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‘THE MOST EXCITING THING IS NOT-DOING-IT’,
OR ANDY WARHOL’S ‘PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE’ ON
THE BASIS OF *BLOW JOB* AND *MY HUSTLER*

ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to identify characteristics of Andy Warhol’s ‘philosophy of love’, the elements of which were described in *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)*, and an analysis in this context of Warhol’s films *Blow Job* (1963) and *My Hustler* (1965). Warhol’s films are treated as an opportunity to discuss his attitude to love and sex, as they contain the key elements of his unusual ‘philosophy of love’. The artist’s biography is referenced, as are the concept of ‘impersonal narcissism’, put forth by Leo Bersani and Adam Phillips, Slavoj Žižek’s theories on the role of fantasy in a relationship, and some reflections of Susan Sontag and Esther Perel.

KEYWORDS

philosophy of love, love and sex, Andy Warhol, *Blow Job*, *My Hustler*

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Introduction

The figure of Andy Warhol, the world's leading representative of pop art, was special, as were his views on love, sex, and the relationship between them. Surprisingly little research on the artist's unusual 'philosophy of love' has been carried out to date, perhaps reflecting an uncritical acceptance of Warhol's provocative statements such as 'Yeah, I'm still a virgin'¹, as well as of the artist's alleged celibacy and asexuality, about which he created a legend, turning them into a shield to protect his privacy. People from the artist's milieu, however, deny that Warhol did not maintain sexual relationships or that he led a life of celibacy. Victor Bockris, author of a comprehensive biography of Warhol, cites detailed testimony — albeit some of it anonymous — from the artist's sexual partners, which clearly proves that certainly Warhol did not die a virgin². Of course, there is no shortage of studies of Warhol's life, including his sexual life, a recent example being John Wilcock's *The Autobiography and Sex Life of Andy Warhol* (2010). However, few have tried to thoroughly understand the artist's 'philosophy of love' and track its components in his artistic output, including in his films.

In this article I will analyse two films by Andy Warhol in the context of his specific 'philosophy of love': *Blow Job* (1963) and *My Hustler* (1965), in which we can see most fully Warhol's complex attitude to love and sex. An analysis of these films will identify the key elements of the Warholian 'philosophy of love', expressed more directly in *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)* (1975).

The problem with reading Warhol's philosophy literally is that *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol* is also an artistic creation, and therefore only one of the elements in the artist's philosophical universe. I would like to avoid the mistake of analysing Warhol's 'philosophy of love' based only on one text treated as an infallible oracle; rather, I wish to confront his words (from the book) with his actions (his other artistic works and private life), and confirm or refute the concepts set forth in *The Philosophy*.

While commenting on the content of *The Philosophy* and dealing with various aspects of love and sex, it is impossible to ignore War-

¹ J.D. Dillenberger, *The Religious Art of Andy Warhol*, New York 1998, p. 35.

² V. Bockris, *The Life and Death of Andy Warhol*, Bantam Books, 1989.

hol's biography. We can observe that some elements of the biography seem to confirm his written words, while other elements contradict those words. One thing is certain: the picture of Warhol's 'philosophy of love' would not be complete without at least some brief insight into the artist's private life and the choices he made. Even if we assume that the celibacy and asexuality Warhol declared is factual, by simply noting these issues, we put the matter of sex in the spotlight. Sex and, perhaps less obviously, love were very important issues in the life and work of Warhol, which may seem paradoxical, given the fact that he had neither a family nor a steady partner during most of his adult life; he also seemed not to attach himself to other people (he coolly assessed most people through the prism of their predisposition to be a star and believed in their 'interchangeability'). Nevertheless, I understand 'sex' (or more generally: 'eroticism') as seen by Esther Perel, that is, as the life force driving action, as the source of creativity and a playing field for the imagination³. In further analysis of Warhol's 'philosophy of love', Perel's theories will serve as helpful commentary.

In addition to Perel, I will reference philosophical concepts and ideas relevant to my discussion: the 'impersonal narcissism' taken from Leo Bersani and Adam Phillips' *Intimacies*⁴; Susan Sontag's views on the relationship between love and sex in modern society, outlined, *inter alia*, in an interview conducted by Jonathan Cott⁵; elements of Slavoj Žižek's theories on the role of fantasy in a romantic relationship⁶.

