

Daimler Art Collection

Andy Warhol. CARS.

MAC Museum Art & Cars, Singen

26 October 2014 – 17 May 2015

A co-operation with the Daimler Art Collection, Stuttgart/Berlin and Mercedes-Benz Classic, Stuttgart

The exhibition "Andy Warhol. Cars" at the MAC – Museum Art & Cars Singen presents the Pop-artist's significant picture series from the Daimler Art Collection in a unique dialogue with historical sports cars.

The *Cars* series has been on display in important museums around the world. In 2010 the entire series was exhibited at the Museum Albertina Wien – but without the original historical cars. The show at the MAC – Museum Art & Cars will contrast 40 pictures from the *Cars* series with selected models from the Mercedes-Benz Classic Collection, such as the Formula-1 racing car W196 R, the 300 SL "Gullwing" or the experimental car C 111, and continues the museum's unique exhibition concept of establishing a dialogue between art, automobile and architecture. Alongside the history of the *Cars* series, the exhibition questions Warhol's significance in the field of commissioned art and the link between art and product design. As a well known and rooted venue in the region and beyond, the MAC – Museum Art & Cars contributes again with this exhibition to an exchange of ideas on art in the context of an automobile culture.

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The MAC – Museum Art & Cars Singen, located in a beautiful countryside, opened its doors to the public in 2013 after ten years of planning and two years of building activity. To bring together cars and art in a unique museum was a primary concern for the founders, Hermann Maier and Gabriele Unbehaun-Maier. Alongside the exhibition of classic automobiles, the MAC – Museum Art & Cars provides space for the Südwestdeutsche Kunststiftung, one of the most renowned collections of modern painting, graphic arts and sculpture by artist of Southern Germany. The opening exhibition “Wachgeküsst” (kissed awake) focused on 70 selected works from the art collection and was presented together with the world famous Collection Schlumpf from Mulhouse, France. For the first time, cars in unrestored condition, some forgotten or neglected over time, were on display. With this exhibition the MAC – Museum Art & Cars contributed to a current discussion on the automobile as a cultural value in general and on the untouched cars from the Collection Schlumpf in particular questioning the relation between the automobile and art.

The co-operation with the Daimler Art Collection and Mercedes-Benz Classic follows this topic. But now icons in the history of the automobile will be on display, whose gleaming beauty and artistic value are regarded to be unquestionable. The dialogue between historical automobiles and Andy Warhol's *Cars* series brings together two brands—Warhol and Mercedes-Benz—each with its own mythic attraction and allows a reflection on the significance and perception of the automobile in the modern consumer- and social media-society.

With his 1986/87 *Cars* series Andy Warhol holds an outstanding position in the Daimler Art Collection. This was his last series of pictures, commissioned by the company on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the motor car, but never completed. 80 pictures were planned, intended to record the history of the motor car from the Daimler Motor Coach and the Benz Patent Motor Car dating from 1886 to the present day, using 20 selected Mercedes types. Only 35 pictures and 12 large-format drawings representing eight different models were finished. Warhol completed three additional large formats in the last two weeks before his death on 22nd February. The subject of Warhol's *Cars* series is the automobile as a fetish of an expanding consumer society. As the artist put the brand Mercedes-Benz in the

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context of art, in the context of the 'Warhol aura' he managed to bring together two high-class products. These rare vintage cars and exclusive models only seem to fall outside the framework of Warhol's specific 'iconography of the everyday'. As luxury products that everyone hankers after but are scarcely available to the masses, as objects of general longing and fetishization, they show typical characteristics that can also be found in other Warhol themes.

Warhol saw himself as a partner in commissioning situations whose aim was to shift a product into a different context: into the context of art, into the context of the 'Warhol aura'. But a product transfer of his kind succeeds above all when two products meet on the same plane. From this point of view, the contractual alliance between Andy Warhol and Daimler-Benz has to be seen as a happy chance 'on the same plane'. In commercial terms, two quality products were coming together that were both absolutely at the top in their own sphere. The name Warhol, as the visitor numbers to his exhibitions show, has 'mythical' pulling power in the context of art; and in the same way, the Mercedes brand name in its context—taking material form in the star symbol—has an assured field of connotations in the 20th century goods production society: beautiful, fast, modern, high quality. The crucial point is that the brand detaches itself from the product and from the producer. It is only when this abstraction process has successfully taken place, when the 'aura' transfers itself from the product to the brand that 'value' verifies itself as an immaterial, unassailable quality. It can be stated that Warhol pre-formulated this late 20th century brand philosophy that dominates all spheres of life artistically, using his own person as an example.

The Art Collection started in 1977 with the acquisition of a painting by Willi Baumeister and today comprises about 2,200 works by 800 international artists. The first phase of the Art Collection's history was essentially pictorial, and featured artists from South Germany, teachers and pupils from the Stuttgart Academy like Adolf Hölzel, Oskar Schlemmer, Willi Baumeister and the Swiss artists Hans Arp and Max Bill. The Daimler Art Collection was able to develop a clear profile relating to abstract-constructive, conceptual and minimalist positions that has been built up steadily and systematically. The international public has followed further development attentively ever since the Collection opened its own gallery,

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Daimler Contemporary, at Haus Huth on Potsdamer Platz, Berlin. New acquisitions are presented in Berlin, but are also put on display internally in Stuttgart and Sindelfingen in temporary themed shows, where they appear in dialogue with classical holdings from the Collection and also with works from major private collections. The world tour, started in 2003, and the accompanying education program significantly increased the Daimler Art Collection's international reputation.

Curator: Dr. Renate Wiehager, Head of the Daimler Art Collection, Stuttgart/Berlin

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