

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The architecture of the (post) studio: Jackson Pollock's barn and Andy Warhol's Silver Factory

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**Abstract** This article will discuss a false dichotomy between two models, the modern art studio and the post-studio, which oppose the private and the public, the individual and the collective, hiding and the revealing. We will begin by analysing Daniel Buren's position in his canonical text "Fonction de l'Atelier" and his practice, where the artist defines the foundations of post-studio work. As the text also describes a New York studio type that must be left behind, we will analyse Jackson Pollock's and Andy Warhol's workspaces through drawing reconstructions to demonstrate that these meet the defining characteristics of both models. It will be shown that the artists have used design strategies to retain certain aspects of studio culture while exploring others of the post-studio. This turning point reveals that the current belief about the obsolescence of the studio in a global era defined by communication, networking and mobility ignores its emerging post-studio qualities. This work aims to acknowledge this shift, obtaining a critical vision that will allow us to design contemporary workspaces avoiding stereotypical and reductionist approaches.

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## 1. Introduction

The artist's studio, historically venerated as the par excellence venue for personal creativity – from the 17th century in Europe to the 20th century in North America –

would be subject to harsh criticism in the late 1960s. When the artists started questioning the traditional modes of production, presentation, and experimentation through conceptual art, performance, land art, pop art, and minimalism, this led to a new understanding of artistic creation

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and productive spaces. The studio represented a powerfully charged semi-sacred place for the solitary and genius artist and, at the same time, a kind of practice with a manual or artisanal work in a romantic and restrictive context (Davidts and Paice, 2009; Esner et al., 2013).

In 1971, French artist Daniel Buren wrote a canonical text entitled “Fonction de l’Atelier”,<sup>1</sup> in which he defined the studio as a private place bounded by frames, envelopes, and limits (Buren, 1991). Buren ended his text dramatically, stating that all of his work came from the “abolition” of the studio (Buren, 1991),<sup>2</sup> this being the theoretical cornerstone for a new generation of artists who decided to take their practice outside the confines of the “four walls” (Coles, 2012).

While Buren and other artists, such as Richard Serra (1994) or Robert Smithson (1996), declared the death of the studio, the birth of its (supposed) antithesis was announced: the “post-studio” era (Tumliir, 2012). Now the work had to show an intentional and voluntary link between the place of production and exhibition (O’Doherty, 2007); it had to be realised in an unstable, open, and urban-scale context. The post-studio represented a practice in public space, the concept of “art as an idea” (Hoffmann et al., 2007), and the revealing as an attempt to escape cultural confinement.<sup>3</sup>

Buren declared the studio’s fall in his text while defining a New York model,<sup>4</sup> composed of country barns and urban warehouses (Buren, 1979). This definition coincided with the workspaces of the major figures of New York Abstract Expressionism and pop art: Jackson Pollock in his rural farmhouse in East Hampton between 1945 and 1953; and Andy Warhol’s The Silver Factory in his Manhattan loft between 1964 and 1968.

However, the link between the artists and their creative spaces is less clear and absolute than it seems to be implied in this binary game between studio and post-studio. On the one hand, we will see that Pollock and Warhol maintained a complex relationship with their workspaces, including a close relation to their urban links, collective identity, and revealing. On the other hand, Buren did not take such a radical distance from the studio as he often claims.

<sup>1</sup> The original French essay is “Fonction de l’Atelier” and dates from 1971, but it was first published in English in 1979 in *October* journal, in a translation by Thomas Repensek.

<sup>2</sup> The original French text uses the term “abolition”, which means the action or effect of abolishing, repealing, or leaving without effect a law, precept, or custom.

<sup>3</sup> Within the institutional art field, the term “post-studio” is commonly used in academic prose and criticism. However, it remains a challenge to determine precisely when and with whom it began. John Baldessari used the term in 1970 at the California Institute of the Arts to name his course for students who did not want to paint, do sculpture, or any other handmade activity but does not recall where he took the term from (Davidts and Paice, 2009; Hertz, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Buren clarifies in his essay that when he writes about US studios, he is referring to New York. In addition, he criticizes the artistic centrality created in this city, understanding that it is a response to the so-called “School of Paris”, and that it reproduces all its defects.

All three artists engaged in different design strategies to foster certain aspects of studio culture, such as the perpetration of authorship in relation to individual identity, while exploring others of post-studio practice, such as a direct connection with the urban context. The conventional model was not discarded or replaced by an entirely new one; instead, existing possibilities were revisited and redefined. This change has not been studied before focusing on architecture.

It is essential to interrogate the interchange between the two positions to offer a new vision of the opportunities and potentialities in the contemporary realm. Today, the studio represents an ideological mistrust due to its association with concepts such as craftsmanship, concentration and isolation (Davidts and Paice, 2009), while the global era is defined by the collective, the network and the market (Gielen, 2010). This research will shed light on specific architectural characteristics of the studio’s conception, which may represent an alternative to the hegemonic tendency now embodied by this new “creative capitalism” (Gielen, 2013). The latter concept is defined, among other things, by the shift from art as a power of production to art as a power of exhibition (Sloterdijk, 2012). The actual creative blur between the making and exhibiting is part of the cause of dispersion of the contemporary studio, which no longer distances the artist from society. The actual studio is all exterior (Relyea, 2010).

