



NATIONAL
GALLERIES OF
SCOTLAND

www.nationalgalleries.org

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Andy Warhol
2009
[Duration 3:34]

Anthony d'Offay:

It was impossible not to meet him. I was in New York once or twice a month for 21 years, all the time. I had an apartment there. I saw all the artists all the time. And you bumped into Andy Warhol you know, before lunch and at tea time. And he liked it if you went and visited him at, you know, in the factory.

And I was always saying to him, 'I want to do a big show of yours in London, what would you like to... would you like to do it?'

And he said 'Yeah, great.'

And 'What would you like to show Andy?'

'Well that's up to you, I'll do whatever you want.'

'What do you mean, you'll do whatever I want?'

'I'll do whatever you want.'

So I then, I mean, it took a long time to get it through to my thick skull that I really had to pick something. And it took me a long time to come up with this completely obvious idea of a self-portrait. It was years since he'd done a great self-portrait.

Believe it or not, at the end of his life, nobody had a good word to say for him. Whether they were august museum directors or collectors or the general public. He was considered a has-been. He was considered... he

had done nothing good and important since Mao, which I think Mao was '72.

So I felt that it was behoven on me to try to, if I was going to work with him, make a great proposal to him, of a really important work. So to propose to him the self-portrait and for that to be a colossal success, and, you know, they went all over the world to great collections and to museums immediately there's one hanging in the Metropolitan, there's one hanging in the Guggenheim. That was a great thing. And at the same time he was having this brilliant idea of stitching photographs, he'd been doing photographs of that sort. You know, the whole time you were with him he was... had a camera and he was taking photographs as a sort of way of covering his incredible shyness. Which people sort of don't realise how unbelievably shy he was the whole time. And then to stitch them together so you have the multiple imagery, which was the thing, if you like, he invented, and photography as painting, was, you know, a most brilliant concept. And, if you look at the subject matter, you will see his preoccupation with death. After all, this was somebody who was shot at close quarters and died on the operating table and then was brought back again.

We were working on a portrait of Samuel Beckett when he died, a very tragic thing. Because that great eagle's head that Samuel Beckett had would have looked pretty great. 'In all sorts of pretty colours, Anthony', were his last words to me on the telephone three days before he died. He was flying to Paris to photograph Samuel Beckett. 'I'll paint him in all sorts of pretty colours for you.'