
[Laura Hauptman]
The cultural picture of the sixties was marked by the flowering of a range of simultaneously operating styles, creating a surprisingly pluralistic artistic landscape. At the same moment that Minimalism was dominating critical discourse in the pages of the international art magazines, Pop, Kinetic, and Op art flourished in the U.S., while new European figurative and narrative movements like British Pop (progenitor of the eponymous American group), German Capitalist Realism, French and Italian Nouveau Réalisme, and the inter-European New Tendency, among others, constituted the flip side of Minimalism's reductive abstraction and visual austerity. This exhibition concentrates on those styles that, in contrast to Minimalism, were optically seductive. Using sensory stimulation, the graphic language of advertisement, and a heady narrative mix of sex, politics, and kitsch, these "maximal" works openly engaged the viewer on a visual and emotional level.

"The truth is, the art galleries are being invaded by the pin-headed and contemptible style of gum-chewers, bobby soxers, and, worse, delinquents," wrote the critic Max Kozloff in a 1962 description of Pop art's explosion onto the New York art scene. So quickly did Pop penetrate both the art world and the consciousness of the general public that it did seem to have breached fine art's precincts, if not its temples. The New York artists whose work was called Pop—Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, Tom Wesselmann, Jim Dine, James Rosenquist, and Claes Oldenburg most prominently—shared a common sensibility that included bright colors, bold graphics, and refreshingly recognizable subject matter that, by its very ordinariness, challenged artistic preconceptions. Roy Lichtenstein commented at the time that "Pop art looks out into the world" but merely "appears to accept its environment." Neither celebrating nor satirizing icons of consumer culture, Pop artists presented hamburgers and cigarette butts, soup cans and dollar bills directly and dispassionately, seemingly without judgment.
Although it was through the work of American artists that Pop achieved international recognition, the seeds of its aesthetic—interest in quotidian subject matter, the punchy language of graphic design and particularly advertising—were planted by a group of artists, architects, and critics who began meeting in London in the early fifties at the Institute of Contemporary Art. Calling themselves the Independent Group, artists like Eduardo Paolozzi, Richard Hamilton, and Peter Blake wrote articles, produced publications, and, most importantly, organized exhibitions on issues surrounding the intersection of the contemporary arts and the mass media, advertising, fashion, and product design. Their imagery, culled from glossy magazines and product advertisements, revealed an intoxication with the most popular elements of postwar urban consumerism, including movie stars, rock and roll, and late-model American cars. Paolozzi's *Universal Electronic Vacuum* (1967) was a series of collages produced in preparation for a screenprint edition. Compositionally dense combinations of wallpaper scraps, computer printout tapes, photographs, and magazine illustrations of everything from machines to Mickey Mouse, these visual equivalents of electronic static reflected British Pop's peculiar fascination with the vulgarities and excitements of mechanized mass culture.

In other cities in Europe during the early and mid-sixties, groups of artists began incorporating found objects and images from daily life—from toothbrushes to advertising posters—into their work. The Nouveaux Réalistes, made up of thirteen artists from all over Europe, worked in diverse styles, but all displayed a commitment to conveying the experience of everyday life by incorporating real objects and staging live actions. Works like Arman's *Accumulation of Toothbrushes* clearly related to both Claes Oldenburg's remaking of household objects and Warhol's silkscreened images of consumer goods. However, whereas American Pop often had the fresh, shiny quality of a product in a grocery display, Nouveau Réaliste work depicted the detritus of urban life. Arman's mountains of used goods, like Jacques...
de la Villeglé’s layers of weathered advertisements, vilified the waste that results from overproduction. In Germany, too, the variants of Pop gloried in the vulgarity of popular culture, but refused to copy American Pop’s ambivalence to its subject matter. Sigmar Polke, like Roy Lichtenstein, played with photographic effects by covering paintings not with ben-day dots, but with his coyly self-titled “Polke dots.” With an ironic wink at Socialist Realism, he and his fellow artists Gerhard Richter and Konrad Lueg (later known as Konrad Fisher) started a movement they called “Capitalist Realism.” Absurdist and openly satirical, the Capitalist Realists set out to expose the threat of the rapidly increasing culture of consumerism by hijacking and then dissecting its messenger: mass media.

