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Andy Loves Richard: The Revelations Of Vote Mcgovern (1972)

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ANDY LOVES RICHARD: THE REVELATIONS OF *VOTE MCGOVERN* (1972)

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ART HISTORY

ABSTRACT

In 1972, Pop artist Andy Warhol was asked by the Democratic National Convention to design a poster for the campaign of George McGovern in his race against presidential incumbent Richard Nixon. The final print was produced in an edition of 250 prints and sold at auction with the proceeds donated to McGovern's campaign. The work commands almost immediate attention as it depicts not George McGovern, as might be expected, but his opponent President Richard Nixon. Nixon's head consumes the greater portion of the print and looms over the scrawled text, "VOTE MCGOVERN." Nixon's eyes are yellow and his face green while he wears a red and pink-colored tie and blazer. An unsettling orange color fills the background of the portrait creating a distinctly negative depiction of Nixon that deserves further analysis.

This thesis seeks to provide that analysis and answer the questions prompted by the odd format and presentation of content composing *Vote McGovern.* It looks specifically at the print as a revealing document of Warhol's own political beliefs that are present throughout his artwork. It accomplishes this by relating Warhol's earlier work to *Vote McGovern* to show political themes already being used by Warhol. It then evaluates the print itself and compares it to his later work to illustrate how common elements and aesthetic approaches exist throughout Warhol's oeuvre. While Warhol himself did not give much information regarding his personal political beliefs, *Vote McGovern* unveils

Warhol as the politically-minded artist depicting his ideas and opinions through his art from the beginning of his career to the end.

Keywords: America, politics, consumerism, communism, socialism, binary.

DEDICATION

To my grandfather, Richard Lewis Hobson, Sr.

You always cared

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

Andy Warhol's *Vote McGovern* [Figure 1] was commissioned by the organizers of the Democratic National Convention in 1972 after they had officially chosen Senator George McGovern, from South Dakota, to be their candidate.[1] The committee asked Warhol to complete a political poster for McGovern in his race against the Republican incumbent, President Richard Nixon. Warhol produced an edition of 250 signed posters that were sold at auction and raised $40,000 for McGovern's campaign.[2] In this thesis, I propose that *Vote McGovern* is much more than another portrait in Warhol's vast repertoire—it is a work that may be the most revealing of Warhol's true feelings towards politics and the American government. By viewing the work as a political document of Warhol, similarities arise within Warhol's earlier and later work exposing him as a politically-minded artist. General scholarship on Warhol subdivides his work into categories or focuses on one print or time period but it does not seek to reveal his oeuvre as a connected whole. This is what *Vote McGovern* provides—it places Warhol's work within a context to interpret his other works as also being representative of his underlying political beliefs and how he decided to communicate and depict these greater convictions.

[1] Edward D. Powers, "Third-Party Politics: Andy Warhol's *Vote McGovern* (1972)," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* (2012): 391.

[2] Arthur C. Danto and Donna de Salvo, *Andy Warhol Prints: A Catalogue Raisonné* (New York: R. Feldman Fine Arts, Inc., 1989), 76.

The print's background is an unsettling orange where the application of color is reminiscent of painterly brushstrokes, sloppily slathered onto the surface. Nixon's head is too large for his frame and looms over the viewer, blurry and indeterminate. The color of his face is in two shades of sickening green that sets off Nixon's piercing yellow, catlike eyes. His mouth, also colored in yellow, bears a slight smile. His neck appears almost nonexistent amidst his imposing head, while the collar of his pink oxford shirt and tie are ill-fitting. The image of Nixon is cut-off at his chest, and just the top of his red blazer is revealed. A white matte border surrounds the depiction of Nixon. The imperative statement, "Vote McGovern" is written in pencil underneath Nixon's frame in the lower center of the print. The command is written in all capital letters with McGovern's name the larger of the two words. The text appears both hastily and emphatically written; it is reminiscent of graffiti, almost as if Warhol scribbled the words onto each print of the edition.

Significance of Topic and Existing Literature

The argument of this thesis focuses on the political content of *Vote McGovern* and evaluates its significance in providing greater understanding and context to a political quality that runs throughout Warhol's work and is most overtly illustrated within this print. The work did not create a new civic structure or predict the course of future American government, but it is an example of Warhol utilizing a new media approach to convey an obvious political message. Through popular methods introduced by other artists, Warhol depicted the society around him. He embraced artist Ben Shahn's style when it was the trend of the advertising world, he emulated the bright-colored and consumerist-fueled Pop art when it was at its height, and he followed the transformation

of Pop in the late 1960s and 1970s as it embraced a broader range of political and cultural subjects. Warhol was aware of the divisiveness of American government with Nixon, Vietnam, and the Democratic National Convention's split over a candidate in 1972. Warhol observed these events and contributed to what the next popular style of art would be. *Vote McGovern* is not a singular example (i.e., James Rosenquist, Richard Hamilton, among other significant Pop artists were also creating political art), but it is a notable representative of Pop's political dimensions and a noticeable illustration of Warhol's own political convictions.

The argument of this thesis acknowledges the existing scholarship and research surrounding Warhol and *Vote McGovern* but also provides a new perspective in which to view his artwork. This perspective is that Warhol's work is connected through a political focus begun in his college years, indirectly present in his work of 1960s, then most obviously unveiled in *Vote McGovern,* and continued in a subtler format in his later career. Deciphering the content and approach to *Vote McGovern* reveals common elements within Warhol's works. While scholars generally focus on one artwork, one period, or one aspect of Warhol, this thesis seeks to evaluate *Vote McGovern* as a means of uniting and better understanding Warhol's work as a politically revealing whole.

Though Warhol often avoided overt political associations, scholarly interest in his politics has grown over the past two decades, evidenced by the work of Anne M. Wagner, who has examined the *Race Riot* series, and Anthony E. Grudin, who has explored Warhol's earlier art in a socio-economic context. Wagner views Warhol in the context of a history painter.[3] He is painting the events around him and chronicling the tension and

[3] Anne M. Wagner, "Warhol Paints History, or Race in America," *Representations* 55 (Summer 1996): 98-119.

turmoil of his time. She argues that Warhol achieves this status by elevating and depicting events like the Civil Rights movement onto a large-scale canvas similar to history painters of the past. However, Wagner is not arguing that Warhol was making a personal statement reflective of his own political beliefs—he was simply replicating key events unfolding around him. Grudin evaluates Warhol's earlier works as a critique of consumerism and capitalism by using machinist methods like screenprinting, Warhol embraces post-war advancement. But by implementing obvious flaws in these works like uneven applications of ink and exposed lines, Warhol is showing the "vulgar" underside of consumerism and capitalism and its eventual results.[4] Warhol was a member of the rising middle class following the world wars, but through his earlier works he displays that suburbia under capitalism will not last and, instead, will lead to imperfection, disaster, and tragedy. Grudin aids my argument establishing Warhol's political critique within his earlier work but he ends his argument with Warhol's works of the early 1960s. Likewise, Wagner is helpful in showing Warhol's awareness of contemporary events. However, neither is looking at Warhol's political beliefs exposed by *Vote McGovern* that connects to all of his works.

Few scholars have focused on the *Vote McGovern* poster or the later political posters that Warhol created. Blake Gopnik, Edward D. Powers, and Blake Stimson have recently published essays on Warhol's politics.[5] These largely revolve around using

[4] Anthony E. Grudin, ""Except Like a Tracing": Defectiveness, Accuracy, and Class in Early Warhol," *October* 140 (Spring 2012): 139-164.

[5] Blake Gopnik, "At Skarstedt, Andy Warhol's Portrait of his Parents?," *Artnet*, October 26, 2015, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/at-skarstedt-andy-warhol-hammer-and-sickle-347732.; Edward D. Powers, "All Things That I Didn't Want to Change Anyway:" Andy Warhol and the Sociology of Difference," *American Art* 26, no. 1 (2012): 48-73; and Blake Stimson, "Andy Warhol's Red Beard," *The Art Bulletin* 83, no. 3 (2001): 527-547.

Warhol's work as evidence of communist or socialistic allegiances and to reveal a larger idea about Warhol the person rather than focusing on themes of continuity in Warhol's art. Their arguments aid in my research to help me understand Warhol's politics and were especially helpful in explaining his background. Their arguments also demonstrate that facets of Warhol are still being discovered and analyzed; there is still a need for and interest in new academic research regarding the artist and his life. *Vote McGovern* initiated a group of political election posters by Warhol that included Gerald Ford (1974), Jimmy Carter (1976), and Edward Kennedy (1980).[6] Yet unlike his images of Jackie Kennedy or China's Chairman Mao, conceived in 1971, the year before *Vote McGovern.* Warhol produced these later posters as donations to the candidates' political campaigns, rather than for personal profit.[7] The later posters are not quite as elaborate or creative as *Vote McGovern* and also do not display loyalty to one political party over another. By viewing *Vote McGovern* next to the later posters, it can be seen that Warhol adopted a subtler approach to political presentation while delving further into politically-centered subjects. Further, it reveals the cyclical nature of Warhol's approach to art and presentation of idea.

Scholarly interpretations of *Vote McGovern* primarily revolve around the image's symbolism and its relationship to Warhol's biography. Critics Christopher Knight and Jonathan Jones suggest in separate reviews that Warhol's use of green, yellow, and red transform Nixon into a devil-like figure, imbuing the image with religious meaning.[8]

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[6] David Bourdon, *Warhol* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1991), 328.

[7] Ibid., 317.

[8] Christopher Knight, "America's Greatest Modern Political Poster," *The Los Angeles Times* (2008): n.pag; and Jonathan Jones, "Richard Nixon, Andy Warhol (Vote McGovern), 1972," *The Guardian* (2008): n.pag.

Knight and Jones support their reading by comparing Warhol's depictions of Nixon to Warhol's earlier images of Marilyn Monroe, Liz Taylor and Jacqueline Kennedy, which have been compared to Byzantine icons due to their use of gold and silver colors, and Mater Dolorosa imagery. It is a true, but not widely known, fact that Warhol was a devoted Catholic throughout his entire life. He attended mass on a weekly basis and decorated the walls of his apartment with a surprisingly large array of religious imagery.[9] These articles highlight the deeper meanings behind Warhol's celebrity portraiture but they focus only on specific works to display Warhol's Catholicism. They are seeking to show Warhol's continuous implementation of religion into his work as evident of his often overlooked faith and practice of faith. This is a helpful prototype to see how to bridge Warhol's work together through a common theme. I follow their example but focus rather on *Vote McGovern* and Warhol's political beliefs and approach to political art.

Another approach to deciphering *Vote McGovern* comes from critic David Bourdon, in his 1991 monograph devoted to Warhol's life and works.[10] He states that the print is representative of the artist's signature style of appropriated imagery and commercial design. Bourdon mentions that McGovern supporters could interpret the negative allusions to Nixon, while the Nixon campaign interpreted the work as celebrity-like publicity for the president.[11] He also notes that the portrait closely follows an earlier portrait designed by Ben Shahn for the 1964 Lyndon B. Johnson/Barry Goldwater

[9] Jane Dillenberger, *Religious Art of Andy Warhol* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 13.

[10] Bourdon, *Warhol.*

[11] Ibid., 318.

presidential race. Shahn depicted candidate Barry Goldwater's face as a caricature over a list of derogatory statements about him. The poster ends with the words, "Vote Johnson" and thus, introduces political "mud-slinging" in a commercial format (i.e., using the opponent's flaws as a campaign platform). Bourdon, however, believes that Warhol chose to depict Nixon's face over McGovern's because it was more recognizable, and therefore the work would be more accessible to a wider audience. Nixon's face had already become iconic in political cartoons and imagery since his first presidential campaign in 1960 and would be immediately familiar to the viewer versus the face of the lesser-known McGovern.

Art critic Blake Gopnik and curator Jane Kinsman also believe that *Vote McGovern* appropriates elements of the earlier Shahn poster.[12] Warhol entered the world of New York advertising at the height of Shahn's popularity. The artist regarded Shahn highly and emulated his designs or, as Gopnik states, "stole" characteristics of Shahn's style. The uneven line and the format of *Vote McGovern* closely follow the Shahn poster. Both artists additionally share political connections with liberal candidates and leftist thinking. Kinsman argues that copying the poster shows Warhol's high regard for Shahn. However, Gopnik argues that Warhol slighted Shahn twice in stealing the work and receiving all of the praise for what was Shahn's original design. While the Shahn poster likely served as an example to Warhol, an artist who often borrowed other artist's ideas and design, the two posters remain quite distinct. Warhol utilizes a specific approach to color and form to deliver the concise and imperative message to "Vote McGovern" that

[12] Blake Gopnik, "At the Whitney, Warhol's Brilliant Theft from Ben Shahn," *Artnet*, May 7, 2015, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/at-the-whitney-warhol-steals-from-ben-shahn-295269.; and Jane Kinsman, "Andy Warhol," *National Gallery of Australia*, 2003, http://nga.gov.au/warhol/Kinsman.cfm.

cannot be observed in the more colloquial and cartoonish design by Shahn. Not only are the posters different, the artists were as well, with Warhol being a fame-obsessed artist/celebrity, and Shahn a Social Realist with Communist ties. Yet Warhol admired and copied Shahn's work and ideas. This reveals Warhol's political awareness and possible affinity for controversial ideas not normally associated with him but revealed in works like *Vote McGovern.*

Henry Geldzahler, curator and friend of Warhol, and Robert Rosenblum, art historian and author, have argued that Warhol's political portraits are versions of society portraiture. These authors both knew Warhol personally, Geldzahler having been the subject of Warhol's film *Henry Geldzahler* (1964).[13] When Warhol was shot by would-be assassin Valerie Solanas in 1968, he left his screen printing career and the wild days of the Silver Factory behind. When he finally returned from his artistic sabbatical spent making experimental films and undertaking the launch of *Interview* magazine, he tried to characterize himself more as a painter than a commercial artist. Both authors stress the importance of remembering that one of Warhol's main focuses throughout his entire career was to make money. [14] He found an untapped market in the 1970s and 1980s in the form of society portraits—from politicians to celebrities to socialites and royalty. This career shift did not begin until the late 1970s with further development in the 1980s, but the portrait of Nixon is similar to the portraiture direction his career embraced in the later 1970s. The status of Nixon, the painterly aspect, and the photographic source are all

[13] Paul Goldberger, "Henry Geldzahler, 59, Critic, Public Official and Contemporary Art's Champion, Is Dead," *The New York Times* (1994): n.pag.

