

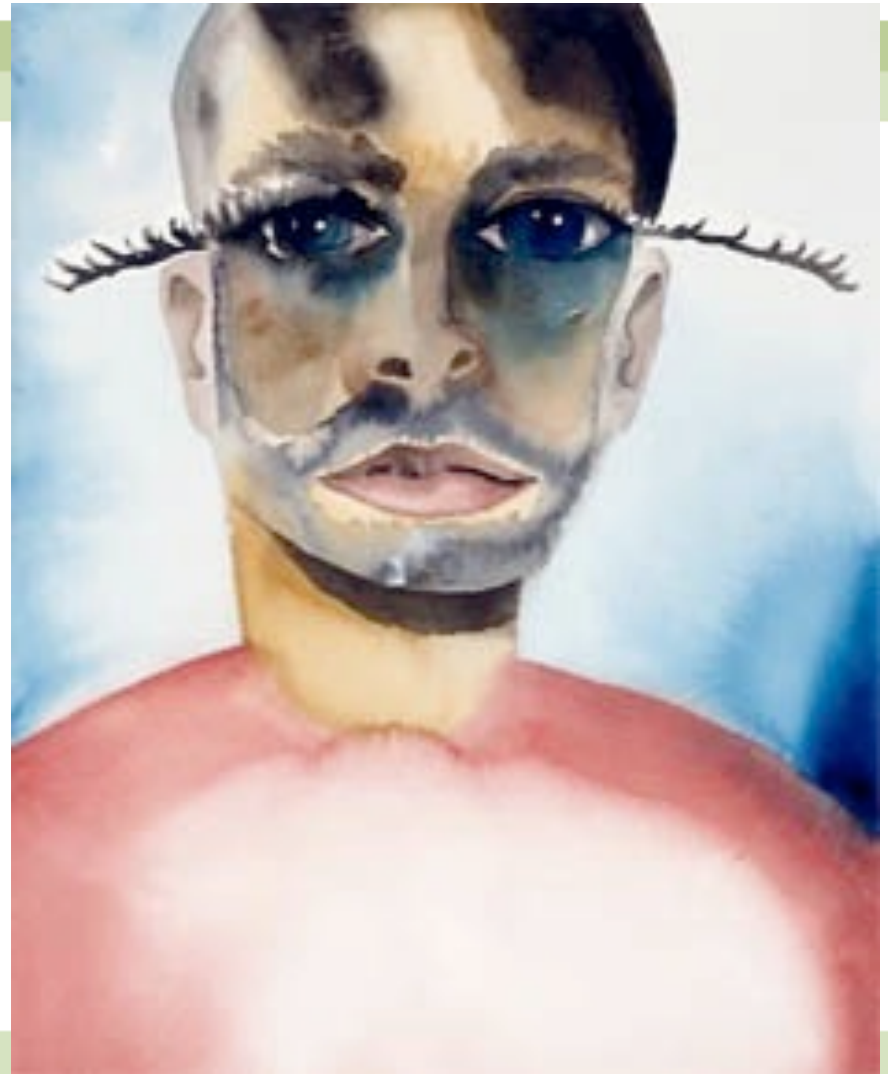
Public Art continued the tradition of Minimalism, Land Art and even Performance.

The second part of this lecture brings attention to some of the Painters.

Many critics had commented that painting was 'dead.' They thought that this highly traditional media was unable to address the concerns of a Postmodern time.

That however, proved to be not true.

Here are a few artists who continued to find ways to make painting relevant.



Francesco Clement

REVIEW_MODERNISM TO POSTMODERNISM

We started this class with a discussion of Modernism.

Modernism was a particular direction in thought, growing out of the Industrial Revolution. Believing in progress and human potential, Modernism in art rejected traditional forms of art and developed new ways of seeing and depicting the world.

An important part of this involved focus on the materials of art, like paint and light and color and movement, as opposed to grand narratives (or stories—like those of religion, mythology, history, etc.).

The artists also tended to organize in groups—so we have the ‘isms.’ Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism, Surrealism, etc. In some ways one might argue that Dada was the beginning of Postmodern ideas. Can you think of why? But it’s usually lumped in with Modernism.

Abstract Expressionism was a Modernist movement. The ideas and artwork continued Modernist ones. However, we begin to see the shift with Rauschenberg and Johns who began to bring real life back into art, including subject matter. This of course continues with Pop.

