

## Andy WARHOL (1928 – 1987)



Title: *Jackie*, 1964

Medium: Acrylic and silkscreen ink on canvas

Size: 50,8x40,6 cm / 20x16 in

Price: USD \$900,000 +10% Commission

Provenance: Ileana Sonnabend, Paris.

Galleria GM, Rome.

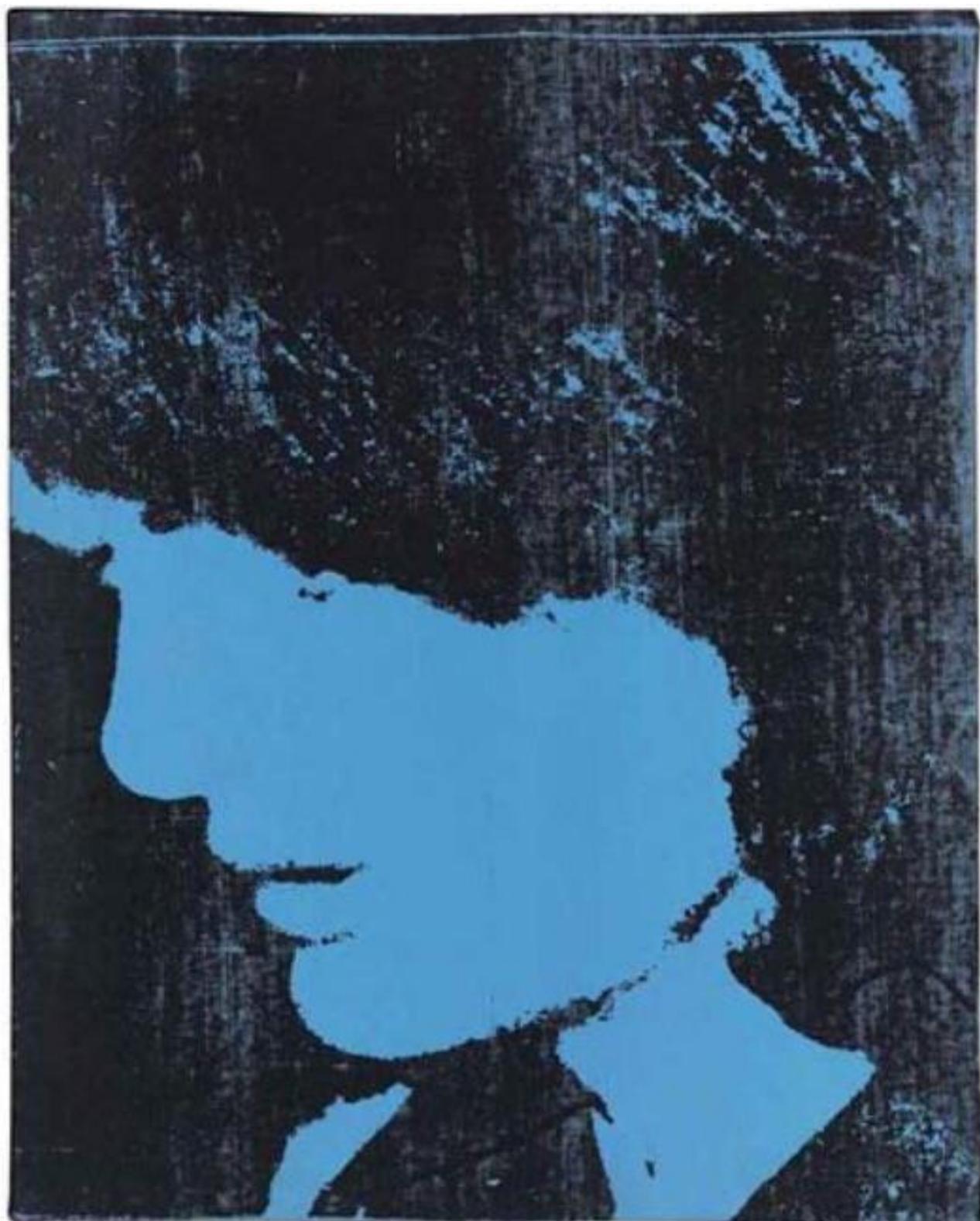
Studio Sergio Casoli, Milan.

Acquired from the above by the present owner.

Exhibited: Lerici, Castello di Lerici, *Il genio differente nell'arte contemporanea*, 1989

Literature: Georg Frei and Neil Printz, *The Andy Warhol Catalogue raisonné. Paintings and Sculptures 1964-1969*, New York, 2004, vol. 02A, p. 221, No. 1205, ill. in color

Signature: Signed and dated twice 'Andy Warhol '64' on the overlap





# Bonhams

## LOT DETAILS

PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION

**ANDY WARHOL (1928-1987)**

*Jackie*, 1964

signed and dated 'Andy Warhol '64' (on the overlap)

acrylic and silkscreen ink on canvas

20 x 16 in.

