

Art and Idea After WW II

Changing Gender Roles.

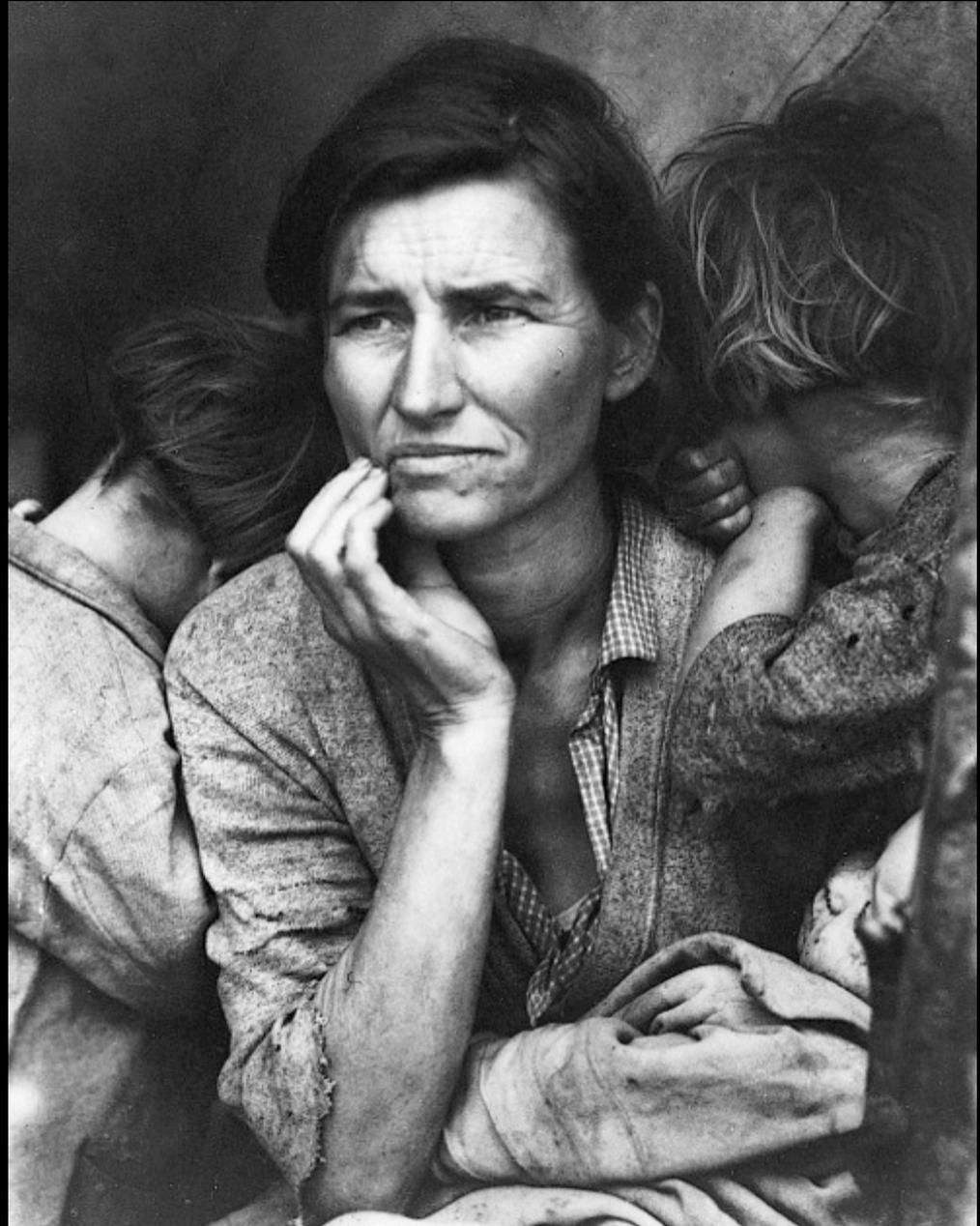
Civil Rights.

Background-1930s-40s

The Depression, the Federal Art Project, the wars and America's pervasive Protestant ethic had instilled in young artists a commitment to social relevance--or usefulness.

Trauma of the depression forced a reappraisal among American artists of their cultural identity.

DOROTHEA LANGE, *Migrant Mother*, Nipomo Valley, 1935. Gelatin silver print. Copyright © the Dorothea Lange Collection, The Oakland Museum of California, City of Oakland (gift of Paul S. Taylor).



