

Meet the Masters

April Program

Grade 8:

Pop Art - 1960's Style

Andy Warhol "Old Fashioned Vegetable"

Roy Lichtenstein "Whaam"

About the Artist:

See the following pages.

About the Artwork;

The period of art that we are discussing is "Pop Art". This was the strongest art movement of the 1960's. Although the Pop Art movement began in Britain in the 1950's, American artists took the movement as their own in the decade of the 60's. This was an art that had a natural appeal to American artists, living in the midst of the most blatant and pervasive industrial and commercial environment. Many of the images used by the British Pop artists were derived from the American commercials, popular idols, comic strips and motion pictures.

American Pop Art was a reaction against the Abstract Expressionism that had dominated American painting in the 1940's and 1950's. Abstract Expressionism generally was non-objective with an emphasis on the expression of the artist through the inherent properties of the paint. These artists generally produce very large-scale works. The Pop artists were concerned with revealing the world they knew which was commercial, mass produced and many times mechanistic.

Topics for Discussion:

1. Do you think the Pop artists changed the way people look at everyday objects?
2. What do you think of their artwork?
3. Would you want to have this art in your home? Why?

Hands-on Art Activity: Enlarged Comics

Teacher Preparation: Students will choose a small section of the cartoon to enlarge to the size of the 11" x 14" paper. Text and some interesting shapes should be included in the composition.

Materials: Favorite cartoon, preferably in color and from the Sunday comics
Pencils
Black markers
Paper 11" x 14"
Tempera paint
Brushes
Water tubs, newspapers

Directions:

1. Place paper around the section you would like to enlarge or you could fold the paper back to crop the image for your drawing.
2. Copy the section from the cartoon onto the larger paper.
3. Color or paint inside of the shapes you have drawn. Add stripes or dots to give Texture to the design.
4. When the paint is dry use the black marker draw around all of the shapes.
5. Sign the front when complete.

Warhol, Andy

1928—87, American artist and filmmaker, b. Pittsburgh as Andrew Warhola. The leading exponent of the pop art movement and one of the most influential artists of the late 20th cent., Warhol concentrated on the surface of things, choosing his imagery from the world of commonplace objects such as dollar bills, soup cans, soft-drink bottles, and soap-pad boxes.

He is variously credited with ridiculing and celebrating American middle-class values by erasing the distinction between popular and high culture. Monotony and repetition became the hallmarks of his multi-image, mass-produced silk-screen paintings: for many of these, such as the portraits of Marilyn Monroe and Jacqueline Kennedy, he employed newspaper photographs. He and his assistants worked out of a large New York studio dubbed the "Factory."

In the mid-1960s Warhol began making films, suppressing the personal element in marathon essays on boredom. In *The Chelsea Girls* (1966), a seven-hour voyeuristic look into hotel rooms, he used projection techniques that constituted a startling divergence from established methods. Among his later films are *Trash* (1971) and *L'Amour* (1973). With Paul Morrissey, Warhol also made the films *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* (both: 1974). In 1973, Warhol launched the magazine *Interview*, a publication centered upon his fascination with the cult of the celebrity. He died from complications following surgery.

The Andy Warhol Museum, which exhibits many of his works, opened in Pittsburgh in 1994.

<http://education.yahoo.com/reference/encyclopedia/entry/Warhol-A>, September 22, 2006.

Roy Lichtenstein

(October 27, 1923 – September 29, 1997) was a prominent American pop artist, whose work borrowed heavily from popular advertising and comic book styles, which he himself described as being "as artificial as possible".

Early years

Born into a middle-class family in 1923 in New York City, he attended public school until the age of 12, before being enrolled into a private academy for his secondary education. The academy did not have an art department, and he became interested in art and design as hobby outside of his schooling. He was an avid fan of Jazz and often attended concerts at the Apollo Theater in Harlem. He would often draw portraits of the musicians at their instruments. During 1939, in his final year at the academy, he enrolled in summer art classes at the Arts Students League in New York under the tutelage of Reginald Marsh.

On graduating in 1940, Lichtenstein left New York to study at the Ohio State University which offered studio courses and a degree in fine arts. His studies were interrupted by a three year stint in the army during World War II between 1943 and 1946. He returned to his studies in Ohio after the war and one of his teachers at the time, Hoyt L. Sherman, is widely regarded to have had a significant impact on his future work (Lichtenstein would later name a new studio he funded at OSU as the Hoyt L. Sherman Studio Art Center). Lichtenstein entered the graduate program at Ohio State and was hired as an art instructor, a post he held on and off for the next ten years. In 1951 he had his first one-man exhibition at a gallery in New York, the exhibition was a minor success.

