces and it completely looked like she was wearing some kind of, uh, Venice mask kind of thing, some kind of face mask.

0362 01:23:28:23 01:23:35:19

And it... it's that kind of attention to detail where we... even the shade that we choose can have such a large impact.

0363 01:23:35:21 01:24:06:11

[Kitt]: Definitely. At one point, we also use the skin color for her face and the thing is that, in the bricks in that box has to be cross used on the different images just... like depending on which image you want to build as a customer, so the face color looked okay for face color but it just looked really weird when it starts being like the hair color or the background color. So we decided to go for the light pink as her facial color and, uh, I think that was really good, like that was a good decision.

0364 01:24:06:13 01:24:23:10

[Christopher]: Yeah, that's how we had to design them. We, of course, we started with the main image which is the... the hero image if you will, um, but we had to design this all four parallel at the same time. We didn't design the first one and then after that, try to figure out the others and see what worked.

0365 01:24:23:12 01:24:34:14

We really tried to figure out all four at the same time just because that was the only way that you can do a product like this, where it is a four in one or a three in one.

0366 01:24:34:16 01:24:42:24

Um, you can't put something on the back burner

and say, okay, I'm gonna look into that one next week but I'm going to take care of this one now.

0367 01:24:43:01 01:24:57:00

If you change the hair on one, you then need to go and change the hair on the others, and then recount how many times am I using the yellow, or how many times am I using the blue. Well, this was a very different type of LEGO® puzzle.

0368 01:24:57:02 01:25:07:01

[Andrea]: Yeah, well, I imagine it sounds like it was almost counterintuitive. When it comes to, like you said, the skin color, you... you try it out and you realize, oh, no. <laughs>

0369 01:25:07:03 01:25:07:13

[Kitt]: <laughs>

0370 01:25:07:15 01:25:21:02

[Andrea]: That didn't work back to the drawing board. Can you take any of the tiles and, like for instance, could you make Marilyn's smile bigger if you placed some in different locations? Or is it sort of we stick to the grid to get just the perfect image?

0371 01:25:21:04 01:25:29:13

[Kitt]: They can try it out, but yeah, maybe they can make a smile. I'm sure some can make her smile, and I think if they want to they should do it.

0372 01:25:29:15 01:25:29:23

[Christopher]: Yeah.

0373 01:25:30:00 01:25:31:09

[Kitt]: That would look really awesome, too.

0374 01:25:31:11 01:25:41:22

[Christopher]: With... with all of these products, because they are a four in one, and you, you cannot possibly do these designs with the same number of each color. We have to include extra pieces.

0375 01:25:41:24 01:25:54:00

So compared to a normal LEGO® product, when you finish building one of these mosaics, you will also end up with a pile of LEGO® pieces left over. Those aren't by accident, those are to allow you to build the others.

0376 01:25:54:02 01:26:13:04

So for example, with this piece, and Monroe, you'll get 850 extra one by one pieces, and that's to allow you to build all four. So that allows you, basically, that gives you the opportunity to maybe make the mouth bigger if you want to. That's not why it's there but there is the possibility of doing it.

0377 01:26:13:06 01:26:15:05

[Andrea]: Take caution, proceed at your own risk.

0378 01:26:15:07 01:26:15:19

[Kitt]: Yeah. <chuckles>

0379 01:26:15:21 01:26:17:05

[Christopher]: Yes.

0380 01:26:17:07 01:26:25:18

[Andrea]: Um, now, why do you think Warhol and his art is still so relevant today and an inspiration to so many younger artists

0381 01:26:25:20 01:26:40:14

[Kitt]: I think this pop art had always fascinated me. It's very timeless. I think that's what it is. It's very bright and popping and... and very modern. I think it's because it's timeless that it's kind of appealing still.

0382 01:26:40:16 01:26:46:16

[Andrea]: And do you think Andy would approve? What do you think he would say if he could see his paintings recreated in LEGO® Art?

0383 01:26:47:07 01:26:48:17

[Kitt]: I think, I think he would like it.

0384 01:26:48:19 01:26:49:11

[Christopher]: Yeah, I do too.

0385 01:26:49:13 01:26:50:04

[Kitt]: I really do.

0386 01:26:50:06 01:26:57:01

[Christopher]: Andy was all about creativity. I think he'd be... I would hope that he would be pretty happy with it.

0387 01:26:57:03 01:26:57:22

[Andrea]: Mm.

0388 01:27:03:03 01:27:05:18

Let's talk more about the Marilyn Monroe paintings.

0389 01:27:05:20 01:27:08:24

First, I'd like to hear what they meant to you, Devan and Lucia,

0390 01:27:09:01 01:27:12:06

and maybe how they've influenced you as artists. Devan?

0391 01:27:12:23 01:27:26:24

[Devan]: The Marilyn portraits, that's, you know, I always... When I was a kid, I'd seen them, I mean, it

became just sort of merchandise. I almost...
Maybe a good comparison would be to
something like, um,
I thought of it like Hello Kitty. It was
almost just like a staple.

