POP ART

Grade Level: 6-12

SUMMARY

A dynamic overview of the Pop Art movement, the artists and their work, and the period in history that produced this indelible mark on 20th Century art.

The Pop Art movement emerged in the mid 1950s in England. The central figures among the Pop artists are all Americans and the movement realized its fullest potential in New York in the '60s where it shared, with Minimalism, the attentions of the art world. Pop Art epitomizes the consumerism of the latter half of the 20th Century. The movements name was coined by English critic Lawrence Alloway in a 1958 issue of Architectural Digest and describes those paintings that celebrate consumerism, defy the psychology of Abstract Expressionism (which Pop Artists thought pretentious and over-intense), and worship the god of materialism.

Pop Art used common objects, commercial imagery and iconography, and rejected any distinction between good and bad taste. The epic was replaced with the everyday and the mass-produced awarded the same significance as the unique.

Pop Art focused attention upon familiar images of the popular culture such as billboards, comic strips, television, magazine advertisements, and common supermarket products. Pop Art was also commonly produced using mass production and commercial techniques such as silk-screening and the now famous "ben-day" dots to simulate the printing techniques used in newspaper and magazine presses.

The leading Pop pioneers include Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg and, of course, Andy Warhol (1928-87). Appropriating images from popular culture, Warhol created many paintings that remain icons of 20th-century art, such as the Campbell's Soup Cans, Disasters and Marilyns.

QUOTES:

ANDY WARHOL

“Everyone will be famous for 15 minutes.”
“Everything is beautiful. Pop is everything.”
“If you want to know all about Andy Warhol, just look at the surface of my paintings and films and me, there I am. There's nothing behind it.”
“Making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art.”
“Don't pay any attention to what they write about you. Just measure it in inches.”

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

"I think a painting is more like the real world if it's made out the real world."
"The artist's job is to be a witness to his time in history."
"You begin with the possibilities of the material."
"An empty canvas is full."

ROBERT VENTURI

"Less is a bore."

CLAES OLDENBURG

"I am for the art of underwear and the art of taxicabs. I am for the art of ice cream cones dropped on concrete."

ROBERT INDIANA

"Pop art is the American Dream, optimistic, generous, and naive!"

ROY LICHTENSTEIN

"Pop Art is industrial painting. I think the meaning of my work is that it is industrial, it's what all the world will soon become.”

This guide may be downloaded and photocopied for free distribution without restriction.
OBJECTIVES
By viewing the module and participating in the activities, students will be able to:

- Describe the historical figures and circumstances that led to the Pop Art Movement.
- Identify major works by Andy Warhol and any 2 of the other leading Pop Artists.
- Discuss and identify the contributions these artists brought to the world of visual arts.

PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

- View a selection of works by Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Peter Max, Peter Blake, Wayne Thiebaud, and Christo.
- Discuss the political, societal, and historical events at the time some of the major works were created.

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

- Write an essay on Pop Art both in England and the U.S.; include the historic events that led to it as well as biographical information on three of the artists featured in the module.
- Discuss the artists’ major works and their contribution to the world of visual arts.
- Compare works by each of the artists, listing similar and varying qualities found in each.

EXTENDED LEARNING

- Create a painting using an image from today’s popular culture in the style of one of the Pop Art artists discussed.
- Storyboard a music video, for a current singer of your choice, using Pop Art as the visual medium and today’s culture as the source of images used to create the video’s ‘look’.

Produced by:

Arts4All, Ltd.
2 West 45th Street, Suite 500
New York, NY 10036
Tel: (212) 391-4007
Fax: (212) 391.4024
Email: info@arts4all.com
www.arts4all.com

This guide may be downloaded and photocopied for free distribution without restriction.