

Pop impressions : [brochure] Europe/USA

Author

Museum of Modern Art (New York,
N.Y.). Department of Prints and
Illustrated Books

Date

1999

Publisher

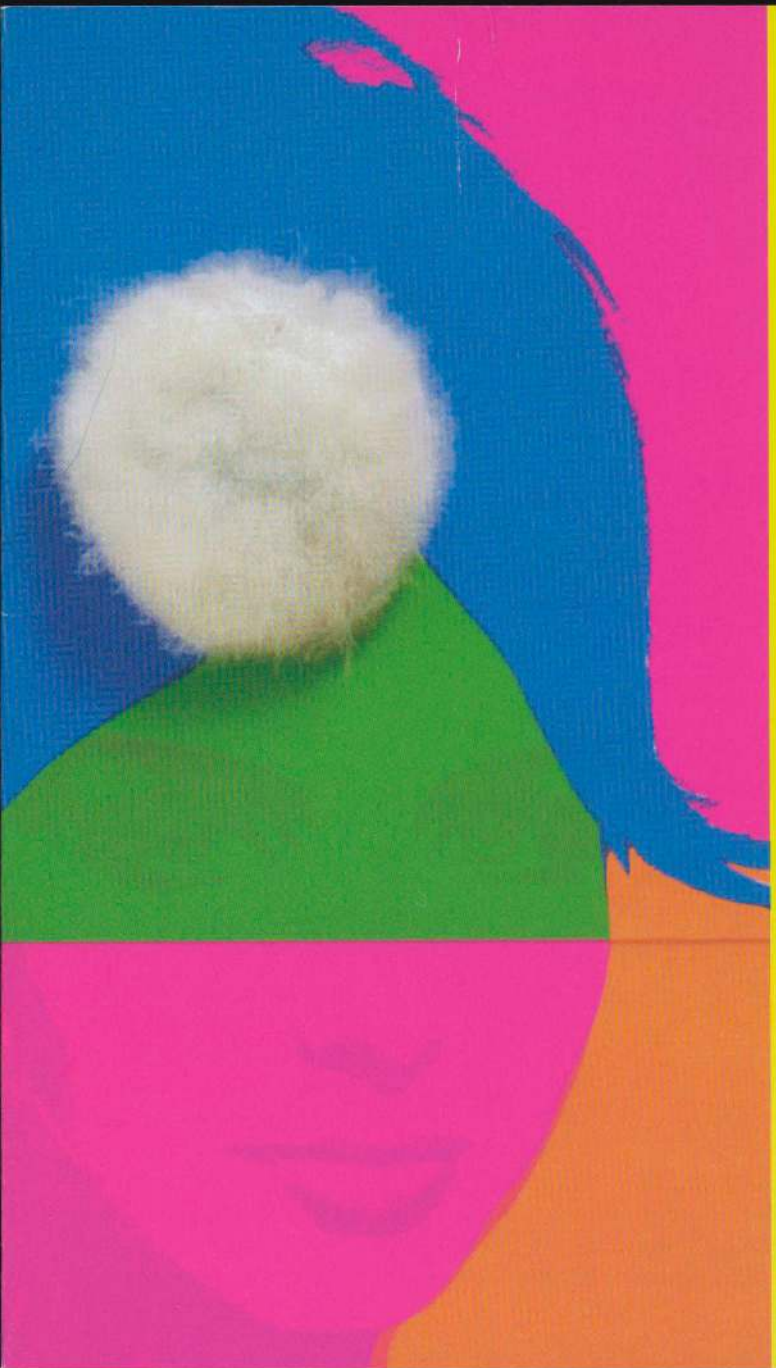
The Museum of Modern Art, Department
of Prints and Illustrated Books

Exhibition URL

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available online. It includes exhibition catalogues,
primary documents, installation views, and an
index of participating artists.

