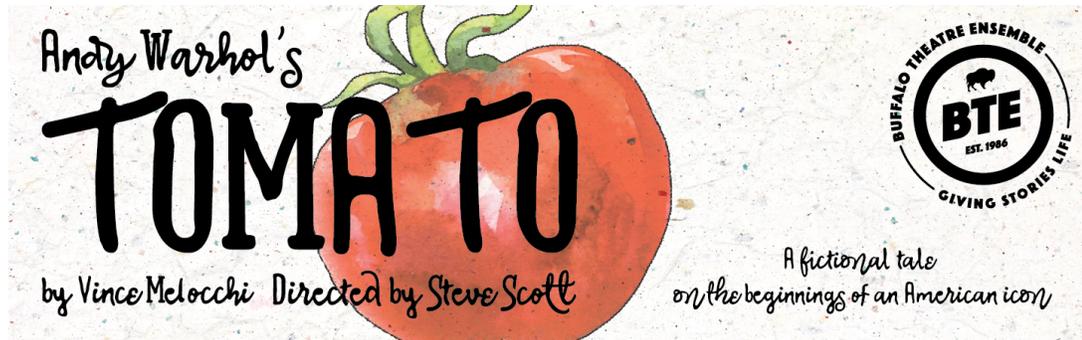


Buffalo Theatre Ensemble
Presents



by Vince Melocchi

Directed by Steve Scott

McAninch Arts Center
Playhouse Theatre
February 2 -March 5, 2023

presented by arrangement with Steel Spring Stage Rights

Preview: Thursday, February 2, 2023

Note: this production contains mature themes and language.

Summary

It's 1946 in Pittsburgh. 18-year-old Andy Warhol finds himself in the basement of a working-class bar. Over the course of a summer, Andy gives and gets inspiration, guidance and friendship from a surprising source in this fictional take on an apocryphal story of an American legend.

Time: 1946

Place: The basement of Bonino's bar, Homestead, PA

There will be no intermission for this production

Characters:

Mario “Bones” Bonino

Andy Warhol

Director’s Note

Few figures of the 20th century achieved as much fame—or notoriety—as Andy Warhol. As a visual artist, his creations forever changed our notions of what constitutes “art” while blurring the lines between fine art and commerce. His forays into filmmaking established a true underground cinema movement, exploring subjects and techniques that are now part of the mainstream. His New York studio, the Factory, became a gathering place for a dizzying variety of intellectuals, playwrights, Hollywood celebrities, drag queens, downtown bohemians and wealthy patrons; and his pronouncement that everyone would achieve “15 minutes of fame” paved the way for such contemporary phenomena as YouTube, reality shows and tell-all autobiographies. He lived openly as a gay man decades before gay liberation; and his numerous writings are still revered as the quintessential definition of “pop art”. In the end, though, perhaps his greatest artistic creation was himself: enigmatic, ghostly and silent, Warhol’s presence became one of the indelible images of the 1960s.

But how did Andy Warhola, the impoverished son of immigrant parents, become one of the seminal figures of contemporary America? In his play *Andy Warhol’s Tomato*, first produced in 2017, Vince Melocchi creates a fable (perhaps based on an actual encounter from Warhol’s youth) that offers a fascinating look at the famed artist years before he became a household word. In a series of scenes that are both endearing and tantalizingly prescient, Melocchi posits a relationship between the young artist and Mario “Bones” Bonino, a no-nonsense bar owner in a village outside Pittsburgh (Warhol’s place of birth) that is alternately sweetly humorous and contentious, regretful and joyous. Much more than a fanciful conjecture about the possible origins of a grandly idiosyncratic cultural icon, Melocchi explores with simplicity and eloquence the struggles of two very different men united in their quest for authenticity and fulfillment in a world too prone to conformity. Not unlike Warhol’s creations, *Andy Warhol’s Tomato* is an unexpectedly profound journey of two very disparate individuals, drawn together by the power of art.

~Steve Scott

Interview about the play: *Peeling a Tomato*

“If you’ve ever wondered what Andy Warhol was like as a kid, perhaps writer Vince Melocchi’s new play will give you a better understanding of the iconic artist, far beyond his eccentric persona.

This curiosity became the biggest challenge for the playwright, finding the voice of a teenage Andy Warhola who was living in poverty with his immigrant family in Pittsburgh.

Most people know Andy as the guy who painted the soup can. He became a leader in the pop art movement, exploring the connection between celebrity and artistic expression. He moved to New York and dropped the “a” from his last name, after an article in Glamour Magazine mistakenly omitted it. He became one of the most significant figures of his time. But, what about his life before fame?