[14] Henry Geldzahler and Robert Rosenblum, *Andy Warhol: Portraits of the Seventies and Eighties* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993).

characteristics that Warhol would utilize in his celebrity portraits. Grudin and curator Sharon Matt Atkins also perceive *Vote McGovern* as a transitional work between Warhol's earlier Pop works from the sixties and commissioned society portraiture from the seventies and eighties.[15] Both Grudin and Atkins highlight how the painterly aspects of *Vote McGovern* differ from the machinist screenprints of the 1960s to resemble the style seen in Warhol's later society portraits. While *Vote McGovern* does possess many of the characteristics of celebrity portraiture, it is not a flattering portrayal of the subject and had no input from the candidate it is actually meant to illustrate. The oddities of *Vote McGovern* compared to the society portraits prove further that it is more than a transitional work, but rather, a work that showcases Warhol's specific decisions to portray Nixon in a very deliberate way that is not seen in his other political portraits.

Only very recent writings have explored the specific political context of *Vote McGovern.* Art historian Edward D. Powers provides the most extensive treatment of Warhol's pro-McGovern poster in his 2012 essay, "Third Party Politics: Andy Warhol's *Vote McGovern* (1972)."[16] Powers argues that the work is a critique of America's two-party political system, basing his argument on Warhol's support of the 1948 Progressive party candidate, Henry Wallace. He additionally connects the artist to Ben Shahn, who also critiqued bipartisanship. This is the most comprehensive scholarly study and evaluation of *Vote McGovern* to date. It reveals a wealth of useful information on the surrounding aesthetics and historical facts behind the creation of *Vote McGovern* and

[15] Anthony E. Grudin, "Warhol's Politics," *Art Journal* 73, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 83-85; and Sharon Matt Atkins, *Andy Warhol's: Pop Politics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008).

[16] Powers, "Third Party Politics."

insight into and documentation of many particulars surrounding *Vote McGovern* that have not been explored by other scholars. It, however, focuses on how *Vote McGovern* serves as a critique of bi-partisanship, rather than symbolizes Warhol's personal political beliefs.

In his 2013 book *A Conspiracy of Images: Andy Warhol, Gerard Richter, and the Art of the Cold War*, art historian John J. Curley similarly argues that *Vote McGovern* reflects Warhol's critical response to the two-party political system.[17] Warhol's life and background as a child of working-class immigrants meets the stereotypes of many accused Communist supporters during the Red Scare. Many working-class immigrants became communists or socialists. Families following this criterion were more open to the Marxist beliefs of banishing economic hierarchies and creating socialistic equality. The promise of leveled economic and social status sounded appealing to blue-collar citizens. Additionally, Warhol's name can be traced to a petition that supported the Progressive party candidate, Wallace, who was investigated by the U.S. Government for Communistic alliances. It can be further documented that a shy Warhol campaigned for Wallace while he was a young art student in 1948. Curley subjectively builds his arguments on examples such as the red in the famous *Campbell's Soup Cans* (1962) as a possible allusion to Communism. The author also cites later works that represent Lenin and the Soviet hammer and sickle as further proof of Warhol's ultimate beliefs and ties to Marxism. While Curley analyzes political themes running throughout Warhol's artwork, he looks at them as being signifiers of Warhol being a communist rather than making an argument about Warhol's art.

[17] John J. Curley, *A Conspiracy of Images: Andy Warhol, Gerard Richter, and the Art of the Cold War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

Blake Stimson's recent book, *Citizen Warhol*, contains the most comprehensive treatment of Warhol's politics.[18] Stimson cites Warhol as signifying America's transformation from a two-party political system to our current government structure. *Vote McGovern* displays this with its text supporting McGovern and its image of Nixon, communicating Warhol's dissatisfaction or lack of active political support (i.e., he never voted and supported a wide variety of candidates from John F. Kennedy to Gerald Ford to Ronald Reagan while still claiming to be a Democrat). As such, Warhol represents a model of contemporary American politics and citizenship beginning in the late 1970's that differs greatly from the bipartisanship absolutes of earlier decades. Stimson's outlining of Warhol's politics from childhood until death is enlightening, but his argument turns into a perplexing discussion connecting Warhol's postmodern politics to the political state. He argues that *Vote McGovern*'s critique of bi-partisanship was ahead of its time and that Warhol's political beliefs helped shape the state of the American government today.

Organization and Methodology

Chapter one examines Warhol's childhood, influences, early career, and pre-*Vote McGovern* works to reveal political elements and approaches already being utilized by Warhol in his art. Warhol's political beliefs which began at an early age would be later seen in *Vote McGovern* and throughout his art. His influences show how his beliefs were constructed. It then delves into Warhol's early career to show his transition from the commercial to the fine arts world. It shows that the political convictions embraced by

[18] Blake Stimson, *Citizen Warhol* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014).

Warhol in 1972 were not random, but rather, previously established and already communicated in his art.

The second chapter focuses on *Vote McGovern* and evaluates it in relation to the period that it was created and the presidential race that it portrays. The chapter relates characteristics of the print to events in Nixon's career and life to achieve a greater understanding of the specific choices made by Warhol in this work. After analyzing the screenprint and the candidates it depicts, I compare *Vote McGovern* to other political works motivated by the same presidential race. In doing so, I highlight Warhol's own notable contribution to the growing commingling of fine arts and politics while also evaluating the various ways that different mediums present political messages. Lastly, this chapter returns to Warhol's Pop Art of the 1960s to show that while *Vote McGovern* is representative of the year 1972 and comparable artwork, it is also a continuation of political thoughts already held and expressed by Warhol.

The third chapter examines the effects of *Vote McGovern* and the results of the presidential campaign that it represented. It views the political turmoil following the 1972 election and the continued presence of Nixon in Warhol's life following the print. The chapter then compares *Vote McGovern* with Warhol's other political portraits and related works to argue that *Vote McGovern* is a unique example in Warhol's career. While Warhol did continue to produce political works, he returned to the subtler format of his prints in the 1960s. *Vote McGovern,* therefore, can be understood as the most overt and specifically assertive political statement made by Warhol in his art.

Ultimately, the chapters build on one another to reveal the significance of *Vote McGovern* in Warhol's career and work. *Vote McGovern* encapsulates political elements

of Warhol's earlier work that were again utilized in his later work. Through the merging of his political background with a specific and calculated approach to an election, *Vote McGovern* may be the closest researchers will come to finding an actual political statement by Warhol. While other scholars focus on *Vote McGovern* to make a greater point about Warhol the person or the American political system, they do not view *Vote McGovern* in direct relation to Warhol's other artwork to try to define his oeuvre as politically aware with similar elements of content and design. My thesis argues that *Vote McGovern* should be regarded as a significant work and an entry point into understanding the evolution of Warhol's political expression.

CHAPTER ONE

PRE-VOTE MCGOVERN

Vote McGovern did not suddenly appear in 1972, but rather, extended from Warhol's early political beliefs as well as from his artworks of the 1950s and 1960s. This chapter will trace the political currents in Warhol's artwork by looking first at his 1950s artworks in connection with the Red Scare, then at how in the early 1960s Warhol turned to making artwork that reflected the politics of consumerism, and finally, at the various socio-political dimensions of his 1960s artwork that responded to the decade's tumultuous events. In placing *Vote McGovern* in a broader context and evaluating Warhol's pre-1972 artwork, I suggest that *Vote McGovern* reflects approaches and themes already utilized by Warhol and was not an anomaly linked solely to the 1972 presidential election.

Warhol and the Red Scare

The Red Scare years led to the creation of some of Warhol's earliest works that responded to the wide-spread fear and doubt felt by many toward the United States government. Examples of the works during this time are sketches of Warhol picking his nose, Warhol standing in the middle of a political rally, and *Communist Speaker* (1950). The works show a specific reaction and interpretation similar to those that would later be seen in *Vote McGovern.*

The earlier sketches of Warhol picking his nose and women breastfeeding puppies reflect his childhood and influences, which are a key to understanding his emergent

political beliefs and how he would later inject them into his work. It is necessary to note his exposure to politics at an early age as the son of Polish immigrants.[19] The American dream and democratic principles were embraced by the working-class Warhola family home in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The want to be "American" in Pittsburg can be observed further in changing the traditional Polish spelling of Warhol's name from Ondrej to Andrew.[20] The tension between immigrants and the American government when the Warhola family first came to America in the early 1920s was significant.[21] Support for labor laws and beliefs of Communism and Socialism increased while capitalism was being more openly questioned.

Warhol, a sickly child, long struggled with the illness St. Vitus Dance, which likely caused the blotchy appearance of his skin that he tried to cover for the remainder of his life.[22] The sickness also caused Warhol to experience pain when touched, as well as uncontrollable spasms attacking his balance and coordination. As a result of his illness, he spent much of his childhood with his mother obsessing over Hollywood stars. While other boys his age played with G.I. Joes and read the latest comics, Warhol went to movies, played with paper dolls, and collected pictures that he would turn into elaborate collages devoted to glamorous actors.[23] He especially loved Shirley Temple and belonged

[19] Bourdon, 14.

[20] Stimson, 69.

[21] Ibid., 16.

[22] Bourdon, 17.

[23]Steven Watson, *Factory Made: Warhol and the Sixties* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2003), 6.

to her fan club. One of his prized possessions as a child was an autographed picture of her displayed on the Warhola fireplace mantle, alongside a Byzantine-style Crucifix.[24]

As a young teenager, Warhol's obsession shifted to the writer Truman Capote who similarly tackled tragedy, stardom, and controversy in his life. Capote rose to fame most notably with his novel *In Cold Blood* (1965), inspired by a sensationalist news story. In the same way, Warhol gained source material and gruesome photographs for his *Death and Disaster* series. Capote was a controversial figure from a complex background who surfaced on the New York scene with brilliance and a shocking lifestyle that led to almost instant fame in the 1950s and early 1960s. Capote who said and did whatever he pleased found refuge in a quasi-innocent youthfulness and nonchalant attitude that mirrors the image Warhol would later try to achieve.[25] Both Warhol and Capote worked hard to attain success and fame equally while trying to cover the depth of their intelligence and strategic ambition. With vague responses and superficial lifestyles, they accomplished much underneath guises of deflection and naiveté. Capote's downfall into alcoholism amidst his fame was a formative precursor to the characteristics of commercial success, fame, and tragedies in capitalism that Warhol later implemented in his screenprints. While Capote may not have been an obvious political influence, he contributed to Warhol's style and the deeper content of his work.

Warhol's contentious relationship with the Red Scare years can be seen not only in how he operated both inside and outside of capitalism but it can also be observed in his only documented political activism and the two drawings that came from this brief and

[24] Stimson, "Andy Warhol's Red Beard," 528.

[25] Simon Grant, "Me and Andy and. . . Ronald Reagan," *Tate Etc.* 17 (2009): 49-55.

unusual period in his life. Both the drawings and Warhol's political awareness were encouraged by his art professor at Carnegie Tech, Robert Lepper.[26]

Lepper assigned his students the book *All the King's Men* (1946), a story based on Huey Long, the Louisiana politician caught in the middle of Red Scare America.[27] As a result of a semester-long study on visual narrative construction, Warhol drew an elaborate sketch of townspeople at a rally with himself in attendance [Figure 2]. The crowd hovers around a charismatic politician while a stoic figure that looks extremely similar to Lenin stands in the background and Warhol looks up inquisitively at the speaker from behind rows of people. It is intriguing that the figure of Warhol thoughtfully listens to the character emblematic of Long, while standing in a visual correlation with Lenin. The drawing shows Warhol's identification with the two controversial political figures and his interpretation of the Communist witch hunt unfolding in America.[28]

These works were created at the height of the Red Scare and also when Warhol personally campaigned for the Progressive Party candidate, Henry A. Wallace.[29] This race led to his initial introduction to Richard Nixon. At this time candidates, such as Wallace, did not openly support Communism; however, they also did not openly condemn it (similar to Long's character around the same time). This blur between Communism and democracy was met with much suspicion in the American political

[26] Stimson, 130.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Stimson, "Andy Warhol's Red Beard," 531.

[29] Powers, 404.

atmosphere, especially during the Red Scare years of multiple congressional hearings and political sentencing over Communist sympathies.