'Everybody has a different idea of love'

These words come from the book *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)*, in which Warhol devoted a great deal of space to the idea of love. The book contains three chapters with love in the title: *Love: Puberty*, *Love: Prime* and *Love: Senility*, and the word

³ E. Perel, *Sexuality, Eroticism and Creativity, with Esther Perel*, viewed 18 December 2014, <http://bigthink.com/videos/why-sex-and-eroticism-are-different-with-esther-perel>.

⁴ L. Bersani & A. Phillips, *Intimacies*, The University of Chicago Press, 2008.

⁵ S. Sontag & J. Cott, *Myśl to forma odczuwania. Susan Sontag w rozmowie z Jonathanem Cottem*, transl. D. Żukowski, Kraków 2014.

⁶ S. Fiennes (director), *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema* [film], 2006.

‘love’ appears 116 times in the book. This may indicate that the subject was quite important for the artist. Here are some things Warhol says about love and sex in his book:

I don’t really know if I was ever capable of love, but after the 60s I never thought in terms of ‘love’ again. However, I became what you might call fascinated by certain people. One person in the 60s fascinated me more than anybody I had ever known. And the fascination I experienced was probably very close to a certain kind of love.⁷ (emphasis mine — J.L.)

The most exciting thing is not-doing-it. If you fall in love with someone and never do it, it’s much more exciting.⁸

Fantasy love is much better than reality love. Never doing it is very exciting. The most exciting attractions are between two opposites that never meet.⁹ (emphasis mine — J.L.)

On the basis of the above words, we are able to argue that the person uttering them has a very specific, very unusual attitude to issues of love and sex (or wants the readers to think so). Love seems in the above quotations to be something hard to define, especially after the turbulent 60s, when all values (including ‘sanctification’ of the idea of love) were questioned. Love began to be treated fairly easily and without obligation; it was pushed from the pedestal and placed on an equal footing with other elements of contemporary reality. It became ‘free’¹⁰. ‘Love’ is replaced here by ‘fascination’, or by something less loaded with centuries-old traditions of courtship and seduction; something that is perhaps not as binding for both parties involved in a sexual relationship.

When we look at Warhol’s biography, we find in it some elements that confirm this aspect of his attitude to love. On one hand, Warhol felt the need for continuous contact with other people, to establish relationships based on the exchange of ideas (he often talked with people close

⁷ A. Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)*, Harvest, San Diego, New York, London 1987, p. 27.

⁸ Warhol, *The Philosophy*, p. 41.

⁹ Warhol, *The Philosophy*, p. 44.

¹⁰ J.R. Petersen, *Stulecie seksu. Historia rewolucji seksualnej 1900–1999 według „Playboya”*, transl. A. Jankowski, Poznań 2002.

to him for a long time, usually on the phone), but on the other hand he treated people as instruments for his own purposes (stories about how Warhol did not pay actors for their work on his films, deluding them with the mirage of their future fame, are widespread). But Warhol's love of talk is a complex matter. He liked to talk, but did not always need people for this activity (as indicated by his famous 'marriage with a tape recorder'), and sometimes the exchange of ideas was for him just a game based on a specific code, 'the language in which understatement reigns, and also irony, distance, absurd, and above all — extreme verbal minimalism'¹¹. When giving interviews, Warhol did not give controversial views, did not try to shock, did not want to offend anyone. 'When asked for an opinion on a topic, he invariably replies that it is "great"'¹². In a word, he did not facilitate the tasks of the interviewers (or modern interpreters of his words and works of art).

According to Bockris, Warhol did not like to be touched or to bestow any physical tenderness on others, which created a barrier between him and other people. Also, during sex, if you believe the artist's biographer's interviewees, he remained distant and seemed absent — as if he was watching the scene from the sidelines, without participating or being involved in it¹³. He was innocent about sex, a bit like a kid in a toy store, fascinated and charmed, touching his dream toy and examining, with some degree of shame and disbelief, how it works. The child does not get the toy, just as Warhol remains forever at the point of unfulfilled desire. After all, this is just 'the most exciting thing'! Sex is not the most important thing, and certainly is not the core of a love relationship. These views, on one hand, may seem very romantic, idealistic, praising a 'platonic' kind of love; on the other hand, they separate love from sex, giving primacy to sex with no commitment, sex as a biological need, keeping real commitment in a potential state. We can clearly see that Warhol's 'philosophy of love' is based on paradoxes.