In the midst of this exhibitionist turn, this article is intended to counter the many prevailing assertions about the obsolescence of the studio. Through the architectural analysis of Pollock’s and Warhol’s studios and an exploration of Buren’s position with his post-studio statement, we will gain a critical view that will allow us to follow the development of creative spaces today. Moreover, a more balanced approach between modern and post-studio characteristics will avoid stereotypical and reductionist design approaches for the artist’s workspaces.

## 2. Methodology

Buren’s radical stance on the studio will be presented through the analysis of his text “Fonction de l’Atelier” and his work “Affichage Sauvage” of 1968. In the former, the artist defines the modern studio and focuses the research in New York by describing a specific model. This justifies the case studies selected and limits the research in a temporal sense. By studying Buren’s artistic practice and exposing his office space as a complement to his workspace, we will find elements that supplement his theoretical position, thus obtaining a clear concept from which to start researching post-studio practice.

In this sense, it is worth noting that the post-war period in the arts was marked by the alleged institutional rivalry between Paris and New York, which generated a valuable cultural exchange between the two “art capitals”. These connections included international exhibitions, cultural relations (Bérard, 1999), and specialised magazines such as *Les Lettres Françaises* publishing articles and presenting works by American abstract expressionists and pop artists (Millet, 1987). Buren mentions Jackson Pollock for the first time in his writings in 1967 (Buren, 1991), but later, he will

be a recurring figure pointed out as a “dead-end” painter on a par with Cezanne, Mondrian, Duchamp, Newman, Stella and Warhol. On the other hand, although other American artists’ studios of the 1960s were lofts of similar conception and spatial organisation, Warhol’s Silver Factory was already, at that time, the most famous loft in the art world (Zuromskis, 2012).

Besides the obvious connection between Buren’s text and Pollock’s and Warhol’s studios, both American artists are among the most influential artists of the 20th century (Danto, 2009; Stals, 2016), and their spaces of creative production are clearly identified with studio culture (Tumlić, 2012). This justifies the interest in them for the development of this article. Finally, given that the text was published in 1971, it anchors the research to that year and manifests a questioning of the immediately preceding decades corresponding to the second postwar period.

Through access to photographic, film and documentary archives (Andy Warhol Museum, New York City Municipal Archives and Stonybrook University research Library); site visits (Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, 231 East 47th Street in Manhattan); and interviews with primary and secondary sources; the research will expose plan reconstructions of Pollock’s and Warhol’s legendary studios. On the one hand, there were no official or unofficial plans for Pollock’s studio before its main renovation in 1953. On the other hand, there have been several attempts by different authors to reconstruct the Silver Factory with architectural plans (Dogma, 2022; Jones, 1997; Watson, 2003), but there are several inconsistencies in each one of them.

With this unprecedented material, we will discover that artists have used the architecture of their studios to explore specific aspects of both models in the creation of their artwork. In that sense, we focused on studying the main characteristics that define the studio and post-studio: the private and the public, the individual and the collective identity, hiding and revealing.

Through a table that will cross-reference the studio and post-studio characteristics with the conception of the workspaces of the three artists, we will be able to compare each situation. In this way, we will demonstrate a dialectical interaction that avoids any categorical classification and asks for an alternative redefinition of the studio concept. This redefinition must include its public character, the relation to collective identity, and the desire to be exposed.

### 3. Daniel Buren and the studio in the city

“Mon atelier, en fait, est le lieu où je me trouve.” (Buren, 1991).<sup>5</sup>

Buren perceived the modern studio as an institutional disguise, a normative convention serving an ideological function. As if the studio’s architectural features were deemed coded mechanisms that actively disassociate the art space from the outer world. The text “Fonction de l’Atelier” begins

with an analysis of the role and significance of the studio within the artistic apparatus (Buren, 1991). Buren believed that since the nineteenth century, the museum, as an institution and an architectural space, functioned as the primary place for the public presentation of art. In contrast, the studio functioned as the unique and private space for creative production. When the works left the studio for exhibition, they were removed from a specific context that was part of their production and creative process, thus deprived of their true meaning. Curiously, Buren experienced this inescapable and public fate of the artwork as a tragedy. What is more, he blamed this misfortune on the studio.

Studying painting in the French regions of Provence and the Côte d’Azur, from Paul Cézanne to Pablo Picasso, Buren discovered a close link between “the truth” of the artwork, its creator, and its place of origin (Buren, 1979). He was interested in the impact of geographic location and specific context on the artwork. In order to recover and highlight this relationship, Buren mentions in his text another historical reference: Constantin Brancusi’s studio. The sculptor donated his workplace and its contents to the French State, intending to preserve the relationship between the artwork and its place of production. According to Buren, Brancusi’s strategy became an obstacle to the museum’s desire to classify, idealise and select. There could be no loss of authenticity if there were no gaps between the studio and the museum. So he did not hesitate to assert the “extinction” of the studio to achieve this short circuit in the commercial art system.<sup>6</sup>

His words seemed to be consistent with his artistic practice: six years before writing the text, he had moved from painting to “in situ” work, which he would define as works conceived for a precise place and which are particularly articulated with, because of, by or against a precise environment (Buren, 1998). In 1965, the artist found a canvas that alternated white and coloured vertical stripes on a rigid, industrially manufactured formal pattern (Carrasco, 2007). With this material, Buren created *Affichage Sauvage*, consisting of the partial covering of two hundred billboards in Paris without legal authorisation or invitation from a gallery or institution. Buren acted alone and directly on the billboards using a long ladder, a bucket of glue and a mop. The photographic images show how this urban site was momentarily transformed into a public workspace and, at the same time, a temporary exhibition, with the art as an advertisement – mimicking its condition, size and positioning – for the ambulant spectator (Fig. 1).

