



Pop Artists on Paper

10 Pop Artists on Paper

October 4 – November 9, 2000
Clough-Hanson Gallery, Rhodes College

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ISBN: 0-9701660-0-1

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Foreword

Students come to Rhodes College because it offers the experience of a liberal arts education in a vital, metropolitan setting. One of the opportunities we are pleased to be able to provide our students is the possibility of working with professional organizations throughout the community. The exhibition *10 Pop Artists on Paper* in the Clough-Hanson Gallery is the result of just such a collaboration. Last spring, thirteen students worked alongside museum professionals, researched original works of art, interviewed internationally known artists, and wrote essays for this publication. The results of their hard work are evident in this exhibition and the accompanying catalog. We thank the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art for contributing to this educational experience in the arts.

William Troutt
President
Rhodes College

10 Pop Artists on Paper has been a wonderful collaboration between the students of David McCarthy at Rhodes College, Marina Pacini and the Clough-Hanson Gallery, and the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art. How fitting it is that the subject of this collaboration is Pop Art, a dynamic European and American art movement that placed the material culture of everyday life both literally and figuratively at the center of the artwork. The Pop Art movement offered a conceptual mirror of its contemporary world that proves to be just as relevant and engaging today as when the works were created.

We are indebted to the scholarship of Professor McCarthy and his thirteen students who have provided extensive research about our prints. The results of their study will further our own knowledge about these important works in the Brooks' collection. I am also extremely grateful for the enthusiastic dedication to the project demonstrated by Kip Peterson, Registrar of the Brooks Museum.

Thanks to the generosity of community leaders and museum donors such as Marcus Orr, the Brooks Museum owns more than 4,000 works on paper, housed in the Orr print room. This impressive collection provides students and scholars the opportunity to study original prints, drawings, photographs, and artists' books. We regularly rotate the display of our works on paper in the Museum and are pleased that the many people who visit the Clough-Hanson Gallery at Rhodes College will also be able to enjoy these works of art.

Kaywin Feldman
Director
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art

Acknowledgments

Collaborations can be wonderful. The *10 Pop Artists on Paper* exhibition brought together two very different educational organizations. The Memphis Brooks Museum of Art generously lent twenty-two Pop Art prints from its collection for this exhibition in the Clough-Hanson Gallery. Rhodes students enrolled last spring in the “Art 365: Pop Art” seminar wrote individual essays on the prints for this catalog. Their research now enriches the Brooks’ files and provides the museum with a catalog on part of its collection. In turn, the students had the opportunity to write about original works of art for publication, with the college and the Memphis community enjoying the results of their fine work.

A project of this size was made possible by the efforts of many people at the Brooks and at Rhodes. My gratitude goes to Brooks Director Kaywin Feldman, who responded enthusiastically to the project from the first. Kip Peterson and Marilyn Masler from the Registrar’s Office made the prints available to all of us innumerable times. Paul Tracy readied the prints for exhibition. Thanks to everyone at the Brooks and I hope this is the first of many collaborations.

The first individuals who need to be thanked at Rhodes College are the “Art 365” students who researched and wrote the catalog essays through the spring. Additional funding for the catalog was provided by the Lillian and Morrie Moss Endowment for the Visual Arts and John Planchon, Dean of Academic Affairs. College Relations helped make this catalog happen in too many ways to mention. My thanks to Loyd Templeton, John Kerr, Sally Jones, Kevin Barré, Larry Ahokas, Martha Shepard, Marsha Williams, and Ginny Davis. The Department of Art helped fund the catalog photography and supported the project from its planning stages. Special thanks go to Victor Coonin, Chair, Department of Art, for his consistent enthusiasm and support.

Many of the artists made themselves available to the students either through personal meetings, telephone interviews, or correspondence. Their willingness to work with the students made this project a more meaningful and unique experience. The thanks of the Department of Art, Rhodes College, and the gallery are extended to Allen Jones, Peter Phillips, Mel Ramos, and Tom Wesselmann.

Finally, I’d like to thank David McCarthy, my main collaborator. It was his book *Movements in Modern Art: Pop Art* (Cambridge University Press and Tate Gallery, 2000) that inspired this project. In agreeing to devote a seminar to the production of the exhibition catalog, he helped the gallery fulfill its educational mission. Bringing students into the process of curating an exhibition, working with artists, and writing a catalog was exciting, fun, and intellectually engaging, thanks to his commitment.

Marina Pacini
Director
Clough-Hanson Gallery

10 Pop Artists on Paper

By the spring of 1965 Pop Art's ascendance was a sure thing. With increasing media attention in mass-circulation publications such as *Time* and *Life*, sold-out exhibitions at mainstream galleries in New York, numerous group exhibitions across the country, and inclusion in the 1964 Venice Biennale, the movement derided as the product of "gum chewers, bobby soxers, and . . . delinquents" only three years previously was firmly established in the pantheon of postwar art.¹ The next act was to mass market the sensibility that owed so much of its inspiration and visual language to advertising. Combined with a national print revival, this most democratic trend in modern art was primed to become the most widely distributed through the publication of the *11 Pop Artists* portfolios.²

Already Andy Warhol had made silkscreen virtually synonymous with Pop, even though most of the artists linked to the movement were painters. By identifying his studio as the Factory, and publicly pronouncing that his approach to creation was machine-like, Warhol intimated that the technology of industry had supplanted the handicraft of the atelier.³ It was a brilliant insight because it capitalized on the explosion in media relations and information dissemination of the preceding decade. By producing multiples instead of singular objects, Warhol could capture a greater share of the market. In turn, such saturation ensured his fame and that of Pop Art in general.

Warhol's shift from painting to silkscreening in 1962 coincided with two interconnected events that dramatically altered the presence of the visual arts in the United States.⁴ The first was the arrival of an affluent audience who wished to own original works of art. Educated in the history of art at the country's leading colleges and universities, this younger generation demanded quality art at affordable prices. Their desire was satisfied by the second event, namely, the printmaking renaissance that swept across Europe and the United States in the early 1960s. With the founding of such workshops as

Universal Limited Art Editions on Long Island, the Tamarind Lithography Workshop, and Gemini G.E.L. (Graphics Editions Limited) in Los Angeles, lithography and serigraphy (silkscreen) became the print media of choice for many artists. The latter technology offered the possibility of highly saturated colors, uninflected flat planes, and razor-sharp edges already favored by so many painters of the 1960s. With the financial interest of museums, corporations, and thousands of private collectors, printmakers catered to a healthy and rapidly growing market for high-quality multiples.

Little wonder that when the tobacco conglomerate Philip Morris decided to finance and organize an exhibition of contemporary art in 1965, it turned to Pop prints. The painters were already household names, if not yet blue-chip artists. Several had moved into print production to make their art available and affordable to a greater number of patrons. And the art was still new enough to be fashionable.

Under the guidance of Nina Kaiden, who started the Philip Morris corporate collection in the early sixties, and with the assistance of the public relations firm Ruder & Finn, prominent art dealers such as Leo Castelli, as well as the printmakers Tatyana Grosman at Universal Limited Art Editions and Rosa Esman of the Tanglewood Press, were approached to assemble a group of artists for inclusion in a series of two hundred portfolios.⁵ Eleven artists were chosen to produce three original prints that would later be included in a traveling exhibition titled *Pop and Op*, the first of many such exhibitions organized and sponsored by the corporation. At Philip Morris, George Weissman had the responsibility of pitching the idea of commissioning young artists to a group of interested, yet skeptical, corporate executives. In late spring the artists were chosen and Rosa Esman was hired to oversee the production and distribution of the portfolios. To market the prints she formed Original Editions, which handled sales and promotion.

The *Pop and Op* exhibition opened in New York at the American Federation of Arts Gallery in February 1966, toured the country through early 1967, and later, the world under the auspices of the United States Information Agency. Reviewers quickly noted that both movements were shaping the look of advertising and corporate design in the mid-sixties, thus reversing the trend of inspiration that initially prompted the Pop artists to assimilate the bold patterning and slick design of mass culture.⁶ The exhibition traveled the United States without the Warhol prints of Jacqueline Kennedy due to Philip Morris' nervousness over the possible perception of commercial exploitation of her public mourning. The Tom Wesselmann nudes were also pulled from the American itinerary because they were deemed to be too explicit for public consumption.⁷ Thus the company's claim to "cherish and preserve . . . individual ideas and freedoms" was something less than fully realized.⁸ Furthermore, this early instance of censorship indicated that corporate sponsorship of the arts would come with strict oversight, despite optimistic claims concerning the "happy marriage of the esthetic and business mentality."⁹

While one set of the prints was traveling, most of the others were on sale, quickly entering the market—at a mere sixteen dollars each—and contributing to the contemporary print renaissance. One result of this renaissance was that many museums across the country could purchase examples of Pop Art for their permanent collections. The Brooks Memorial Art Gallery (today Memphis Brooks Museum of Art) purchased the prints in this exhibition in March 1966 with money from the Memphis Park Commission and the Brooks Fine Art Foundation.

As was common with lithographs, posters, and broadsides from the previous century, the prints in the *11 Pop Artists* portfolios frequently depicted topical subject matter, whether the shifting mores of the sexual revolution evident in the work of Allen Jones and Wesselmann, or the construction of gender roles, notable, for instance, in the prints by Roy Lichtenstein

and Jim Dine. Warhol's poignant images of a grieving Jacqueline Kennedy reminded audiences of the trauma and violence at the core of postwar American experience. Peter Phillips' and Allan D'Arcangelo's prints reflected the pervasive presence of automobile culture in the United States. Together, the prints helped freeze the moment of the mid-sixties, prompting the critic Max Kozloff to write in the catalog that "it would be hard to find an exhibition more revealing of how art in the mid-sixties looks."¹⁰

The *Pop and Op* exhibition helped perpetuate the presence of Pop Art within Western culture during the later years of the 1960s, while the portfolios guaranteed that the movement would find a place in the permanent collections of many museums across the land. Our understanding of Pop Art today rests, in no small part, on the production of these important portfolios. And the prints themselves remain compelling reminders of the first sustained act of celebration—and occasional critique—of the worlds of advertising and mass communications.

David McCarthy
Associate Professor of Art
Rhodes College

¹ The quotation comes from Max Kozloff, "Pop Culture, Metaphysical Disgust, and the New Vulgarians" (1962), reprinted in Steven Henry Madoff, ed., *Pop Art: A Critical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 32.

² Of the eleven artists commissioned for the portfolios, only ten are included in the present exhibition. The British Pop artist Gerald Laing, who was included at the insistence of the dealer Richard Feigen, contributed nonobjective work that was closer to the style of Op Art. Telephone conversation with Rosa Esman, 28 March 2000. Roy Lichtenstein's *Seascape* is included in the present exhibition even though it derives from *New York Ten*, a different portfolio organized by Tanglewood Press in 1965.

³ Warhol's pronouncement that "everybody should be a machine" comes from a series of interviews with the Pop artists conducted by G.R. Swenson in 1963; see "What Is Pop Art? Part I" (1963), reprinted in Madoff, *Pop Art*, 103. For an extended reading of the Factory as a site of production, see Caroline A. Jones, *The Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 189-267.

⁴ The following information on the postwar print revival derives from Theodore B. Donson, *Prints and the Print Market: A Handbook for Buyers, Collectors, and Connoisseurs* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1977), 192-225.

⁵ I am indebted to several individuals for sharing their reminiscences concerning the production of the *11 Pop Artists* portfolios. Information on the series is drawn from the following sources: Rosa Esman, telephone conversation with the author, 18 March 2000; Nina Kaiden Wright, telephone conversation with the author, 1 April 2000; and William Ruder, telephone conversation with the author, 3 April 2000.

⁶ See Walter Carlson, "Advertising: Pop and Op Are Popping Up," *New York Times* (30 January 1966): 14; and "Pop and Op," *New York Times* (19 February 1966): 23.

⁷ *Pop and Op* File, Philip Morris, New York. My thanks to Stephanie French at Philip Morris for providing me with copies of the press release and newspaper clippings for the exhibition. The organization of the exhibition is also recounted in Sam Hunter, *Art in Business: The Philip Morris Story* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1979), 33.

⁸ The quotation comes from "'Pop and Op' Art," *News-Texan* (25 February 1966): unpag. Copy in the *Pop and Op* File, Philip Morris, New York.

⁹ The quotation is taken from "Pop and Op," *New York Times* (19 February 1966): 23.

