REPORT 2
1950 ERA
POP ART

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Introduction

In western culture, under a capitalist environment, a new cultural phenomenon developed. This cultural movement was referred to Pop Culture. Pop culture could be defined as mass culture, a product of mass media. In the 1950's Pop culture intertwined with art. In contemporary art, a high place of honour was given to school of abstract expressionism (Miller, 2012). In this changing culture, an art movement grew from modest shows and galleries, far way to Beaux-arts (Honnef, 2004). This movement did not have a name until Lawrence Alloway, an English art critic, coined the term "Pop" to that new form of cultural expression. Pop art was born. In years after, Pop art became a significant movement.

What is Pop art?

Pop art is an art movement that emerged in the mid-50s in Britain and in parallel in the late 50s in the United States. Westerns societies in the 1950's became more and more a consumerism society and Americanised. Pop art which originates from Britain, analysed and criticised this Americanisation while Pop art in the USA, criticized the conformity and mass consumption that was defining American culture at that time. Pop art can rather be described "as a collective terms for artistic phenomena in which the sense of being in a particular era found it concrete expression" (Ostowold, 2003) rather than a style. In means that Pop art is closely related to its era and to mass culture. Osterwold state that "the elitist art of the subjestivistic Expressionist found itself confronted with demand for a broader based culture" (2003). Pop art is widely interpreted as a reaction to the dominant ideas of abstract expressionism. It was a return to realism. Pop art challenged tradition by taking as subject visual elements of popular cultures popularized by mass media (Miller, 2012). Themes and techniques were drawn advertising, comic books an everyday objects. By using the term "Pop", Laurence Alloway was applying the term to values of the era and product of mass media that created new form of expression (Shanes, 2012).

CAMPBELL SOUP (WARHOL, 1968)

COCA-COLA 3 BOTTLES(WARHOL, 1962)

According to Ostowold (2003) in the post war era, the growing of political and economic stability led to the re-appreciation of "the Popular". Everyday life and object became the subject of interest. This phenomenon broke all class barriers; everyone demanded for consumer goods and mass media programs. There was a convergence of every class to the mass culture. Pop art movement aimed to blur the boundaries between "high" art and "low" culture. One of the main characteristics of Pop art was that there was no hierarchy and that art could come from everywhere. This led to the reassessment of ideas, culture and consequently art. People wanted a more reachable art. Pop artists wanted to elevate popular culture to fine art by celebrated commonplace objects and everyday life. Pop art reflects the cultural change of the 1950's. It mirrors the myths of everyday life which surface with consumer culture. Communication forms also changed a lot; they were rapid and centred on the consumer. These changes influenced art which turn to a trivial consumer good too. The speed of communication changed the way art was produced and distributed. As a consumer good accessible to people, art needed to be produced, reproduce and distributed quickly to satisfy the consumer demands. Pop art matched these changes for it to appeal to the mass. Pop artist used the subject of everyday life to criticise the manner in which mass consumption has turn the society in a throwaway society and also the inauthenticity and absurdities of the society. For example, Andy Warhol series of paintings Marilyns produced in 1962 reflected the made up image of Marilyn by the media by repeating her lips and her face.

MARILYNS (WARHOL, 1962)

MARILYNS (WARHOL, 1962)

Pop art in Britain

Pop art first originated from England. Pop art in Britain and in the USA developed slightly differently. The origin

of the movement in Britain after the war was more academic with a focus on the dynamic and paradoxical of

popular culture. It was an aim to understand contemporary life that gave rise to Pop art in England. The begin-

ning of the Pop Art in Britain was a matter of ideas fuelled by American popular culture viewed from far (Oster-

wold, 2003). It was intellectual and interdisciplinary. In the early years of 1950's, artists, intellectual, architects,

writers, critics, theorists among others felt the consequences of Americanisation in Europe. They realized that

mass media greatly influence their cultural change. These people group themselves in The Independent Group

exploring the growth of the popular arts and mass culture in arts. The group included artists Eduardo Paolozzi,

Richard Hamilton, Nigel Henderson and John McHale, critics Lawrence Alloway and Rayner Banham, and the

architects Colin St John Wilson, and Alison and Peter Smithson (Tate, 2014). The Independent group met from

1952 to 1955 and discussed and expressed the ideas of British pop. These artists are considered as the pioneer

of Pop art. Paolozzi gave a visual lecture entitled 'Bunk' which took an ironic looks at the all-American lifestyle.

An early artwork of British Pop art is Paolozzi series of collage made up of comic stripes, American magazines

of advertising imagery. The collage I was a Rich man playing (1647) reflects the trivial contents and popular

characteristics which will be later be associated with Pop art. Another example of artworks is Hamilton Collage

Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing? (1956), a satiric work reflecting the con-

formity of society with stereotype individuals and mass culture objects and idea of a home.