The absence of a private production space charged with meaning the public environment where the artwork was shown. The main quality of Buren’s work on-site was to literally and metaphorically stick to the reality of the place where the work was produced and exhibited. The artist shifted from a fixed, confined, domestic-scale workplace to an unstable, open, urban situation.

What Buren had done was to move the work’s narrative to the context. This shift implied movement from canvas to

<sup>5</sup> ‘My studio, in fact, is the place where I am’. Translation by the author.

<sup>6</sup> It is striking that the English translation opts for the extreme term “extinction”, which means the action or effect of extinguishing, causing certain things to cease or cease altogether gradually.



**Fig. 1** Jacques Caumont, 1969, Photo-souvenir: Daniel Buren applying white and pink striped paper for *Affichage sauvage*. [Photograph], Paris. © Jacques Caumont.

the wall (other architectural elements such as doors and windows followed), painting to space, and studio to city. The artist's exploration between painting and architecture became evident when his works were extended into public space to become three-dimensional volumetric objects, reinforcing Buren's assertion that his work "is about space" (Buren and Chanson, 2008).

Buren's theory and practice strictly linked the work to the city and the artist to a personal on-site execution. In this sense, this was one of Buren's most fundamental and, at the same time, fragile aspects: the supposed extinction of the studio becomes incarnation (Davidts and Paice, 2009). He is his studio.

As the artist's work in situ no longer required a studio, Buren got rid of the one he had in the *Cité des Fleurs* in Paris, a small attic with a sloping glass roof that has now been demolished.<sup>7</sup> Since then, he has occupied an office, which can be seen in one of his photo-souvenir collections (Fig. 2). This photograph shows a desk in a corner next to a radiator, a chair, a telephone, a clutter of papers, a board with photographs, books and magazines, a drawing and a map: like any other middle-ranking worker in a company.

According to Buren, his office never replaced the studio since, in the former, he only wrote letters and consulted magazines and books (Buren, 2003). However, the office Buren occupied (sporadically or briefly) represented the artist's need for a private concentration space, even if it was for managing his work, planning or doing artistic research. Or is this not part of the artist's work? Is the studio not only the place where the works are produced but also where they are planned and imagined?

#### 4. Jackson Pollock and the studio outside the city

"I got to move around, so I'm free on the outside. Then I'm free inside, which frees the force which makes the work." (Potter, 2000).



**Fig. 2** Daniel Buren, 1987, Photo-souvenir: Daniel Buren's office. [Photograph], Paris. © DB-ADAGP Paris, Daniel Buren.

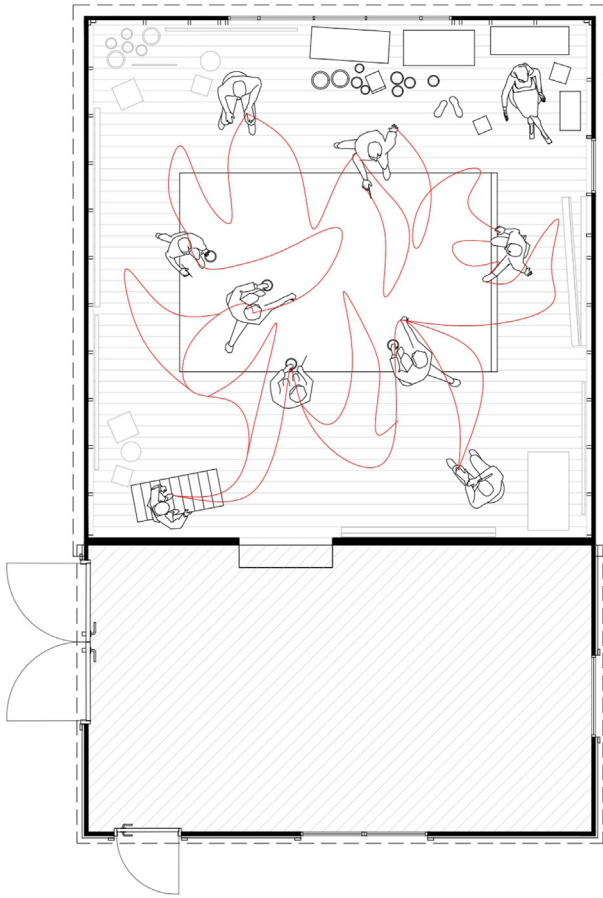
In November 1945, impressed by the qualities of the landscape, Pollock and artist Lee Krasner moved from their Greenwich Village apartment in Manhattan to a two-acre rural land in East Hampton on Long Island. The property included a late 19th-century house, a few outbuildings, and a barn. The leap to new territory was the starting point of a change in a cultural environment that fitted with the post-war atmosphere of withdrawal, alienation and search for identity typical of the Abstract Expressionist artists (Gordon, 2000). It also responded to some practical issues: the Hamptons offered a natural setting close to beaches and affordable real estate and was the location of choice for a new group of European modern and exiled artists such as Max Ernst, Fernand Léger, Marcel Duchamp, Constantino Nivola, Jean Hélion and Matta (Pisano et al., 1980).