Vince Melocchi, celebrated for his plays about the working class (*Lions* and *Julia*), grew up in Pittsburgh. He had heard all the stories about Warhol and wanted to research the early life of the artist. The story takes place in 1946 Pittsburgh. An 18-year-old Andy Warhol finds himself in the basement of a working class bar. Over the course of a summer, Andy gives and gets inspiration, guidance, and friendship from a surprising source.

...*Andy Warhol’s Tomato* — a story that is both truth and fiction. Mr. Melocchi spoke to *Stage and Cinema* about his inspiration to explore the Andy Warhols’ roots.

Stage and Cinema: Vince, did you get a chance to see the Warhol Revisited exhibition? If not, what exhibitions have impressed or stuck with you the most?

Vince Melocchi: No, I did not. But I have, on a couple of occasions in the past few years, gone to the Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh. I was able to get a lot of really good material from that. The most interesting part of the museum, for me, was on the top two floors. There are seven floors. It was there that I saw all the bits and pieces of Andy’s youth. His movie star scrapbooks, pictures of his family, his sketchbook...which is featured prominently in the play. With each floor I saw the progression of his body of work. They even had his “time capsules.” He collected over 600 boxes through the years of his life. Simple cardboard boxes filled with objects, and sealed. One of them had sourdough starter inside of it.

What really stuck with me, and still does to this day, is the beauty of his work in the sketchbook. It captures the spirit of the time. Most of the sketches were done on his brother’s produce route. I got a really good feel of those neighborhood customers. It’s uniquely stunning because the

sketches are a nice mix between art and animation. I've always loved animation; especially in the style that Warhol did his sketches. It kind of reminded me of Will Eisner's "The Spirit," pulp fiction drawings. And you know, I also loved the Marilyn and Jackie Kennedy Onassis work. There is something so hauntingly lovely and sad about them.

S&C: Were you a Warhol fanatic before becoming interested in writing this play?

VM: I didn't know much about Andy Warhol except for the stories I'd heard. More of them were false than true. But they are great stories. One tale was about Andy living across the street from my cousins on Steele Street. Then there was the story I'd heard often, about how he'd draw on napkins, up at the Huddle Bar on Grandview Avenue, in exchange for Coca-Cola. And how the owner then stored them all in the basement of the bar. None of this is true, but once I heard those stories I never saw the Huddle Bar in the same way again. I really fell in love with his work over these past couple years of researching him.

The more I got to know about Andy, the more I realized that he was a true Pittsburgher. That may sound strange, because most people think of Andy as this eccentric artist. This guy had a lot of guts and drive. He was not going to be denied by anyone. That's a mentality you have drilled into you while growing up there, especially when you're poor as hell. He worked hard to get where he was and wouldn't take "no" for an answer. That's a working class mentality. Maybe his tool was a brush and not a shovel, but make no mistake that he was a worker.

S&C: Was this always conceived as a two-person play like RED? Does this compare to RED in any way?

Andy Warhol's Tomato was originally a seven-character play about a woman having her bar foreclosed on. The only collateral she had was a stained, faded, unauthenticated Andy Warhol painting on the basement wall. AWT was inspired by yet another story I had heard about another bar. Feedback from the play reading helped me understand that people just weren't interested in anything but Warhol and the bartender, Bones. So I made adjustments. Rearranging the furniture of my play as Annie Baker would say. The next draft had just five characters. I got the same feedback. The audience only cared about Andy and Bones. The third draft was 4 characters. Still, they only cared about Andy and Bones. What's more, I had to admit to myself that as wonderful as my actors were, I only cared about the characters of Andy and Bones. That was the story, the

relationship between two men. Each one is helping the other one in their own way. The other stuff was a device, and frankly, a distraction from the story of our two main characters.

The two men in the play *Red* are obviously different from Bones and Andy. But I can see where people might draw parallels. Both plays are about artists, both two handers and all that, but in my eyes AWT is more a father and son piece than anything else. Andy and Bones really come to love one another as people and as artists. I do hope people walk away from *Andy Warhol's Tomato* looking at not only Andy in a different light, but also all artists from all walks of life.¹

Exploring Andy Warhol's Early Life

While our play is a fictional take on an apocryphal story of an American legend, Warhol's early life is quite fascinating. "Andy Warhol was born Andrew Warhola on August 6, 1928, in a two-room apartment at 73 Orr Street in a working-class neighborhood in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants from an area in the Carpathian Mountains in what is present-day Eastern Slovakia, his parents Andrej and Julia Warhola had three sons, Paul, John, and Andy, the youngest. In 1934, the family moved to their home at 3252 Dawson Street in Pittsburgh's South Oakland neighborhood, which was closer to their church St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic. Devout Byzantine Catholics, the family regularly attended mass and observed their Eastern European heritage.

"If you want to know all about Andy Warhol, just look at the surface of my paintings and films and me, and there I am. There's nothing behind it."

