

Portrait of Maurice by Andy Warhol

Print Facts

- Medium: Synthetic polymer paint and silkscreen ink on canvas
- Date: 1976
- Size: 65.8 x 81.4 centimeters
- Location: National Galleries of Scotland
- Style: Pop Art
- Genre: Animal Painting
- Maurice was the beloved dachshund of Gabrielle Keiller, who bequeathed her art collection to the Modern One in 1995. To create this screenprinted image, he worked from Polaroids of Maurice, taken at Keiller's London home.

Artist Facts

- Born August 6, 1928 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Died February 22, 1987 in New York City
- In third grade, Warhol got very sick. He became a hypochondriac, developing a fear of hospitals and doctors. Often bedridden as a child, he became an outcast at school and bonded with his mother. At times when he was confined to bed, he drew, listened to the radio and collected pictures of movie stars around his bed.
- When Warhol was 13, his father died in an accident.
- Warhol was an early adopter of the [silk screen](#) printmaking process as a technique for making paintings. His earliest silk screening in painting involved hand-drawn images though this soon progressed to the use of photographically derived silk screening in paintings.
- Warhol's work displays a casual approach to image making, in which chance plays a role and mistakes and unintentional marks are tolerated. The resulting imagery is often replete with imperfection—smudges and smears can often be found.
- Warhol made paintings of iconic American objects such as dollar bills, Campbell's Soup Cans, Coca-Cola bottles, celebrities, and newspaper headlines.
- Warhol was obsessed with fame and produced many pictures of the rich and famous.
- He was never afraid to solicit commissions for portraits and would often suggest that he could create a portrait of a pet, if someone was unwilling to sit for their own portrait.
- Warhol was able to produce his works quickly by transferring images onto canvas or paper through photography and screenprinting, sometimes with the help of assistants. Warhol stated that he wanted to make works that showed no trace of having been produced by hand. His interest in mass production reflected the fast-developing consumer culture he recognized in America. (<http://www.nationalgalleries.org>)
- Screen printing is basically the process of using a stencil to apply ink onto another material. A number of screens can be used to produce a multicolored image. (See Wikipedia)
- His New York studio, 'The Factory,' was a popular place for artists, celebrities and bands to meet.
- In 1968 when Warhol was 39 years old, he was shot in his studio and severely wounded. He barely survived.

Key Principle of Design to Teach

- **Balance**, often referred to as visual weight, describes the relationships between different elements of a work of art in terms of their size and location. The balance of an artwork can be used to help create a visual harmony or tension within the piece. In art “nothing” can balance “something.” Balance is achieved by arranging art elements in the artwork so that no one part overpowers, or seems heavier than, any other part. Symmetry and asymmetry are part of balance. Symmetry is the relationship of one or more groups of elements so that they are identical from side to side. Asymmetry is a part of balance where the elements are evenly weighted visually, but they are not the same.

Possible Questions and Suggestions to Teach Balance

- Cover up the right or left side of this painting? Can you guess what’s on the other side? Point out it’s almost exactly the same. We call this **symmetry**.
- Are the halves exactly equal?
- Where would you divide this painting to make two halves
- What differences? ? (The line is just barely to the left of center. See how the ear on the left is just a little closer to the edge than on the right? This balances the body moving to the right at the bottom rather than just straight down like on the left. The colors are not exactly the same on both sides.)
- Show Warhol’s other painting in the packet. Talk about what parts of the painting are symmetrical (the car that is repeated) and not symmetrical (the colors are totally different). If you folded the painting in half, the car shape is the same. If you fold it in half the other direction, the cars are not the same.

Keywords

- Balance, symmetry color, shape, pattern

Other Possible Questions and Suggestions

- What colors do you see in this painting? When you close your eyes and open them, what color do you see first? (Should be red. Warm colors move forward and red pops out.)
- What do you see when you squint at this painting? (Squinting helps distinguish between the light and dark values. The dark blue value of the dog really stands out in the center along with the dark red around the ears. The pink and the light blue are similar lighter values and they seem to sort of blend together a bit. I really notice the light pink circle around the dog’s nose.)
- What shapes do you see in this painting? (Geometric: Pink circle around the nose. Nose is a blue circle. Dark blue shape of the body is like a rectangle. Eyes are circles. Organic: The ears and continuing clear around to his nose create an interest organic shape. It’s simplified and almost like a top, flat layer put on after the rest of the painting.)
- This painting is created using a printing process called silk screen. The colors were applied one at a time. What order do you think he applied the colors to this painting? (Guess? 1. light blue, 2. Red, 3. Pink, 4. Dark blue) Explain that it was like he used a stencil and only put ink on the part he wanted to show up with each color.