0392 01:27:27:01 01:27:50:11

It's this thing that has no real backstory.
it's a potent image that has a punch, it's recognizable,
but it almost becomes backdrop and I
think that's the power of that that sort
of, um... that familiarity with certain types of
images of celebrity
just becomes this sort of nothingness
but, uh,
you know he's sort of pointing to that.
Commodification of celebrity culture or,
you know, a multitude of layers to that.

0393 01:27:50:13 01:27:56:14

Um, but, you know, then I start
when I get to about college, I think, I saw...

0394 01:27:57:14 01:28:14:03

I forget which movie it was but it was...
The first Marilyn Monroe movie
that I had seen was in college in a class of mine,
and, you know, then,
now there's all this content buzzing
beneath all these images
that I've seen in my, you know,
in my entire... my entire childhood, growing up, um...

0395 01:28:14:05 01:28:27:13

So, I don't know, it really changes
the way I look at everything looking back at that
but I think it, uh, makes me think about
the significance of having an iconic
image and,
um, and the power of a multiple in printmaking.

0396 01:28:27:15 01:28:48:10

And... and I think that that's how the
Marilyn portraits maybe impacted me most directly
and thinking of like, uh, you know,
how much you can sort of alter the
perception of someone through,
uh, mass-producing images of them.
And it sort of created this barrier around Marilyn that
we don't really know her know her.

0397 01:28:48:12 01:29:09:05

We know her as this like singular static image
and it sort of really mimics the way
in which we believe, we understand
or know a celebrity or some, or, you know,
someone of importance who has a
massive presence like that but we don't quite.
So I think it, um, I think
the iconic image, uh, is what I take from that
and I try to do that with a lot of my paintings.

0398 01:29:09:07 01:29:27:01

A lot of the time, I'm really
interested in like symmetry, um, you know,

the figure must be centered or I should sort of have a direct gaze with the viewer. Um, so a lot of those things, I think, come out of loosely out of work like the Marilyn portraits. Not necessarily just those but work like that.

0399 01:29:27:03 01:29:28:09

[Andrea]: Lucia, what do you think?

0400 01:29:28:11 01:29:45:22

[Lucia]: I love those. Those are so great, um, I think that one of Andy's greatest gifts and feats is sort of that immediacy and repetition. And he was so good at utilizing the medium of screen printing.

0401 01:29:47:06 01:30:00:17

And I think that coming from his like commercial background, he understood that taking one image and doing something to it over and over and over and over again until, you know, there was nothing else to do to that thing

0402 01:30:00:19 01:30:14:06

that you would find these different variations and that and that making something blue or red or yellow or would definitely change the read of the thing. And working for commercial publications,

you learn that these variations definitely change the tone of something.

0403 01:30:14:08 01:30:41:12

And I think those Marilyn pieces are really brilliant because they got sloppy sometimes, the lines, you know, around the lips would get messy and it would look almost like this sort of re-application of lipstick or makeup or, um, or felt that way, you know, and they got messy. And for people who know a bit about Marilyn's life and personal life and that sort of thing, that images is haunting in that way.

0404 01:30:43:00 01:30:59:04

There was something that... Andy sort of knew about that culture, about celebrity culture that was darker and a little bit more grim than we realized. And so, I think those pieces capture that and it's... they're amazing, they're pretty brilliant.

0405 01:30:59:06 01:31:05:14

[Andrea]: Totally. Warhol actually did Marilyn portraits both in 1962 and in 1967.

0406 01:31:05:16 01:31:29:08

In '62, he did a silkscreen painting that he named Marilyn Diptych.

This one huge painting with the same Monroe face 50 times, 25 images on the left painted in color the 25 on the right side are in black and white. This artwork was named the third most influential piece of modern art in a survey of 500 artists critics and others.

0407 01:31:29:10 01:31:52:13

And then there are the square artworks where there is one portrait per frame. These are the ones that are used in the LEGO® Art project. Warhol did 10 different versions in 10 different colors in 1967, and called this artwork Untitled From Marilyn Monroe. It's the same photo he used for both works a promotional photo from the film Niagara from 1953.

0408 01:31:52:15 01:31:55:09

Jessica Beck, what can you say about the one from '62?

0409 01:31:55:11 01:32:22:20

[Jessica]: The Marilyn paintings by that point, by 1962, Warhol's navigating the screen printing process. He's working in color under painting and then screen printing over top of it, and then he's also working in a black and white screen printing process so

he's playing with diptych paintings which be two canvases next to each other, um, that start to mirror things like the television screen or a film strip.

0410 01:32:22:22 01:32:57:22

So I think, you know, that's part of it too with his painting practice, it often mirrors other... other media. So whether that be the portraits he made, of Ethel Scull for instance, that he made from photo booth strips from 42nd street, um, that moves in a way, there's movement in those... in those portraits so in the early Marilyn paintings, he screen printed in a repetitive fashion that starts to look like a moving image, or multiples that look like a film strip or a television screen.

0411 01:32:57:24 01:32:59:21

[Andrea]: Blake Gopnik, what can you add?

