

ANDY WARHOL, ABSOLUT WARHOL, 1985  
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# ABSOLUT ART.



**FROM  
BOURGEOIS  
TO WARHOL**

**THE STORY OF A SUCCESSFUL  
RELATIONSHIP SINCE 1985.**

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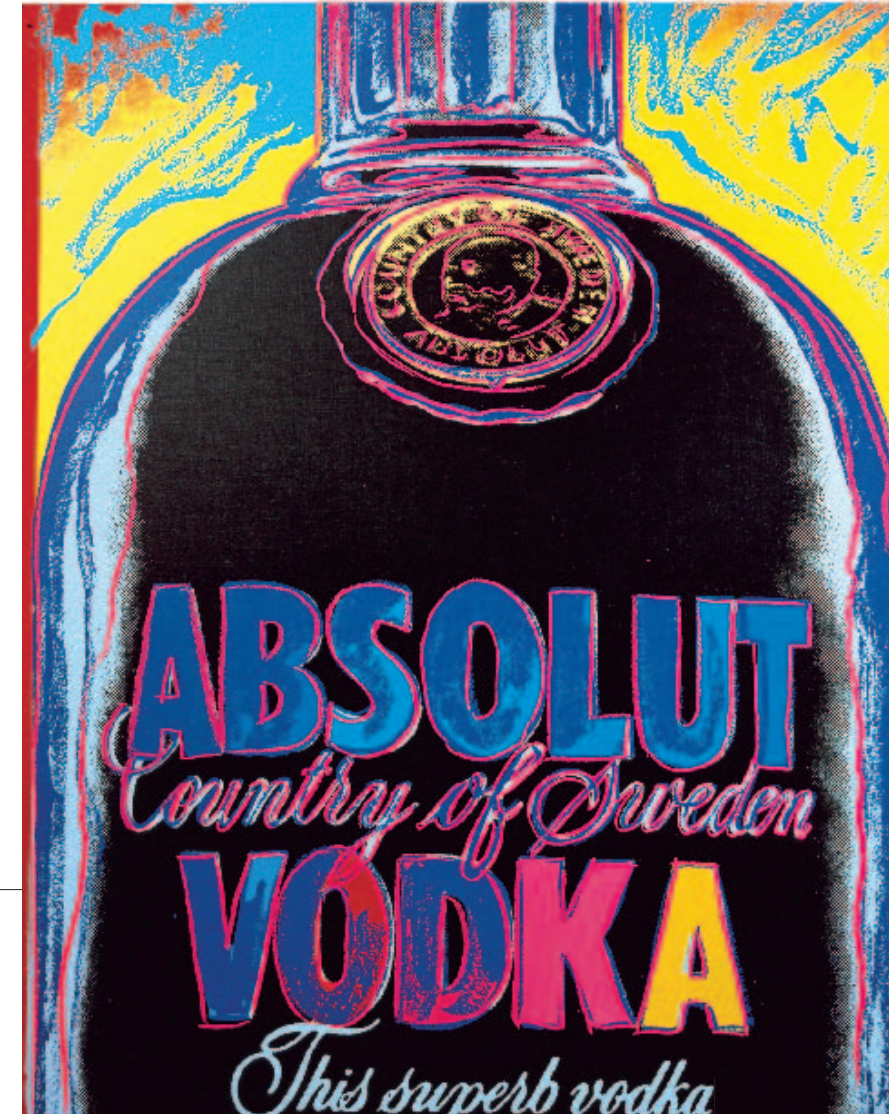
## IT'S ABOUT CREATIVITY.

Inspiration was what prompted ABSOLUT to move in artistic circles, and inspiration is what has nurtured that collaboration for nearly 20 years.

When Andy Warhol first set eyes on an ABSOLUT VODKA bottle in 1985, he was inspired to put his brushes to work. The following year, the torch was passed to Keith Haring, and since then, over 400 ABSOLUT masterpieces have been created by artists from around the world.

People sometimes ask us about this somewhat unique form of symbiosis. Besides the usual when, where and how, the most common question is Why? The answer is simply that we like being inspired by creative people and their works. The art world is a great source of inspiration for us; it is also a tool for showing off various interpretations of the dynamic ABSOLUT brand. In return, we provide means and marketing for both known and unknown artists, giving them exposure they might not otherwise have. The formidable art collection that ABSOLUT has today was not amassed for financial reasons, but as a way to express the creativity of a brand. Our many years of collaboration and stated desire to respectively support the community of artists who have contributed works have made ABSOLUT a part of that community rather than just a client.

We're very pleased with that development.

