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Pop Art and Europe's New Realism

The shift in values that took place in the late fifties was in part a reaction to the barrage of new products and accompanying mass-media explosion produced by the postwar consumer society. The Pop generation responded enthusiastically to the very media images avoided by the Abstract Expressionists. As Andy Warhol said, "The Pop artists did images that anybody walking down Broadway could recognize in a split second—comics, picnic tables; men's trousers, celebrities, shower curtains, refrigerators, Coke bottles—all the great modern things that the Abstract Expressionists tried so hard not to notice." Many artists of the younger generation viewed the legacy of Abstract Expressionism as an oppressive mantle that had to be lifted. They were no longer concerned with the heroic "act" of painting, in "hot" gestures and emotions. Rather, they found subjects within the immediate environment of their popular culture and sought to incorporate them into their art through "cool," depersonalized means. Pop art, Happenings, environments, assemblage, and *Nouveau Réalisme* began to emerge simultaneously in several American and European cities.

In 1961 The Museum of Modern Art mounted The Art of Assemblage, a show organized by William C. Seitz that surveyed modern art involving the accumulation of objects, from two-dimensional Cubist *papiers collés* and photomontages, through every sort of Dada and Surrealist object, to junk assemblage sculpture, to complete room environments. Seitz described such works as follows: "(1) They are predominantly assembled rather than painted, drawn, modeled, or carved; (2) Entirely or in part, their constituent elements are pre-formed natural or manufactured materials, objects, or fragments not intended as art materials." In 1962 the Sidney Janis Gallery's New Realists exhibition opened. The show included a number of the recognized British and American Pop artists, representatives of the French *Nouveau Réalisme*, and artists from Italy and Sweden working in related directions. Although the American Pop artists had been emerging for several years, Janis's show was an official recognition of their

arrival. The European participants seemed closer to the tradition of Dada and Surrealism; the British and Americans more involved in contemporary popular culture and representational, commercial images. But Pop was not embraced by everyone. Proponents of abstract painting decried the arrival of commercialism in art as rampant vulgarity, a youthful attack on high culture. And, like many labels assigned by critics and historians, the Pop designation is rejected by most of the artists it has been used to describe, for the term groups together a very diverse population of highly individual artists.

"This is Tomorrow": Pop Art in Britain

Although Pop art has often been regarded as an American phenomenon, it was first introduced in England in the mid-fifties. The term was first used in print in 1958 by the English critic Lawrence Alloway but for a somewhat different context than its subsequent use. Late in 1952, calling themselves the Independent Group, Alloway, the architects Alison and Peter Smithson, the artist Richard Hamilton, the sculptor Eduardo Paolozzi, the architectural historian Reyner Banham, and others met in London at the Institute of Contemporary Arts. The discussions focused around popular (thus, Pop) culture and its implications—such entities as Western movies, science fiction, billboards, and machines. In short, they concentrated on aspects of contemporary mass culture and were centered on its current manifestations in the United States.

As the Smithsons wrote in 1956, "Mass production is establishing our whole pattern of life—principles, morals, aims, aspirations, and standard of living. We must somehow get the measure of this intervention if we are to match its powerful and exciting impulses with our own." After a period of postwar austerity, fifties Britain began to experience new levels of prosperity that created a mass market for consumer and cultural products. American popular culture was embraced as a liberating, egalitarian force by a new



21.1 Richard Hamilton, *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* 1956. Collage on paper, 10¼ × 9¾" (26 × 24.8 cm). Kunsthalle Tübingen, Sammlung Zundel.

generation who had little time for the restricting exclusivity of "high culture," a notion that included not only aristocratic classicism but also the essentially minority pleasures of modernist abstraction. Alloway's definition of Pop as an art that takes "signs" for its subject matter points the way to postmodernism's preoccupation with the nature of signs in all spheres of human expression and communication.

Hamilton and Paolozzi

Richard Hamilton (b. 1922) defined Pop art in 1957 as "Popular (designed for a mass audience), Transient (short-term solution), Expendable (easily forgotten), Low cost, Mass produced, Young (aimed at youth), Witty, Sexy, Gimmicky, Glamorous and Big Business." A pioneer Pop work is his small collage made in 1956 and entitled *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* (fig. 21.1). A poster of this work was used in a multimedia exhibition held at London's Whitechapel Art Gallery in 1956, entitled *This is Tomorrow*. Hamilton was a disciple

of and respected authority on Marcel Duchamp, whose influence on Pop art cannot be overestimated. Hamilton's collage shows a "modern" apartment inhabited by a pinup girl and her muscle-man mate, whose lollipop barbell prophesies the Pop movement on its label. Like Adam and Eve in a consumers' paradise, the couple have furnished their apartment with products of mass culture: television, tape recorder, an enlarged cover from a comic book, a Ford emblem, and an advertisement for a vacuum cleaner. Through the window can be seen a movie marquee featuring Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer*. The images, all culled from contemporary magazines, provide a kind of inventory of visual culture.

An important point about Hamilton's, and subsequent Pop artists', approach to popular culture is that their purpose was not entirely satirical or antagonistic. They were not expressionists like George Grosz and the Social Realists of the thirties who attacked the ugliness and inequities of urban civilization. In simple terms, the Pop artists looked at the world in which they lived and examined the objects and images that surrounded them with intensity and penetration, frequently making the viewer conscious of that omnipresence for the first time. This is not to say that the artists, and especially Hamilton, were unaware of the ways in which consumer mass culture is communicated to the public—its clichés, its manipulations. On the contrary, his work is often rich with irony and humor. As critic David Sylvester once observed, "Hamilton never makes it clear how far he is being satirical and coolly ironic, how far he is rather in love with the subject, and this equivocation is an aspect of the message."

