

Lazy Warhol

Strategies of Work Refusal in Andy Warhol's Early Films

Gilad Reich

Abstract

This article explores Andy Warhol's early films as a mechanism of bio-political production: both challenging capitalist logic of production and mobilizing subjectivity as a source of financial value. The article introduces Maurizio Lazarrato's view of Duchamp's readymade as a 'lazy technique' – a strategy of production that links inactivity and the refusal of work with the creation of non-normative forms of life. Drawing on Isabelle Graw's notion of Warhol's Factory as a site of post-Fordist production, and employing Antonio Negri's concept of "social capture" – this article shows how Warhol's early films (*Sleep*, 1963; the *Screen Tests* project, 1964–1966) served as means of appropriating the non-normative lifestyle of his employees (Warhol's Superstars). However, I argue that at the same time they also deployed significant strategies of challenging capitalist notions of productivity and efficiency. Warhol rejected traditional aspects of filmmaking, adopted an 'indifferent imposition' towards the films' subjects, and made an extensive use of repetition to produce a prolonged duration, queer visibility and a collective viewing experience. By doing so, I conclude, Warhol's early films functioned as a "lazy technique" – they explored the refusal of work under bio-political production and its inherent link to non-normative forms of life.

It still seems to me today quite legitimate to challenge the forced labor that even newborns are subjected to.

—Marcel Duchamp, 1964^[1]

I suppose I have a really loose interpretation of "work", because I think that just being alive is so much work at something you don't always want to do. Being born is like being kidnapped. And then sold into slavery. People are working every minute. The Machinery is always going. Even when you sleep.

—Andy Warhol, 1975^[2]

In a short publication produced on the occasion of the 2014 Whitney Biennial, Maurizio Lazzarato made the following argument regarding Marcel Duchamp's oeuvre: "If there is something that systematically reappears and to which he [Duchamp] remains faithful all his life, it is his refusal of work and his commitment to lazy action."^[3] The readymade, according to Lazzarato, is the prime example of Duchamp's "lazy technique" since it requires "no virtuosity, no special know-how, no productive activity, and no manual labor."^[4] By introducing laziness into art, Duchamp situated art production alongside any other productive activity under the capitalist division of labour. When art turns into commodity, the refusal to produce sabotages the foundation of capitalist accumulation: work, property and exchange. Hence, Duchamp's refusal was an act of non-compliance with any kind of labour, both artistic and wage-based work.^[5]

Reading Duchamp's life and work from an autonomist perspective, Lazzarato conceptualises the refusal as a creative act that goes well beyond the refusal of capitalist production. The suspension of the machine—in this case, as a metaphor for the social order at large—offers "to carry out a reconversion of subjectivity, to invent new techniques of existence and new ways of living time."^[6] According to this school of thought, production is understood as the "production of subjectivity founded on the refusal of capitalist production."^[7] Readymade as a "lazy technique", something existing selected rather than newly fabricated, creates a "freedom of indifference" that pauses "all social habits, norms, and significations. ...[it] opens a new dimension where there is no longer any choice but where something happens, something takes place. The readymade is a meeting, an encounter..., the trace of an event."^[8]

Lazzarato's perspective on Duchamp's work is mostly based on statements the artist gave throughout his life, and is not rooted in his practice—which, as Elena Filipovic points out, was far from lazy.^[9] However, emphasising this aspect of Duchamp's life and work offers an alternative to traditional scholarship on the matter. Most readings of Duchamp's work focus on the way he challenged notions of skill, authorship and uniqueness, undermined art's retinal experience and highlighted the role of institutions in defining what counts as art. Lazzarato's reading of Duchamp's tradition as a one of refusal, shifts the focus from art-related questions to the exploration of forms of life. Duchamp's refusal opens up the possibility of constituting a subjective "line of flight" outside capitalist rule: a "technique of dis-identification" that undermines social and sexual positions and identifications.^[10] This view derives from the autonomist perspective that links strategies of escape from capitalist demands to a new form of "social becoming" where relational social dynamics are formed. "This is the movement of refusal that leads to the re-fusing of common life and energy back through the social," as Stephen Shukaitis puts it.^[11]

Andy Warhol's work is often linked to Duchamp's readymade because of his interest in the relationship between commodity and art in the age of industrial mass production, as expressed through his use of the "photographic readymade". Taking everyday objects and images as a source of inspiration for his paintings challenged notions of skill, authorship and originality, as was the case with Duchamp. Moreover, Warhol's paintings refuse "to assume the socially desired functions of aesthetic legitimation" expressed by his singular, "flat", repetitive yet isolated images.^[12] Like the readymades, they convey a position of indifference that rejects any claim for transcendent experience, as well as any critical or utopian stance.