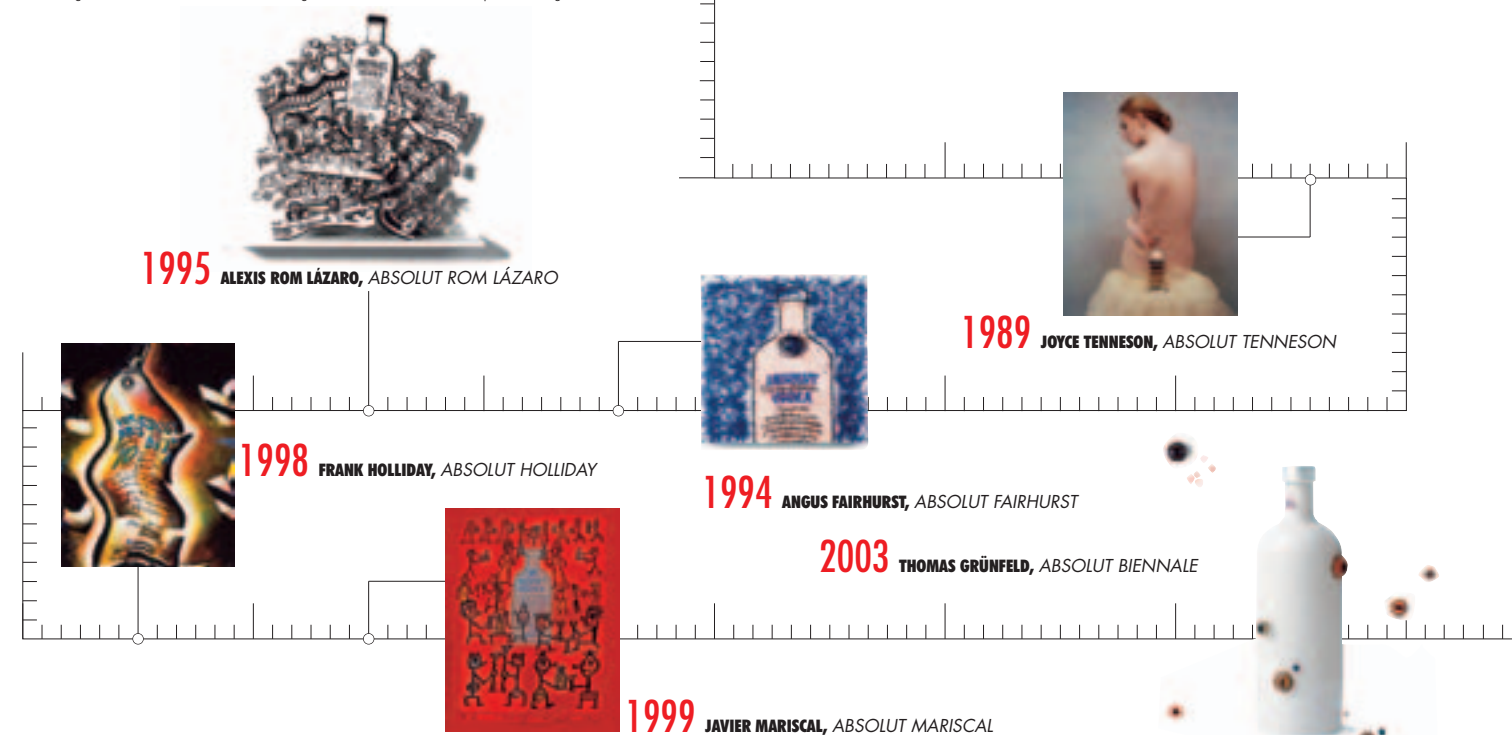


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### 1985

**"I LOVE THE PACKAGING,  
I LOVE THE FEELING OF IT...  
I WANT TO DO SOMETHING..."**

It might be hard to imagine today, but one of the world's most famous art advertising campaigns was actually never planned. Michel Roux, President of Carillon, U.S. Importer of ABSOLUT VODKA until 1994, got in touch with Andy Warhol through a friend at Interview magazine. During a dinner one night, Warhol had offered to paint his own interpretation of the ABSOLUT VODKA bottle, and Roux took him at his word. Warhol himself didn't drink, yet he liked the artistic expression in the bottle and according to the legend he admitted he occasionally used the drink as a perfume. The work of art that was unveiled in 1985 received a great deal of attention and was disseminated to the public in a magazine advertisement. Warhol offered to do a whole series of ABSOLUT paintings, but Roux had a better idea. Warhol would be his link to the art world and hand-pick new artists for the same task: a personal interpretation of the brand name and the bottle. The concept of ABSOLUT ART had been born.



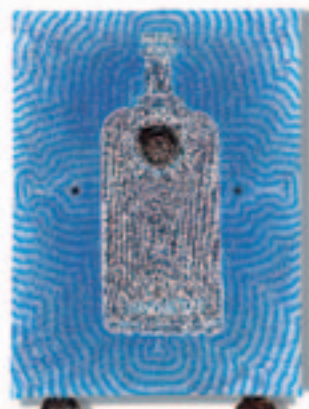
FRANCESCO CLEMENTE, *ABSOLUT CLEMENTE*, 1999

## THE EUROPEAN UNION OF EGOS

If you look for a theme in the ABSOLUT art collection, the answer is that either there is none or maybe all artists just tend to think outside the box in one way or the other. In the year 2000 ABSOLUT EGO project, This was taken one step further with the ABSOLUT EGO project in 2000. 16 of the most of the most happening artists in Europe were asked to interpret ABSOLUT and themselves in the spacious premises at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs at the Palais du Louvre. The exhibition hall had been designed by Takao Harai, with lighting that evoked the sea and cool, repetitive music.