~ Andy Warhol,
The East Village Other; 1966

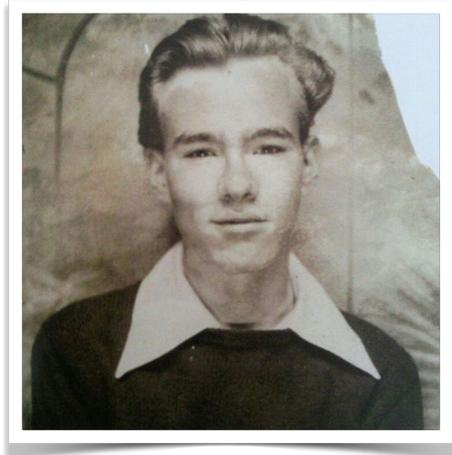
As a child, Warhol suffered from Sydenham chorea, a neurological disorder commonly known as St. Vitus dance, characterized by involuntary movements. When the disorder occasionally kept him home from school, Warhol would read comics and Hollywood magazines and play with paper cutouts. Growing up in Depression-era Pittsburgh, the family had few luxuries, but Warhol's parents bought him his first camera when he was eight years old.

He attended elementary at Holmes School and took free Tam O'Shanter art classes at Carnegie Institute (now Carnegie Museum of Art) taught by Joseph Fitzpatrick, before attending Schenley High School in 1942. Recognizing his son's talent, Andrej saved money to pay for Warhol's college education, and he attended Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University) from 1945 to 1949.

¹ Arthur, Frank. "Vince Melocchi (writer of world premiere *Andy Warhol's Tomato* at Pacific Resident Theatre." Stage and Cinema.com. 2 August, 2019.

Throughout his life, Warhol fixated on his physical imperfections. As a child, Sydenham chorea (St. Vitus dance) occasionally kept him bedridden, and he had pigment issues that caused discoloration of his skin, leading to the nicknames “Spot” and “Andy the Red-nosed Warhola.” In response to his perceived physical flaws, Warhol cultivated different looks through his clothing, wigs, cosmetics, and plastic surgery to change the shape of his nose. Later in his life he had premature baldness and massive scars from gunshot wounds suffered in 1968. His lifelong interest in beauty regimes and skin care made its way into his work, with early paintings depicting a nose job, wigs, and pain relief for corns. By the 1980s, Warhol had a near daily exercise regime and took vitamin supplements to improve his hair and skin; he incorporated bodybuilder imagery into

his work and exercise equipment populates photographs of his studio.



After graduating from art school with a degree in pictorial design, Warhol moved to New York City to pursue a career

Andy Warhol, Sept. 1945
~ The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh

as a commercial artist, and he dropped the final “a” in Warhola. He moved with fellow classmate Philip Pearlstein and created a circle of close-knit friends including college friend Leila Davies Singeles and dancer Francesca Boas.

His work first appeared in a 1949 issue of *Glamour* magazine, in which he illustrated a story called “What is Success?” An award-winning illustrator throughout the 1950s, some of his clients included Tiffany & Co., I. Miller Shoes, Fleming-Joffe, Bonwit Teller, Columbia Records, and *Vogue*.

Warhol was known for his blotted-line ink drawings, using a process he developed in college and refined in the 1950s. This working method combined drawing with basic printmaking and allowed Warhol to repeat an image and to create multiple illustrations along a similar theme. He could also make color or compositional changes quickly in response to client requests.

In 1952, Julia Warhola moved to New York City to live with her son. Julia was an artist in her own right. Cats and angels were her favorite things to illustrate, and in 1957 Warhol published a book of her drawings, *Holy Cats by Andy Warhol's Mother*. Warhol enlisted her to add her feminine and delicate penmanship to hundreds of his drawings, including advertisements, album covers, and book illustrations.

Warhol self-published a large series of artist’s books in the 1950s. He would hold parties at Serendipity 3, a restaurant and ice cream parlor on Manhattan’s Upper East Side, where his friends would help him hand color his books. In 1956, he presented a solo exhibition at the Bodley Gallery called *Studies for a Boy Book*. These sketchbook drawings of portraits of young men

and erotic portrayals of male nudes contrasted with the work of other contemporary gay artists, such as Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, who considered Warhol ‘too swish.’