50.8 x 40.6 cm

### FOOTNOTES

#### Provenance

Galerie Sonnabend, Paris.

Gian Enzo Sperone Gallery, New York.

Blum Helman Gallery, New York.

Acquired from the above by the present owner *circa* 1982.

Lot 19

**ANDY WARHOL**

**(1928-1987)**

*Jackie*, 1964

**Sold for US\$ 907,500 (£ 708,787) inc. premium**

**POST-WAR & CONTEMPORARY ART**

15 Nov 2016, 17:00 EST

**NEW YORK**



## Andy Warhol's "Jackie"

With the nation still reeling in shock from President John F. Kennedy's assassination, only Andy Warhol could take the cultural pulse of a society so fixated on the iconography of celebrity and fuse it with the subliminal fear of death. The present work is a masterful achievement that escalates the narrative of the artist's Death and Disaster series, the darker subject matter promoting a strong argument for the depth of Warhol's artistic practice.

Not surprisingly, images of First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy at her husband's funeral have become some of the most symbolic in media history, both within an art historical framework and within the collective American memory, as Jackie herself emerged as the center of public attention. In the days following President Kennedy's death, Warhol collated images of the First Lady taken by the press and paparazzi, selecting just eight photographs with which to imprint his token silkscreen technique. Warhol ended up creating 302 portraits of the First Lady, the seriality of the Jackie pictures echoing the mass publication of newspaper images following the President's assassination and, two days later, his highly publicized funeral service. In direct contrast to the pleasantly austere press images of the First Lady that saturated the public audience before the untimely assassination, the present work is undeniably the portrait of a widow in mourning. Through Warhol's eyes, the public's enduring desire to catch a glimpse into Jackie's private life, her grief, her response, is finally satiated.

Painted just one year following President Kennedy's tragic and widely broadcasted assassination in late 1963, Andy Warhol's Jackie, 1964, is a captivating exploration into contemporary celebrity culture and the media frenzy that surrounded the tragic events that November. With Jackie, Warhol both condemns and celebrates the power of the image to inform cultural consciousness. Though awash with intense despair, the present work bears Warhol's subversive signature. Where Liz and Marilyn are synthetically charmed, Jackie is tragically cold and numb, representing the dark underside of Warhol's aesthetic capacity, one previously unseen. As stated by New York Times art critic Holland Cotter, "The themes of violence and mortality that link so much of Warhol's art from this period are here, but the pictures seem to belong to a different, graver world."<sup>1</sup> Here, the assumed purity and elevated status of the subject matter differentiates the Jackie series from Warhol's iterations of Pop portraits. The underlying discourse of Jackie, 1964, is a complex construction that requires unpacking at multiple levels.

In the early 1960s, Warhol began experimenting with film and self-taken images, his obsession with contemporary photography, and, specifically, figures in the spotlight, commingling with his preoccupation with existential ideas of fame and mortality. Amidst the rising visual literacy that accompanied this cult of celebrity, the Kennedy Administration offered up a renaissance of hope, positioning Jackie at the forefront of this paradigm. But just as the American public was breaking free from the throes of political turmoil and social revolution, they were also painfully reminded that this glittering idealistic vision could burst at any moment. At once, the political and cultural landscape shifted, the accompanying hysteria and nonstop news coverage that surrounded President Kennedy's funeral service "immersing us in a perpetual state of electric voyeuristic excitement, in the abstractions of drama and accident. In Warhol's case, of course, this magnification is frozen in painting."<sup>2</sup>

In the present work, Warhol focuses only on Jackie's face, once glamorously composed, now somber and despondent, so that her expression is exaggerated to the viewer. He then tightly crops the original source image that she expands beyond the picture plane, suggestive of a force larger than

life. George Frei and Neil Printz further suggest that Warhol's appropriation of the former First Lady cemented her status as an icon within a cultural context and within the canon of Contemporary Art, stating that by "Cropping Jackie's face from eight reproductions, he brought her into close-up, making her the dramatic focus and emotional barometer of the Kennedy assassination, shifting the historical narrative into a series of affective moments or portraits that register the subject over time."<sup>3</sup> Noted Warhol dealer Emmanuel Di Donna goes even further to suggest that in Warhol's canonization of Jackie, the artist made her "even more of an icon by focusing on her face."<sup>4</sup> Perceived as the ideal wife, mother and First Lady, Jackie was portrayed as a pillar of emotional strength in the days following the Kennedy assassination, with press images closely monitoring her every expression. Jackie, dubbed "a photographer's dream", was already a popular figure in post-war media culture in her own right.<sup>5</sup> According to Cotter, "The "Jackie" pictures also evoke a specific type of image, one tied to desire, devotion and a salvational hope: the religious icon."<sup>6</sup> As such, Jackie, 1964, is as much a symbolic representation of the public's fixation on media and the desire to identify with celebrity as it is a badge of history.