Each artist had his or her own pavilion to fill with their own ego. There was a space with 1,000 fluorescent snails around the artist's name (Kana) and an albino gorilla eating sunflowers (by Barceló). The Polish artist Miroslav Balka completed the task by recreating parts of his life—the room was filled with half-burnt works of art from a fire in his own studio in 1993. The floor was then covered with a thick layer of salt that symbolized Balka's own sweat during the creation process. Visitors spent more time visiting Balka's "ego" because it actually took longer to get through the room.

The origin of this project came from ABSOLUT ORIGINALS, in which ABSOLUT EGO's artists created advertisements for Time Magazine's pan-European version. These were published on a monthly basis from 1998.

CHRIS OFILI, *ABSOLUT OFILI*, 1996MAURIZIO CATTELAN, *ABSOLUT CATTELAN*, 1998DAN WOLGERS, *ABSOLUT WOLGERS*, 1999

**WHILE THE WORLD MAP WAS REDRAWN** The cultural and political changes that swept the Soviet Union in the late 1980s were some of the most revolutionary in modern times. When words like "glasnost" and "perestroika" were hottest—in June 1990—26 Soviet artists were given a unique opportunity to shine before an American public. In a 32-page exposé in *Interview* magazine, the country's most prominent painters each had a work published featuring the ABSOLUT VODKA bottle. The epoch-making project coincided with Gorbachev's visit to the U.S., and naturally, Gorbachev was presented with the first copy. Until then, Moscow had completely controlled cultural expression, only allowing a handful of regime-friendly artists to show their work abroad. That's why ABSOLUT GLASNOST was so much more than a display window for a group of creators from one of the world's largest dictatorships—it was a symbol of the struggle for freedom, which had grown in strength and would culminate in the historical dissolution of the USSR in 1991.

BORIS MATROSOV, *ABSOLUT MATROSOV*, 1989OLEG KULIK, *ABSOLUT KULIK*, 2003BLUE NOSES, *ABSOLUT BLUE NOSES*, 2003

## THE FRIENDLY TAKEOVER

The city of Venice has regulated the number of gondola licenses to 405. This has led to the licenses becoming extremely hot property; and if you've got hold of one, you don't let it go—either they are sold for a great deal of money, or they stay in the family.

Yet this did not stop Austrian architect Hans Hollein from placing a gondola in a 15-meter long inflatable ship-in-a-bottle of a certain well-known profile, when ABSOLUT GENERATIONS hit the Biennale in Venice in 2003.

The idea behind the ABSOLUT GENERATIONS project was to delve into the roles of mentor and protégé. Thirteen established artists chose younger, up-and-coming artists to work with, and the same number of installations were featured at the world's largest international exhibition—the 50th Venice Biennale in the Palazzo Zenobio. It was the first time a commercial brand had participated in the exhibition. The theme of this year's Biennale was Dreams and Conflicts—the Dictatorship of the Viewer, a perfect concept for the GENERATIONS artists. One of the more spectacular joint projects was Oleg Kulik's collaboration with the duo the Blue Noses—a video installation consisting of 55 sketches with a vodka-drinking monkey that gradually metamorphosed into Charles Darwin. The Blue Noses' own work was a bottle cut in the ice of lake Shartash, with the two artists swimming in a freezing cold hole in the ice. Sasha Shaburov can't swim, so he refused to let go of the edge of the ice when being photographed. They commented on their derring-do, "We won't get in that ice-hole again for all the money in the world!"

HANS HOLLEIN, *ABSOLUT HOLLEIN*, 2003



ABSOLUT HAGEN, 2002

## AN ABSOLUT BOTTLE UP THE SLEEVE

The release of the Beatles' groundbreaking Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band in 1967 coincided with a new era in popular music. Suddenly, the art of the sleeve was almost as appreciated and analyzed as the music inside. That very same year, Andy Warhol designed the cover for the Velvet Underground and Nico, instantly lending credence to the new idea that art and popular music could lead a symbiotic existence.

The idea behind ABSOLUT ALBUM COVERS was to celebrate the diversity and creativity in the art of sleeve designs. Classic covers by the likes of David Bowie, John & Yoko, Judas Priest, Nina Hagen, the Velvet Underground and INXS were subtly spiced up with bottles. The results were displayed in ads in Rolling Stone Magazine, premiering with ABSOLUT BOWIE in the fall of 2001. The first ad, a reworking of the androgynous cover of Aladdin Sane, was much appreciated by Mr. Bowie himself.