As equally as he was an artist, Warhol was an entrepreneur. He kickstarted his career in the 1950s as a commercial illustrator, earning a sizable revenue to finance his artistic ventures. Warhol grew up during the rise of post-war consumer culture in the U.S. and England and realized the benefit of assembly lines in manufacturing, employing studio assistants and processes to aid his artistic production. Warhol successfully balanced commercial and entrepreneurial endeavors with avant-garde, underground work. He continually pushed himself to experiment in new media—publishing, film, music production, television, fashion, theater—throughout his career and frequently collaborated with artists and brands. Warhol wrote in *THE Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)*, ‘Being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art. Making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art.’²

Sexuality

“In the early 1950s, many of Warhol’s friends and fellow artists were accepted to show at the Tanager Gallery in New York City, but the works he submitted were rejected because of their subject matter—two men embracing. Warhol was a gay man, and homosexuality was criminalized in 1950s America. Warhol filled sketchbooks in the 1950s with drawings titled *Boy Portraits*, which were loving, humorous depictions of the male form and studies of feet, torsos, and genitalia. During his foray into film in the 1960s, Warhol did not shy away from sexuality. His films included scenes of sexual escapades, explicit and not—from turning tricks to sleeping. One of Warhol’s earliest films featured his then-boyfriend, poet John Giorno, sleeping nude in the nearly six-hour-long *Sleep* (1963). Throughout his career, Warhol blurred the lines between his romantic and professional relationships, mixing business and pleasure. Edward Wallowitch, Ted Carey, John Giorno, Jed Johnson, and Jon Gould were some of Warhol’s business associates with whom he also had intimate relationships. He returned to the male—and female—nude in the 1970s with his *Sex Parts* and *Torso* series. In the 1980s, Warhol’s focus on the body in his work and return to hand painting corresponded with the early days of the HIV/AIDS public health crisis, which devastated New York City’s arts scene and gay community.”³

² The Andy Warhol Museum. “Early Life.” <https://www.warhol.org/andy-warhols-life/>. 5 January, 2023.

³ The Andy Warhol Museum. “Early Life.” <https://www.warhol.org/andy-warhols-life/>. 5 January, 2023.

Warhol exhibit explores roles of gender and sexuality in his life and art

by Julianne McShane

The Andy Warhol retrospective at London's Tate Modern aims to unearth Warhol the person from the facade of Warhol the icon.

A large portrait currently on view at London's Tate Modern is one of many in a new exhibition that is instantly recognizable as the work of Andy Warhol. Its composition is bold, and so is its content: The model was Marsha P. Johnson, a Black transgender woman and trailblazing LGBTQ activist.

The 1975 portrait is one of over two dozen from Warhol's "Ladies and Gentlemen" series featured at the museum's newly reopened and extended Warhol retrospective, on view until Nov. 15 [2020]. The series, which portrays Black and Latinx trans women and drag queens from New York, is one of the highlights of the exhibition.



Andy Warhol's portrait of transgender activist Marsha P. Johnson, left, is on view at London's Tate Modern. Andrew Dunkley / Tate Modern

The retrospective, which opened briefly in March before being closed in the coronavirus pandemic, features more than 100 pieces of the artist's work and explores the influences of gender expression and sexuality in both his life and art. In doing so, the exhibit — which will travel to Cologne, Germany, and Toronto after its London run — aims to unearth Warhol, the person,

from beneath the well-known facade of Warhol, the iconic American artist, according to assistant curator Fiontán Moran.

“Very often he’s associated nowadays with his carefree constructed persona or his association with celebrity or money or fame, and all of those things are parts of his career and his interests, but I think in the process sometimes the real human being who created art gets lost a little bit,” Moran said.

Warhol’s gender expression and sexuality were defining influences on his personal and professional lives, according to his most recent biographer, Blake Gopnik, whose nearly 1,000-page eponymous Warhol tome was published this year. In it, Gopnik — who was not involved in the curation of the Tate exhibit but spoke about Warhol at the museum this year — writes, “Warhol’s relationship to his own sexuality ... became a driving force behind his entire conception of how to make art and live life.”

The artist’s gender nonconformity was clear from the days of his childhood in 1930s Pittsburgh, according to Gopnik.

“Instead of being out playing baseball with the boys, he was sitting on the front stoop drawing pictures of flowers and butterflies,” Gopnik said. “From very early on, he was being marked as not traditionally masculine.”

In 1949, after Warhol finished art school at the then-Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University), he boarded an all-night Greyhound bus to New York — the city where he would become Warhol, the icon, and where he would more fully express his sexuality.

“In New York, he completely threw himself into this creative queer community,” Moran said.

But even in the New York gay and arts scenes, Warhol — who as a public figure was famously elusive about his biographical details and identity — was “almost but never quite out,” Gopnik writes in his Warhol biography.

“Anyone with half a brain realized that Warhol was gay, but he didn’t actually come out and say it really until the 1970s and ’80s, and even then it was only said in a somewhat joking way,” Gopnik said.

