

POP ART

Part 2

POP ART

The term 'Pop art', occurred roughly between 1956 and 1966 in Great Britain and the US.

The origin of Pop in post-War Britain, while employing irony and parody, was more academic. It focused on the dynamic and paradoxical imagery of American popular culture as powerful, manipulative symbolic devices that were affecting whole patterns of life, while improving prosperity of a society.

This collage by Richard Hamilton, is making fun of American culture seduced by advertisements.



POP ART

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, unlike Abstract Expressionism, **was figurative**.

It used **recognizable images** rooted in an urban, media-driven environment & it was **very literal**.

In his early career, Warhol painted images snatched from headlines, ads in print media or life cycles of processed articles and food.

Images from Mass Culture.

Andy Warhol, these early paintings by Warhol were simply painted from real newspaper pages, 1962



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



Warhol recognized that with advertising and fame, all images were viewed and related to in the same way. A can of soup was sold the same way a personality was sold. People became one dimensional, superficial, conspicuous, consumed. No matter if it is a can of soup or a person, media images are presented in the same way and viewers consume them the same way.

Warhol, *Coca-Cola*, 1962,

Eventually he used a silkscreen process to emphasize the reproducibility of the process. Silk screen is a print making process previously used in advertising.

So the images were taken from advertising and day-to-day and then process of reproduction was also taken from mass media.

It is not meant to elevate the objects but to make a point about the availability, consumerist-consumptive nature of life.



WARHOL

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*

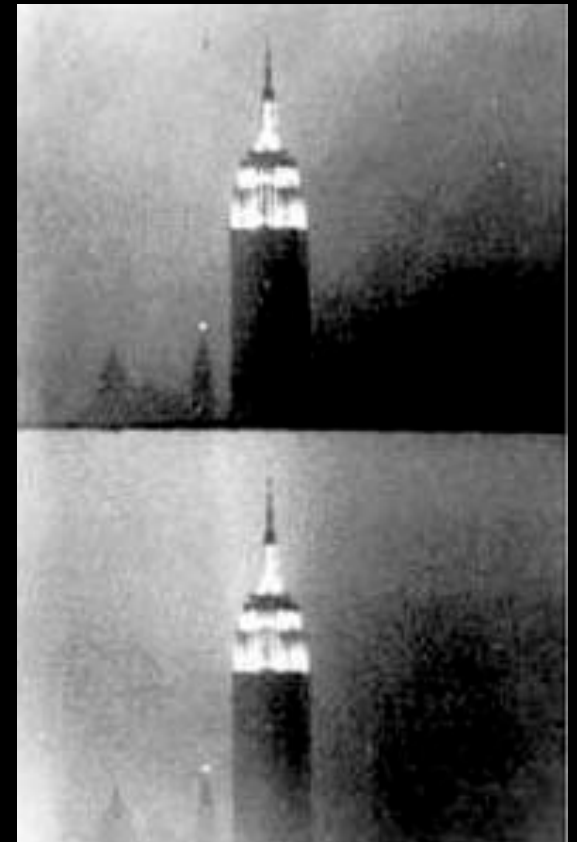


Warhol, *Querelle, United States*, 1982
Warhol, *Double Torso*, 1982 both are silkscreen





Another contribution by Warhol was to film. His interest was in non-edited documentation. This 8 hour 5 minute film of the Empire State Building shows everything that happened while the camera was shooting the event. Which was mostly the very slow shift from night to morning.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-sSsWj2HWk0>

Andy Warhol, *Empire*, 1964, 16 mm black and white silent film, 8 hours 5 minutes at 16 frames per second. Shot from dusk to dawn.

CONTEXT_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.