Background

While European Modernism (Cubism, Surrealism, Dada) thrived in Europe, The New York School (also called, Abstract Expressionism) is often considered the first truly 'American Movement'.

Because WW I and WW II were both fought as ground wars in Europe, European cities were destroyed.

New York became the center of the art world as artists in Paris, London and Germany fled Europe to escape the Nazi's and came to New York.



**Jackson Pollock, *Number One, 1950*
(*Lavender Mist*) 1947 and 1950**

Painted in an old barn-turned-studio next to a small house on the East End of Long Island.

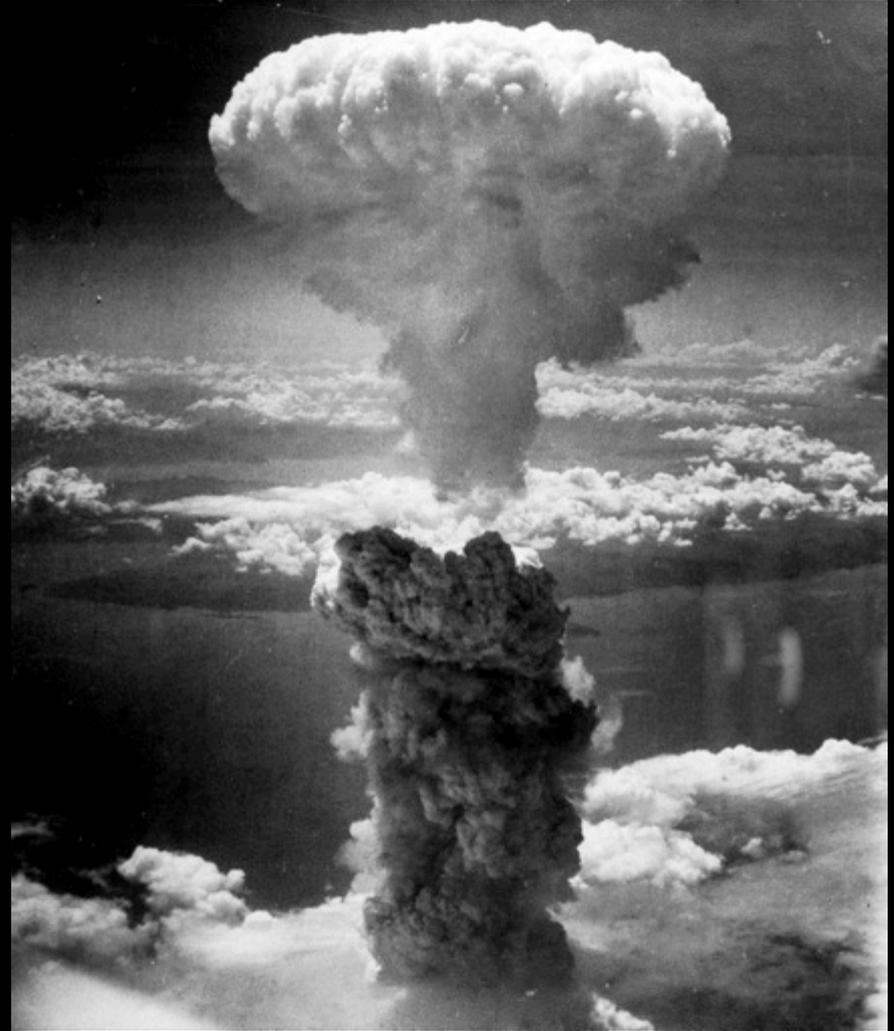
New York School or Abstract Expressionism

Background

Birthered out of **the atrocities of the Second World War**, including **the atom bomb** and the horrors of the **Nazi Holocaust**, the New York School (or Abstract Expressionism) was also influenced by **European avant-garde** ideas as they bumped up against the more pragmatic social and political ones in America of the 1940's.

Prior to the War, the Ashcan School was thought to be the most radical in the U.S.

A new style emerges after the War.

