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THE ANDY WARHOL MUSEUM ANNOUNCES EXHIBITION *ROBERT LEPPER, ARTIST & TEACHER*

(Pittsburgh, PA) . . . September 10, 2002... The Andy Warhol Museum presents a new exhibition, *Robert Lepper, Artist & Teacher*, on view in the Museum's fifth floor gallery from September 12, 2002 through January 12, 2003. Robert Lepper (1906-1991) taught design at Carnegie Mellon University from 1930 to 1975. While he helped to establish the first degree-program in the United States in industrial design, his best-known student was Andy Warhol. Curated by Matt Wrban, assistant archivist at The Warhol and Carnegie Mellon alumnus, this small exhibition focuses on Lepper's work as a muralist and sculptor, and his teaching of Warhol. Presented are art works and archival materials on loan from several collections, including Carnegie Mellon and the artist's estate. Several items have not been exhibited previously.

As an artist, much of Lepper's work came from commissions for large audiences: painted murals in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s; a sculpture for the 1964 World's Fair in New York, corporate commissions, and stained glass windows for churches. He explored new materials like aluminum, industrial "found objects," and acrylic resins beginning in the 1950s.

Lepper completed many projects on a large scale, including his now-destroyed painting, *Flight* (1950) for the ceiling of the Charleston, West Virginia airport, measuring 22 by 80 feet. It was honored by the Architectural League of New York in 1952, and is represented in the show by drawings and photographs.

In 1961, Lepper's metal wall relief, *Engine*, was published in *Life* magazine. His *Astrobat*, an interactive kinetic sculpture, was the most popular attraction at the 1962 Three Rivers Arts Festival. At the same time, his work entered the collections of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, and The Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The Andy Warhol Museum

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Near the end of his teaching days, Lepper was contacted by Rainer Crone, a Warhol scholar from Berlin, inquiring about his teaching methods. Crone wrote that Lepper's 2-year course, "Individual and Social Analysis," which Warhol was required to take, had made a huge impact on the young artist. Because students were asked to describe the most important objects in the "social flux," the class may be the inspiration for Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Can* paintings.

Lepper's students also include painter Philip Pearlstein, editorial cartoonist Jimmy Margulies, conceptual artist Mel Bochner, children's book author and illustrator Leonard Kessler, and dozens of industrial designers, advertising and other arts professionals.

Lepper's art achieved renewed attention in 1985, when he was included in the exhibition, *The Machine Age in America, 1918-1941*, which praised his mural at West Virginia University as the "only rival" of the great Diego Rivera's celebrated works in Detroit. A large study and a full-scale painting of a detail from the complete work represent Lepper's *Mineral Industries* mural.

In a reply to a scathing editorial of Warhol published after his premature death in 1987, Lepper proclaimed that history would regard his former student as a social critic of the same stature as William Hogarth, Jonathan Swift, Francisco Goya, Mark Twain, and Sinclair Lewis.

Lepper's final public project, an unrealized sculpture for downtown Pittsburgh, was a work of vivid imagination with both mythic and local resonance: a 60-foot tall fire-breathing dragon titled *River Creature*. It's illuminated bulging eyeballs, exaggerated nostrils and toothy gaping mouth fit the "dragon" squarely in the realm of comedy, which Lepper considered to be dangerous yet essential territory for any artist. The dragon's fire recalls Pittsburgh's long history of heavy industry, while the comic expression reveals the good nature of its people.

The Andy Warhol Museum receives state arts funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

Located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the place of Andy Warhol's birth, The Warhol is one of the most comprehensive single-artist museums in the world. The Andy Warhol Museum is one of the four Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh. Additional information about The Warhol is available at www.warhol.org.

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Phone: 412.237.8300

Hours: Tues, Wed, Thurs, Sat, and Sun 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Fri, 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Mon closed

Admission: Members - free

Good Fridays - free gallery admission, 5-10 p.m.

Adults - \$8, Sr. Citizens - \$7, Children/Students - \$4

The Warhol Store/The Warhol Café – free