POP IMPRESSIONS EUROPE/USA



POP IMPRESSIONS EUROPE/USA**Prints and Multiples from The Museum of Modern Art**

Pop art pervaded the culture of the 1960s and became intertwined with the lifestyle of its time more than any other aesthetic movement of the twentieth century. It flourished out of an era of unprecedented economic prosperity, whose manifestations became the fodder for Pop's artistic upheaval. The broad appeal of its accessible imagery and vivid, bright designs permanently expanded the audience for art.

Printed images permeated the Pop vision, and fundamental principles of printmaking—including concepts of transference and repetition—underlay the artistic thinking of the movement. A resurgence of interest in printed art in the United States and Europe coincided with Pop's development and set the stage for the perfect pairing of conceptual thinking and technical means that occurred in the printmaking of the Pop era. The media-based, populist ideas that fostered Pop art corresponded to the multiple nature, lower cost, and commercial mediums associated with printmaking, screenprint in particular, yielding an especially rich moment in the history of twentieth-century printed art.

THE MEDIUM

A host of new publishers and print workshops in the U.S. and Europe contributed their creative energies and talents to the outpouring of prints in the 1960s. Their entrepreneurial, technical, and aesthetic visions were in large part responsible for this explosion of printed art.

The screenprint workshop Kelpra Studio was founded in London in 1957 by master printer Christopher Prater. Though begun as a commercial shop printing posters for organizations such as the British Arts Council, it became a magnet for artists interested in exploring the screenprint's capacity for coupling photographic elements with vibrant color. Artists Richard Hamilton and Eduardo Paolozzi were among the earliest converts to

the medium. At Hamilton's urging, in 1964 London's Institute of Contemporary Arts published a groundbreaking portfolio of twenty-four screenprints by as many artists. The project launched the medium as a vital tool for creative expression among contemporary British artists, many of whom made their first screenprint for this project. Several other adventurous and far-sighted British publishers, including Editions Alecto and Petersburg Press, who understood printmaking's potential as the ideal vehicle to meld Pop's audacious imagery with its democratic ideals, undertook ambitious projects with artists ranging from Peter Blake and David Hockney to Allen Jones and Jim Dine.

France also witnessed a renewed interest in printmaking with the onset of Pop. Publishers, print galleries, and print clubs flourished in Paris in the 1960s. Small publishers, such as Éditions V, sold prints in the department stores Galeries Lafayette and Printemps, as well as through subscriptions. In the late 1950s and early 1960s screenprint workshops opened in Paris and elsewhere to accommodate artists' growing desire to experiment with the medium. In 1955 Jean-Jacques de Broutelles opened his shop Paris Arts, and in 1963 Michel Caza opened his atelier; together they printed hundreds of works by contemporary Pop figures working in France including Peter Klasen, Bernard Rancillac, Martial Raysse, and Hervé Télémaque.

New publishers and workshops, such as Hofhaus-Presse in Düsseldorf, also sprang up in Germany during this period, while several galleries opened presses to publish prints by their artists. Vanguard German artists, including Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke, were attracted to the screenprint primarily for its ability to reproduce the photographic imagery that served as the foundation of much of their work. Progressive Berlin gallery owner René Block launched their careers and those of others in the Pop-inspired German group known as Capitalist Realism. Block was also one of the

leading publishers of the period and coordinated several innovative multi-artist projects including the portfolio *Grafik des Kapitalistischen Realismus* (Graphics of Capitalist Realism), in 1967.

In the U.S., the seminal workshops Universal Limited Art Editions (begun in West Islip, New York in 1957) and Tamarind Lithography Workshop (started in Los Angeles in 1960) instigated a revival of interest in the printmaking mediums among cutting-edge artists and trained a host of desperately needed printers. Both shops believed in the primacy of lithography. But with the ascent of Pop, several new screenprint shops arose, and existing commercial firms turned to fine art projects. In New Haven, Sirocco Screenprinters, which opened in 1950 as a commercial printing shop, began working with Pop artists in the early 1960s, and Steve Poleskie launched Chiron Press in New York in 1963. Known as an experimental and adventurous technician, Poleskie was an ideal collaborator for many of the Pop artists in their iconoclastic use of materials.