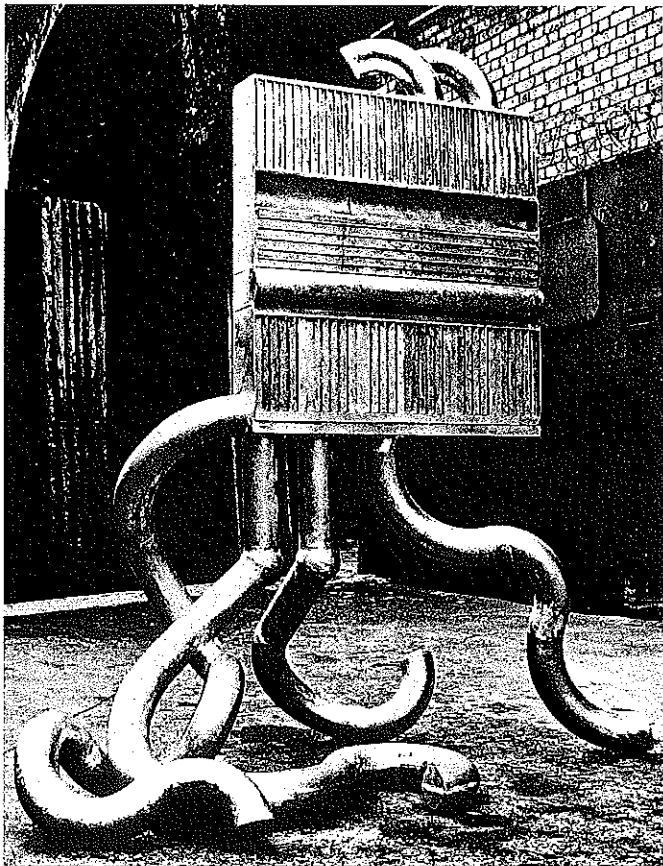
From the sixties onward, Hamilton was deeply involved with photography, a medium that engaged other artists of his generation, such as Hockney and Rauschenberg, in experiments that broke down the barriers between "fine art" practices and photography. Hamilton's painting, *I'm dreaming of a white Christmas* (fig. 21.2) and a subsequent



21.2 Richard Hamilton, *I'm dreaming of a white Christmas*, 1967–68. Oil on canvas, 42 × 63" (106.7 × 160 cm). Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Kunstmuseum.

screenprint, *I'm dreaming of a black Christmas*, were based on a film still of Bing Crosby in the 1954 movie *White Christmas*. By effecting in paint the kind of chromatic reversal found in a photographic negative he creates not only a magical, looking-glass world, but pointedly transforms the protagonist of *White Christmas* into a black man.

The sculptor **Eduardo Paolozzi** (b. 1924), an original member of the Independent Group, produced collages in the early fifties made from comic strips, postcards, and magazine clippings that are today regarded as important forerunners of Pop art. Originally influenced by Giacometti, Dubuffet, and Surrealism, Paolozzi became interested in the relations of technology to art and emerged as a serious spokesman for Pop culture. In the mid-fifties he began to make bronze sculptures whose rough surfaces were cast from found objects, resulting in creatures that resemble towering, battered robots. Searching for forms and techniques consistent with his growing interest in machine technology, Paolozzi produced welded sculptures in the sixties that vary from austere, simplified forms in polished aluminum to elaborate polychromed constructions. While the snakelike tubular forms of *Medea* (fig. 21.3) may have been inspired by the ancient Hellenistic sculpture *Laocoön*, which shows the mythical Greek prophet Laocoön and his sons battling sea-serpents, Paolozzi's humanoid machine seems to have materialized from the science fiction screen.



21.3 Eduardo Paolozzi, *Medea*, 1964. Welded aluminum, 6'9" × 6' (2.1 × 1.8 m). Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo.



21.4 Peter Blake, *On the Balcony*, 1955–57. Oil on canvas, 47¼ × 35¼" (121.3 × 90.8 cm). Tate Gallery, London.

Blake and Kitaj

Of the other English Pop artists, **Peter Blake** (b. 1932) took subjects of popular idolatry, such as Elvis Presley, the Beatles, or pinup girls, and presented them in an intentionally naive style. His early painting *On the Balcony* (fig. 21.4) was inspired by a Social Realist painting he saw in New York's Museum of Modern Art of working-class people holding masterpieces of modern art they could never afford to own. In his own variation on the theme, Blake's young people hold paintings, including, at the left, Manet's painting titled *On the Balcony*. But they are also surrounded by images from the popular media and advertising, as well as by paintings by Blake and his contemporaries.

An ambiguous but crucial figure in the development of English Pop is the American **R. B. Kitaj** (b. 1932), who studied at Oxford and at London's Royal College of Art under the GI Bill that gave services personnel access to college education after the war. He subsequently lived mainly in England. Kitaj painted everyday scenes or modern historical events and personalities in broad, flat, color areas combined with a strong linear emphasis and a sense of fragmentation that is consistent with the style of most Pop art.



21.5 R. B. Kitaj, *The Autumn of Central Paris* (After Walter Benjamin), 1972–73. Oil on canvas, 60 × 60" (152.5 × 152.5 cm). Private collection.