"When I started out, I used the covers on my albums to give a visual picture to my music. Now, as I look back, I am able to recall moments of my past through those images. I believe that ABSOLUT is bringing a significant part of music's history back into the forefront, and I am glad to have been chosen to be part of it."



© JACK E. DAVIS, ABSOLUT NEBRASKA, 1991

## UNITED STATES OF ART

A country as large as a continent sure has a lot to offer. Or, as novelist Edward M. Forster put it: "America is rather like life. You can usually find in it what you look for. It will probably be interesting, and it is sure to be large." This is what makes ABSOLUT STATEHOOD so interesting: one artist in every single state—and one in Washington DC—was contacted to interpret and depict his or her state in an innovative way.

Beginning in 1991, a new painting was published every other week in USA Today, a newspaper with a readership of six million. The campaign continued for two years and was extremely successful. Besides the media exposure, 300 lithographs of each painting were printed. The revenues from the sales went in their entirety to the Design Industries Foundation for AIDS, resulting in over \$4.5 million donated to research on the incurable disease. A book was also published, with all the works in the project and brief descriptions of the people behind them—51 extremely gifted artists who all put their very personal touch on the ABSOLUT collection.



NAM JUNE PAIK, ABSOLUT PAIK, 2000

## BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY

To add a little more luster to the 20-year jubilee thrown by ABSOLUT and the retrospective "Greatest Hits" exhibition ABSOLUT EXHIBITION in the Vanderbilt Hall in New York's Grand Central Terminal, legendary photographer Annie Liebovitz was given a call. Together with Vanity Fair, Liebovitz was given the assignment of photographing 20 superstars. Seen among those posing with their favorite ABSOLUT ads were author Salman Rushdie, Sex and the City actress Sarah Jessica Parker and composer Philip Glass. When comedian Jerry Lewis wanted to pose with his mouth tightly closed round a tumbler, Liebovitz protested, but Lewis stood his ground with the words, "Listen, you just take the picture, I'll do the funny." The exhibition, designed by the Guggenheim's Sean Mooney, featured all aspects of ABSOLUT ART and drew more than 40,000 visitors over a 10-day period in June 2000. As well as Liebovitz, ABSOLUT PAIK was also unveiled—a cross-border creation made of iron, neon, video and an electric circuit, by the godfather of video art, the American-Korean artist Nam June Paik. Marion Kahan, curator for the exhibition, believes that Paik's significance can not be overstated: "Nam June Paik is the founder of video art as we know it, as a movement. He took the collection to the next step and into the new millennium."

## ART BY THE BOOK

After a happy 20-year period of matrimony with art, it was time for ABSOLUT to write down what had happened to both partners over the years, especially since both the public and the art community were curious to find out. The result was ABSOLUT ART, a 240-page, limited edition book that features about a hundred art works from the collection.

One of the works that received the most attention when many of the pieces were displayed at Millesgården in Stockholm – and in the book as well – is also the emptiest from a visual point of view, and requires an explanation: what appears to be a totally white canvas is in fact more than a month's work by Glasgow-based artist Douglas Gordon.

Every day between January 6th and February 10th 1992, he painted the canvas with 540 ml of ABSOLUT VODKA. Each application was allowed to saturate over a period of 24 hours until the process could restart.

In total, he used 18,900 ml of vodka, or twenty-seven 70 cl bottles. Straight up.



DOUGLAS GORDON, ABSOLUT GORDON, 1992



PIERRE &amp; GILLES, ABSOLUT PIERRE &amp; GILLES, 1993

## AN ABSOLUT TOP MODEL

Helmut Newton became famous in the 1950s, photographing for *Vogue* magazine. His pictures were always very artistic, nearly always of women wearing as little as possible, and his work has set the standard for generations of photographers.

However, it wasn't until he turned 80 that he was commissioned to do landscapes, for ABSOLUT ORIGIN in 2001. Newton was asked to depict the origins of the vodka and its primary ingredients: wheat and water. He expressed some gratitude for the assignment, since he felt that he'd been "locked into a genre" and ABSOLUT wanted him to do something completely different.

This was his second task for the brand. In the first campaign, ABSOLUT NEWTON (1995), the artist collaborated with great fashion designers such as John Galiano and Helmut Lang, and portrayed their creations in the hometown of ABSOLUT: Åhus. ABSOLUT ORIGIN was to be Helmut Newton's last job for the brand.

Newton is far from being the only top photographer who has contributed to the ABSOLUT collections.

Artists, such as the New York-based Brazilian Vik Muniz, who playfully depicted Brazil with a bottle-shaped cloud, are also testing the boundaries. Then there are the more traditional photographers, like Czech Jan Saudek, who portrayed Joan of Arc with a bloody sword in one hand and a bottle in the other; or American Joyce Tenneson, whose soft feminine portrait for ABSOLUT is very similar to the works in the seven books that have been published of her photos.