Enterprising publishers like Rosa Esman of Tanglewood Press and Marian Goodman of Multiples, Inc., opened in 1964 and 1965 respectively, realized how well editioned work meshed with Pop's aesthetic, conceptual, and economic framework. Tanglewood's innovative portfolios, from *New York Ten* (1965) and *New York International* (1966) to *7 Objects in a Box* (1966), dominated the outburst of Pop publishing in New York. Multiples, Inc. championed the recently developed medium known as the multiple—mass-produced, three-dimensional objects made in editions—with innovative projects by Robert Indiana, Roy Lichtenstein, and Claes Oldenburg.

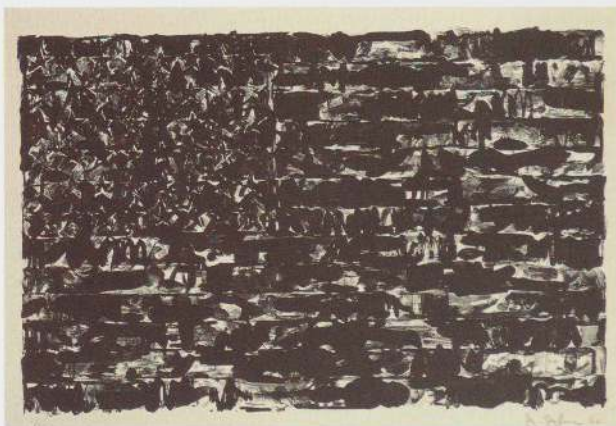
Andy Warhol came to define the Pop movement in the U.S. and revolutionized the role of the screenprint in American art. In 1962 he began screenprinting pho-

tographic images onto canvas, and works on paper soon followed. By the late 1960s he became his own publisher and, using commercial screenprint workshops, founded Factory Additions to release print portfolios based on specific themes in his paintings. Begun in 1967, these portfolios, including *Marilyn Monroe* (*Marilyn*) and *Campbell's Soup I*, are among Warhol's most well-known works and also contributed to his status as one of the most successful publishers of the Pop era.

THE MESSAGE

Proto-Pop

The accessible, mundane, and occasionally vulgar imagery that exploded onto the world with Pop art was unlike anything seen before in its banality, confrontational presentation, and commercial derivation.



Jasper Johns *Flag I*, 1960. Lithograph. Composition: 17 1/2 x 26 3/4" (44.5 x 67.9 cm). Sheet: 22 1/4 x 30" (56.5 x 76.2 cm). Publisher and printer: Universal Limited Art Editions, West Islip, New York. Edition: 23. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Armand P. Bartos, 1962. ©Jasper Johns/ULAE/VAGA, New York

The art that immediately preceded it set the stage for these breakthroughs. As artists rejected the abstract modes that had dominated the 1950s, they increasingly turned to depictions of the object. In the U.S., proto-Pop figures such as Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg,



Richard Hamilton. *My Marilyn*. 1966. Screenprint. Composition: 20 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 25" (51.5 x 63.3 cm). Sheet: 27 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 33 $\frac{7}{16}$ " (68.7 x 84.3 cm). Publisher: Editions Alecto, London. Printer: Kelpa Studio, London. Edition: 75. Joseph G. Mayer Foundation Fund, 1966. © Richard Hamilton/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/DACS, London

and Larry Rivers began their prolific, influential careers as printmakers working in lithography at ULAE in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Martial Raysse, Mimmo Rotella, Daniel Spoerri, and other members of the Paris-based Nouveaux Réalistes, a group working mostly in assemblage and performance, stated their goal as "new perceptive approaches to the real." The editioned work of Rotella and Spoerri often took the form of three-dimensional objects. This was also true for Christo, a recent émigré to Paris, who made early wrapped multiples for Spoerri's groundbreaking venture Édition MAT (Multiplication d'Art Transformable), which had begun publishing affordable multiples by a wide range of international artists as early as 1959.

