



a

Andy Warhol

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Conceptually unique, hilarious, and frightening, *a: A Novel* is the perfect literary manifestation of Andy Warhol's sensibility. In the late sixties, Warhol set out to turn a trade book into a piece of pop art, and the result was this astonishing account of the artists, superstars, addicts, and freaks who made up the Factory milieu. Created from audiotapes recorded in and around the Factory, *a: A Novel* begins with the fabulous Ondine popping several amphetamines and then follows its characters as they converse with inspired, speed-driven wit and cut swathes through the clubs, coffee shops, hospitals, and whorehouses of 1960s Manhattan.

a Details

Date : Published February 17th 1998 by Grove Press (first published November 12th 1979)

ISBN : 9780802135537

Author : Andy Warhol

Format : Paperback 384 pages

Genre : Art, Fiction, New York

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From Reader Review a for online ebook

Heather says

Transcribing interesting people having conversations isn't as entertaining as you think it would be.

Amanda says

This book is fucking terrible; I couldn't even get through 100 pages. There's no plot, just random people saying random things. This just reaffirmed my belief that Andy Warhol was a jackass.

Steve says

I rarely never finish a book, but couldn't read past page 168 of this book that Andy Warhol calls a novel. Yet I still feel compelled to write a review. While Warhol may identify this voluminous text as a novel, I won't waste space explaining why none of it fits any of the basic structure of a novel. Instead, I view this as just another one of his passively provocative art projects. Like those 24 hour films of the Empire State Building, this is a recording in text of many consecutive hours of his Factory denizens, centered on Robert Olivio, identified as Ondine. The "a" in the title is for amphetamines which fuel Ondine's gibberish that composes most of the "narrative." If you attempt this book, make sure you have an edition with Victor Bockris' glossary which explains who the players are and what's happening, including the passages with Edie Sedgwick, identified as Taxi. Reading this is like being a fly on the wall or cockroach in the floorboards of the Factory in the 60s. If you're obsessed with Warhol and the Factory then this is a must attempt to read, if you can get through it. What I really found revealing about this was just how fucked up the members of the Factory were and how much Andy, or Drella (Cinderella & Dracula) as he's referred to, manipulated them for his own artistic purposes. I can't say what my ultimate conclusion would be if I had made it to the end, but what I read left me sad and disappointed in how the revered artist used the people that clung to him.

Christina says

Could not even get past page 40...

W.B. says

This sounded as though it might be interesting, but it turned out to be sort of unreadable. Andy just said "Hey, let's tape record everybody and then have someone type it." That's a good way to document a scene, but not exactly a stellar way to write a novel.

It did make me almost late for work when I was reading it in the tub..it's the sort of book you end up jumping all around in, because it's so homogenously gossipy, bitchy, bland....it's about Ondine more than it is about

Drella (Andy)...and Ondine is friggin' annoying...you get the sense he thinks of himself as a character out of Genet...everyone in A is so messed up on amphetamine (partially responsible for the title...the A-heads grouped around Ondine) and whatever else is available, that normal life is a weird joke to them. I believe it's called arrested development...like when Ondine finds the newspaper pics of a child suffering from progeria hilarious. These are people who let one junkie shoot them all up with rat poison (strychnine) at a party and still wax nostalgic about it. But like most things associated with Warhol, in the end the book is not horrifying, illuminating, endearing, or even that interesting...it's neutral to the point of boring, as neutral as Warhol was in his stance towards life...this is the guy that filmed a mall escalator running mostly empty for hours, after all, the guy who said that all cars should be black (he did have a sense of humor)...although I admit he's very funny in that little book of his thoughts on love, because no one ever talks about love in those neutral, blah terms...that one's worth picking up if you can find it, it's like a five minute read; I think it's called Warhol on Love. I suppose some people would read A and think it's Felliniesque or a modern adaptation of the Satyricon, but it's so, "oh, i don't know...something or other." Uh huh.

Andy Warhol may be the only "important" artist in the Western canon whose entire oeuvre was based more on attitude than ideas. (Neutrality and boredom are attitudes more than they are ideas.)

Hello Juliet and Robert.

I think these people dropped acid (and trou) more than they dropped names.

Dana Jerman says

An experiment worth finding the single-line gems in. I'll probably pick this up and read pieces of it again, but it's the kind of document you might go for when you don't feel like paying attention to what you're reading.

Nate says

Rubbish.