Executed in Warhol's most prolific means of expression, the silkscreen technique, Jackie, 1964, is an exceptional example of the artist's epochal representations of vanity and tragedy. The quality of the present work was immediately recognized by two of the most renowned dealers in the Contemporary Art world, Ileana Sonnabend and Irving Blum, both credited with being foremost tastemakers of their time. In 1962, Blum's Ferus Gallery first showed Andy Warhol's Campbell's Soup Cans in Los Angeles. In January 1964, legendary dealer Ileana Sonnabend gave Warhol his first solo exhibition in Europe, in which the artist presented works from his Death and Disaster series. Though initially met with substantial criticism, Warhol's darker, morbid works emphatically reinforced the pervasiveness of the photographic image and its power to seduce and manipulate through repetitive exposure. Together, Sonnabend and Blum posited Warhol's works on a global stage. The gravitas of this momentum primed Warhol to conceive perhaps his most emotive portrait, one of a face that would epitomize a generation, Jackie, 1964.

Of the circumstances that drove Warhol to produce the Jackie series, the artist recalls, "I'd been thrilled having Kennedy as a president; he was handsome, young, smart – but it didn't bother me that much that he was dead. What bothered me was the way television and radio were programming everybody to feel so sad."<sup>7</sup> With his appropriation of the First Lady, Warhol, rather than the media, is the informing agent, the one in control of the narrative. Jackie becomes his subject, her image embracing and embodying the grievous spirit of a nation deeply affected by the loss of their symbol of unity as played out on a public level. Frei and Printz expound upon Warhol's appropriation, noting, "Warhol's interest was not exclusively invested in the human subject or the content of the image but in its appearance, both visually and contextually – the way that it looked graphically, appeared photographically, and functioned in cinematic terms."<sup>8</sup> That Warhol's primary focus was not the subject of his portraits is of particular importance, for it is in his confrontation of the artificiality of the pre-packaged image that the artist is at his most profound and most compelling.

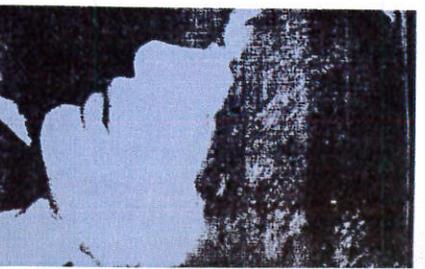
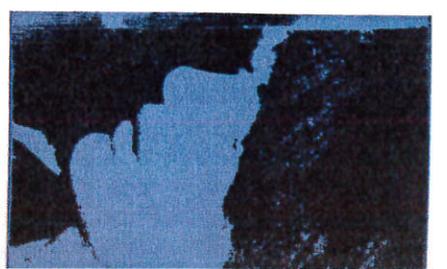
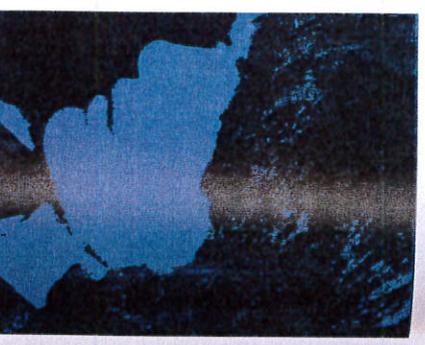
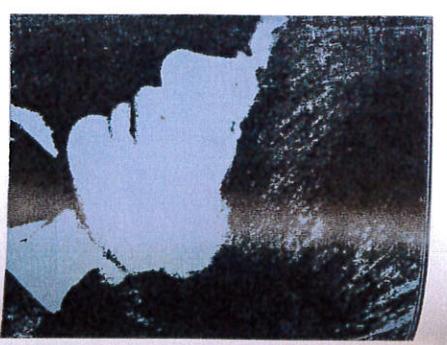
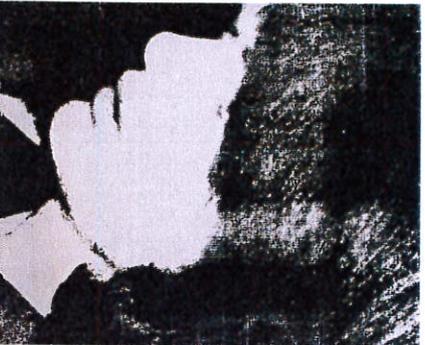
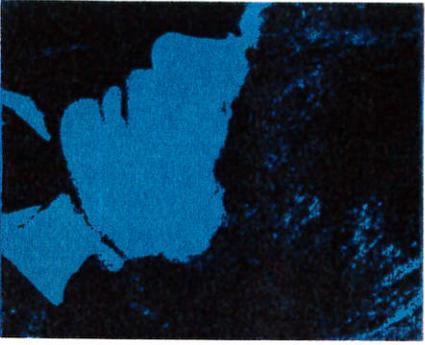
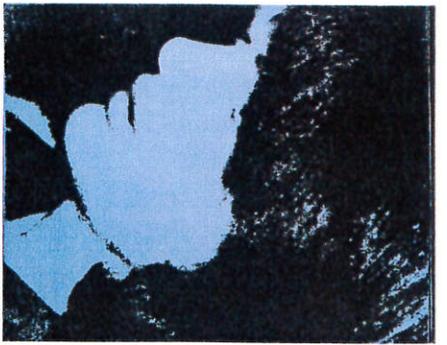
Influential critic and art historian Thomas Crow points to the implicit subversion in the Jackie pictures, noting "The emotional calculus is simple, the sentiment direct and uncomplicated. The pictures nevertheless recognize, by their impoverished vocabulary, the distance between public mourning and that of the principals in the drama. Out of his deliberately limited resources, the artist creates a nuance and subtlety of response that is his alone, precisely because he has not sought technically to surpass his raw material. It is difficult not to share in this, however cynical one may have become about the Kennedy presidency or the Kennedy marriage. In his particular