Yet for Lazzarato, Duchamp and Warhol occupy very different positions in relation to the dynamics between art and commodity in capitalism. Towards the end of his text, Lazzarato bluntly articulates this contradiction:

Reproduction, monetization, and aestheticization, which the anartist [Duchamp] had futilely tried to contain, were finally adopted and fully exploited in Warhol's work. The latter represent the artist's total

“capitulation.” For instead of refusal, Warhol rigorously adhered to the values and logic of the market, money and consumption... If the artist becomes indistinguishable from the businessman or celebrity, if Warhol’s Factory functions exactly like a modern-day corporation, the conditions no longer exist for conceiving of art as a “technique of the mind,” a means of subjectification, a technique of the self, or even a system of signs obliging us to think and feel. Nor it is possible to conceive of the artist’s role as that of a “medium” of subjectivation.^[13]

In other words, Warhol’s readymades cannot be conceptualised as a “lazy technique” since they contain market values such as aestheticisation. Therefore they block processes of social becoming that refusal of the capitalist logic of accumulation might instigate. However, this reductive view of Warhol’s oeuvre leaves out several important historical facts crucial to any discussion of Warhol as a producer, and ignores any periodisation of his career. First, Warhol never exhibited an everyday object as an art object. Quite the contrary: each of his paintings and objects was singular, similar but not identical to others. Second, he “withdrew” from painting at an early stage in favour of making movies that had, at the time, no commercial value. And third, Warhol created a social space—the Factory—where non-normative forms of life, queer and others, were exercised and shaped, hence transforming himself into a “medium of subjectivation” in an almost literal sense.

According to Filipovic, Duchamp’s many and often ignored social activities were an integral part of his artistic activities, and crucial to our understanding of his material production as well as his model of artistic subjectivity.^[14] Instead of making art in its traditional sense, Duchamp took the role of an administrator, archivist, art advisor, note maker, publicist, reproduction maker, and salesman of his own oeuvre...^[15] When linked to Lazzarato’s argument about the readymade as a “lazy technique”, it is possible to articulate the connection between Duchamp’s “refusal of work”—read refusal of the position of the artist as a maker of]aesthetic[objects—and his decision to operate in the social sphere, inventing new forms, organizations and presentations of art. Warhol’s social activities—in the Factory—stood at the centre of his position as an artist, and materialised artistically through his films. As I plan to demonstrate, this “social turn” was—like in Duchamp’s case—an act of refusal towards modernist models of artistic subjectivity and capitalist notions of production, value and efficiency. Adopting an autonomist perspective to analyse Warhol’s Factory—a very non-intuitive thing to do, as Lazzarato implies—can reveal how Warhol’s innovative methods of art-making were entangled with non-normative ways of living and the role of the artist in a post-industrial society.

The clear-cut distinction Lazzarato and others make between Duchamp’s refusal of work and Warhol’s devotion to the market is not as clear as it seems, at least during Warhol’s formative years as an artist—between 1960 and 1966. Duchamp’s main contribution to Warhol’s practice goes well beyond the use of the “photographic readymade”, and is centred around the “social”: firstly, through the focus on relationships, encounters and events as part of what constitute the work of the artist; and secondly, because of the exploration of non-normative processes of subjectivation and forms of life through these social and creative “flows”. Non-normative forms of life that were constituted, maintained and disrupted by the adaptation, and refusal of, certain modes of production. However, the point is not to outline the influence Duchamp had on Warhol as much as to mark the common understanding the two artists shared: that modes of production, social identity and artistic subjectivity are always entangled. In the spirit of Duchamp, Warhol incorporated refusal—albeit in a very different way—as a way of reinventing the role of the artist in the post-artisanal era.

In the following I will attend to the Factory’s division of labour and its nature of work to show that, in the spirit of Isabelle Graw’s argument, Warhol’s production process was post-Fordist and bio-political.^[16] That is, the creation

of value out of bodily or mental capacities of the subject by capitalisation or command over life, which goes hand in hand with flexible and adoptable mode of production. While bio-political production in post-Fordism is often regarded as a sophisticated form of exploitation—as demonstrated in the Factory’s celebrity culture—I will show how, for Warhol, it had a more ambivalent function. It mobilised subjectivity as a source of value production, while at the same time serving as a site for a non-normative lifestyle. I argue that Warhol’s early films were crucial in creating this ambivalence, since they serve as a way to “capture” non-normative forms of living and did so by reducing artistic work to almost zero. If modes of work refusal under post-Fordism are conceptualised from autonomist perspective as a double-edged sword—both help capitalism to reinvigorate itself and have the potential to resist this reinvigoration—Warhol’s films fully exploited this contradiction. Through their mode of production, the films radically challenged capitalist notions of productivity, efficiency and value, therefore linking the refusal of work to the mobilisation of non-normative subjectivity and sociability.

