

My first day as a student at the New York Academy of Art is vivid in my memory.

I walked into an empty room where easels circled a model stand. My fellow students each took a place. The teacher, a master draftsman, talked about how to start a drawing; he used words like gesture, line, and proportion. The model dropped her robe and assumed a pose on the stand. We began to work. It was so quiet, all you could hear was the scratch of pencil on paper interspersed with the occasional rhythmic scrub, scrub of an eraser. Nobody said a word. The only thing we thought about was how best to express the form before us. The concentration was intense, the absorption total.

We met with varying degrees of success. I was completely intimidated by the evident skill of my fellow students. Every 20 minutes, the model took a break during which we walked around the room evaluating each other's work. The feedback was instant. If a drawing was good, people would stop to comment or ask questions. If it wasn't, they would glide silently by. You knew exactly where you stood and what you needed to do in the next 20-minute session. And so it went, for six hours each day.

We reveled in the learning. Cast Drawing, Structural Drawing, Anatomical Drawing, Narrative Drawing – each a world unto its own – formed the foundation from which we ventured in the eventual search for our own voice.

That's why the "Andy Warhol: By Hand" show is so important to the Academy. The school's motto is Traditional Skills / Contemporary Discourse. For us, it's not enough to be able to render a perfect likeness. That's just a starting point. From there, we want to use the skills we acquire to create something new, urgent, unique and personal, something that adds to the current dialogue. Perfection in likeness is not the goal. The ultimate expression of each artist's singular point of view is what we're after.

Andy Warhol is an inspiration to our community. His artistic journey is emblematic of the transformation we hope our students will undergo. At the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh from 1945 to 1949 he immersed himself in a classical studio art training. He then used that training to set out on his own, making work that was anything but academic, work that could only come from his mind, eye, and most importantly, hand. Armed with technical skill, he was able to simplify to the purity of a single fluid line and capture the world's imagination. Is that too much to ask of our students? Perhaps. But I suspect capturing the world's imagination is the inner goal of many an artist who sets off on the solitary journey of creative exploration, armed only with pencil and paper. For the more humble souls, we the audience wish for them to captivate us with the new. The drawings in this show shine a light on the path taken from the traditional to the original by one extraordinary man.

We're thankful that Andy was an early supporter of the New York Academy of Art. His belief in our mission sustained us from our start offering free lessons in a church basement on 10th Street to the present day in our own dedicated building on Franklin Street in Tribeca. The Academy now attracts the best and the brightest students from around the world, who come to learn, study and train amongst a community of professional artists, united in a search for their unique expressions of visual truth and beauty.

We were honored to have Andy be a part of our school, and we are honored to present this show of his drawings from the 1950s to the 1980s. We would like to thank Daniel Blau, Shelly Fremont, Paul Kasmin, Anton Kern, Stavros Merjos, Sam Shikiar, and Angela Westwater. They all took a leap of faith when they agreed to lend to us for an ambitious endeavor that some might have considered beyond the reach of a small, independent educational institution. This show would not have been possible without friends like them.

Eileen Guggenheim, our Board Chair, deserves special thanks and recognition for suggesting Warhol as the focus for our winter show. The Academy would not be what it is today were it not for her constant inspiration.

We also thank our sponsors, AXA XL Insurance, 108 Leonard and Cadogan Tate Fine Art. They continually enable us to punch far above our weight with their consistent "yes, you can" support.

And finally, I want to thank Vincent Fremont, my friend and co-curator, whose eyewitness insights gave the selection process integrity and whose firsthand stories of the Factory made the long hours that went into preparing the show pass like minutes. As they say, time flies when you're having fun.

**David Kratz**  
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