All this makes the ABSOLUT VODKA bottle one of the world's most commonly hired photo models—and definitely one of the poorest paid!

## VIVID COLORS

The influences were often traditional African, but classic American motifs also popped up in the collection of paintings, sculptures and photos that was included in ABSOLUT EXPRESSIONS in 1997. 14 artists with African roots, participated in this eye-catching art tour that took the world by storm. Among the works, some stood out, for example, James Denmark's jazzy paintings, Xenobia Bailey's ethno-inspired textiles and Amalia Amaki's collages. One of the most amusing contributions was Michael Anthony Brown's painting featuring a number of "hidden" animals.



XENOBIA BAILEY, ABSOLUT BAILEY, 1997



SEMICONDUCTOR, ABSOLUT SEMICONDUCTOR, 2003

## PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF WWW

In 1996, the Internet was still largely incomprehensible to the majority of people. The search engine [www.altavista.com](http://www.altavista.com) had recently made a breakthrough, yet throughout the world only a modest 35 million people used the Web to any great extent. (Today, the same number is 421 million\* and is expected to increase by a couple of million—every month!)

While other companies were dwelling on whether or not this new medium was something to take seriously, ABSOLUT created a forum for interactive art on the Web.

Under the leadership of media pioneer and Internet guru Kevin Kelly, executive editor of the leading IT magazine *Wired*, ABSOLUT KELLY was launched—a site where the online public could monitor and influence artists' work via various tools, in real time.

Another part was named "The Ant Farm"—where an artist was secluded in a windowless studio for a week with a camera monitoring his or her work for 24 hours a day.

A year later, it was time for another interactive project in the same spirit: ABSOLUT PANUSHKA, an animated film festival. The event was named after its creator, Christine Panushka, associate director of experimental animation at the California Institute of the Arts. A large number of filmmakers expressed their impressions of the ABSOLUT VODKA bottle on the site, and curious members of the public were once again able to interact with the creators.

Loads of web campaigns later, ABSOLUT NEXT GENERATION was created by Richard Wentworth and the artist duo Semiconductor for the Venice Biennale International Art Exhibition. Web surfers from all over the world created a landscape by sharing information on themselves, and the interactive 3D piece could be explored on the Internet.

Today, all online activities are collected under [absolut.com](http://absolut.com).

\* *Clickz*, Nov 2003

**LOVELY LATIN LINES** Despite the colorfulness of their cultures, Central and Latin American artists had remained largely unknown outside their own continent. However, in 1993, ABSOLUT LATINO turned its eyes south, selecting 16 artists to show the trends in their countries. And, as *Buzz* magazine stated: "Following international rather than regional trends, these conceptually based artists make installations out of everything from metal and wood to plastic, cloth, and old books." The majority of the works were exhibited at the ABSOLUT L.A. INTERNATIONAL BIENNIAL in 1997.

RODOLFO MOLINA, ABSOLUT MOLINA (ABSOLUT EL SALVADOR), 1993



KEVIN KELLY, ABSOLUT KELLY, 1997





## THE TREASURE KEEPERS

The ABSOLUT ART collection includes over 400 works of art. When not on display at various exhibitions all over the world, they are stored in two warehouses, one in New York and the other in Paris. Three people administer this unique artistic treasure:

**Marion Kahan** is the curator for the American part of the collection. When Marion began working with the collection in 1994, her job was to catalogue, inventory, and move the works to a single location in New York. Up to then, Michel Roux, the collection's founder, had been storing the works everywhere—in his office, in storerooms, and in his New Jersey apartment.

Today, her work also consists of contacting artists and serving as the project manager for exhibitions and touring shows.

However, this is not a full-time job; she works primarily as Program Manager at the Guggenheim Museum. "When I started working with the ABSOLUT ART collection, everybody I told was like, 'oh, my God, really?!' It still happens; people don't really react to what I do until I tell them I am the curator for the ABSOLUT ART collection. It's the one moment when I feel like a rock star!"

**Hervé Landry** is based in Paris; his job is almost exclusively to contact artists and keep up-to-date on the art scene. ABSOLUT first contacted him to get in contact with Miquel Barcelo, the Spanish artist. Landry traveled to Mali, where the artist was living at the time, to convince him to paint a canvas on the familiar theme. Barcelo was disappointed because he thought his friend had an ulterior motive for visiting him, so a few days later, when Landry showed him some visuals of the bottle, he tore them to bits. Landry recounts:

"I went off to the mountains; when I got back I walked into his workshop, and the work as you know it today was already finished. Barcelo was pleased with the result and I was absolutely over the moon."

Hervé Landry has also served as curator for a number of exhibitions, including those at the Museum of Decorative Arts in the Louvre and at the Venice Biennale.

**Veerle Dobbeleir**, originally from Belgium, is also based in Paris. She is primarily responsible for administering and taking care of the collection. Lieven van den Abeele, her predecessor and compatriot, recruited her for the position, and she began working with ABSOLUT in 2003. She also works for a private foundation outside of Paris.

