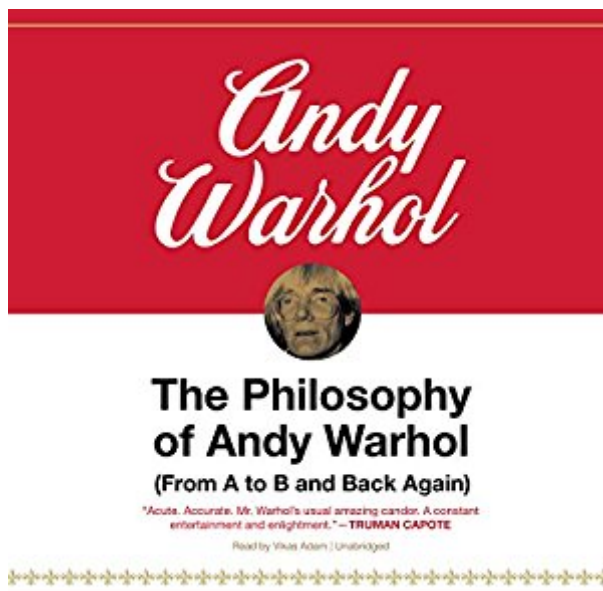


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The Philosophy Of Andy Warhol: From A To B And Back Again



Synopsis

The Philosophy of Andy Warhol, first published in 1975, is less a memoir than a collection of riffs and reflections. The private Andy Warhol talks about love, sex, food, beauty, fame, work, money, success, New York, and America. And he talks about himself - his childhood in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, good times and bad times in New York, the explosion of his career in the '60s, and his life among celebrities.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Seriously, at a certain point when I was around 18 or 19, this was my Bible, or my Little Red Book - I and a handful of friends (Warhol died at about the same time) took every syllable here very, very seriously. This is kinda funny to me now, but it's a great book still, a truly unique cultural artifact. Warhol - as always maintains the trademark deadpan aloofness here, which had a few odd purposes beyond simply looking cool: there were rare instances when he'd drop his guard and a hint of social relevance would enter the frame, which did run contrary to most of what Warhol did, here especially. Doing so would turn art into something didactic, and - as a joke doesn't work if you have to explain the punch line, art flops if you have to lead your viewers, or readers, by the hand into your meaning. Thus Warhol's stylish glibness and affected cool served a brilliant purpose - it made demands of everyone who came into contact with it. Here we have Warhol's epigrams - spread out like some artboy approximation of 'Quotations From Chairman Mao Tse-Tung,' all about equally quotable, useless, devoid of literary merit, yet (unlike the leaden and ideologically bankrupt

Chairman) also stylish and memorable, even at their most zoned out. The other great method behind Warhol's facades is here as well - the same impulse that turned canned soup into the artworks of a once very, very poor 2nd-generation immigrant's child (if you were going hungry, Campbell's soup would in fact become, and possibly remain, a beautiful thing, and we all know that beautiful things are and always will be one of the most fitting of subjects for art). These cryptic sayings and jottings all seem constructed to get us all to see the small stuff for what it is, and learn to appreciate it for that.

Andy's response to an excess of abstract art was Pop Art. Andy's response to an excess of abstract philosophy was Pop Philosophy. This book is not so much about Andy Warhol as it is about Warhol making philosophy pop. To make philosophy pop, Andy shared his observations and values, just as to make art pop, Andy shared the Campbell soup he enjoyed so often. Philosophy has been abstract for so long, we had forgotten it could be anything else. It had belonged to academicians for so long, we had forgotten it could belong to anyone else. Andy worked with the topics of abstract philosophy, such as love, beauty, time, death, economics and art ... but he rendered them pop by talking about them the way ordinary people talk about them. Not that Andy seemed ordinary but what do you call concerns of pimples (in "Beauty"), not being able to shop on Sunday (in "Economics"), or waiting in line for movies (in "Time"). Views of Andy's but also acts of making topics previously owned by abstract philosophy into instances of pop philosophy. Pop philosophy can also move beyond the limitations of stuffy abstract philosophy. Andy offers a chapter on something not to be found in academic philosophy: not "Power" but "Underwear Power". The same commercialism found in pop art can be found here in pop philosophy: "Buying is much more American than thinking..." So philosophy needn't be just about thinking, it can be about our everyday lives: loving, working and buying underwear. Andy liked having loud music on when doing art so he wouldn't think too much. Perhaps thinking too much gets in the way of good philosophy. If your underwear fits well, there may be no need to work out a lengthy critique of dialectical reasoning.

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