

NEWS RELEASE



Montclair Art Museum

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For Immediate Release

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**THE MONTCLAIR ART MUSEUM PRESENTS
*WARHOL AND CARS: AMERICAN ICONS***

**First Exhibition to Explore Warhol's Fascination with Cars as Products of
American Consumer Society**

On View March 6 – June 19

I think of myself as an American artist; I like it here. I think it's so great. I feel I represent the U.S. in my art but I'm not a social critic: I just paint those objects in my paintings because those are the things I know best.... I've heard it said that my paintings are as much a part of the fashionable world as clothes and cars.

Andy Warhol, 1966

MONTCLAIR, NJ, January 14, 2011— As one of the most iconic and influential artists of the 20th century, Andy Warhol has helped to define America. His signature images of such American products and celebrities as Campbell's soup cans, Coca-Cola bottles, Marilyn Monroe, and Elizabeth Taylor have become instantly recognizable, while challenging traditional and cherished distinctions: between fine and commercial art, the mechanical and hand made, popular taste and high culture, repetition and singularity. In doing so, Warhol himself has attained a level of celebrity and public visibility unknown to most artists.

Yet despite the intense attention paid to Warhol since the time of his death, in 1987, his preoccupation with another American icon, the automobile, has been largely overlooked. The Montclair Art Museum (MAM) now breaks new ground in presenting *Warhol and Cars: American Icons*, the first exhibition to examine Warhol's enduring fascination with automotive vehicles as products of American consumer society. Highlighting MAM's pivotal, little known,

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early silkscreen painting, *Twelve Cadillacs*, 1962 (above), *Warhol and Cars* features more than 40 drawings, paintings, prints, photographs, and related archival documents on loan from the Andy Warhol Museum and private collections spanning Warhol's career from 1946 to 1986. The exhibition will be shown exclusively at the Montclair Art Museum, on view from March 6 through June 19, 2011.

The exhibition is organized chronologically and thematically, tracing the development of Warhol's work with cars throughout his career. Exhibition highlights include a rare, spontaneous drawing of the 1940s featuring a produce truck operated by Warhol's brother Paul; works on paper of the 1950s, dating from the era of Warhol's commercial magazine illustration; and paintings and prints from his important and poignant Car Crash series.

A key work is *Twelve Cadillacs*, part of a group of nine Warhol car paintings published in the November 1962 issue of *Harper's Bazaar*, which commissioned Warhol to make a visual commentary on the phenomenon of the iconic American motor car. The repetition and grid organization became a central feature of Warhol's work. For the first time, *Twelve Cadillacs* will be juxtaposed with potential source images, as well as the related *Seven Cadillacs* and the hand-painted *Lincoln Continental*, both of which were also part of the *Harper's Bazaar* commission. Also on view will be a related drawing and car model of Cadillacs from the Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf Collection of American Automobile Art.

Warhol's continued engagement with the theme of the automobile is seen in prints and paintings of the 1970s and 1980s based on Volkswagen advertisements, as well as in multiple photographs of European and American cars sewn together with thread into a format evocative of Warhol's characteristic assembly-line aesthetic.

Also featured will be a film of the artist painting a BMW in 1979 as part of the BMW Art Race Car Projects introduced by French race car driver Hervé Poulain. A painted miniature model of this car will be among a number of rare archival documents. It will be complemented by a unique, recently discovered, large-scale fiberglass maquette of a 1978 BMW art race car incorporating Warhol's Pop art floral design, exhibited in the United States for the first time.

Warhol and Cars: American Icons is organized by the Montclair Art Museum and curated by Gail Stavitsky, MAM chief curator.

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Exhibition Catalogue

Published by the Montclair Art Museum, *Warhol and Cars: American Icons*, by Gail Stavitsky, is the first to focus on Warhol's Cadillac paintings and other car-themed works within the context of his career and American art prior to and during his lifetime. Fully illustrated. 88 pages. Softcover. Available at the Museum Store.

Related Exhibition

A related installation of Andy Warhol's *Silver Clouds* will be on display on loan from the Warhol Museum. Exhibited in 1966, Warhol referred to these silver mylar pillows, filled with a mixture of helium and air, as "a painting that floats.... some floating sculpture ... silver rectangles that I blow up and that float ... free." Their silver color was a favorite of his, which he associated with the Factory and the band the Velvet Underground, "who will belong to the biggest discotheque in the world, where painting and music and sculpture can be combined and that's what I'm doing now." *Silver Clouds* will be displayed in a separate room, painted black to evoke the experience of the 1968 presentation of the modern dance *Rainforest*, choreographed by Merce Cunningham, with music by John Cage, costumes by Jasper Johns, and set design by Warhol. A DVD of the 1968 film of this dance, by DA Pennybacker and Richard Leacock, will be displayed on a monitor adjacent to this room, for a "Happening"-like experience.

Public Programs; Group Tours

MAM is offering a wide variety of education and public programs for all ages in connection with the exhibition. Please consult the calendar on the home page of montclairartmuseum.org for complete information. Group tours may be booked by calling 973-259-5136 or by e-mailing tours@montclairartmuseum.org.

Online Press Site

The Museum will maintain a site dedicated to the exhibition for journalists seeking further information, including a checklist and images. Please visit montclairartmuseum.org and click on For the Media.

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Visit Montclair

For more Montclair experiences, visit websites for the Montclair Center Business Improvement District (www.montclaircenter.com/) and Destination Montclair (www.destinationmontclair.com).

Sponsorship

Warhol and Cars: American Icons is made possible by generous support from The Mr. and Mrs. Raymond J. Horowitz Foundation for the Arts, Mande, Annie sez, and the Judith Targan Endowment Fund for Museum Publications. Additional support has been provided by Exhibition Angels the Vance Wall Foundation, The Bershad Foundation, Bobbi Brown and Steven Plofker, Bob and Bobbie Constable, Tracy Higgins and James Leitner, Jacqueline and Herb Klein, Lyn and Glenn Reiter, Toni LeQuire-Schott and Newton B. Schott, Jr., Adrian A. Shelby, Margo and Frank Walter, and Joan and Donald Zief.

This exhibition was selected by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts as part of the American Masterpieces Series in New Jersey. American Masterpieces is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Image Credit

Andy Warhol, *Twelve Cadillacs*, 1962, Silkscreen ink on canvas, 46 x 42 inches, Montclair Art Museum purchase; prior bequest of James Turner and Acquisition Fund, 1998.9, © 2010 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

About the Museum

The Montclair Art Museum, a notable, community-based institution with an international reputation, boasts a renowned collection of American and Native American art that uniquely highlights art making in the United States over the last three hundred years. The collection includes more than 12,000 objects: paintings, prints, original works on paper, photographs, and sculpture by American artists from the 18th century to the present, as well as traditional and contemporary Native American art and artifacts representing the cultural developments of peoples from all of the major American Indian regions. MAM's Yard School of Art is the leading regional art school, offering a multitude of comprehensive courses for children, teens, adults, seniors, and professional artists.

The Montclair Art Museum is located at 3 South Mountain Avenue in Montclair, N.J. Information and directions are available on the Museum website, montclairartmuseum.org, or by calling 973-746-5555. MAM is open Wednesdays through Sundays, Noon – 5 p.m., and closed on Mondays, Tuesdays, and major holidays. Museum admission is \$12 for nonmember adults, \$10 for senior citizens and students with I.D., and free for members and children under 12.

All Museum programs are made possible, in part, by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, and by funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Vance Wall Foundation, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Arts Consulting Group, and Museum Members.

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