“ACTUALLY, ART HAS ALWAYS BEEN USED TO ADVERTISE SOMETHING OR SOMEONE. IN THE MIDDLE AGES, IT WAS GOD AND THE CHURCH. AFTER THAT IT WAS FOR KINGS—I DON'T THINK IT'S ALL THAT DIFFERENT NOWADAYS.”

VEERLE DOBBELEIR

“IT STILL HAPPENS; PEOPLE DON’T REALLY REACT TO WHAT I DO UNTIL I TELL THEM I AM THE CURATOR FOR THE ABSOLUT COLLECTION. IT’S THE ONE MOMENT WHEN I FEEL LIKE A ROCK STAR!” MARION KAHAN

#### THE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO ABSOLUT

**Hervé:** Working with ABSOLUT is really exciting – you’re constantly making new friends! Each project is intellectually rewarding, and all the different people you meet are amazing. There’s also that notion of shared creativity, an aspect so dear to ABSOLUT. You belong to a large family bound together by the love of art, scattered all around the global village and whose founding father is none other than Andy Warhol himself. It’s really difficult to feel lonely and depressed!

**Marion:** ABSOLUT has given me the opportunity to explore how art is interpreted beyond the realm of a museum or gallery wall. By incorporating art into the advertising campaign ABSOLUT has indeed brought culture and art to the masses and in doing so has made more people art savvy than they could probably imagine.

#### THE SYMBIOSIS BETWEEN ABSOLUT AND ART

**Marion:** Basically, I think it’s been so successful because it had never been done before. It’s iconic. ABSOLUT as a campaign, ABSOLUT as an image—the whole ABSOLUT concept is probably one of the best marketing strategies of all times.

**Hervé:** ABSOLUT and art share the same approach: creativity. The bottle is like a mirror held out to the artists, who play with the idea of seeing themselves inside it. This process always gives rise to a historically characteristic work. Symbiosis also emerges from the playful aspect of our approach.



**MARION** "We set up the ABSOLUT dining room, and within that dining room I hung a photograph that Helmut Newton had taken of the Helmut Lang fashion piece—it's Helmut on Helmut. I also had Ross Bleckner and Joyce Tenneson photography. I did the Newton as a tribute to him, as he recently passed away, and photography is a very interesting medium that I would like to see more of in the collection."

## PAGE 12-13

## THE LINE BETWEEN ART AND ADVERTISING – IN GENERAL

**Veerle:** Actually, art has always been used to advertise something or someone. In the Middle Ages it was God and the church. After that it was for kings—I don't think it's all that different nowadays.

**Hervé:** Once again, you have to go back to Warhol, who began as an advertising illustrator. When he became an artist he never denied his origins and, in a sense, made advertising more respectable. Today, the boundary between art and advertising is extremely flexible.

## HOW THE ART WORLD VIEWS THE ABSOLUT ART COLLECTION

**Marion:** I think it's looked upon very favorably, I have to say I've only had one artist say no to a request to do a commission.

**Veerle:** I think the art world is becoming much more aware of the fact that the ABSOLUT ART collection includes important works. The collection is receiving more and more recognition, although it is somewhat ambiguous—which is also what makes it interesting. Not only are they good art, but the pieces are also good advertising.

**Hervé:** The ABSOLUT ART collection is highly regarded in the art world in general. We enjoy a lot of credibility.



## SELECTING THE CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

**Hervé:** Quality comes first, even before celebrity. But the two frequently overlap. Personally, I always ask myself how people will look at the collection fifty years from now. What can we do to avoid gaps? We can't buy everything, but on the other hand, we're like a museum of modern art and can't overlook a "must-have"! Obviously, there's also the question of personal taste, but ABSOLUT always makes the final decision. Personally, I really like artists who keep a pop aspect to their work. In fact, Warhol is constantly present both in our minds and in the minds of the artists we select.

## A THROUGHLINE IN THE WORKS

**Marion:** There isn't one, not really. I mean, each artist interprets the bottle in

a unique way—through photography, painting, sculpture or mixed media; each artist uses his or her own signature media to create the ABSOLUT work.

**Veerle:** That's difficult to say, but ABSOLUT GENERATIONS in Venice was interesting because very famous artists worked with younger artists; the collection is not made up only of artworks by the "big names" of the day.

**Hervé:** Obviously, we remain within the framework of portrait painting at all times. Warhol was probably the last great portrait artist. You might say that he set the general tone for the collection. In fact, since the artists must use the commercial object—the bottle—as the subject

**VEERLE** "For the photo, I chose the Rosemarie Trockel piece - it's a good example of our collection, and the video she did—with the bottle striptease—is very sexy and funny."

**HERVÉ** "Le Mercier is an artist I discovered before he became well-known and won the Marcel Duchamp Prize, the French equivalent of the Turner Prize. Afterwards, he had a one-man exhibition in the Pompidou Centre. I really like what he created for ABSOLUT. What's more, different models of the work were produced, and collectors are snapping them up like hotcakes. This clearly demonstrates that the ABSOLUT works are full-fledged works of art."