The barn, originally used to store fishing equipment (Berman, 1993), was quickly adapted into an art studio, even when it was just a large shed made of boards nailed to a wooden structure.<sup>8</sup> It had a double sliding door facing west and a door and two windows on the south wall. The roof was cedar shingles over irregularly spaced wooden rafters and was about 5.8 m high at the peak (Harrison, 2001). The studio had no electricity, so the artist worked exclusively with natural light and followed seasonal schedules. The north window, designed above eye level, created a visual frame of the outside and the branches and leaves of the trees surrounding the studio. A window on the east wall looked directly into the creek but was later covered because it distracted the artist (Namuth et al., 1982).

There are only two official studio floor plans: one showing the general dimensions and ceiling heights; and another with detailed information about the floor for the conservation work to remediate powder post-beetle damage to the wood. These two are property of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center and were provided by the courtesy and kindness of its director Helen A. Harrison. However, there are no detailed architectural plans of Pollock's studio before its main

<sup>7</sup> A photograph can be found here: (Buren, 1988, 2).

<sup>8</sup> The only problem was that it was initially located just behind the main house, blocking the view of Accabonnac Creek and the harbour, so they had to move the building 23 m to the north to enjoy an interrupted view. In its new location, the wood floor and north-facing opening were added. See: (Naifeh and Smith, 1989).



**Fig. 3** Planimetry elaborated by the author based on the site visit, two official studio floor plans property of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, and photographs by Hans Namuth, Herbert Matter, Martha Holmes, Rudy Burckhardt, Larry Larkin, and Arnold Newman.

renovation in 1953. For example, neither show the double door on the west wall nor the south façade with the main entrance door.

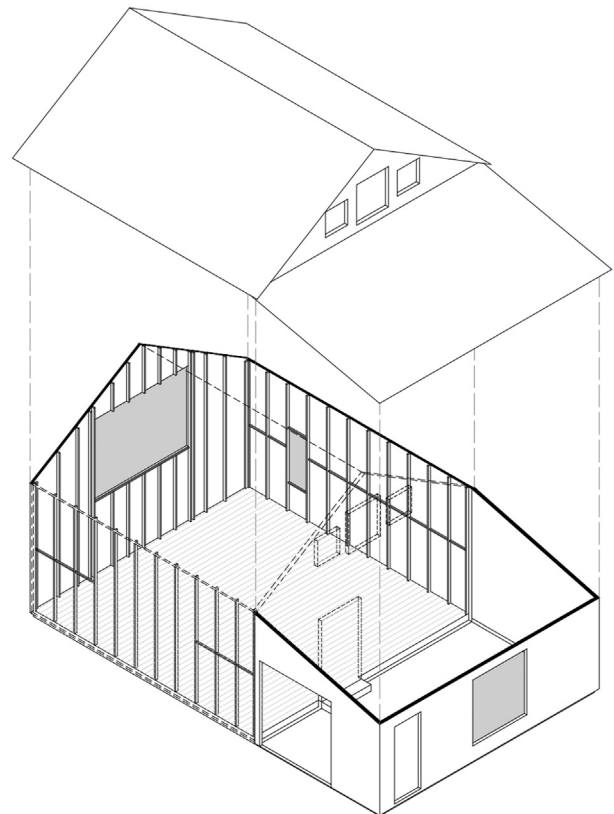
The precarious barn studio, with the main room of 6.4 m by 6.4 m, is where Pollock created his largest and most significant liquid paint canvases: *Autumn Rhythm* (2.7 m × 5.3 m), *Convergence* (2.4 m × 3.9 m), *Blue Poles* (2.1 m × 4.9 m), among others. The feeling of amplitude and freedom in the paintings is so powerful that it is difficult to believe how small the interior space of his studio was (Fig. 3).

With its open floor plan, the studio allowed him free movement and exploration and the opportunity to study the potential of the horizontal plane in relation to his pouring painting technique. On the one hand, Pollock wanted to achieve greater freedom with his liquid painting, but always with strict control over the result (Clark, 1999), and without being conditioned by gravitational pull (Krauss, 1993). He could apply the paint from above by nailing the canvas directly to the ground while traversing its four sides with ease. In 1958, Allan Kaprow stated that the vast canvas on the floor made it difficult for Pollock to see his work entirely (Kaprow, 2020). So to appreciate the larger picture of what



**Fig. 4** Photograph of Pollock's studio floor taken by the author in Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center on May 19th, 2021.

he had done and make the final touches, he needed to emulate the viewer's experience in front of the painting once it was finished and hung (Coddington and Hickey, 2013).



**Fig. 5** Sketch elaborated by the author based on the site visit, two official studio floor plans property of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, and photographs by Hans Namuth, Herbert Matter, Martha Holmes, Rudy Burckhardt, Larry Larkin, and Arnold Newman.

Alternatively, he quickly climbed the ladder in his studio to find this distance through aerial views (Kalb, 2012).

