

FOCUS ON DANTO

A cura di Manrica Rotili

In 1964, in the two main rooms of the Stable Gallery of New York Andy Warhol displayed facsimiles of six different brands of American products – Heinz Ketchup, Del Monte peach halves, Kellogg's Corn Flakes, Campbell's Tomato Soup, Brillo soap pads – piled high, in neat stacks, as in the stockroom of the supermarket. Everyone who walked into those «stockrooms» was amused. Eleanor Ward, the director of the Stable Gallery, was livid at the opening, she felt absolutely betrayed by Warhol's works¹. But while people laughed, Danto was living a sort of epiphany. It was as if Warhol's transfiguration of the commonplace had corresponded to a transfiguration of a common man. Since then, Danto's life as philosopher would have never been the same. In this light, Danto's last book, *Andy Warhol*, is a real tribute to the artist that «knocked off his horse», for using Danto's words², an homage to the artist that has opened art to the pluralism, starting the so called *post historical period of art*. But at the same time *Andy Warhol* is a valued account of Danto's debut in the «art question».

The magnificent synthesis of Andy Warhol as an American icon that Danto offers in his last book is just the starting point of this interview. The conversation easily moves from Warhol to Danto's personal life, making the interview an exclusive portrait of one of the major shaper of recent art theory.

¹ See A. Danto, *Beyond the Brillo Box. The Visual Arts in Post-Historical Perspective*, New York, Farrar Strauss&Giroux 1992, p. 37.

² *Stopping Making Art*, «American Society of Aesthetics», 30 (2), Summer 2010, p. i.

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The video is followed by three essays that prompted by Danto's latest book, proposing reflections about his theory of art. I would like to thank the authors for accepting my invite to participate to this focus.