I WAS A RICH MAN'S PLAYTHING (EDUARDO PAOLOZZI, 1947)

JUST WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES TODAY'S HOMES SO DIFFERENT, SO APPEALING
(RICHARD HAMILTON, 1956)

Pop art in America

American artist did not have to compete with European artist anymore after the global success of American art movement Abstract Expressionist. Abstract expressionist contributed to the advert of Pop art; however, in the same time pop art developed in reaction to the introspective and elitist of Abstract Expressionist (Shanes, 2012). American Pop art movement aimed to come back to realism by inspiring themselves by everyday life. While the British saw American popular culture from an outsider perspective, American artists being bombarded daily by a multitude of objects of mass production usually produced more aggressive artworks. Two forerunners of American Pop Art were Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg. Rauschenberg combined real objects with collage and painting. Rauschenberg found a new method of combining oil painting and silkscreen which became a breakthrough to bring in Pop art into multimedia. Jasper Johns did a series of paintings using an iconic emblem of American culture, the American Flag. Both artists, who came from the Abstract Expressionist movement, were the bridge to Pop art. Other famous artists of American Pop art were Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein. American Pop art artists used hard-edge paintings, repetition, comic stripes and their work had affection to commonplace image of American culture.

RETROACTIVE 1 (RAUSCHENBERG, 1964)

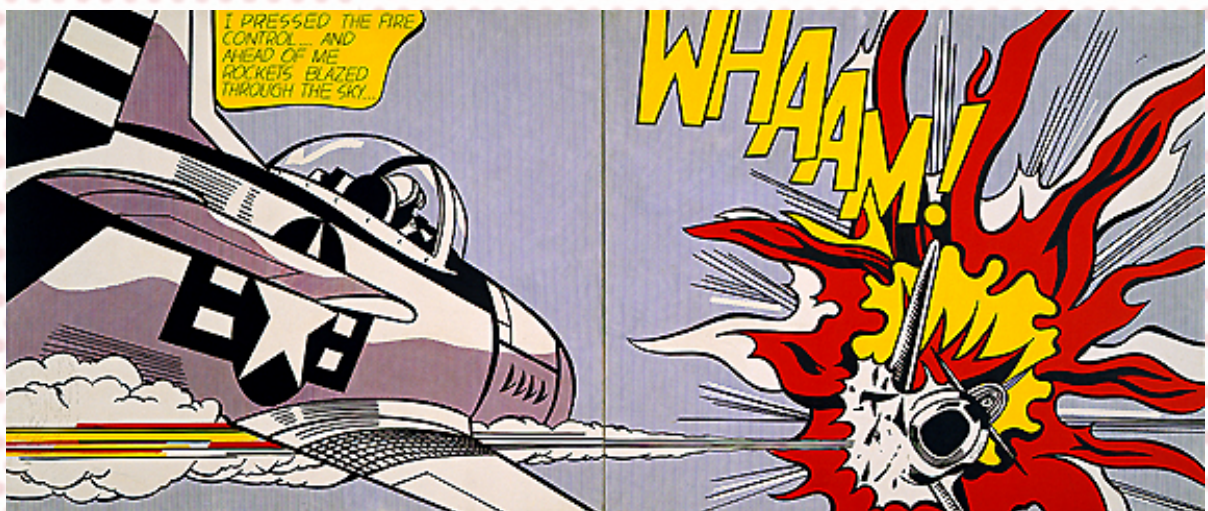

THREE FLAGS (JASPER JONES)

Concepts and Style

Pop art artists and mainly American artist depicted commonplace object and everyday life in a straight forward manner. They used bold primary colours, commercial methods like silkscreens and also produced multiple works at once (MoMAlearning, 2014).

A BIGGER SPLASH (DAVID HOCKNEY, 1967)

WARHOL

WHAAM! (ROY LICHTENSTEIN, 1963)

British Pop art artists developed collage to express the Americanisation of the society. They did so by combining images from various mass media sources and thus conveying an image of the consumer society. They often used comic book imagery, advertising images and American magazines in their artwork.

Roy Lichtenstein style was inspired by comic strip. He adopted the techniques used to create comic books. These techniques and style include black outlines, bold colours and tones rendered by Ben-day dots: dots used to render colour in comics.

DROWNING GIRL (ROY LICHTENSTEIN, 1963)

THE ARTIST'S STUDIO NO. 1 LOOK MICKEY (ROY LICHENSTEIN)

Warhol was commercial artist working in advertising and later became a leader of Pop art Culture. Andy Warhol uses repetition and bright contrasting colours. The subject for his works varied from consumer goods like Coca-Cola bottles, Campbell's Soup can to celebrities like Marilyn Monroe. He reproduces the image by varying the colours. Warhol hand painted his works and then moved to screen printing to produce in large scale his repetition of popular images. He wanted to prove that art consumer goods as the Campbell's cans soup.

Pop art also comprises sculptures. One major Pop art artist that produced sculptures is Claes Oldenburg. He did sculpture, sometime monumental, of everyday object. He started by making soft sculpture of everyday objects like cream cone or using fabric. He then continued by making grand public art like 45-foot-high Clothespin (1974).

Conclusion

Pop art began in the mid 1950's. The movement was acclaim in England and in USA. The movement however developed differently. In England it was more intellectual, reflections of mass culture while in America more a mirror of their own culture. It was a revolt against prevailing ideologies in art. Pop art movement aimed to bring back reality to art and to appeal to all. Pop art use source from mass media and mass product. It can include advertising, magazines, comic book or movies. The techniques and the style use vary from artists but all art works are bright colours and uses routine objects. Pop art was a new way of doing art; by the production method, by the scale and the subject matter. Pop art can be considered as one of the first manifestation of postmodernism.

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