In an architectural sense, Pollock's studio floor, its dimensions and features, is a vivid testimony to his creative process and intriguing evidence of his most productive and innovative years (Fig. 4). However, the height of the studio and the space generated by its gable roof, which at first glance might appear to be unused space, were equally important (Fig. 5). It gave the artist the perspective he needed, rapidly and without moving his artwork. By performing a "cardinal transposition" (Lueder, 2014), the artist complemented his creative process, pointing out a clue about the architecture of his studio: a set of continuous and oscillating movements between plan and section over time.

As documented by photographers such as Herbert Matter, Martha Holmes, Rudy Burckhardt or Hans Namuth, Pollock was constantly surrounded by his works, which were usually leaning against the studio walls and facing the centre of the space, and others placed on the floor. Pollock established a continuity between the two and the three dimensions as if he was trying to cover his studio with a mural of endlessly shifting perspective. This was the result of exploring the conceptual limits of the canvas, now extended to his studio's architecture. Pollock's choice of huge canvases served many purposes; however, the main one was to verify that his paintings became environments (Kaprow, 2020), and that viewers (like him in his studio) were absorbed by them.

Pollock's series of influential and publicised exhibitions at the Betty Parsons Gallery between 1948 and 1951 featured his paintings displayed in such a way that they entirely covered the gallery walls, many of them made specifically to match in height (Cernuschi and Herczynski, 2014). When we look at the photographs in the show, we find that they closely resemble those in his studio, the only difference being that his works were only displayed vertically.<sup>9</sup> This indicates the artist's intent to start exploring the connection between his production and exhibition spaces.

Around the fall of 1950, Namuth persuaded Pollock to paint outdoors so that he could film in colour. The filming concluded after a sequence shot under glass, on which the artist painted and incorporated various materials (Jackson Pollock 51, 1951). For the first and only time, Pollock left his studio to stage on camera in a public, open, and analogue way what he was doing in a private, individual, and reserved environment. Namuth's film of Pollock working outside the studio recorded his creative activity outdoors using his context as a canvas.

Namuth's films and photographs had an enormous impact on the art world. The concept of "action painting" popularised by the critic Harold Rosenberg and the entire body of thought that identifies Pollock as the forerunner of happenings and performance is largely based on the image of Pollock exhibited in these photos (Rosenberg, 1952). By Namuth's recording, Pollock extended the reach of his

studio into other media, still unconvinced of the performative quality of his work outside of it.

## 5. Andy Warhol and the city in the studio

"It's just taking the outside and putting it on the inside, or taking the inside and putting it on the outside." (Goldsmith, 2004).

In the nineteenth century, the Soho neighbourhood – extended northward to Midtown, including Chelsea, Meatpacking District and Lower East Side – was the epicentre of New York's port activity, with warehouses and an established commercial core of the garment industry (Pratt, 2012). These small-scale industries settled in buildings called Lofts, with eclectic ornamental facades often reflecting a late nineteenth-century taste for the Italian Renaissance and a similar interior organisation: deep warehouses and mostly cast iron structures. In the 1940s and 1950s, within the context of a wave of de-industrialisation (Zukin, 1982), these city areas were emptied of their previous uses and fell into total abandonment. Many lofts remained empty for a considerable time until some artists, searching for large spaces and low rents, began to move into these abandoned buildings and areas of the city.

In mid-January 1964, Andy Warhol rented a loft formerly used by an upholstery shop on the fourth floor of 231 East 47th Street (Kiedrowski, 2011). Located in Midtown, Warhol's new studio was surrounded by corporate headquarters that had come to dominate the neighbourhood. It was modern business opposing any artistic, romantic notion (Jones, 1991). The industrial space was defined only by central pillars and three arches; a clear height of approximately three and a half meters; a door leading to the interior stairs; a second door from which there was direct access to a manual freight elevator; the main façade with five windows and an emergency exit leading to the fire escape; and a small rear window on the west wall that was soon obscured by furniture and racks. The walls defining this space were made of exposed brick, and the pillars, as well as the openings, were made of cast iron (Fig. 6).

The most accurate attempt to draw a floor plan of the space was made by Warhol's assistant, Billy Linich (Watson, 2003), as there are no records of floor plans in the New York City Archives. However, upon close analysis, some details of the drawing appear to be out of place. First, there is no photograph in which we can see six pillars in total, and all evidence indicates that there were four.<sup>10</sup> In addition,

<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, there is a photograph from an exhibition at the Sidney Janis Gallery in 1955 in which White Cockatoo: Number 24.4, from 1948, is shown on the ceiling. This is probably an anomalous example.