Despite the possible implications of being connected with a questionable figure, Warhol's name can be found on a petition for Wallace that was published by the Pittsburgh Press.[30] His family was reportedly embarrassed to see their son inextricably linked to a controversial candidate. Furthermore, Warhol produced an overtly political drawing titled *Communist Speaker* (1950) [Figure 3], in which a man is in the middle of a passionate speech with his arms thrown in the air in front of podium with a Soviet flag waving behind him. These leftist political works, *Untitled (Huey Long)* and *Communist Speaker*, as well as Warhol's involvement with the Wallace campaign indicate that Warhol was already aware of and critiquing the political structure that he would increasingly address throughout the 1960s and would culminate in 1972's *Vote McGovern.*

Warhol and Consumerism

While Warhol was affected by the fear and controversy of the Red Scare years, Warhol's artwork also reacted to and critiqued the growing trend of consumerism in the 1960s. It is similar to how *Vote McGovern* is a more vocal critique of how Warhol perceived the leader of the capitalist United States (i.e., Nixon). Warhol's critique of consumerism can be observed in Warhol's early work of the 1960s and in his *Death and Disaster* series from the dates 1962-1964.

[30] Powers, 541.

Following college, during the 1950s and early 1960s, Warhol composed his shoe drawings and fulfilled assignments from department stores [Figure 4].[31] His work became further disconnected from himself and his personal involvement with the art in content and process. He did not even sign most of the drawings from this period, but instead had his mother artfully scrawl his name across the works.[32] Warhol left his commercial career and focused on his art that became increasing removed from his as well. He produced paintings on screenprints that appropriated popular brands of the time as can be observed in *Green Coca Cola Bottles* (1962) [Figure 5] and *Campbell's Soup Cans* (1962) [Figure 6]. These works of the early 1960s critique consumerism by replicating products but reproducing them in a way that they are noticeably fake (i.e., inky blots of color and overlaid images). Warhol also commented on the emptiness of consumerism with his *Brillo Boxes* (1964) [Figure 7] and *Heinz Tomato Ketchup Box* (1964) [Figure 8]. Scholars like Grudin attribute the "vulgarity" of consumerism shown in Warhol's artwork from the early 1960s as being his response to the over-embrace of materialism and machinist approaches in advertising and factory production in the post-war years.[33] He argues that Warhol is showing the imperfection inherent in society with his purposeful ink blotches and subtle mistakes.

In his painting of a plane crash titled *129 Die in Jet* (1962) [Figure 9], which originated from a newspaper story, Warhol emphasizes death in the modern era by a modern mode of transportation. [34] The sadistic or unsatisfying qualities of a consumer

[31] De Salvo, 19.

[32] Bourdon, 43.

[33] Grudin, 164.

[34] Ibid., 117.

society can also be seen in the work *Eddie Fisher Breaks Down* (1962) [Figure 10] where the newspaper headline, "Eddie Fisher Breaks Down," is written in bold commandeering the attention of the screenprint.[35] These words relay an actual news account of actor Eddie Fisher's breakdown experienced in the middle of his tumultuous marriage to actress Elizabeth Taylor. The two were among the most well-known Hollywood stars of their time and immediately recognizable symbols of American society. Yet, their marriage lay in division and their lives in disarray. This screenprint is mostly about celebrities and stardom, but perhaps with this work, Warhol was also highlighting the ultimate emptiness of celebrity and consumerism in a cryptic critique of American society.

In addition to Warhol's early celebrity and consumer subjects, he also completed the *Death and Disaster Series* which consisted of about 70 or more paintings began in 1962 and lasting until 1964. He delves into more serious subject matter and appropriation of images from news sources rather than product logos. The series reveals the more serious side of Warhol and his perception of American society. America had been triumphant through World War II and was embracing a utopian dream of materialism found in suburbia, cars, and prosperity. Through Warhol's series, he poses interesting questions, such as, if war and conflict had been obliterated, why were there still suicides, fatal car accidents, and tragedies present all around modern society? The material goods that contributed to the American society and economy were also what was killing it as can be observed in the car accident images of the *Death and Disaster* series [Figure 11].

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[35] Grudin, 116.

In addition, the *Tunafish Disaster* (1963) [Figure 12] centered on the news story of contaminated aluminum cans causing the death of housewives.[36] Warhol found the images from real accounts in newspapers across the country and transferred them onto screen-prints. The images display an unpleasant underbelly of American consumerist culture with graphic and direct images of contorted automobile frames and photographs of deceased or injured people who were once alive and well.[37] These tropes of tragedy, crisis, shock, and critique can also be observed in another *Death and Disaster* print that depicts a young girl committing suicide in 1963 [Figure 13] by jumping from a building to her death.[38] Her frozen last seconds are obscured by Pop colors. This image's bluntness in subject and presentation is similar to the directness of Nixon's unflattering portrayal in *Vote McGovern*.

Warhol's large-scale work, *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* (1964) [Figure 14] illustrates the alluring but seedy undertones of American society.[39] Its depiction of thirteen criminals was initially intended for the New York State pavilion of the World's Fair hosted by New York in 1964. It was taken down due to the outcry of Italians who were offended by its decidedly criminal presentation of Italian citizens since the mugshots chosen by Warhol consisted only of Mafia members. They are shown as handsome outlaws and rallied rebels, surveying the grounds of the World's Fair, a celebration of progress and technology. The work was additionally controversial because

[36] Bourdon, 155.

[37] Binstock, 16.

[38] Bourdon, 139.

[39] Richard Meyer, "Warhol's Clones," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 7, no. 1 (1994): 79.

of its showing the men as attractive and playing on the words "most wanted" to convey hidden sexual connotations. Critics like Richard Meyer interpret works like *Thirteen Most Wanted* as Warhol making allusions to his own sexuality.[40]

It can be seen that Warhol's Pop art of the 1960s is not glorifying the consumer age but, rather, disagreeing with it and exposing its inadequacies and dangers. Throughout this period, Warhol challenges the current state of politics in America and shows the imminent "disaster" or consequence that will come from it. Warhol's challenging of society did not thus begin with his derogatory portrait of Nixon but was already present in his work of the early to mid-1960s.

Warhol and the Political Tensions of the 1960s

The 1960s did not only revel in consumerism but also dealt with many issues surrounding racism, governmental policies, and changes in leadership. It was a decade filled with much tension that would result in the issues being faced in 1972 and debated by Nixon and McGovern. Warhol was sensitive to the political and cultural tensions of this period and responded through his art in the way that he responded to the 1972 election through *Vote McGovern*.

Warhol looked at police brutality and racism with his series titled *Race Riots* (1964) [Figure 15].[41] The images feature the Charles Moore photographs for *Life* magazine documenting the marches in Birmingham, Alabama. Like the *Death and Disaster* series, the *Race Riot* images also portray tragedy, violence, and disorder. Warhol again obscures his subjects with bright colors, most notably using blues and reds that mix

[40] Meyer, 79.

[41] Wagner, 98-119.

with white paper and black ink to mock the United States' patriotic colors and to reveal the inherent irony in the events where the police are meant to protect, not brutalize, citizens. As scholar Wagner proposes, the work elevates contemporary events to the genre of history painting. It shows Warhol's awareness of and preoccupation with events around him, using photographs gained directly from newspaper sources.

The *Electric Orange Chair* (1964) [Figure 16] follows the same strategy as it shows Warhol again engaging with a contemporary event.[42] The death penalty (and use of the electric chair) were contested during these years through several anti-death penalty cases presented before the Supreme Court throughout the 1960s. While the death penalty has always been controversial, it reached its lowest level of support in this decade. This again shows Warhol's awareness and presentation of political events around him. But in classic Warholian-style, he obscures any overt claim or point of view with bright colors and inky blotches.

Warhol specifically addressed the subject of American political leaders with his screen-prints made as a belated response to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in *Flash-November 22, 1963* (1968), four years after it occurred [Figure 17].[43] The print displays the power of newspapers by illustrating the various headlines typed across every major American press publication after the death of Kennedy. The words are written across each screen-print announcing the tragic and unexpected death of a young figure of hope in the American political structure. Warhol, like many, was affected by the

[42] Bourdon, 43; Feldman, 78-79.

[43] "FLASH—NOVEMBER 22, 1963, 1968,"
thewarhol.org.,http://www.warhol.org/exhibitions/2012/headlines/selectedworks/flash.php.

sudden and gruesome death of the young president. The reasoning for this print's later date suggests the extended trauma of the Kennedy assassination felt by the American public.[44] Although, it is interesting that Warhol would produce this in the year that Nixon began his first presidency. Maybe he was already voicing his dissatisfaction with Nixon that would be more obviously seen in *Vote McGovern.* Kennedy was a symbol of Nixon's first big failure when the young candidate overwhelmingly defeated the more seasoned Nixon in 1960.

Warhol had previously produced numerous portraits of Kennedy's widow, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, in 1964. In these prints, such as *Sixteen Jackies* [Figure 18], Warhol chose images of Jackie arriving with the President in Dallas and in the moment following the assassination, juxtaposing images of extreme hope and extreme tragedy.[45] Warhol shaded the screenprints in cool blues and whites as well as black blotches that recall newspaper formats. Although records of Warhol actively campaigning for Kennedy cannot be found, the death of the President affected him and led him to further considerations in addressing political content via fine arts. However, the *Jackie* works are also reminiscent of Warhol's celebrity portraits of the early 1960s, like *Ethel Scull 36 Times* (1962) [Figure 19] with their repetition, minimal use of color and grid-like organization.[46] They additionally reprise the themes of tragedy that can be observed throughout the *Death and Disaster* series. Like in *Orange Car Crash Fourteen Times*

[44] "FLASH—NOVEMBER 22, 1963, 1968," thewarhol.org., http://www.warhol.org/exhibitions/2012/headlines/selectedworks/flash.php.

[45] Bourdon, 181.

[46] Geldzahler, 23.

(1963), they show the president's widow as a tragic victim. They too symbolize the ending of Camelot and the suburban bliss following World War II along with a realization that enemies and dangers lay within our own society and politics. [47]

The works from this period show that Warhol was engaged with politics enough to devote works dedicated to some of the most traumatic and hotly debated issues and events of the 1960s. They also reveal a growing confidence in depicting, illustrating, and questioning the government's handling of the Civil Rights, the Electric Chair debate, and even the aftermath of Kennedy's death, that again emerges in *Vote McGovern.*

Warhol and Mao

The mass production of Warhol's prints came to an abrupt halt in 1968 when former employee or "superstar" (as Warhol popularly titled the actors that he hired) Valerie Solanas, came into his studio and shot him in the chest.[48] The bullet passed through his body without harming any vital organs but it did lead to surgeries and significant scarring. It also marked the end of Warhol's Silver Factory days in which both his studio and life was open to the bohemian spirit and drugs of the 1960s. After Warhol was released from the hospital, he moved his studio to a new location and made it more difficult to access him or his surroundings.[49] He stopped producing screenprints and began to focus on his films and the launch of his magazine, *Interview*.[50] After the Solanas incident, the studio is said to have possessed more of a professional office atmosphere,

[47] Bourdon, 145.

[48] Geldzahler, 23.

[49] Bourdon, 299.

[50] Ibid., 302.

with Warhol becoming more of an entrepreneur and socialite, rather than a leader in the underground art scene as he had been before.

After the Solanas incident, Warhol did not enter the fine arts arena again for a few years until Kennedy's old opponent, Nixon, visited China with Henry Kissinger in 1969.[51] The visit was significant due to China having been in a self-imposed isolation from the Western world for several decades. It showed a light relaxation of the rigid Communist culture embraced by the Chinese government being willing to peaceably interact with leaders of the free world. The leader of China at that time, Chairman Mao, became popularized as the face of an anti-democratic government that was referenced in popular anti-war critiques. Despite the peacefulness observed in Nixon's journey to China, the Vietnam War was being fought and actively protested. As Warhol's print of Mao shows, the popular culture of the late 1960s seriously questioned the American political system.

As with Warhol's decision to construct a work dedicated to Kennedy in the first year of Nixon's presidency, it is also intriguing that Nixon's reopening of diplomatic relationships between China and the United States would prompt Warhol's next portrait of a political figure. He accomplished this with the large-scale print editions of *Mao* (1972) (also produced on wallpaper for gallery spaces) [Figure 20].[52] The screenprint depicts the head of the Chinese ruler with painterly brushstrokes of color that differ from Warhol's mechanized practice of the early 1960s. The image of the leader of the Communist world was immediately recognizable and striking when it was first shown in

[51] Bourdon, 317.

[52] Ibid., 317-18.

Paris in 1972. According to former *Interview* editor Bob Colacello, Warhol reportedly composed this work for monetary reasons only.

But it is intriguing that his first significant work following a long absence from the fine arts and his films in the mid-to-late 1960s depicted a political figure, and not only a political figure but a controversial one. So with the creation of *Mao* in early 1972, the next decade would be one of change for Warhol. The theme of political critique displayed in Warhol's work of the 1960s and in the figure of Chairman Mao would be the foundation for *Vote McGovern.* The 1970s would be a decade where Warhol would change both the style and content of his work as the government and the American people would also change following the turbulent 1960s.

