

Photorealism: hyperrealism, hyperrealism, new realism, or sharp focus realism

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Photorealism which can also be identified as Superrealism, Hyperrealism, New Realism, or Sharp Focus Realism, is a type of art that incorporates graphic media, drawing, and paintings in which the artist replicates a photograph onto a canvas to make it as realistically as possible. The word was coined by the author and art dealer Louis K. Meisel in 1969 when it showed up in catalogue for the show "Twenty-two Realists. The name came about as a way of describing artists whose work hinged on the use of photographs. The movement began in the same period as Minimalism, Pop art, and Conceptual art and articulated a strong concentration in art, over that of abstraction and idealism. Some themes that were found in Photorealism included such things as gumball machines, cars, motorcycles and trucks. Then Audrey Flack, the solo female photorealist of the movement, came along and started to integrate expressive themes and concepts of the transience of life in her art.

There are normally a few characteristics that define photorealism, that most photorealists follow. Most of these characters derived from Louis K. Meisel's The Five Principles, cause after all, he is the one that coined the phrase Photorealism. Cameras can only be used as a tool in the gathering of information. An image that an artist has painted on a canvas is clearly noticeable as something that can be found in reality, but is still generated by a photograph. The completed artwork is not formed through an observation.

Many concepts and styles came out of Photorealism. Pop art which shared a lot of mutual visual ground. Both took advantage of the wide range of photographic media in popular culture, but you would not mistake one of the

other. Then came Minimalism, which made a select use of symmetrical abstraction and the delicate placement of forms and lines within a certain space. That was followed by the controversial style of Trompe l'oeil, which were paintings intended to deceive a viewer into thinking that what they were in fact view was a real object when it was not. Another style accepted by Photorealists was Gridding. It was a technique where an image is projected from a photograph onto a canvas where it is overturned or reversed. This was done by dividing the canvas into an elaborate grid system, where you able to see up close. Finally, we come to Photorealist sculpture. Very alike to the Photorealist paintings in which a two-dimensional photograph is being imitated but on an overstated scale. At times the sculptures were so life like that they would fool the human eye and play with your perception. They would even dress the sculptures to achieve a life like look and feel.

The Photorealism movement would not have been as big as of a movement without some key notable Photorealist that helped it move forward with their own individual touch. The first notable artist is Ralph Goings, who was responsible for such works as American Salad (1966), McDonalds Pickup (1970), and Airstream (1970). His work captured the American working-class way of life in gracious and graceful manner. Then there was Richard Estes who was famous for such paintings as Bus with Reflection of the Flatiron Building (1966-67), Telephone Booths (1968), and Double Self-Portrait (1976). His work was unique because of the way he did not use a grid of systems or projector to transfer his images onto the canvas. With his great

attention to realism and detail, he helped bring the classic style of easel painting back into fashion. Then there was Duane Hanson, who was known for his life size sculptures like *Woman Eating* (1971), *Man on bench* (1977), and *Photographer* (1978). His focus of his work was of human beings doing every day to day things. His sculptures were so realistic that was not able to disguise whether it was real or not unless they were close enough to see the brush strokes. The last and final notable Photorealist is Audrey Flack. Unlike her male counter parts, she dabbled in both paintings and sculptures. Some of her famous include *Royal Flush* (1977), *World War II* (1976-77), and *Rocket Goddess* (1990). Her work added a social and political aspect to Photorealism movement. She is also known for being the first artist to use the aid of projected photographs in her paintings.

In conclusion, even though Photorealists managed to draw in a wide audience, they were still disregarded as an important avant-garde style by art historians. In fact, some traditional artists consider the form cheating because of the modern-day mass production of their work. Although the highpoint of Photorealism movement was in the 1970s, it continues imitating more than a few of the original photorealists as well as their contemporaries. With the progression of technology today's Photorealism works have surpassed what was thought possible due to advances and new technology in cameras and digital equipment. Those advances allow the artist of today to be more precise, but still work of the building blocks of the past.