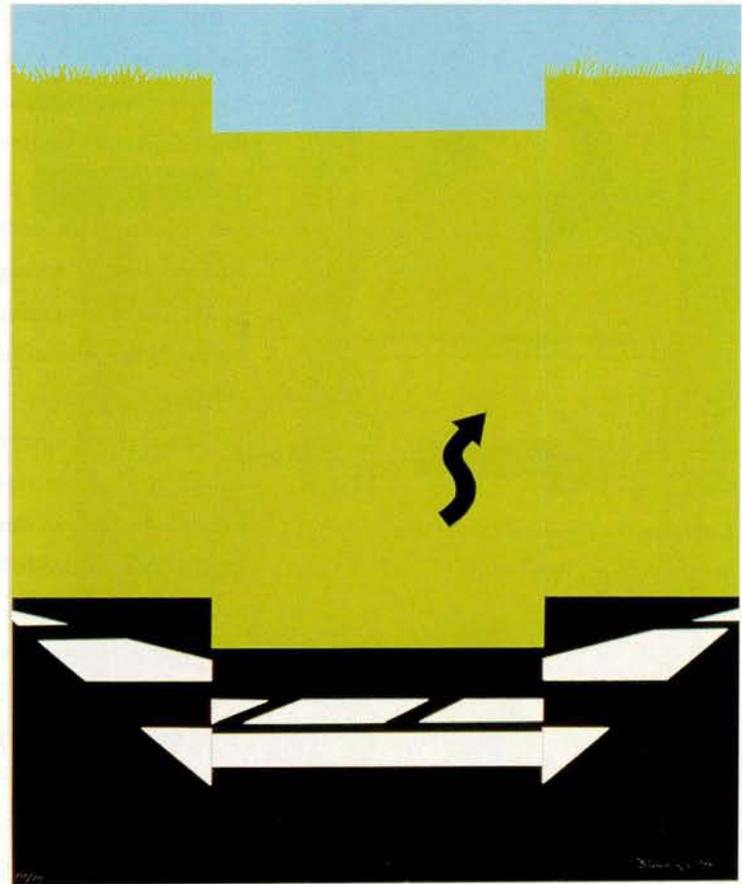
¹⁰ Max Kozloff, "Introduction," *Pop and Op* (New York: Philip Morris, 1965), unpag.

Allan D'Arcangelo

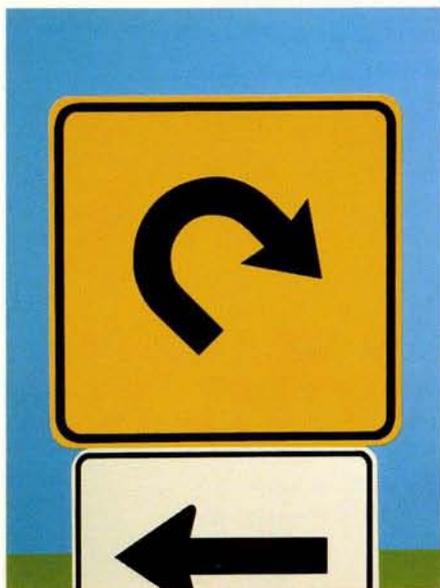
The contemporary understanding of Allan D'Arcangelo's (1930-1998) artistic motivations is that his art mirrored the national political and social themes of American culture during the 1960s. The two D'Arcangelo prints included in this exhibition, *Landscape I* and *Landscape III*, are representations of the national obsession with cars, road travel, and the exploration of the American landscape following the mass marketing of automobiles during the postwar era. Both *Landscape I* and *Landscape III* suggest that Americans were consuming the highways and landscapes just as they were consuming products of our nationwide affluence. The aesthetic expendability of our countryside and farmland was, and still is, justified by our need for freedom. This freedom has been clearly exercised through the growing availability of automobiles and highways. In light of this, if we consider art to be the constant response to new desires, then D'Arcangelo's intentions are clear: he wanted to use recognizable imagery, removed from its original context, to conjure new ideas about American culture.

When Detroit automakers began mass marketing automobiles in the early twentieth century, America began to blanket its previously virgin landscape with paved roads and white center lines. These center lines, used to separate driving lanes on highways, were first used in the early 1920s in and around Detroit. As the American countryside was overwhelmed with automobiles in the postwar years, it became absolutely necessary to regulate motor vehicle and pedestrian traffic in order to avoid accidents. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 appropriated the necessary funds to complete more than 44,000 miles of interstate highways. This Highway Act, and several that followed, necessitated the use of uniform road and warning signs for drivers. These familiar roadside images also included billboards and gas station symbols that became part of a new American vocabulary. D'Arcangelo interpreted this new vocabulary of signs and symbols as a meaningless ballet of oversaturated imagery.

The artist's original intention with the landscape series, which lasted from 1963 to 1978, was to "shorten the distance between meaning and metaphor" by providing viewers with direct representations of American culture such as the open roadway and highly visible traffic symbols.¹ He is asking viewers to compare the availability of the open road with our liberty, which guarantees the pursuit of the horizon. *Landscape I* incorporates an arrow, or road, with



Landscape I ©Estate of Allan D'Arcangelo/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY



Landscape III ©Estate of Allan D'Arcangelo/
Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

no beginning and an unknown end. The road and the scattered dotted lines in *Landscape I* may be placed across the American landscape as viewers, or drivers, desire. Road signs and directions are irrelevant if one wishes to pursue an individual path. According to this interpretation, D'Arcangelo documented the Americanization of our landscape, and its promise of endless movement.

An additional interpretation of *Landscape I* requires viewers to imagine the piece in three sections, which are divided by the two vertical lines which run from top to bottom. Each section may

now be seen as a separate view from an automobile. The two sections to the right and left of center appear to be views reflected in the side mirrors of an automobile. The center section appears to be a view out of a side window. Here, the simplicity of D'Arcangelo's message easily yields to metaphor: by comparing the freedom of the road to the freedom promised by our founding political documents, we begin to explore the independence of humans behind the wheel of an automobile.

These images and myths of the open American road were explored in *On the Road* (1957) by Jack Kerouac and photographed by Robert Frank in *The Americans* (1959). In the postwar years it seemed as if, for the first time, every citizen, regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic status, was offered the possibility of movement and travel. With this understanding, we may consider D'Arcangelo's work to be a portrait of the national landscape in 1965.

This portrait, however, is decidedly ambiguous. Whereas *Landscape I* takes the viewers wherever they wish, *Landscape III*

provides a fixed set of contradictory rules directing viewers toward and away from their destination simultaneously. These two signs could not be affixed to the same post. The yellow, diamond-shaped sign containing the arrow, which indicates a U-turn and serves as a warning, is specific to Arizona.² It is conceivable that D'Arcangelo encountered such a sign while driving in Arizona during the late 1950s when he matriculated at Mexico City College, Mexico. At the bottom of the print lies a white sign containing an arrow that points away from the direction of the U-turn. If drivers were to encounter such a sign, they would clearly be confused as to the intended direction of the road.

If *Landscape I* and *Landscape III* are societal portraits, like most Pop Art, they allow a wide degree of personal interpretation. The freedom offered in *Landscape I* is thoughtfully juxtaposed with the contradictory directions of *Landscape III*. The former has no boundaries, while the latter offers contrasting rules. The only option is to follow one's personal path or direction, while ignoring the suggested restrictions. With these images, D'Arcangelo painted the American landscape as he viewed it. The rules of society sometimes offer divergent and perhaps comical meaning, but the ultimate freedom of Americans can be found behind the wheel of an automobile, driving into the national landscape.

Tom Hart
Class of 2000

¹ The Institute of Contemporary Art of the Virginia Museum, *Allan D'Arcangelo* (Richmond: The Virginia Museum, 1979), 6.

² Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, Government Printing Office, Department of Commerce, Bureau of Public Roads: Washington, D.C., 1961.

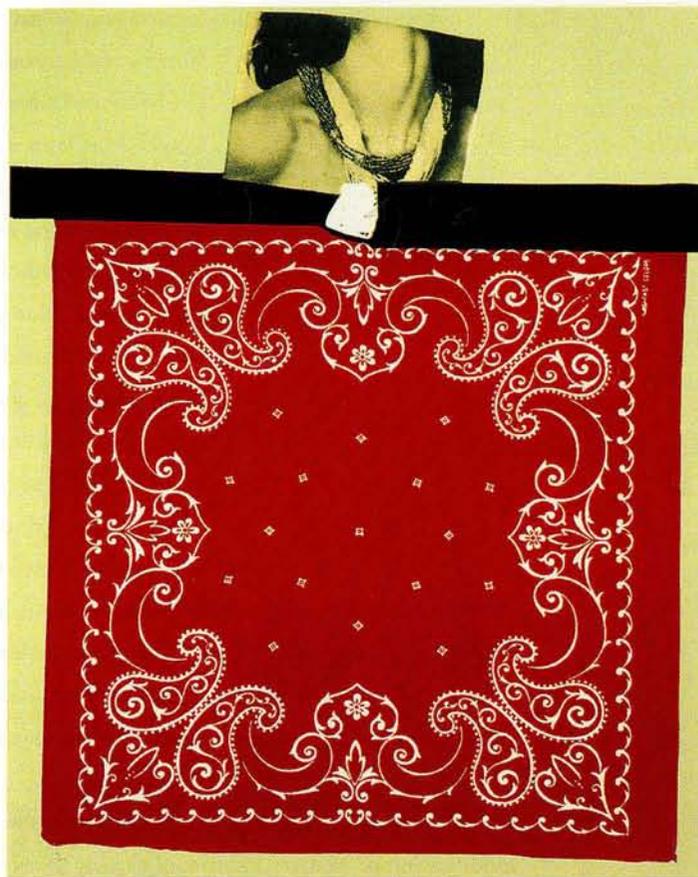
Jim Dine

If a work of art can be compared to language, the screenprints *Throat* and *Awl* can be said to use a complex vocabulary. In each, Jim Dine (b. 1935) combined signs of working-class masculinity with chic women's fashions. Dine's stylized and sexualized imagery critically examines traditional gender roles, a popular theme among Pop artists attempting to explore postwar American culture.

Images of a red bandana, a black strip, and a photograph of a woman's neck are the three primary components of *Throat*. The majority of these are masculine. The red bandana signifies workmen and venerates physical labor. Dine identified himself with this sign by wearing a red bandana around his neck at one of his own openings at the Reuben Gallery in the spring of 1960. Additionally, he painted *The Red Bandana* (1961, collection of Nancy Dine), a lush flat image of the classic cowboy scarf.¹ The black swath probably signifies, while also parodying, artistic and intellectual seriousness. For instance, in a 1958 self-portrait Dine presented himself wearing a black turtleneck that prefigures *Throat's* ebony band.² This black strip also surfaced in Dine's happenings, as in his clown-like makeup in the *Smiling Workman* (February and March 1960). Here he painted a morosely comic grin in the form of a black band across his face. Dressed as a manual laborer, Dine jumped through a painted wall in this performance, which also witnessed the first appearance of tools in his artwork. The notion of the artist as laborer is further substantiated by the prolific volume of work he produced and by his propensity for physically demanding artistic tasks.³

The masculine imagery within *Throat* is clearly juxtaposed with visual signs of femininity. The image of a young woman's well-defined upper torso and neck, adorned with a multistranded necklace, sits atop the black strip and bandana, which function as a pedestal. The placement of this clipping above the symbolic sign of a working man articulates differences in gender roles. The exposed female image is an appropriated sexual body, while the male presence is defined as working class.

A phallic awl suspended above a box of cigarettes and a kaleidoscope of dismembered torsos in Bonwit Teller dresses comprise *Awl*. The Marlboros, an icon of 1960s pleasure and commercialism, tie Dine to the Pop infatuation with consumerism. The Marlboro box is ironically removed from mass culture. The item still exists as a commodity within the consumer market, but on a completely different level as it is transported from sundry



Throat



Awl

store to formal gallery. The portfolio for which *Awl* was created was sponsored by Philip Morris, the corporation behind the Marlboro label. In the 1960s, Marlboro was advertised as a masculine product, and was appropriated in this screen print as the symbol of the workingman, along with the awl. The tool, used to make holes and marks on a surface, here signifies masculine activity. It may also suggest an autobiographical connection. In Cincinnati, Dine's family

owned a hardware store, which undoubtedly influenced his identification with tools. Dine adopted the philosophy that tools facilitate work as they extend the hand, increasing its versatility. He celebrated the beauty of these instruments within his work throughout the sixties.