Mass Media

The economic prosperity of the 1950s brought about a boom in media development. The flood of new consumer products that appeared during this period required vast advertising expenditures, the revenues of which in turn contributed to an expanding media industry. And it was the media, both printed and electronic, more than any other single aspect that informed the everyday imagery, conceptual underpinnings, and even aesthetic formats of Pop.

For the first time in the history of art, items such as comic strips, movie stills, magazine and newspaper photographs, and television played a dominant role in artists' creative thinking. Hamilton and Paolozzi were among those British artists who focused on the mass media's impact on modern art and thrived on experimenting with screenprint's adaptability with photography.



Andy Warhol. *Cagney*. (1964). Screenprint. Composition and sheet: 29 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 39 $\frac{13}{16}$ " (75.9 x 101.2 cm). Publisher: unpublished. Printer: the artist. Edition: approximately 5. Vincent d'Aquila and Harry Soviak Bequest, 1993. ©Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts/Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Their collagelike styles combined elements from magazines, newspapers, postcards, and a host of other printed ephemera that reflected the visual bombardment in post-war culture.

For *My Marilyn* Hamilton manipulated rejected publicity stills of Marilyn Monroe published in a British magazine after her suicide. In this context Monroe's vetting Xs take on a poignant, charged meaning about the role of the media in society. Warhol was an inveterate collector of celebrity memorabilia, magazines, posters, movie stills, and other popular printed artifacts of the period. For *Cagney* he borrowed a publicity still from the 1938 film *Angels with Dirty Faces* and cropped out James Cagney's adversary to heighten the drama of the scene and highlight the movie star's film persona.

Consumer Culture

The 1950s and early 1960s witnessed the rise of the self-service supermarket and with it a new emphasis on consumer packaging. Advertising styles were transformed during this period, and the industry as a whole grew dramatically. Ads became significantly bolder in design, comprising fewer words and larger, more colorful, and increasingly photographic images. The impact of these developments was reflected more in the work of Pop artists in America, where this phenomenon was most apparent, than in that of



Roy Lichtenstein. *Turkey Shopping Bag*. (1964). Screenprint on shopping bag with handles. Composition: $7\frac{7}{8} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ " (19.1 x 22.8 cm). Bag: (ireg.) $19\frac{1}{2} \times 16\frac{1}{8}$ " (49.9 x 43.0 cm). Publisher: Bianchini Gallery, New York. Printer: Ben Birillo, New York. Edition: approximately 200. Fractional gift of Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder, New York, 1998. ©Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

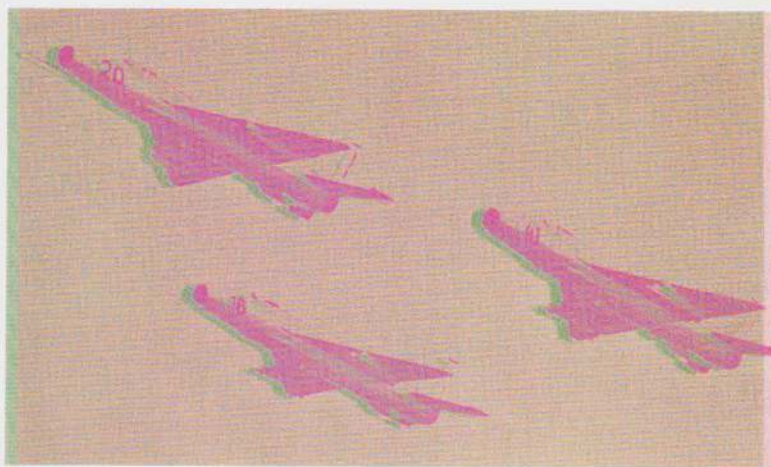


Andy Warhol. *S&H Green Stamps*. (1965). Photolithograph. Composition: $22\frac{1}{2} \times 22\frac{1}{4}$ " (57.0 x 56.5 cm). Sheet: $23\frac{1}{4} \times 22\frac{3}{4}$ " (58.8 x 57.9 cm). Publisher: Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia. Printer: Eugene Feldman, Philadelphia. Edition: approximately 300; plus 6,000 folded exhibition mailers. Gift of The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art, 1997. © Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts/Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

their European counterparts. Warhol's work exemplified the commodity-as-art trend with his Campbell's soup can images. In *S&H Green Stamps*, however, he depicted the actual currency of the consumer culture. He produced the printed version of this image in several ephemeral formats: as an exhibition mailer, a poster, and as wallpaper plastered across the walls of the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia for his first museum retrospective in 1965. This throwaway, short-lived status added a further ironic comment to this symbol of contemporary commerce.