The last of the above-mentioned quotes from *The Philosophy* seems to me to be the most memorable in the context of his films. Warhol contended that 'fantasy love is much better than reality love', which leads me to consider the category of love in terms of fantasy and reality. Imaginary love,

¹¹ K. Goldsmith, *Będe twoim lustrem. Wywiady z Warholem*, transl. M. Zawada, Warszawa 2006, p. 7.

¹² Goldsmith, *Będe twoim lustrem*, p. 7.

¹³ Bockris, *The Life*.

not belonging to reality, potential love, love as a dreamed-up toy from the store, unfulfilled love — this is the centrepiece of Warhol's films. 'Never doing it is very exciting', he says. The problem, which, in my opinion, tormented the artist throughout his life, and which is reflected in his work, is the inability to present the thing he really wanted to show; the impossibility of creating a complete representation, the impossibility of grasping the core of selfhood of a person representing the 'strange', 'different' 'philosophy of love', inability to take possession of the toy from the store and to play with it without embarrassment in front of others. I think that this inability is not just about Warhol's homosexuality but, more broadly, about how to talk about non-normative sexual behaviour and non-normative understandings of love without falling into the trap of the banality of clichéd 'free love' slogans of the 60s. The question is: how to express one's sexual identity and one's 'philosophy of love' in a situation where it is not recognised and accepted by the outside world and its cultural norms? Warhol's strategy to cope with this situation consisted of several elements: to pose as an asexual person, an innocent child and virgin; to play language/convention games with art lovers, film viewers, and audiences, as well as with the people carrying out interviews and their readers; and, more importantly, to control the rules, and to escape into the realm of fantasy, where everything can have its representation.

In addition, Warhol gives the word 'fantasy' in *The Philosophy* a slightly different meaning. He talks about notions that we have about the person we fall in love with, and that often they do not correspond to reality, which can be a source of problems, for example during sex. In the artist's own words:

People's fantasies are what give them problems. If you didn't have fantasies you wouldn't have problems because you'd just take whatever was there. But then you wouldn't have romance, because romance is finding your fantasy in people who don't have it. A friend of mine always says, 'Women love me for the man I'm not.'¹⁴

According to Warhol, one source of disappointment and suffering in love is the inevitable clash of fantasy and reality. Here we touch the wide, and recently very trendy, topic of imaginary ideas about romance

¹⁴ Warhol, *The Philosophy*, p. 55.

partners and their inadequacy in reality, that is, the role of fantasy and phantasm in a love relationship. Slavoj Žižek, in the famous film *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema* (2006), says:

All too often, when we love somebody, we don't accept him or her as what the person effectively is. We accept him or her insofar as this person fits the coordinates of our fantasy. We misidentify, wrongly identify him or her, which is why, when we discover that we were wrong, love can quickly turn into violence.¹⁵

Warhol noticed this thirty years before Žižek and, consciously or not, warned us against too serious an approach to sex and proposed a playful attitude to the subject, in order to be able to enjoy lovemaking (i.e. he wrote, of course half-jokingly, half-seriously, about the necessity to introduce some courses in primary schools about love and beauty). Making these topics less serious, treating them as a mundane thing, would save us many disappointments in our love lives. Warhol knows that reality cannot beat the imagination. In the end, sex will always be 'more exciting on the screen and between the pages than between the sheets anyway'¹⁶. In addition, many of our anxieties regarding sex stem from the failure to meet cultural norms that often stand in opposition to our real needs. Sex is a kind of great demand that the world places on us. Warhol writes that he cannot meet the demands of cultural norms and he does not feel good about it, as if he did not meet someone's top-down expectations. His recipe for this problem is distancing. Now, let's have a look at how it works in his films.

'Movies could show you (...) how it really
is between people'¹⁷

In the early 60s Warhol gave up painting for some time and devoted himself to filmmaking. Today, some of his films are classics of American underground cinema. Nevertheless, their most important asset and a major attraction for researchers and fans seem to be Warhol's authorship. The

¹⁵ Fiennes, *The Pervert's Guide*.

¹⁶ Warhol, *The Philosophy*, p. 44.