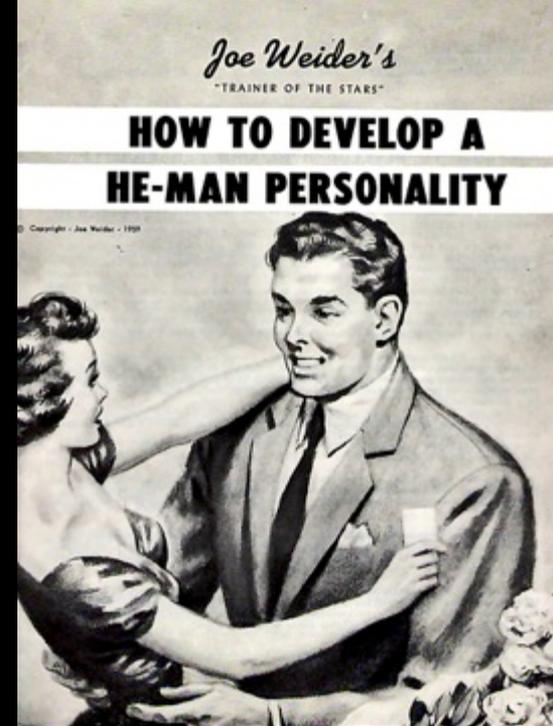


Historic Context

For the politically uncertain times of the cold war and nuclear power, Existentialism's emphasis on the development of the individual human being who was trying to live fully in an absurd world, fueled nationalistic ideals.

At the same time, the Modern Man subject which reinforced models of self as essentially autonomous, integral, rational, and effectual was actually faltering under pressure from political and social conflict and change.

This meant it needed to be shored up. That happened in films, advertising books and art.



Popular book from 1959 by well-known body builder and Western Movie still.



Historic Context

Five million women entered the workforce between 1940 and 1945.

Jobs were available because men had left to fight in World War II.

Women held jobs in defense plants, aircraft industry and factories as well as office jobs.

After the war, they were expected to return to their 'rightful place' in the home even though 75% wanted to continue working.



Women leaving a factory and Eastine Cowner working on the SS George Washington.

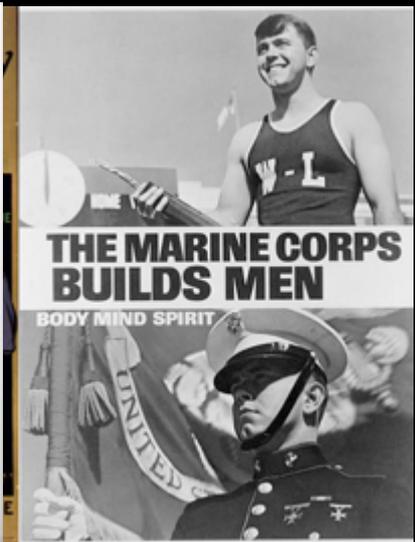


The Modern Man

Conversations about masculinity in the 1950s began with the publication of David Riesman's study *The Lonely Crowd* (1950).

James Gilbert noted that *The Lonely Crowd* is "the story of society told around the problems of men." The book located much of the blame for these problems firmly in the domestic sphere, arguing that middle-class men were increasingly forced by the corporate environment and suburban lifestyle to take on the qualities identified with women: consensus building, conciliation, manipulation (no coincidence that the paradigmatic organization man was in advertising), teamwork, domestication.

The problem, was seen as the erosion of the differences between the roles of men and women.



So we see many contradictory images of men as rugged, hard drinking, hard fighting, and then, the business man.

The New York School

It is within this context we look at the artists and work of the New York School, or Abstract Expressionism.

American artists and critics saw all the European Modernists as being elitist and even effeminate.

The Artists who was celebrated in the U. S. was rough and manly; the person that exemplified these characteristics was Jackson Pollock.

While Pollock's work exhibited a combination of Cubism, Native American Art and self-expression, it was his persona that made him exemplify what was thought of as the American Spirit.



His canvases became surfaces, which simply recorded his passage. Using fluid paint poured from the can, unconscious processes, as opposed to conscious ones, were accessed.

In the background, his wife, the artist Lee Krasner.

The New York School

Clement Greenberg, an important art critic of the time said, “The real American painter would be “a male who did not feel the dead hand of the past on his shoulder but would assert a new independent personality.” He was asserting a cut with the past and a heroic masculine aesthetic.

While there were many female painters associated with Abstract Expressionism, most were not celebrated during their own time.

“I had the feeling the art scene belonged to the men, and that I was in some way invading their domain. Therefore, my work was done but hidden away. I felt more comfortable hiding it...nowadays, I am making an effort to change.”

The artist, Louise Bourgeois



Side note:
Louise Bourgeois continued to make art. There is a retrospective of her drawings at MoMA now.