Printed ephemera also played an important role in a landmark 1964 exhibition titled

American Supermarket, which highlighted the ambiguity between actual commodities and Pop art's depiction of them. The installation included stacks of Ballantine ale cans alongside Johns's sculptural rendering, *Painted Bronze*. Roy Lichtenstein and Warhol each made screenprinted shopping bags for the occasion—Lichtenstein's had his trademark turkey image and Warhol's a soup can—which visitors could buy for \$15 a piece to carry out their purchases from the show. Printed in editions of approximately 200, the bags stand out as early examples of the Pop fascination with multiples that blossomed throughout the 1960s.



Gerhard Richter. *Airplane II (Flugzeug II)*. 1966. Screenprint. Composition: $19 \frac{1}{8} \times 32 \frac{3}{4}$ " (48.6 x 81.4 cm). Sheet: $24 \times 33 \frac{7}{8}$ " (60.9 x 86.0 cm). Publisher: Edition Rottloff, Karlsruhe, Germany. Printer: Löw Siebdruck, Stuttgart. Edition: 20. Lee and Ann Fensterstock Fund, Alexandra Herzan Fund, and Virginia Cowles Schroth Fund, 1998

Politics

The turbulent political events of the 1960s, from the assassination of President Kennedy and the Vietnam War to Mao's Cultural Revolution and 1968 civil unrest in France and Germany, were frequently mirrored in Pop art. Contrary to the conventional view of Pop artists as

ideologically distanced from their subject matter, many, in fact, scrutinized the printed and electronic media for appropriate images to transform into subtle political invectives. Printmaking offered the ideal format to focus on the mediated interpretations of these crises.

Richter based many of his images on photographs he found in the media. His *Airplane II* (Flugzeug II) of 1966 considers the nature of reproduction as well as the issue of German rearmament which was strongly debated in the German press of the period. By printing the image in hot pink and vivid green and slightly off-register, he both suggested the supersonic speed of the

jets and electrified their perception as vehicles of destruction. The diagonal lines of the color screens mechanically accentuate the reproductive nature of the image and allude to the common visual effects of its media source.

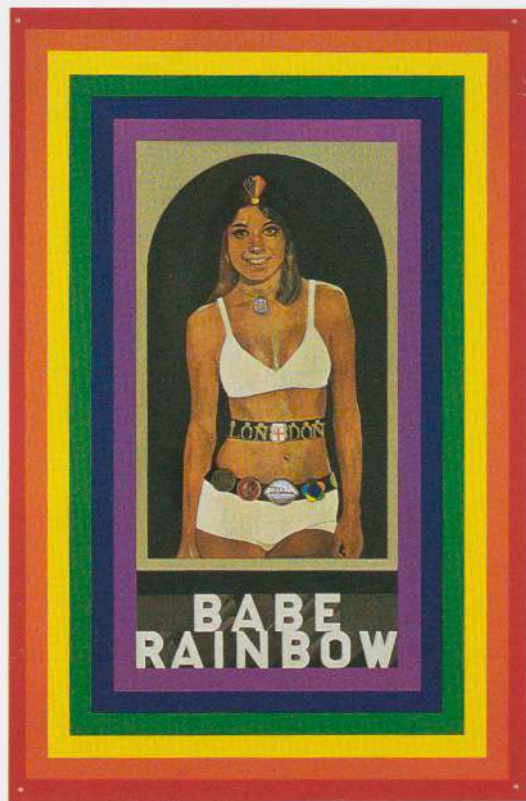
Erotica

The liberalization of sexual mores was one of the defining social changes of the 1960s. A broad spectrum of events—from the publication of the Kinsey Report on sexuality and a critical change in American

obscenity laws to the launching of *Playboy* magazine and the legalization of the contraceptive pill—precipitated more open attitudes toward sexuality. This in turn engendered greater tolerance for aesthetic displays of erotic imagery. Mary Quant's miniskirts and the exaggerated cosmetic styles of "Swinging London" sent an overall erotic chord across Europe as well as the United

