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Press release
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ANDY WARHOL – THE LIFE YEARS 1949-1959

4 November – 23 December 2015; 4 January – 17 January 2016

Opening: Tuesday, 3 November 2015, at 6 p.m.

In 2011, a sensational find was announced: among the works included in the estate of Andy Warhol (1928-1987), a substantial group of drawings from the 1950s had been discovered. They were from the very earliest period the artist had spent in New York. Ever since, the person who discovered them – Munich art deal Daniel Blau – has been ceaseless in his efforts to research this valuable material and bring it to the attention of the (art) world. What makes this find so remarkable is the fact that the works themselves reveal such unexpected facets of one of the late twentieth century's most iconic artists. In these early drawings, Andy Warhol paves the way for his entire future oeuvre. They contain the seminal subject matter of his later works and mark the early evolution of his own distinctive technical approach – including, for instance, the so-called blotted-line technique.

From a pool of 400 drawings – some of which have previously been shown in public, albeit never on such a grand scale – we have carefully made a selection that places the focus firmly on his targeted use of found material and, in particular, on his use of found photographs. In the meantime, through painstaking research, we have succeeded in tracing and identifying the original sources used by him. This research has revealed that some of his works were actually based on images by such famous photographers as Edward Steichen. Much of the material could be traced back to specifically identifiable images that Warhol had found in the printed media – many of them originally published in the American magazine LIFE. During the 1950s, the market saw a veritable explosion in the launch of chic and appealing magazines evoking the seductive qualities of modern life. It was from this rich trove of visual material that the impassioned voyeur drew not only his earliest inspiration but also his enduring artistic syntax – by reducing and transforming the found material into a hard-hitting and intense version of his very own visual language.

In the scheduled exhibition, we aim to present outstanding examples of Warhol's blotted-line designs, including – for the very first time – a substantial group of drawings from his early period, alongside the primary sources on which they are based, in the form of original magazine issues and photographs. This exquisite exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue with authoritative and scholarly articles on the singular approach taken by Andy Warhol in developing his highly distinctive method of transference between the two media of photography and drawing.

For further information and visual material, please contact:
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The exhibition will be accompanied by the following publication (in German and English) issued by the Graphische Sammlung ETH Zurich: **ANDY WARHOL – THE LIFE YEARS 1949-1959**, with texts by Alexandra Barcal, Olaf Kunde and Paul Tanner; published by Hirmer Verlag, Munich, 2015; 196 pages, 116 colour illustrations, CHF 35.- (exhibition) / EUR 34.90 (booktrade), ISBN 978-3-7774-2438-5.