I know this is a lot to read. Hope you do it anyway. ☺

You may have noticed we have not looked at much painting in this class since Abstract Expressionism. As other ideas came to the forefront in art, painting was seen as antiquated and associated with either tradition or self-expression.

However, there were artists who continued to paint.

New Imagist Painting and Sculpture---was the name of a show that opened at the Whitney Museum in New York Dec. 1978.



This show focused attention on new aspects of painting that had been evolving over the decade...the curator identified 10 painters who used recognizable images in their work but whose execution was principally in dialog with abstraction, not traditional figurative painting...These artists, as well as others in the 70's and 80's were working with multiple, interacting but independent layers of discourse simultaneously in their work.

Philip Guston

One compact definition is that

postmodernism rejects modernism's grand narratives of artistic direction, eradicating the **boundaries between high and low forms of art**, and disrupting genre's conventions with **collision, collage, and fragmentation**.

Postmodern art holds that all stances are unstable and insincere, and therefore **irony, parody, and humor** are the only positions that cannot be overturned by critique or revision.

"Pluralism and diversity" are other defining features. Questions of **identity** and **embracing all forms** as equally valid.

While these artists were bringing recognizable subject matter into their work, Irony, Parody, Humor, Pluralism, Diversity, dissolving boundaries between High and Low Art, etc. are all evident.

THE RETURN TO PAINTING--



Philip Guston— Stated that each artist is himself.

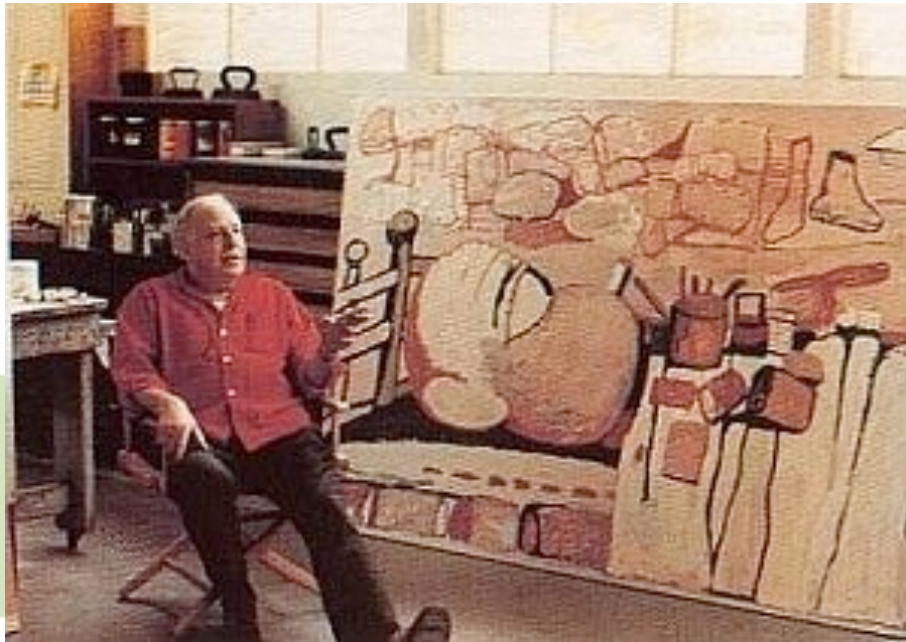
His work was based on ideas being developed at the time :

--Dissolving distinctions between High and Low art (his work has a cartoon aesthetic)

--bringing back recognizable subject matter

--making social and psychological statements about the human species, including artists

