

Marilyn monroe



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Marilyn Monroe is the only one whose vivid image remains instantly recognisable to millions of men and women young and old throughout the world. Each new generation of movie goers and film commentators seems to discover her afresh, virtually re-inventing her image to suit the fashion of the time and there have been many imitators of Monroe 'style' both during her lifetime and since. Marilyn Monroe influenced fashion over the late 50's, the figure hugging material that was to create the small waist and emphasise larger hips to show the woman's curvy figure, the figure that Marilyn Monroe is extremely famous for.

Marilyn Monroe was always centre of media attention this had a very strong connection with the style at the time as she needed to always look the very best to keep her reputation and image going. Looking at different artist's I came across William De Kooning and his unique way of portraying Marilyn Monroe, He fragmented human figures, continuously piecing them together and disassembling them again, he was influenced by cubism but not accepting cubism's clear, fixed, and stable composition.

Just as he dismembered the human figure he destabilised cubist design, decomposing it into carelessly shifting and interpenetrating compacted but open forms, this was the way Marilyn Monroe was painted he concentrated little on detail and used large expressive brush movements capturing the voluptuous figure of Marilyn Monroe. De Kooning recognises that, like all female sex symbols, Monroe is often viewed more as an object than as a whole person and he portrays her almost as a shop window dummy with no trace of eroticism in some ways it could be said that de Kooning was the one that interpreted Marilyn in this way.

Marilyn Monroe would not of liked being portrayed like this; she was forever trying to show the world that she was more then an icon for the public, and wanted to be recognized as a serious actress. De Kooning's subjects were big-busted women with eye's crossed and teeth bared, the women are city-bred pin-up girls never before seen in art, and as such they are both a maintenance of and a challenge to the centuries long tradition of western figure painting, particularly that of Picasso. The reason for which de Kooning may have painted his women in that way may have come from his social influences.

When painting, de kooning has no final image in mind he faced innumerable options in his paintings. De Kooning's paintings were filled with anxiety, whose marks where everywhere visible. Anxiety was also a sign of the time. He was too 'nervous' as he put it, too restless and anxious to feel comfortable in any fixed situation. His experience with New York had contributed to his anxiety, but as much as he loved the city he evoked the city's complexity, claustrophobic space, hectic tempo, and peculiar anxiety through a great variety of invented shapes, jammed into the picture space, energised, ordered and disarranged.

The Stability in de Kooning's paintings is a metaphor for New York in a state of excavation, continuously being torn down and built up. The paintings are row and raging, evoking the unpleasantness, violence, and restlessness of urban life. To de Kooning, New York city was so overwhelming that it's reality could only be caught in 'glimpses'. Women, one of his first paintings is composed of intense slashes of fleshy pigment, the painterly drawing

became increasingly expressionist, paradoxically both violent and voluptuous.

Whatever was De Kooning's imagery, he arrived at it in the act of painting turning point, the substance itself, the way it moves, the tradition it represents into a way of seeing the world. There is also an undeniable element of drawing in de Kooning's approach that expects Pop Art attitudes. Furthermore, de Kooning, like Stuart Davis, Gerald Murphy, and certain other earlier Americans, predicted Pop Art in drawing inspiration from many sides of popular culture as well as in his choice of specific images.

For example, a detail of the t-zone from a Camel cigarette advert that appeared on the back of Time magazine in 1949 was included into a study for Women, 1950. This is the type of imagery James Rosenquist might have used in the early 1960's, and the kind of subject Andy Warhol illustrated in his Marilyn paintings. Andy Warhol is the son of Czech, his father was a miner, and he had a middle class upbringing in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Warhol immigrated to America in the hope to further his career so did de Kooning. Warhol's first Pop paintings had a drippy Abstract Expressionist style.

It was only when he started to paint things flat, dead on, that he found his true style. Warhol created paintings that directly reproduced mass-media images of stars or people who got into the news by dying, or being murdered. In 1962 he made paintings of Marilyn Monroe, who had just died; her repeated, blackened image is like a ghost on the canvas. Andy Warhol had a huge obsession with glamour, style and fashion. By the 1960's Warhol

had collected large groups of press and publicity photographs of stars such as Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor and had stored piles of fan magazines and tabloid newspapers.