The feminine imagery surrounding the awl reveals the commodification of women. Pictures of elegant shoes and the women's bodies in black dresses are splayed haphazardly across the page, upside down and sideways. They are clipped to avoid any personal features such as expressive faces and hands. In *Awl*, Dine confronts his audience with an uncomfortable duality: the commercial fashion images project both the consumerist

and the objectified roles available to women in the mid-sixties, thereby reflecting the constricting forces of culture on American women. Juxtaposed with the Marlboro box, the women partake of such pleasures, but at the same time they are commodities just like the cigarettes.

Throat and *Awl* reveal Dine as a man manipulating post-war iconography to unveil tensions in 1960s culture. Parallels can be drawn between the gendered nature of images in both prints. The workman is signified by the bandana in *Throat*, and by the tool and Marlboro box in *Awl*. The feminine side of culture is represented by the bejeweled neck in the former and the images of women's fashion in the latter. These prints share the same theme, and visually both are dominated by hot red masculine images. By bringing tools and fashion into the realm of fine art, Dine questions societal roles for men and women while firmly announcing his identification with working-class masculinity.

Allana Clarke
Class of 2002

¹ Painting reproduced in Clare Bell and Germano Celant, *Jim Dine: Walking Memory, 1959-1969* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1999), 120.

² Bell and Celant, *Jim Dine*, 15.

³ Elisa Turner, "Jim Dine: Drawings," *Art News* 85 (January 1986): 48.

Allen Jones

When asked to contribute three prints of varying sizes to the *11 Pop Artists* portfolios sponsored by Philip Morris, Allen Jones (b. 1937) wished for each work to have a distinct appearance.¹ Thus *Janet Is Wearing . . .* looks quite different from its companion pieces, *Miss America* and *Pour les Lèvres*. In 1968, Jones said, "I think through my lithographs. Ideas which later crystallize into paintings, intentionally or otherwise, often appear in some form or another in my lithographs long beforehand."² *Janet Is Wearing . . .* is typical of Jones' effort to explore a problem within a work, declaring the piece finished when the problem is resolved pictorially. Its sketch-like quality reveals the artist's characteristic spontaneity, suggesting an impulsive attempt to capture a fleeting moment. Yet it also focuses viewers' attention on the ideas of feminine display and spectacle.

The print takes its name from Jones' first wife. The couple was very much part of the culture termed "Swinging London" by *Time* magazine in 1966.³ "Swinging London" was rooted in fashion, particularly new modes of gendered dressing. This was perhaps best exemplified by Mary Quant's Chelsea set and a generation of unabashedly feminized males. Jones and his wife sometimes stumbled upon low-key fashion shows during walks near their Chelsea home. Hence the playful titular reference, *Janet Is Wearing . . .* Janet served as a model for Jones, but instead of modeling a lovely spring frock or a new Quant miniskirt, she is wearing the fashion of Jones' fantasy.

Jones' multiple influences are clearly visible. Legs extending from beneath an unrealistic fan-pleated skirt (directly lifted from another of his works to show a progression of movement) produce a comical image parodying advertisements of the era. Further, it could be viewed as a parody of Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* (1912, Philadelphia Museum of Art). Jones seems to be below ground level, observing passersby on a busy London street, or perhaps on the catwalks he encountered at fashion shows. Yet he emphasizes inappropriate female footwear, asserting that the image is indicative of his imagination rather than his actual experience. In this respect, the shoes reflect the fetish and underwear magazines he was familiar with at the time.

The stiletto heels reveal Jones' intention. Were they realistic, the image could be an observation of women walking past viewers. Yet the ridiculous footwear depicted allows such an interpretation to be dismissed. Jones said, "The choice of a leg for my image meant that I had to consider shoes; to consider a shoe is to consider a style and I did not want to date my pictures



Janet Is Wearing . . .

in that way. I wanted the epitome of a shoe just as I wanted the epitome of a leg. The high-heeled black shoe became an inevitable choice. From [Sigmund] Freud to Frederick's [of Hollywood] it is the archetypal shoe."⁴ He purposefully chose the shoe that screamed sex at a time when vividly colored granny shoes were the "in" look.⁵

High-heeled stilettos and truncated legs can be seen as fetishes. According to Freud, the fetish is tied to female castration. Objects—the stiletto and leg—replace woman's missing penis. Female sexuality is thereby defined through male projection based on fear of castration. Freudian analysis also stresses the search for sexual identity through scopophilia, which involves pleasure on the part of the male viewer and a passive female willingness to be looked at.⁶

Jones' representation of women has led to critical feminist backlash. Yet the artist insists that he reveals modes by which women are objectified, thus "fighting the same battles as the feminists."⁷ The sense of tangibility within his works can be interpreted as an objectification of women. Jones, however, argues that such tangibility reinforces the idea of the image as art, and therefore transforms it from exploitation to an exploration of gender identity.⁸ Furthermore, in overemphasizing female form and attributes, he calls attention to conventions—particularly clothing—that define gender and sexuality.

In "The Painter of Modern Life" (1863), the poet and critic Charles Baudelaire outlined male artists' obsessions with capturing ever-evolving female fashion. In this regard, Edgar Degas, Edouard Manet, and Pablo Picasso are Jones' predecessors. He is clearly influenced by the idea of fashion as representative of a peculiarly female "pageant"—the continuation from one moment in fashion history to the next.⁹ His sketch represents a passionate attempt to document the swirling fashion show that he seems to believe *is* female life.

The woman of the sixties was an important source of inspiration for Jones and for the culture of the day. Yet Jones' manner of depicting *Janet*—as faceless and highly sexual—perhaps

suggests that he did not wish to acknowledge her significance. He made little attempt to differentiate between the erotic experiences that his influences—cheap mass media publications—could produce and those captured in his own representations. Tied to ads by fashion, fetish, obsession, and mass reproduction, Jones' print is at once a satirical comment upon the culture of the sixties and a reflection of his own experiences within it.

Meredith Cain
Class of 2002

¹ Allen Jones, interview with the author, London, 6 March 2000.

² Richard A. Born, *From Blast to Pop: Aspects of Modern British Art, 1915-1965* (Chicago: The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago, 1997), 111.

³ "London: The Swinging City," *Time* (15 April 1966): 30-34.

⁴ Allen Jones quoted in Peter Webb, *The Erotic Arts* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1983), 371.

⁵ "London: The Swinging City," 30.

⁶ Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 16.

⁷ *Allen Jones 1957-1978: Retrospective of Paintings* (Liverpool: Walker Art Gallery, 1979), unpaginated.

⁸ Interview with the author.

⁹ Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne, (New York: Phaidon Publishers, 1964), 1-40.

Allen Jones

In the summer of 1965 the British Pop artists Allen Jones (b. 1937) and Peter Phillips set out on a three-month road trip across the United States. Like the characters in Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road* (1957), the two men desired to explore and experience the expansive nation. They wanted visual verification of the country they were familiar with only through Hollywood cinema and other exported media.¹ Because they were told that southerners might greet them with hostility (thinking they might be civil rights agitators), they headed west.² Along the road, Jones purchased the postcard "Sweet Doll with that Dangerous Look," the source of inspiration for his print *Miss America*.

The composition of the print takes its lead from the postcard, which is repeated three times on the lithograph with the opposite side of the postcard positioned in the bottom right-hand corner. Jones wanted the postcard to appear to float in illusionistic space. In a recent statement Jones explained that "tumbling the image down the page and letting it come to rest in the lower corner of the sheet had the effect of anchoring the image to the surface of the paper."³ The sketched landscape at the top of the print also helps anchor the image. Jones states, "It was done in a crude manner to emphasize the difference between a photographic reality and the artist's hand."⁴ This compositional device continues the modernist tradition of pictorial flatness embraced by the Pop artists.

Even though they embraced modernist techniques, the Pop artists appropriated untraditional subject matter, and Jones was no exception. He was "interested in sources of inspiration from non-fine-art sources," often using imagery from mass culture.⁵ A found object, the postcard is also an impeccable example of kitsch that embodies all things mass-produced and publicly consumed. The main objective of postcards is to provide tourists with visual verification of scenery encountered on the road. Like a conventional tourist, Jones selected the postcard that represented America to him.

The desert landscape and the gun-carrying cowgirl bring to mind one of America's most internationally known exports. The western is a genre based on the legends and myths produced by Hollywood and consumed by the whole world. Jones was very interested in visiting this fictionalized landscape.⁶ According to the historian Richard Slotkin, "Cultural tradition defined 'the West' as both an actual place with a real history and as a mythic space populated by projective fantasies."⁷ The mystique behind the western legend is based on the vast spread



Miss America

of wild and lawless territory in a young nation. The cowboy folk hero tried to tame the land and its occupants with the primary law of this region—the gun. Violence was the main solution to personal and societal problems in the mythical half-savage, half-civilized landscape. To Jones, the postcard stood as an “icon of America.”⁸

Another popular genre exported to Great Britain that, according to Jones, “typified all things American,” was the pinup. A fairly modest example is “Sweet Doll with that Dangerous Look.” She attempts to seduce viewers with a “dangerous” and teasing smile; a tight, revealing outfit; and long, sexy legs. In the postwar years the sensual and ideal female image was plastered everywhere from toothpaste advertisements to pornographic magazines. It seems only logical to put a pinup on a postcard as well.

This objectified cowgirl also represents sexual control. She may seem tough with her gun and holster, but is an entirely sensual object in a masculine world that even includes phallic cacti. The wildness of the western frontier corresponds with the uncontrollable and libidinous desire evoked through the postcard cowgirl. She is another force the cowboy has to conquer, but in a sexual way. The gun she holds should be a symbol of violence and control, but carries more erotic connotations when placed in her hand. Whereas the gun was the primary means of justice in the West, in the postcard it alludes to carnal desire.⁹

Control is the central theme in this print. It is, however, not just sexual and political mastery; it is also cultural domination. After World War II the United States became the most powerful nation in the world. With the aid of technological innovations, American music, movies, television, magazines, and advertisements bombarded other cultures. Many Europeans, especially artists, were embittered by this cultural invasion. Yet the lure of American culture enticed Jones and Phillips to take a road trip across the United States in order to experience what they had only seen through the media. As Jones admitted, “*Miss America* also appealed to me as an ironic

warning to non-Americans in the art world who fulminated against American cultural imperialism.”¹⁰ In other words, whoever held the gun held the power, and in 1965 it was the United States.

Dawnanna Davis

Class of 2001

¹ Information regarding the road trip drives from Allen Jones, interview with Meredith Cain, London, 6 March 2000. This was Jones’ second trip to the United States; his first visit was in 1964 when he was offered an exhibition in New York by Richard Feigen. In 1965 he returned to America on a Harkness Fellowship. He stayed for a year at the Chelsea Hotel in New York City.

² In 1965 the civil rights movement was at its height in the American South. Jones was told by several New Yorkers that strangers with a New York license plate were not trusted for fear that they would support the African-American struggle.

³ The information and quote regarding the composition of *Miss America* are taken from Allen Jones, letter to the author, 29 February 2000.

⁴ Jones, letter to the author.

⁵ Jones, letter to the author.

⁶ Jones, letter to the author.

⁷ Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), 234.

⁸ Jones, letter to the author.

⁹ Jon Tuska, “Women” in *The American West in Film* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985), 223-236.

¹⁰ Jones, letter to the author.

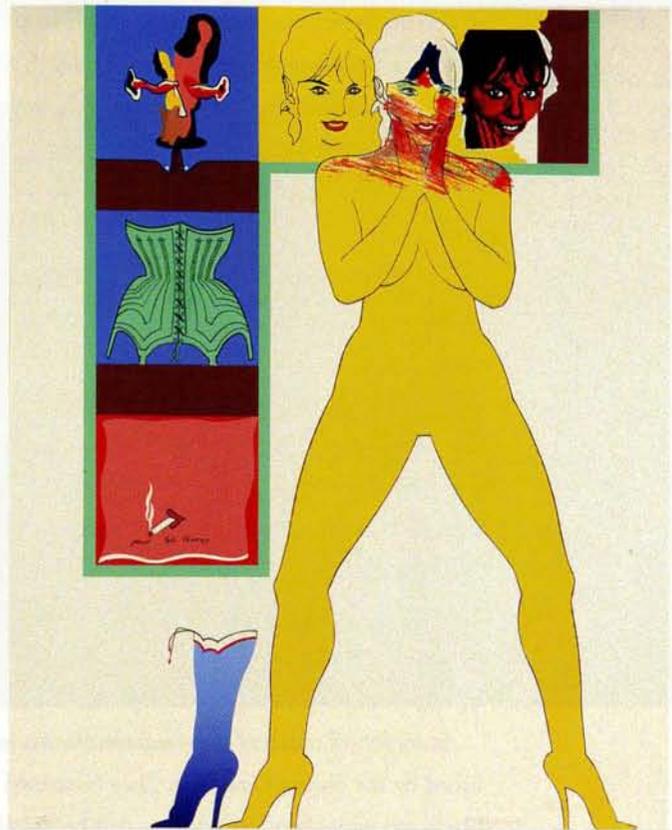
Allen Jones

Pour les Lèvres marks a drastic change in both the style and subject matter of British Pop artist Allen Jones' (b. 1937) work. Although his earlier works, such as *Second Bus* (1962, collection of Granada Television), can be understood as precursors to his more solidly Pop work in that they make clear reference to consumer culture, their abstract style excludes them from the Pop canon.¹ During a trip to New York in 1964 to oversee the installation of his work at Richard Feigen's gallery, and a second trip seven months later in 1965 during which he traveled through the United States by car with Peter Phillips, Jones discovered a wealth of inspiration in sexually explicit fetish publications. Jones turned to fetish magazines after fellow expatriate David Hockney remarked on the similarity between cheap pornography and the hermaphroditic imagery Jones had previously used in his work.² This new subject matter prompted Jones to reject the abstract, painterly style of his earlier work in favor of the hard-edged graphic style he had mastered while teaching lithography at the Croyden College of Art (1961-1963).

