



If you want to know all about Andy Warhol, just look at the surface of my paintings and films and me, and there I am. There's nothing behind it.

ANDY WARHOL

Andy Warhol (American, 1928-1987)

Self-Portrait, 1986

Synthetic polymer paint and silkscreen ink on canvas

108 x 108 inches (274.3 x 274.3 cm)

Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

Museum Purchase, The Friends of Art Endowment Fund

In 1978, Andy Warhol celebrated his fiftieth birthday and began to reflect on his own mortality and the legacy of his career as an artist. In *Self-Portrait Wallpaper, 1978*, he revisits his youthful visage, repeating the image of his young self across the entire gallery wall. On top of this wallpaper hang several later self-portraits that reflect this intense period of introspection. *Self-Portrait (Strangulation), 1978*, shows a pair of hands ominously wrapped around the artist's neck. In *Self-Portrait with Skull, 1978*, his face is juxtaposed with the ghostly image of a skull—a clear reference to Baroque vanitas paintings meant to encourage viewers to contemplate their own mortality. The repetition in these images recalls Warhol's early Pop work from the 1960s, such as the *Campbell's Soup Cans* or the Modern's own *Twenty-Five Colored Marilyns, 1962*. *Self-Portrait, 1986*, also in the Modern's collection, is an imposing work featuring the closely cropped face of the artist intently staring at the viewer from under his characteristic "fright" wig. Although the artist could not have known that his own passing would be so imminent (only months after this painting was completed), this disembodied head seems to foretell his impending death. With little of the "cool" affect he was most known for in his public life, perhaps this painting represents a sincere introspective investigation and more genuine side of Warhol. Regardless, the personal nature of the work completed in this late period is indeed a marked departure from the rather detached tone and machine aesthetic of his early work.