¹⁷ Warhol, *The Philosophy*, p. 48.

huge interest that accompanied screenings of Warhol's films (i.e. *Chelsea Girls*, 1966) was also (or primarily) generated by a desire to see the life of the artist and his entourage on the big screen. In Warhol's films, however, we can find much more than a record of the times in which they were made. His film work is a game with classic cinema — primarily with traditional narrative structure, without which a good movie, it was commonly believed, could not exist. Warhol's experimental cinema undermined this thesis, arguing that the pleasure of our association with the film can also be derived from the specific game between the author and the audience; from not meeting the expectations of the viewer; from testing the viewer's patience; and from a game with convention, i.e., an unusual presentation of love relationships, romance and sex on the screen.

Let us now focus on one of the most interesting and most famous of Warhol's early film experiments, *Blow Job*, an etude from 1963, and see what it tells us about the artist's 'philosophy of love'. During the entire film, which runs a little over thirty minutes, the camera focusses on the face of the young man who is the recipient of the sexual act referred to in the title. We see nothing else. The camera remains on the man, who leans against the wall, sometimes tilts his head back, leans from side to side, raises his hands in moments of ecstasy, and, after reaching climax, lights a cigarette. We do not see, of course, the sexual act itself; we can only observe the young man's face. A commentator on Warhol's films, Stephen Koch, notes that, '(...) the fellated penis is the focus of attention; it's excluded from the frame'¹⁸. The viewers expect this exclusion but are nevertheless frustrated by it. We are left with the same face, which, moreover, is often hidden in shadow; it is difficult to read anything from it. It looks as if the face is intentionally hidden from us, or as if the director knew what we would try to see, what we would seek, and gently mocked our expectations... or wanted to draw our attention to the essence of 'no-looking'.

Let us quote a memorable phrase from *The Philosophy*, which is interesting in the context of *Blow Job*. Warhol says:

People should fall in love with their eyes closed. Just close your eyes. Don't look.¹⁹

¹⁸ S. Koch, *Stargazer: The Life, World and Films of Andy Warhol*, Marion Boyars Publishers Ltd, 2000, p. 50.

¹⁹ Warhol, *The Philosophy*, p. 50.

To persuade someone to fall in love with eyes closed may seem at first glance bizarre, but Warhol seems to indicate something deeper, namely the problem of seeing according to convention and judging by it. Warhol calls for non-judging by appearances, or, more broadly, for non-judging in general; he speaks of an immersion in pleasure of 'no-looking', 'not seeing', 'not noticing', in the sense that he wants to change the perspective, turning expectations upside down. The artistic technique of this movie also serves this purpose: lighting the face so that we do not see the emotions on it, the exclusion of unnecessary elements from the frame, the lack of narrative construction, the lack of a clear climax²⁰. Warhol shows us clearly that there is another way; he wants to go against the grain. Sometimes you have to close your eyes and distance yourself, in order to start to see and to fall in love. This is one of the ways, in addition to the above-mentioned 'making the topic less serious', to challenge cultural norms and social expectations about sex.

The very act of sex is something that we do not witness in the film, something that we, the viewers, have to fill in with our own imaginations. As we remember, 'fantasy love is much better than reality love', and 'the most exciting attractions are between two opposites that never meet'. An interpretation in this spirit of the scene from *Blow Job*, which in fact we did not witness, confirms this element of Warhol's 'philosophy of love'. The idea of two opposites, two contradictions that never meet but are next to each other, and their inability to meet generates sensual pleasure and is attractive for us. Contradiction, which causes tension, is embodied in the fact that we have the act of fellatio in front of our eyes (and certainly we are aware that it is taking place), but at the same time we do not see it; contradiction is also embodied in the fact that we look at the man who experiences pleasure, but at the same time do not read anything particular from his face. Finally, the signals sent from the screen are contradictory: some of them demand: 'Look!' (in the spirit of voyeurism, as Koch reads them), and others say: 'Do NOT look!'.

It seems that turning to filmmaking and the opportunities associated with the medium of film allowed Warhol to express his attitude towards love and sex in a way fuller than ever before. Warhol had loved movies since childhood and the world of popular Hollywood stars was

²⁰ D. Crimp, *"Our Kind of Movie": The Films of Andy Warhol*, Cambridge 2012.

very close to his imagination and sensitivity. His childhood heroes were characters from movies and comics: Dick Tracy, Superman, Batman, Popeye²¹. Cinema offers fantastic opportunities for building tension between what is visible and invisible, and also allows the director to hide behind the camera and to create a sense of distance. It was ideally suited for the expression of Warhol's 'philosophy of love'.