Warhol was not the machine that he described himself as to interviewer Gene Swenson in 1963, but a mirror that reflected post-war America and its politics. Not only was he a product of his time, but he was also a voice and illustrator of them. It can be seen through viewing Warhol's early works and pre-1972 screenprints, that he was a politically aware artist who expressed his beliefs in his artwork, sometimes directly but more often indirectly, long before the creation of *Vote McGovern*. Warhol's background, influences, and early work reveal a political consciousness that emerges potently in *Vote McGovern.*

CHAPTER TWO

VOTE MCGOVERN

Following the 1960s, Warhol delved into a new phase in his career that differed from the style of his earlier screenprints, while continuing with their political awareness and critique. With *Vote McGovern,* Warhol directly targeted Nixon through the form of a political poster. Typically, a political poster is a two-dimensional work that combines text and image to create a summarization of a candidate and his or her platform that can be visually consumed and embedded in a viewer's mind within seconds. *Vote McGovern* combines text and imagery to create the instantaneous message "Vote McGovern" not Nixon. To understand this message, it is important to explain *Vote McGovern* within the context of the 1972 presidential race. I compare *Vote McGovern* to other contemporary works to show that it was one of multiple artworks inspired by this election and to illustrate how it operated as a political poster. I also compare *Vote McGovern* to Warhol's earlier works and later political posters to suggest its significance within his oeuvre. Warhol's aesthetic decisions surrounding *Vote McGovern* show a specific political element that is already existent in his earlier works but emerges more distinctly here.

The Subject of *Vote McGovern*

Vote McGovern is recognized for its memorable depiction of Nixon revealing Warhol's true feelings toward the political leader. The visual image of Nixon's face

juxtaposed with the slogan "Vote McGovern" suggests the divisive political atmosphere of the early 1970s. The American public was divided over conflicting issues including the Democratic National Convention's choice of George McGovern as their candidate, President Nixon's opening relations between China and the U.S., and the ongoing Vietnam War.[53] While McGovern held a PhD in history and was well-liked by his peers, he was considered a controversial candidate by conservative voters of 1972. He supported liberal policies born out of the revolutionary 1960s that were still met with shock by the greater part of the nation. McGovern had difficulty garnering the support of the Democratic Party, especially when individuals such as Edward Kennedy refused his offer of vice presidency.[54] Nixon was seen as the polar opposite of the easy-going McGovern and was, instead, considered a dominant conservative.

Warhol's use of brash colors suggests the chaos of the election and turnover on the 1972 campaign trail. Nixon's unavoidable eyes that ominously target the viewer in *Vote McGovern* are similar to the way that he targeted his opponents. Nixon initially considered third-party candidate, George Wallace, as his greatest competitor in the race until Wallace was shot and subsequently paralyzed at a political rally on May 15, 1972.[55] Following this, McGovern became increasingly more of a threat to Nixon and his goal of reelection. McGovern's "Come Home America" stance on Vietnam was met with popularity, especially with the younger voters.[56] However, his campaign suffered when it

[53] James N. Giglio, "The Eagleton Affair: Thomas Eagleton, George McGovern, and the 1972 Vice Presidential Nomination" *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (2009): 647; Powers, 401.

[54] Giglio, 650.

[55] Ibid., 442.

[56] Ibid., 443.

was revealed that his choice for vice-president, Missouri Senator Thomas Eagleton, had suffered from depression in the past that had required electro-shock therapy treatments.[57] McGovern stood behind his choice but this cast additional doubt in the minds of many already skeptical Americans. Nixon, too, had an embarrassing incident happen when it was reported on June 18, 1972, that someone had broken into the Democratic National Convention's headquarters at the Watergate office complex; however, this concern would not become substantial until after the 1972 election.[58] Perhaps the sinister or uneasy quality of Nixon in *Vote McGovern* is a subtle foreshadowing of how his presidential career would end in disgrace with his resignation in 1974.

As the 1972 presidential campaign trail continued, Nixon became increasingly obsessed and worried about the election and the possibility of losing to McGovern. He decided to target the more controversial political platforms of his opponent.[59] He wished to make McGovern look as radical and unstable as possible to the American people. He did this by copying the techniques that Lyndon B. Johnson utilized against Barry Goldwater in the 1964 presidential election to not only make voters question the opponent's platform, but also his character and individuality.[60] Nixon emphasized McGovern's liberal political stance on Vietnam and governmental policies to indicate his questionable moral character and values so that Nixon would appear as the most stable

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[57] Giglio, 446.

[58] Jonathan Aitken, *Nixon, a Life* (Washington D.C.: Regnery Pub., 1993), 445.

[59] Ibid., 443.

[60] Ibid.

qualified candidate. Nixon in fact targeted McGovern in a manner similar to how Warhol portrays him in *Vote McGovern,* as fixated and relentless.

Warhol in *Vote McGovern* and Nixon in his own campaign strategy, however, were not the first to campaign by highlighting the unflattering characteristics of an opposing candidate. Shahn had used a similar format in his campaign poster for candidate Goldwater in Goldwater's 1964 race against Johnson [Figure 21]. Shahn depicted a caricature of Goldwater's face with the words "Vote Johnson" written in bold at the bottom of the poster. Bourdon and Atkins believe that Warhol copied his political poster from Shahn.[61]

Warhol's depiction of Nixon and presentation of McGovern also differs from other posters and campaign imagery for the 1972 election. Other artists had been inspired to create works in support of McGovern. Examples by Larry Rivers and David Levine are favorable depictions of only McGovern and do not mention or show Nixon. Other artists, such as William R. Kohn, incorporated McGovern's campaign slogan of "Come Home America" in their posters.[62] But these all show the candidate they support, whereas Warhol campaigned for McGovern through a negative portrait of Nixon. Warhol's strategy more closely paralleled the negative campaign imagery produced by contemporary filmmakers like Emile de Antonio and media collectives like TVTV, who also focused on Nixon's weaknesses, poor leadership, policy choices, personality, and image.

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[61] Bourdon, 318; Atkins.

[62] "Collections Search," *The National Museum of American History*, 17 June 2016, http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/main?edan_q=george%20mcgovern&edan_start=0&ogmt_local_unit=off.

Emile de Antonio and Portraying Nixon

In his documentary film *Millhouse* (1971) [Figure 22], the director and close friend of Warhol uses archival material and source photography to expose Nixon's past political failures and frame him as an inadequate candidate. *Millhouse* was De Antonio's fourth political documentary. His first film, *Point of Order!* (1963) [Figure 23], was about the Communist "witch hunt" induced by Cold War hysteria. This film won critical acclaim with its lack of narrative and grainy shots that conveyed a realistically compelling account of the McCarthy hearings of the 1940s. Like Warhol, De Antonio was affected by the Red Scare and its chilling impact on politics. De Antonio's second film, *Rush to Judgment* (1967) [Figure 24], investigated the assassination of Kennedy. His third film, *In the Year of the Pig* (1968) [Figure 25], was dedicated to exposing the realities behind the Vietnam War.[63] This film showed current wartime footage in order to convey the atrocities of the war.

With *Millhouse*, composed of numerous old interviews and previously unattainable media footage documenting Nixon's rise to political fame. De Antonio again sought to expose Nixon's questionable decisions and past mistakes in politics to depict him as an unfit candidate.

De Antonio was supposedly given these obscure Nixon archives by an anonymous source that left them for him in a New York garage.[64] The movie is an exaggerated collage or portrait of Nixon similar to the style of modern day filmmaker

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[63] Powers, 112.

[64] Ibid., 114.

Michael Moore.[65] De Antonio summarizes his feelings toward the film's antagonist with these words: "Nixon personifies the change that is taking place in the American language[;] our language today means the opposite of what it says, is used to veil meaning rather than to discover anything."[66]

Despite De Antonio's passionate dislike of Nixon and use of actual archival material, the film had a mixed critical reception. While the film did not gain the full approval of the art world, *Millhouse* did win the affirmation of McGovern's campaign. Since many of his supporters were young voters, his campaign managers thought they would respond well to the satiric film. The film was shown multiple times by McGovern supporters at colleges, universities, campaign headquarters, and a last time in New York during the final weeks leading up to election day.[67] The movie did not win the election for McGovern but it did try to persuade voters by showcasing the negative attributes of Nixon similar to what Warhol created the following year.

Because it is a film, rather than a print, *Millhouse* provides a more in-depth treatment of Nixon, American history, and the circumstances leading up to the 1972 election. Snippets of archival material of the president resemble documentary style photographs as if de Antonio was simply capturing images that were unfolding around him. De Antonio intentionally used Nixon's older speeches and unflattering footage of Nixon to expose his past failures. In this way, *Millhouse* is both documentary and exposé. As a poster, *Vote McGovern* operates quite differently because it is not time-based nor

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[65] Powers, 108.

[66] Mark Minett, "Millhouse: The Problems and Opportunities of Political Cinema," *Film History* 26, no. 1 (2014): 116.

[67] Ibid., 128-129.

contains a narrative. Instead, it simply portrays Nixon's face with the imperative to vote, not for him, but for his rival. But in so doing, Warhol's image of a devilish, disagreeable politician hearkens to how De Antonio's *Millhouse* focuses on Nixon's foibles and portrays him in an unflattering, negative light.

TVTV and Political Documentary

Vote McGovern also possesses certain similarities to media collective TVTV's documentary *The World's Largest TV Studio* (1972) [Figure 26] and *Four More Years* (1972) [Figure 27] through its focus and perhaps critique of the two-party system. In Warhol's print, there are only two choices offered, Nixon or McGovern, Republican or Democrat. This limited choice matched the U.S. two-party political system--a system that had become a subject of debate, evidenced by TVTV's 1972 films. Both Warhol and TVTV saw the two-party system's rising dominance and illustrated it through contemporary media-based approaches: the documentary film and political poster. They also recognized the power of the campaign format. TVTV accomplishes this through showing the slogans and posters and signs from the campaigns, while *Vote McGovern* uses the candidates' depiction or lack of depiction paired with a specific message to portray the election. Through using these methods, the works create an aura around the figure of Nixon, an aura of fear to convince voters not to re-elect him.

TVTV was formed by members of other video collectives such as Ant Farm, Raindance, and Videofreex that engaged in social and political critiques using unconventional approaches.[68] Their first film about the Democratic National Convention,

[68] Stephanie Tripp, "From TVTV to YouTube: A Genealogy of Participatory Practices in Video," *Journal of Film and Video* 64, no. 1-2 (2012): 8.

The World's Largest TV Studio, is grainy and choppily edited due to amateur equipment; however, it presents an insightful glimpse into the overt consumerism and staging behind both modern media and politics. The film focuses on the amount of campaign paraphernalia and organization behind the actual events making up the Democratic National Convention to represent the Convention as more of an elaborate performance rather than a political forum.

The second film, *Four More Years,* that TVTV made examined the Republican National Convention. Held at the Miami convention center, the 1972 RNC was considered one of the biggest media events to date. The film eerily begins with campaign songs about Nixon and shows almost every aspect behind the organization of the Convention showing the image Nixon was working so hard to create, project, and control. *Four More Years* is much more polished compared to *The World's Largest TV Studio* due to better funding and equipment. With its creative editing and the separation of each scene by a still shot of a campaign button, *Four More Years* is an artful exposé of the nomination process and the structure of the two-party system. The same reporters who were excited in TVTV's earlier film *The World's Largest TV Studio* have now become tired and jaded. Some reporters refused to speak to the members of TVTV, but others, such as the well-known Walter Cronkite, gave thoughtful and sincere interviews.[69] The film was objective in that it focused on both Nixon's critics and supporters, like his daughters who were both interviewed by the collective.

TVTV created an image of Democrats in *The World's Largest TV Studio* that showed the internal conflict within the party. The tension of the delegates being divided

[69] Tripp, 8.

over McGovern is noticeable not only on the floor where the TVTV reporters were but in their choice to film certain meetings taken place behind the scenes of the convention. TVTV does, however, frame McGovern as an accessible candidate through showing his speeches and interviews. Whereas in *Four More Years,* Nixon seems unreachable through TVTV reporters not being able to get anywhere near him. He seems like a frightening myth as the only predominant shot of Nixon in the film is him giving a speech in the distance. Warhol plays on these elements in *Vote McGovern*'s tense composition and depiction of Nixon as an unreachable type of monster or myth rather than an actual person. TVTV and Warhol are noting the conflict within the Democratic Party during this period but they are both saying that Nixon is not the answer.

While—TVTV and Warhol share some similarities in their approaches to politics, TVTV does not present a concretely constructed message like Warhol does in *Vote McGovern* nor does TVTV show archival material like De Antonio uses in *Millhouse*—rather, in *Four More Years*, they depict and frame events as they occurred. Their format of film leaves more rooms for viewers to interpret what they have seen as they wish. *Millhouse* and TVTV both used the film format as a means to campaign and the medium of film to depict Nixon and 1972, but their messages are relayed with much less control and specificity than in *Vote McGovern. Vote McGovern* conveys a central, direct message that can be cemented in the viewer's mind within seconds and does not require a longer summarization of Nixon's past or present to arrive at the intended message.