States. Sexual stereotyping accompanied this newfound freedom, and numerous artists of the Pop era responded with playful and, often, caustic images.

Briton Peter Blake's multiple *Babe Rainbow* depicts a fictional female wrestler, alluring yet innocent, garbed in patriotic symbols. Part carnival image, part seductress, *Babe Rainbow* was screenprinted on tin in an edition of 10,000 and sold for £1 on Carnaby Street and around London. This mass-edition multiple came ready to install with grommets in the corners and epitomized



Peter Blake. *Babe Rainbow*, 1968. Screenprint on tin. Composition and tin sheet: 26 x 17 3/8" (66.0 x 44.0 cm). Publisher: Dodo Designs, London. Fabricator: Metal Box Co., Nottingham, England. Edition: 10,000. Purchase, 1997. © Peter Blake/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/DACS, London

the exuberance of the London Pop scene in the 1960s.

Martial Raysse was involved in the Nouveaux Réalistes group in Paris and later became a leading figure in French Pop. In the early 1960s he made assemblages based on photographic enlargements of fashion models surrounded with plastic household props to underscore the superficiality of contemporary depictions of beauty and the synthetic nature of consumer society. The neon color and photographic imagery attainable with screenprint were the perfect match for his expressive goals. In an untitled work of 1963 (cover), he attached a powder puff onto the forehead of a Day-Glo-colored face. The seductive gaze suggests that the model is unaware of the oddly placed cosmetic device, thereby creating an inherent tension and critique. Raysse's manipulation of contemporary conventions of glamour serves to question the feminine stereotypes common in the media of the day.

POP'S IMPACT

It was startling to see a work of art that depicted a banal supermarket item or an image taken from the newly ubiquitous television set. But it was even more startling to receive this art folded up in the mail, printed on a shopping bag, or run off in editions of hundreds or thousands. Printmaking, and screenprinting in particular, conceptually and formally enhanced the fundamental principles and ideals of the Pop aesthetic. It impacted not only on the art of its time but fostered a reevaluation of the medium in general. Pop artists used printmaking to tackle conceptual issues of reproduction vs. originality and repetition vs. uniqueness, ideas which enriched the art of the Pop era. Printmaking itself has not been the same since.

Wendy Weitman
Associate Curator

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PRINTS AND MULTIPLES FROM THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Produced in conjunction with the exhibition
Pop Impressions Europe/USA
Prints and Multiples from The Museum of Modern Art
February 18 to May 18, 1999

This brochure is made possible by The Contemporary Arts Council and The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art.

Additional support is provided by Marc A. Schwartz and Lee and Ann Fensterstock.

Publication:

Pop Impressions Europe/USA: Prints and Multiples from The Museum of Modern Art. Wendy Weitman. 8 1/4 x 10 3/4"; 136 pages; 69 illustrations, including 59 in full color. Paper \$24.95. Available in The MoMA Book Store.

The publication is made possible by the Contemporary Exhibition Fund of The Museum of Modern Art, established with gifts from Lily Auchincloss, Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro, and Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder.

Cover: **Martial Raysse**. Detail of Untitled from the illustrated book *das grosse buch* by various authors. (1963, published 1964). Screenprint and feather powder puff collage, mounted on board. Composition: 11 1/4 x 6 3/4" (30.1 x 17.1 cm). Publisher and printer: HofhausPresse, Düsseldorf. Edition: 100. Linda Barth Goldstein Fund, 1997. ©Martial Raysse/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

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