

Origins he was included for incorporating illusion in

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Origins In October of 1964, an article in Time Magazine coined the phrase “Optical Art”.

Op was recognized and popularized in the United States, and spread to Europe specifically France and Italy where it achieved critical acclaim (“Op art – Art Term”). It emerged in the 1960s as an abstract style of art that creates the illusion of movement through mathematical precision, contrast, color and abstract shapes (“Op Art”). Op’s greatest success was in 1965, when the Museum of Modern Art exhibited the style in The Responsive Eye show, which showcased 123 paintings and sculptures by various artists such as Victor Vasarely, Bridget Riley, Jesus Rafael Soto, and Josef Albers (Op-Art.co.uk).

Victor Vasarely, Bridget Riley, and Jesus Rafael Soto were key Op artists that dazzled museum attendees with their incorporation of art and science. Art critics such as Clement Greenberg vehemently opposed the movement. The exhibition cast doubt on the movement, since the artistic interests were so different from each other; for example Albers was not an Op artist, but he was included for incorporating illusion in his art. The Op label seemed too broad. (“Op art – Art Term”).

INFLUENCES Op was influenced by Bauhaus ideals of form follows function. William Seitz, who documented Op Art in 1962 called it a generator of perceptual responses. Op was designed to provoke sensations in the spectator by tricking the human eye.

Illusion is common to art, but Op exploited the capability of the viewer to complete images in their mind by effecting the normal perceptual process (trompe l’oeil). Op was influenced by Abstract Expressionism to entice a

feeling in the audience, but it left any kind of representation behind to create an experience (Op-Art. co. uk).

It can be seen as descendant of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, for artists like Seurat rejected palette mixing. Seurat used pure colors of dots next to each other, to allow the eye of the viewer to mix them in their mind. Op would push this idea even further. Artists in the Op movement made technique and subject matter inseparable (ThoughtCo).

Josef Albers and Victor Vasarely, Hungarian-born French painter (1908-97) were huge influences on Op art. Albers explored the expressive potential of color more than any living artist. He demonstrated relativity of color in his painting series “ Homage to the Square”, and he embraced the deception of color to appear similar and different in relation (“ Op Art”). Vasarely is an early pioneer of Op Art, in 1938 with his Zebras utilizing photographismes (black and white line drawings) that caused illusionary effects on the eye. He created disorientation through syncopated rhythms and geometric patterns (ThoughtCo). He believed the experience of the work outweighed the meaning. This is important to note while viewing Op art. He applied the term cinetic art not kinetic art.

Cinetic art referred to the illusion of movement. This was used by J.R. Soto who created Op sculptures that moved based on the viewer's interaction with object. Vasarely sought to create art that captured the modern times. But, color is where the full power of Op art was realized. Color contrasts in geometric shapes caused retinal vibrations within the spectator

(ThoughtCo). STYLES(ThoughtCo)Op Art fools the eye. Op compositions create visual tension.

It is flat, static, and two-dimensional, but the human eye tells the brain that the object moves. Op Art is not reality. Op Art is abstract. Artists do not attempt to depict anything we know in real life. Op Art is not chance. The elements picked for maximum effect in each color, line, and shape in the overall composition. It takes a great deal of thought to successfully create artwork in the Op style. Consider most of it was hand done, at large scales.

Op Art has specific techniques. They used perspective and juxtaposition of color to achieve effective optical illusions. The color may be chromatic (hues) or achromatic (black, white, or gray), or bold, complementary and high-contrast for a full visual experience for the viewer. . Op Art does not blend colors.

The lines and shapes are defined. Artists do not use shading. Two high-contrast colors placed next to each other to trick the eye into seeing movement. Op Art uses negative space. The positive and negative spaces in a composition make the illusion plausible.

Op artists used negative space as they do the positive. Color interaction There are three major classes of the interaction of color: simultaneous contrast, successive contrast, and reverse contrast (or assimilation). Simultaneous contrast may take place when one area of color is surrounded by another area of a different color. Successive contrast, one color is viewed and then another. This may be achieved either by fixing

the eye steadily on one color and then quickly replacing that color with another.