The title *Pour les Lèvres* derives from the red handkerchief that appears on the left side of the print under the corset. While touring the United States, Jones stopped in Chicago to visit Morton G. Neumann, a cosmetics tycoon and major collector of Pop Art who owned some of Jones' sculptures. Jones was fascinated by the novelty of red handkerchiefs that could not be stained by lipstick, and Neumann gave him one to take back as a souvenir.³

The handkerchief is not the only reference to the cosmetics industry in the work. Above the yellow female form is a series of three heads that can be read from left to right as the steps in a makeover process. The first head lacks any hint of realism, while the second head has exuberant color. The last head is no longer a product of the artist's hand, but rather a copy from an advertisement that Jones tore from a women's magazine.⁴ With this final head, the makeover is complete, and the woman's face has achieved a pictorial reality through the application of cosmetics.

It is possible to tie *Pour les Lèvres* to the work of such early modernists as Edouard Manet through the poetry and criticism of Charles Baudelaire, particularly his volume of poems *The Flowers of Evil* (1857) and his essay "The Painter of Modern Life" (1863).⁵ Much like Manet, Jones used the female form to capture the ephemeral beauty of his age, for what could be more beautiful and more transitory than cosmetics? In this way, Jones demonstrates his allegiance to the early modernist belief that an understanding of women's fashion, due to its



Pour les Lèvres

constantly changing nature, is one of the best ways to take the pulse of an era. As in Manet's paintings, there is clear reference to free-market exchange. In 1863, viewers could fantasize about procuring the sexual favors of *Olympia* (1863, Musée d'Orsay, Paris); in 1965, viewers knew that for the price of a tube of lipstick and a compact, they could create the look of contemporary beauty, or for sixteen dollars, they could own a *Pour les Lèvres* print.

The Baudelarian theme of ephemeral beauty is complicated by the multiple references to fetishistic sex in the print. Jones used hermaphroditic imagery in his work before *Pour les Lèvres*, without reference to sexual fetishes. The union of male and female sexual organs represented for Jones the balance of contradictory elements he felt were necessary in the creative act. His interest in the themes of duality and alchemy derived from his reading of Friedrich Nietzsche and Carl Gustav Jung. Later, when Jones began to include fetishes in his work, he kept the hermaphroditic forms both as a reference to his earlier work and because they fit well with the new imagery.

Jones found much of his visual inspiration in books published by the Nutrix Company. They contained cheaply printed black-and-white bondage imagery that he found appealing because they resembled German Expressionist woodcuts.⁶ The stiletto-heeled boot and the tightly drawn corset are classic examples of bondage paraphernalia. Continuing the Baudelarian theme of the spectacle of modern life, *Pour les Lèvres* suggests that the once taboo world of sadistic and masochistic sex is now just another pleasure to be purchased by modern man.

Viewers of *Pour les Lèvres* are immediately drawn to the female form both because of its bright color and its placement near the central axis. The lack of detail on the body, however, does not hold viewers' attention for long. Instead, the forms that surround the female body carry equal visual weight, and thereby suggest that the entire print is organized like a paper doll to be dressed up in various accoutrements. This is somewhat complicated by the location of the hermaphroditic forms

and the red handkerchief that are not paired with their appropriate body parts. The hermaphroditic imagery, aligned with the woman's head, is probably a reference to Jones' belief in the dual nature of the creative act. Thus its positioning makes sense in that Jones placed creativity in the realm of the mind. The red handkerchief works as a double entendre, with the red lips substituting for the female genitalia and the cigarette suggesting penetration. Jones seems to assert that the female form in itself lacks interest. In order to achieve a sexual presence, it is necessary to employ the artifice arranged around the figure.

Pour les Lèvres is an excellent example of Pop Art with its ambiguous depiction of the trappings of modern life, its overt references to mass media, and its hard-edged graphic style. It is also an excellent example of Baudelarian modernism. In his depiction of cosmetics and fetishes, Jones captured the fleeting pleasure and beauty of his epoch, a time when fashion and sexuality were part of the new American landscape.

Max Groth
Class of 2001

¹ For a reproduction of the painting and a brief discussion of Jones' early work, see Marco Livingstone, *Pop Art: A Continuing History* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990), 99-100.

² Allen Jones, interview with Meredith Cain, London, 6 March 2000.

³ Jones, interview with Meredith Cain.

⁴ Jones, interview with Meredith Cain.

⁵ See Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life," in Francis Francina and Charles Harrison, eds., *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 23-29.

⁶ Jones, interview with Meredith Cain.

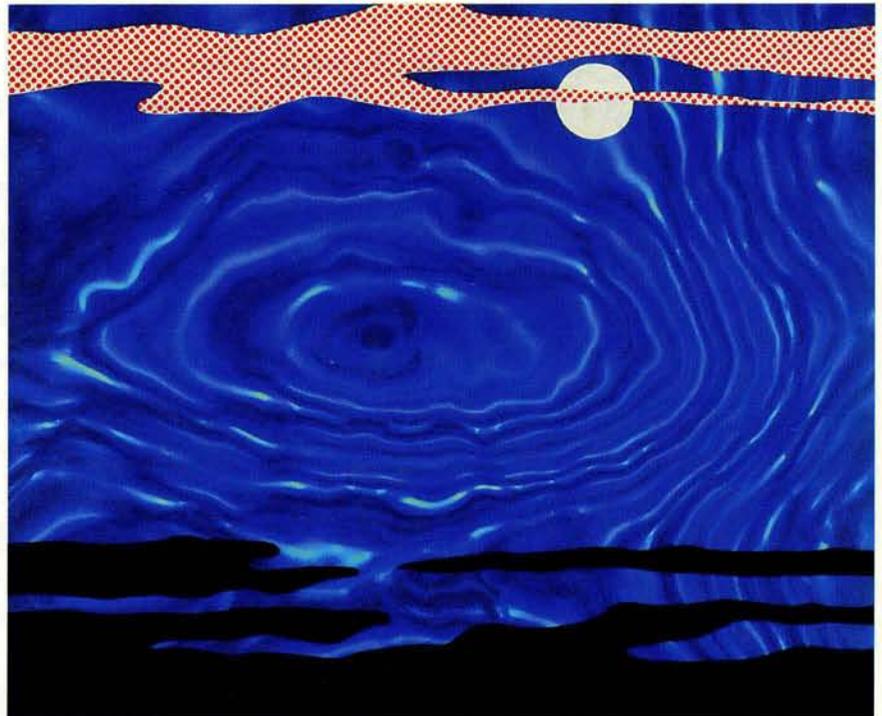
Roy Lichtenstein

Roy Lichtenstein's (1923-1997) *Moonscape* and *Seascape* seek to engage viewers in a dialogue questioning principles in modern art. Lichtenstein and the other Pop artists broke from the modern tradition of nonobjectivity and expressionism by turning to images from newspapers and television for subject matter and reproducing them in a deadpan style. From 1961 to 1965, Lichtenstein experimented with paintings that derived from comic books. The influences of pop culture and preceding masters led him to use solid colors and simplified forms in 1961, which formed the basis for his block-colored landscapes of 1965. Experimenting with plastics, he brought this new medium into his artwork.

Lichtenstein's formal training at the Ohio State University School of Fine Arts from 1940 to 1943 is evident in his prints that take up modernist themes. His series of landscapes (1964 to 1965) followed the tradition Paul Cézanne established when he made landscape a viable subject in modernist art in the 1880s. Cézanne set the precedent for radically simplified, though classical, landmasses by concentrating on color, linear simplification, and cubic form. In *Moonscape* and *Seascape* we can see Cézanne's simplifications filtered through the conventions of comics.

In his artistic process, Lichtenstein clearly seized upon the standardized imagery of traditional comics—emphasizing the importance of violence, love, and action—by enlarging it and taking it out of context. He used the same methodology in his landscapes, exploiting the flat, schematic nature of comics. By following the style in *Moonscape* and *Seascape*, Lichtenstein established a connection between the subject matter of fine art and the look of mass culture.

Lichtenstein also drew inspiration from contemporary popular culture through his use of plastics. In the postwar years, manufacturers increasingly turned to this material, developing many new products. One example, Tupperware, was celebrated by the Museum of Modern Art for bringing excellent design to household equipment. Its popularity in kitchens led to housewives hosting Tupperware parties, rapidly expanding the marketing of these containers. Lichtenstein mirrored this fascination with plastics as the sign of the times. His interest



Moonscape ©Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

in new media, as can be seen in the Rowlux plastic ground of *Moonscape*, complemented his interest in mass production.

Lichtenstein attempted to camouflage his handiwork with technology, stating, "I want my painting to look as if it had been programmed. I want to hide the record of my hand."¹ His 1967 words express his interest in focusing on programming and standardization in his art. Confronting the inevitability that the world would soon become universally industrial, Lichtenstein had also claimed that Pop Art was industrial painting.²

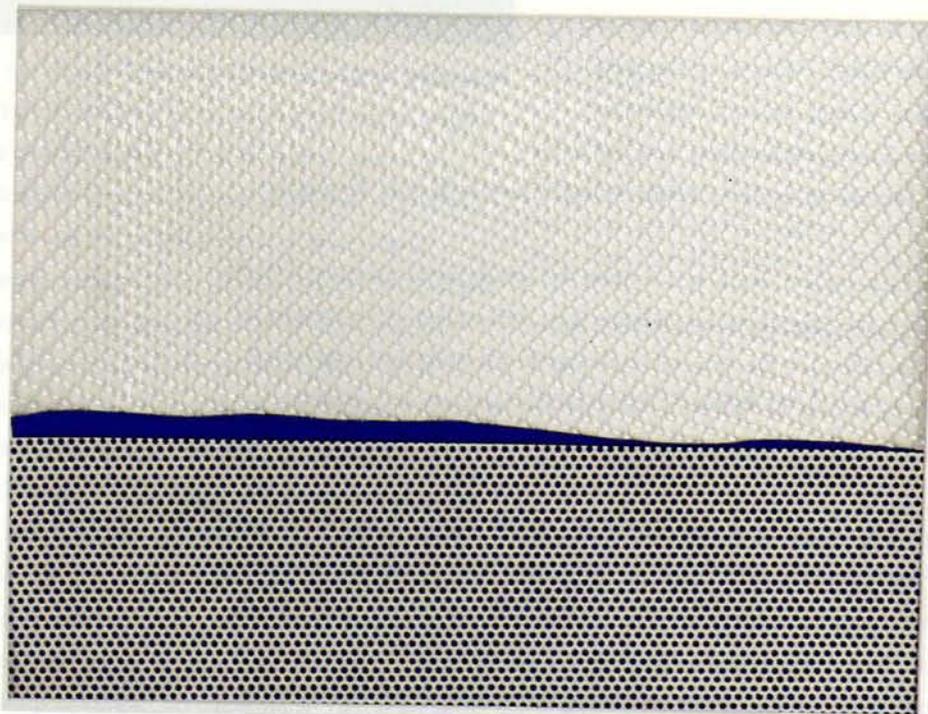
Pop Art advertised itself as art for everyone. As American families brought plastic products into their homes, so too did Lichtenstein bring these materials into his art. He industrialized art by constructing it from Rowlux plastic, which he coupled

with traditional themes of composition to create his landscape prints. The classical components of his landscapes, such as the horizontal lines subdividing his prints, evoke past art, while the use of plastics ties Pop Art to the postwar moment.