0412 01:32:59:23 01:33:22:04

[Blake]: Well, one of the things that's always said about the Marilyn Monroe paintings is that they were done right after Marilyn died. But, you know, I dug into this and there's not really any decent evidence. That's the case. It is something that Warhol seems to have said about them. But the great thing about Andy Warhol is that he always said the thing that he

thought would make for the best story.
He didn't necessarily always tell the truth.

0413 01:33:22:06 01:33:34:11

And there's a little bit of
evidence that,
well, we certainly know he was fascinated
by Marilyn Monroe for a couple years,
before he, um, he made the painting of her,
there was a photograph of her up on his wall
years before he made the painting.

0414 01:33:34:13 01:33:50:05

Uh, she's an obvious subject for him,
she didn't need to die to, uh, to be a subject,
and she hung out at a cafe called
Serendipity Cafe which still exists in New York,
which was his main hangout.
So it's very possible that they met
even before he made the painting of her.

0415 01:33:50:07 01:34:09:08

But what matters most about that
painting is that it's a silk screen,
that it's clearly made from kind of
low-end studio photograph of Marilyn Monroe,
in one of her very first movies
before she becomes the sex kitten.
Uh, when she's playing a completely different role,
well that's the photograph Andy chose to make into art.

0416 01:34:09:10 01:34:31:07

So this, Marilyn Monroe's a kind
of hinge for everything that Andy Warhol ever did.
She represents so much in in his life
and even though she may have been dead
when he came to make it,
it still stands as a kind of celebrity,
uh, portrait just like the celebrity portraits
he did by the hundreds and
hundreds in the 1970s.
So it really is at the heart of his career.

0417 01:34:31:09 01:35:00:14

And the nice thing about the Marilyn is
that he also did them in lots of
different versions.
And that's really important for understanding Andy Warhol.
That he
loved repeating the same image.
And the question is did he love repeating it
to increase its power, right,
if you keep yelling something?
It gives it a kind of extra heft?
Or on the other hand, it could be exactly the
opposite
that when you repeat something often
enough like Campbell's Soup Cans on a supermarket shelf,
they start losing their value.

0418 01:35:00:16 01:35:05:14

Well, the great thing about Andy Warhol is
that it's always yes and no at the same time.

0419 01:35:05:16 01:35:09:11

[Andrea]: Is that part of the reason that the colors shifted from canvas to canvas?

0420 01:35:09:13 01:35:29:18

[Blake]: You know, one of the interesting things about Andy Warhol, of course, is that he... he was very interested in using devices from popular culture, from commercial culture, and transferring those into, um, into high art and, of course, one of the things about textiles. And after all, paintings are painted on canvas, they are kind of textile.

0421 01:35:29:20 01:35:48:09

Textiles are often made in different colors, right? You can get a tablecloth in red and green or you can get the same pattern in blue and red. Um, and so he took that notion that a single image can be done in lots of different colors or what they call color ways, and transplanted that into fine art. And that's kind of exciting,

0422 01:35:48:11 01:36:04:06

I mean in 1967, when he made this series of silk screen prints, they came in all these different color ways as though in a sense they were just commercial goods. Well, they weren't. They were high art. And what made them interesting is that they were high art pretending to be commercial goods.

0423 01:36:04:08 01:36:13:10

There's nothing interesting about a table cloth, you can get in different colors, that's normal. What's interesting is if you take that idea and turn it into high art, like he did with his Marilyn prints.

0424 01:36:15:00 01:36:21:20

[Andrea]: We're almost at the end of this soundtrack with the story behind Andy Warhol and the Marilyn Monroe portraits.

0425 01:36:21:22 01:36:36:17

Thank you to the talented young artists Devan Shimoyama and Lucia Hierro. Also to Jessica Beck from the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh and Blake Gopnik, the author of the brand new biography simply entitled Warhol.

0426 01:36:36:19 01:36:42:10

Before we wrap it up, I have one more thing I'd like to ask Kitt and Christopher from the LEGO® Group.

0427 01:36:42:12 01:36:55:01

It's normal that LEGO® fans are creating something new, and now that these brand new LEGO® Art tiles are out there, do you expect that fans are going to start creating their own pieces? And if so, are you looking forward to seeing what they come up with?

0428 01:36:55:03 01:37:21:12

[Kitt]: Oh, I really... I really hope that they'll do that.

That could be, um, that could be very inspiring also for us to see...
I personally would like to do the Mary Monroe
and like have four different versions
and do it of my own family so
that we each become a different like colored
image. Instead of Marilyn Monroe,
then just have the four of us, I have two
daughters and a husband,
so I hope others will do the same
definitely

0429 01:37:21:14 01:37:41:00

[Christopher]: Yeah, I completely agree with Kitt.
We've got such a fantastic, uh, adult community,
and if you go on the Internet, you can see
they make these fantastic creations.
Uh, their imagination is just off the charts.
I'm just excited to see what new things they come up with.

0430 01:37:41:02 01:37:51:11

[Andrea]: How is your piece of art coming along?
Are you getting ready to hang it on the wall?
Maybe you're ready to break it apart and
build one of the other versions, or create your own.

0431 01:37:51:13 01:37:58:16

Thank you so much for listening.
My name is Andrea Collins, and this has been
an original soundtrack from LEGO® Art.