Artists like Öyvind Fahlström, Peter Saul, Ray Johnson, and Paul Thek, among others, shared Pop artists’ commitment to a readable narrative and a punchy illustrative style but also rejected its ambivalence towards its subject matter. Wrestling with the political issues that convulsed Europe and the Americas during the sixties, the American artist John Fawcett conjured the bloody “long hot summer” of rebellion that swept the ghettos from Watts to Washington in his pointedly titled Algiers Motel—Detroit (1968). In a similarly detailed but chaotic drawing that called to mind the goofy language of underground comics (another product of the period), Fahlström satirized U.S. interventionism with his boardgame-inspired Plans for World Trade Mono-

poly and Notes 4 (C.I.A. Brand Bananas) (1970). Working contemporaneously with the Pop explosion, British artist David Hockney and American expatriate R.B. Kitaj developed figurative styles that were related to Pop but were more intimate in technique and subject matter. Using highly detailed methods of rendering that recalled illustration, both artists concentrated on the depiction of the people and places they knew best, affording the viewer a daringly sentimental peep at friends, lovers, and even themselves. The British performance duo Gilbert and George’s To Be with Art Is All We Ask takes this almost literary aestheticism to its kookiest extreme. Adopting the style of a late-nineteenth-century British sketchbook, To Be with Art is a billboard-sized double portrait of the artists as Edwardian dandies, communing with the flowers in a bosky wood. A far cry from American Pop celebration of baser pleasures, Gilbert and George’s work makes an equally strong appeal for an art that indulges the senses.
Those artists who experimented with Kinetic and Optical art in the early to mid-sixties were more interested in investigating the visual effects of light and movement than in exploring the possibilities of metaphoric transport. Building on the influential color theories of Joseph Albers and the surface-piercing “Spatial Conceptions” of the Italian artist Lucio Fontana, artists like Victor Vasarely of the French Groupe de recherche d’art visuel (GRAV) manipulated light and shadow, complementary colors, and visual illusions to create the effect of movement and multidimensional space on flat surfaces. Drawings by artists like Bridget Riley, Carlos Silva, and Yayoi Kusama strove for dynamic effect solely through optical means. Radical for their aggressively participatory nature, these works engaged the viewer directly by causing what Bridget Riley called a “visual prickle” that was both mesmeric and disturbing. Recalling the perceptual instability caused by hallucinogenic drugs, these works sought to give a stimulating shock of pleasure and ultimately to broaden perceptual experience—without the aid of pharmaceuticals.

“I am for an art that is political-erotic-al-mystical, that does something other than sit on its ass in a museum,” wrote Claes Oldenburg at the beginning of 1961 in what became a kind of credo for the decade. “I am for an art that takes its form from the lines of life itself, that twists and extends and accumulates and spits and drips, and is heavy and coarse and blunt and sweet and stupid as life itself.” Whether they hypnotize us with their optical effects or excite us with movement, amuse us with their irreverence or shock us with their vulgarity, the works in this exhibition share the very sixties desire to celebrate direct, unmediated experience. With a full-throttle quality that stands in absolute contrast to Minimalist restraint, these “maximal” works add a rollicking, sensuous, and contentious element to the cultural picture of this complex decade.

Laura Hoptman
Assistant Curator
Department of Drawings
The Maximal Sixties
Pop, Op, and Figuration from the Drawing Collection

All works are from the collection of The Museum of Modern Art and are on paper unless otherwise indicated.

Valerio Adami
Italian, born 1935
An Easy Chair in the Showcase. 1970
Crayon and watercolor, 30⅞ x 22⅝" (77.1 x 56.8 cm)
Gift of Wilder Green

Joseph Albers
American, born Germany, 1888–1976
MM3. 1961
Pen and ink, 18 x 23 ⅝" (45.8 x 58.6 cm)
Gift of the artist

Arman
American, born France, 1928
Black Toothbrushes. 1972
Charcoal and spray paint, 23 ⅞ x 18" (60.3 x 45.7 cm)
Gift of Mrs. Bertram Smith

Richard Artschwager
American, born 1923
Table and Two Chairs. 1965
Charcoal, 19 x 25" (48.3 x 63.6 cm)
Gift of Paul Bianchini

Peter Blake
British, born 1932
Colin Macinnes. 1966
Pencil and colored pencil, 7 ⅝ x 6 ⅜" (19.5 x 17.0 cm)
S. Brooks Barron Fund

Gouache, watercolor, and pencil on cardboard, 16 ⅜ x 13 ⅝". Acquired with matching funds from Mrs. Walter N. Thayer and the National Endowment for the Arts