## PAGE 10-11

of their work, inevitably each of them is asked to adopt, in part, an approach à la Warhol, which everyone can unanimously support.

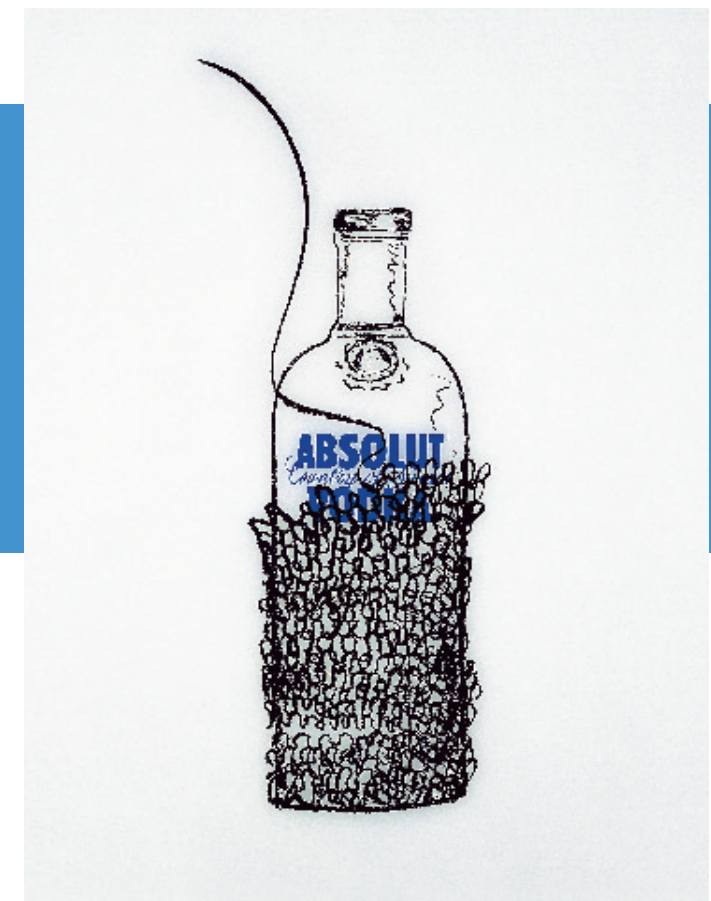
## THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND HOW THEY GENERATE PUBLICITY

**Hervé:** Publicity is always completely unexpected. If I remember correctly, one of the greatest reverberations in the press were related to Rosemarie Trockel, who won't give any interviews and refuses to be filmed. And yet, several columns in the extremely serious Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung referred to her contribution to the ABSOLUT ART collection.

## THE CAMPAIGN'S FUTURE:

**Veerle:** I think the concept is unlimited. You just have to find new ways of presenting it. I think video might be an appropriate medium for future ads.

**Hervé:** I think that since the bottle acts as a mirror to the story, the campaign can only end when the story ends.



ROSEMARIE TROCKEL, ABSOLUT TROCKEL, 1999



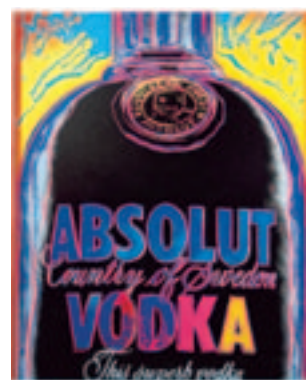
MATHIEU MERCIER, ABSOLUT MERCIER, 1993





ITINERARY: ABSOLUT WARHOL, 2000-2004

	DESTINATION	DATE
1	Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, USA	March 20 – April 20, 2000
2	Grand Central Station, New York, NY, USA	June 6 – 14, 2000
3	Millesgården, Stockholm, Sweden	September, 2000
4	One Club, New York, NY, USA	January 2 – February 2, 2001
5	Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, USA	March 26 – May 22, 2001
6	Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis, Tennessee, USA	June 24 – July 15, 2001
7	The Rubicon Gallery, Dublin, Ireland	August 10 – September 3, 2001
8	Grand Hotel, Stockholm, Sweden	Nov. 23 – Dec. 6, 2001. Spring 2002
9	Customs House, Sydney, Australia	August 14 – September 8, 2002
10	Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan	October 4 – November 11, 2002
11	Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo, Norway	November 28, 2002 – February 9, 2003
12	The Central House of Artists, Moscow, Russia	April 27 – May 7, 2003
13	Venice Biennale, Italy	June 14 – September 28, 2003
14	Aoseum, Åhus, Sweden	June 17 – August 29, 2004



**ABSOLUT ART ON TOUR**

Some works of art from the ABSOLUT ART collection make the rounds of the world on a regular basis. To deal with this, the curators of the ABSOLUT ART collection have developed rigid security measures so as to ensure the safe passage of these treasures. The artworks are wrapped in packaging material that protects them from knocks and bumps, as well as temperature and air humidity changes. In rare cases, when the most valuable parts of the collection are moved, a freight courier oversees the trip from start to finish. Yet most often, the works are moved on their own, in anonymous packages that do not draw any unnecessary attention.