Lee Krasner, painting, 1950s and with Pollock, 1940s above.

Background: 1950s-60s

The artists of the second generation post WWII, rejected the idea of personal expression (as in Abstract Expressionism) and devised ways to reinsert life into art.

The ideas of Dada, especially chance encounter and word games manifest in art of the late 50's and early 60's.

Media, particularly TV and magazines influence artists of the post war era.

From 1947-1957 the number of televisions in the US jumped from 10,000 to 40,000,000, putting Sema, Alabama and Saigon, Vietnam in everyone's living room.



Here's Mr. Showmanship himself - Cecil B. DeMille - watching his Magnavox Big-Picture TV at home with his family.

Magnavox graces America's finest homes

Things which makes many American homes envious is television, and magnificent Big-Picture TV ranks highest in living is a daily habit. For Magnavox showpieces inside and out, combining advanced engineering with stunning cabinetry of heirloom quality. Each superb furniture piece is the ideal sounding chamber for glorious Magnavox tone. Sharp, clear Magnavox pictures are specially filtered for pleasing contrast. No matter how proud your home, or how well you'll find a Magnavox meant just great value at one of the finest Magnavox in your classified to The Magnavox Company, Fort

Better sight...better sound...better buy

EMBAASSY (also FM radio-phonograph) now or later.

the magnificent **Magnavox** television radio-phonograph

Ultra High Frequency Units Readily Attachable

Ads in the 1950s were sexist to say the least, but reflected mainstream middleclass white values.



If your husband ever finds out

you're not "store-testing" for fresher coffee...



... if he discovers you're still taking chances on getting flat, stale coffee ... wee be unto you!

For today there's a sure and certain way to test for freshness before you buy



It's nice to have a girl around the house.

Though she was a tiger lady, our hero didn't have to fire a shot to floor her. After one look at his **Mr. Leggs** slacks, she was ready to have him walk all over her. That noble styling sure soothes the savage heart! If you'd like your own doll-to-

doll carpeting, hunt up a pair of these he-man **Mr. Leggs** slacks. Such as our new automatic wash wear blend of 65% "Dacron" and 35% rayon—incomparably wrinkle resistant. About \$12.95 at plush-carpeted stores.

Dacron For Fall!

Get yourself a new pair of **Mr. Leggs**

THOMSON COMPANY, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York 19, N. Y.

Background

Levittown was the first truly mass-produced suburb (1947-51) and is widely regarded as the archetype for postwar suburbs throughout the country. It reflected this mainstream mentality that exemplified the attitudes of post war US.

In accordance with this policy, the buying agreement signed by all those who purchased homes in Levittown stated that the property could not be used or rented by any individuals other than those of the Caucasian race.



Background—Beat Poets

To understand the next art movement in the U. S. it's important to look at some more history.

Rather than Painters, it was poets, who set the stage for the next direction. The “Beat” generation rejected the existential motives of the Abstract Expressionist artists. They railed against mainstream American values in poems and life style.

The poets raged against mainstream America.

*“I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked...Burned alive in their innocent flannel suits on Madison Avenue...or run down by the drunken taxicabs of Absolute Reality”
Howell--Ginsberg 1955*

