

# Warhol in Detroit

## Starts New Religion

Ben Habeebe

1966

Andy Warhol, slightly built with frosted blond on his hair and perpetually with shades, doesn't grind out the pop culture he's noted for.

It flits forth from his head instead.

Warhol, the man who started the whole pop art movement with his painting of a Campbell's soup can, who filmed the epic kiss, who swathed the under-round in velvet, and brought the nation's first wedding in a happening to this midwestern town, is thinking of following Leary into the Village Theater in New York with his own religion.

When he talks of his ideas for his religion they don't thunder from his tongue in fundamentalist fashion, nor are they reasoned and rational like the liberal religionists; instead they bubble to the surface like a fart in a bathtub.

His religion will be the erector set, and his Pope will be Ondine.

He wants converts. They'll come from Billy Graham he says.

Warhol's god is the same as everybody else's. He has a son, but Warhol hasn't decided on his name yet.

In fact, Warhol hasn't thought of very much concerning the erector set. The Idea happened from his lips; when Warhol talks everything happens from his lips, in miniscule particles. He said he is starting a new religion, smiled the smile of a man with an idea taking hold, and nodded his head.

From then on Warhol's statements concerning the religion were in response to questions. It seemed that if it weren't for questions Warhol would be mute.

Yes he was going to have a mass, yea, it will be like a black mass. Yes, yes, that's right—it will fill a void in America's spiritual life. It'll be a grassroots religion with a popular base, and it will develop of itself to meet the needs of the faithful, he answered.

No psychedelics, though, Warhol said he doesn't need them.

But whips and witches, lots of witches. And a liturgy, he was about to start work on that. And weddings like the one he brought to Detroit, and funerals.

Beautiful, crazy loud funerals... "I hate anything that's quiet," Warhol said.

Warhol's friend Gerard Malanga, billed as super-star in Warhol's spectaculars, has his doubts about the erector set's religious value.

"It's entertaining, but it's a toy," he said.

Andy will have lots of followers, but he isn't going to stay with it," said Gerard. "He never can commit himself to one thing. Then all his followers will be hung up."

Warhol, who believes in god, "Today is Sunday," he said; says this is it, he is going to stick with it.

At that point someone asked him about his new religion, and Warhol said he was going to start one.

"What's it going to be like?"

Warhol stopped and thought, then said "I don't remember, ask him, I just told him." and he pointed to me.

# fifth Estate

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Fifth Estate #19, December 1-15, 1966

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