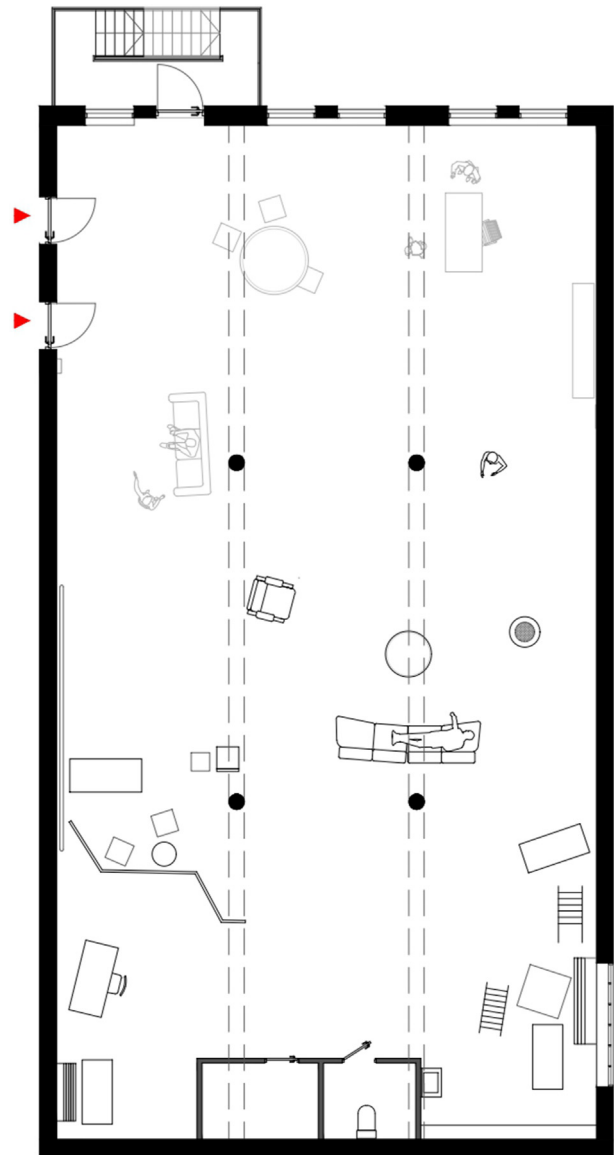
<sup>10</sup> The Silver Factory had three vaulted roof sections we can see through the photographs, meaning there were only two rows of supports. So, there were either four or six pillars. However, looking at Stephen Shore's photograph "Andy with Mirrored Disco Ball", we can establish that the two pillars shown there are the latter ones (let us call them pillars A and B). To the right of the photo, we see the radiator on the east wall. Then, looking at David McCabe's photograph "Larry Latreille and Edie Sedgwick dancing in The Factory", we see how the radiator ends in another line of pillars near the entrance doors (let us call them pillars C and D). Finally, if we look at Fred McDarrah's photograph "At A Factory Party", we can see that the line of pillars near the entrance doors is the closest to the main facade of the building and the last one. This means that there were four pillars instead of six.

some dimensions and proportions are confusing. Caroline A. Jones (1997) also drew a plan, but with four pillars. However, she placed the entrances, elevator and stairway, on the north wall instead of the east when the testimonies (Freeman and Kiedrowski, 2021) and photographs show otherwise. In addition, the bathroom and darkroom are undefined, and the west window is missing. Although Warhol claimed that The Silver Factory was “about 50 feet by 100” (Warhol and Hackett, 2006), about 15 m by 30 m, the New York Records and Information Center shows the dimensions of the entire building, indicating that the depth was approximately 21 m.<sup>11</sup> The width was 12 m, although the latter was not expressly noted.

Warhol commissioned Billy Linich, a former lighting technician who had worked on theatrical productions, to design the interior space. At the back, there was a light wooden structure with a bathroom and a room that he turned into a darkroom for developing photographs. Then, he began to paint the entire space with silver paint: walls, ceiling, tables, chairs, toilet, telephone, photocopier and even the floor, which he had to repaint every two weeks due to heavy foot traffic (Bourdon, 1989). The windows were painted black, preventing natural light from entering the space. The rest was covered with silver paper. For Warhol, that colour signified the past, a reminder of the industrial aesthetic of his native Pittsburgh; the present, mirror reflection, narcissism; and the future, space, astronauts and glamour (Warhol and Hackett, 2006).

The loft’s open floor plan allowed for constant redesign and the simultaneous development of activities nearby, such as film shoots, rock rehearsals, recordings, meetings and silk screening. In this sense, Ábalos wrote in his book *The Good Life* (Ábalos, 2017) that this space represented the negation of the specific and technified square meters of modern architecture and the valuation of cubic meters without qualities of any kind (Fig. 7). In contrast to the spatial fragmentation with which the functionalist project was resolved, here, intimacy was reduced to a minimum. It was understood as a consequence of modern hierarchy, the old paradigm of the isolated artist-genius and the bourgeois way of life. Warhol conceived a space that implied a simulation of liberation, a de-hierarchising fiction, whereby things were allowed to happen. His studio encouraged artistic, experimental and collective production through its architecture.

In this space, with no distribution or specialisation, the only thing that defined a concrete human position was the relationship between width and depth. However, it was difficult to determine the directional sense (Fig. 8). There was a deliberate attempt to generate artificial isotropy through the silver coating. The effect was accentuated by the almost exclusive use of artificial light and reflecting surfaces like mirrors (Warhol and Hackett, 2006) which must have provoked disorientation. This resource could be compared to the black box of the theatrical space, where a colour device is consolidated to eliminate any offstage reference. At the same time, the artificial lighting focuses on the characters (Rufford, 2015). Warhol went so far as to