Warhol’s artistic immersion in gay culture in New York is on view in a selection of his early line drawings from the 1950s featured in the Tate exhibit. The drawings — likely based on people Warhol knew personally, most of whom are not explicitly identified — depict men with full lips and wavy hair. One reclines in a sweater, smelling a flower, while another stands in front of a

vase of flowers, his long nose and lashes on display in his profile view. Other drawings are far more explicit. Together, they recall not only a “moment of gay life in New York,” as Gopnik notes, but also Warhol’s role as both a witness to and a participant in that culture.

But the drawings, like most of Warhol’s explicit works throughout the 1950s, were not well received by the U.S. art world: Critics considered him too “camp,” according to Gopnik. Warhol would not achieve widespread acclaim until the 1960s, when he created works of pop art based on advertising imagery and consumer and celebrity culture — including Campbell’s soup cans and Marilyn Monroe portraits, also on view in the Tate exhibit.

Early in his success, in 1963, Warhol made “Sleep,” his first serious art film that — at more than five hours long, projected in slow motion — consists of 22 closeups of his lover, the poet John Giorno, sleeping naked. Like the early line drawings, “Sleep” implicitly suggests Warhol’s dual roles both as an observer of gay life and a member of it. The film, also on view at the Tate exhibit, is not as much of an anomaly in Warhol’s oeuvre as it may seem upon first glance, according to Moran.

“Throughout his work — especially works that deal more explicitly with beautiful people or beautiful men — there is this great attention to the act of looking, and ‘Sleep’ is probably the best testament to that,” Moran said. “It isn’t a film of dramatic storytelling. It’s literally forcing you to gaze at this naked man as he sleeps.”

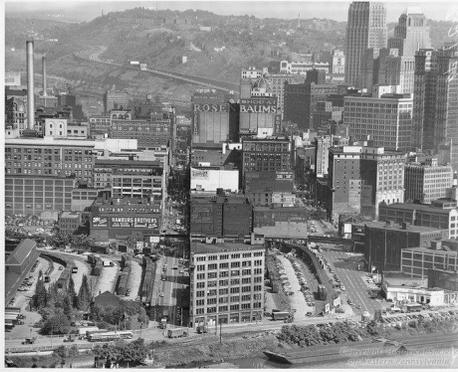
Giorno was not explicitly recognized in reviews as Warhol’s boyfriend, according to Gopnik— a fact that he attributes to the film’s experimental quality, which may have overshadowed what it depicted.

“By making it so formally avant-garde, he saved himself from having to worry about whether people would be up in arms about its gay content,” Gopnik said.

In contrast, the content of Warhol’s “Ladies and Gentlemen” series, in which Marsha P. Johnson was featured, did attract attention both because of who it highlighted and the relative absence of artistic depictions of transgender people — and particularly trans people of color — that it pointed to.

“It was rare for women who weren’t naked to be the subject of art; it was extremely rare for people of color to be the subject of art by and for the mainstream world; and my guess is it’s one of very few images of transgender people, and certainly the only significant representation of transgender people of color by a major white artist,” Gopnik said.

The Italian art dealer Luciano Anselmino commissioned the series from Warhol after the artist brought him to the Gilded Grape, a bar in Midtown Manhattan that attracted gay and transgender



people, along with drag queens. Warhol would go on to scout models for the series from the club. Anselmino paid Warhol almost a million dollars for just over 100 paintings; Warhol, instead, painted nearly 300. He employed his silk screen method to produce the works, by first photographing the models and then printing the images with ink onto canvases through a mesh silk screen.

Warhol saw the models he painted partly as manifestations of the ideal womanhood that he argued drag performers, by nature, strove to achieve.

“Drag queens are living testimony to the way women used to be, the way some people still want them to be, and the way some women will actually want to be,” Warhol wrote in the book “The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again,” which came out in 1975, the same year he created his “Ladies and Gentlemen” series.

Warhol’s signature pop art style emerges in the series’ elegant and compelling portraits, many of which at the Tate are of lesser-known transgender women and drag queens about whom little is known. But the images are more subdued than Warhol’s well-known pop art works: The models’ smiles are sly, and their poses — a head resting on a chin, a dead-on glare — often pensive.

For Gopnik, the series represents Warhol’s commitment to foregrounding the intersections of race and gender, and to depicting the models as both people and performers — as both human beings and icons.

“Those people are individuated, they’re full of character and life, they’re painted with energy, there seems to be a real investment in those roles — both on the part of Andy Warhol, and in the parts of the sitters,” Gopnik said. “It’s exceptional on all sorts of levels.”⁴

Pittsburgh

“The city of Pittsburgh sits at the confluence of three rivers, in the foothills of the Allegheny Mountains, at the heart of northern Appalachia. It is a critical port on the Mississippi River system, a vital meeting place for rail and for steam, once *the* artery connecting the big cities of the Atlantic coast with the resource-rich Midwest. By the late nineteenth century, the city’s status as a commercial hub and its proximity to the iron ore mined near Lake Superior and the coalfields

⁴ McShane, Julianne. “Warhol exhibit explores roles of gender and sexuality in his life and art.” NBC News. 14 August, 2020. <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/warhol-exhibit-explores-roles-gender-sexuality-his-life-art-n1236516>

of Appalachia gave rise to the biggest steel operations in the world, which generated extraordinary wealth and attracted waves of migrants.

