Queen Ntombi Twala of Swaziland

Work

Queen Ntombi Twala of Swaziland is part of Andy Warhol’s series the Reigning Queens, a series of 16 colorful prints that were created in 1985 and are considered the largest of his series of silkscreen prints. In addition to the Queen of Swaziland, it includes Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, and Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom. These queens are presented not as appendices to their husbands, but as distinct and powerful individuals, ruling queens who assumed the throne.

Warhol created other such series with historical leaders, which included among others John F. Kennedy and Alexander the Great. Notoriously fond of fame, Warhol was fascinated by universally recognizable images and based these silkscreens on official state portraits, especially those mass produced on stamps and money.

Warhol created the series through working with existing images, reaffirming his interest in appropriation and mass imagery, as well as repetition.

About the Artist
One of the most iconic artists and personalities of the 20th century, Andy Warhol was born in Pennsylvania to immigrant parents from Slovakia. He studied design at the Carnegie Institute of Technology and received his degree in 1949. Changing his last name from Warhola to Warhol, he pursued a career in advertising, achieving great success as a commercial artist and working for such clients as Glamour Magazine, Vogue, Harper's, and Columbia Records, to name a few.

A decade into his career, Warhol began painting, eventually appropriating images from mass media of well-known personalities, creating works through silkscreens. He is considered the first major artist to create important portraits not by actual brush strokes, but through mechanical silkscreens. Portraits of Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, and Jackie Kennedy are among his most famous.

A pioneer of the Pop Art movement, which critiqued and celebrated postwar American consumer culture, Warhol distinguished himself as the most influential, prolific, and creative artists and personalities of the 20th century, as well as one of the most sought-after commercial artist and illustrator of his time.

Warhol died in 1987 at the age of 49 from complications following a routine gallbladder operation.