

History of Pop Art



Andy Warhol *Campbell's Soup Cans*, (1962)

A history of Pop Art is the story of popular art that began in Britain in 1955, capturing the burgeoning consumerism and retail consumption that pervaded popular culture in America. The movement crossed the "pond" in the early 1960's as American artists created art inspired by consumer goods, packaging and advertising. Today many Pop artists are well represented in permanent collections of major museums worldwide.

British Pop artists include Eduardo Paolozzi (1924-2005), Sir Peter Blake (b.1932), Patrick Caulfield (1936-2006), Richard Hamilton (b.1922) and David Hockney (b.1937). American Pop Artists include Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008), Jasper Johns (b.1930), Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997) and Andy Warhol (1928-1987).

Johns focused on paintings of flags, using a mixed media technique of encaustic, oil paint, and newsprint collage on wood panel and separate colorful concentric shooting targets. Rauschenberg concentrated on assemblage and collage pieces, often constructed from discarded objects. Lichtenstein created blown up comic strips that parodied American culture.

Pop Art rejected and challenged Abstract Expressionism, the post-World War II art movement, also referred to as "The New York School," claiming that art could be made from any material available.

In contrast to Abstract Expressionism — with artists Mark Rothko (1903–1970), Willem de Kooning (1904–1997), Barnett Newman (1905–1970), Lee Krasner (1908–1984), Franz Kline (1910–1962), Jackson Pollock (1912–1956) and Robert Motherwell (1915–1991) — Pop Art was recognizable and easily processed by average art consumers with minimal art appreciation background.

Without Americans turning to consumer consumption, which served as initial subject matter and inspiration for British Pop Art, Abstract Expressionism might have had a longer reign as the leading art movement of its time.

The most commercially successful American Pop artist was Warhol who began as a commercial illustrator. He rose to the apex of the Pop Art world as a celebrity artist, a Damien Hirst or Jeff Koons of his time, a distinction some would call dubious.

Warhol used silk screening to create collage paintings on canvas, incorporating photography and hand-drawn images into mixed media art. His art became internationally recognizable when he depicted colorful Campbell soup can images. In October of 2014, two works by Warhol, silkscreen portraits of Elvis Presley and Marlon Brando, sold for a combined \$151.6 million.

He outlasted his "15 minutes of fame" — a quote attributed to him in 1966, in reference to a crowd trying to get into the photographic frame with him during a book signing — when he said, "In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes!"

Warhol is immortalized in The Andy Warhol Museum, located in his birthplace, Pittsburgh, PA.

The Pop Art movement is also considered to have introduced components of American culture and life — such as fast-food chains and an increase in overall disposable consumerism and waste — to Britain and to the rest of the world,

While the movement caught on more slowly in the rest of Europe, many artists found great success, notably Yves Klein (1928-62), Francois Dufrene (1930-82), Matial Raysse (b.1936), Jacques de la Villegle (b.1926), Jacques Monory (b.1934), Alain Jacquet (1939-2008) and Jean Tinguely (1925-1991).

Pop Art remains one of the most easily identifiable, understood and approachable forms of art, to novices and art aficionados, an enduring popular subject of major retrospectives in museums worldwide, accruing record sales at art auction houses.