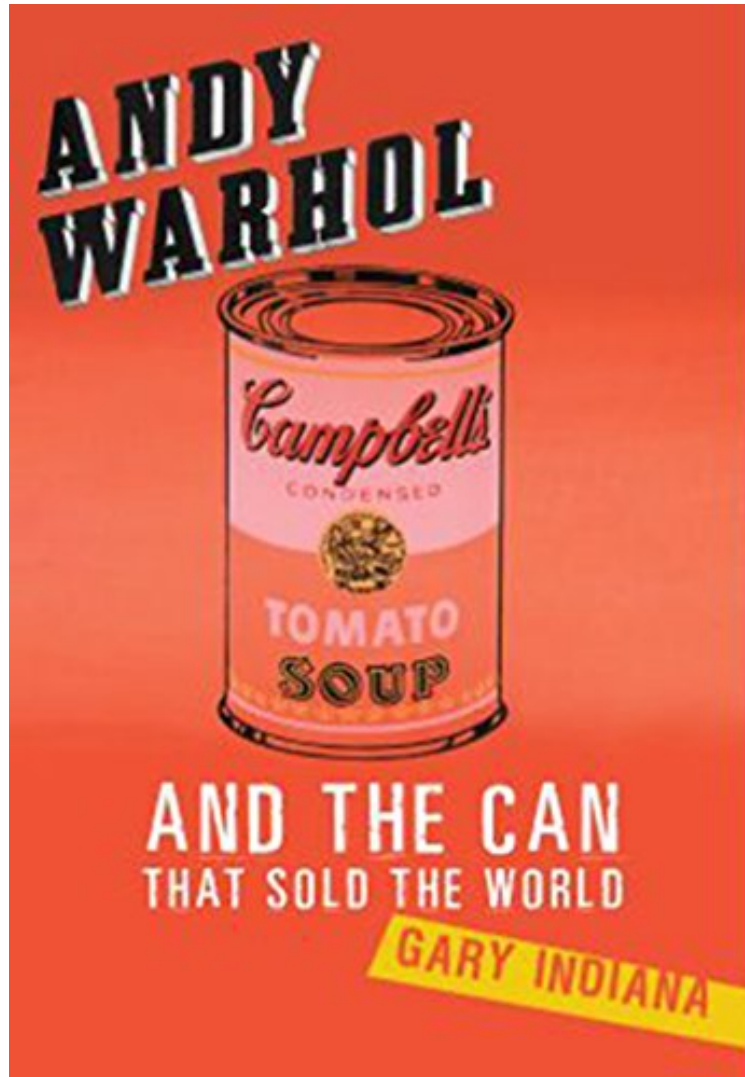


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Andy Warhol and the Can that Sold the World

Gary Indiana

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Gary Indiana : Andy Warhol and the Can that Sold the World before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Andy Warhol and the Can that Sold the World:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Remembering who said it first...15 minutes of fame for everyoneBy David LedferdThe older I get the more sense of appreciation I have for anything retro and from my past. If we had all only known how much things from our past would return to make a comeback!0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. CheapBy schnauzers_3Guess you get what you pay for! No pictures, cheaply printed. I would think a book about an artist would have pictures of his work!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An Empty SecretBy Jeffrey SwystunMay I make a confession as it holds some significance? I owned a print of the famous soup can that I bought along with other Warhol and Lichtenstein pop classics. This was my attempt at being both cool and

refined as I decorated my first few homes early in my career. Most of these works followed me from city to city and home to home. That soup can now hangs in my stepson's first townhome. Gary Indiana's book on Warhol and this ubiquitous can attempts to make sense of its allure and place in history. It comes across as balanced but is largely in awe of its impact. Of course, to understand the can one must understand the man. The book begins with Warhol's challenging home life and what seems like a conscious manipulation using illnesses, shyness and talent to get his way. Over the years he deliberately confused his history with an "enigmatic quality, which made Warhol a celebrity, infused all of his work with a kind of an empty secret." Indiana appears to suggest that timing was also on Warhol's side, "The ideologically gridlocked 1950s fairly begged for a thoroughgoing high colonic." Pop Art was long in the making but was missing the label and a colourful leader. Then came the can which "were produced by hand, using stencils and projected slides, and their handmade quality can be seen..." I love this line, "Warhol's technique invested the cheap manufactured object with the solemn dignity of portraiture." It made such a thunderous impact in art circles that it scrambled the generally accepted categories that defined art. To paraphrase the author, the can drew the art gallery and supermarket closer together. For me the next part is the most interesting. I attribute this to my career as a brander and marketer. Warhol has been quoted as saying, "Business is the most fascinating kind of art." He took the awareness of the can and began mass producing it through a silk screening process multiplying output. No two were exactly the same which satisfied those wanting the unique while, at the same, Warhol was able to create an assembly line. This was a time when mass production combined with mass advertising to turn people into consumers and products into brands and we have never been the same since. Warhol did not invent this but he undeniably saw it, leveraged it, and rode it. All of this fits with "Warhol's notion of democracy, which he defined as access to consumer goods of identical quality." We will always wonder if Warhol was a good artist or a superior marketer or both. I view him as the Henry Ford and Ray Kroc of art. He spun out works of similar quality and people gobbled them up while media and hangers-on waited on his every word. In moments of lucidity I picture him laughing at this herd mentality, head scratching commercialism and benefits of personal branding.

In the summer of 1962, Andy Warhol unveiled 32 Soup Cans in his first solo exhibition at the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles—and sent the art world reeling. The responses ran from incredulity to outrage; the poet Taylor Mead described the exhibition as “a brilliant slap in the face to America.” The exhibition put Warhol on the map—and transformed American culture forever. Almost single-handedly, Warhol collapsed the centuries-old distinction between “high” and “low” culture, and created a new and radically modern aesthetic. In *Andy Warhol and the Can that Sold the World*, the dazzlingly versatile critic Gary Indiana tells the story of the genesis and impact of this iconic work of art. With energy, wit, and tremendous perspicacity, Indiana recovers the exhilaration and controversy of the Pop Art Revolution and the brilliant, tormented, and profoundly narcissistic figure at its vanguard.

From Publishers Weekly The latest from cultural critic and author Indiana (*Utopia's Debris*) explores the legacy of Andy Warhol through his most famous and, arguably, groundbreaking work, 1962's *Campbell's Soup Cans*, a group of 32 20"x16" paintings of the ubiquitous red-and-white canned staple. Beginning with a brief look at Warhol's impoverished childhood, Indiana focuses in on the creation and impact of the famed Soup Cans, resulting in an exhaustive report on the Pop Art movement and its relationship to contemporary culture, featuring vibrant commentary on the way a single piece can stand in for an entire oeuvre. Indiana is highly knowledgeable regarding the art world and Warhol's work, and can assume a similarly sophisticated level of understanding in his reader; as such, he will probably leave casual fans behind with dashed-off discussion of the art scene at large. For those already fluent in the man or the movement, Indiana's in-depth look at *Soup Cans* is a welcome refresher on the power of a single vision not just to make a remarkable career, but to recast the world in a new light. Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Newsweek "Engrossing"; Buffalo News "Elegant and impressive"; [a] witty, smart, near-definitive consideration of Warhol.