



Andy Warhol

"Panda"

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Pittsburgh 1928 - 1987 New York

"Panda"

acrylic on canvas

1983

153 x 153 cm / 60 1/4 x 60 1/4 in.

verso signed and dated

Provenance

Andy Warhol Foundation

Private collection, Paris

Andy Warhol's Endangered Species series was born out of a conversation between Warhol and the commissioner, Ronald Feldman, concerning the ecological issue of beach erosion. Given Warhol's curiosity with animals, he was eager to take on the project proposed to him by Feldman. The resulting screenprints highlight ten endangered animals in a colorful, upbeat manner, which Warhol described as "animals in make up". His focus on the animals in isolation, with the pop-art palette, puts them on a level of superstardom along with the infamous screenprints of his past: Marilyn Monroe, Liz Taylor and Muhammad Ali. The viewer consequently regards the animals in the same immortalizing light as those celebrities. Warhol created some of the motifs as paintings, especially the Panda, of which there are three painted versions.

The Chinese regard pandas as a symbol for friendship and peace. They have an important place in Chinese culture and history. In the Shangshu (a written history of the Xizhou Dynasty, 1027-771 BC) the panda was described as an invincible animal, as strong as a tiger. As a tribute to kings and emperors, a panda's pelt was often given during that time. During the Ming dynasty, the panda was often thought to have medical powers. The pelt supposedly could repel plague and prevent tumors.