Vote McGovern and Warhol

Despite the obvious manipulation of medium and message, Warhol denied any intentions besides aesthetic concerns in creating *Vote McGovern*. Yet Warhol's aesthetic decisions contain, as usual in his work, deeper symbolic meaning. In *Vote McGovern*, Nixon wears a red tie and pink blazer that recalls Nixon's involvement in Communist witch hunts during the Red Scare years and his Cold War politics, still playing out in Vietnam. Nixon's rose to political fame as a young congressman when he convicted alleged Communist, Alger Hiss.[70] Hiss had graduated from Harvard, had a law degree, worked for the State Department and had held a UN position when an informer told the government that he was part of a Soviet spy ring.[71] After a harrowing trial, the FBI discovered evidence that Hiss had been communicating with the Soviets and he was indicted on several counts.[72] Nixon's persistent Cold War views had changed little since his early days in Washington in the 1940s.

Warhol used further subjective coloring in *Vote McGovern* to illustrate more of Nixon's past. The president's bluish green skin in Warhol's print refers to Nixon's first presidential race against John F. Kennedy. Warhol sourced the image from Nixon press photographs, similar to how de Antonio's used archival film footage of Nixon to reference the president's past failures. The picture Warhol chose for *Vote McGovern* was taken from a *Newsweek* article from the earlier race that included Nixon and his wife, Pat.[73] Warhol cropped out Pat. The tint of Nixon's face mirrors his appearance in the so-

[70] Aitken, 174-175.

[71] Ibid., 150-156.

[72] Ibid., 174.

[73] Powers, 396.

called Great Debates when Nixon was recovering from the flu and a knee infection during the 1960 presidential debate. The weight loss from the sicknesses, combined with the unfortunate decision not to wear makeup, gave Nixon a sinister five o'clock shadow. This made his face have a nauseating and slightly evil aspect. His clothes also fit poorly, giving the sensation that something was not quite right. Nixon's ill-fitting clothes are alluded to by his floating head, and non-existent neck. It is with a skillful subtlety that Warhol references Nixon's first failed presidential bid in the McGovern campaign poster. Additionally, the implementation of green-colored skin and maniacal yellow eyes and mouth could be seen as Warhol portraying Nixon as a power-hungry candidate in his third presidential race. In *Vote McGovern,* Warhol specifically alludes to Nixon's connection with the communist witch hunts in the 1940s to relate to the ongoing conflict and tension over Vietnam, which relates to McGovern's platform promising to bring American troops back. Warhol also used references to Nixon's failed presidential race of 1960 to conjure an image of Nixon losing or Nixon as a failure. Warhol intelligently crafted this visual strategy through color manipulation to convey a specific message and response.

Vote McGovern and Warhol's Art from the 1960s

While *Vote McGovern* is Warhol's most specific political work in form and content, it was a continuation of artwork he had composed since his early career. He had not only critiqued consumerism but he had also painted portraits of political figures and contemporary events. These works utilized form and color to convey a specific message to the viewer comparable to the aesthetics choices behind *Vote McGovern.*

Examples of Warhol's art from the 1960s that represent political figures and contemporary events are Jackie Kennedy after the assassination of JFK in *Sixteen Jackies* (1964) or his work dedicated solely to JFK, *Flash! November 22, 1963* (1968).[74] Although these are summarizations of events, not visual choices between two candidates or parties, they appropriate news photographs and capitalize on building meaning through presentation and meaning. This can be seen in the repetitive blue images of Jackie Kennedy in *Sixteen Jackies* relaying the tragic event over and over again. It can also be found in the newspaper headlines recreated in *Flash! November 22, 1963* that mirrors the immense news coverage of the president's assassination. Here Warhol is playing on contemporary events, text, and color to depict political figures that he would similarly in *Vote McGovern.*

Warhol's *Death and Disaster* series is also political in nature due to its presentation of the result of 1960s consumerism. He displays gory car crashes in *Orange Car Crash Fourteen Times* (1963), deaths from mass produced foods in the *Tuna Fish Disaster* (1963), and death by electrocution in the *Electric Chair* series (1964).[75] These are not political posters but their underlying meanings and presentation of information reveal a political awareness and approach already in motion within Warhol's work years before 1972.

Vote McGovern's overt nature exposes this political thread that is not as noticeable when looking at the artworks separately. When studying *Vote McGovern,* scholars generally argue more specifically about *Vote McGovern* alone but they do not

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[74] Bourdon, 180; Feldman, 71.

[75] Bourdon, 135,148-155, 156.

seek to define it within Warhol's oeuvre and in context of its relationship to his other artwork. Powers interprets *Vote McGovern* as Warhol's plea for a third-party political system.[76] But Warhol seemed to be specifically and personally concerned with Nixon in *Vote McGovern* rather with bipartisanship. Stimson sees the poster as a sign of the modern political system and how it develops.[77] While this article's research is enlightening, *Vote McGovern*, I argue, is more concerned with its moment. Curley and Gopnik use *Vote McGovern* to show Warhol's Communistic tendencies.[78] Their arguments view Warhol's work as containing common elements to prove a greater point more about Warhol the person than Warhol the artist. Contextualizing *Vote McGovern* within its moment and within Warhol's larger oeuvre reveals that Warhol had a long-ranging interest in and opinion of politics that he fused into his artwork. While Warhol may have not outwardly said much about his political beliefs, he was a pseudo-political activist and participant—using his art as platform.

Mao and *Vote McGovern* and Warhol's Political Portraits

In the late 1960s, Warhol retired from painting and focused on his *Interview* magazine and filmmaking career.[79] By this point in his career, he had achieved the fame and stardom that he had so earnestly sought from the time he was a child. He was wealthy and had reached the level of superstar himself in both the art world and popular culture. He also witnessed a painful glimpse into the underbelly of fame when he was shot by

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[76] Powers, 391.

[77] Stimson; Gopnik.

[78] Curley.

[79] Geldzahler, 23.

former employee, Valerie Solanas in 1968.[80] An enlightening view of the realities of stardom's danger and an accomplishment of his goals caused Warhol to withdraw from his art career and his 1960s lifestyle. Warhol, the machinist artist, became human through both his gunshot wounds and disillusionment with fame. He experienced an ugly side of celebrity or fame that resembles the style and aesthetic choices in *Vote McGovern* in its unflattering portrayal of Nixon exposing an unflattering aspect of fame.

Warhol returned to painting in 1972 with his print *Mao*.[81] This differs from his previous work and introduces Warhol the painter. Warhol transitioned from the mechanized and impersonal appearance of his screenprints to adopting a more personalized approach that used brushstrokes and other aesthetic means to expose the artist's presence. Like *Vote McGovern,* Mao also implicates President Nixon since it was influenced by Nixon's trip to China where he famously re-opened diplomatic relations between the East and the West. In pictures and footage of Nixon's trip to China, Warhol noticed how the Chairman's face appeared everywhere, thus inspired Warhol to appropriate an image of Mao and replicate it repeatedly in serial prints and on wallpaper.[82] *Mao,* of course, differs from *Vote McGovern* because while it represents a political figure and appropriates and image used for propaganda, Warhol has divorced the image from its original context—Mao from the Little Red Book, a product of political propaganda to emphasize the ruler's power and presence. This separation transforms the print into a celebrity portrait with a politician as celebrity. In this way, *Mao* relates more

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[80] Geldzahler, 23.

[81] Bourdon, 317-18.

[82] Ibid., 317.

closely to Warhol's earlier images of JFK and Jackie Kennedy, rather than to *Vote McGovern,* which functions, perhaps paradoxically, more like the Little Red Book portrait of Mao, as political propaganda—an image meant to persuade. Unlike Nixon's ugly portrayal in *Vote McGovern*, Mao is depicted as glamorous celebrity similar to Warhol's portraits of the later 1970s and 1980s.

It is this embrace of imperfections that also separates *Vote McGovern* from Warhol's later political works of Jimmy Carter [Figure 28 and 29] and Edward Kennedy [Figure 30]. Warhol edited the source photographs of both of these individuals to create flattering portrayals of them. He also mirrors the images they wished to project in his illustration of Carter as a hardworking American with the president confidently gazing at viewer and Edward Kennedy as a face of patriotism with red, white, and blue composing the print's background.[83] There are no imperative commands in these and nothing controversial aside from being a portrait of that candidate. Warhol was also asked to create additional portraits of political leaders, such as Ronald Reagan, which he declined.[84] Thus, the assumption that Warhol accepted every commission for financial reasons is disproved since there were obviously deeper thoughts affecting his acceptance or denial of commissioned prints and posters for political figures.

Vote McGovern interestingly stands apart compared to previous and later works by Warhol. It emulates qualities of his earlier career by critiquing politics and society and it influenced later works with a new career shift to portraiture. It shows that Warhol was

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[83] Feldman, 94-95, 115.

[84] Paul Maréchal, *Andy Warhol: The Complete Commissioned Posters, 1964-87* (New York: Prestel Publishing, 2014), 18.

familiar with Nixon's career and was also aware of Nixon's impact on the art world of 1972. Warhol was often motivated by trends of others and saw a chance in the platform of the 1972 election to confront the structure of political parties and its leaders. *Vote McGovern* shows an awareness of the media and its power. In similar ways to what he had done with advertising, Warhol capitalized on the media format of the campaign poster and brought it successfully into the fine arts. He created a commercialized but artful and insightful portrait of President Nixon that illustrates the conflict over the presidential race and the issues that Nixon represented--Vietnam and an old political paradigm. While Warhol denied specific political alliances and did not talk about the deeper details behind *Vote McGovern,* there is undeniably an underlying bias similar to the one communicated by De Antonio. Just as De Antonio proclaimed Nixon as two-faced politician whose words meant nothing, Warhol depicts Nixon's contradictory political decisions with the juxtapositions present within *Vote McGovern*.

By evaluating the 1972 presidential race and the events surrounding it, one can see that *Vote McGovern* is exemplary of the 1970s art world and Warhol's place within it. For many, the 1970s offered a realization of the disillusionment of the hopeful and revolutionary 1960s to ultimately produce real societal change. The 1970s were also a period of rebirth for Warhol and his career when he returned to painting, not as a machinist screenprint producer, but as an artist and a painter free to express his underlying opinions. The works inspired by the 1972 presidential race are representative of political themes in the art world and Pop art and demonstrate that both media and the fine arts were entering a time of needed change, reevaluation, and growth. *Vote McGovern* is not simply an isolated work within Warhol's career; it is an example of a

political poster in the 1972 presidential race that deserves greater recognition because it exposes the political nature present throughout Warhol's work while also showing the artist's aesthetic approach to conveying his beliefs through art.

CHAPTER THREE

POST-*VOTE MCGOVERN*

After the creation of *Vote McGovern*, Warhol continued to produce both political posters and political artwork. These works reflect the politics of Warhol's early works. In this chapter, I look at the aftermath of 1972 and *Vote* McGovern in order to compare Warhol's artworks from the late 1970s and 1980s to those created during the beginning of his career to show how Warhol's political thought comes full circle. In doing so, I argue that *Vote McGovern* is key to understanding Warhol's political consciousness and the various shifting political threads that run throughout his oeuvre.

The Aftermath of the 1972 Election and *Vote McGovern*

To understand the significance of *Vote McGovern* in Warhol's oeuvre, it is necessary to view what happened to Warhol and the subject of his poster, Nixon, after the 1972 election. Despite the popularity of McGovern with young voters and support from celebrities and artists like Warhol, Nixon ultimately won the 1972 presidential race by a landslide. The Watergate scandal, however quickly unfolded and with it the eventual downward spiral of Nixon's presidency.[85] The uneasiness of Nixon's face in *Vote McGovern* eerily foreshadows his future in 1974 as he narrowly escaped impeachment by resigning.[86] In Warhol's poster, the artist makes Nixon appear criminal, almost as if he is

[85] Richard Lewis Hobson, Jr., "Changing Public Attitudes toward Richard M. Nixon, 1968-1984" (master's thesis, The University of Alabama, 1988), 2.

[86] Aitken, 524.

wearing a mask or hiding something from the viewer. Nixon could also be interpreted as a monster or nemesis to Warhol and his political beliefs.

After *Vote McGovern* was created, Nixon still remained a part of Warhol's life and was mentioned sporadically throughout Warhol's diary until the artist's death in 1987. Warhol was convinced that Nixon was the reason he was subjected to an arduous IRS audit each year after 1972.[87] He specifically felt that *Vote McGovern* had led to this pointless governmental subjection. As a result, Warhol carefully recorded each item that he bought after that date. The animosity between the two lived on with Warhol who said years later that he walked by Nixon's old residence in New York, but was afraid to ask if the ex-president still lived there for fear of Nixon finding out that it was him.[88] While it has been impossible to find actual effects of *Vote McGovern* on the voters of 1972, the audit following its creation proves that is was well known and impacting enough to elicit an actual response from the United States government.

Despite tension in the Nixon/Warhol relationship and *Vote McGovern*'s possible impact on Warhol's yearly audit, Warhol still created paintings which illustrated the political confusion that Nixon left in his wake during one of America's most conflicting political eras.[89] This chain reaction of Warhol creating other political works reflected numerous changes in presidential leaderships. Gerald Ford followed Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter was inspired to run for president after Ford, and Edward Kennedy decided

[87] Andy Warhol, *The Andy Warhol Diaries* ed. Pat Hackett (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2014), xviii.

[88] Warhol, 768.

[89] Maréchal, 16.

to run against an incumbent Carter. This sequence of events shows the struggle for America to find a strong ruler in the aftermath of the instability following Watergate.