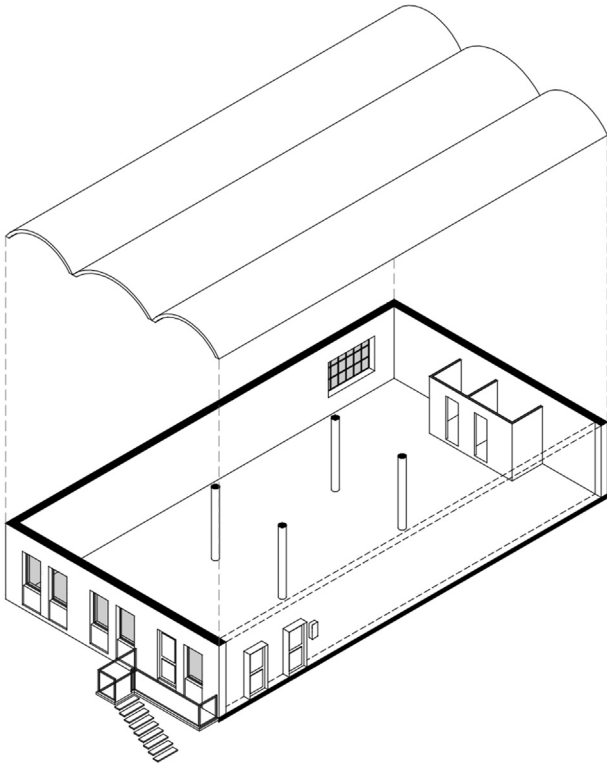


**Fig. 6** Planimetry elaborated by the author based on the site visit, New York Records and Information Center archive, photographs by Billy Name, Stephen Shore, David McCabe, Fred McDarrah, Edward Wallowitch, William John Kennedy, Ugo Mulas, and Nat Filkelstein; sketches by Billy Linich and Lucy Hogg; and satellite images.

describe this strategy as an “environment” (Gopnik, 2020), and Linich as an art installation (Schorr, 1997).

Contrary to popular belief, The Silver Factory was, for Warhol, “a vacuum” that left him “alone to work” (Warhol et al., 1968), and at the same time, a place where “Friends come over ... and do the work with me” (Crone, 1970). It was creatively fueled by the oscillation between isolation and a place of gathering and work that involved partying as one of its social manifestations. For example, when Warhol reached the peak of Flowers’ silk-screened production (nine hundred paintings over June and July 1964), there were as many as fifteen people in the afternoon, filling in the colours and stretching the canvases (Watson, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> It appears in block 1321, lot numbers 231 and 233, of the 1933’s book of New York Records and Information Center.



**Fig. 7** Sketch elaborated by the author based on the site visit, New York Records and Information Center archive, photographs by Billy Name, Stephen Shore, David McCabe, Fred McDarrah, Edward Wallowitch, William John Kennedy, Ugo Mulas, and Nat Filkelstein; sketches by Billy Linich and Lucy Hogg; and satellite images.

Moreover, people would gather after midday waiting for Warhol to arrive so that they could capture his attention and participate in his projects. At the same time, Warhol periodically closed the Factory to outsiders, and on weekends people would need someone to drop the key down from a window so they could get into the building (Gopnik, 2020). Warhol's new artistic vision, which included his cultural critique and his distancing from social norms, could not occur without disconnection from reality and an intense return to it.

Warhol appropriated the city and formed a creative community with the studio at its centre, using architectural strategies to emphasise its characteristics: connection to the logic that controls society and its disconnection from normative schedules, mentalities, and prejudices. The Silver Factory was anti-marginal, but at the same time, no one occupied a specific space, no one had a reserved seat, there were no set schedules, and the rotation of people – of different origins, ages, professions, education – meant a representation of the city itself within the studio. Art was understood as part of everyday life, which changed the interpretation of the place of artistic creation, now linked to architectural space and a specific urban territory.

By the end of 1967, and due to Warhol's focus on films rather than painting, The Silver Factory was no longer

under the influence of Billy Linich and Gerard Malanga (his earlier assistant),<sup>12</sup> but rather by the aspiring filmmaker Paul Morrissey. He thought that the space should be more under control to become a movie-making business enterprise. His solution would be a change in the site's architectural layout, installing partitions up to one-third of the floor space and dividing the loft into several little "office" cubicles. The result could not have been further from his intentions: people started using the compartments for having sex (Warhol and Hackett, 2006). This practical experiment marked the end of an era. Simultaneously, this was reliable proof that this place, given its peculiar characteristics, could not have functioned with any other spatial distribution.

## 6. Discussion

Researching Pollock's and Warhol's studios, we found that the artists have used architecture to explore specific aspects of the studio culture but also of the post-studio practice. This means considering a broader view which includes a public character, a collective identity, and a closer relationship with revealing (Table 1). At the same time, we saw how Buren connected with the studio culture by incorporating an office for research and concentration into his workspaces and defining his production process as essentially individual. Finally, we discovered that two of Buren's explorations with his post-studio practice, the transition from surface to space and performative quality, had been previously experienced by Pollock (in and out of his studio).