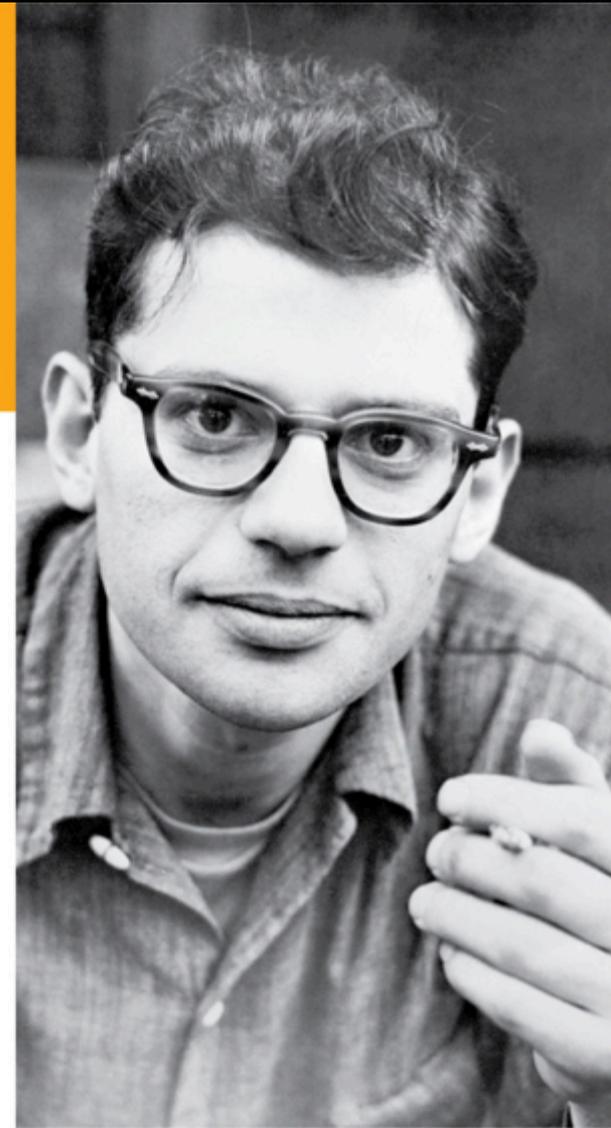
In 1965, Ginsberg was ejected from both Czechoslovakia and Cuba—the latter for allegedly hitting on Che Guevara.

ALLEN MEETS THE BEATS

SHORTLY AFTER ARRIVING AT COLUMBIA, Ginsberg met Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs, who would become his lifelong friends and greatest influences. Both were older than him (Kerouac by four years and Burroughs by 12), and they introduced young Allen to the fast-paced New York nightlife. During the next few years, Ginsberg developed a love for jazz, experimented with drugs, and became openly homosexual. He also became passionate about writing poetry—dashing his father's hopes for law school to pursue the artistic life, now known as Beat.

If you were expecting this to be the part where Ginsberg gets famous, then you're thinking of the wrong literary movement. The Beat lifestyle promised adventure and artistic wanderlust, not pop stardom. Ginsberg finally graduated from Columbia in 1948 (six years after he started), but the dead-end jobs he cycled through afterward didn't signal much professional promise. His love life around that time wasn't any better. Abortive love affairs with the likes of Burroughs and Beat icon Neal Cassady eventually drove Ginsberg into the Merchant Marines in an attempt to escape a persistent melancholy.

Then things hit rock bottom. Caught with a car full of stolen goods belonging to his roommate, Ginsberg was court-ordered to spend eight months in a psychiatric ward. In true Ginsbergian style, however, he managed to turn institutional lemons into lemonade. He met Carl Solomon, a fellow



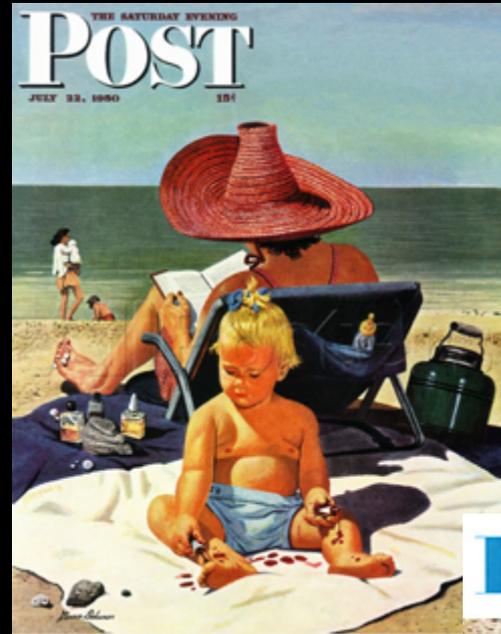
Many of these poets were openly gay.

Background

These poets saw a dehumanizing prison of mainstream values reflected in advertising, TV and media, in which the underside of society was defined out of existence.

Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and Ferlinghetti--raged against the complacent duplicity of fifties mass culture. The beats, aided by alcohol, drugs, jazz and Zen Buddhism, dropped out of America celebrated by the Saturday Evening Post.

In the process, they created their own vocabulary to reappropriate their American experience---the **struggle against conformity, mechanization and materialism**



Post Magazine covers, 1950s.

The white American middle class dream.

Homosexuality

In New York City in the 1950s, there were laws against homosexuals. The law against 'degenerate disorderly conduct' applied to those perceived as appearing homosexual through dress, hairstyle, deportment or topics of conversation. Two men were actually arrested on what they were discussing at the opera.