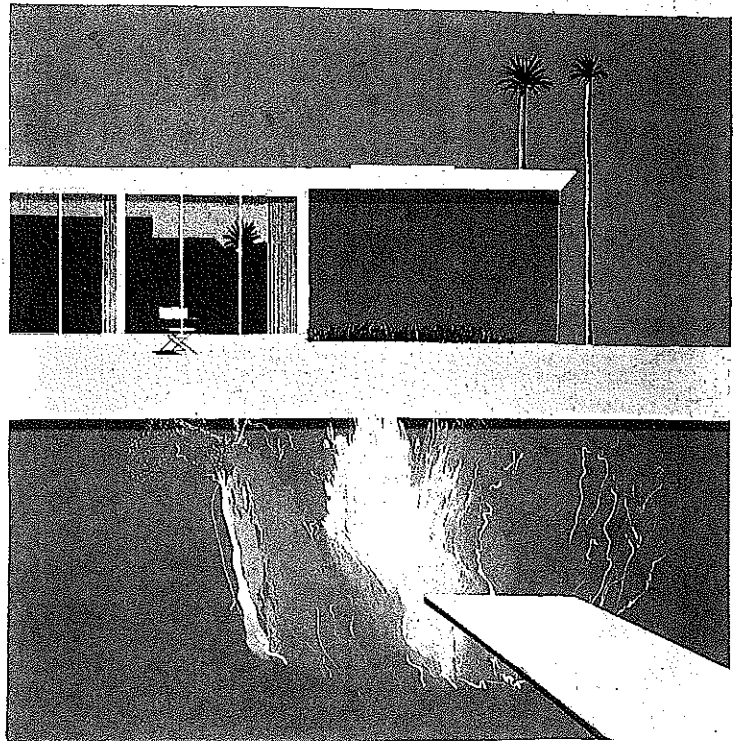
His subject matter, however, diverges from that of his peers. Unique to Kitaj is an emphatic disinterest in popular culture, counterbalanced by a serious, wide-ranging commitment to political and literary themes. His paintings often contain evocative combinations of images derived from sources too complex to yield a clear or specific message. The characteristic work seen here (fig. 21.5) shows a Parisian café scene in which Kitaj's hero, the leftwing German Jewish critic Walter Benjamin, can be identified, juxtaposed to a man wielding a red pick, as if to announce the calamities of 1940 that would drive Benjamin to suicide as the German army began occupying the French capital. Kitaj's eloquent words about Benjamin seem to pertain equally to his own work, "His wonderful and difficult montage, pressing together quickening tableaux from texts and from a disjunct world, were called citations by a disciple of his who also conceded that the picture-puzzle distinguished everything he wrote."

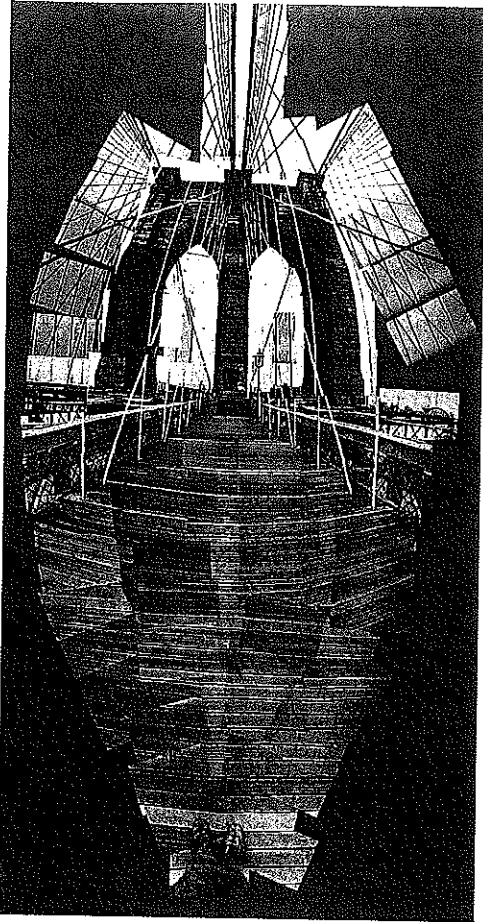
21.6 David Hockney, *A Bigger Splash*, 1967. Acrylic on canvas, 8'½" × 8'½" (2.4 × 2.4 m). Tate Gallery, London.

Hockney

David Hockney (b. 1937), a student of Kitaj's at the Royal College, was so gifted and productive that he had already gained a national reputation by the time of his graduation. Emerging within the same period as the Beatles, Hockney—with his peroxide hair, granny glasses, gold lamé jacket, and easy charm—became something of a media event in his own right, a genial exponent of the go-go, hedonistic style of the sixties. Although Hockney projected a self-image that drew on pop culture, his art did not; instead, he used his own life and the lives of his friends and lovers—their faces and figures, houses, and interiors. These he rendered in a manner sometimes inspired by Picasso and Matisse, but often influenced by Dubuffet, in the delicate *faux naïf* manner of children.

Hockney has long maintained a residence in southern California. There the swimming pool became a central image in his art, complete with its cool, synthetic hues. *A Bigger Splash* (fig. 21.6) combines Hockney's signature equilibrium of elegant Matissean flat-pattern design and luxurious mood with a painterly virtuosity for the splash itself. One critic described this sense of suspended animation as the "epitome of expectant stillness," which is due partly to the artist's habit of working from photographs. Infatuated with the Polaroid and, later, with 35mm cameras, Hockney has used photography in more recent years to reexplore the riches of the space-time equation investigated by Braque and Picasso in Analytic Cubism (fig. 21.7). In his large collage of the Brooklyn Bridge, dozens

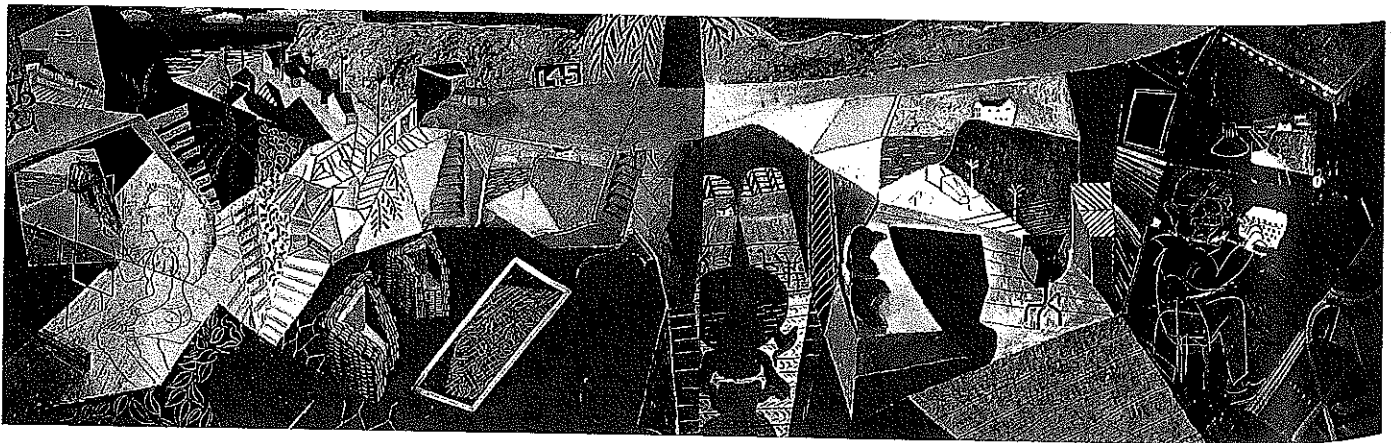




21.7 David Hockney, *The Brooklyn Bridge, Nov. 28th 1982, 1982*. Photographic collage, 42 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (109.1 x 57.9 cm). Private collection.

of smaller sequential photographs compose a single motif, simulating the scanning sensation of actual vision. Hockney termed his composite photographic images "joiners."