Bio-political Production on the Factory

In Spring 1965, during a trip to Paris for his show at Ileana Sonnabend Gallery, Andy Warhol announced his retirement from painting. “Art just wasn’t fun anymore; it was people who were fascinating and I wanted to spend all my time being with them, listening to them, and making movies of them”, he wrote in his memoir.^[17] Warhol was making movies as early as 1963, and kept painting long after 1965, but his statement marked a shift in interest for him as an artist. The focus was now on people: their talents and lifestyles, their social dynamics and professional connections, their look and charisma, the way they carried themselves and behaved in public: in short, their performance. And as Warhol made clear in the above quote, this “social turn” was inseparable from his growing interest in making movies.

In practice, Warhol started to gather people around him as soon as he moved into his studio at East 47th Street in Manhattan, which he named the Factory. This group of people, his Superstars, or rather his employees, were mostly people who had aspirations to become performing artists, models or film stars. By mid-1965, with Edie Sedgwick joining the group, they were already known in New York’s art scene as Warhol’s entourage, or the Factory People. In addition, Warhol surrounded himself with more circles of workers and collaborators, each formed and maintained for different purposes, even though their activities were constantly intertwined. One circle of employees consisted of specific people hired per project.^[18] Parallel to them, Warhol kept employing his commercial works’ assistant, Nathan Gluck, until the end of 1964. The loose ends of these circles included some of Warhol’s gallerists, art consultants and friends who helped him develop his ideas, promote his art—both commercially and non-commercially—and in some cases took part in his films. As the Factory manager, Warhol recruited/collected all these people, assigned them to work collectively on different tasks, and “fired” them when he no longer needed them. His “soft” and seemingly non-authoritative managerial style did not undermine the fact that every aspect of the Factory was linked back to him.

Warhol’s Superstars not only stood at the centre of the Factory’s public attention, but also at the heart of the Factory’s production system. Their “official” job was to star in Warhol’s films, but they had many other informal duties: accompanying him to parties and openings; helping him film his movies; completing various production tasks for the Factory’s everyday activity; entertaining the many guests who visited; introducing him to new talents or wealthy collectors; serving as spokespeople at public events; and providing him with ideas and inspiration for his artistic projects.^[19] Their presence transformed the Factory from a painter’s studio to a film studio, a creative hub, a work space for various creative types, a hang-out joint and an ad-hoc night club. Most importantly, they transformed it into a symbol, or rather a brand, that stood for creativity, freedom and glamour.

Put it differently, the Superstars had no official job description. Their working hours were flexible and adaptable. The nature of the work was undefined too, and the number of employees was ever-changing and determined by the projects' (read Warhol's) needs. Since work was immeasurable and unquantifiable, it promoted a fluid organisation of time and space that "hybridised" the private and public spheres, work time and leisure time.^[20] Some of them even turned the Factory into their temporal home.

Writing retrospectively about his former organisation of labour, Warhol observes: "A few people who worked with me on a fairly regular basis, a lot of what you might call free-lancers who worked on specific projects, and a lot of 'superstars' or 'hyperstars' or whatever you can call the people who are very talented, but whose talents are hard to define and almost impossible to market."^[21] In other text he described the Superstars as "too gifted to lead 'regular lives,' but they were also too unsure of themselves to ever become real professionals."^[22] The talent Warhol recognised in each of them lay in their personalities: either creative and communicative—"baby" Jane Holzer and Edie Sedgwick, for example—or strange and mysterious—Nico. What all Superstars shared was the desire to become famous, as well as their attentiveness to the boss's desires and needs.

