

Observational Writing – Contextual Studies
Andy Warhol – Marilyn Diptych

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Figure 1. Andy Warhol. Marilyn Diptych 1962

The iconic pop art painting by Andy Warhol, a world-famous visual artist who worked primarily in screen printing, he was a leading figure in the visual art movement known as pop art. Warhol's work symbolises materiality and celebrity.

One of his most famous paintings of Marilyn Monroe, a vibrant vivid image bursting with colour, the painting consisting of fifty images. Each image of the actress is taken from the single publicity photograph from the film Niagara.

The connotation of the piece focuses on the god like nature fans and supporters associate with celebrities, conveys the idea of immortality and superhuman features.

Warhol's work is an example of the modern art movement in the 1960s, the movement included aspects of shapes, colour and lines. 'Art has a voice – let it speak', links back to themes within Warhol's work, of being bold and making an impact like Marilyn Monroe did within her career as seen by the media.

'Life is an abstract art, and its up to you to make sense of it', meaning in context to Warhol's work, the abstract nature of the piece links to the mysterious private life Monroe lived outside of the public eye.

The piece was created soon after Monroe died of a drug overdose, each side of the painting contrasts each other, one side showcases the vibrant energy Monroe was known for. Then the other monochrome side conveys ideas of the artificial and sad reality of fame and the negative impact it can have on people.

'John Berger's quote 'perspective is the focus of what the eyes see', conveys the idea of experience links to what we see and how we see them, within Warhol's work Monroe was perceived as a one of Hollywood's biggest stars how has it all, however behind the fame can be sad reality for people.

The iconic sign of the work showcases the flamboyant lifestyle Monroe conveyed to the public, where in reality she was lonely and struggling with the quick fast pasted lifestyle of fame.

The colours within the work contrast each other the bright orange tone is associated with meanings of joy, success and warmth within her long successful career. The secondary colour green represents growth, rebirth and renewal. Implying how quickly her career boasted and grow. Whereas the black colour, symbolises sadness, anger and fear, that Monroe had experienced during her career. The white contrasts representing purity and innocence. The black lips of the painting may symbolise the drug problem that Monroe suffered from.

The basic semiotic meaning of Marilyn Diptych is representing on the saint-like nature of fame.

Bibliography:

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