ANDY WARHOL
THE COMPLETE COMMISSIONED POSTERS
1964–1987
CATALOGUE RAISONNÉ

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This catalogue raisonné indexes fifty-two posters created by Andy Warhol from 1964 (midcareer) until his death in 1987. The only selection criterion for the works presented in this publication was evidence of a sponsor commissioning Warhol to create a poster for the sole purpose of promoting a product, an event, or a cause.

As a result, this book does not index the great number of posters announcing Warhol’s exhibitions, be they solo or group shows presented at galleries, museums, or exhibition centers. The majority of such posters featured photographic reproductions of existing Warhol artworks, and therefore cannot be considered original posters by Warhol. The artist rarely, in fact, had any hand in these promotional materials, and occasionally his artwork was the object of modifications not made by Warhol. One example is the exhibition poster for the 1970 Warhol exhibition at the Pasadena Art Museum, which represents a Brillo box in green—a color not chosen by the artist. Neither have we included any of the posters announcing Warhol’s post-1965 films, such as Hollywood, Lonesome Cowboys, Frankenstein, Blood for Dracula, Trash, Flesh, and Heat. All of these used stills taken during the films’ production, and their graphic design owes nothing to Warhol.

We have also excluded the great number of posters of Warhol’s work published during his lifetime and after his death. These are reproductions of existing works for which there is no evidence of a commission and that were published for decorative or marketing purposes only (as, for example, the posthumously printed Chanel posters used by the French brand for a 1997 publicity campaign). Therefore, they too cannot be considered original commissioned posters.

Warhol sometimes agreed to create an original poster based on one of his previously produced works, with modification of the composition or colors. A few examples of such posters are included here because their creation was inspired by a specific request from a client. Warhol’s acquiescence in altering his work was based on his understanding of promotional purposes. Such posters were made for record albums by Aretha Franklin (no. 46), Diana Ross (no. 17), and Rats & Star (no. 34), as well as exhibitions of Warhol’s work held in 1970 at the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (no. 9) and the 1976 Venice Biennale (no. 10).

Warhol sometimes received double commissions that resulted in both a cover and a poster. His Michael Jackson Time magazine cover also became a poster to promote the sale of the issue (no. 37)—a poster designed with noticeable differences from the magazine cover. Likewise, Warhol created both a series of posters (nos. 18–22) and the cover of the soundtrack album for Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s film Querelle.

Other posters by Warhol advertising record albums merely replicated his album cover designs, enlarged and translated into poster format. This is the case with alternate versions of posters for Rockbird (Debbie Harry), Love You Live (the Rolling Stones), Silk Electric (Diana Ross), and Emotions in Motion (Billy Squier). Since these reproduce Warhol’s album cover commissions rather than having been altered specifically for the poster format, they cannot be identified as original posters.

This book does include posters designed by Warhol in collaboration with other artists, including Roy Lichtenstein, Yoko Ono, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Keith Haring (Rain Dance, 1985, no. 41), and Haring again (20th Montreux Jazz Festival, 1986, no. 47).

Due to the reproducibility of Warhol’s Pop imagery, the artist created some screen prints that could understandably be confused with posters. The posters, however, are the final products and represent what Warhol deemed the best versions of the screen prints. Viewers, in the context of this book, can as a result take a very different look at Warhol’s screen prints in light of the artist’s commissioned posters. Vote McGovern (1972, fig. 7) and Paris Review (1967), for example, were conceived only as signed and numbered screen-print limited editions and thus do not meet the selection criteria for this catalogue raisonné. Fifth New York Film Festival—Lincoln Center (1967, no. 6), on the contrary, was intended as a poster but also published in a separate screen-print edition of 200. The latter cannot be considered original posters since they were numbered and signed, but the poster version is of course included in this volume.

In sum, we have retained for this catalogue raisonné only works by Andy Warhol designed expressly for the purpose of creating a poster, and for which he received a commission.
I felt that if everyone couldn't afford a painting, the printed poster would be available.

Andy Warhol
Posters generally serve one of the four following purposes: announcing an event, promoting a product, fund-raising, or supporting a cause. Aside from their ability to inform, educate, or promote, posters communicate essentially through images. Graphic art changes in style and medium, as does written language. Its infinitely malleable possibilities manipulate drawing, painting, engraving, etching, lithography, collage, and photography: all artistic disciplines allowed by transfer onto paper. Each of these methods allows for the message of a poster’s communication either through direct representation or through evocation, the latter being a more subtle form of communication appealing primarily to the imagination. Between these two poles, many possibilities exist for a poster as graphic art or as an artwork—something its ephemeral nature would seem to forbid.

Lithography, invented by Alois Senefelder (German, 1771–1834) in the latter half of the 1790s, was at the time a printing method used mostly to illustrate books and magazines. With the technological developments and economic expansion of the Industrial Revolution, it became possible, from