Warhol's Other Political Posters

Following *Vote McGovern*, Warhol was asked to design more political posters for the following two presidential election cycle. These depicted Jimmy Carter in 1976 and 1977 and Edward Kennedy in 1980 (when he ran against the incumbent Carter).[90] The Jimmy Carter posters portray a positive image of the president. Warhol did not appropriate a news or magazine photograph like he did in *Vote McGovern*, but instead shot Polaroid photographs of Carter.[91] After taking the images, Warhol then went back and edited the photograph to remove all wrinkles or imperfections from the subject's face before coloring the print in yellow, red and white for the 1976 portrait and in the patriotic colors of red, white and blue for the 1977 work.[92] These differ from *Vote McGovern* too because Warhol includes no imperative text. Further, Warhol involved Carter directly in his process by allowing him to pose for the photograph and choose the image, unlike in *Vote McGovern,* in which Warhol, alone, controlled the image, message, and presentation of information.

Similarly, for his Kennedy print Warhol also took Polaroid photographs of the candidate and employed no use of text. The candidate posed for Warhol like someone would sit for a portrait. No negative campaigning was used to construct the image for Kennedy; it simply displays a wholly positive image. Like the Carter portraits, Warhol

[90] Bourdon, 328.

[91] Colacello, 361-63; Feldman, 94-95.

[92] Bourdon, 327.

edited the source to remove all of Kennedy's imperfections and show the most attractive image as possible. Warhol composed two editions for Kennedy with both colored in red, white and blue to symbolize Kennedy as the continuation of a reigning American political family that had fascinated Warhol for some time. For Warhol, Kennedy, like his relatives who Warhol imaged during the 1960s, was a celebrity as well as politician. Warhol even chose to decorate one of the Kennedy poster editions in sparkling and expensive diamond dust showing Kennedy as both an icon and a candidate.[93] This reflects the earlier 1960s works of JFK and Jackie Kennedy that present the president and his family as glamorous celebrities, merging fame with political figures. Warhol donated the Carter and Kennedy posters to their respective campaigns like he did with *Vote McGovern*, but unlike *Vote McGovern*, these images are entirely positive representations of candidates showing them as they wished to be displayed to voters. It seems like Warhol was working more as an artist on commission with the Kennedy and Carter works adhering to their wishes, while Warhol implemented his own ideas and designs in *Vote McGovern*. The Carter and Kennedy posters are comparable to the work of *Mao* which is also a positive image of a political figure.

The *Mao* works and the Carter and Kennedy posters focus on the importance of the politician's image and the recognizable quality of that image with large realms of the population. *Vote McGovern* is also concerned with image, but differs in that it is not concerned with depicting its actual subject of McGovern or disseminating McGovern's image throughout the country. The purpose of *Vote McGovern* appears to be more about Warhol's personal feelings towards Nixon and the 1972 presidential race rather than the

[93] Feldman, 115.

power of McGovern's image. Perhaps *Vote McGovern* is a construction of Warhol's political ideas and the other political posters are constructions of the politician as celebrity.

Warhol's Later Artwork

In the late 1970s and 1980s, Warhol created other artworks containing political subject matter that mirror those more overt political critiques that he produced during his college years. Evaluating these other controversial works, further suggests that *Vote McGovern* is still singular in Warhol's oeuvre through its specificity and format. Warhol's later tackling of controversial content can be seen in multiple screenprints depicting the Communist symbol for the Soviet Union, such as *Hammer and Sickle* (1976) [Figure 31] which is composed of a hammer and sickle in bright Communist red with imposing black lines highlighting details.[94] He also created a portrait of the Shah and Empress of Iran [Figure 32]—a commission he campaigned for by attending state dinners and ambassador functions. These were made the same year as Carter and also embrace the idea of the political figure being portrayed as celebrity. This portrait, however, generated controversy due to stories that surfaced about Iran's persecution and imprisonment of political opponents.[95] The *Village Voice* also published the article titled "The Beautiful Butchers," that contained a picture of Warhol and the glamorous Empress alongside a story that reported numerous human rights violations by Iran.[96] Warhol's

[94] Feldman, 98-99.

[95] Lyn Boyd, "A King's Exile: The Shah of Iran and Moral Considerations in U.S. Foreign Policy," *Case 234*, 29 July 2000, http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/ir/sirga/ARboyd234.pdf.

[96] Colacello, 363.

friends, such as Emile de Antonio, criticized him for the commission and Warhol even received a few anonymous death threats.[97] Meanwhile, he continued to create his portraits of Carter and remain involved in the American political sphere.[98] Eventually, the public largely forgot the scandal and Warhol's reputation remained intact. The artwork, however, shows Warhol's increasing preoccupation with merging aspects of politics with celebrity.

Several years later Warhol created another controversial portrait—this time of the Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin. In 1987, Warhol made his first screenprint of the man, *Lenin* [Figure 33], which is colored mostly in black with the subject's eyes and facial features outlined in bright colors similar to the emphatically outlined figure in *Communist Speaker* (1950).[99] In *Lenin*, the subject eerily gazes at the viewer comparable to how Nixon's does in *Vote McGovern*. In the same year, Warhol created *Red Lenin (F&S II.403)* [Figure 34], following the stylistic format of the first portrait.[100] The only difference is that instead of black, Warhol uses a bright orange and red similar to the bright colors of his earlier 1960s works and to the bright yellows and pinks of *Vote McGovern*. The portraits of Lenin are similar to the series Warhol did entitled *Myths* (1981) [Figure 35], which consists of ten prints depicting legendary fictional characters including Uncle Sam, Howdy Doody, and Dracula.[101] In the Lenin works, the Soviet

[97] Colacello, 366.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Feldman, 160.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid., 122-123.

leader appears more like a character or celebrity than an actual person making him similar to celebrity portraits of Warhol depicting stars like Elizabeth Taylor or Marilyn Monroe. By creating artwork dedicated to the insignias and leaders of the Soviet Union--a threat to the free world--Warhol attempted to gain attention and publicity through shock value similar to the earlier *Death and Disaster* series. These artworks show Warhol responding to contemporary political events as tensions grew between America and the U.S.S.R. under the presidency of Ronald Reagan who was campaigning for the demise of the Berlin Wall and the liberation of the Soviet Union.

One of Warhol's last series revolved around capturing television stills, including Felix the Cat and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. giving his "I Have a Dream" speech.[102] He was also working on a series of large-scale works after Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* and other religious subject matter.[103] Warhol passed away unexpectedly in 1987 due to complications following gall bladder surgery.[104] Throughout his life, he said very little concerning his political beliefs or anything of a serious nature which can make defining him as a political artist difficult. He pursued people for his portraits who were both Democrats and Republicans, liberal and conservative. Two indices of his political beliefs, however, are that he would let all of his employees that voted Democratic have voting days off, and that he refused to do the Republican candidate Ronald Reagan's portrait for his 1980 presidential bid. He also told *Interview* magazine editor, Bob Colacello that artists could not be Republican.[105] But outside of these things, he had little

[102] Feldman, 356.

[103] Dillenberger, 116-120.

[104] Feldman, 151.

[105] Colacello, 362.

political involvement and did not vote. *Vote McGovern* therefore stands as both an anomaly in Warhol's oeuvre and an image that unites the seemingly disparate political threads that run throughout his oeuvre. Although scholars such as Atkins and Grudin consider *Vote McGovern* as a transition to the later celebrity portraits and Geldzahler and Robert Rosenblum categorize it as a celebrity portrait they fail to show how it relates to Warhol's earlier artworks.[106]

Viewing Warhol's later works next to *Vote McGovern* highlights the increasing production of political art by Warhol but also show Warhol's return to the subtler format of his work from the 1960s. Warhol used his artwork as a platform to express political ideas, but could still remain safe behind a mask of neutrality. With *Vote McGovern*, however, Warhol's mask vanishes for a moment to reveal his opinion about Nixon, as well as, expose the political elements that run throughout his art. *Vote McGovern* should be acknowledged as an artwork that not only captures the 1972 election but provides a new perspective on Warhol's politics and understanding of him as a political artist.

[106] Atkins; Grudin; Geldzahler; and Rosenblum.

CONCLUSION

In 1972, Warhol created his first political poster, *Vote McGovern*. Produced in an edition of 250 prints and sold at auction, the money raised was donated to McGovern's campaign. *Vote McGovern* remained largely unstudied until the twenty-first century when scholars re-discovered it. Since then, they have assigned religious connotations to it, positioned it as a precursor to Warhol's later political portraits, and used it to decode Warhol's political beliefs. My thesis extends this scholarship to assert the print's significance as a lens through which to understand and reconsider the shifting political currents manifest in Warhol's artwork throughout his career.

Chapter one argues that the political elements of *Vote McGovern* were already present in Warhol's earlier works and that *Vote McGovern* is a continuation of these themes and approaches. Chapter two focuses on *Vote McGovern* and the year that it was created while also relating the print to other artwork inspired by the 1972 election to show Warhol's own aesthetic decisions and thoughts being utilized within *Vote McGovern.* Chapter three compares Warhol's later political posters and artwork to *Vote McGovern* to illustrate how the later works return to the subtler format of his early artwork while directly tackling contemporary political subject matter.

Prior to discovering *Vote McGovern*, I viewed Warhol's oeuvre as fragmented, his artworks emerging from their historical contexts and related to the prevailing art

movements of their time. However, upon studying *Vote McGovern*, I can no longer view Warhol as anything but a politically engaged artist. While Warhol did not involve himself much with politics in his life, he very much did so through his art, notably with *Vote McGovern.* His feelings towards Nixon evidenced by *Vote McGovern* expose an ongoing engagement with and skepticism towards American politics.

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FIGURES

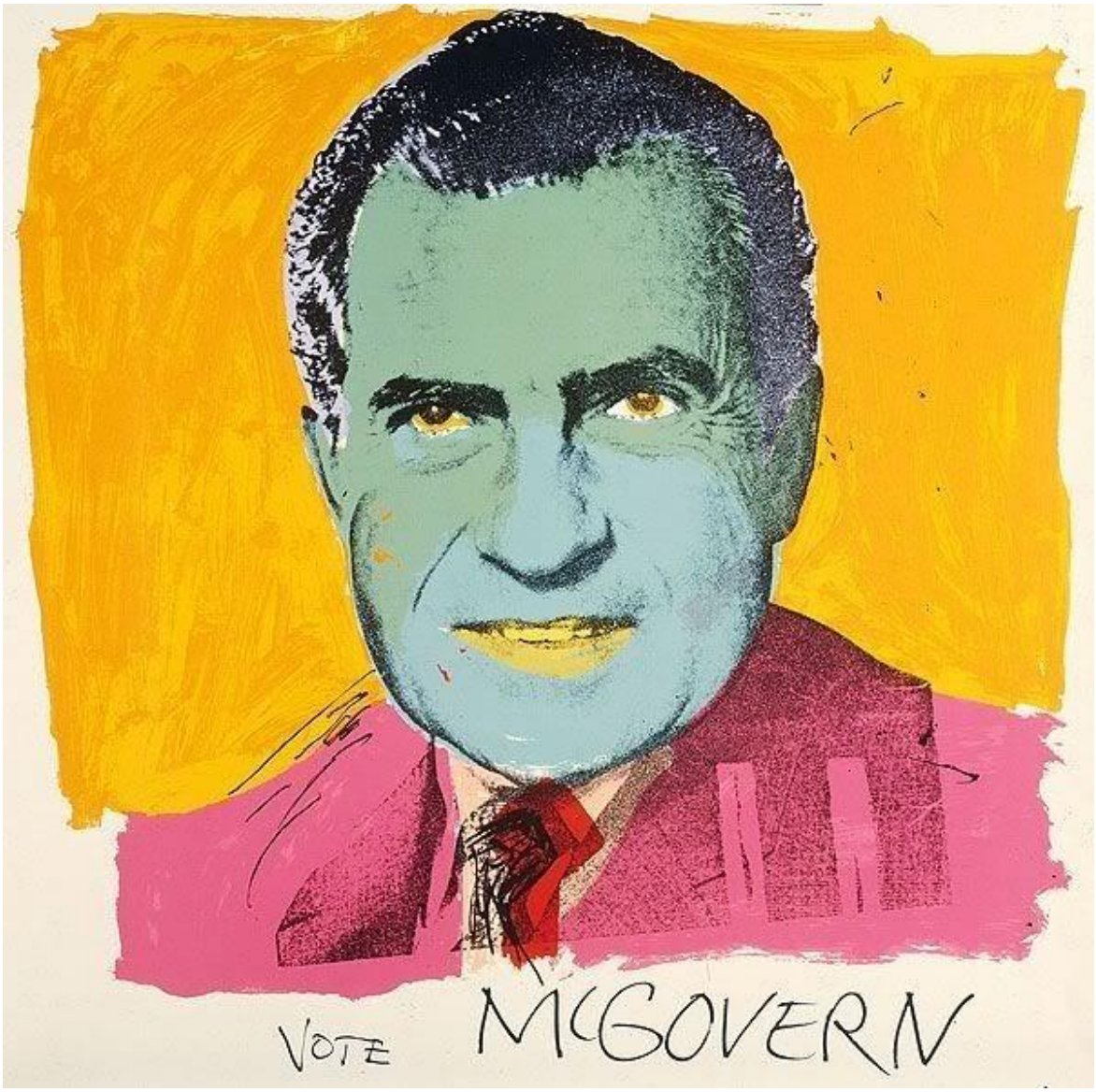

Figure 1. Andy Warhol, *Vote McGovern*, 1972, Abroms-Engel Institute for the Visual Arts, Birmingham, Alabama.

