

Has anyone seen this picture before? [\[point to TAG soup can print\]](#) Where have you seen it?

TITLE: Insight

This painting is titled **Cambell's Soup Can (Tomato)**, made in 1962. Does anyone know the name of the artist that made this painting? [\[hold up the self-portrait\]](#) He was born here in Pittsburgh (Aug.6th, 1928) and today is considered the most popular artist ever. His paintings are in galleries and museums all over the world. They are sought after at art auctions more often than any other artist over the last decade. And, he made so much art in his lifetime, there are two museums dedicated solely to his work, one of which is right here in Pittsburgh (on the North Side, 117 Sandusky Street, Pgh 15212, 412-237-8300).

Andy Warhol's parents immigrated to the United States from Miko, Slovakia. Like many families that emigrate from another country where they speak a different language, their names are often changed to more 'English' sounding names. So, their family name back in Slovakia called Varhola was changed to Warhola. And then, when Andy became known as an artist, he changed his last name again, dropping the 'a' off the end and going by Warhol. Andy was named after his father, **Andrej Varhola**. He had two older brothers, Pavel was the oldest and went by the name Paul, Jan was the other who went by the name John. His mother's name was Julia.

When his father was dying, he told his brother John, **"Your role is to take care of Andy and make sure he goes to school, because he's going to be successful someday."** Andy ended up going to Carnegie Institute of Technology (today called CMU), getting a Commercial Art degree in 1949. The first two years of school were paid with the family's savings, then his brother John went to work to pay for the last two years. Many years later after Andy died, his brother John raised money to establish a foundation to preserve all of his art. He was also responsible for starting the two Warhol museums, one here in Pittsburgh where he would give guided tours up until he passed away a couple years ago, and a second museum in their family's hometown back in Slovakia. Andy's oldest brother is still living in Pittsburgh, where he maintains a junk yard, which is described in a book I brought to read, written by his son James Warhola, Andy's nephew.

When Andy was your age, he spent a lot of time in bed because of a nervous system disease from scarlet fever. His father worked all day in the coal mines, but **his mother was able to sit with him, while he passed the time listening to the radio, drawing cartoons and cutting pictures out of magazines of movie stars. He believed that experience was very important in the development of his personality, talents, and interests later in life as an artist.** In fact, after finishing school, he moved to NYC to work as an illustrator for magazine advertisements. He was very successful at this, but still wanted to become an artist making paintings for galleries and museums. His favorite thing to draw was cartoon characters, but another artist at the time (Roy Lichtenstein) was already well known for that type of work and he wanted to do something completely original that had never been done before.

This painting of a Campbell's Soup Can is what he came up with and it has become his most famous painting. Why do you think he painted a Campbell's Soup Can? In November of 1961, he was talking to a gallery owner (Muriel Latow) and told her he needed an idea. She said he should **"paint something you see every day, something everyone would recognize, like a can of Campbells Soup."** You see after he moved to New York, every day for twenty years Andy would eat Campbells soup for lunch with a Coca-Cola. It was something that reminded him of being a boy, when his mom would make him soup every day for lunch. In fact, she made so much, she would use the empty cans to make flower pots for around the house [\[hold up picture of plants growing in soup cans\]](#). When the gallery owner came up with idea, he said, "Oh, that sounds fabulous." And the very next day he went out to the supermarket to buy an entire case of every type of soup they made, to start making paintings.

So, he painted Campbell Soup Cans in different ways, with a can opener [\[hold up picture from Ebsworth Collection\]](#), with the lid open [\[hold up picture from Menil Collection\]](#), even with a torn label [\[hold up picture from Eli Broad Collection\]](#). This one in particular he thought was **a metaphor of life: even packaged food must meet its end**. After a while, he wanted to make more and more of them, so he started reproducing them with silkscreens, a process he revolutionized in the art world. He named his studio The Factory and got a bunch of friends to help him make hundreds of them. In the beginning, he would make a line drawing like this one [\[hold up pencil sketch from MoMA\]](#), then used it to create a stencil for each color. On this TAG print for example, he would layer four colors, the red label, gold for the seal, grey on the lid and finally black to outline the lettering and details.

TECHNIQUE: Silk Screen Printing

On July 9, 1962 Andy had his first solo art show (Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles), where he debuted these 32 prints of Campbell Soup Cans [\[hold up picture of 32 soup cans from MoMA\]](#). Why do you think he had 32 prints? If you look closely at the soup can labels, you will see that each one is a different flavor. At the time he created these prints, Campbell's was making 32 different varieties of soup. At the gallery show, these paintings were for sale at \$100 each, but he only sold six (Dennis Hopper was one of the first to buy). This was because the public and art critics did not consider them to be art. In fact, they felt the show was more like a grocery store than a gallery. One of the nearby galleries trying to make fun of the show displayed dozens of soup cans in their window hanging a sign saying "Three for sixty cents."
How many of you think this is art? If not, why is it not art? What do you think art is?

