

Pop art was simply a reflection of consumer society and mass media

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Pop art was simply a reflection of consumer society and mass media, not a critique. Discuss with reference to the work of 3 artists. Pop Art was one of the major art movements of the twentieth century. It brought art back to the material realities of daily life, in which ordinary people derived most their visual pleasure from popular massculture, such as advertising, television, magazines, or comic books and comic strips. As it emerged from the experiments of the fifties, was the ideal instrument for coming to grips with the American urbanenvironment. (Stangos, 1997) As the post-war generation and the stable political situation, it drove people back to the qualities of life. At the same times, America urban environment was influence by industrialism, consumer society and the mass media explosion. The pop artists have found subjects, which have previously been 'invisible' because they are so much a part of our surroundings that we don't see them. These things now begin to appear, once the artists have pointed them out, and we discover that the world is full of 'Pop object,' which are expressive of our times and our values for better or for worse. (Mahsun, 1989, p. 163) Pop art was established from the reality of basic consumer society; therefore, it was accepted by the society easily.

Pop art is said to be a reflection of culture as artists are giving new interpretation to different ordinary objects in their art works. Jasper Johns establish his career in art in 1954, he uses flags, numbers, letters and maps these kind of common symbols in daily life as element or theme of his art work. Jasper talks about his work, 'Flags' (fig. ), in which he thinks that flag this kind of most ordinary objects 'can be dealt with without having to judge them, they seem to me to exist as clear facts, not involving aesthetic

hierarchy. ' (Harrison and Wood, 2001, p. 721) He adds that ' one thinks it has forty-eight stars and suddenly it has fifty stars; it is no longer of any great interest. '

' The painting of a flag is always about a flag, but it is no more about a flag than it is about a brush-stroke or about a color or about the physicality of the paint, I think. (Harrison and Wood, 2001, p. 723) People will not care anymore about the cultural meaning of a flag, such as the meaning behind the number of stars of flag, but it transforms to a new representation of merely art element---- brush-stroke, color and paint. The deform of ordinary objects is reformed into a new image using oil and collage on fabric. By looking at the quality of work, one may say it is unfinished, however Jasper said it is his intention. ' I think a painting should include more experience than simply intended statement.

I personally would like to keep the painting in a state of ' shunning statement', so that one is left with the fact that one can experience individually as one pleases; that is, not to focus the attention in one way, but to leave the situation as kind of actual thing, so that the experience of it is variable. ' (Harrison and Wood, 2001, p. 726) Besides he is interested in deforming objects, he also intended to leave the painting not ' perfect' as people usually conceived, to let viewer to ' experience' and interpret the painting in their own way.

Lippard (1966) also said that he has neutralized the gap between life and art by composing ' imperfect synthesis of motif and treatment'. The question about is it a painting or flag is no more important. He integrates art and life

with the use of ordinary objects and the imperfect way to treat his art. The new interpretation of ordinary culture is arousing resonance of viewers rather than voicing out a statement to challenge the society. Andy Warhol, another master of pop art giving a new interpretation of mass production. For the most 1950s he was a successful graphic designer, particularly in the field of shoe illustration.

In 1960, Warhol, produced his first canvases depicting comic strip characters. The canonical repeated Soup Cans, Disaster, Elvises and Marilyns followed in 1962. Warhol talks about his work, ' Campbell's Soup Cans,'(fig. 2), for the reason he start painting soup cans ' because I used to drink it. I used to have the same lunch every day, for twenty years, I guess, the same thing over and over again. '(Harrison and Wood, 2001, P. 732) Painting usually reflects the painter's mind, which is happening around them. And the Soup cans totally reflect what Warhol's life had and what he concerned.

Daily objects are used again as the theme of art work which is reminding viewers about very common objects, which Warhol is placing a new value and thought into them through his work. Another series of painting, the death series (fig. 3), and the reason to start this series is because there was lots of disaster news from the mass media. Warhol realized that everything he was doing must have been Death. That started it. But he believed when one see a horrible picture over and over again would lose the effect (Harrison and Wood, 2001, P. 732).