Figure 2. Andy Warhol, *Untitled (Huey Long)*, 1948-49, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Figure 3. Andy Warhol, *Communist Speaker*, 1950, The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Figure 4. Andy Warhol, *Shoe*, 1956, The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Figure 5. Andy Warhol, *Green Coca-Cola Bottles*, 1962, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Figure 6. Andy Warhol, *Campbell's Soup Cans*, 1962, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Figure 7. Andy Warhol, *Brillo Boxes*, 1964, The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Figure 8. Andy Warhol, *Heinz Tomato Ketchup Box*, 1964, The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Figure 9. Andy Warhol, *129 Die in Jet*, 1962, The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Figure 10. Andy Warhol, *Eddie Fisher Breaks Down*, 1962, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

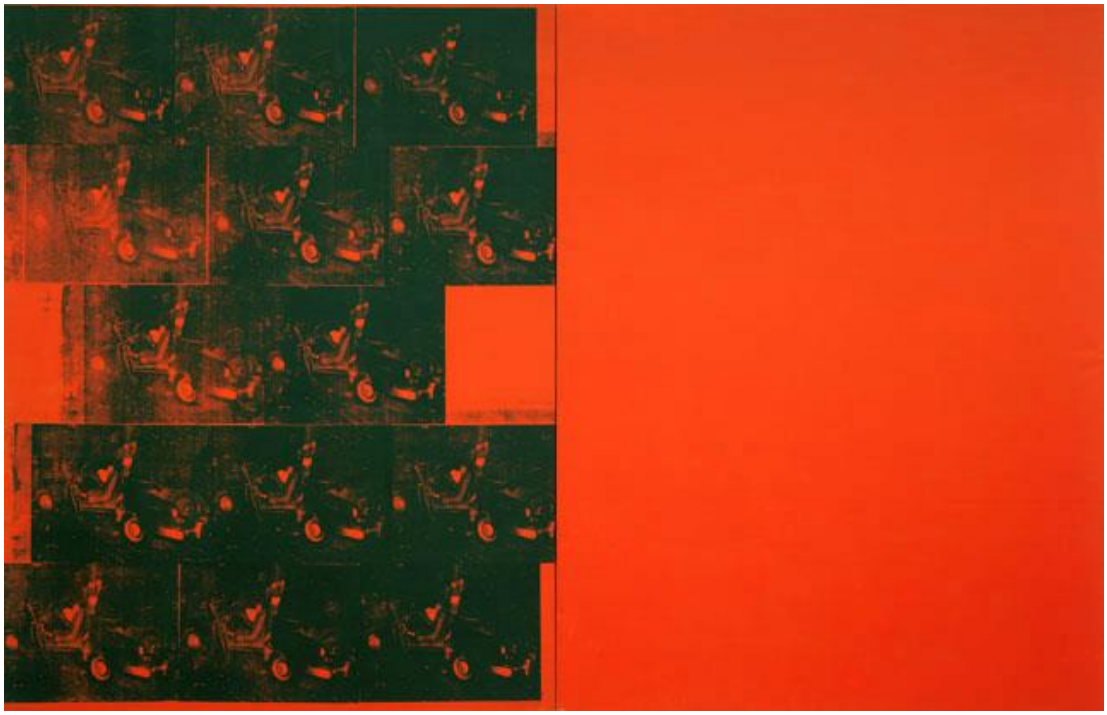

Figure 11. Andy Warhol, *Orange Car Crash Fourteen Times*, 1963, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Figure 12. Andy Warhol, *Tunafish Disaster*, 1963, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California.

Figure 13. Andy Warhol, *Suicide*, 1964, The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Figure 14. Andy Warhol, *Thirteen Most Wanted Men*, 1964, Queens Museum, Queens, New York.

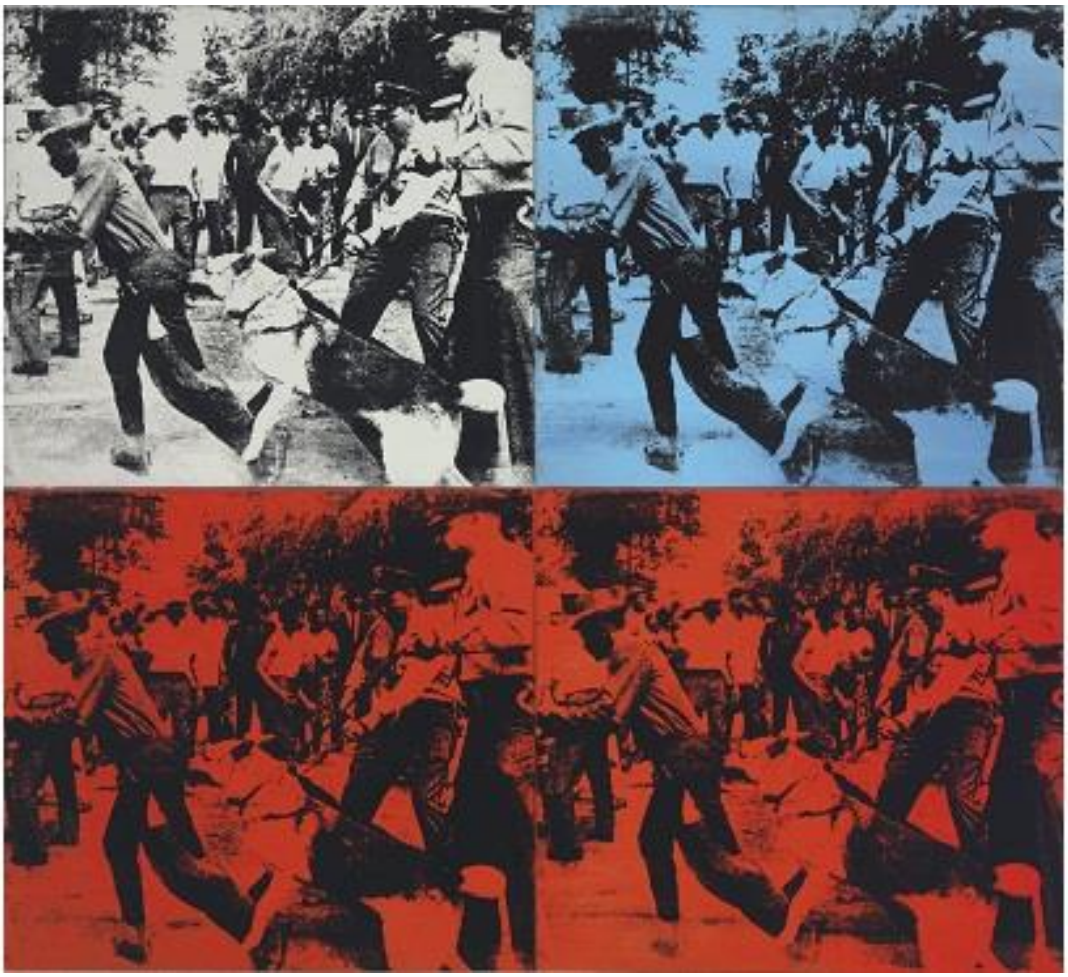

Figure 15. Andy Warhol, *Race Riot*, 1964, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

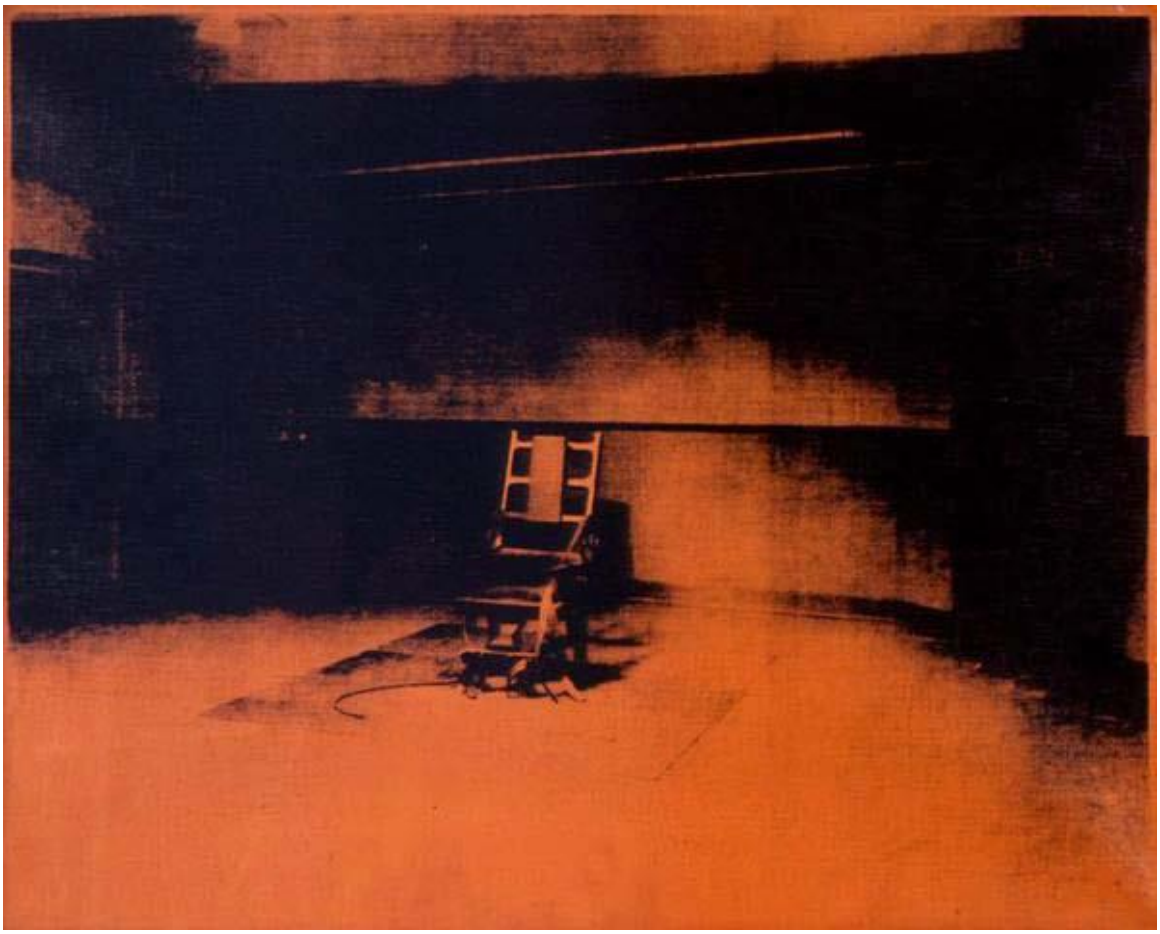

Figure 16. Andy Warhol, *Electric Orange Chair*, 1964, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

Figure 17. Andy Warhol, *Flash November 22, 1963*, 1968, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Figure 18. Andy Warhol, *Sixteen Jackies*, 1964, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Figure 19. Andy Warhol, *Ethel Scull 36 Times*, 1962, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 20. Andy Warhol, *Mao*, 1972, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago.

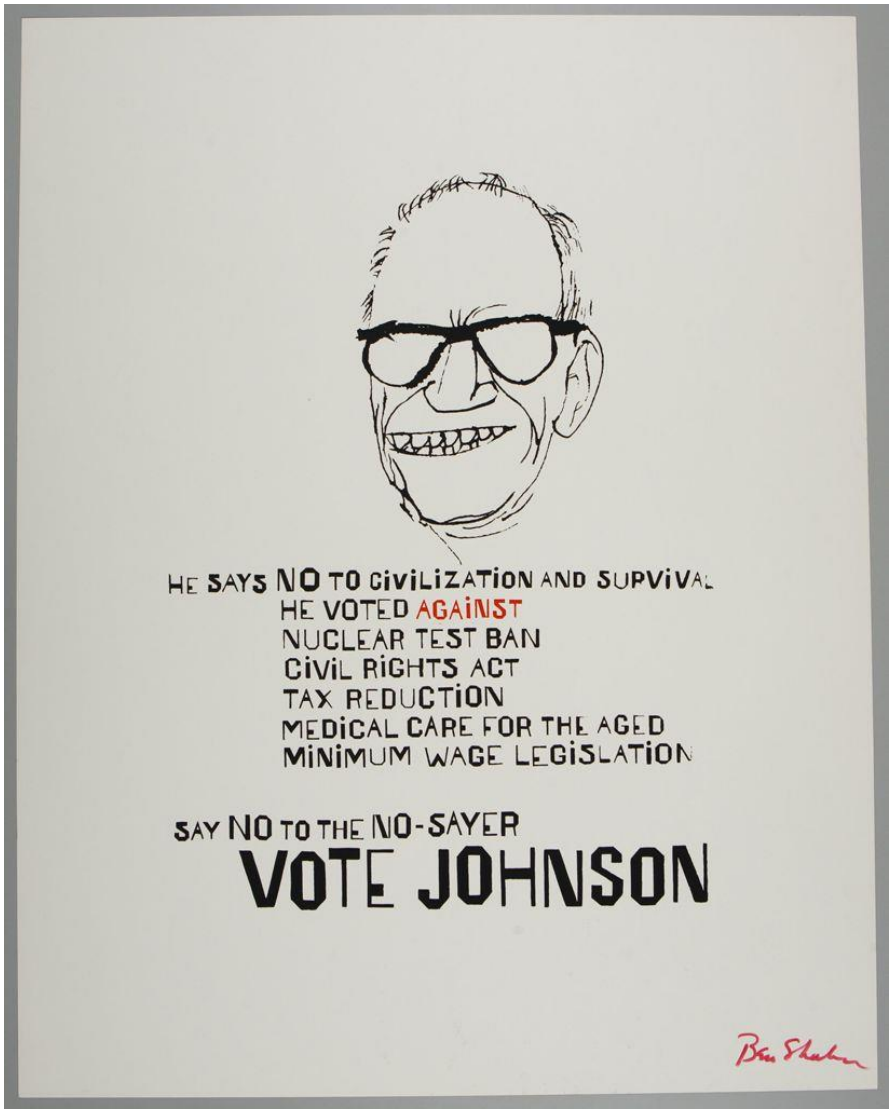

Figure 21. Ben Shahn, *Say No to the No-Sayer: Vote Johnson*, 1964, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Boston, Massachusetts.

