

**FOR THE COLLECTION OF INTERNATIONAL PRINTS & DRAWINGS
POUR LA COLLECTION DE DESSINS ET ESTAMPES INTERNATIONAUX**

WARHOL, Andy, American (1928-1987)

Sleep, ca. 1965

Screenprint on off-white wove board, 89.5 x 117 cm (support); 70.8 x 101.4 cm (image)



recto



verso

Provenance: The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.; Collection of Larry and Marla Wasser, Toronto.

Exhibition History: Art Gallery of Ontario, *Andy Warhol-Supernova: Stars, Deaths and Disasters, 1962-1964*, July 8 – October 22, 2006.

Literature: *Andy Warhol Catalogue Raisonné Volume 2B: Paintings and Sculpture, 1964-1969*, Phaidon Press, Edited By George Frei, Sally King-Nero, Neil Printz, Ex cat., illustrated as fig. 82 on p. 187.

The recto of this screenprint is an image in black ink (plus some marginal red smudges incurred during the printing of the verso) showing the head of a sleeping John Giorno based on a still from Andy Warhol's first film *Sleep* (1963). One of the few examples of Warhol's still works immortalizing anyone in his entourage, this print exists in four near-identical examples.¹ These proof-like prints are close and perhaps identical in scale to the images of Giorno in a 1965 print on Plexiglas reproducing two successive frames of film, the only extant example of which is on the Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh.² The same collection includes a photographic negative showing two successive frames of an image very close to the Plexiglas print, and hence to the present work.³ A different work on Plexiglas, now lost, shows four successive frames, complete with sprocket holes, of Giorno's naked torso and head in the same film.⁴ There are likewise Plexiglas works in various sizes based on other early, silent films (*Kiss, Eat, Empire, Henry Geldzahler*).⁵

To place these various works within the artist's practice, we must first understand the films themselves. Warhol decided to become a filmmaker in the summer of 1963, after spending a morning in a Connecticut country home watching his lover, the poet John Giorno, sleep off a

hangover. According to Giorno's account the artist had purchased a vintage 16mm Bolex camera the week before that, in the hopes of making underground films that were more "beautiful" than the ones he and Giorno had been seeing together. In the ensuing months the artist spent many three-hour sessions at Giorno's apartment filming him sleeping, until he had accumulated one thousand hundred-foot rolls of black-and white film.⁶ Shot at 24 frames per second, these pioneering efforts became the basis of a film that runs for more than five hours at the silent speed of 16fps.⁷ The present work seems to be based on a still from the second reel of the film, which repeats essentially the same shot for some twenty minutes. Giorno was sleeping on his arm, but the image has been inverted to assume the more prone pose with exposed underarm.⁸

Beginning in 1964 Warhol used the same Bolex camera to make over five hundred short, black-and-white video portraits or "screen tests" of a range of sitters who came through his studio. Of these, it is the two Giorno portraits, both from 1964, that "probably come closest to achieving the presence and graphic impact of a still photograph"—thereby exemplifying the stillness that Warhol sought for his film portraits.⁹ Between his motionless films and his serial prints Warhol challenges seemingly essential features of familiar media. This ontological muddying occurs at the time of his May 1965 announcement that he has retired as an artist in order to take up filmmaking—a Duchampean pronouncement that does not stop him from making art work based on stills from his films.¹⁰ Judging from the dates of the related works in Plexiglas, the present sheet probably dates from around late 1965.

While many of the Plexiglas works were clearly displayed as finished art works in Warhol's day, the status of the present sheet is less evident. Since both recto and verso exhibit considerable smudging in black and red ink, it is possible that these few prints on board are proof states for the work(s) on Plexiglas. The image on the verso, comprising a collage of two magazine photos of fish and pipes printed in separate colours of red ink, looks more Rauschenberg than Warhol, and on the back of the Warhol Museum version of this work there is likewise a dubious print suggesting the work of another artist.¹¹ Photos showing Warhol carefully rolling the latter print indicate that it was not simply a throwaway—unsurprisingly given that he famously kept everything.¹² Whatever the status of this print, it attests to the sheer complexity of the merging of Warhol's filmmaking and art making practice in the mid-1960s, and its trial-like nature makes it all the more valuable as evidence of a process involving relentless reworking of a given image.¹³

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¹ The donor of the present print informed me that there are examples of this print in the Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh and the collection of Pamela and Richard Kramlich, San Francisco. I have obtained a photo from the Warhol Museum (described in more detail below) that does not correspond to the marginal markings in either of the two prints illustrated, without reference to location, as cats I.9 [a] and [b] in Feldman and Schellmann 2003, p. 49. The present impression, with its distinctive smudges in red and black at lower right, is reproduced as fig. 82 in Georg Frei and Neil Printz, *The Andy Warhol Catalogue Raisonné* (London: Phaidon, 2004), p. 187.