He even wants to repeat the images like what a machine does. In the 60s, most of the American similar to Warhol repeating their life likes a machine.

No one would like to be a machine, but Warhol does. Warhol said that ' I want to be a machine, and I feel that whatever I do and do machine like is what I want to do. ' (Harrison and Wood, 2001, P. 732) In 1963 Warhol was mass-producing the images by silkscreen technique, for the repeated images ' makes us aware again of objects which have lost their visual recognition through constant exposure.

We take a fresh look at things familiar to us, yet uprooted from their ordinary contexts, and reflect upon the meaning of contemporary existence. '(Stangos, 1997, P. 229) Warhol wants an art that will appeal to everybody, and his ' products' range from soup to cheesecake, Brillo to Marilyn Monroe, nose surgery to Jacqueline Kennedy, as he mention ' everything is beautiful, Pop is everything. ' (Stangos, 1997) Once again, his art work reflects the mundane daily life of Warhol. It becomes widespread and popular because of the objects are so attached to everyone's common life in America, which recalls people's memory.

It is more probably that he is playful to ordinary materials, giving new look to them, mass producing them, rather to give a critical statement to the contemporary society. Roy Lichtenstein, who was a founder and foremost practitioner of pop art, he interest in the comic-strip cartoon and blown-up enlargements of things as an art theme probably began with a painting of Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, ' Look Mickey' (fig. 4). Although he was initially dissatisfied with his technique and uncomfortable with direct appropriation, he took great pleasure in presenting well-known comic-strip figures in a fine art format.

He thinks that Pop art is commercial art which is used as subject matter in painting. (Franciz, Mark and Foster, 2005) He is interested in signs and comic strips because they are ' usable, forceful and vital about commercial art.... We are using those things---- but we are not really advocating stupidity, international teenagerism andterrorism. ' (Franciz, Mark and Foster, 2005, p. 229) The use of ' comic strips' itself already brings the cultural effect which everyone could digest easily, while he did not intend to give a judgment to the culture or society.

Roy also said that he painted directly. To express the things in a painterly style would dilute it; the techniques he uses are not commercial, they only appear to be commercial and the ways of seeing and composing and unifying are different and have different ends. Roy believes pop art looks out into the world; it appears to accept its environment, which is not good or bad, but different-another state of mind. And the tension between apparent object-directed products and actual ground- directed processes is an important strength of pop art. Mahsun, 1989,) When the curator at the modern museum has called pop art fascistic and militaristic, ' the 1st televised war' (fig 5), Roy said that ' The heroes depicted in comic books are fascist types, but I don't take them seriously in these paintings- maybe there is a point in not taking them seriously, a political point. I use them for purely formal reason, and that's not what those heroes were invented for.... Pop art has very immediate and of the moment meanings which will vanish- that kind of thing is ephemeral- and pop takes advantage of this ' meaning' which is not supposed to last, to divert you from its content.

I think the formal statement in my work will become clearer in time. ' (Mahsun, 1989, P. 113) It is clear that Roy does not take the heroic effect of cartoon strip itself seriously, even agrees with the fading meaning of pop art it may convey. It does not matters to him whether the effect will be long-lasting. He takes the immediate effect of cartoon images which are popular and influential in the moment. One could hardly think about he is criticizing the culture from his own statement. In 50s to 60s America societies, pop culture is the product of the Industrial Revolution, and of the series of technological revolutions that succeed it. Nikos Stangos, 1997) The impact of Mass media from radio, television or magazine advertising was fully influenced in America urban environment, who can live without this complicated mass media element. According to impact of mass media, the commonplace objects (such as comic strips, famous star and commodities) were used as subject matter in pop art. When the pop artists discovered those ' invisible' objects, they realized that there were full of new interesting art element surround them. When the daily commodities become an art piece, the relationship between the commonplace objects and the consumer are resonating easily.

That is the reason why pop art acceptance and recognition by the consumer society and become a fad quickly. (Harrison and Wood, 2001,) It is more prone that Pop art is reflecting the society and culture rather than judging it. ' Everything about pop art was, and is, transient and provisional. By embracing these qualities, the pop artists held a mirror to society itself.

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