Julia Garrett
Class of 2001

¹ John Coplans, "Talking with Roy Lichtenstein" (1967), reprinted in Steven Henry Madoff, ed., *Pop Art: A Critical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 198.

² Quoted in G.R. Swenson, "What Is Pop Art? Part I" (1963), reprinted in Madoff, 109.



Seascape ©Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

Roy Lichtenstein

Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997) once stated that he wanted his “painting to look as if it had been programmed.”¹ He achieved this appearance in his works by altering appropriated sources, changing their scale, and unifying their composition. His mechanical treatment of these images forces an examination of their context and charged content. In the two prints, *Reverie* and “*Sweet Dreams, Baby!*” Lichtenstein adapted comic book panels from the early 1960s; he employed thick black contour lines that delineate the figures, while the solid saturated color and the use of Benday dots mimic the printing of the original panels. This approach produces a sense of immediacy that is identifiable with the style and the iconography of the comic strip. By copying these publications, the prints allow for a direct and objective look at postwar American gender constructions, which were generating criticism in 1965 when the prints were made. The appropriation, at the same time, brings the language of the comic form into the realm of high art. These prints use this language to suggest sound and time in a way that is not conventional to most works of fine art.

Through the use of speech balloons and motion lines, Lichtenstein conveys the passage of time. The words prohibit reading the picture as an instantaneous moment. *Reverie* creates a scene long enough for the blonde to sing a line of a song. “*Sweet Dreams, Baby!*” forces viewers to imagine the duration of a punch and the delivery of the title. This sense of time is dependent upon the placement and the reading of the speech balloons.

Words and symbols are also used to suggest sound. In “*Sweet Dreams, Baby!*” the title is placed inside a speech balloon that originates from the head of the attacker outside of the picture plane. The speech balloon and the lettering, “POW!,” are not intended as visible text to be read, but rather as an audible message. The motion lines serve to map the movement of the fist. In *Reverie*, the balloon is manipulated to represent singing through the addition of undulating text and music notes.

The types of motion and speech created in each print are indicative of the gender themes evident in comics and present in Lichtenstein’s paintings, such as *Hopeless* (1963, collection of Peter and Irene Ludwig) and *Okay, Hot-Shot!* (1963, collection of David Geffen).² The woman in *Reverie* seems to be expressing her feelings by singing a line from Hoagy Carmichael and Mitchell Parish’s “Stardust” (1927). The lyrics of the song suggest a fear of being alone and a desire for romantic companionship. As is shared with many of the



Reverie ©Estate of Roy Lichtenstein



"Sweet Dreams, Baby!" ©Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

interchangeable blondes in Lichtenstein's paintings, prints, and sculptures, she appears as if she is about to cry. Her emotions are revealed to viewers through her facial expression and speech. Lichtenstein's women transparently display their desires, which are frequently the longings for the company of a man. This dependence upon a male counterpart is indicative of the conventional roles available to women in the early 1960s.

Playboy, which had been published since 1953, and numerous advertisements from this

period often depicted women as sexual objects at the disposal of men. This type of gender discrimination was contested by the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and the rise of feminism later in the decade.

The action in "*Sweet Dreams, Baby!*" dramatically contrasts with that in *Reverie*, producing a scene that identifies a male stereotype. The two characters, presumably male, reveal very little about themselves. The face of the speaking character is not shown, but the gender is suggested through the presence of violence. Unlike the speech in *Reverie*, the spoken phrase does not reveal directly what the character is feeling. The text simply reinforces the violent action of the panel. No explanation is given for the punch; it simply exists as an exchange between two men. While women are made transparent and dependent in Lichtenstein's work, men are portrayed as active and stoic.

Men and women are frequently segregated through the use of color and space in Lichtenstein's work. As in *Reverie*, women are regularly represented with cool colors, which are

more recessive. Meanwhile, as in "*Sweet Dreams, Baby!*," men are often portrayed in warm colors, such as yellow, that appear to advance. Lichtenstein rarely allows both men and women to exist in the same space. Whenever he does, men are present in the romance images as the fulfillment of the women's desires. In contrast, women are never allowed in the action or war scenes. This bias follows the gender segregation that is characteristic of 1960s comic books. Women are dependent upon men for completion, but, at the same time, they are not allowed to participate in certain masculine activities.

Lichtenstein's prints identify postwar gender roles by isolating them from their mass-culture context. With the introduction of the Comics Code in 1955, the medium was forced to reduce the amount of sex and violence, which diminished the audience and curtailed the creative freedom of the authors. Many comics in the 1960s became indistinguishable from one another, blandly reiterating gender stereotypes. Without taking a stance on them, Lichtenstein's works identify the presence of hackneyed gender roles within this weakened medium, and become topical by pointing out these accepted clichés.

Jamie Ziebarth

Class of 2001

¹ John Coplans, "Talking with Roy Lichtenstein" (1967), reprinted in Steven Henry Madoff, ed., *Pop Art: A Critical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 198.

² For reproductions see Diane Waldman, *Roy Lichtenstein* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1993), 116, 106.

Peter Phillips

Custom Print I and *Custom Print II*, by the British Pop artist Peter Phillips (b. 1939), are part of a series designed during his stay in New York. Like his fellow artists who came of age in England after World War II, Phillips was infatuated with the affluence of the United States. In particular he was drawn to the advertisements celebrating American buying and selling capacity, which was completely foreign to a Europe still living on rations in the early 1950s. This fascination is evident in the images of cars and girls within these prints.

Phillips' work for the *11 Pop Artists* portfolios alludes to the advertising training of his teenage years and to youthful desires. The boyhood fantasy of fast cars and voluptuous women plays out openly in his art, the machine aesthetic being more forcefully pushed in the Custom series. Before he moved to the United States on a Harkness Fellowship in 1964, Phillips had already decided that he would reproduce sources exactly as he found them, thinking they would affect viewers the same way they had stimulated him.¹ He arranged individual images on the picture plane by using projected photographs.² In this manner he remained true to the original shapes while using their placement to focus on subject matter, which in the case of *Custom Print I* and *Custom Print II* is youthful infatuation with automobiles.

In the years following World War II, critics began to view cars as a kind of art. Reyner Banham first put cars on the artistic map with his essay "Vehicles of Desire" (1955), in which he categorized them affectionately as expendable art that was concerned with fantasy and maximum glitter rather than "fussing after big, timeless abstract virtues."³ In his book *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby* (1963), Tom Wolfe added to the discourse by saying that for American kids, customizing their cars was an art form and that their cars meant everything to them. He asserted that such cars "are freedom, style, sex, power, motion, color—everything is right there."⁴ Phillips thought along the same lines, connecting car customization with artistic choices made by painters.⁵ The Custom series, as suggested by the title, is based on this very notion of car customization.

In *Custom Print I*, the sexual aspect of the automobile is clearly stated. The front end of the car is graced with a beautiful girl whose placement suggests a hood ornament. Here the female is in the classic role of object, the prize that comes with the right car. The woman can be owned just as the car can. Phillips strengthened the relationship between the two: he



Custom Print I



Custom Print II

made them look as if they originated from a newspaper through the use of Benday dots and the metallic finish. Through their juxtaposition with the other forms in the print, the rest of the images can be interpreted as having automotive and sexual connotations. Next to the girl and car are two coil shapes,

most likely shock absorbers, which can double as bedsprings. At the top center is an explosion, the shape of which is designed to connote an electrical spark, alluding to the spark plug of a car, or to sexual climax. In the background, a grid and a series of graphs resembling performance curves chart both automotive and sexual activity.

Custom Print II does not have the same sexual quality because there is no woman in the composition. A few car parts, such as an engine and a bumper, are combined with references to the funfair: strings of beads, and a series of geometric shapes that include triangles, circles, and a graph.⁶ On the right side is a column of different colored circles clearly separated from the rest of the iconography. The circles allude to the process of production and suggest a color code, as all but one of the colors are used in the images to the left of the column. We are shown the palette the artist chose with which to custom design his own print. The machine aesthetic is pushed in the engine and bumper by the use of the same metallic finish with Benday dots seen in *Custom Print I*, and the importance of the automobile is magnified by its centralized location on the picture plane.

The visual design of the prints is more important than the subject matter of adolescent fantasy. With no suggestion of illusionistic depth, the images lie flat on the picture plane, as if they were just pasted on the surface, though without the

textured quality of collage. They are clean and clear, pristine in their machine-made glossy finish. Their flatness and sharp resolution allude to the advertisements and magazines from which Phillips appropriated his automobile and girl.

The importance of Phillips' time in America cannot be overstated. There he was able to work with technology such as the airbrush that was not available to him in England. This allowed him to push the aesthetic he began exploring in his work with spray paint. By producing the photo-like finish on his prints, he eliminated any trace of the painterly process and promoted the machine production more forcefully. Both in image and aesthetic, Phillips' art came from a postwar environment that was overwhelmingly magazine and ad oriented. It shaped his desires as a young artist and thus drove him to create artworks such as those of the Custom series.

Scott Hopkins

Class of 2000

¹ Marco Livingstone, *Pop Art: An International Perspective* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991), 285.

² Marco Livingstone, *Pop Art: A Continuing History* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990), 174.

³ Reyner Banham, "Vehicles of Desire" (1955), reprinted in The Institute for Contemporary Art and the Clocktower Gallery, *Modern Dreams: The Rise and Fall and Rise of Pop* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1988), 69.

⁴ Tom Wolfe, *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1963), 79.

⁵ Livingstone, *Pop Art: A Continuing History*, 174.

⁶ A funfair is the British equivalent of a carnival. Peter Phillips, telephone conversation with the author, 24 March 2000.

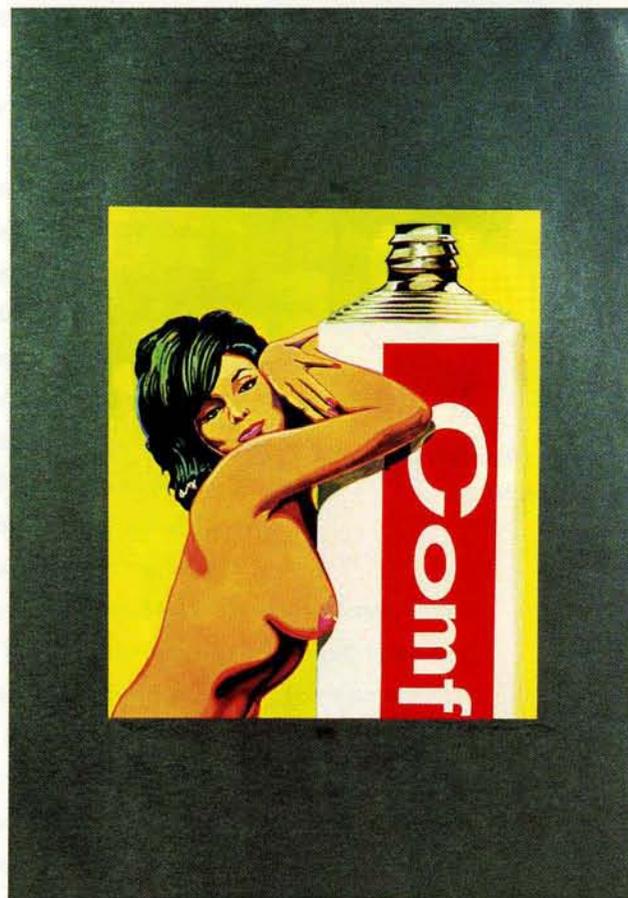
Mel Ramos

In the 1960s, Mel Ramos (b. 1935) integrated the art of the masses with the tradition of figurative painting. He first began painting the female figure derived from childhood comics, and later merged these images with representations of models found in advertisements and girlie magazines, particularly *Playboy*.¹ These sources furnished material for a larger body of Ramos' work, beginning with his Wolf Call series, and continuing through the Brand-Name Beauties, which juxtaposed female nudes with products of mass culture.² The latter series alludes to notions of sexuality and gender commodification through the use of commercial imagery combined with the traditional female nude. Two of the Brand-Name Beauties, *Miss Comfort Creme* and *Tobacco Rose*, are included in this exhibition.

Like the other Pop artists, such as Andy Warhol, Ramos focused on the commodities of mass culture. In 1964, Warhol was producing reproductions such as his *Brillo Boxes* and *Campbell's Soup Cans*. When Ramos included the box of Philip Morris cigarettes within *Tobacco Rose*, he not only espoused the ideas associated with the *Campbell's Soup Cans*, but also subjected the human figure to the same standard. Coupling the body with commercial merchandise, Ramos suggested that the female figure is a temporal commodity just like the other products of culture.

