

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.



Richard Hamilton, *Just what is it today that makes today's homes so different, so appealing*, 1956

Hamilton's list for Pop qualities include that it must be:

- Popular (designed for a mass audience)
- Transient (short term solution)
- Expendable (easily forgotten)
- Low Cost
- Mass Produced
- Young (aimed at Youth)
- Witty
- Sexy
- Gimmicky
- Glamorous
- Big Business

Hamilton's collage took images from advertising to create an ironic image of the American Dream.



Richard Hamilton, *Just what is it today that makes today's homes so different, so appealing*, 1956

Pop, unlike Abstract Expressionism, was figurative. It used recognizable images rooted in an urban, media-driven environment & it was very literal.

In the US, Warhol painted images snatched from headlines, included 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





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

His Campbell Soup cans too, were simply paintings of the different varieties of soup sold by the Campbell Company at the time. Very straightforward. No emotion.

Warhol, *Coca-Cola*, 1962,

Eventually he used a silkscreen process to emphasize the reproducibility of the process.

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

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





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.

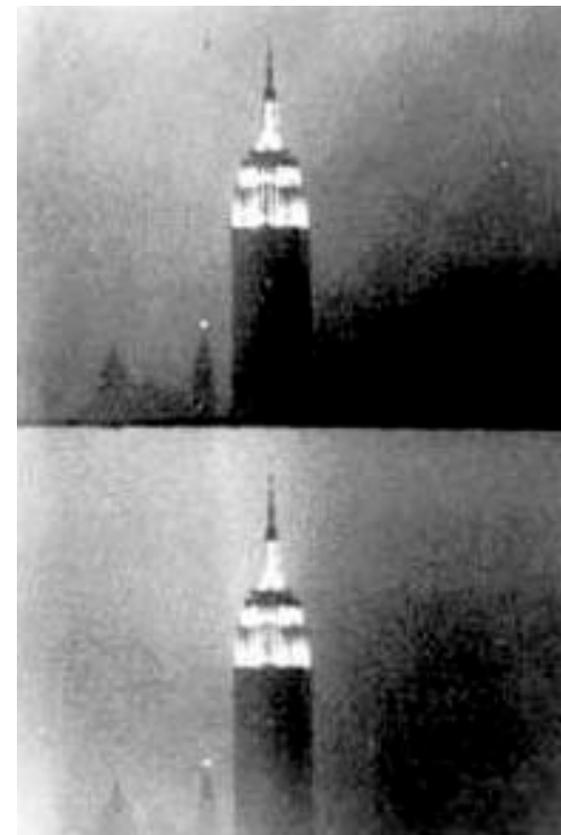


25 marilyns, 1962, transformed from reality to perceptions of reality by the media– he used reproductive techniques similar to advertising challenging the notions of the artist’s hand.

Marilyn Monroe died in August 1962. In the following four months, Warhol made more than twenty silkscreen paintings of her, all based on the same publicity photograph from the 1953 film *Niagara*. Warhol found in Monroe a fusion of two of his consistent themes: death and the cult of celebrity. By repeating the image, he evokes her ubiquitous presence in the media. The contrast of vivid color with black and white, and the effect of fading in the right panel are suggestive of the star’s mortality.

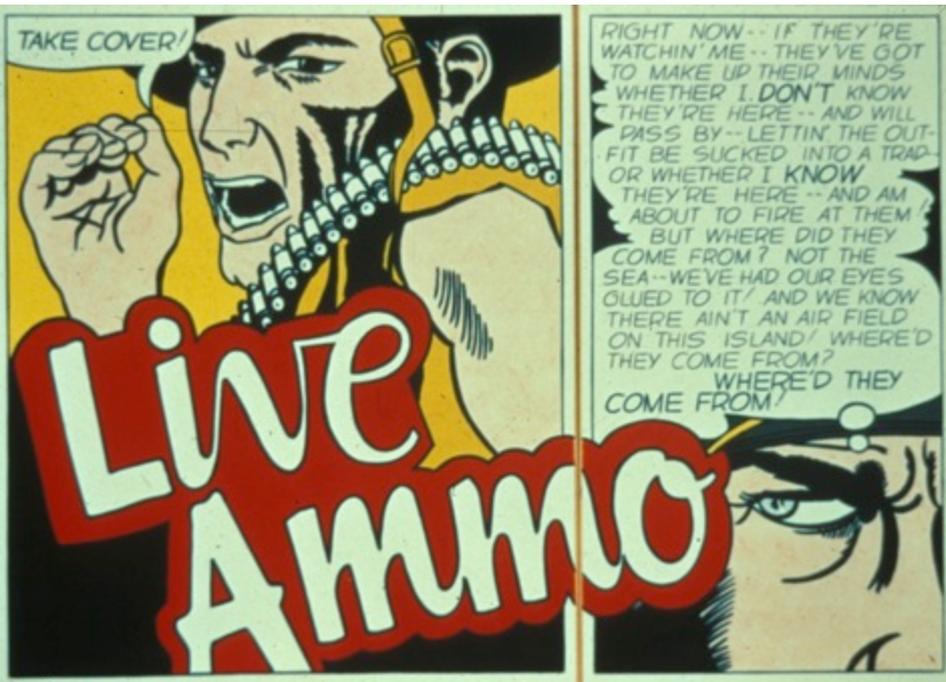


Another contribution by Warhol was to film. His interest was in non-edited documentation. This 8 hour 5 minute film of the Empire State Building shows everything that happened while the camera was shooting the event.