Oyvind Fahlström
Swedish, born Brazil, 1928–1976
Notes 4 (C.I.A. Brand Bananas). 1970
Synthetic polymer paint, pen and ink, 16 ⅝ x 14" (42.2 x 35.3 cm)
Mrs. Bertram Smith Fund

John Fawcett
American, born 1939
Algiers Motel—Detroit. 1968
Pen and ink, rubber stamp and red and black ink, cut-and-pasted photographs and printed papers, and pencil, 22 ¼ x 29" (56.7 x 73.7 cm)
Phillip Johnson Fund

Lucio Fontana
Italian, born Argentina, 1899–1968
Untitled. 1956
Incised paper, pen and ink, 12 ⅞ x 9 ⅜" (31.6 x 24.9 cm)
Gift of John S. Newberry

Gilbert and George
Gilbert: Italian, born 1943
George: British, born 1942
To Be with Art Is All We Ask. 1970
Charcoal and wash on partially charred sheets of paper in three parts, overall 110 3/8 x 320 5/8" (280.3 x 814.6 cm) Elizabeth Bliss Parkinson Fund

Richard Hamilton
British, born 1922
Study for the Solomon R. Guggenheim. 1965 Pastel, gouache, colored crayon, and synthetic polymer paint, 20 x 23" (50.7 x 58.4 cm) Gift of Charles B. Benenson

David Hockney
British, born 1937
Portrait. 1966 Pencil, 12 1/2 x 10" (31.8 x 25.4 cm) Given anonymously
Ready Cleaners. 1966 Pencil and colored pencil, 10 3/4 x 13" (31.8 x 33.7 cm) Given anonymously
Costume Design for Ubu Roi (Mr. and Mrs. Ubu). 1966 Colored crayon, metallic crayon, and pencil, 11 3/4 x 15 3/4" (29.6 x 40.6 cm) Gift of the Trustees of the Pastorale Fund

Patrick Procktor in New York. 1966 Pen and ink, 17 x 14" (42.9 x 35.3 cm) S. Brooks Barron Fund

Ray Johnson
American, 1927–1995
Second Marilyn Monroe. 1966 Ink and gouache on cardboard, 10 3/8 x 8" (27.0 x 20.4 cm) Frances Keech Bequest

Allen Jones
British, born 1937
Costume Design for Oh Calcutta! (The Ultimate Development in Ladies Undergarments: Panty Hose). 1970 Pastel, pencil, pen and ink, and ballpoint pen, 22 1/4 x 30 1/8" (56.1 x 77.9 cm) Purchase

Alex Katz
American, born 1927 Ada. 1973 Pencil, 19 3/4 x 26 1/8" (50.3 x 66.0 cm) Gift of Edgar B. Howard
Boy with a Hat. 1974 Pencil, 16 3/4 x 22 3/4" (41.7 x 57.9 cm) Acquired with matching funds from the Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Inc., and the National Endowment for the Arts

John Ashbery. 1976 Pencil, 15 x 22 1/2" (36.2 x 56.1 cm) Acquired with matching funds from the Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Inc. and the National Endowment for the Arts.

R.B. Kitaj (Ronald Brooks Kitaj)
American, born 1932.
Dropped Cup of Coffee: Preliminary Study for “Image of the Buddha Preaching” by Frank O’Hara. 1967 Pencil, crayon, and wash, 30 1/2 x 22 1/2" (76.5 x 56.4 cm) Gift of the artist

Colossal Fagend: Dream State. 1967 Pencil, 30 x 22" (76.1 x 56.1 cm) Gift of Lily Auchinclos, Charles B. Benenson, and Ronald S. Lauder, and purchase

Yayoi Kusama
Japanese, born 1929
Flower. c. 1953–63 Ink, watercolor and pastel, 15 3/4 x 13 3/4" (40.0 x 33.7 cm) Purchased with funds given by Sheldon H. Solow

Roy Lichtenstein
American, born 1923
Baked Potato. 1962 Ink and synthetic polymer paint, 22 1/2 x 30 1/8" (56.6 x 76.5 cm) Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller (by exchange)
Brushstrokes. 1966–68 Pencil and tusche pochoir, 22 1/4 x 29 3/4" (56.5 x 76.5 cm) Gift of Leo Castelli in memory of Tony Castelli