Accepting that the female body is culturally produced, the aesthetic appearance of the form may be analyzed through the frame of feminist theory. The modern dialogue concerning the question of sexual inequality makes it almost impossible to view Ramos' work without thinking of feminist issues.³ The buxom beauties sliding against the phallic tube of "comfort creme" or sitting on a pack of erect cigarettes reveal less about themselves and more about the viewers, here presumed to be male. Commercial products and consumerism in general, both gendered feminine within recent critical theory, are placed against the masculine sign of sexual domination—the female nude.⁴ These products, coupled with the female body, connect the idea of consumer control with the female body. Therefore, these prints are a commodity for a masculine audience attempting to consume the female figure.

It is clear that the figures within the prints are women; their most pronounced features are their breasts and hips, overt indicators of their sex. This blatant emphasis on the signifiers of woman suggests some need to compensate for the gender identification of the viewers. Although every male viewer comes to the prints with a social construction of masculinity, the experience of viewing allows both viewers and the Brand-Name Beauties to exist within socially constructed gender roles. The Beauties can be mistaken for nothing but women, and by process



Miss Comfort Creme ©Mel Ramos/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY



Tobacco Rose ©Mel Ramos/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

of elimination, viewers can be mistaken for nothing but men. Through these prints, presumably, Ramos clarifies any question of his own sexuality or the “universal” sexuality of men during the early sixties.

The bodies of Ramos’ nudes are clearly based upon the prototypes established in the pages of *Playboy* magazine in the 1950s and 1960s. What sort of man reads *Playboy*? The simple answer is Ramos. Catering to a “uniquely young, ambitious, upscale, free-thinking, and college-educated” audience, it promoted the modern

male as a consumer of literature, architecture, furniture, and art.⁵ The magazine attempted to reject the sexual prohibitions and domestic stereotypes of the decade, and therefore came to be known as a “generational prison break.”⁶

Just as the Playmates’ bodies were subject to the obsessive control of their producer, so too were the other commodities depicted within Ramos’ prints. The merchandise with which *Tobacco Rose* and *Miss Comfort Creme* are juxtaposed comes from the pages of popular advertising. As the three *11 Pop Artists* portfolios were commissioned by Philip Morris, the brand of cigarettes depicted in *Tobacco Rose* was dictated to the artist by the corporation.⁷ *Miss Comfort Creme* was originally paired with Colgate toothpaste in the painting *Gloria Gardol* (1965, collection of Charles Wilp), but she shifted her product allegiance after Ramos was forced to alter the text of “COLG” to the “COMF” due to copyright complaints from Palmolive.⁸ Despite Ramos’ role as producer of these prints, the control of the appearance of all the goods remained with their commercial manufacturers.

The work of Ramos does not create a universal aesthetic, but instead attempts to convert kitsch images of mass culture into the realm of high art. Through consumer culture as well as

an awareness of middle-class male sexuality, Ramos’ work documents an ephemeral concept of sexuality equivalent to the temporal nature of commercial products. Through this visual effort to connect vulgar culture to art history, Ramos realizes the ideals and forms of Pop Art.

Jena Balton
Class of 2002

¹ Elizabeth Claridge, *The Girls of Mel Ramos* (Chicago: Playboy Press, 1975), 47.

² Harvey L. Jones, *Mel Ramos: Paintings 1959-1977* (Oakland: The Oakland Museum, 1977), 10; Claridge, *The Girls of Mel Ramos*, 96-97.

³ Robert Rosenblum, *Mel Ramos: Pop Art Image* (Portugal: Taschen, 1997), 16.

⁴ On the gender of mass culture and consumerism see Andreas Huyseun, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 44-62, and Cecile Whiting, *A Taste for Pop: Pop Art, Gender, and Consumer Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Lynda Nead argues that the female nude is a form of control in *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 5-33.

⁵ Gretchen Edgren, *The Playboy Book: Forty Years* (Santa Monica: General Publishing Group, 1994), 61.

⁶ Edgren, *The Playboy Book: Forty Years*, 14.

⁷ Mel Ramos, telephone conversation with the author, 8 March 2000.

⁸ Telephone conversation with the author.

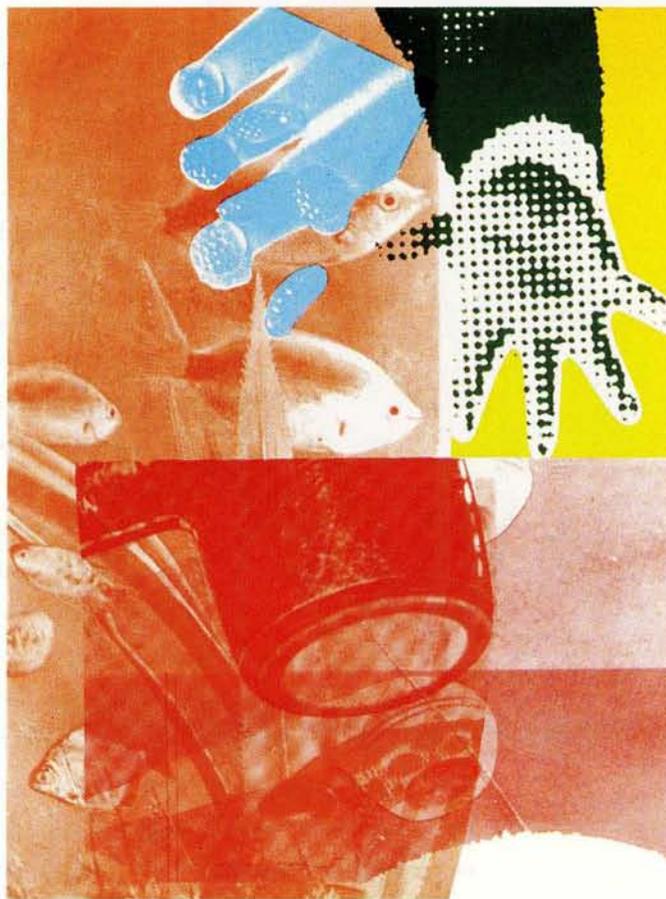
James Rosenquist

The florid collage of images in *For Love . . .* and the pastel blur of *Circles of Confusion* hardly seem to be from the same hand. Both are indicative of James Rosenquist's (b. 1933) work in 1965, and both exemplify Pop Art. In these two prints, Rosenquist toys with viewers' ability to identify objects and iconography, which complicates clear interpretation.

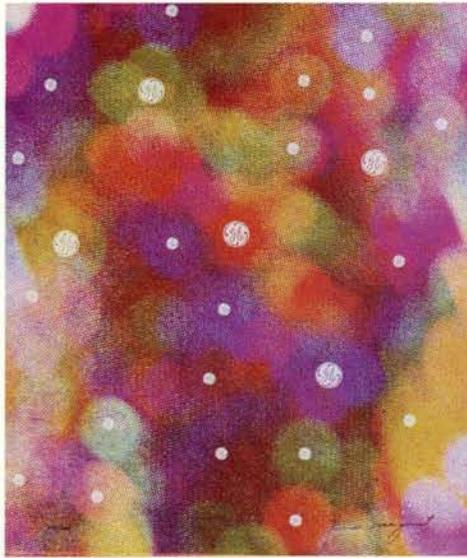
Rosenquist began his career as a billboard painter, and later took advantage of an opportunity to study at the Art Students League in New York. He began his Pop paintings in 1960, maintaining ties with the commercial iconography of his former painting experience. Evidence of his artistic background is visible in both prints. Rosenquist's art is a pastiche of images. He shares many of the hallmarks of Pop Art: he used a vibrant palette, culled images from *Look* and *Life*, and combined them in unique conjunctions. In comparison with Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, Rosenquist is less direct in that he picked more obscure images. Whereas most Pop artists removed objects from their everyday environment to spotlight them, Rosenquist selected subject matter in *For Love . . .* based on what works together visually in the composition. *Circles of Confusion* is almost nonobjective.¹

A startling juxtaposition of images and brassy, aggressive colors characterize *For Love . . .*. Aqua-colored jelly candies with a distended shadow pile on the top edge beside a hand printed in green on yellow. What appear to be a showerhead and faucet dominate the lower portion of the work. On the left side, seven orange fish swim among reeds of sea vegetation. In the 1960s, Rosenquist often pursued the idea of nature in his art, so it is not surprising that this collage combines nature and water with the themes of technology and human manipulation.

It is a natural tendency to attempt to find common meaning among images in any work of art, but in the case of *For Love . . .* such a connection does not appear to exist. Rosenquist's iconography is recognizable from everyday experience and nothing within the picture is completely foreign to American viewers. These images, however, are not usually grouped in such a manner within one frame. Thus, the experience of viewing *For Love . . .* is akin to watching a foreign movie without subtitles. There is no indigenous language to identify the relationships between objects, landscape, and people despite their familiarity or personal relevance to viewers. One is left with a sense of failed connections rather than "love" as the title would suggest. Hence, the title, which does not clearly relate to any of these appropriated images, is merely a



For Love . . . ©James Rosenquist/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY



Circles of Confusion ©James Rosenquist/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

clipping added to the array in this collage.

In the screenprint *Circles of Confusion*, twenty-five General Electric symbols swarm around a blurred impression of light conveyed through a warm and cool patchwork of colors. The term “circles of confusion” is used in photography to refer to the effects of negatives that are out of focus due to a dark-room phenomenon caused by diffused light. The General Electric symbols fuse into a sea of color as each round form blends on the page, lending

equal visual attention to all of the shapes.² General Electric, a multinational conglomerate, manufactured fluorescent, incandescent, and mercury-vapor lightbulbs, among other products.³ In incorporating this logo into his images of diffused light, Rosenquist created a cause-and-effect relationship. He commented on the company itself, which was saturating the market with its merchandise and logo, and perhaps suggested that the unhinging of the logo from its products was responsible for the “confusion.”

Circles of Confusion reveals the process of its production. Dots forming each shape are pixilated, indicating that Rosenquist enlarged the image and changed the scale in previous proofs to emphasize the process of making this print. In the spring of 1965, to highlight the technical aspects of contemporary printmaking, Rosenquist referred to paint and brush as “antique methods.”⁴ Thus, subject matter is trumped by fabrication, which is thereby given precedence.

Rosenquist’s style reveals a skill for adept manipulation of images. *For Love . . .* is a mysteriously satisfying composition

despite the unnatural combination of images. Rosenquist’s visual strategy in *Circles of Confusion* relates to his years on scaffolding painting billboards, resulting in the print appearing to be different at varying distances. From afar the circles of confusion themselves are apparent as a blur of color, whereas on closer examination the General Electric symbol is evident. Thus, the print has a dynamic visual appeal depending on the position of viewers.

For Love . . . and *Circles of Confusion*, produced at a moment when many artists turned to printmaking, demonstrate how easily Rosenquist transferred his commercial iconography from billboards, to paintings, to prints. His style of combining found images lent itself well to this process. The dynamism of his prints represents the successful exploits of Pop artists in this new medium.

Allana Clarke
Class of 2002

¹ Marcia Tucker, *James Rosenquist* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1972), 14.

² Judith Goldman, *American Prints: Process & Proofs* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, Harper and Row, 1981), 156.

³ Allan Clarke, interview with the author, Katy, Texas, 9 March 2000.

⁴ Quoted in Richard F. Shepard, “To What Lengths Can Art Go?,” *The New York Times* (13 May 1965): 39.

Andy Warhol

Portraits are an important subject in Andy Warhol's (1928-1987) work. Although portraiture was largely ignored by vanguard American artists in the 1940s and 1950s, Warhol sought to resurrect this tradition in the 1960s. In doing so he became a court painter to celebrities whose "portraits," distributed on a large scale through popular magazines and television, could be consumed at minimal cost. This environment offered Warhol the opportunity of silkscreening the charismatic first lady and immortalizing her as the American queen in his print *Jacqueline Kennedy I*. Traditionally, the responsibility of the court painter was to celebrate and commemorate aristocratic patrons, thus securing their place in history. Warhol used his portrait of Jackie to satisfy his fascination with the rich and famous as well as to honor her.

Within a week of her husband's death in 1963, Jackie Kennedy endeavored to ensure their place in history by collaborating with *Life's* Theodore H. White to write "For President Kennedy: An Epilogue." In the article, Jackie compared the Kennedys' thousand days in office to a famous line from the popular musical *Camelot*, "Don't let it be forgot, that once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment that was known as Camelot."¹ Warhol's portrait aided this quest.