Such treatments of subject matter have infiltrated Hockney's paintings as well, including the 1984 *A Visit with Christopher and Don, Santa Monica Canyon* (fig. 21.8). This panoramic composition recreates a visit to the house of the artist's friends, the painter Don Bachardy and



21.8 David Hockney, *A Visit with Christopher and Don, Santa Monica Canyon, 1984*. Oil on canvas, 6' x 20' (1.8 x 6.1 m). Collection the artist.

the writer Christopher Isherwood. The viewer's eye is carried through the fractured spaces of the view, where we see the residents at work at either end and where we periodically encounter the same fractured view of the Santa Monica Canyon. Like most of Hockney's work since 1980, the painting combines flat unmodulated zones with more painterly ones, all enriched by a palette of sumptuous color. In recent years this multifaceted artist has designed stage sets and even directed performances for the opera.

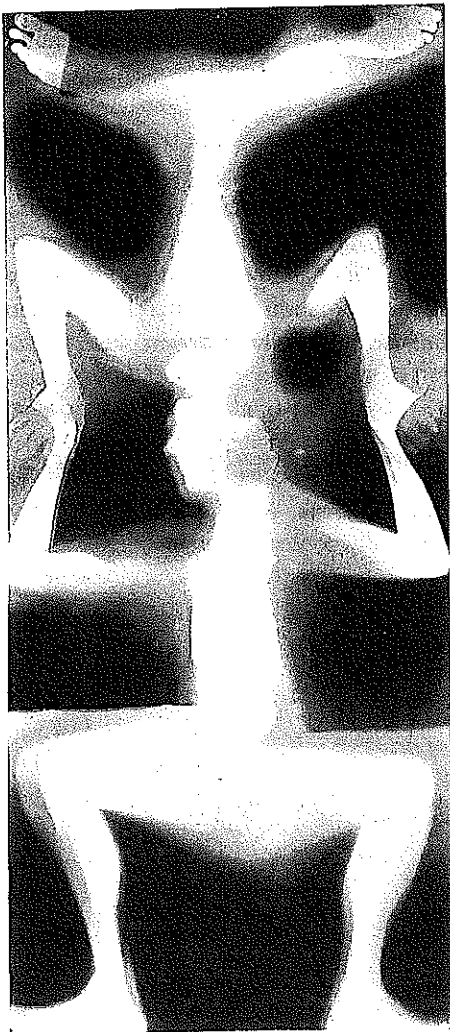
Signs of the Times: Neo-Dada in the United States

Pop art, especially during the sixties, had a natural appeal to American artists, who were living in the midst of an even more blatant industrial and commercial environment than that found in Great Britain. Once they realized the tremendous possibilities of their everyday surroundings in the creation of new subject matter, the result was generally a bolder and more aggressive art than that of their European counterparts.

Toward the end of the fifties, as we have already noted, there were many indications that American painting was moving away from the heroic rhetoric and grand painterly gestures of Abstract Expressionism. (For example, de Kooning had parodied the gleaming smiles and exaggerated cleavage of American movie starlets in his paintings of women, one of which even included a cutout mouth from a popular magazine advertisement.) American art had a long tradition of interest in the commonplace that extended from the *trompe l'oeil* paintings of the nineteenth century (see fig. 2.41) through the Precisionist painters of the early twentieth century (see fig. 18.28). Marcel Duchamp's antiart program led younger painters back to Dada and most specifically to Kurt Schwitters (see fig. 13.29), who was a crucial model for several young artists. Two leading American artists, Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, were the most obvious heirs to Duchamp and Schwitters. The art of these important forerunners to Pop art has been referred to as Neo-Dada.