Examining this mode of production from a contemporary perspective, it is clear that Warhol implemented a post-Fordist logic of production into the production process at this stage of his artistic career. First, work was organised in a "flexible accumulation" model where Warhol, as the manager, orchestrated all facets of production and marketing. Second, work was immaterial by nature: a mode of production that prioritised immaterial goods in which "the symbolic value outweighs the use value."^[23] In the Factory, immaterial production meant that the performance of one's own personality was part of the artistic outcome, and sometimes the artistic outcome itself. Warhol's employees did not have any specific technical skill or material knowledge; their work was based on their mental and bodily capacities, whether producing a good idea or aesthetically performing themselves in intriguing ways. They were expected to be creative or innovative in the social meaning of the term: to surprise, amaze or entertain on a daily basis. This was achieved via modes of informality and play and as part of collective and seemingly non-hierarchical social dynamics, where each collaborator had to be an "active participant".^[24] It took cooperation and collective coordination that went beyond any recognisable modes of artistic production.

This mode of production was not only flexible and immaterial. It was a form of bio-political production: the creation of value out of bodily or mental capacities of the subject by capitalisation or command over life, through technologies or mechanisms of power; production that monetised biological aspects of life, and used life itself as a source of generating value—symbolic, economic, or both. Artists, who traditionally dedicate their lives to their art, are known now to serve as a "blueprint for a post-Fordist condition that aims at the whole person."^[25] But while the intertwining of life and artistic work usually took place on an individual level—even if the artist had assistants—work in Warhol's Factory was conducted through a whole set of collective performative capacities—a shift which implies new relationship between bodies, labour, and value. Work was not done by the workers' disciplined body, nor by the artist's "cognitive, sensual and emotional competence", but through sociability.^[26] Production was equal to sociability, and sociability meant that work was always assumed a performance in front of others. Yet the question remains: what was produced by these collective and performative modes?

Isabelle Graw, who recognised the performative and bio-political nature of labour in Warhol's Factory, links it to the emergence of celebrity culture. According to her, the voluntary demand from the Superstars to perform themselves correlated with the rise in media interests regarding people's private lives.^[27] Inspired by the fashion industry, Warhol exploited the personal styles and characteristics of his employees to gain publicity, Graw argues. Warhol himself was very open about this strategy: his goal was to enter as many sections in the

newspaper as possible, starting from the art section and expanding into the fashion, music, society sections and the weekend magazine.^[28]

Here I would like to apply Antonio Negri's concept of "social capture" to formulate Graw's claim on the production of celebrity culture as a means to "capture" expressions of creative activity within performed social dynamics. The concept delineates the ways in which value is today extracted from the expansion of capitalist exploitation from "the simple making of commodities in the traditional factory, to the making of the whole pattern of life."^[29] As Negri argues, bio-political production generates value by recognising the innovative elements within collective social activity, and appropriating it by different means, technological and others.^[30] Transforming the personal style and behaviour of the Superstars, as well as their sexual and social interactions into a topic of public interest, was a way to capture them; in other words, to capitalise on them. It allowed Warhol to establish the Warhol brand.

As a means of social capture, the Factory's celebrity culture was a mechanism that was embedded in and fuelled by the market. But following the idea that production in the Factory was a bio-political one, I would like to argue that Warhol's films—and here I focus only on the early films—also generated value from the new and immaterial relationship between labour and body under post-Fordism. They were another mechanism of social capture: technological means for capturing creative social activity that took place in the Factory. A way to work through and with the Factory People's bodies, styles, interactions and deviations. The "innovative elements" that mobilised the workers' subjectivity as a source of value production were the daily lives of the Superstars as performed in front of the camera. Performed, and not documented, since, as Graw points out, the films were "a highly mediated affair, blurring the line between the 'staged' and the 'authentic'."^[31] Meditated as it was, they provided a glimpse into, and a capture of, the lives of the small and marginalised queer community of New York in the mid-1960s, and their subculture.

Warhol made dozens of films during the early years of the Factory, an average of one film per week. Many of them were literally bio-political in the sense that they registered or consumed aspects of individual and collective unskilled human activities: for example, sex in *Kiss* (1963), *Blowjob* (1964) and *Couch* (1964), or other bodily acts in *Sleep* (1963), *Eat* (1963) or *Drink* (1965). Other films focused on the Superstars' body parts, such as *Taylor Mead's Ass* (1964), or their hobbies, as in case of Billy Name in *Haircut* (1963). In the most extreme cases, the films exhausted the mere presence of a person in front of the camera, such as *Henry Geldzahler* (1964) or the *Screen Tests* (1964-1966) project. For our discussion it is important to note that almost all the activities that Warhol "documented" or filmed had to do with reproduction or unproductive aspects of human life—from an economic perspective. "I only wanted to find great people and let them be themselves and talk about what they usually talked about and I'd film them for a certain length of time and that would be a movie", as Warhol testified.^[32]

Many of the films were silent films—even though Warhol had a camera that could record sound in 1964—and those with sound included mundane conversations on- and off-screen. Warhol usually determined the topic of the discussion—after consulting with his collaborators—but they did not follow any specific guidelines. Most of them were long, repetitive and boring after a while, sometimes even for Warhol himself, and had no commercial prospects.^[33] They were often screened for a small audience of Warhol's entourage or experimental film lovers in the Factory, in Warhol's home, or in some cases at the Independent Film Co-op.