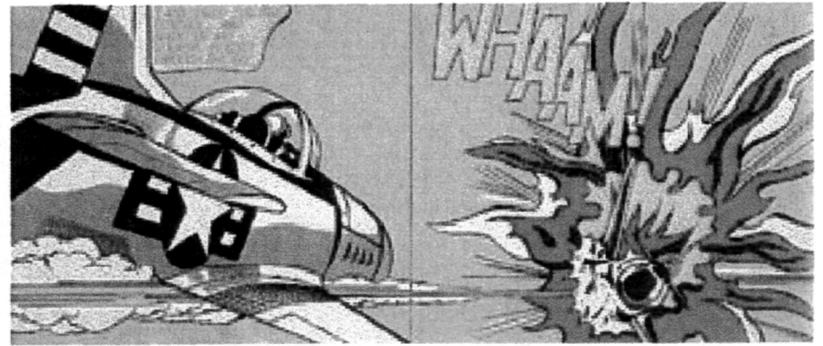
He moved to Cleveland in 1951, where he remained for six years, doing jobs as various as draftsman to window decorator in between periods of painting. His work at this time was based on cubist interpretations of other artist's paintings such as Frederic Remington. In 1957 he moved back to upstate New York and began teaching again. It is at this time that he adopted the Abstract Expressionism style, a late convert to this style of painting; he showed his work in 1959 to an unenthusiastic audience.

He began teaching at Rutgers University in 1960 where he was heavily influenced by Allan Kaprow, also a tutor at the University. His first work to feature the large scale use of hard edged figures and Benday Dots was *Look Mickey* (1961, National Gallery, Washington DC). In the same year he produced six other works with recognizable characters from gum wrappers or cartoons. In 1961 Leo Castelli started displaying Lichtenstein's work at his gallery in New York, and he had his first one man show at the gallery in 1962; the entire collection was bought by influential collectors of the time before the show even opened. Finally making enough money to live from his painting, he stopped teaching a year later.

Mature Style

Using oil and Magna paint his best known works, such as *Drowning Girl* (1963, Museum of Modern Art, New York), feature thick outlines, bold colors and Benday Dots to represent certain colors, as if created by photographic reproduction. Rather than attempt to reproduce his subjects, his work tackles the way mass media portrays them. When his work was first released, many art critics of the time wrote about the originality, more often than not they were making no attempt to be positive.

His most famous image is arguably *Whaam!* (1963, Tate Gallery, London), one of the earliest known examples of pop art, featuring a fighter aircraft firing a rocket into an enemy plane with a dazzling red and yellow explosion. The cartoon style is heightened by the use of the onomatopoeic lettering WHAAM! and the boxed caption "*I pressed the fire control... and ahead of me rockets blazed through the sky...*" This diptych is large in scale, measuring 1.7 x 4.0 m (5'7" x 13'4").



Whaam! (1963). On display at the Tate Gallery, London

Drowning Girl (1963). On display at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Most of his best-known artworks are relatively close, but not exact, copies of comic book panels, a subject he largely abandoned in 1965. (He would occasionally incorporate comics into his work in different ways in later decades.) These panels were originally drawn by lesser known comic book artists such as Russ Heath, Tony Abruzzo, Irv Novick, and Jerry Grandinetti, who rarely received any credit. Artist Dave Gibbons said of Lichtenstein's works: "Roy Lichtenstein's copies of the work of Irv Novick and Russ Heath are flat, uncomprehending tracings of quite sophisticated images." In response to complaints like that of Gibbons, Lichtenstein's obituary in *The Economist* noted these artists "did not think much of his paintings. In enlarging them, some claimed, they became static. Some threatened to sue him...But this is to miss the point of Roy Lichtenstein's achievement. His was the idea. The art of today, he told an interviewer, is all around us."

During the seventies and eighties, his work began to loosen and expand on what he had done before. He produced a series of "Artists Studios" which incorporated elements of his previous work. A notable example being *Artist's Studio, Look Mickey* (1973, Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis) which incorporates five other previous works, fitted into the scene.

In the late seventies this style was replaced with more surreal works such as *Pow Wow* (1979, Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen). In addition to paintings, he also made sculptures in metal and plastic including some notable public sculptures such as *Lamp* in St. Mary's, Georgia in 1978. His painting *Torpedo...Los!* sold at Christie's for \$5.5 million in 1989, a record sum at the time, one of only three artists to have attracted such huge sums for art by a living artist. In 1995 Lichtenstein was awarded the Kyoto Prize from the Inamori Foundation in Kyoto, Japan. In 1996 the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC became the largest single repository of the Artists work when he donated 154 prints and 2 books. In total there are some 4,500 works thought to be in circulation. He died of pneumonia in 1997 at New York University Medical Center. Twice married, he was survived by his wife, Dorothy, whom he wed in 1968, and by his sons, David and Mitchell, from his first marriage. The DreamWorks Records logo was his last completed project.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roy_Lichtenstein, September 22, 2006.