Rauschenberg

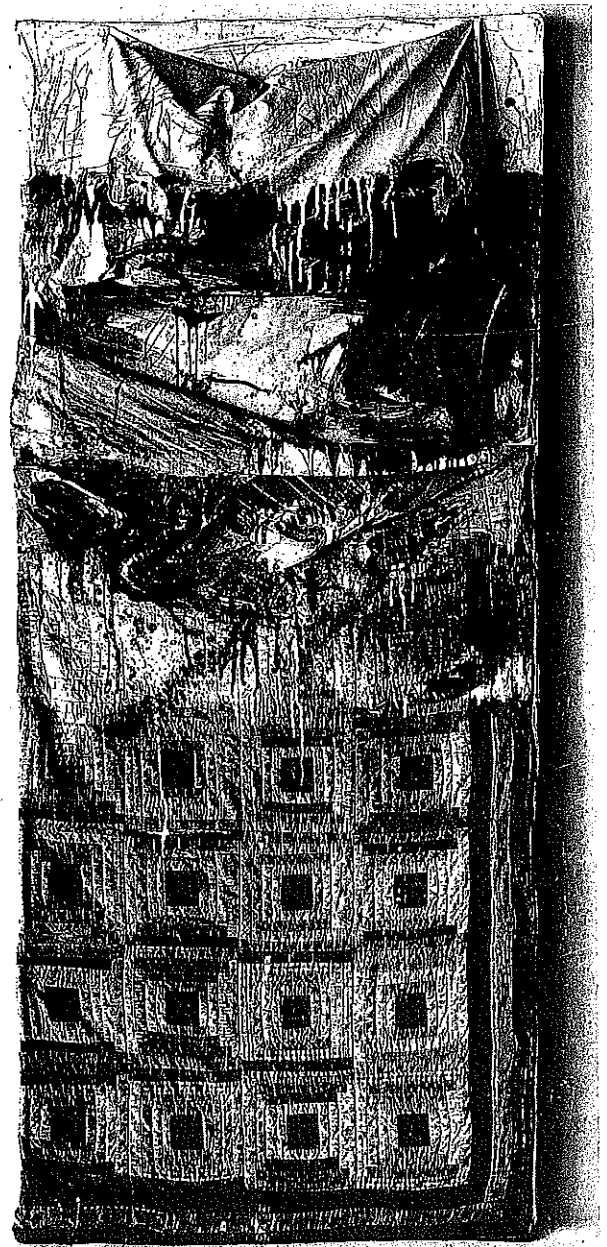
Robert Rauschenberg (b. 1925), one of the most important artists in the establishment of American Pop's vocabulary, came of age during the Depression in Port Arthur, Texas. "Having grown up in a very plain environment," he once said, "if I was going to survive, I had to appreciate the most common aspects of life." After serving in the U.S. Navy in World War II and with the help of the GI Bill, Rauschenberg studied at the Kansas City Art Institute and at the Académie Julian in Paris. In 1948, feeling the need for a more disciplined environment, he went for the first of several times to Black Mountain College, an experimental school in North Carolina, to study with Josef Albers. Rauschenberg learned not so much a style as an attitude from the disciplined methods of this former Bauhaus professor, for the young artist's rough, accretive assemblages could hardly be further from the pristine geometry of Albers's abstractions. Even more important in his development was the presence at Black Mountain College in the



21.9 Robert Rauschenberg and Susan Weil, *Untitled (Double Rauschenberg)*, c. 1950. Monoprint: exposed blueprint paper, 8'9" × 3' (2.7 × 0.91 m). Collection Cy Twombly, Rome.

early fifties of John Cage, a composer, writer, and devotee of Duchamp, whom Rauschenberg had met in New York, and the choreographer-dancer Merce Cunningham. Cage was an enormously influential figure in the development of Pop art, as well as offshoots such as Happenings, environments, and innumerable experiments in music, theater, dance, and the remarkably rich combinative art forms that merged from all of these media. Rauschenberg would later join Cage and Cunningham in several collaborative performances, designing sets, costumes, and lighting.

Rauschenberg literally used the world as his palette, working in nearly every corner of the globe and accepting virtually any material as fodder for his art. This element of



21.10 Robert Rauschenberg, *Bed*, 1955. Combine painting: oil and pencil on pillow, quilt, and sheet on wood supports, 75½" × 31½ × 8" (19 × 80 × 20.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

eclectic pastiche is typical of the postmodern approach to culture. It differs from the singular, purist voice of modernism, while owing much to modernism's determined expansion of the media and subject matter available to art. Rauschenberg has always used photographic processes in one way or another and, in 1950, collaborating with his former wife Susan Weil, achieved an otherworldly beauty simply by placing figures on paper coated with cyanotype and exposing the paper to light (fig. 21.9). He has made radically reductive abstractions, including the all-white and all-black paintings he began while at Black Mountain College in the early fifties, as well as paintings and constructions out of almost anything except conventional materials. An artist who values inclusivity, multiplicity, and constant experimentation, Rauschenberg scavenges his environment for raw materials for his art, excluding little and welcoming detritus of every sort. He once remarked, "Painting relates to both art and life. Neither can be made. (I try to act in that gap between the two.)"

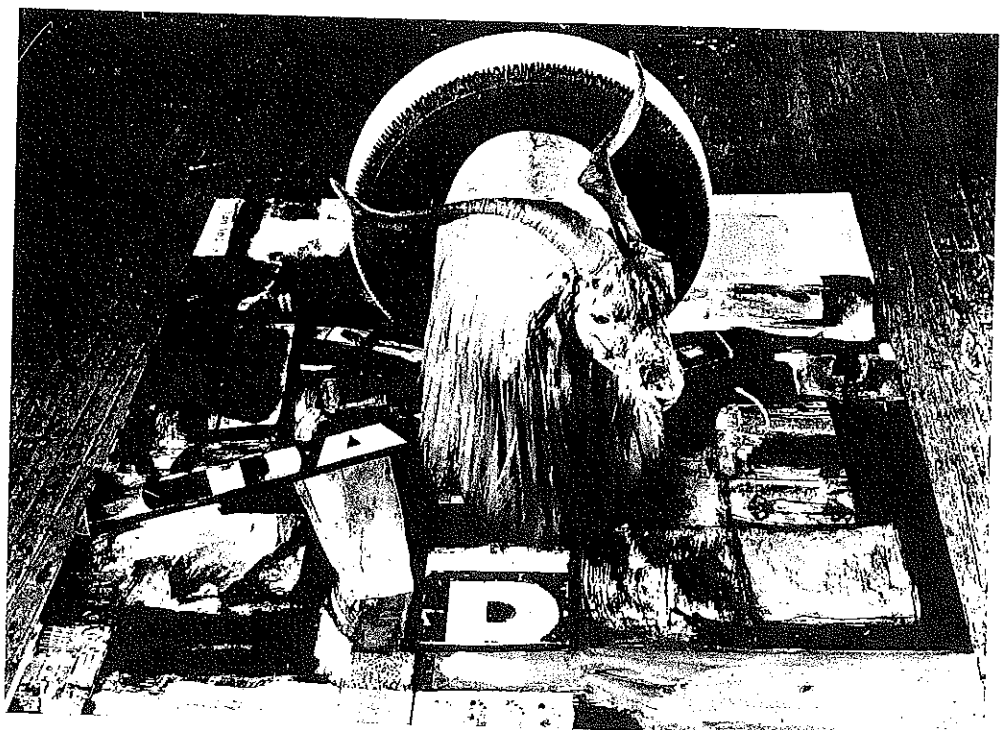
After settling in New York, Rauschenberg became increasingly involved with collage and assemblage in the fifties. By 1954 he had begun to incorporate such objects as photographs, prints, or newspaper clippings into the structure of the canvas. In 1955 he made one of his most notorious "combine" paintings, as he called these works, *Bed* (fig. 21.10). This work included a pillow and quilt over which paint was splashed in an Abstract Expressionist manner, a style Rauschenberg has never completely abandoned. His most spectacular combine painting, the 1959 *Monogram* (fig. 21.11), with a stuffed Angora goat encompassed in an automobile tire, includes a painted and collage-covered base—or rather a painting extended horizontally on the floor—in which free brush painting acts as