Reverse contrast (assimilation) the lightness of white or the darkness of black may seem to spread into neighboring regions. A NEWMOVE Op artists were concerned with the behavior of the eye. They developed abstract compositions that caused after-images, moire (wavy patterns) effects, dazzling, and all kinds' effects resulted from the eye's struggle to read an image. Op art never produced a clear body of ideas, and the range of interests made the Op art label very uncomfortable. The Op label embraced so many different artists to testify to the importance of visual effects throughout modern art, but it had no base ideology. It was more of a technique that the artists that used it gave their reasoning.

Therefore, its origin and end blur with other movements like Kinetic art. Op artists used black and white to produce the greatest contrast in their designs, since this caused the greatest struggle to the eye to discern which element of the composition is in the foreground and which is in the background. Bridget Riley created black and white undulating striped paintings through a systematic process to etcetera, trick the eye to see something that does not exist ("Op art"). IMPACT The antecedents of Op can be traced back to Neo-impressionism, Cubism, Futurism, Constructivism and Dada. Its complex perceptual effects created by Op artists were embraced by the general public, but art critics considered it a gimmick. Commercial success led to the decline of the movement, since artists discovered that their designs were borrowed by American clothing manufacturers.

Op artelements were made into posters, t-shirts and book illustrations.

Audiences who embraced the movement would reject it as eye trickery. The Op movement in a lifespan of around three years lost popularity by 1968, but its exploration of systematic optical effects are still incorporated in visual art and architecture. The artists sought to create a unique experience through intense sensuality not intellectual content (ThoughtCo). Structural

Constellation (1913) Artist: Josef Albers Albers experiments with the perception of space by arranging simple lines to create an indistinct sense of depth. The black rectangular shapes intersect in various angles to disorient the viewer's perception of space. The piece is 2D and not stylistically rendered, but the viewer interprets unstable dimensions. Albers rejected the label "Op art," and his Bauhaus background inclined him to be interested in a very rational investigation of color, yet he embraced the usefulness of tricking the eye (The Museum of Modern Art).

In the Museum of Modern Art, New York Duo- 2 (1967) Artist: Victor Vasarely The warm and cool shades of color create the illusion of three-dimensional structures. The concave, or convex shapes blur the lines of reality, but one needs to remember it is a painted image, despite its volumetric assembly. Vasarely used black and white to deliver his more memorable Op images like Zebras Color interested many Op artists. The scientific study of color was central to teaching at the Bauhaus, and Vasarely benefited from his education at the "Budapest Bauhaus." Bauhaus teachers such as Albers encouraged students to think beyond the symbolism of colors, which was very important in art, but the effects that color had on the eye was worth more exploration (Masterworks Fine Art). Gouache and acrylic on board

-Private Collection Blaze (1964)Artist: Bridget Riley (b. 1931)Zigzag black and white lines in createthe perception of a circular attire.

The image tricks the brain that thepattern shifts back and forth. Her work would wave before the audience, andcritics found something feminine about her abstract work (“ Op art – Art Term”). The interlocking lines add depthto the form as it rhythmically curves around. The curator Joe Houston has argued that works such as Blaze “ trigger in theviewer an experience equivalent to an atmospheric electric charge; not an illusion, but an “ event.

” (ThoughtCo)She disliked thecommercialization of her work, probably due to her early career as a graphicdesigner. Rileyherself has said, “ My work has developed on the basis of empiricalanalyses and syntheses, and I have always believed that perception is the mediumthrough which states of being are directly experienced.” (ThoughtCo)Screen print on paper – TheInstitute of Contemporary Prints Houston Penetrable 2004-2014 (IdeelArt)The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston(Houston, Texas)Artist: Jesus Rafael SotoThe artist investigates light, movement and space. He initially spoke of them as “ enveloping works”—art thatwould give people a sense of the shape and density of space (IdeelArt).

The space was a field that had tobe experienced with the eyes, the entire body, and the senses. French artcritic Jean Clay was the first to call them Penetrables (meaning, in French andSpanish, “ to get into” or “ to walk through”), a term that Soto then adopted (IdeelArt). Soto used art to make people seethe world differently, to make them experience moving through it.

Spectators entering a Penetrable redefine their relationship to the space, and they must reconfigure their sense of height and width.

The Houston Penetrable was Soto's most ambitious work. It uses clear tubes with a huge yellow ellipse at its center. The design and immense scale made the piece extremely difficult to produce.

After more than five years, the Museum helped Soto in Paris to construct what his final project (Ideel Art). Works Cited

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