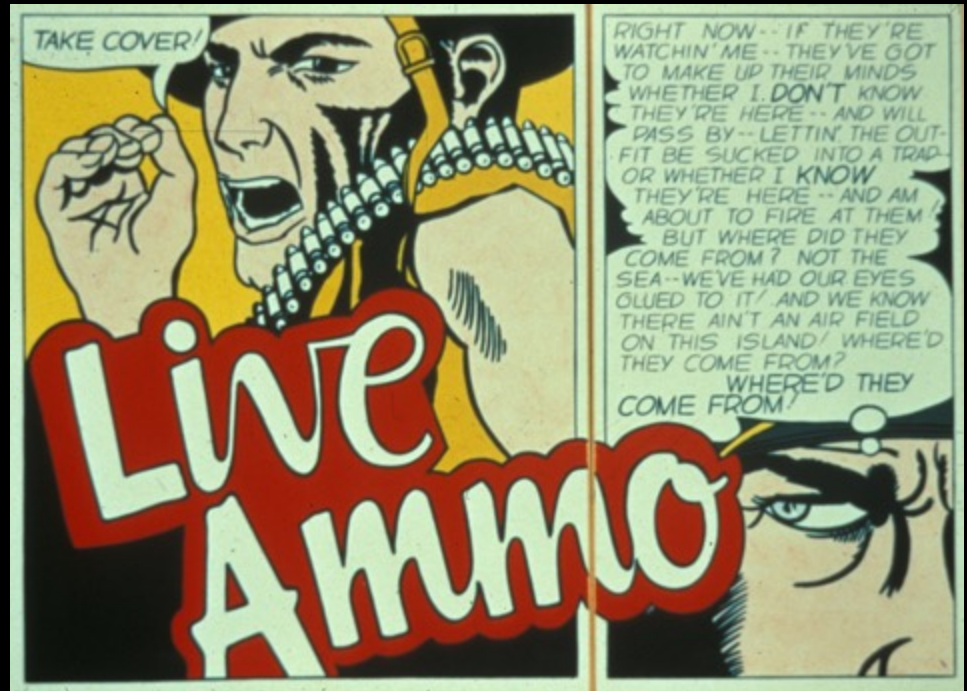
POP AND SEXUALITY

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





Tom Wessleman was influenced by history of Female reclining nudes in art but also soft-core porn in Playboy. Using a flat, almost silkscreen style, he exploited female sexuality seen in popular culture. Tom Wessleman, *Great American Nude*, 1961

James Rosenquist, a former billboard painter, made large scale works that fragmented images from advertising in suggestive ways.

A Ford car, a girl's face and spaghetti in tomato sauce are brought together to express the erotic theme implied in the title



James Rosenquist, *I Love You with my Ford*, 1964.

Robert Rosenquist,
Details, *F-111*, 1965

His large-scale--airbrush style and panels that summarize the ad layout taste for objects, material progress and social optimism.



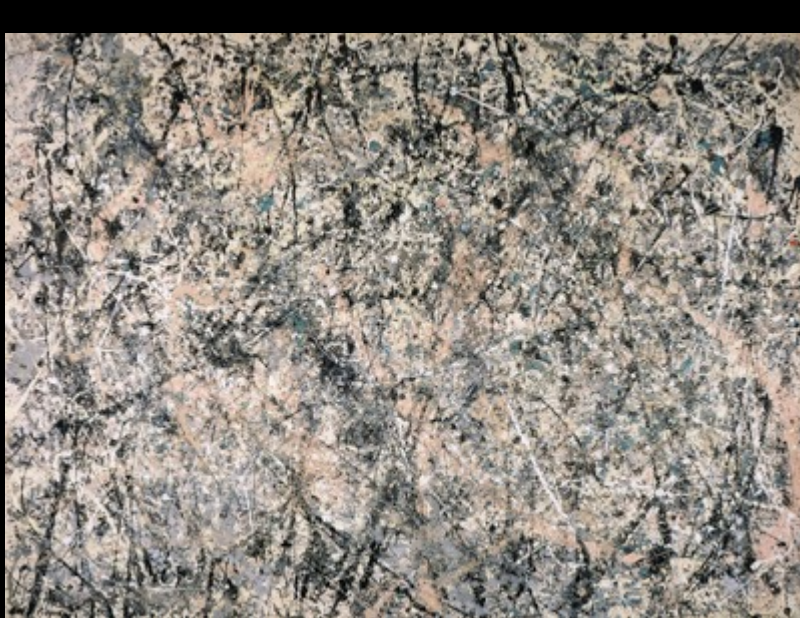
F-111 points to what the artist has described as “the collusion between the Vietnam death machine, consumerism, the media, and advertising.”



We started with these two diverse styles from the NY School.

Pop reacted against the Existential self-reflection of the New York School expanding instead, the ideas of Dada.

Next we will be looking at directions departing from them.



Throughout the class we see the artwork responding to or reacting against previous ideas or styles. At the same time, the cultural, social and historic context of the time has enormous impact on the work.

IMPORTANT

This week we looked at the artwork and ideas in Post WWII America, 1950s.

While the New York School dominated the art world in the 1940s and early 50s, focusing on internal expression, the next generation looked outside themselves to the things happening in everyday life.

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

We also looked at ideas and images related to masculinity.

The reality that mostly white men were responsible for most of the art in western history is about to be challenged.

Next week we look at a somewhat challenging movement— Minimalism.

It's all about the 'idea.'
How very Duchamp.

