

## Lecture Notes

### Syllabus 3/30/05 – POP ART

#### ➤ POP ART

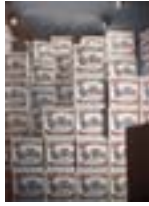
- actually started in Britain around 1954-55 to discuss American POPular and consumer culture
- Pop artists said they were not making social commentary or critique of American culture but they were just examining it using the banal cliches of mass media culture in the U.S. Richard Hamilton is something of an exception, however.



- **01\_Just What is it that Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing? – 1965 – Richard Hamilton**
- **POP ART**
  - The Blow Pop is NOT the origination for the term “Pop Culture” (see above)
  - This scene enumerates the newest modern conveniences that make life easier & “effortless”:
    - Hoover vacuum cleaner w/ June Cleaver in dress and pearls
    - Canned ham
    - Tape deck
    - Perfect lady on TV advertising perfect stuff
    - “Jazz Singer” with Al Jolson on theater marquee was the first “talkie” – precedes 1956 but still speaks of the modern age
    - Ford-ism – mass production started and helped start the machine age of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
    - Comic book – another icon in American popular culture in the 1950s
    - Woman with pasties could represent the beginning of the sexual revolution, sex symbol
    - Moon on ceiling – reaching for the stars/space travel?



- **02\_I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas – 1967-8 – Richard Hamilton**  
**POP ART**
  - Painting of the film “negative”. Bing is actually black. Painted during racial tension in U.S. making subtle comment.



03, 03A\_Brillo Boxes – 1964 – Andy Warhol

- **POP ART**

- **Important turning point in theorizing modernism**
- Arthur Danto (famous art critic) saw these & wrote famous essay proclaiming “This marks the end of modern art as we know it”
  - Leading up to this they were starting to burst the bubble by bridging the gap between art and life
  - Bubble’s now been burst – the bubble is the late Greenbergian Formalist Modernism, the heroic gesture of Pollack, the tragic and timeless art of Mark Rothko etc. : The Art that speaks of the epic moment of creativity that we flock to the museum to worship and bow down to; that modernist, removed abstraction that only the privileged, insightful and elite can really grasp and understand
  - Danto not decrying this pessimistically saying that art itself was over, merely signaling a new direction, a departure
  - Despite Danto’s statement, formalist abstraction continued to be the primary form of art both in painting in sculpture that was privileged by museums and galleries on into the 1970s
- Not the original boxes but fabricated replicas screen printed to look identical to actual boxes produced by the company. “This is not a pipe!” (reference to Magritte’s statement that everything is not as it appears to be).
- Warhol’s asking, in an inverted way, the same questions Duchamp raised with his readymades. Rather than use the real boxes and putting them in a museum, Warhol is making them. This makes it an “original” of sorts, keeping its “aura” according to Walter Benjamin.



04\_ 210 Coca-Cola Bottles –1962 – Andy Warhol

- **POP ART**

- Warhol said Coke is the same no matter who drinks it, the Queen or a pauper. No class distinction.
- Uses SERIAL REPETITION, a practice central to his pop art, except images aren’t exactly identical (which he liked)
- What makes Warhol a Pop artist? His subjects are the cliches and the objects and products of mass consumer culture in the U.S.
- Warhol presents them “just as they are” – “on the surface”



- **05, 06, 07\_Marilyn Monroe –**

**1962 – Andy Warhol**

**POP ART**

- Warhol loved celebrity. Everybody can relate to or have ownership in a celebrity.
- Loved serial repetition:
  - “Familiarity breeds indifference” – even tho there’s no social commentary, and everything’s surface, when he repeats images like Marilyn Monroe he’s identifying with how the public has been bombarded over and over with the same images of the celebrity and after a while we see only a celebrity icon and not the real person, draining her of her real meaning (a poor girl named Norma Jean who was self made)



- **08\_Last Self-Portrait – 1986 – Andy Warhol**

**POP ART**

- Whole idea of what I am is surface, artificiality of what we do and don’t see in mass media objects... admitting he’s hiding by putting camouflage on himself



- **09\_Wham! – 1963 – Roy Lichtenstein**

**POP ART**

- Most well known for appropriation of comic book images
- Started with Mickey Mouse
- Made dot stencils to resemble dot-screens of comics
- Alters images just enough so it’s not exact replica but makes a good painting
- It’s pop art because it’s a transformation from every day comic book imagery into fine art.



10\_Big Painting no 6 – 1965 – Roy Lichtenstein

**POP ART**

- Example of new direction in his art
- Began branching out his appropriations beyond comic books to look for other images as part of mass consumer culture cliches.
- What's he appropriating here? the gestural brushstroke of abstract expressionists. ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM has become the cliché of consumer culture.
- Also did appropriations of masterworks, suggesting their entry into the cliché, mass commodified, popular culture: Van Gogh's bedroom at Arles, Matisse's studio, Monet's Rouen Cathedral series.



11, 12, 13\_Love – 1972 –

**Robert Indiana**

**POP ART**

- Not his original last name
- Also considered to be one of those iconic pop artists
- This image is an instantly recognizable icon of mass consumption that comes from an idea rather than a commodity.
- Influenced by Demuth and Stewart Davis who appropriated billboard/everyday popular culture at the beginning of the century.
- Fascinated by words. Did a series of two juxtaposed words, "Eat" and "Die"