Few jobs have been as fetishized, as mythologized, and as misunderstood as that of the steelworker. It's certainly true that the steel mills of western Pennsylvania provided steady, relatively stable employment for generations throughout the twentieth century. By the 1940s, these jobs were heavily unionized. Years of strikes and solidarity led to average hourly wages of \$3.36 by the early 1960s (equivalent to \$28.53 in 2020 dollars). But these jobs were also brutal and dirty and dangerous. They slowly wrecked men's bodies, and often injured them much more quickly. In one mill in McKeesport, Winant notes, 500 injuries were routinely reported per month in a facility with just over 4,000 employees. Coke ovens, blast furnaces, and open hearths exuded a punishing heat, with some workers inhaling so much burning dust that they vomited blood. 'Working-class men did not only love and draw strength from this work,' Winant writes. 'They also dreaded spending their lives doing it, imagining all that it would require of them and all that it would do to them.'

Downtown Pittsburgh, 1946

~pintrist.com

The hell of steelwork was distributed unevenly across racial and ethnic lines, with Black workers being subjected "to the damage and humiliation of the job in greater concentration, more minutes per hour, more hours per day," Winant writes. They were disproportionately shunted into 'unskilled' positions and excluded almost entirely from the skilled trades. They were often forced to live 'at the bottom of the valleys, where air pollution collected around smokestacks.'

The physical and ecological wages of steelwork had significant ramifications for their wives and families. Fumes and filth meant considerable cleaning labor for women—rubbing overalls with lard to remove industrial grease or scrubbing the basin of a washing machine to excise dust and silt. One steelworker's wife described herself as 'an unpaid clean-up woman for industry.' Fathers, sons, and brothers often worked different shifts, necessitating women being 'in and out of the kitchen all day long,' as one steelworker's daughter recalled. Surveys revealed housewives working more than 50 hours a week. And, in an industry where pain and slow violence were the norm—and where to 'drink, fight, drag heels, or sleep constituted a form of resistance,' as Winant notes—many men had trouble turning this off at home; mental and physical abuse were not uncommon.

As a result of automation and capital flight, the steel jobs gradually began to disappear in the 1960s. From 1960 to 1970, the number of metal manufacturing workers in the region fell from 162,514 to 128,142, part of a broader, massive decline in blue-collar industrial jobs across the country. This decline hit Black workers hardest. Layoffs often affected them at more than three times the rate of their white counterparts. Relatives, churches, and ethnic community centers had long shared money, food, and assistance, pooling their resources to care for families suffering as

a result of a strike, an injury, or a death. But these ties and institutions began to strain under the weight of so much need.”⁵

The Golden Age

The 40-year period from 1870 until 1910 marked Pittsburgh’s Golden Age. Favorable geography, unique natural resources and a super-abundance of entrepreneurial talent lifted Pittsburgh to a position of national and international prominence never seen before or since. Pittsburgh’s growth is a story of heavy industry, specifically steel. Population statistics speak to Pittsburgh’s dynamism during this period. The city’s population grew sixfold in those 40 years, from 86,076 to 533,905. Allegheny County nearly quadrupled, to 1,018,463 residents. The local population growth rate doubled that of the nation. In 1900 the value of manufactured products in Pittsburgh was more than Cleveland and Detroit combined...

During this Golden Age, Pittsburgh was a seething cauldron of entrepreneurial activity. Matching Carnegie in industrial prominence was the Mellon family. In 1870, Judge Thomas A. Mellon established a private bank, T. Mellon & Sons. He was soon joined by his third surviving son, A. W. Mellon (1855–1937). Through financial acumen rivaling J.P. Morgan, he built the Mellon Bank into the 13th largest bank in the country. In 1889 he and his brother, R.B. (1858–1933), financed the Pittsburgh Reduction Company, later Alcoa—for over 100 years the largest aluminum company in the world. In 1900, the Mellons, along with nephew W.L. (1848–1949), founded the Gulf Oil Company. It eventually accounted for 40 percent of the family fortune and became one of the “seven-sister” international oil companies. Mellon’s fingers were everywhere. In addition to his three largest holdings, A.W. founded Koppers, Carborundum, Union Steel Company, Standard Steel, Pittsburgh Coal, McClintic-Marshall and a host of other sizable companies.