First, we saw that there is a certain parallelism between Warhol's and Buren's posture when it comes to conceiving their productive spaces: the intention lies in transferring the contingencies of the public and urban context to the processes of artistic creation, although the former applies it to interior space and the latter to an exterior one. In this sense, Buren's nomadic practice had an implicit connection with the city's public space, aiming to achieve a meaningful exchange of equals between the artist and the urban fabric. At the same time, Buren's office, occupied sporadically or briefly, represented the artist's need for a private concentration space, even if it was for managing his work, planning or doing artistic research. This ambivalence was also visible in Warhol's case. His studio location was defined by the opportunity to take advantage of the speculative dynamics of the city, as well as by the (conscious or unconscious) vindication of urban memory. At the same time, an architecture that combined interaction, celebration and exhibition to work generated a particular tension in its urban environment. Therefore, the artificial isotropy generated by the silver surface provoked, when it was wanted, a disconnection from the city's normative productive cycles.

<sup>12</sup> Besides Billy Linich and Gerard Malanga, Warhol's youngest assistant/apprentice was Joseph Freeman. This high-school student went to The Silver Factory in 1965 to interview Warhol and was hired by the artist. Freeman accompanied Warhol to the studio every day for three years.



Fig. 8 Various notes by the author on different photographs of The Silver Factory.

Second, although Buren and Warhol acknowledge the productive context's influence, impact and significance on the work of art, they respond to this stance differently. Buren's practice remained, at all times and paradoxically, the result of an authorial action. The supposed disappearance of the studio in his work was the new point of departure, even if that did not mean renouncing to an individual creative process. If he *is* his studio, his studio could not exist without him. Furthermore, this could be interpreted as a vindication of authorship: one of the modern studio's most recognised and deeply rooted legacies. On the other hand, Warhol defined Silver Factory's

architecture by his particular desire to build and shape both an individual and collective identity. The space allowed for disparate and simultaneous activities of different people through an industrial-scale architecture and its interior indeterminacy. Concepts like comfort, order, specificity or intimacy were completely ignored. This architecture drew people to each other, recognising the value of social experience and human interaction. Each art project highlighted the creative process as an essentially social experience, while at the same time, everything produced in this space, even if Warhol's participation was nil or minimal – indicating who

Table 1 Results on the characteristics of the Studio and Post-studio in the cases studied, elaborated by the author.

	Studio			Post-studio		
	Private	Individual identity	Hide	Public	Collective identity	Reveal
Buren	O	O	X	O	O	O
Pollock	O	O	O	X	X	O
Warhol	O	O	O	O	O	O

would work on each project, and the more people the better – was automatically his.

Third, we have shown that to a greater or lesser extent, and with different strategies, both Pollock and Warhol opened the doors of their creative spaces. The former did it first by linking his studio with the exhibition space, as in the case of the exhibition at the Betty Parsons Gallery. Then, through photography and films. The records of Pollock working inside and outside the studio prompted and influenced the following generations of artists. On the one hand, by reaffirming the studio as a private space with domestic, seasonal and precarious architecture. On the other hand, focusing on the creative process involving time and space that would lead to performance and, paradoxically, to questioning the private condition of the studio. Warhol oscillated between hiding and revealing, emphasising the latter by overexposing his studio through audiovisual recordings and almost direct access from the street. This close connection to the city allowed people to visit him in search of opportunities to carry out avant-garde artistic experiments, even if they were total strangers to Warhol. At the same time, its interior space opened every area to all comers, so there were almost no private spaces. Guests immediately penetrated the whole studio, contrasting a gradual transition between social and intimate spaces. The Silver Factory was not a public space, but definitely not a hidden space either.

Finally, both Pollock and Warhol, far from conceiving their studios as restrictive contexts, considered them generative. For the former, his production space was a *Non-finito*,<sup>13</sup> a testing ground for the desire to turn space into the following field of artistic production. Covering his walls and floor with his works of art was not an act of substitution but construction. It allowed him to experience its three dimensions. In the same sense, The Silver Factory was conceived as an active and evolving environment, with a flexible, interior and indeterminate architecture.

The discussion aims to illuminate the expansion of the studio concept, in particular from an exclusively private sphere to a combination with the public one. We saw that the pendulum swings, depending on the case, towards a modern model (private, individual, hide) or post-studio (public, collective, show), but without failing to recognise each other.

## 7. Conclusions of a possible contradiction

This article has shown how the modern studio and post-studio practice are not radically opposed. Their supposed confrontation exposed the shortcomings of a blunt categorisation. Pollock and Warhol engaged in different design strategies to preserve the main features of the studio culture while implementing others to explore in a direction that would coincide with the post-studio practice. Ultimately, Pollock's and Warhol's studios could be considered

precursors to the post-studio rather than a countervailing causality.

This article is marked by the belief that the studio cannot be so easily dismissed, at least beyond verbalisations and manifestos. The attempt to move beyond the studio was actually a move toward a more open and inclusive model, an opportunity to allow for genuinely experimental processes that transformed artists' practice through architecture. This turning point forces us to visit the studio in an exercise of architectural reflection and critique.

Future research will now need to incorporate a more complex view of the studio into its perspectives. While today, communication, networking, and mobility are the pillars of creative workspaces, this article shows that a more balanced approach is required to avoid narrow and simplistic architectural design. This means paying special attention to areas of concentration, the different forms of connection with the city, and the oscillating game between concealing and revealing.

## Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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<sup>13</sup> Non-finito is an Italian expression, literally translatable as “unfinished”. It is applied to artworks to which an aesthetic value is attributed precisely because of their imperfection or lack of finish (whether a stylistic feature deliberately chosen by the author or the result of chance).

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