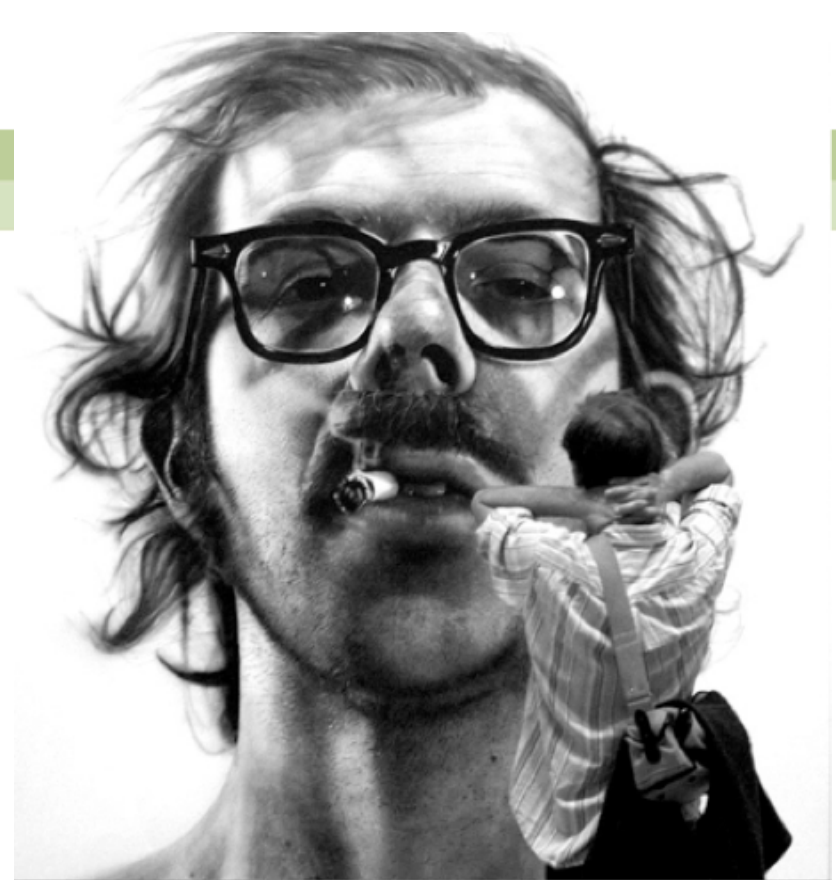
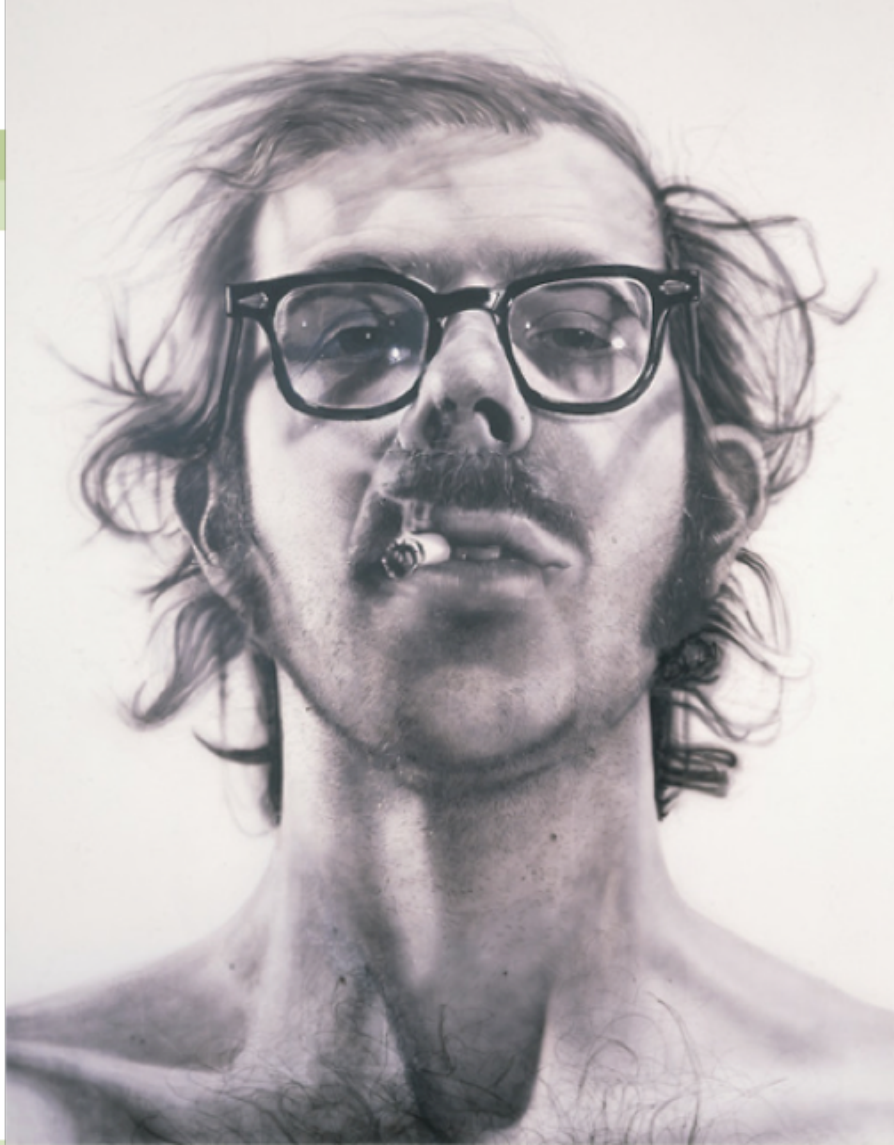
notice the cartoon aesthetic in the work.