George Westinghouse (1846–1914) moved to Pittsburgh from Schenectady, NY in 1873. Pittsburgh beckoned because it was a rail hub with low steel costs and abundant metalworking talent. He patented his revolutionary air brake in 1869 and built Westinghouse Air Brake into one of the nation’s most successful and lucrative corporations. As an inventor (371 patents) Westinghouse stands second only to Thomas A. Edison. In 1886, he founded the Westinghouse Electric Company—at its peak the nation’s 13th largest industrial company.

⁵ Stern, Scott, W. “A Rust Belt City’s New Working Class.” 31, March, 2021 <https://newrepublic.com/article/161867/rust-belt-citys-new-working-class-pittsburgh-review>.

Henry Clay Frick (1849–1919) built a vast fortune on the mineral wealth of the Connellsville coal seam. Known as the Coke King, he was originally financed by Judge Mellon and became a close confidant of A.W. Mellon. In the '80s, Frick needed money and Carnegie needed coke. Carnegie bought a controlling interest in the H.C. Frick Coke Company and Frick ran the entire Carnegie operation. Despite a final rupture, it was a win/win relationship.

Henry J. Heinz (1844–1919) founded the precursor of the H. J. Heinz Company in 1869. The Heinz Company was the odd man out as a branded consumer products company in a town totally dominated by heavy industry.

By 1970, Pittsburgh would have the distinction of being the third largest corporate headquarters city in the United States. With but few exceptions, all these companies or their antecedents were founded during the period between 1870– 1910: Alcoa, Allegheny Ludlum, Blaw-Knox, Consolidation Coal, Copperweld Steel, Crucible Steel, Dravo, Fisher Scientific, Gulf Oil, Harbison Walker, H. J. Heinz, Jones & Laughlin, Joy Manufacturing, Koppers, Mellon National Bank, Mesta Machine, Mine Safety Appliance, National Steel, Pittsburgh Chemical, Pittsburgh National Bank, Pittsburgh Plate Glass, Pittsburgh Steel, Rockwell International, United Engineering and Foundry, Universal Cyclops, United States Steel, Westinghouse Air Brake and Westinghouse Electric. With the exception of the two banks, Heinz and a couple of light manufacturing companies, it was heavy industry all the way.

In only 40 years, the industrial growth of Pittsburgh was breathtaking. It was an era of unprecedented dynamic entrepreneurialism. For those at or near the top of the heap, it was a glorious time, but for the vast majority it was a burden to be born. Most work in the mills was 12 hours a day, six and seven days a week. Enlightened employers such as Heinz and Westinghouse were the exception.⁶

History of Advertising 1950s

by Kaitlyn Scott

“The 1950s were an exciting time. Sinatra, Elvis... “Some Like It Hot”. The 1950s were considered both The Golden Era of 3D Cinematography and the Golden Age of Television. With the war ending and families being reunited, a huge increase in population erupted: The Baby Boom. In 1952 alone, 3.9 million babies were born and an average of 4 million babies were born every year after that. Advertisers saw this as an opportunity to address consumer needs and desires,

⁶ Dietrich, William S. “A Very Short History of Pittsburgh.” Pittsburgh Quarterly. <https://pittsburghquarterly.com/articles/a-very-brief-history-of-pittsburgh/> 2008 Fall.

particularly those of women. Need to lose that baby weight? The 1950s is where the obsession of body image and weight came into play. Women would buy any- and everything if it would help them stay slim; they were obsessed with dieting. Advertisers began promoting bath salts, suction cups, candy and even belts – all the things that were sure to help women keep their slim, sexy figures.

The rise of targeting specific demographics started in this decade. Teenagers, who were forming their own subculture for the first time ever, were seen as a lucrative demographic to target due to the fact that they had disposable incomes and an influence over parental spending habits. They were regular consumers of food, music, and of course – TV.



By 1951, regular TV programming reached the West Coast, establishing national coverage. TV became the driving force for advertising. Some memorable TV spots during this time period were for Alka-Seltzer, Ajax, and Frosted Flakes. Anacin really took the leap into TV advertising and showed how beneficial it could truly be. Their main advertising tactic was repetition; they consistently repeated the phrase “fast, fast, fast relief”. With this tactic, Anacin’s sales increased significantly.

Many agencies began using motivational research to help advertisers influence their consumers based on their need for safety, sex, belonging, and success. They used psychological tools to examine their spending habits. They created personalities that the everyday consumer could relate to or aspire to become: The Marlboro Man, Maidenform Woman, The Hathaway Shirt Man. Product personification became a prominent tactic.

Advertising, in any age, is largely shaped by the cultural, social, and political environment that surrounds it. Here are a few events – both major and minor – that had a huge influence on daily life throughout the 50s.”