Let's see what the artist himself had to say about the importance of cinema:

Movies bring in another whole dimension. That screen magnetism is something secret — if you could only figure out what it is and how to make it, you'd have a really good product to sell. But you can't even tell if someone has it until you actually see them up there on the screen.²² (emphasis mine — J.L.)

Films, thanks to screen magnetism, have the ability to express inexpressible things; that is why they are so valuable for Warhol.

I am the queen of the beach!

My Hustler, a film from 1965, by Andy Warhol and Chuck Wein, one of the collaborators in the Factory, is important for at least two reasons. Firstly, it is Warhol's first sound feature film, in which an attentive viewer will find the key elements of the artist's 'philosophy of love' with no problem. Secondly, it is the film most widely recognised by commentators (Michael Moon places it next to *Midnight Cowboy*, John Schlesinger's 1969 film, in some respects), and by the (not very large at the time) audience²³.

My Hustler is a film with a very simple construction and storyline. In the first part of the film, three friends – the old owner of a beach house; his neighbour, an experienced hustler; and another neighbour, a young woman – enjoy themselves by watching the owner's newest 'pickup', a beautiful young blond man who, as we can guess, is a rent-

²¹ M. Moon, *A Small Boy and Others: Imitation and Initiation in American Culture from Henry James to Andy Warhol*, Durham and London 1998.

²² Warhol, *The Philosophy*, p. 63.

²³ Moon, *A Small Boy*, pp. 117–132.

ed hustler. We hear the talk between the three friends, who are betting which of them will be able to seduce the hustler first. Most frequently, the frame is filled with the blond man lying in the sand. He becomes the object of gazes and desire, while we hear the whole exchange of ideas between the neighbours off-screen. The second part of the film is a long scene in the bathroom, filmed without cuts, during which the two men, the experienced hustler and the blond man, perform a detailed hygienic procedure: they brush their teeth, comb their hair, apply some perfume on their skin, etc. The dark-haired hero tries to seduce the blond one in a kind of 'dance in front of the mirror'. According to Koch, 'the action is tense with its obvious little truth, that this sequence is about two men's bodies, that they have become, in this situation, sexual objects (...)'²⁴. The signals sent by the two bodies are interpreted by the viewer primarily as an 'orgasmic promise of happiness' ('orgasmic *promesse de bonheur*')²⁵. Lust and beauty are never alone, but come together in dialogue. As well, here two bodies are needed to create tension²⁶.

Here, love as known from Plato's concept and from Leo Bersani and Adam Phillips' *Intimacies* comes to mind. Plato's love is called 'back-love' — that is, the love when the lover and beloved see in each other both the other person and themselves, as well as unconsciously looking for elusive pieces of lost, divine ideals from the past. Lust and beauty are linked: people in love desire each other, but they are also searching for a lost ideal of beauty, the elements their souls once experienced. In this sense, love for another person is always so-called 'self-love'. This is also associated with impersonal narcissism, which challenges modern theories of love that is unique, oblatory, exceptional; it betrays the fact that, for example, we are looking for some constant features in our successive romance partners, and that love is always narcissistic, lined with a hint of selfishness, striving to meet one's own needs. We are looking in a partner for images of ourselves, our reflections, but also something that we have lost. Here, modernist faith in human individualism and uniqueness of love has been shaken. A romantic feeling that happens only once in a lifetime, and narratives created around this belief, are myths²⁷.

²⁴ Koch, *Stargazer*, pp. 83–84.

²⁵ Koch, *Stargazer*, p. 85.

²⁶ W. Koestenbaum, *Andy Warhol*, New York 2001, p. 139.

²⁷ Bersani & Phillips, *Intimacies*, 2008.

Warhol's films, including *My Hustler*, focus attention on the fact that alternatives, or assumptions other than those in force, are possible in the realm of love and sex. There is no need to base them on romantic love; you can try to create your own rules. Warhol, in his films, in my opinion, would like to draw attention to the existence of a type of sensitivity which does not have to comply with any guidelines or submit to cultural norms, but which also wants to be noticed. All of the activities that Warhol undertook aimed to present the 'not shown' and 'unnoticed'. The scene in the bathroom from *My Hustler* is something like this; it makes the young man an object of interest; he is placed in the centre of attention. Warhol points out that it is possible to do this without trying to fit it into existing romantic narratives.

