

Two groupings of Andy Warhol paintings — “Ethel Scull” (1963) and “Flowers” (1964) — showcase one of Andy Warhol’s earliest experiments combining silk screening and painting — a technique he pioneered. The Hall Art Foundation Museum of Contemporary Art exhibition, running in the Hall’s galleries in Reading from May 13 to Nov. 26, is replete with examples of the artist’s work in this vein. The silk-screening process enabled Warhol to create the serial interpretations of famed photographs, consumer packaging, and celebrities that were a central tenet of his work.

Jeffrey Nintzel Photo

The Hall opens Andy Warhol exhibit

It’s the largest exhibition of his work ever shown in Vermont

By Tom Ayres
Senior Staff Writer

READING — Andy Warhol, the famed 20th Century American artist, was exiting a successful career as a commercial illustrator and emerging as a force in the contemporary art world in New York in the late 1950s when he was struggling for ideas of what to paint

“You should paint something that everybody sees every day, that everybody recognizes, like a can of soup,” Warhol’s friend, the writer and art gallery owner Muriel Latow, suggested.

Warhol certainly took Latow up on the advice: his multi-part work, “Campbell’s Soup Cans” (1962), which depicts 32 different versions of a Campbell’s soup can, is fixed in the American imagination as the quintessential image of the Pop Art movement of the 1950s and 1960s, of which Warhol was an originator. One of the works included in the series is about to be on display in the Upper Valley.

Cultural icon, provocateur, and celebrity — his own life a work of art in itself — Warhol, who died



Daniel Ehrenberg, an exhibit installer with the Hall Art Foundation Museum of Contemporary Art, hangs and levels one of nearly 100 paintings by Pop Art icon Andy Warhol that will be exhibited at the museum in Reading beginning this Saturday, May 13. The “small is beautiful” show will run every weekend at the Hall through Nov. 26.

Rick Russell Photo

at age 58 in 1987, produced instantly recognizable works that inspired a generation of artists. When the largest exhibition of Andy Warhol paintings ever shown in Vermont opens this Saturday, May 13, at the Hall Art Foundation galleries in Reading, museum patrons

will have the opportunity to see and experience a wealth of Warhol’s famed works up close and personal. The exhibition, entitled “small is beautiful,” will be featured at the acclaimed Hall Foundation site through Nov. 26.

Warhol was a painter, photographer, draftsman, sculptor, filmmaker, and diarist. The Hall show, however, focuses solely on his paintings — and the smaller ones at that. The exhibition, which was still being hung when Hall Art Foundation Director Maryse Brand led two visitors on a sneak-preview tour of the show last Friday, features nearly 100 of Warhol’s smaller-format works, arranged chronologically. The expertly curated exhibition vigorously illustrates the artist’s predilection for appropriating images from popular culture and replicating them serially in a multitude of different iterations. The Hall’s curatorial decision to set the Warhol show in its two smallest galleries — in the Reception Center and Farmhouse at the Reading site — was a stroke of genius. The intimacy of the exhibit had a profound impact on Brand’s visitors, who were held rapt by the opportunity to view up-close iconic Pop Art images that they’d heretofore only seen mediated through the printed page or on posters. The effect was galvanizing — a

sheer delight.

Starting this weekend, Hall patrons will begin their journey through the Warhol exhibit by stepping into the diminutive and inviting Reception Center gallery, where they will first be greeted by what could be considered the only “sculpture” in the show — “Brillo Soap Pads Box” (1964), a 17-by-17-by-14-inch wooden construction vividly painted in red, white, and blue. As one might expect, “Campbell’s Soup Can” (1961), a casein-and-pencil creation on canvas, hangs near the reimagined Brillo box.

“Double One Dollar Bills” (1962), showcases one of Warhol’s earliest experiments combining silk screening and painting — a technique he pioneered. The Hall exhibition is replete with examples of the artist’s work in this

vein, with the silk-screening process enabling Warhol to create the serial interpretations of famed photographs, consumer packaging, and celebrities that were a central tenet of his work.



Exhibit installers Vangeli Atsalis, left, and Daniel Ehrenberg hang and straighten “Ethel Scull,” a grouping of paintings that demonstrate Andy Warhol’s serial approach to portraiture and painting in general, enhanced by the artist’s use of both synthetic polymer paint and silkscreen ink on canvas.

Rick Russell Photo

Warhol’s fascination with celebrity is also on display throughout the exhibition. Midway through the Reception Center gallery hangs the

black-and-white “Jackie” (1964), an acrylic-and-silk-screen-ink painting on linen and Warhol’s reinterpretation of a famous newspaper photograph of Jackie Kennedy taken at the funeral of her husband, President John F. Kennedy, following his assassination in 1963. “Troy” (1962), a portrait of the heartthrob American actor Troy Donahue, and tiny, roughly 5-inch-square paintings of Warhol’s friends and fellow art luminaries Roy Lichtenstein and Frank Stella, all done in paint and silkscreen ink, are also on exhibit.

The largest painting in the “small is beautiful” show, occupying a 39-by-38-inch space in the Farmhouse gallery at the Hall, is “Twenty Fuschia Maos” (1979), another widely recognized Warhol work that features a reversal (or negative) image of the Chinese Communist leader Chairman Mao Zedong, repeated 20 times. A single Warhol portrait of Mao, from 1973, is also on exhibit.

