

ANDY WARHOL

(Pittsburgh 1928–1987 New York)

Lola Jacobson. 1985.

Acrylic and silkscreen ink on canvas.

On the overlap with the stamps: The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and The Estate of Andy Warhol. Also with the archive number on the stretcher: P050.072.

101.5 × 101.5 cm.

Provenance: - Artist's estate. - The Andy Warhol Foundation of the Visual Arts, New York. - Jane Holzer, New York. - Private collection New York. - Auction Sotheby's New York, 15.11.2000, Lot 314. - Private collection Switzerland. Andy Warhol was born on 6 August 1928, the third child of a Russian immigrant family in Pittsburgh. At the age of eight he contracted

St Vitus' dance and a rare pigment condition, so that he was often taken to be an Albino. Confined to bed, he discovered a passion for comics and movies. From 1945 to 1949 Warhol studied commercial graphics at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, where he obtained a degree in painting and design. The young Warhol then moved to the hotspot for art and literature – New York. There he worked as a window dresser and soon became the most sought-after advertising designer in the city. His first drawings were published in 1950 in the magazine "Mademoiselle". With the designer Suzie Frankfurt, he developed the drop-and-dripping technique, in which he copied motifs painted with India ink and ink using blotting paper, and transferred them to another sheet – a precursor to his later favourite technique of screen printing. This resulted in numerous greetings cards, giveaways, contributions to magazines and also cookbooks. At so-called "Colouring Parties" he would have friends and guests paint works – again a clue as to later serial production and the Factory. By the end of the 1950s he decided to abandon graphic design and to work as an artist. Like no one before him he addressed the question of changes in society. He sought out everyday objects, events, stars, and starlets that permeated everyday life and had some kind of meaning for everyone. These might be an item of mass consumption, such as the famous Campbell's soup cans, which in the 1950s/60s were never absent from American and English kitchen cabinets, or celebrities like James Dean, Jackie Kennedy and Marylin Monroe, whose fate had been shared with an entire generation. Warhol skilfully used comics, newspaper photos and pictures of stars, starlets, accidents, events and objects, and by using them in his artworks and simultaneous serialisation, elevated them to the status of icon, not only for his own time but for our time as well. At the beginning of the 1960s he began to explore screen printing, the technique of which enabled him to work in series, which was intrinsic to his work. The Factory, founded in 1962, also contributed to pushing this seriality to its extreme. In 1968 the radical women's rights activist Valerie Solanas carried out an assassination attempt on Warhol. As a result, for a time he became more and more withdrawn, and the formerly experimental Factory became increasingly focussed on the commercialisation of his art. Through this

experience and later the death of his mother, the theme of death found its way into Warhol's work. In addition, portraits, including commissioned portraits, were of ever-increasing importance. Andy Warhol died on 22 February 1987. During his lifetime, he had founded the Andy Warhol Foundation of Visual Arts, which, alongside his family, received a large portion of his estimated fortune of over 100 million US dollars. Today the foundation is compiling a comprehensive catalogue raisonné of his works. In 1962 Warhol had his first solo show at the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles with his series of "Campbell's Soup" paintings. He was represented at documenta 4 in 1968 with his "Ten Marilyns" series, as well as at documenta 6 in 1977 and documenta 7 in 1982. Countless group and solo shows have paid homage to the work of this American artist: in 2020 the Museum Ludwig in Cologne, which, thanks to the collector couple Peter and Irene Ludwig, owns the largest Warhol collection outside the United States, held a comprehensive retrospective of Andy Warhol's work in cooperation with the Tate Modern in London. Andy Warhol revolutionised the art of the 20th century by turning away from the classical concept of fine art, elevating the everyday and the trivial to the level of art, and also by affording commerce a high status. Portraits feature in Andy Warhol's oeuvre from the beginning right up to his late work. "Teen Stars" from 1963 is the first series in which he focussed exclusively on the portrait. This series includes Warren Beatty and Natalie Wood, the young stars of American cinema. Shortly afterwards came the first portraits of Marilyn Monroe, which are amongst the icons of his oeuvre. What all the portraits have in common is that the original images come from newspapers or Polaroids (especially in the later paintings) as well as the almost endless experimentation with colour combinations and seriality: for example, Elvis, from a single image to a sequence in the manner of a contact sheet, in one work. Amongst the most prominent subjects were Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, Jackie Kennedy, Elvis Presley and Mick Jagger. In addition to the stars, Warhol also wanted to portray society, and so over time he accepted more and more commissioned portraits from high society clients. They were of course a secure source of income, which would finance his extravagant lifestyle, but also his parallel projects.

At the same time, however, with these numerous portraits Warhol succeeded in depicting an imposing cross-section of American society, whereby the commissioned portraits covered high society, while his own projects such as “Ladies and Gentleman” from 1975 (Lot ????) or “Ten Portraits of Jews of the Twentieth Century” (1980) represented those facets not always accepted by society. The present painting shows Lola Jacobson, who along with her husband Donald, were well known and highly regarded because of their numerous charitable and philanthropic projects, such as the founding of the Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York. As a local celebrity and no doubt welcome guest at any party, Lola Jacobson was one of the typical motifs for Warhol’s commissioned portraits.

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