Philip Guston

Philip Guston—Began working with Abstract Expressionism but develop a more individual style using a cartoon aesthetic. Themes based on his self-examinations.



<http://www.pacegallery.com/artists/80/chuck-close>

Note scale.

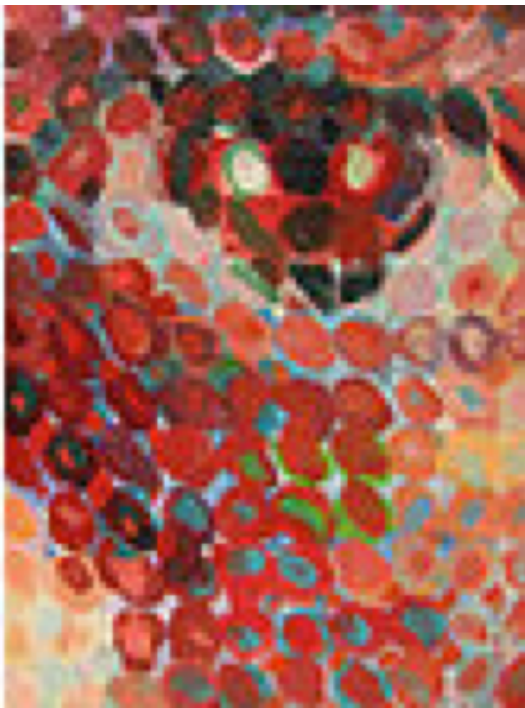
CHUCK CLOSE---Spent months painting something that looked like a snapshot-. He decided not to make art dependent on his own self-discovery but rather the pre-established facts of the photograph. The large scale impacts the viewer differently depending on the viewing position. Far away they appear super realistic. Up close, you can see too much of the detail. More than the eye could see.



Chuck Close (at the Met) renowned for his highly inventive techniques of painting the human face, and is best known for his large-scale, photo-based portrait paintings.

As he continued through his career, paintings became more and more abstract.

Using a grid to transfer photographs to paintings, each square was always viewed as an abstract image.





In 1988, Close was paralyzed following a rare spinal artery collapse; he continues to paint using a brush-holding device strapped to his wrist and forearm. His practice extends beyond painting to encompass printmaking, photography, and, most recently, tapestries based on Polaroids.

Anslem Kiefer

Images like this one below are based on photos from concentration camps.



Anselm Kiefer is a German artist working in a German Romantic tradition conveys a presence in his materials, lead, straw, dense pigment...linked to nature and mystery. Kiefer looks for parallels in mythology,--Nordic, Greek, Egyptian, Early Christian and Jewish. His preoccupation with death, destruction and renewal is classically romantic.



Nigredo

His massive works present encrusted paint, straw, tar, dirt and even clothes to impact the viewer with a visceral reminder of the human condition.

ANSELM KIEFER, *Nigredo*, 1984. Oil paint on photosensitized fabric, acrylic emulsion, straw, shellac, relief paint on paper pulled from painted wood, 11' x 18'. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia (gift of Friends of the Philadelphia Museum of Art).



Says he thinks about Religion a lot because Science provides no answers...Painting offers redemption from the horrors of a dark history and from his own unconscious.

Scorched landscapes refer to burnt black battlefields as well as death and destruction.



This large scale piece is in the Met. NYC.
If you see it in person the surface is crusty, layered, dense. While the reference to Pollock's paintings is clear, these works have recognizable subject and a feeling of something destroyed.





Eric Fischel-- embraced the description of himself as a painter of the suburbs, not generally considered appropriate subject matter prior to his generation.

Large scale paintings of people doing ordinary things with undertones of sexuality.



Themes of adolescent sexuality, voyeurism, and sexuality underlying seemingly ordinary everyday situations.



While painting returned in the 1980s despite the resistance to market forces of the 60s and 70s, it was graffiti art that carried the ideas of the previous decades into the next significant movement.

The continued integration of art and life with the postmodern directive to EMBRACE EVERYTHING.

Next week we talk about Graffiti.