Close by the many Maos are three works, hung side-by-side, that further illustrate Warhol’s captivation with political and religious iconography and symbolism: “Crosses” (1981-82), “Hammer and Sickle” (1976), and “Dollar Sign” (1981). “I like money on the wall,” Warhol once said. “Say you were going to buy a painting. I think you should take that money, tie it up, and hang it on the wall. Then when someone visited you, the first thing they would see is the money on the wall.”

In addition to his enthrallment with celebrity and consumerism, Warhol was also fascinated by images of death and violence, Brand noted as she guided her visitors through the museum last year. See **ANDY WARHOL - Page 6D**

Hall Art Foundation offering Rothenberg, Gorchoff shows too

By Tom Ayres
Senior Staff Writer

Two exhibitions running concurrently with the Andy Warhol show in the galleries of the Hall Art Foundation Museum in Reading offer a compelling contrast to the iconic works of the frightened visionary who helped pioneer the Pop Art movement of the 1950s and 60s.

For more than fifty years, New York- and New Mexico-based painter Susan Rothenberg (1945-2020) was a wildly independent and experimental artist who, like Warhol, challenged contemporary conventions of art. She merged abstraction and expressionism with representational art, with the human body, animals, and the landscape her primary subjects, embedded in an illusory fashion in fields of sweeping, broadly brushed color.

The nearly 30 large-format paintings in the Rothenberg show trace the evolution of the artist’s emotionally charged works from her iconic horse paintings of the 1970s to works completed in the decade before Rothenberg passed away three years ago at the age of 75.

Ron Gorchoff (1930-2020) was an American artist known for his colorful, abstract paintings on curved canvases. In the 1960s, after deducing that “paint looked better on curved canvases,” Gorchoff taught

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At left, an Andy Warhol self-portrait from 1967. Right, a serial grouping of four portraits depicts longtime Warhol collaborator and confidante, filmmaker and interior designer Jed Johnson.

Jeffrey Nintzel Photo

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week, all three people weaving around several bustling workers who were hanging Warhol works in both exhibit spaces. "5 Deaths" (1963), part of Warhol's "Death and Disaster" series of works first presented in Los Angeles in 1962, is based on a gruesome tabloid photograph from 1959 captioned "Two Die in Collision." The crimson acrylic paint Warhol used in the work reinforces the brutality of the accident photo, in which two bloodied bodies are seen pinned under an overturned car.

Warhol, noting the preponderance of violent images in newspapers and magazines of the time, many of which he appropriated, said, "When you see a gruesome picture over and over again, it doesn't really have any effect." The implication of the artist's comment for the present

day, with nightly newscasts reporting about mass shootings, natural disasters, and racially motivated violence day in and day out, was not lost on last week's visitors to the Warhol show.

Pop Art emerged in the 1950s and 60s as a reaction to

IF YOU GO "small is beautiful" Paintings by Andy Warhol Plus additional exhibitions by artists Susan Rothenberg and Ron Gorchov Open Saturdays and Sundays, May 13 through Nov. 26 Entry times for self-guided tours are hourly, 11 a.m. through 3 p.m. Docent-led tours 10-11 a.m. Hall Art Foundation, Reading

and revolt against the dominant approaches to culture and the traditionalism that dictated what art — and life — should be. The art form's leading adherents, including Warhol, felt that what was typically shown in museums and galleries of the time had

little to do with their lives or how they viewed the world. Warhol — and the contemporaries whom he both influenced and drew inspiration from — turned to Hollywood, advertising, magazines and tabloid newspapers, supermarket shelves, comic books, popular music, and politics for the images that they transformed into art that responded to the tenor of the times.

For the next six months, via the Hall Art Foundation's scintillating "small is beautiful" show, Vermonters and visitors alike can savor the wit and wisdom of Andy Warhol, while also pondering for themselves the continued, deep-seated relevance of the artist and his work in today's increasingly violent, consumption-crazed, and media-saturated world.

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himself to work with wood, stretching both canvas and linen on curved wooden frames that added a vivid dimensionality to his paintings. By playing with the curvaceous concave and convex nature of his substrates, Gorchov created works that evinced a powerful sense of motion, even as they hung static on a gallery wall.

Often described as resembling saddles, masks, or shields, Gorchov's works blur

the boundary between painting and sculpture. They also call to mind the bulbous, curved shapes of the old-school television and movie screens of the 1960s. Approximately 20 of Gorchov's shaped paintings from the 1970s through the last decade of his life will be shown concomitantly with the Warhol and Rothenberg exhibitions at the Hall beginning this Saturday, May 13 and continuing through Nov. 26.

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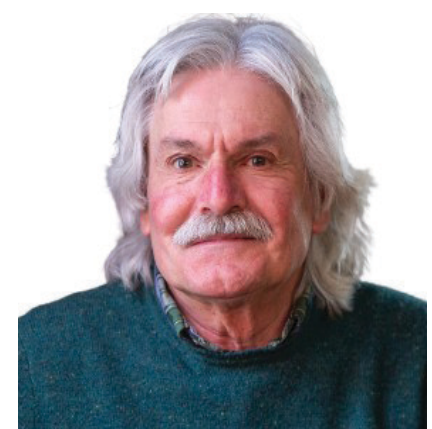
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