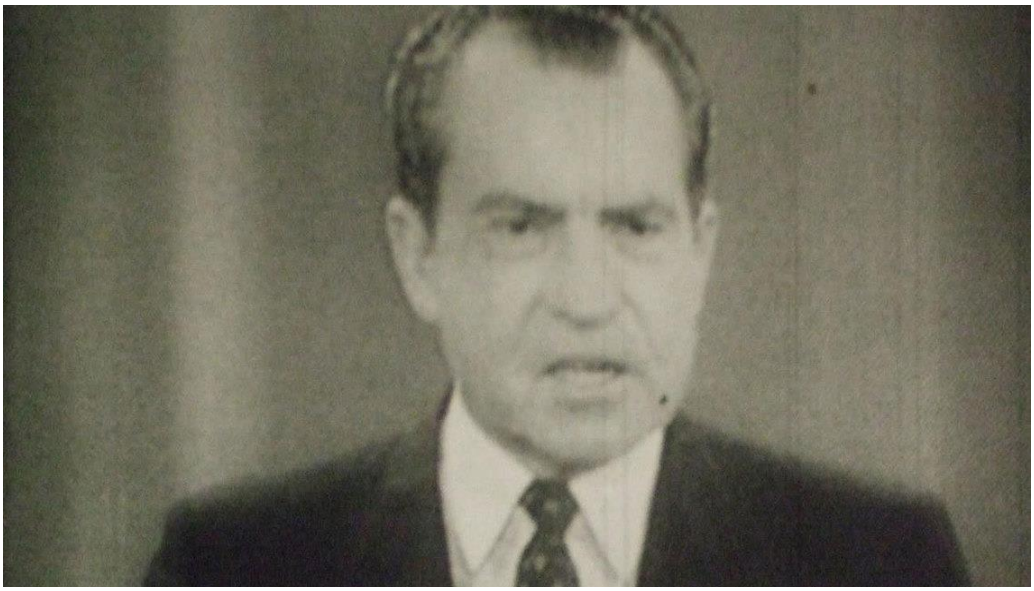

Figure 22. Emile de Antonio, still from *Millhouse*, 1971, film.

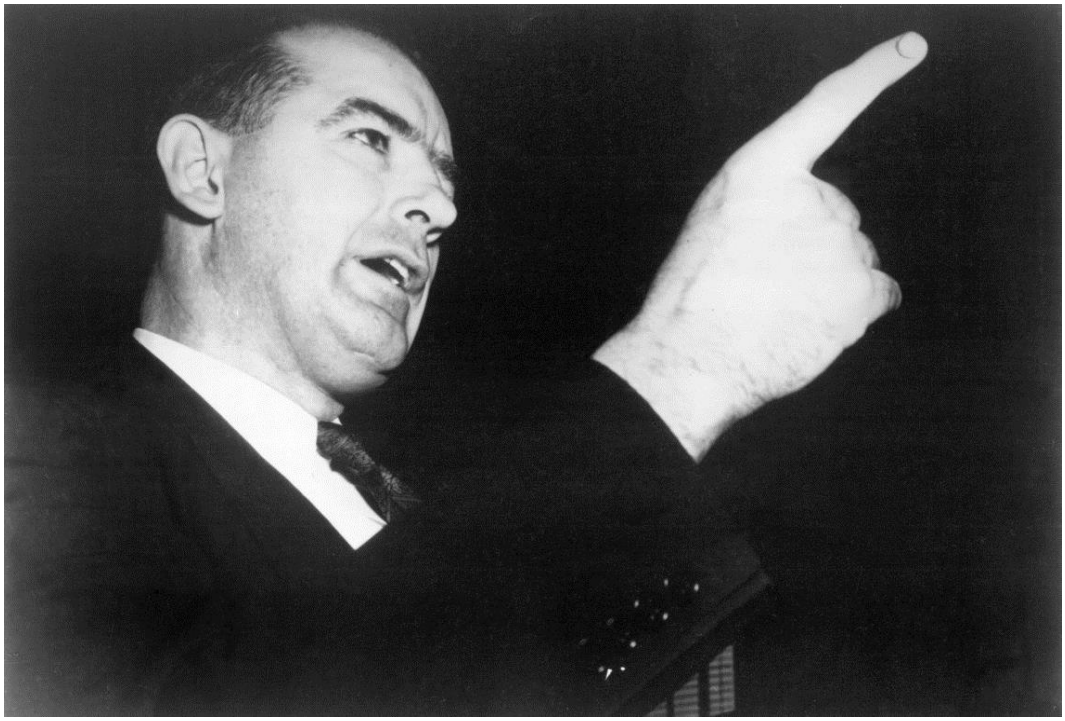

Figure 23. Emile de Antonio, still from *Point of Order!*, 1963, film.

Figure 24. Emile de Antonio, film cover of *Rush to Judgment*, 1967.

Figure 25. Emile de Antonio, still from *In the Year of the Pig*, 1968, film.

Figure 26. TVTV, still from *The World's Largest TV Studio*, 1972, film.

Figure 27. TVTV, still from *Four More Years*, 1972, film.

Figure 28. Andy Warhol, *Jimmy Carter I*, 1976, The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Figure 29. Andy Warhol, *Jimmy Carter II*, 1977, Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

Figure 30. Andy Warhol, *Edward Kennedy*, 1980, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Figure 31. Andy Warhol, *Hammer and Sickle*, 1976, The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Figure 32. Andy Warhol, *Princess, Shah and Empress of Iran*, 1977, Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York.

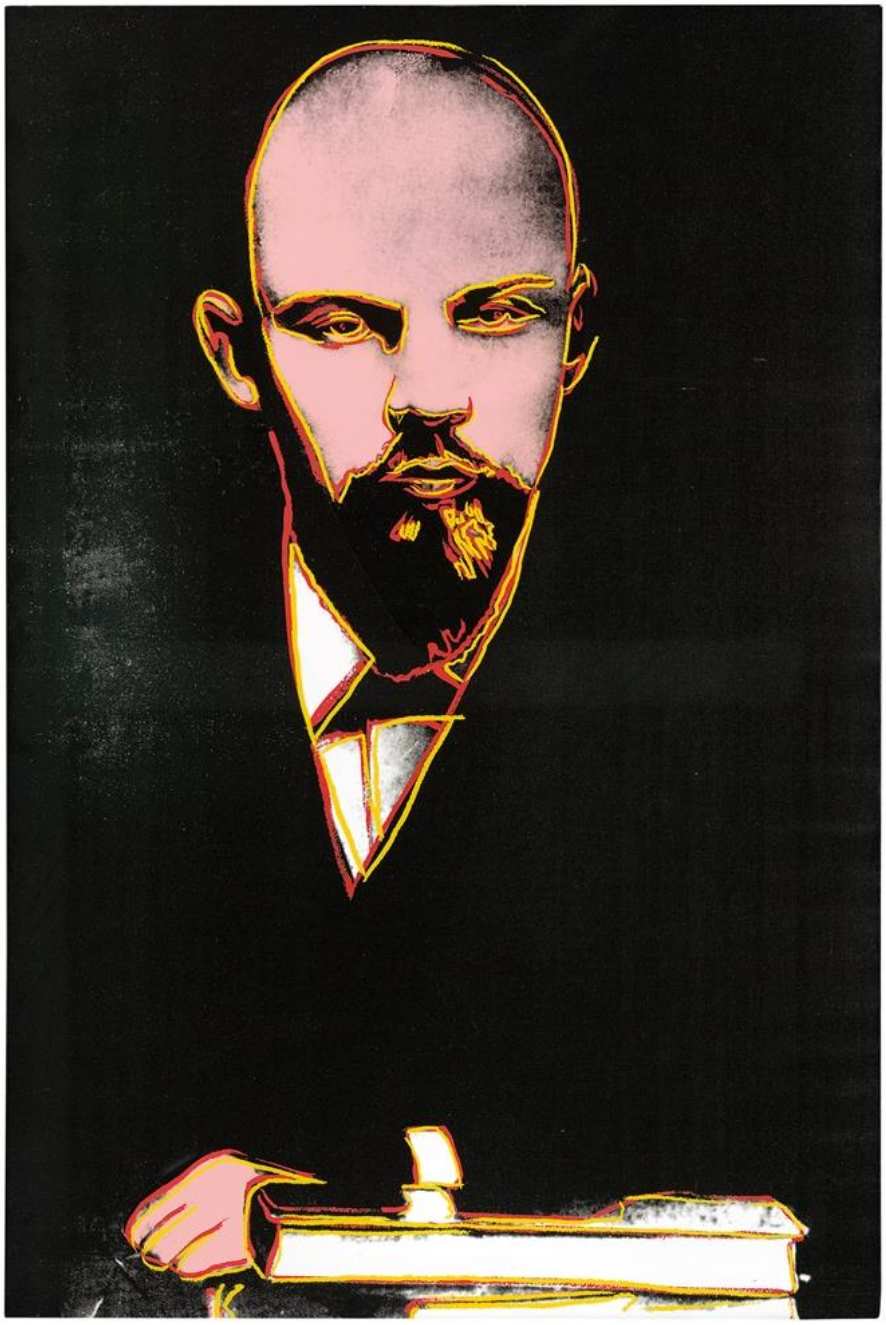

Figure 33. Andy Warhol, *Lenin*, 1987, Christie's, New York.

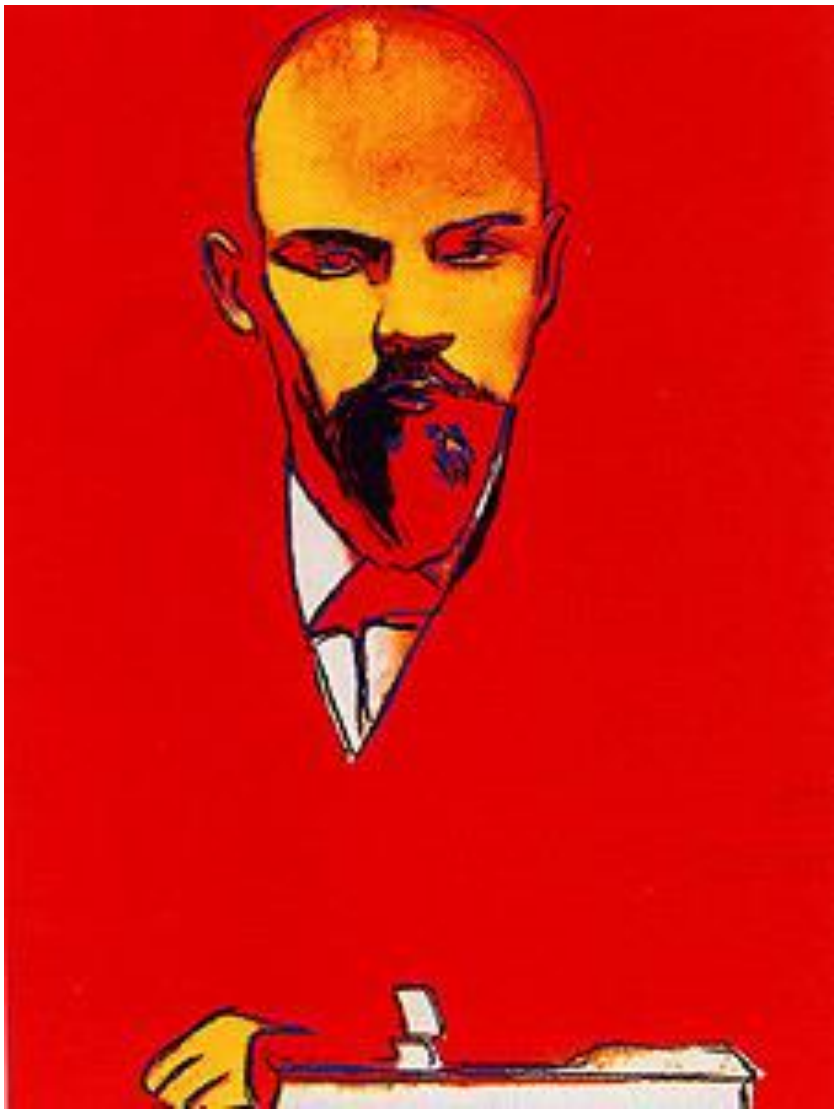

Figure 34. Andy Warhol, *Red Lenin (F&S II.403)*, 1987, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Figure 35. Andy Warhol, *Myths*, 1981, Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York.