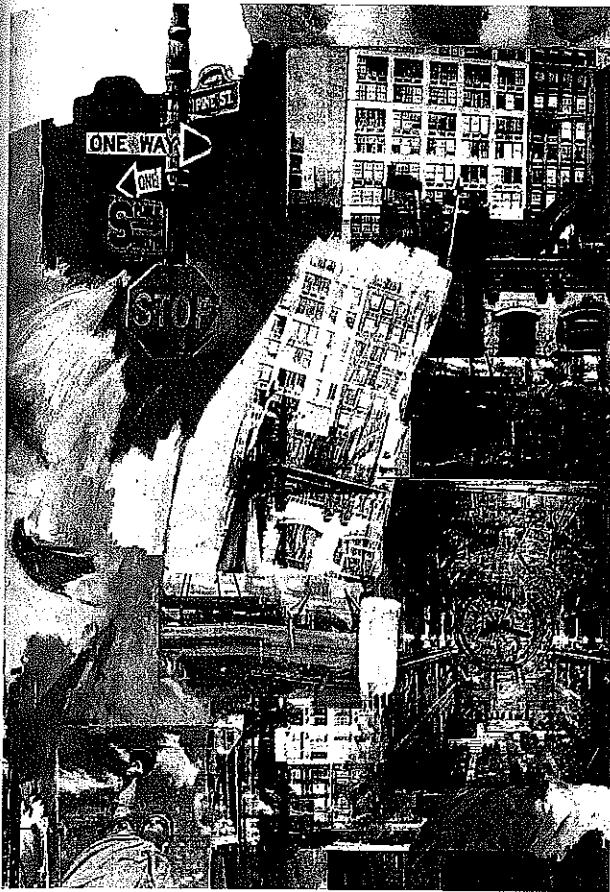
a unifying element. Whereas *Bed* still bears a resemblance to the object referred to in its title, *Monogram* is composed of disparate elements that do not, as is true of Rauschenberg's work as a whole, coalesce into any single, unified meaning or narrative. The combine paintings clearly had their origin in the collages and constructions of Schwitters and other Dadaists (see fig. 13.30). Rauschenberg's work, however, is different not only in its great spatial expansion, but in its desire to take not so much a Dada, antiart stance as one that expands our very definitions of art.

In 1962, at virtually the same time as Andy Warhol, Rauschenberg began to make paintings using a photo silkscreen process. Collecting photographs from magazines or newspapers, he had the images commercially transferred onto silkscreens, first in black and white and, by 1963, in color, and then set to work creating a kaleidoscope of images (fig. 21.12). In the example shown here, the subjects range from traffic signs, to the Statue of Liberty, to a photograph of Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling. They collide and overlap but are characteristically arranged in a grid configuration and are bound together by a matrix of the artist's gestural brushstrokes. In 1964, after Rauschenberg had won the grand prize at the Venice Biennale, and as a guarantee against repeating himself, he called a friend in New York and asked him to destroy all the silkscreens he had used to make the silkscreen paintings.

Throughout the sixties, Rauschenberg, like many of the original Pop artists, was involved in a wide variety of activities, including dance and performance. His natural inclination toward collaboration drew him to theater and dance. *Pelican*, a dance he actually choreographed, was performed in 1963 as part of a Pop festival in Washington, D.C.

21.11 Robert Rauschenberg, *Monogram*, 1959. Combine painting; oil and collage with objects, 42 × 63½ × 64½" (106.7 × 161.3 × 163.8 cm). Moderna Museet, Stockholm.



