

Wham! Blam!

American Pop Art and Its Critics

Übung Cultural Studies (USA), 3 CP
050664 Aufbaumodul

Lecturer: PD Dr. Stefan L. Brandt
Room and time: GB 6/137 (Nord), Thursdays 14-16
First session: April 23, 2009

Short description: In the American 1960s, a new movement began to “storm” the citadel of ‘high art’ and challenge the established modes of artistry and art reception—Pop Art. Building upon concepts developed by British “pop painters” like Richard Hamilton in the Fifties, American Pop Artists utilized the mass-produced visual commodities of popular culture to create a new visual aesthetic. In particular, they removed the material from its original context, isolating the object and combining it with other objects. This course will deal with the key representatives of American Pop Art, especially Andy Warhol, Claes Oldenburg, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, and Tom Wesselman, but also examine the work of artists like Robert Rauschenberg who functioned as transitional figures from Abstract Expressionism to Pop Art. Individual topics to be discussed are the “Factory,” Warhol’s celebrity portraits, the clash of ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture, the influence of billboards, the Great American Nude, California Pop, and photorealism. For an introduction to the major currents within Pop Art and Pop Art criticism, see *Pop Art: A Critical History* (ed. Steven Henry Madoff, Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1997).

Grading: Quality of class participation counts 1/3; expert session 1/3; final paper of five to eight pages 1/3. Poor attendance or class participation will negatively affect your grade.

Deadline for Final Papers: Friday, October 30, 2009. Note: There is no (!) extension of this deadline.

Syllabus:

- 23. April** **Introduction: American Pop Art**
Steven Henry Madoff, “*Wham! Blam! How Pop Art Stormed the High-Art Citadel*”, from:
Pop Art: A Critical History (1997)
- 30. April** **Minimalism and the Emergence of ‘Pop’ Aesthetics**
Kiss (1963/64, dir. Andy Warhol) & *Blow Job* (1963/64; dir. Andy Warhol), watch on
www.youtube.com
- 07. May** **The Foundations of Pop—Johns, Rauschenberg, and American Prototypes in the 1950s**
Marco Livingstone, “The Coca-Cola Plan”, from: *Pop Art: A Continuing History* (1990)

- 14. May** **Andy Warhol and the Silkscreen Method**
Cécile Whiting, “Warhol, the Public Star, and the Private Self”, from: *A Taste for Pop: Pop Art, Gender, and Consumer Culture* (1997)
- 21. May** **Ascension Day (Christi Himmelfahrt)**
Relax and enjoy!
- 28. May** **Nudity and Provocation—Tom Wesselmann**
Jo-Anne B. Danzker, “The Great American Nude”, in *Tom Wesselmann 1959-1993* (1994)
- 04. June** **Pentecost Holiday (Pfingsten)**
Relax and enjoy!
- 11. June** **Feast of Corpus Christi (Fronleichnam)**
Relax and enjoy!
- 18. June** **Advertising and Pop Art’s Comic Aesthetic—Roy Lichtenstein’s Early Works**
Cécile Whiting, “Lichtenstein’s Borrowed Spots”, from: *A Taste for Pop: Pop Art, Gender, and Consumer Culture* (1997)
- 25. June** **Pop Art Gigantism—James Rosenquist**
Short articles on Rosenquist, from: Steven H. Madoff, *Pop Art: A Critical History* (1997)
- 02. July** **Soda Pop—The Art of Coca Cola**
Lawrence Dietz, from *Soda Pop: The History, Advertising, Art and Memorabilia of Soft Drinks in America* (1973)
- 09. July** **Post-Abstract Expressionism: Lichtenstein & Oldenburg**
Harold Rosenberg, “Marilyn Mondrian—Roy Lichtenstein and Claes Oldenburg”, from: *The De-Definition of Art: Action Art to Pop to Earthworks* (1972)
- 16. July** **American Pop, 1965 and after—Robert Indiana, Malcolm Morley, and Others**
Marco Livingstone, “Extinguished Match”, from: *Pop Art: A Continuing History* (1990)
- 23. July** **Neo-Pop in the 1980s—Jeff Koons, Barbara Kruger, Keith Haring, Cindy Sherman**
Marco Livingstone, “Eat Dirt Art History”, from: *Pop Art: A Continuing History* (1990)

All texts are in the course reader!