Before the paintings are unpacked, they are left for 24 hours in "quarantine" so they can adapt to the new climate. Two professional art handlers unpack the pieces, wearing gloves so as not to damage the highly valuable articles. They then check the condition report put together by the curator in New York or Paris and make sure that the works of art have not been damaged in any way. This procedure is repeated a couple of weeks later when the art work is sent either to Paris or New York or some other city for a different exhibition.

ABSOLUT WARHOL is the most traveled of all the works. To the right is a short list of all the places it has been in the last three years. Now, if only there were some way to accumulate frequent flyer miles for all this travel ...



## FREQUENTLY AND INFREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Q: Why do you use contemporary artists for your advertisements?

A: ABSOLUT is a creative brand, so it's only natural for us to collaborate with artists and designers. The creativity of the artists helps retain the vitality and freshness of ABSOLUT and ensures the continued impact of our creative communication.

### Q: Are you planning to continue with your "art collection"?

A: Yes, we will continue to work with both well-known up-and-coming artists. Keep your eyes open for more.

### Q: How do you choose the artists?

A: ABSOLUT artists must display the qualities that appeal to our customers – taste, refinement, and originality. Artists are given complete artistic freedom, as long as the bottle is displayed in the artwork. The attention that this collaboration receives from both the media and the general public has a positive impact on the professional future of the artists.

### Q: Do all the artists contribute to the sale of ABSOLUT in the same proportion? Or is there a best-selling artist?

A: All campaigns are intended to build brand awareness and establish ABSOLUT as a premium brand. In addition, we hope they will keep the brand fresh and exciting and, of course, help increase sales.

### Q: I'm an artist and I've done a really nice piece for ABSOLUT! Where should I send it?

A: We only accept work from commissioned artists.



### Q: How many pieces are there in the ABSOLUT collection?

A: The collection includes over 400 works of art in a wide range of media—everything from furniture and sculpture to photographs, textiles, and much more.

### Q: Which ad was the first to be published?

A: ABSOLUT PERFECTION, created by TBWA in New York, was the first "regular" ad. It was published in 1980. Andy Warhol's ABSOLUT WARHOL, the first artwork ad, appeared in American magazines in 1985. Made of acrylic and silkscreen on canvas, the original painting measured 137 x 112 centimeters [54 x 44 inches].

### Q: Who was asked to be artist number two, after Warhol?

A: Warhol's first recommendation was Jean-Michel Basquiat, but he kept wavering—declining, accepting, declining—so Warhol threw out Keith Haring's name instead.

### Q: What is the largest ABSOLUT VODKA bottle that has ever been created for the art collection?

A: In conjunction with the Venice Biennale International Art Exhibition, Hans Hollein, the Austrian artist and architect, created a huge, inflatable bottle containing a full-size gondola. The bottle measured 15 meters [49 feet].

### Q: Has ABSOLUT done any specific art projects on the Internet?

A: Actually, the first ABSOLUT on the Internet was an artistic venture. In collaboration with IT guru Kevin Kelly, founder of *Wired* magazine, we launched a forum for interactive art (read more about this project on page 9). At absolut.com, we're always running campaigns in the borderland between the Internet and art.

### Q: Has Morse code ever been used as part of an ABSOLUT ART concept?

A: The ABSOLUT BALKA visual shows a soft brown bottle with lines and dots carved out of the front and an orange light shining inside. Mirosław Balka, the Polish artist who created the bottle, told us that the lines and dots are actually Morse code for ABSOLUT VODKA and that the light, representing the spirit, makes him think of a lighthouse guiding people to the right route. Balka also made an association between Samuel Finlay Breese Morse, the inventor of Morse code and Lars Olsson Smith, the creator of ABSOLUT VODKA, who lived at about the same time!



### Q: Which member of the Rolling Stones contributed to the collection?

A: ABSOLUT WOOD, painted by guitarist Ron Wood, is a colorful self-portrait dating back to 1997. Another famous musician, Holly Johnson, of the iconic 80s rock group Frankie Goes to Hollywood, also painted a canvas for ABSOLUT.

### Q: How about ABSOLUT and golf?

A: Actually, ABSOLUT ART HOLES were created in Glasgow, Scotland—the home of golf. Nine of the most prominent artists in the UK were each asked to design a miniature golf hole. Of course, all the holes were playable.

### Q: Are there any steerable pieces in the collection?

A: A: There are a couple. For example, Artist Malcolm Coelho made a steerable ship in a bottle for the ABSOLUT PUBLIC ART exhibition in Mexico City.



For more information:

[www.absolut.com](http://www.absolut.com)

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