Warhol presented the image of the first lady in the manner of Renaissance portrait busts. These portraits were expected not only to be accurate depictions, but also to be both *illustri*, or nourishing to the eye by having a variety of design, and *significati*, or having a message worth remembering.² In his portrait, Warhol replicated a photograph taken in Dallas on 22 November 1963, a few hours before the assassination of the president. The image is *illustri* in that it captures Jackie's engaging smile, and *significati* in that it commemorates her role as first lady, which was to support publicly her husband's campaign for reelection. Therefore, Warhol was able to transform the Renaissance portrait ideal into modern terms.

Jackie's understanding of the language of fashion manifested itself in her impeccable sense of style. Fashion functions as a language in that the signs of sex, age, and class can be read before words are exchanged.³ Jackie probably chose her ensemble of a pink and black Chanel suit with matching pillbox hat that day because it was comfortable for campaigning as well as practical for November. This indicates that she could identify with all women, yet the suit separated her from them. Purchased at Chanel, it distinguishes her as part of the elite, since only a few could afford such an expensive suit. The choice of pink was decidedly feminine, while the style indicated that she was sophisticated. All of this



Jacqueline Kennedy I © 2000 Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts/ARS, New York, NY

culminated in an eloquent visual statement that furthered her myth.

The Kennedys were well aware of the power of photography and effectively utilized the news media. They understood that photographs can be read as mirrors thrusting viewers into familiar territory. This defines the photogenic where, in the words of the French semiotician Roland Barthes, viewers are “at once expressed and heroized.”⁴ When viewing this photograph and silkscreen, women could imagine themselves as the beautiful, young wife of the president. Jackie became a role model for women who desired to imitate her style.

Furthermore, she was featured in popular magazines, such as *Look* and *Life*, more often than popular actresses such as Elizabeth Taylor or Debbie Reynolds.⁵ She was charming and modified the position of first lady by interesting herself in such matters as redecoration of the White House and cultural diplomacy. Therefore, it is understandable that Warhol’s image focuses on her, and not the president who appears behind her.

For Warhol, art came from mass cultural sources such as newspapers and magazines. *Jacqueline Kennedy I* replicates, down to the silver and white ink, one of the many famous newspaper images seen after the president’s death. While the color scheme obviously refers to the mass media, the use of

silver also has connotations of Hollywood glamour and the “silver screen” furthering Jackie’s celebrity. Warhol struggled to immortalize the subjects of his portraits through high art. By focusing on celebrities, he revived portraiture while making himself court painter to America’s royalty.

Thaler Cassibry
Class of 2000

¹ Theodore H. White, “For President Kennedy: An Epilogue,” *Life* 55 (6 December 1963): 159.

² Bonnie A. Bennett and David G. Wilkins, *Donatello* (Mt. Kisco: Moyer Bell Limited, 1984), 76.

³ Alison Lurie, *The Language of Clothes* (New York: Random House, 1981), 115.

⁴ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972), 92.

⁵ Irving Shulman, “Jackie”! *The Exploitation of a First Lady* (New York: Trident Press, 1970), 15.

Andy Warhol

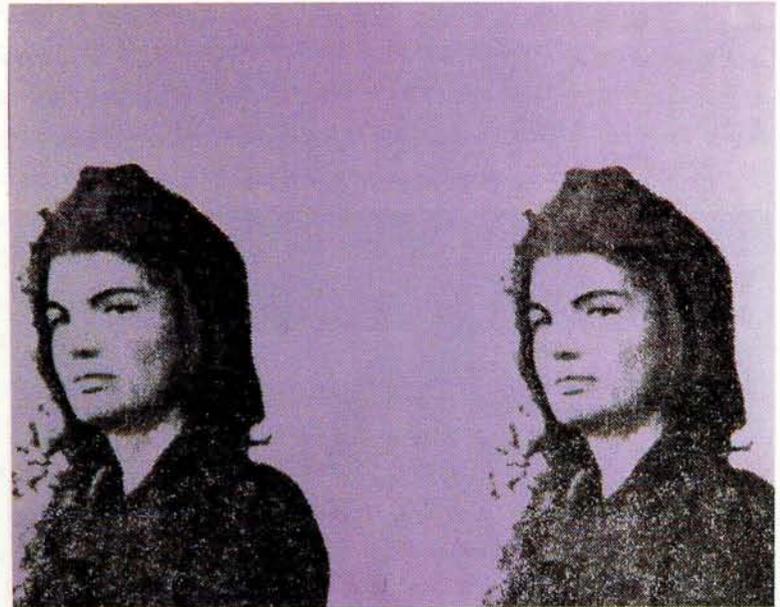
Jacqueline Kennedy, a historical icon of the twentieth century, brought beauty, intelligence, and taste not only to the White House, but also to the American people. In *Jacqueline Kennedy II*, Andy Warhol (1928-1987) depicts Jackie at a moment of private grief, mourning the loss of her husband, President John F. Kennedy. Warhol focused on a moment of private emotion during the public funeral.

Jackie's demonstration of courage after her husband's death in Dallas on 22 November 1963 won her the admiration of the world. She played a pivotal role in the public remembrance of the president by personally helping to plan the details of his funeral. Due to massive media coverage, the family's private grief was part of a major public ceremony. The image of Jackie is an appropriated photograph. Warhol closed in on her face by blowing up the size, thereby increasing the roughness of the image and decreasing the details in the face. As a result, Jackie's face is a highly charged, schematized expression of emotion resembling the image of the Virgin Mary after the crucifixion of Christ.

Like the Kennedys, Warhol was Catholic, and therefore was more than familiar with Christian iconography. Jackie, similar to Our Lady of Sorrows, deals with the tragedy of wrenching loss with grace and dignity. Warhol compares Jackie to one of the many artistic representations of Pietà Madonnas. Instead of grieving the dead Christ, however, she laments the loss of her husband.

The Kennedys presided over the court of Camelot, living out the American dream while the entire country aspired to be like them. In the print, Warhol perpetuated their regal standing through the use of purple, the color traditionally associated with royalty. Additionally, he doubled the image of Jackie. The second image is slightly more faded than the first, perhaps signifying an end to the reign of Camelot. As a good Pop artist, Warhol knew how to exploit and market the signs and symbols of his time. By saving and enshrining this tragic moment in history in *Jacqueline Kennedy II*, Warhol made it possible for Americans to buy a piece of time.

Kate Skvarla
Class of 2001



Jacqueline Kennedy II © 2000 Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts/ARS,
New York, NY

John Wesley

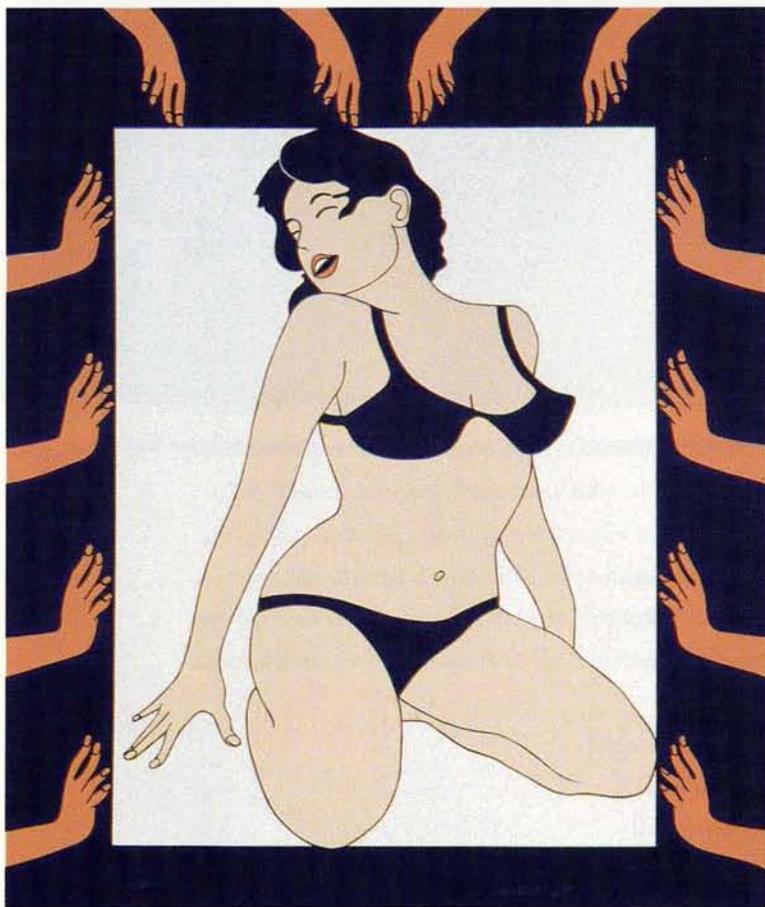
The paintings and prints of John Wesley (b. 1928), considered a Pop artist from 1963 to 1966, were featured in a number of exhibitions alongside works by artists such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein.¹ In later years, as Pop Art became more clearly defined, Wesley was no longer included in the Pop canon. In an article in the *New York Times* titled

“Something Funny’s Going On,” the critic Peter Schjeldahl wrote, “Wesley came to prominence a decade ago as a sort of ‘second generation’ Pop artist. Within his emblematic style, however, he is a unique, hermetic visual poet somewhat on the order of Bill Copley. He is really a kind of surrealist, I suppose, though no label seems very helpful in his case.”²

Wesley’s art demonstrates a flair for the eccentric and the exotic, almost a psychological oddness. Because of his background as a draftsman and illustrator, Wesley emphasized design in his work, particularly the tension between positive and negative space. The relationship of positive shapes and intervening spaces creates a forceful composition. He is drawn to unusual combinations of line and color, as well as exotic elements of figure position and organization.

If Pop Art is defined as the duplication of a pattern or image from mass media, then John Wesley’s works are Pop. Wesley was very much indebted to photography, from his father’s photos of the 1932 Olympic Games to the female pinup posters distributed through magazines in the 1940s and 1950s. His art directly reflects photographic images and mass media printing processes, replicating the entire design and flatness of such sources. In 1966 Wesley’s compositions were described by the critic Lucy Lippard as “whimsical emblems, enshrined in floral or decorative borders and painted in a deceptively sweet poster style, celebrating old-fashioned sports figures . . . [and] nudes. . . . His wit is a curious one—partially subtle and Surrealist . . . but also broadly humorous in the sight gag tradition.”³

A female pinup is the subject of Wesley’s print *Maiden*. Although the sexy female figure is unattainable in real life, her erotic and desirable image is readily available through the mass media. Pinups gained importance during World War II through distribution in such popular magazines as *Esquire* and inclusion in military barracks when it seemed as if every soldier had a poster of Betty Grable over his bunk. The pinup represents the perfect woman



Maiden

that every man wants to have: feminine, beautiful, sexy, and desirable. Although the pinup represents the feminine ideal, she is portrayed in an array of settings. She is the wholesome and innocent pretty girl next door, who is unaware that her sweater is a little bit too tight. She is the elegant and sophisticated beauty in an evening gown, staring out over the sea while aboard a luxurious ship.

The female figure in Wesley's *Maiden* is a reflection of male sexual desires and the dominant postwar definition of feminine sexuality. The woman in the print has the voluptuous figure, robust breasts, slim waist, and rounded hips of the idyllic pinup girls from the 1950s, such as Marilyn Monroe and Betty Page. Wesley positioned her in the center of the composition to focus on her femininity and her significance as a sex symbol. The woman's pose is erotic; her hands are propping her up as she leans back on her knees. Her head is tilted with tousled hair seductively covering part of her face, which exhibits pleasure and excitement. The woman is framed by a border of elegant hands that appear to hold her up. She is slightly protruding from her confined space, suggesting greater physical presence. It is as if viewers are witnessing an erotic peep show where she plays the role of seductress and flirt. She is enshrined within a decorative pattern that is common in many of Wesley's works—perhaps an allusion to the border of a china pattern, thus suggesting domesticity. This establishes a distinct contrast between the image of the female as sex symbol and that of her more traditional role as domestic caretaker.

As Lippard wrote in an essay, "The strength of Wesley's work derives from its apparent innocence, even coyness, fused with an underlying eroticism."⁴

The ornate border, the relative flatness of the composition, and the positioning of the figure also serve as a reference to Byzantine iconography. The organization of the print suggests that modern men worship the fleshy, hippy, and seductive pinup with the same intensity as the saints are venerated. Like the Virgin Mary, *Maiden* is an idol and an image of adoration. She is the representation of the utmost feminine beauty and perfection.

As Wesley moved closer to a more surrealistic and displaced style, he was no longer considered a Pop artist. The appropriation of sex and the updating of traditional imagery continue to link his early work to the moment of Pop.