Another city law made it a crime for bars to serve alcohol to gay men.

Sexual secrecy in general and the secret of homosexuality pervaded postwar American culture.



Many male artists were open and or closeted homosexuals in the 1950s and 60s.

Tennessee Williams— Writer
Robert Rauschenberg, Artist
Jasper Johns— Artist
John Cage— Musician
Merce Cunningham— Dancer

And most were acquainted with each other.

Pop and pre-Pop

The reaction against what was thought of as the internal expression of the New York School, together with mainstream American values, emerged as Pop art.

Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, both gay men, began creating artworks about everyday subjects out of everyday materials.



In this work, *Bed*, Rauschenberg is mocking Abstract Expressionism's painting style, while attempting to bring the real world back into art. This piece, as many others of his, can also be read as referencing his own sexuality. Commenting on the bed as a place of sexual connection, as a closeted gay man, the drips of Abstract Expressionism are now used to imply bodily functions.



Robert Rauschenberg, *Bed*, 1955, pillow, bedding, paint, graphite.
MoMA— go see it.

Rauschenberg did his own version of the 'Odalisk' theme we've seen already in art history. He knew what he was doing. Only this time, using images from 'girlie' magazines, commercial symbols, comics, and a stuffed chicken and pillow, he references art, popular culture and sexist advertisements like this one.



This is a Sculpture. That means it is 3 dimensional. Not flat like a painting.

Rauschenberg, *Odalisk*, 1955-8



7.6 Old Gold cigarettes advertisement, *Life Magazine*, April 27, 1953, p.3.

Pop Art and Sex

The person we most associate with Pop art is Andy Warhol. His *Campbell Soup cans*, were simply paintings of the different varieties of soup sold by the Campbell Company at the time. Very straightforward. No emotion—the complete integration of life and art.

Unlike Rauschenberg and Johns, Warhol was openly gay at a time when it was a criminal act in New York to even speak about homosexual matters.

His silkscreen prints of famous celebrities, like Marilyn Monroe, highlighted the similarities in the way products like soup were advertised and consumed, in the same way as celebrities (who are real people).



Warhol, *Campbell Soup Cans*, 1964, Synthetic polymer paint on thirty-two canvases.

Warhol realized that advertising soup and people had become virtually the same.



Pop, Sex & Andy Warhol

While Andy Warhol is thought of whenever discussing Pop Art, he also, blurs the distinction between art and life more than any other artist. Warhol argued that Campbell's Soup and Coca Cola were things he used every day.

He brought the same level of personalization to his private life when he made public, films and photographs about private things; the erotic and emotional life of those around him.



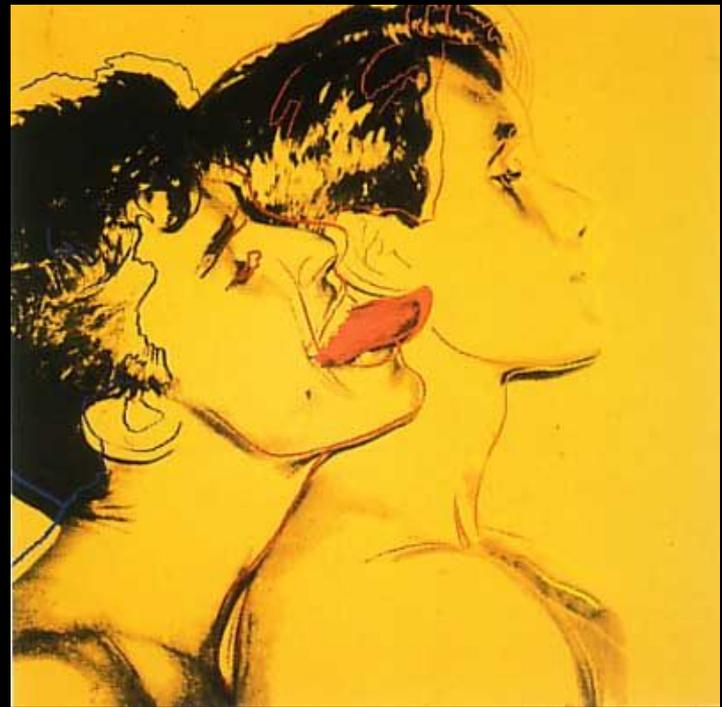
Andy Warhol, *Self Portraits in Drag*, 1980-81

Pop Art and Sex

The average viewer did not see the sexual content in Warhol's work. However, many art critics did and with homophobic leanings wrote things like, "homosexual ethics and esthetics are staging a vengeful, derisive counterattack on what deviates call the 'straight' world. This is evident in pop..."