Our historical perspective on the development of Warhol's career in the 1970s and 1980s, as well as his superstar status in today's highly commercialised art market, strengthen the idea that under the expanding Warhol brand

economic thinking was embedded in the making of the films. However, unlike the inherent connection between celebrity culture and the market, several production strategies that Warhol adopted in making the films implied that in the historical moment of their making they served also to demonstrate the potential ambivalence of refusal of work in post-Fordism: a way to challenge the logic of the market and the values that is based on. In the following, I argue that Warhol's films allowed a process of capturing that explored a potential deviation from the market and even refusal to it, at least until 1965 with *My Hustler*, Warhol's first intentional attempt to create a more commercial film.

Strategies of Refusal and the Production of Sociability

Writing about contemporary modes of production in the art world, Pascal Gielen points to two possible outcomes of post-Fordist and bio-political production. The first, as mentioned above, is its extreme mode of exploitation of the subject's body and soul—an "instrumentalization of the human body in an economic rationale," as he puts it.^[34] The second and more "vitalistic" understanding of bio-political production makes it possible to conceive it as a way out of capitalist exploitation, via strategies of work refusal. The argument is that if value is produced through the subject's body and mind, through the capture of life itself, then it is possible for the subject to constitute new creative life—an emergence of subjectivity that does not obey capitalist patterns of self-conduct.

The immaterial worker is in possession of various means of resistance. And yet this resistance is hard to trace because it too is immaterial in nature. Whereas rebellion by the material worker is usually visible, for example in the form of strike, the immaterial worker can exercise far less traceable forms of "unproductive" resistance.^[35]

Refusal, in other words, is potentially embedded within the immaterial and bio-political production process, waiting to be activated by the worker. It opens up a "line of flight" that make it possible to establish new forms of life and social dynamics that are not constructed, regulated or consumed by the logic of production and consumption^[36]—a "counter power" as Negri calls it.^[37] In the spirit of autonomist thought, this counter power does not express itself only as negation of the system, but as an act of self-valorisation. It should be understood as a "creative practice, one that seeks to reappropriate and reconfigure existing forms of production and reproduction" for a "positive project of self-constitution."^[38] It is an "invention power" as much as it is a power that straggles against the capitalist organisation of work: "...a beginning of a liberatory politics."^[39]

To understand how refusal is played out in the films requires us to look at its mode of production from the workers' perspective, that is, Warhol and the people who stared in his films. From this perspective, it is clear that Warhol adopted a radical withdrawal from any traditional perception or practice of a film director. The early films were made without a script (therefore there was no need for rehearsals), without professional actors, without director's instructions, without camera movement, without editing, without voice or soundtrack. Even the length of the film was not determined by Warhol, but by that of the film reel. The filming ended when the reel ended, which means that Warhol never shouted "cut!" In fact, Warhol did not edit any of his films until 1969.^[40]

This strategy went hand in hand with Warhol famous indifferent imposition as an artistic style. In most of his early films, Warhol positions the camera in a fixed and static way, always framing his protagonists using a medium shot: the subject of the film filled the frame by their presence, leaving a very partial view of the background. A medium shot "allows for neither identification nor objectification", as Brigitte Weingart put it.^[41] The indifferent

imposition was a result of a rigid apparatus that determined the artistic outcome while leaving some space to change and “error”, like in Warhol’s silkscreens. This is most notable in Warhol’s *Screen Tests*, a project that consists of the documentation of 472 individuals—mostly visitors at the Factory—staring at the camera for three minutes. The disengaged method of filming was produced by a strict protocol: “The camera should not move; the background should be as plain as possible; subjects must be well lit and centered in the frame; each poser should face forward, hold as still as possible; refrain from talking or smiling; and try not to blink.”^[42] Moreover, in many of the tests Warhol did not bother to sit behind the camera while the shooting was taking place.^[43] In comparison with other experimental film-maker at the time, he intentionally did not take any responsibility over what was filmed.^[44]