One of the elements of Warhol's 'philosophy of love' is to draw attention to the possible separation of love and sex, which we have already briefly mentioned. Love and sex are not inseparable and, moreover, very often have nothing in common. Susan Sontag describes the complex relationship of these two elements:

We ask everything of love. We ask it to be anarchic. We ask it to be the glue that holds the family together, that allows society to be orderly and allows all kinds of material processes to be transmitted from one generation to another. But I think that the connection between love and sex is very mysterious. Part of the modern ideology of love is to assume that love and sex always go together. They can, I suppose, but I think rather to the detriment of either one or the other. And probably the greatest problem for human beings is that they just don't. And why do people want to be in love? That's really interesting. Partly, they want to be in love the way you want to go on a roller coaster again — even knowing you're going to have your heart broken. What fascinates me about love is what it has to do with all the cultural expectations and the values that have been put into it. I've always been amazed by the people who say, "I fell in love, I was madly, passionately in love, and I had this affair. And then a lot of stuff is described and you ask, 'How long did it last?' And the person will say, 'A week, I just couldn't stand him or her'."²⁸

Sontag observes a problem which is also important for Warhol: attaching too much importance to the issue of love, which is supposed to be the cure for all ills, and mythologising its status. We expect a lot

28 Sontag & Cott, *Myśl*, pp. 106–107.

from love, often unnecessarily and unjustifiably. As we already know, the problem of the difficult relationship between love and sex and the inability to meet the expectations derived from imposed ideas and cultural norms were the subject of the artist's reflections in his works. In *My Hustler*, sex and desire are discussed by the characters and are an interesting starting point for play, fun and competition. We do not know how the bet will finish; we only know that the game is going on.

Here we touch one of the most important points of Warhol's 'philosophy of love'. Sex, or eroticism, should, after being freed from the conventions, be reborn as a life force, as a game associated with creativity, spontaneity, vitality. According to Esther Perel, a well-known psychotherapist dealing with human romantic relationships, sex at some point ceased to be associated with these aspects, which is a big mistake. Erotica's original strength and creative power should be restored²⁹. There is a deep connection between eroticism and creativity. Stepping out of the scheme, 'the demolition' of the established order, looking from a different perspective, drawing from imagination and fantasy, are all extremely important issues in love and sex life. Perel talks about them as follows:

(...) when you are creative you often are erotic. You feel alive. You feel radiant. You feel vibrant. Sometimes you feel very confident. (...) That's why for all of history we used to call it the erotic arts. (...) So creativity is about going outside of the boundaries. It's about being non-linear. It's about expansiveness. It's about connecting dots that are not necessarily so obvious to connect and then to create a whole new reality with it.³⁰

Susan Sontag also emphasises the aspect of fun and frolic in the art of love, saying:

And I think that, for many people, love signifies a return to values that are represented by childhood and that seem censored by the dried-up, mechanized, adult kinds of coercions of work and rules and responsibilities and impersonality. I mean, love is sensuality and play and irresponsibility and hedonism and being silly (...).³¹ (emphasis mine — J.L.)

29 Perel, *Sexuality*.

30 Perel, *Sexuality*.

31 Sontag & Cott, *Mysl*, p. 106.

It seems that Andy Warhol in his 'philosophy of love' also focusses on these aspects. Love is a matter which should be treated less seriously; and the aspect of humor and fun and games needs to be appreciated. Erotica means creativity and going off the beaten track.

Conclusion

In his 'philosophy of love' Andy Warhol wanted to go beyond conventions and provide an alternative version of romantic sensitivity, where the first priority is the freedom to make one's own decisions. He convinces us in his work that love and sex cannot be labelled or categorised. Warhol was a person full of contradictions: on one hand, he provoked viewers with erotic depictions in films, on the other, he described himself as a virgin. His ambivalent attitude to the issue of sex and love, and especially the relationship between them, can be tracked in his life and work, especially in the films. On-screen games with the audience in *Blow Job* and *My Hustler* were intended to undermine existing theories about the sanctity of love and sex relationships, and also to question the cultural norms and draw attention to their incompatibility with the modern world. The classification of Warhol's 'philosophy of love' as demanding homoerotic images only would be a simplification; rather, I think that it is connected with the need to present a non-normative understanding of love and sex in general.

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