Maggie Wilson
Class of 2001

¹ These exhibitions include "The Popular Image," Washington Gallery of Modern Art, Washington, D.C., 1963, and "Pop Art, Nouveau Realisme, Etc.," Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, 1965.

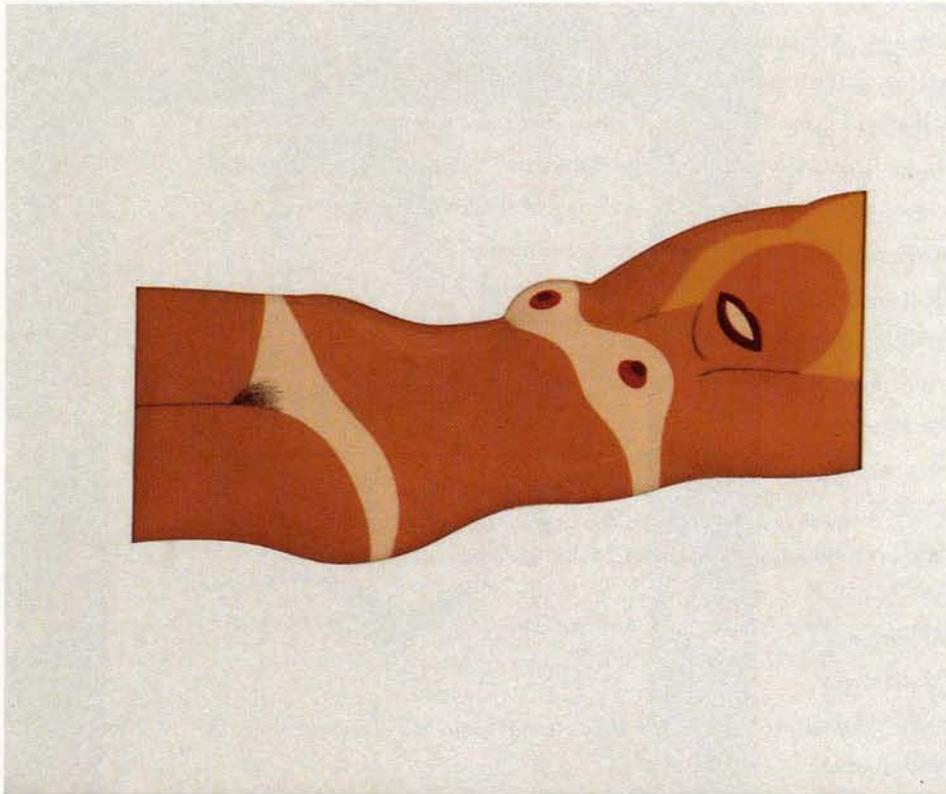
² Peter Schjeldahl, "Something Funny's Going On," *The New York Times* (7 January 1973): D23.

³ Lucy R. Lippard, *Pop Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1966), 128.

⁴ Lippard, *Pop Art*, 128.

Tom Wesselmann

Cut-Out Nude and *Nude* are two prints by Tom Wesselmann (b. 1931), an artist who began practicing in the 1950s after graduating from the University of Cincinnati with a degree in psychology. At first he specialized in collages of domestic interiors and still lifes, but after 1961 he turned to the nude, a subject that quickly became controversial and therefore



Cut-Out Nude ©Tom Wesselmann/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

popular. In the preceding decade, the Abstract Expressionists created an arena that left little room for figuration. Wesselmann's subject matter is entirely traditional—the reclining female nude is one of the most often used images in art. He suggests a beach scene in *Nude*, which sets up the classic bather pose as depicted by any number of masters, although Wesselmann's diverges from the past through his depersonalization of the female body. His nudes do not look “classic,” but instead resemble pinup posters, which are made for the erotic fulfillment of heterosexual men. For this reason, as well as his use of commercial images, he was quickly included in the movement now referred to as Pop.

In 1961 Wesselmann began his series *The Great American Nude*.¹ His audiences immediately expected him to prove just how he could appropriate an ancient model, fuse it with a new, brazen iconography, and call the result American. In the 1960s, the peak of the sexual revolution, the task ahead of Wesselmann was risky and challenging, but entirely appropriate. After graduating from the Cooper Union Art Institute in 1959, Wesselmann abandoned Abstract Expressionism, the art that had

held his affection.² The movement had such a tremendous impact on him that he felt overwhelmed, with no choice but to proceed in an entirely different direction. Instead of grand, thick brush strokes and monumental compositional elements, he focused on what he had liked looking at during his training: still lifes, domestic interiors, and especially female nudes. He also thought of himself as a cartoonist, and the simplified, humorous components from cartoons showed up immediately in his early works.³

The one element that Wesselmann did carry over was one he had picked up from Willem de Kooning. Wesselmann thought de Kooning's work was the "primary example of the most full-blown use of all the exciting ideas of the time."⁴ He therefore wanted his work to be as powerful as de Kooning's. In homage to the older artist, Wesselmann collaged female lips on one of his early nudes, whose face was otherwise featureless. The idea came from a study for de Kooning's *Woman Series* (1950 to 1953) that contained a woman's lips cut and pasted from a magazine advertisement. From that point on the lips became a crucial part of Wesselmann's work. He continued painting these nude, semi-faceless women, which were his most effective way of exploiting what was exciting about that time.

As he settled into this particular style, the resulting work indicated a painter who tended to confuse work time with playtime. To Wesselmann, simplified body parts were analogous to a bold brush stroke or a bright red. They were compositional eye-catchers. Innocent viewers tend to see Wesselmann's aggressive actions as fun and erotic, having little to do with the higher, more solemn emotions art often evokes. His nudes were an expression of his delight in rediscovering sex after the breakup of his marriage. Furthermore, his new girlfriend willingly posed for him in the nude in revealing poses as a part of their sexual pleasure or communication.⁵ Perhaps this playtime between Wesselmann and his lover indicated the proper state of an American nude in the early sixties.

In these two prints we are presented with radically truncated female bodies, whose lips, nipples, and tan lines create an uncomfortable, perhaps voyeuristic, relationship with viewers. It appears we are looking at a woman who is merely there to be looked at, a woman who is sexually excited, who finds pleasure in presenting her body so that it teases and titillates. To refer briefly to her place within Pop Art, she is there to be consumed. But Wesselmann claims confidently that the appearance of this "fake" woman is an accurate reflection of his relationship with his model. Without explaining every detail he simply says, "Those really were her nipples, those really were her tan lines [speaking of Claire, the model and his current wife]."⁶ Blank except for the exaggerated lips, the faces of his models indicate that he was not producing a portrait; he was creating a work that commented on his sexual relationship. A nude, that is, an American nude in the sixties, needed to blur the distinction between what was strictly private and what was fair game for public knowledge.



Nude ©Tom Wesselmann/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

It is difficult to respond to Wesselmann's claims as we stare at these exaggerated depictions of the female body. We cannot help but think he was looking at pornography, which was becoming more widespread at the time, especially through such soft-core publications as Hugh Hefner's magazine *Playboy*. The Supreme Court cleared once banned literature for distribution to the general public. Coupled with the advent of the birth control pill, the result was a rapid climax within the ongoing sexual revolution. It only seems natural to consider these nudes as poster children for what men wanted women to be at that time.

Wesselmann quickly became predictable in his style and subject matter. But his series of nudes remains enticing today as he keeps returning us to that place of predictability where we know we are going to question American sexuality. In 1961 he changed the way we thought of a nude in art; in 1965 he brought the nude women outdoors for a public audience. His women did not apologize for being fun to look at. He forced us to look at their lips, nipples, tan lines (and genitals, in many of his works), not to form a higher, symbolic relationship with them, but to see them for what they are. And what they are is his bridge between the postwar nude and the traditional nude,

his own form of avant-gardism. He was changing the way we thought about social life in America, while making money in the process. This is art. Well, at least this was Pop Art.

Nick Shiraef
Class of 2001

¹ Thomas Buchsteiner and Otto Letze, eds., *Tom Wesselmann* (New York: Distributed Art Publishers, 1996), 11.

² Buchsteiner and Letze, *Tom Wesselmann*, 9.

³ Tom Wesselmann, telephone conversation with the author, 20 March 2000.

⁴ Slim Stealingworth, *Tom Wesselmann* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1980), 13.

⁵ Stealingworth, *Tom Wesselmann*, 23.

⁶ Tom Wesselmann, telephone conversation with the author.

Checklist of the Exhibition*

Allan D'Arcangelo

Landscape I from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. I
1965

Silkscreen in three colors, 137/200
24" x 19 7/8"

Memphis Brooks Museum of Art

Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.108

©Estate of Allan D'Arcangelo/Licensed by VAGA,
New York, NY

Allan D'Arcangelo

Landscape III from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. III
1965

Silkscreen in four colors, 137/200
40" x 29 7/8"

Memphis Brooks Museum of Art

Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.117

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New York, NY

Jim Dine

Awl from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. I
1965

Silkscreen in two colors, 137/200
23 7/8" x 19 3/4"

Memphis Brooks Museum of Art

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and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.109

Jim Dine

Throat from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. II
1965

Silkscreen, 137/200
30" x 24"

Memphis Brooks Museum of Art

Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.94

Allen Jones

Janet Is Wearing . . . from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. III
1965

Lithograph, 137/200
23 1/2" x 18 7/8"

Memphis Brooks Museum of Art

Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.123

Allen Jones

Miss America from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. I
1965

Lithograph, 137/200
24" x 20"

Memphis Brooks Museum of Art

Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.115

Allen Jones

Pour les Lèvres from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. II
1965

Silkscreen, 137/200
30 1/8" x 24"

Memphis Brooks Museum of Art

Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.99

Roy Lichtenstein

Moonscape from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. I
1965

Silkscreen on Rowlux plastic, 137/200
19 1/2" x 24"

Memphis Brooks Museum of Art

Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.107

©Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

Roy Lichtenstein
Reverie from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. II
1965
Silkscreen, 137/200
30 1/4" x 24 1/8"
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
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and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.97
©Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

Roy Lichtenstein
Seascape from the portfolio *New York 10*
1965
Silkscreen on Rowlux plastic, 111/200
16 3/4" x 22"
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
Brooks Memorial Art Gallery Purchase 65.52
©Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

Roy Lichtenstein
"Sweet Dreams, Baby!" from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. III
1965
Silkscreen, 137/200 (Castleman 156)
37 1/2" x 27 5/8"
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.116
©Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

Peter Phillips
Custom Print I from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. I
1965
Silkscreen on alufoil, 137/200
24" x 20"
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.110

Peter Phillips
Custom Print II from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. II
1965
Silkscreen on alufoil, 137/200
24" x 30"
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.95

Mel Ramos
Miss Comfort Creme from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. III
1965
Silkscreen, 137/200
40" x 30"
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.125
©Mel Ramos/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

Mel Ramos
Tobacco Rose from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. II
1965
Silkscreen, 137/200
30" x 24 1/8"
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.104
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James Rosenquist
Circles of Confusion from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. I
1965
Silkscreen in seven colors, 137/200
24" x 20"
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.112
©James Rosenquist/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

James Rosenquist
For Love . . . from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. III
1965
Silkscreen in five colors, 137/200
35 1/2" x 26 3/4"
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.120
©James Rosenquist/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

Andy Warhol
Jacqueline Kennedy I from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. I
1965
Silkscreen, 137/200
24 1/8" x 20"
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.106
© 2000 Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts/ARS,
New York, NY

Andy Warhol
Jacqueline Kennedy II from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. II
1965
Silkscreen in two colors, 137/200
24 1/8" x 30 1/2"
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.98
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New York, NY

John Wesley
Maiden from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. III
1965
Silkscreen in four colors, 137/200
23 7/8" x 19 7/8"
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.111

Tom Wesselmann
Cut-Out Nude from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. I
1965
Silkscreen on moulded brown vinyl in six colors, 137/200
20" x 24"
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.105
©Tom Wesselmann/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

Tom Wesselmann
Nude from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists*, vol. II
1965
Silkscreen in eight colors, 137/200
24" x 29 3/4"
Memphis Brooks Museum of Art
Joint purchase of the Memphis Park Commission
and Brooks Fine Arts Foundation 65.103
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**Print sheet measurements are height x width.*

Curators: David McCarthy and Marina Pacini

Catalog production: Marina Pacini

Catalog design: Larry Ahokas and Kevin Barré

Editing: Carlisle Hacker, David McCarthy, Marina Pacini, Kaywin Feldman, Martha Shepard

Printing: Starr Toof

ISBN: 0-9701660-0-1