The last strategy of disengagement, and most recognisable aspect of Warhol’s films, was his use of repetition. Warhol experimented with different strategies of repetition in his early years as a film-maker. In *Screen Tests*, for example, what was repeated was the format, while the protagonists were ever-changing. Warhol used to add up some tests to create a film out of them, but the selected tests as well as the length of the film differed in each screening event. *Empire* (1964)—the only Warhol film in which the protagonist is not human—is an outcome of filming the Empire State Building from the exact same angle for eight consecutive hours while replacing the hour-long films reels one after the other. One can trace the time that passes thanks to one light—actually located in another building—that blinks every 15 minutes for about 20 seconds. Without the recurrence of scenes, a building as a subject matter, and the static position of the camera, *Empire* can serve as a case study for Warhol’s interests in repetition as a mean to minimise the labour that was put into the (art)work while extending the film’s duration.

This strategy was enhanced by the “artificial” extension of the films’ duration by screening them in silent-speed (16 frames per second), even though they were being shot in sound-speed (24 frames per second). By doing so, Warhol slowed down the films by one-third, transforming three-minute shooting material into four-minute screenings. This manipulation extended the duration of each film, while leaving its production process untouched. The slowing down of the films also created a sense of disorientation in time that strengthened the durational effect Warhol was interested in. “There is no question that Warhol was interested in extended length as such in his films,” writes Douglas Crimp. “To varying degree, we always experience time in Warhol’s films as, among other things, duration.”^[45]

By adopting these disengaging strategies of film-making Warhol developed what we might call a non-economic efficiency. A mode of efficiency through which very little investment is made—in terms of finance, labour power or creative capabilities—but that leads to an abundance of artistic outcomes. The physical or cognitive effort required to make the films did not change much from one film to the next, but made it possible to make more of them and extend their running time—the duration they produced. Warhol kept producing films non-stop, but his type of production was not transformed—at least not immediately—into commodity. The process of production, its mode of non-economic efficiency and the value that was generated aimed towards something other than the creation of financial value.

Going back to the “vitalistic” understanding of bio-political production—meaning its potential to create a way out of capitalist exploitation via strategies of work refusal—makes it possible to observe that what was actually produced in Warhol’s early films was sociability, on- and off-screen. Sociability was generated by the extension of time—duration—which was accompanied by permissive modes of visibility that led to a different economy of value. First, as Warhol himself have noticed, the films’ duration generated boredom. A sense that nothing really happens. According to Crimp, boredom in Warhol’s films was intertwined with “... mild ecstasy, some interest,

interest in something else, aloofness, and awareness to the camera.^[46] Crimp attributes these feelings to Warhol's protagonists, but they can just as easily be applied to the viewers who find themselves, according to him, "caught in time that refuses to progress."^[47] Instead of the artist doing all the labour of making art while the viewer consumes it, the films redistribute the division of labour as part of the artistic act itself. The burden of boredom and laziness penetrate the films on both sides of the screen.^[48]

This aspect has to do with the tension between action and non-action in the films. The *Screen Tests*, for example, were called "Stillies" among the Factory People because of the forced frozen posture on the part of the protagonist. They resembled early photographs, or *tableaux vivants*, in their insistent on immobility. If action was inherent to any notion of productivity in the industrial age—as in the "workers' movement"—^[49] the inaction of Warhol's camera and his protagonists suggested that under conditions of bio-political production, boredom can enter the production process. In short, the refusal of work is inseparable from work itself.

Second, the films provided an affirmative visibility to the small community of queers and "dropouts" that constituted the Factory. Since the amateur actors and actresses were required to perform "themselves" in front of the camera, the result was, to some extent, a presentation and reflection of life in the Factory or the Factory People. The films "expressed a 'new kind of cinema truth', one that saw in artifice, in performance the possibility for creating a more fabulous, more livable reality."^[50] They function to create a "counter public" as Michael Warner famously put it. A public that is formed around a text—the films—through non-normative modes of address and attachment.^[51]

This political aspect of the film was strengthened by their static, distanced and repetitive indifferent imposition. In the context of their making, this "mechanised" artistic approach implied openness, tolerance and a non-authorial style.^[52] The film's protagonists did not function as objects for inquiry or knowledge.^[53] Just as Duchamp's readymade allowed "freedom of indifference" where new meanings could emerge, Warhol's films became a space in which marginalised forms of life could be viewed and constituted. The screen was transformed into a reflective instrument where the emergence of collective subjectivity could take place, free from heteronormative—read Fordist—societal norms. As Weingart points out regarding the *Screen Tests*, the films implied unprocessed potential—a process of becoming—a constitution of subjectivity that took place on screen but was never fully realised.^[54]