² In vol 2B of their 2004 catalogue Frei and Printz surmise that there were two unknown versions (cats 1834.1, 1835) of the Plexiglas print in addition to the extant example in the Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh (cat 1834.2). Rainer Crone (*Andy Warhol*. New York: Praeger, 1970, cat 6627, p. 279) and Kynaston McShine (*Andy Warhol, a Retrospective*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1989, cat. 320 p. 304) refer to the Plexiglas work as the *Large Sleep*, even though there is no small equivalent. The title evidently

derives from the fact that the comparable film-based work *Kiss* existed in both large and miniature versions, which appear respectively as cats 1836 and 1837 in Frei and Printz 2004, pp. 184-185. The conceit of the miniature version and the cataloguers' title bring to mind Duchamp's *Large Glass* (the commonest English title for his work *La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même*) and the portable version of this and other works in his *Boîte-en-Valise*.

³ AWM, Pittsburgh # TC5.14.1-TC5.14.2 (unpublished). A related piece of evidence is a Kodak box inscribed in the hand of Julia Warhola: "Andrew to / Here you Have / Picture. / Pitcture." Taped to the outside are some frames showing details of John Giorno's head (as in the *Sleep* print), with the remainder of the reel tied inside with string. AWM, Founding Collection. Never having been to Pittsburgh, I have obtained information and images about unpublished works in the Warhol Museum through the generous help of their Rights & Reproductions / Photo Services Manager Greg Burchard.

⁴ Rainer Crone, *Andy Warhol*. New York: Praeger, 1970, cat 633 (illustr.); Frei & Printz 2004 vol 2B, cat. 838 (illustr.).

⁵ See Film Frames (cat nos 1834.1-1841) in Frei and Printz 2004 vol 2B, pp.178-187.

⁶ Giorno later recounts: "We would go back to my place around 1:00 or 2:00 a.m. I'd have another drink and take off my clothes as Andy set up the tripod with the camera and messed around with the lights. Two minutes after my head hit the pillow, I was asleep. When I woke up the next morning, Andy would be gone, the lights still on, and the floor littered with scraps of film and empty yellow boxes. Andy would shoot for about three hours, until about 5:00 a.m., all by himself. The Bolex was an early model. The camera had to be reloaded every three minutes... The shoot lasted for a month. We stopped when we had taken a thousand rolls of film. He tried to think what he could do with them to make it into a film. Andy would look at them on a hand-cranked movie viewer and say, 'Oh, they're so beautiful!'" Quoted in McShine et al. 1989, p. 436.

⁷ Branden W. Joseph, "The Play of Repetition: Andy Warhol's *Sleep*" *Grey Room*, Spring 2005, No. 19, pp. 22-53, contains the best published description of the film.

⁸ Joseph (p. 31) notes that "the fourth and final image of reel two (K) is Giorno's head, quite visible and clearly legible. This shot (much like, if not identical to the one Warhol used to produce a freestanding Plexiglas sculpture), repeats five times over the course of more than twenty minutes."

⁹ Callie Angell, *Andy Warhol Screen Tests: The Films of Andy Warhol. catalogue raisonné*, vol. 1 (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2006), p. 85.

¹⁰ According to a New York Times report the following day, it was at a May 1965 opening at the Sonnabend Gallery, Paris, that Warhol casually "began to describe himself as 'a retired artist' and spoke of plans to devote his life to the cinema. 'I've had an offer from Hollywood, you know, and I'm seriously thinking of accepting it,' he said. 'At least that way you can eat. And then I can come back to Cannes next year.'" Jean-Pierre Lenoir, "Paris Impressed By Warhol Show: Artist Speaks of Leaving Pop Pictures for Films," *New York Times*, 13 May 1965, p. 34. This gesture clearly has roots in Duchamp's 1923 announcement that he was retiring from art to devote himself to chess.

¹¹ That unpublished print (AWM, Pittsburgh # 1998.1.2654) shows rhinos with a woman wearing heels and a bikini. Rauschenberg discovered the silkscreen method when visiting Warhol's studio in 1962. Art critic David Bourdon later recalled that Rauschenberg "was very interested in the silk-screens and asked where you got them. Up to then he'd been transferring images by putting lighter fluid on magazine and newspaper illustrations and then rubbing it onto the paper—a very painstaking process. He was impressed when he saw that with a silkscreen you could get an image larger than life and use it over and over again." Quoted in Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett. *Popism: The Warhol '60s*. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), p. 23.

¹² The photographs by Nat Finkelstein are reproduced in his *Andy Warhol: The Factory Years 1964-1967*, p. [10] (unpaginated). One can clearly discern the woman and rhinos on the verso.

¹³ Incessant copying, and the concomitant disappearance of any master image, already inheres in the film itself. Citing a source not available to the present author at the time of writing, Branden W. Joseph notes that "a[s] reported by Callie Angell, *Sleep*'s relation to copies without originals inhered deep within its production. Not only is there no "original" footage in the edited master (surprising only because Warhol often used original reversal process stock in that way), but most segments are "several generations removed" from the shot footage and sometimes reversed or inverted as though to add further layers of mediation. Angell, *The Films of Andy Warhol: Part II*, 11."