1950 – First organ transplant

1951 – Color TV was born

1952 – Seat belts are introduced

1953 – DNA is discovered

1954 – Report says cigarettes cause cancer

1955 – Disneyland opens; McDonald's is founded

1956 – Remote control is invented

1957 – Sputnik launches in space

1958 – NASA founded

1959 – Castro becomes dictator of Cuba⁷

Tomato from Campbell's Soup I, 1968



“Before he became one of the best known artists of the postwar period, Andy Warhol found great success as a commercial illustrator in New York City. After studying pictorial design and painting at the Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University), he moved to New York City, where he supported himself by producing images for advertising and fashion magazines. He continued to make art, which he exhibited in various small galleries and other venues in New York, yet Warhol viewed his commissioned work as distinct from his artwork, which, at that time, often reflected the legacy of both Abstract Expressionist artists and the influence of more recent figures, such as Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg. Warhol found source material for his art from such things as advertisements, comics, and stories from magazines and newspapers. Active brushstrokes combined with drips and splatters functioned as signs not only of the gestural impulse, but also, in a nod to artists of the previous generation, a kind of reference to creativity and originality made visible; yet paradoxically, it was by embrac-

⁷ Scott, Kaitlyn. “History of Advertising.” Insights for Destination & Leisure Marketers. Mascola Group. <https://mascola.com/insights/history-of-advertising-1950s/>

ing not only the imagery of mass culture but also its aesthetic and means of production that he developed the qualities that made his art so distinctive and influential. ⁸

In 1960, Warhol turned his attention to the pop art movement, which began in Britain in the mid-1950s. Everyday life inspired pop artists, and their source material became mass-produced products and commercial artifacts of daily life; commercial products entered into the highly valued fine art space. In 1961, Warhol created his first pop paintings, which were based on comics and ads. Warhol's 1961 Coca-Cola [2] is a pivotal piece in his career, evidence that his transition from hand-painted works to silkscreens did not happen suddenly. The black and gray composition first sketched then hand painted is a blend of both pop and abstraction, which he turned away from at the beginning of his career before experimenting with it again in the 1980s."⁹

Things to discuss

Things to think about, prior to the performance:

- Have you ever heard of Andy Warhol? If yes, what do you know about this artist?
- When you hear "Tomato," what ideas are spurred?
- Later in his life, Warhol played with iconic, cultural images. Does the title intrigue you, knowing this idea?

Things to watch for in performance:

- Notice the set pieces, the furniture, the costume pieces and the prop pieces. Are the shapes predictable? What is recurrent and what is different?
- Notice the layering of sound, both before the performance begins and during the production.
- Notice the colors in the production. Which pieces are unique and what colors change throughout the production?
- Notice the location of this play. Why might a basement be important?
- Notice the effect of the light on the different scenic elements. What are the different spaces established by the set and how does the light effect your experience?
- Notice the relationship between these two characters. Is it unique to you? Are these two people so very different? If so, why? If not, why not?
- Notice the "marketing" idea that plays importance to these two characters. Why do you think that might be significant?
- Notice the "dreams" that are voiced by these two characters.
- What are the differences between these two characters? And, what are the similarities?

⁸ Andy Warhol. "Campbell's Soup I." The Met. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/395022>

⁹ The Andy Warhol Museum. "Early Life." <https://www.warhol.org/andy-warhols-life/> 5 January, 2023.

- What is your reaction to the end of the production? What does this say about human relationships?

Things to think about after the performance:

- After the events of this fictionalized story, the real Andy Warhol spent his life creating images and art. Many of the ideas he would explore are contained within this story: images such as cultural ideas, attitudes or events. If you are familiar with Warhol’s art, can you name a few ideas that the playwright chose to include which appear later in Warhol’s works?

Other Analysis “Tools”:

- What happens in the very last moments of the play? Certainly, the last few minutes, but, more importantly, the last thirty seconds? In that time, WHAT happens or is said, and what does that say about what the play is ‘about?’
- And what is the significance of the title? Why did the playwright decide that this was the most quintessential title for his work?

The running time for this production is 85 minutes

Please note the **pre-show** discussion will take place prior to the preview performance, **Thursday, February 2, in MAC 140 from 6:45 pm – 7:15 pm**. The pre-show discussion will include the director and designers, and will be a discussion of the approach to this production.

The **post-show discussion** will take place on **Friday, February 10, following the performance**. The post-show will include the director, cast and crew who will answer questions from the audience.



ASL Performance: Thursday, February 23

“ASL interpreters will be located near the stage for patrons who are deaf or hard of hearing, seated in an area of the theater that gives the best sight lines to follow the interpretation and the action on stage. To access reserved seating in view of the interpreters for a signed performance, call the box office at [630.942.4000](tel:630.942.4000) or [630.858.9692](tel:630.858.9692) (TDD).