The duration of the films, as well as their style and content, transformed the screening events into a "permissive space"—an act of self-valorisation for the Factory People and their surroundings. The films were not intended to be watched from beginning to end, but rather serve as the background to other social activities. As gallerist Erving Blum describes:

That was really an ideal of Andy's—that it could just be there always, and that you could come and go, and you could have a lunch or do whatever, you can make an appointment, you could go to a department store, but you could come back and that film would still be there always, ever-present.^[55]

The screening events generated "social value": a sense of communal, shared experience and a platform where social interactions took place.

A new economy was created by Warhol, in which time was the currency and sociability was the value. The repetition in the films, their permissive aesthetic, and the withdrawal from any "productive" aspects of film-

making, unfolded in time—rather than in space—challenging notions of productivity, efficiency and value. In line with autonomist thought, refusal functioned here not only as a negation of existing models of production and efficiency, but as an act of self-valuation and creativity. A “line of flight” that emerged when the movement of people, machines or capital is sabotaged or disrupted.

Warhol’s first film, *Sleep* (1963), which features close-ups of a man sleeping—John Giorno, Warhol’s partner at the time—for 5 hours and 20 minutes, is a case in point. Brendan Joseph’s reading of the film focuses on the construction of homosexual desire through a play of repetition. According to him, the act of repetition in the film imitates the industrial and fetishised logic of commodity: subtly produced sexual desire.^[56] This analysis reads a subversive aspect in the film by focusing on its coded queer desire, while attributing Warhol’s artistic style a commodity feature. However, reading *Sleep* from an autonomist position demonstrates Warhol’s interest in exploring both modes of resistance and exploitation. According to Jonathan Crary, sleep is the only human activity that has not yet been totally consumed by the “non-stop life-world of twenty-first-century capitalism.”^[57]

Sleep is an uncompromising interruption of the theft of time from us by capitalism. Most of the seemingly irreducible necessities of human life—hunger, thirst, sexual desire, and recently the need for friendship—have been remade into commodified or financialized forms. Sleep poses the idea of a human need and interval of time that cannot be colonized and harnessed to a massive engine of profitability, and thus remains an incongruous anomaly and site of crisis in the global present.^[58]

Filming a reproductive and (the most) unproductive activity—sleep—the film takes to its extreme the inherent tension between non-action and production, refusal of work and an outcome. Here, the artist not only reduced the production process of the film via all the aforementioned strategies of withdrawal, but the protagonist himself participated in the production process without his awareness, and without taking any active action. Non-action and boredom became part of the production process and the artistic outcome. Warhol proved that the relationship between body, labour and value had reached a point at which no action was taken on both sides of the screen, yet something was produced—a film, a viewing experience, duration, homoerotic desire. No work is part of the work process where value was produced out of life itself. Hence, the refusal of work also had to take place on the level of human (in)activity, as a practice and representation of such (in)activity. Bio-political production was marked as a site of extreme exploitation, but also as way of generating a new economy: one that had to do with sociability, visibility and duration.

Conclusion

Going back to Duchamp and his use of the readymade as a “lazy technique” that promotes the emergence of subjectivity and new forms of lives by its “suspension of the machine”, I argue that the same logic applies to Warhol’s early films. Like Duchamp’s readymades, the films required “no virtuosity, no special know-how, no productive activity, and [almost] no manual labor”.^[59] They took from the readymade the conceptual act of selection, but instead of presenting selected objects, they presented selected people and exhibited them “as they were”, as readymades, as a performance of their own self. They were produced by different strategies of withdrawal that aimed to invent “new techniques of existence and new ways of living time.” In other words, their non-normative mode of production was intertwined with the non-normative forms of lives they wish to exhibit. Warhol introduced laziness and leisure into the process of art production and art consumption. By doing so he destabilized the notion of artistic labour and redefined the role of artist in the second half of the twentieth century. But he also experimented with the meaning of work and refusal in a post-Fordist society. While today

we live under the tyranny of post-Fordist exploitation, Warhol presented us with the ambivalence that such refusal contained and its inherent potential for creating an alternative modes of production and the forms of life that are link to them.