Andy Warhol, *Andy's Randy Summer*



Warhol, *Querelle, United States, 1982*
Warhol, *Double Torso, 1982* both are silkscreen



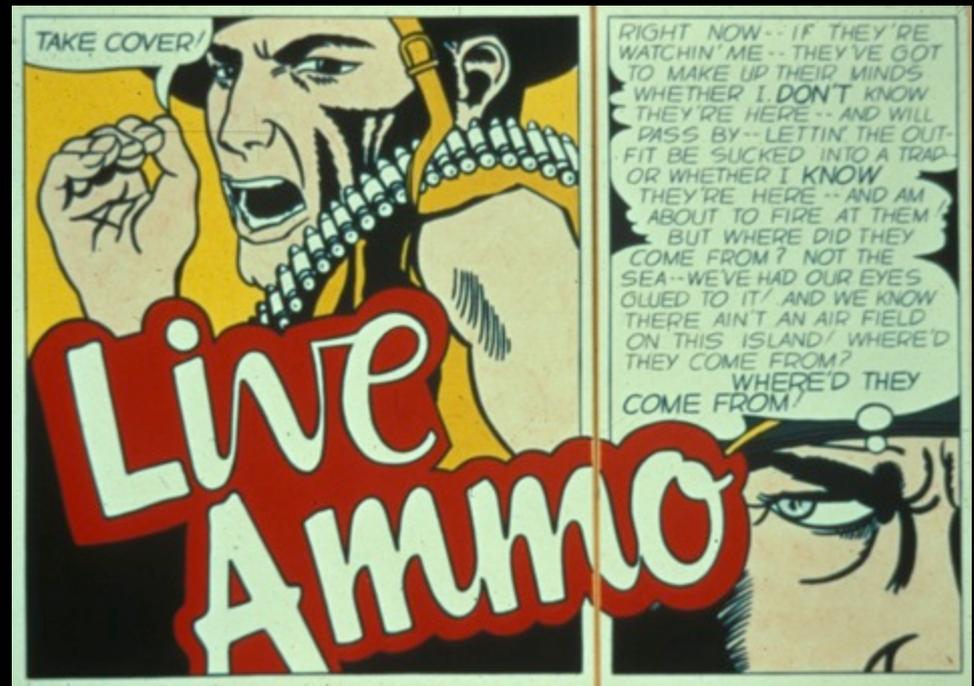
Pop Art and Sex

Other artists, like Lichtenstein, took images about romance and violence from popular cartoons.

He stressed ways media are part of the vehicle for construction of gender identity, among other things.

His work from this period are statements on our fascination with these themes and how they show up in cartoons. Because of the context, these cartoons solidify gender roles for boys and girls.

Men are active and take-charge, women are hopeless and emotional, waiting for their man.



Roy Lichtenstein, *Live ammo*, and *M-Maybe (A Girl's Picture)*, 1965 and *Hopeless*, 1963



Civil Rights

In the 1950s, African Americans in Southern states still experienced a unequal world of segregation and various forms of oppression, including race-inspired violence.

In the turbulent decade and a half that followed, civil rights activists used nonviolent protest and civil disobedience to bring about change, and the federal government made legislative headway with initiatives such as the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Act of 1968.



Selma to Montgomery march 1965



Memphis, Tn. Dr. Martin Luther King memorial 1968



Parker High School Student peacefully protesting. Attached by Police dogs, 1963, Birmingham, Alabama.

The riots at Birmingham, Alabama, in the spring of 1963 were notorious across America, and with this wide publicity the event was one of the climaxes of the Civil Rights Movement. Peaceful demonstrators were attacked by police dogs and water hoses, Martin Luther King was arrested. All was televised.



1963 March on Washington for Civil Rights and High Pressure water hose dispersing people in a civil rights protest.



Andy Warhol,
Race Riot, 1963.

Silkscreen of
newspaper
images.



Supporters of Martin Luther King, protesting segregation at lunch counters, were attacked by the police with dogs and water hoses, and King himself was arrested

• Warhol contributed this print to a portfolio of work by ten artists, published the year after the riot. The image is changed only in size and status from a newspaper photograph. Newspaper photos are removed from their context, silkscreened and repeated to emphasize the reality (or surreal) nature of the image.