Claes Oldenburg
American, born Sweden, 1929
Hamburger. 1962 Lithographic crayon, 14 x 17" (35.3 x 43.0 cm) Phillip Johnson Fund
Empire Sign—With M and I Deleted. 1960 Casein and spray paint on cut-and-pasted corrugated cardboard, 54 1/4 x 24" (137.6 x 61.0 cm) Gift of Agnes Gund

Ray Johnson
American, 1927–1995
High Efficiency Gas Turbine II. 1969 Pen and ink, 39 3/4 x 39 1/4" (99.8 x 99.7 cm) Joseph G. Mayer Foundation Fund in memory of René d’Harnoncourt

Panamarenko (Henri)
Belgian, born 1940
No. 2: A Formula That Can Shatter into a Million Glass Bullets
Study for Universal Electronic Vacuum. 1967
Collage of paper, contact paper, cardboard, and graph paper, 36 x 26½" (91.3 x 67.1 cm)
Gift of Mrs. Alexander Keiller

No. 3: Horizon of Expectations
Study for Universal Electronic Vacuum. 1967
Collage of paper, wrapping paper, cardboard, magazine paper, graph paper, 41 x 28" (104.0 x 71.0 cm)
Gift of Mrs. Alexander Keiller

No. 5: Spontaneous Discrimination and Non-Spontaneous Discrimination Altered to Poster for Editions ALECTO
Study for Universal Electronic Vacuum. 1967
Collage of paper, contact paper, wrapping paper, gummed label paper, cardboard, graph paper, 40½ x 28" (104.0 x 71.0 cm)
Gift of Mrs. Alexander Keiller

No. 6: 7 Pyramide in Form Einer Achtelskugel
Study for Universal Electronic Vacuum. 1967
Collage of paper, magazine paper, wrapping paper, cardboard, graph paper, 40½ x 28" (104.0 x 71.0 cm)
Gift of Mrs. Alexander Keiller

No. 7: Sun City
Study for Universal Electronic Vacuum. 1967
Collage of paper, cardboard, metallic paper, newspaper, 40½ x 28" (104.0 x 71.0 cm)
Gift of Mrs. Alexander Keiller

No. 9: 883 Whipped Cream, A Taste of Honey. Peanuts. Lemon Tree and Others
Study for Universal Electronic Vacuum. 1967
Collage of paper, wrapping paper, magazine paper, and graph paper, 41 x 28" (104.0 x 71.0 cm)
Gift of Mrs. Alexander Keiller

David Park
American, 1911–1960
Richard Diebenkorn. 1960
Watercolor, 14 ½ x 11½" (37.0 x 29.6 cm)
Larry Aldrich Foundation Fund

Sigmar Polke
German, born 1941
Untitled (Witz). 1964
Felt-tipped pen and watercolor, 11¾ x 8½" (29.8 x 21.2 cm)
Purchased with funds given by Ronald S. Lauder

No. 5: Spontaneous Discrimination and Non-Spontaneous Discrimination Altered to Poster for Editions ALECTO
Study for Universal Electronic Vacuum. 1967
Collage of paper, wrapping paper, cardboard, magazine paper, graph paper, 41 x 28" (104.0 x 71.0 cm)
Gift of Mrs. Alexander Keiller

No. 6: 7 Pyramide in Form Einer Achtelskugel
Study for Universal Electronic Vacuum. 1967
Collage of paper, contact paper, and thin cardboard, 41 x 28" (104.0 x 71.0 cm)
Gift of Mrs. Alexander Keiller

No. 7: Sun City
Study for Universal Electronic Vacuum. 1967
Collage of paper, cardboard, metallic paper, newspaper, 40½ x 28" (104.0 x 71.0 cm)
Gift of Mrs. Alexander Keiller

No. 9: 883 Whipped Cream, A Taste of Honey. Peanuts. Lemon Tree and Others
Study for Universal Electronic Vacuum. 1967
Collage of paper, wrapping paper, magazine paper, and graph paper, 41 x 28" (104.0 x 71.0 cm)
Gift of Mrs. Alexander Keiller

Bridget Riley
British, born 1931
Study for Painting (12011-DG). 1965
Gouache and pencil on graph paper, 41 x 29" (104.1 x 71.0 cm)
The Riklis Collection of McCrory Corporation