Footnotes

1. Tomkins, Clavin. *Marcel Duchamp: The Afternoon Interviews*. New York, NY: Badlands Unlimited. 2013. p. 87.
2. Warhol, Andy. *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: (From a to B and Back again)*. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 1975. p. 96.
3. Lazzarato, Maurizio. *Marcel Duchamp and the Refusal of Work*. Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e). 2014. p. 10.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 23
9. Filipovic, Elena. *The Apparently Marginal Activities of Marcel Duchamp*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2016. pp. 2-8.
10. Lazzarato, *Marcel Duchamp*, p. 27.
11. Shukaitis, Stephen. "Learning Not to Labor". *Rethinking Marxism*. Vol. 26. No. 2. 2014. pp. 196-197.
12. Buchloh, Benjamin. "Andy Warhol: One Dimensional Art". In *Andy Warhol*, edited by Annette Michelson and Benjamin Buchloh. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 2001. p. 22.
13. Lazzarato, *Marcel Duchamp*, p. 38.
14. Filipovic, *The Apparently Marginal Activities*, pp. 2-8.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
16. Graw, Isabelle. "When Life Goes to Work: Andy Warhol". *October*. No. 132. 2010. pp. 99-114.
17. Warhol, Andy and Hackett, Pat. *POPism: The Warhol Sixties*. Toronto: Harcourt. 1980. p. 142.
18. Warhol, *The Philosophy*, p. 95.
19. Many of the people Warhol met during this time, such as the members of the Velvet Underground, were introduced to him by one of the Factory People, usually Malanga.
20. Gielen, Pascal. *The Murmuring of the Artistic Multitude: Global Art, Politics and Post-Fordism*. Amsterdam: Valiz. 2009. p. 19.
21. Warhol, *The Philosophy*, pp. 91-92.
22. Warhol, *POPism*, p. 71.
23. Gielen. *The Murmuring*, p. 18.
24. Lazzarato, Maurizio. "Immaterial labor". In *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*. edited by Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. 1996. p. 134.
25. Graw, "When Life Goes to Work," p. 100.
26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 100–102.
28. Warhol, *POPism*, p. 169.
29. Negri, Antonio. *Reflections on Empire*. Cambridge: Polity. 2008. pp. 63–64.
30. *Ibid.*
31. Graw, “When Life Goes to Work”, p. 103.
32. James, David E. *Allegories of Cinema: American Film in the Sixties*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 1989. p. 67.
33. Warhol, *POPism*, p. 64.
34. Gielen, *The Murmuring*, p. 21.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
37. Negri. *Reflections on Empire*, p. 72
38. Weeks, Kathi. *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 2011. p. 100.
39. Hardt, Michael and Negri, Antonio. *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 2000. p. 204.
40. Warhol, *The Philosophy*, p. 94. At this stage of his career Warhol no longer directed his films: Paul Morrison did.
41. Weingart, Brigitte. “That Screen Magnetism’: Warhol’s Glamour”. *October*. No. 132. 2010. p. 69.
42. Angell, Callie. *Andy Warhol Screen Tests: The Films of Andy Warhol: Catalogue Raisonné*. New York, NY: Abrams, in association with Whitney Museum of American Art: New York. 2006. p. 14.
43. Jones, Caroline A. *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. 1996. p. 235.
44. Sitney, P.A. *Visionary Film the American Avant-Garde 1943–2000*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002. p. 408.
45. Crimp, Douglas. “Our Kind of Movie”: *The Films of Andy Warhol*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 2012. p. 14, p. 143.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
47. Joseph, Branden. “The Play of Repetition—Andy Warhol’s Sleep”. *Grey Room*. No. 19. 2005. p. 34.
48. Schoonover, Karl. “Wastrels of Time: Slow Cinema’s Laboring Body, the Political Spectator, and the Queer”. *Framework*. No. 1. 2012. p. 66.
49. Lazzarato, *Marcel Duchamp*, p. 7.
50. Quoted in Crimp, Douglas. “Getting the Warhol we Deserve”. *Social Text*. No. 59. 1999. p. 63.
51. Warner, Michael. “Publics and Counterpublics”. *Public Culture*. Vol. 14. No. 1. pp. 51–68.
52. James, *Allegories of Cinema*, p. 67.
53. Crimp, *Our kind of Movies*, p. 12.
54. Weingart, “That Screen Magnetism”, p. 46.
55. Smith, Patrick W. *Warhol: Conversations about the Artist*. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press. 1988. p. 199.
56. Joseph, “The Play of Repetition”, pp. 44–47.
57. Crary, Jonathan. *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*. New York: Verso. 2013. p. 8.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11.
59. Lazzarato, *Marcel Duchamp*, p. 19.