IMPORTANT

Ad for Western Cartridge Company, 1943



Millions of boys, like many Americans in our armed forces, learned to be weight shooters with Western Cartridge. The accuracy of Special Agent Xpert .22's helped to improve marksmanship. They know, from their experience, why Western is the true Champion Ammunition.

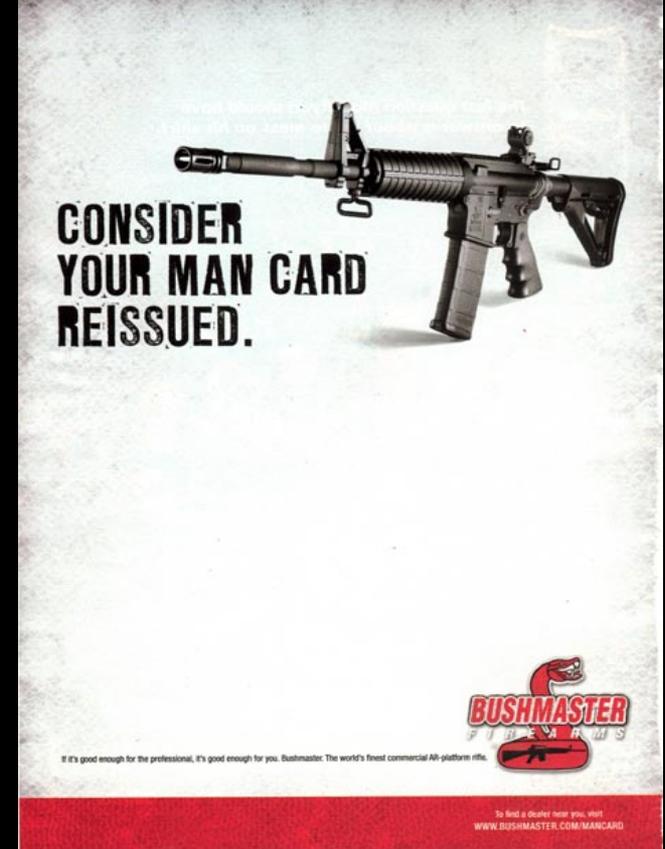
"Look what my kid brother did with Western!"

JUST a home-made bullet-punched paper target? No, it's much more than that. It's a page out of the way brothers grow up in millions of American families . . . a part of learning early to burn the bull's-eye out of a target with a .22 rifle.

Off on the serious business of soldiering for Uncle Sam, where he, too, may be shooting Western ammunition, Corporal Bob is mighty proud of his kid brother. And how right he is. American democracy gives *every individual* a reasonable chance to advance.

Western is an outstanding example of how that Democracy works. It has grown into one of the nation's great enterprises, and when war came we were *ready!*

Western
CARTRIDGE COMPANY
EAST ALTON, ILLINOIS



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FIREARMS

If it's good enough for the professional, it's good enough for you. Bushmaster. The world's finest commercial AR-platform rifle.

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WWW.BUSHMASTER.COM/MANCARD

This entire semester I have been trying to get you guys to understand that ideas do not go away. We might feel like some of them are relegated to the past but the residue is with us. How we define femininity and masculinity are constructed and these days, often by advertising companies with an agenda.

Contemporary advertisement for the gun used in the Sandy Hook shooting. 2016

IMPORTANT

This week we looked at the artwork and ideas in Post WWII America.

Women were not really allowed into the 'boys club' of the art world.

Racial issues still segregated whites and blacks in communities and politics.

While homosexuality was still against the law, homosexual individuals were finding ways to express their personal identity.

We looked at ideas and images related to masculinity.

Many things change with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s.

The modern African-American civil rights movement, like similar movements earlier, transformed American democracy.

It also served as a model for other group advancement and group pride efforts involving women, students, Chicanos, gays and lesbians, the elderly, and many others.

NEXT WEEK:

Women's Movement
Feminist Art Movement

The AIDS crisis

Vietnam War

African American Artists



JUDY CHICAGO, *The Dinner Party*, 1974-79.
Multimedia, including ceramics and stitchery,
48' x 48' x 48' installed.
Brooklyn Museum

GUERRILLA GIRLS, *Do Women have to be Naked to get into the Met Museum?*, 1989. Poster.