In your past TAG presentations, you might have seen paintings that look more like this [\[hold up the picture of Caravaggio's Basket of Fruit\]](#). So naturally, you might think this is art. Does anyone know what this type of painting is? This genre of painting is called Still Life, when an artist arranges objects from daily 'life', which would sit 'still' in a composition for painting. So, for these artists in the early 1600s through the 1700s and into the 1800s, it was very popular to paint pictures of fruit bowls, because in those days fruit was picked from the family orchards, then placed on the kitchen table to eat every day. Artists would often paint their favorite fruit or a fruit that was specific to their region. For example, here is one [\[hold up the picture by Chardin\]](#) of peaches and another one by [Claude Monet of apples](#) or [Paul Gauguin's tomatoes](#). [Vincent van Gogh was famous for potatoes](#) and [Paul Cezanne's apples](#). So, this tradition of painting Still Life arrangements of fruit continued for hundreds of years, then in the middle of the twentieth century [Pablo Picasso painted a basket of fruit](#) very differently, in a style known as Cubism, abstracting objects into geometric shapes. The basket of fruit was almost unrecognizable, but it was still a basket of fruit. At the time, this change was very radical and got people questioning art. For Andy Warhol, [a Campbell's Soup Can was no different, a Still Life of fruit found on his kitchen table every day](#). The only thing that had changed was the preparation, rather than a basket collected from the orchard, it was a can purchased at the grocery. And for that reason, [a painting of a soup can was a true reflection of the modern times in which he lived, a more genuine painting than a romanticized depiction of a bowl of fruit from another time period](#). In fact, his soup can paintings were not only true to the food he ate, accurately portraying his daily life, but even the way in which he made the paintings – silk screening multiple copies like a production line – was a commentary on the way food was made in his day, in a factory mass producing cans for distribution and marketing to the masses. For him, the packaging was just as important as the subject matter and therefore, his paintings' graphics were made to emphasize this.

TERMINOLOGY: Still Life

In 1964, two years after his first show, he was in a group show (Bianchini Gallery, New York with Billy Apple, Mary Inman, and Robert Watts) called The American Supermarket. By then his Campbell Soup Can idea had caught on and his paintings were selling very well at \$1,500 a piece. In fact, he had become so well known as the artist that transformed the concept of art, he was autographing actual cans of soup [\[hold up picture of autographed can\]](#) for \$6 each as a collectable. But for Andy, the Campbell Soup Cans were a symbol for America. ["What's great about this country is that America started the tradition where the richest consumers buy essentially the same things as the poorest, can see Coca-Cola on TV and know Liz Taylor drinks Coca-Cola and you can too. All the Cokes are the same and no amount of money can get you a better Coke."](#) America's industrialization and consumerism had ended classism, where everyone has access to the same things and Andy wanted to make art that celebrated this equality in the American mass market.

NARRATIVE: Symbolism

This mass production of goods would naturally follow popular culture to market to the American population. Artwork that captured this idea of selling to masses, as opposed to an elite few, became known as Pop Art. By the end of the 1970s, [Andy had become the symbol of Pop Art](#). Campbell's Soup was synonymous with Warhol, to the point he was signing his name with a Campbell's Soup Can caricature [\[hold up signature sketch\]](#). In 2006, one of his original 1962 Campbell's Soup Can paintings (Pepper Pot) sold at auction for \$11,776,000. And last year, Campbell's released a series (Art of Soup) of four Tomato Soup Cans in the style of his 1965 colorized labels, featuring a portrait, quote and signature of Andy Warhol, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of his debut show [\[hold up picture of commemorative cans\]](#), sold exclusively in Pittsburgh at Giant Eagle.

STYLE: Pop Art

Andy died at the age of 58 in New York City, where he lived ever since he left school in Pittsburgh. After a memorial service for his friends and colleagues in New York, his body was brought back to Pittsburgh to be buried. Since you guys are lucky enough to live in Pittsburgh, you could not only visit the Andy Warhol Museum, you could also visit his grave in the South Hills (St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Cemetery). [Hundreds of people make pilgrimages to his grave every year from all over the world, leaving Campbell's Soups Cans and Coca-Cola bottles on his tombstone](#). In fact, last year in honor of Andy's birthday, an artist by the name of Madelyn Roehrig set up a live webcam viewing his grave site (The Figment Project: Conversations with Andy, <http://www.warhol.org/figment/>), so people could visit it online anytime from anywhere.

So, today I brought in some oil pastels and paper for you to make your own picture of something you see every day, something you love, maybe your favorite thing that you use every day. And don't worry about making a perfect picture, as Andy Warhol used to say, ["When you do something exactly wrong, you always turn something up."](#)

While you are drawing, I am going to read you a book written by Andy's nephew ([Uncle Andy's](#), by James Warhola, Puffin Books, 2003), about his memories of driving from Pittsburgh up to New York to visit his Uncle Andy.

A recording of this TAG presentation can be heard online at: <http://www.schlueb.com/draw/20131205warhol.m4a>