Lucas Samaras
American, born Greece, 1936
Untitled. 1961
Pastel on red paper, 12½ x 9" (32.3 x 22.9 cm)
D.S. and R.H. Gottesman Foundation Fund

Peter Saul
American, born 1934
Untitled. 1961
Colored crayons, cut-and-pasted paper and turpentine, 26¾ x 27³/₄" (67.0 x 68.9 cm)
Gift of Allan Frumkin
Colin Self
British, born 1941
Drive, He Said. 1965
Pencil, 19 3/4 x 15 3/4" (50.1 x 38.3 cm)
Gift of Carol O. Selle

Woman in Fur Coat and Tulip. 1964
Pencil and crayon, 22 3/8 x 15 1/4" (56.1 x 38.7 cm)
Joseph G. Mayer Foundation Fund in memory of René d'Harnoncourt

Carlos Silva
Argentine, born 1930
Deyber. 1968
Gouache and pencil, 19 3/4 x 18 3/4" (49.7 x 47.2 cm)
Given anonymously

Leon Polk Smith
American, 1906–1996
Torn Drawing. 1961
Gouache on torn and pasted paper, 23 3/4 x 17 3/4" (60.7 x 45.6 cm)
Given anonymously in memory of Mrs. Henry Epstein

Kenneth Snelson
American, born 1927
Untitled. 1967
Plastic and electrical tape, 12 3/4 x 15 1/4" (32.5 x 38.8 cm)
John S. Newberry Fund

Frank Stella
American, born 1936
Untitled. 1964
Pencil and colored crayons on graph paper, 17 1/2 x 22" (43.7 x 56.2 cm)
Gift of the artist

Untitled. 1965
Felt-tipped pen and colored ink on graph paper, 17 x 21 3/4" (43.4 x 55.8 cm)
Gift of the artist

Takis
(Takis Vassilakis)
French, born Greece, 1925
Tele Sculpture. 1960–62
Three-part construction: electromagnet, 10 5/8 x 12 3/8" (26.8 x 31.9 cm); top-shaped black-painted cork, 4" x 1 3/4" (9.9 x 4.3 cm); and white-painted wood sphere, 4" d (10.1 cm)
Gift of D. and J. de Menil

Paul Thek
American, 1933–1988
Untitled (Green Potato). c. 1974
Synthetic polymer paint and gesso on newspaper, 22 1/8 x 33" (57.8 x 83.8 cm)
Purchase through the Vincent d'Aquila and Harry Soviak Bequest

Jean Tinguely
Swiss, 1925–1991
Sketch for Homage to New York. 1960
Felt-tipped pen and ink on bristol board, 22 1/8 x 28" (56.0 x 71.0 cm)
Gift of Peter Selz

Victor Vasarely
French, born Hungary, 1908
Study for Deuton R.B. 1966
Gouache, 9 3/4 x 9 3/4" (25.1 x 25.1 cm)
Gift of Lily Auchincloss

Jacques Mahé de la Villedé
French, born 1926
12 Rue du Temple. 1968
Torn and pasted printed papers on linen, 62% x 82 3/4" (159.2 x 209.6 cm)
Gift of Joachim Aberbach (by exchange)

Andy Warhol
American, 1930–1987
Roll of Bills. 1962
Pencil, felt-tipped pen, and crayon, 40 x 30 1/4" (101.6 x 76.4 cm)
Purchase

Jimmy Cagney. 1964
Screenprint, 29 3/4 x 39 3/4" (75.9 x 101.2 cm)
Vincent d'Aquila and Harry Soviak Bequest

Tom Wesselmann
American, born 1931
Study for Mouth. 8. 1966
Synthetic polymer paint and pencil, 10 3/4 x 13 5/8" (26.2 x 35.2 cm)
John B. Turner Fund

Final Study for Little Still Life, 13. 1963
Pencil on brown paper, 13 3/4 x 14 5/8" (35.0 x 37.1 cm)
The Joan and Lester Avnet Fund

William T. Wiley
American, born 1937
Peacock Gap. 1970
Watercolor and pen and ink, 28 1/8 x 20 3/8" (73.5 x 53.3 cm)
Larry Aldrich Foundation Fund

James Wyeth
American, born 1946
Andy Warhol. 1976
Gouache, watercolor and pencil on cardboard, 16 1/4 x 13 3/4" (41.3 x 34.4 cm)
Acquired with matching funds from Mrs. Walter N. Thayer and the National Endowment for the Arts

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