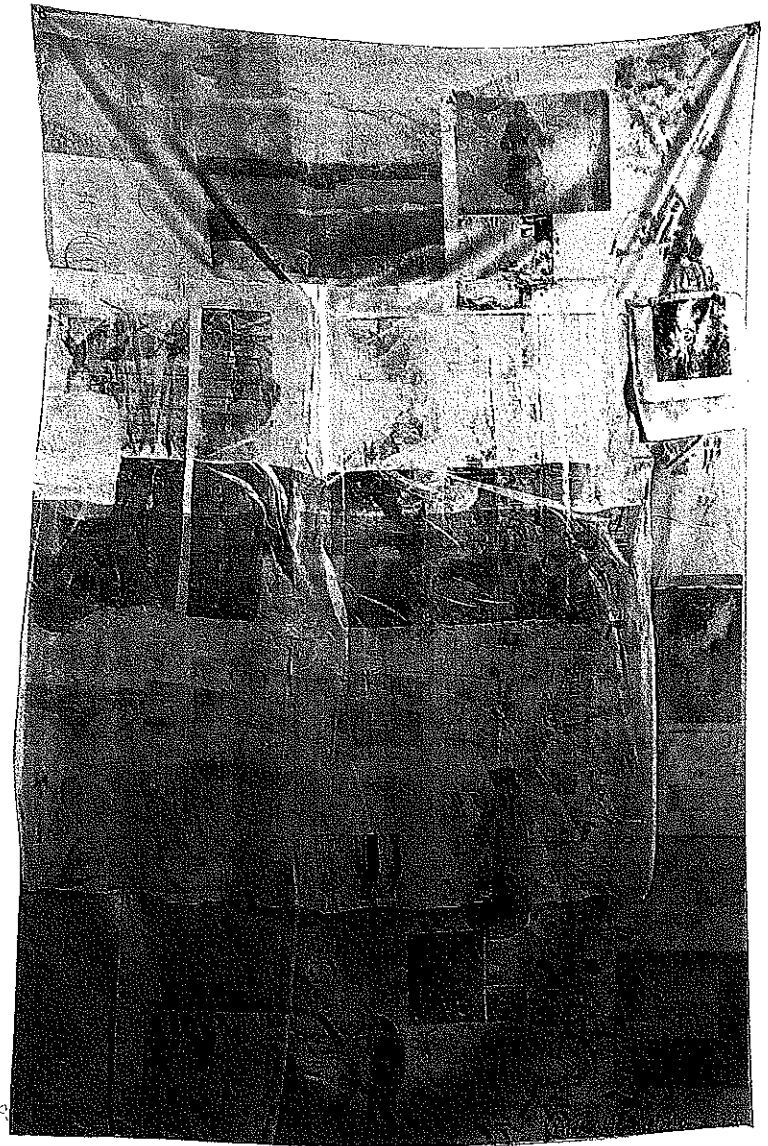


21.12 Robert Rauschenberg, *Estate*, 1963. Oil and silkscreen ink on canvas, 8' × 5'10" (2.4 m × 1.78 m). Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Because the event took place in a roller-skating rink, Rauschenberg planned a dance of three—including himself, another man on roller skates, and Carolyn Brown, a professional from Merce Cunningham's company who danced on point. The men trailed large parachutes that floated like sails behind them during the performance, which Rauschenberg dedicated to his heroes, the Wright brothers.

This indefatigable and prolific artist later extended his quest to make art from anything and from anywhere. From the seventies onward, he tended to work in series, including the *Cardboard* series, numerous sculptures, prints, and photographs, as well as dozens of works that involved fabric. For the *Hoarfrost* series he employed a solvent process to transfer photographic images onto delicate cloths that are draped unstretched on the wall (fig. 21.13). Rauschenberg said his aim was to "dematerialize the surface" with these works, whose diffuse images undulate as people pass by.

In 1984 Rauschenberg launched a seven-year project called ROCI (Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange), during which he traveled to foreign and often politically sensitive countries to work for the cause of world peace. Collaborating with local artisans and drawing upon indigenous traditions and motifs, Rauschenberg created a body of work in each of the ten countries he visited, including the former Soviet Union, Cuba, China, Tibet, Chile,

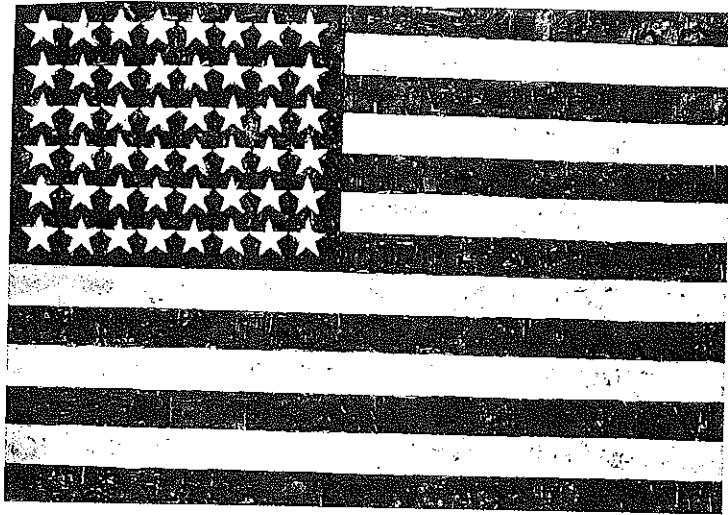


21.13 Robert Rauschenberg, *Blue Urchin* from the *Hoarfrost* series, 1974. Collage and solvent transfer on cloth, 6'4" × 4'1" (1.9 × 1.25 m). Collection Paul Hottlet, Antwerp.

and Mexico. He completed the series with ROCI USA, for which images were deposited through complex techniques onto a brightly polished surface of stainless steel. The artist then attached a crumpled section of the stainless steel that projects awkwardly from the main support. Typically, chance and accident are welcome, for the highly reflective surface records the activities of the viewers in the gallery.

Johns

Jasper Johns (b. 1930), a native of South Carolina, appeared on the New York art scene in the mid-fifties at the same moment as Rauschenberg with whom, after 1954, he developed a very close and supportive relationship. Johns's paintings were entirely different but equally revolutionary. At first, he painted targets and American flags in encaustic (an ancient medium of pigment mixed with heated wax), with the paint built up in sensuous, translucent layers



21.14 Jasper Johns, *Flag*, 1954–55 (dated 1954 on reverse). Encaustic oil and collage on fabric mounted on plywood, 42¼ × 60¾" (107.3 × 153.8 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

(fig. 21.14). In addition to targets and flags, he took the most familiar items—numbers, letters, words, and maps of the United States—and then painted them with such precision and neutrality that they appear to be objects in themselves rather than illusionistic depictions of familiar objects.

Johns, who destroyed all of his previous work, said the subject of the flag was suggested by a dream in which he was painting an American flag. Because a flag, like a target or numbers, is inherently flat, Johns could dispense with the illusionistic devices that suggest spatial depth and the relationship between figure and ground. At the same time, the readymade image meant that he did not have to invent a composition in the traditional sense. "Using the design of the American flag took care of a great deal for me because I didn't have to design it," he said. "So I went on to similar things like targets—things the mind already knows. That gave me room to work on other levels." This element of impersonality, this apparent withdrawal of the artist's individual invention, became central to many of the painters and sculptors of the sixties. Despite their resemblance to actual flags, Johns's flags are clearly paintings, but with his matter-of-fact rendering he introduces the kind of perceptual and conceptual ambiguity with which Magritte had toyed in his painting *The Treachery (or Perfidy) of Images* (see fig. 15.29). Johns's flags and targets exemplify Pop art's concern with signs. They are unique, not mass-produced, objects. And yet, to paint a target is to make a target, not merely a depiction of a target, which in its essentials resembles any other target. Such ambiguities were often exploited in Pop art.