From these he collected the images that would become the source of his paintings and prints of Marilyn and Liz. Andy Warhol a Pop artist transforms mass produced objects and information from the mass media into art, he also turns his own art into mass produced objects. The Pop artists of that time created images that anybody walking down Broadway could recognize in a split second. Comic's, picnic tables, men's trousers, shower curtains, refrigerators, coke-bottles all the great modern things that abstract expressionists tried so hard not to notice at all.

More research of Marilyn lead me to a photographer Eve Arnold. She was a close friend of Marilyn and had photographed her over a period of ten years; this made eve's photographs much more personal to Marilyn and the public. Eve found that each time she photographed Marilyn she was different and always relaxed, Richard Avedon also noticed this. This is what made Marilyn Monroe's beauty carry on throughout the years, each different photographed captured a different mood and attitude and also a new story that would be featured across the newspapers.

Eve photographed Marilyn in personal situations, snap's in the ladies' room of the Chicago airport, through intimate reportage and through formal colour studio shots for cover. These changes are only possible if the photographer has forged a relationship, which permits an atmosphere in which the subject feels relaxed and safe. Eve Arnold's work has captured Marilyn Monroe in a

completely different way than the works of Andy Warhol and Willem De Kooning her personal relationship connects with Marilyn in a way that the other artists couldn't, they used her as an object and not as a real person to who she may have been.

Eve's work can be related more to women as women can relate more to Marilyn, the photographs taken by Eve display Marilyn as the 'normal' women she was, finding herself in situations most women find themselves in. The photograph of Marilyn in the ladies' room at the Chicago airport, shows Marilyn fixing her hair as she has her dress wrapped round her waist showing the bottom of her knickers. An embarrassing moment for all ladies, but for Marilyn, from the reflection of her face expression in the mirror it seems this does not affect her.

This photograph may have had preparation for Marilyn to be portrayed in this way, even though Eve Arnold was a close friend Marilyn may have been shown here to show her 'best side' and it may not portray the real person that she is. The difference between Andy Warhol's work and de Kooning's work to that of Eve Arnolds is that Warhol and de Kooning portray Marilyn how they see her as an individual. In de Kooning's work he may have the closest true beauty of Marilyn of the voluptuous women that she was, he did not care about her importance in the world, he took her body and created her beauty through abstract expressionism.

Because of Eve being a personal friend of Marilyn's she may have portrayed Marilyn to her best possible look, she would not of captured the hard times when Marilyn was not at her best for it would of just put more stress on top

Marilyn's life. As with Warhol he portrayed Marilyn as the media portrayed her, every headline that she was displayed, Warhol interpreted that to the woman he wanted her to be. My first project, unit 5 the creation of pop art for the 21st Century brought about idea's for this project.

I came across Marilyn Monroe when I was researching Andy Warhol and related her to the former 'pop idol' of the 21st Century, Madonna. My idea's expanded from this and I began taking articles from the daily newspapers and developed these ideas, similar to what Andy Warhol did. I created several screen prints from my research of the terrorist attacks in America, these was created in a Warhol style, similar to how he captured Marilyn Monroe from the interpretation from what the media made of her. Using the screen prints I experimented, working on top of these to create the layers of tragedy and lies that the media brings.

In some ways I've used paint in violent slashes across the prints to show a distorted view of the tragedy that happened, this can be related to the work of William de Kooning, Frank Auerbach and Leon Kossoff. In my work I have joined two different artist's techniques together to create my 21st century final painting. For this project about Marilyn Monroe I wanted to create a piece of art that showed her beauty through her features. Through my work I have made sketches of Marilyn's features - eyes, chest, body, lips, nose etc. from pencil or pastels, from these I've created a silk scarf which has parts of Marilyn printed on.

The flow and lightness of the material represents the fifties style clothing that Marilyn Monroe would have been seen wearing, and her features that

have been put onto the scarf represent the beauty that Marilyn Monroe became famous for. I wanted to research Marilyn Monroe to find out the true beauty that she was to the world and it's artists, as it was her stunning looks that made her a goddess and attracted her to me this is why she became the subject for my research.