dramatization of medium, Warhol found room for a dramatization of feeling and even a kind of history painting.<sup>9</sup> As such, a distinct vestige of authenticity is carefully weaved into Warhol's deft critique of the effects of mass media on public reception of images and information. With Jackie, the subject matter challenges the emotional conditioning of the era, simultaneously desensitizing and accentuating the weight of the visual image.

The rarity of color and screening of the present work in relation to other pieces of the same schema is not to be overlooked. Here, Jackie is shown roughly screened, the frozen frame on her face conjuring a sense of inherent distance. Compositionally, there exists a duality in the close crop of Jackie in which the scale of the portrait suggests intimacy while the shadowy screening asserts the voyeuristic nature of the viewpoint. In opposition to the artist's Pop palette, the present work is rendered in ultramarine blue and black hues, decidedly more morose and funereal. Jet-black areas of pigment encircle her face, offsetting the richness of the cool cerulean colors, their tonality reminiscent of European renaissance pictures depicting the benevolent Madonna in blue robes. The structure of Jackie's face situates the present work on a higher plane altogether as compared to his levy of celebrity portraits. Where Warhol's other subjects confront the angle of observation head-on, Jackie is veiled, shown in profile, with her eyes shaded and visage shrouded. Her gaze is averted, lips parted as if on the verge of movement. Due to the uniqueness of the silkscreening process, the present work is highly textured, whereas other compositions appear flat. The image of Jackie is grainy, grounding the present lot in historical legitimacy. Light vertical bands lend the work an aura of film noir, the horrible tragedy repeating in the minds of the American public like an inescapable static loop.

Today, iterations of the Jackie series reside in the permanent collections of prestigious institutions such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among others. Perhaps the most culturally and historically poignant work in Warhol's oeuvre, Jackie is at once intoxicating and harrowing. Consideration of Warhol's momentous depiction of Jackie Kennedy conjures vivid albeit heart-wrenching memories of a charismatic icon turned subject of pity, positing Jackie, 1964, front and center within the lexicon of American cultural history.

1. H. Cotter, "Most Wanted and Most Haunted", in *The New York Times*, 24 April 2014.
2. T. Shafrazi (ed.), "Andy Warhol: Portraits" in *Andy Warhol Portraits*, London, 2007, p. 16.
3. G. Frei and N. Printz (eds.), *The Andy Warhol Catalogue Raisonné, Vol. 2A, Paintings and Sculptures 1964-1969*, New York, 2004, p. 103.
4. E. Di Donna, quoted in A. Binlot, "Andy Warhol's Jackie", in *W Magazine*, 9 April 2014.
5. A. Warhol and P. Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol Sixties*, New York, 1980, p. 301.
6. H. Cotter.
7. A. Warhol and P. Hackett, p. 77.
8. G. Frei and N. Printz (eds.), p. 104.
9. T. Crow, "Saturday Disasters: Trace and Reference in Early Warhol", in *October Files: Andy Warhol*, Cambridge, 2001, p. 55.



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*Paintings and Sculptures 1964-1969*

# WARHOL

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THE ANDY WARHOL CATALOGUE RAISONNE