<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.



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

Other artists, like Lichtenstein, took images about romance and violence from popular cartoons. He wanted to stress ways media are part of the vehicle for construction of gender construction, among other things. His work from this period are statements on our fascination with these themes.



Little Big Painting, 1964, and *Red Hat*, 1970s

Lichtenstein went on to use this style to references to the history of art as well as other subjects. In this case Picasso and Pollock.



Tom Wesselmann, *Great American Nude*, 1961

Wesselmann's work is influenced by history of Female reclining nudes in art but also soft-core porn seen in Playboy. Much of his work is focused on consumerism.

James Rosenquist, a former bill board painter, brought his style and scale together with interest in consumer culture in complex, large-scale paintings.

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

The billboard artist turned pop artist used airbrush style and panels that summarize the ad layout taste for objects, material progress and social optimism.

This expanse of colliding visual motifs, *F-111* points to what the artist has described as “the collusion between the Vietnam death machine, consumerism, the media, and advertising.”





Claes Oldenburg, *Giant BLT (Bacon, Lettuce, and Tomato Sandwich)*, 1963. Vinyl, kapok fibers, painted wood, and wood, 32 × 39 × 29 in. (81.3 × 99.1 × 73.7cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of The American Contemporary Art Foundation Inc.,

“I am for U.S. Government
Inspected Art, Grade A art, Regular
Price art, Yellow Ripe art, Extra
Fancy art, Ready-to-eat art, Fully
cleaned art, Spend less art, Eat
better art, Ham art, pork art,
chicken art, tomato art, banana art,
apple art, turkey art, cake art,
cookie art . . . ”
—Claes Oldenburg

Oldenburg uses vinyl and other materials to transform familiar objects into artworks. His Emphasis is **on the preoccupation of advertising along with the oral obsession of most Americans.** **Transformed food into a dream fetish so outrageous it appeared comical.**



Claes Oldenburg, *Soft Toilet*, 1966. Wood, vinyl, kapok fibers, wire, plexiglass on metal stand and painted wood base, 55 1/2 × 28 1/4 × 30 in. (141 × 71.8 × 76.2 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; 50th Anniversary

and installation view with Hamburger



Many of the transformed everyday objects constructed by Oldenburg had erotic connotations either by subject matter or materials used or both.



Best known for food constructions in painted canvas and plaster. The early ones were done in a painterly way but still recognizable, then evolved into vinyl.

In December 1961, he rented a store on Manhattan's Lower East Side to house "The Store," a month-long installation he had first presented at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York, stocked with sculptures roughly in the form of consumer goods.



Race riots: Photo at top,
Warhol at right, *Race Riot*, 1963.

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.





Installation views of two other versions of the subject.

These silk-screen images were taken from newspapers, enlarged, reprinted and repeated in large scale. Now they are in a museum.

Context:

Race riots, Public protest, the War in Vietnam all meant people were taking their resistance to the street.

This iconic image of a Buddhist monk burning himself in protest helps us remember the public way these images entered popular culture.



Quang Duc, a seventy-three-year-old Buddhist monk, soaked himself in gasoline and set himself on fire, burning to death in front of thousands of onlookers at a main highway intersection in Saigon, Vietnam on June 11, 1963. **He was protesting against the American backed government's discrimination against Buddhists.** A group of nuns and Buddhist monks circled the burning martyr with banners that read

“A Buddhist Priest Burns Himself For Five Requests.” Malcom Browne

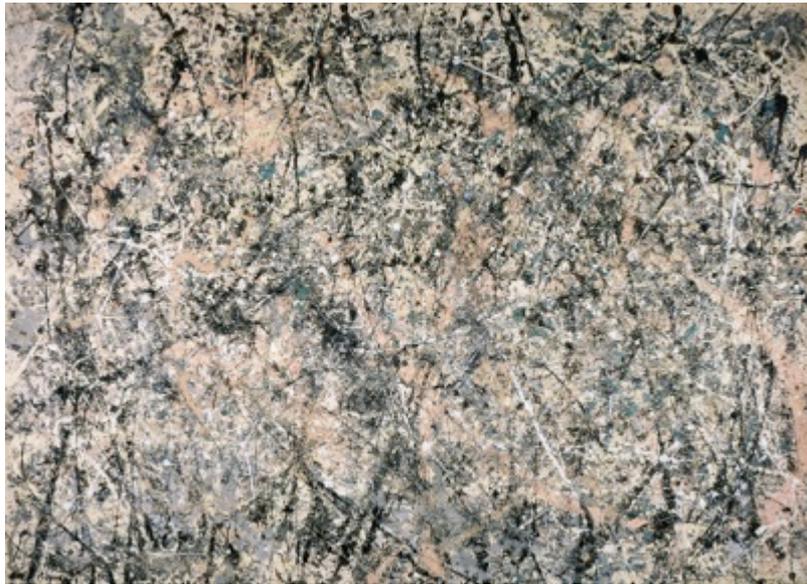


It may seem like art from this period was about popular culture, ignoring the realities of the war. However, the **Art Workers Coalition**, a group of artists protested in many instances. Here a group protests the Museum of Modern Art stance on the Vietnam war in front of Guernica, the Picasso anti war painting that was at MoMa at that time. They held up poster of “And Babies” about the My Lai incident in 1970.

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

Pop reacted against the Existential self-reflection of the New York School expanding ideas of Dada and using themes from real life.

Next we will be looking at directions departing from them.



Two examples of New York School and then

Pop.