Patrick says

This book solidifies my opinion that Andy Warhol's 'friends' were totally f*ed up. Beyond that, it is an extremely interesting, albeit unadulterated, portrait of an infamous social group. Kind of a Warhol painting in text form, if you will. It is a little hard to read at first, though. I suppose that is the way Candy Andy wanted it.

Anouk says

A bit eccentric with conversation-ish writings. Fun but I would rather enjoy his art or films. Good collectible and reference though.

Scott Holstad says

While this book sounded interesting when I bought it, it turned out to be the most insipid book I've ever read or seen. It's truly terrible. Whoever told Andy Warhol he could write did America a grave disservice. This isn't even a real novel! It's tape recorded conversations Warhol had typed up by high school girls and saved complete with misspellings and all. And it's all dialogue, most of it one sided, so you rarely know who's saying what. That's if you can get past all the gay sex and drug use. I don't want to know about rim jobs, thanks. Warhol himself is a character in this book, but he seems largely to be a bit player. I actually couldn't finish this book, it was so bad. One of the characters stutters and that's displayed in the text. It's like Andy took one of his bad movies and made a book out of it. I can't believe mostly one sided dialogue. How stupid. Definitely not recommended.

KidPolaroid says

So this book is pretty fun. Not acutally fun to read, but fun in the way it was made. Andy had all these tape-recorded conversations of him with people on some amount of days (like 4, I think) and he hired a bunch of girls to sit at typewriters and listen and transcribe them. It's really fun to see it came out all jibberishly and random. (File under my weird fascination with typing thingies.)

Jo says

The thing with Andy Warhol is that you can never quite tell if you're being tricked. This is 24 hours of conversation recorded in New York in 1966 and 1968, most of it taking place at The Factory and surrounds, including restaurants and taxicabs, and all of it transcribed quickly and badly with many spelling errors. Most of it revolves around Ondine, the actor and supermodel, who is completely off his head on amphetamines for most of the time and is constantly bumping into friends, listening to opera very loudly and generally talking shit. Everyone's referred to by a nickname; Warhol is "Drella." It's worth reading the notes at the back to make some sense of this, I think I would've been almost completely lost if I hadn't. A isn't really a novel, I don't think. It's a work of concept art, an experiment, and a difficult read, up there with *Naked Lunch*, *Infinite Jest* and James Joyce. There is a point and a message to it all, even though it doesn't seem like it at first. It's more than worth sticking with it. That's all that I can really say about *a* without losing my way with words. It's kind of sickening to realise what's in front of you.

Simon says

Review originally written in may 2005

a a novel By Andy Warhol

Well I've spent most of this year wading through this so called novel by Warhol. This is a book that is a concept far ahead of its time as the basic premise of taping 24 hours in the life of Ondine and his A-head pals and then transcribing it as a novel is pretty much the reality tv concept as novel. the fact that the book is unedited non spell checked and a complete mess in terms of narrative etc only re-enforces the reality tv concept.

The frequent yeah but no but type conversation is almost at times verbatim script for the current comedy show Little Britain, a show that has a couple of characters called Lou and Andy so is giving out clear clues.

That and most of the lyrics to Walk On The Wild Side by Lou Reed who of course is one of the books characters.

Still I would have preferred to read a well edited 180 page book rather than the 457 pages I waded through, but then you would not expect a book about a bunch of Amphetamine Junkies to be concise would you.

Scarlettexx says

Conversations between drug-addicts and gay men was interesting for about twenty pages, and then it just became unreadable and unbearable. Also, it might be helpful to read the index in the back BEFORE you read the book, because it gave background on the characters that would have been helpful to know. Like that one of the characters is actually Andy Warhol himself.

Alan says

boring

Adam says

a 3 page summary of how this book was made would be infinitely more interesting than the book itself. the only real joy or art in this is in the personality that comes through the various transcribers.

Rosalind Grush says

SO AMAZING

Stephanie says

One question.

Why?

Couldn't even get by the first 30 pages.

Great book for home decor though.

Joni says

Written by my cousin Robert Olivo who was one of Andy Warhol's Velvet Underground Superstars, Ondine. Robby was a stutterer, an alcoholic and drug addict. He wrote the book and Andy put his name on it. What people will do for drugs!

7jane says

This is a tough nut to read, and I never would recommend starting with this as an introduction to Warhol's writing products. Basically it's typed-down (by various people, including schoolgirls) document of a-heads talking rubbish and doing things - and not always written down perfectly. Not something you want to re-read very often, especially if you can't concentrate much, but it's an experience for sure.