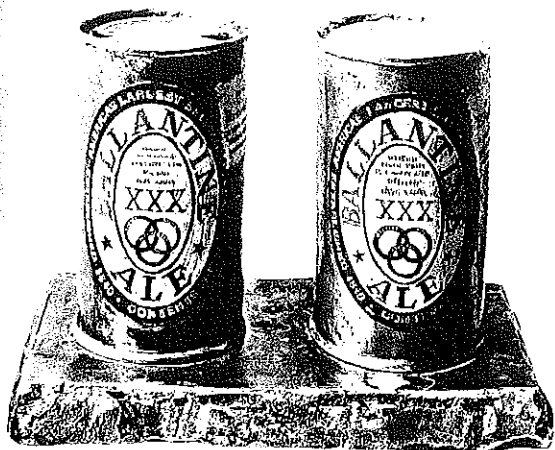
One of the artist's most enigmatic works is *Target with Plaster Casts* (fig. 21.15), another encaustic painting of a flat, readymade design, but this time the canvas is surmounted by nine wooden boxes with hinged lids, which can either remain closed or be opened to reveal plaster-cast body parts. A strange disjunction exists between the neutral image of a target and the much more emotion-laden body parts, each a different color, just as it does between the implied violence of dismembered anatomical parts and their curious presentation as mere objects on a shelf.

In one of his best-known sculptures, *Painted Bronze*, Johns immortalized the commonplace by taking two Ballantine Ale cans and casting them in bronze (fig. 21.16). Yet upon close examination it becomes clear that Johns has painted the labels freehand, so what at first appears mass-produced, like a Duchamp readymade, is paradoxically a unihandwrought form. Moreover, although the cans look identical, one is in fact "open" and cast as a hollow form; the other is closed and solid.

From the end of the fifties, Johns's paintings were marked by the intensified use of expressionist brushstrokes and by the interjection of actual objects among the flat

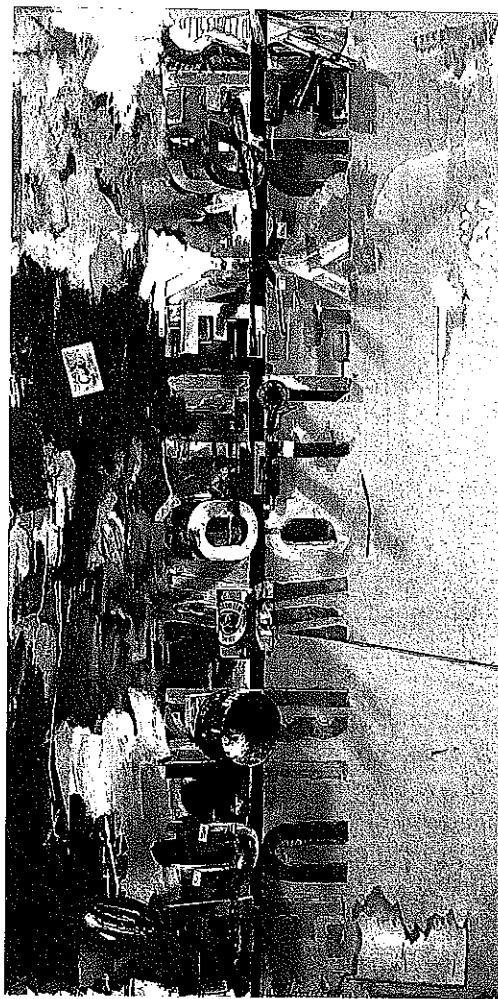


21.15 Jasper Johns, *Target with Plaster Casts*, 1955. Encaustic and collage on canvas with wood construction and plaster casts, 51 × 44 × 3½" (129.5 × 111.8 × 8.9 cm). Collection David Geffen.



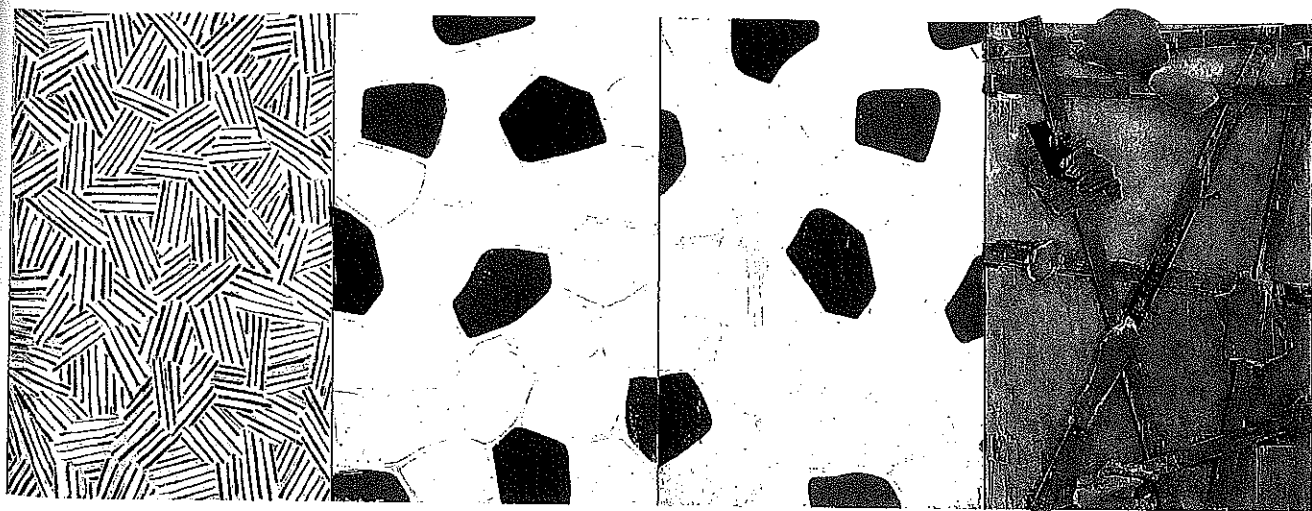
21.16 Jasper Johns, *Painted Bronze*, 1960. Painted bronze, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8 \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ " ($14 \times 20.3 \times 12.1$ cm). Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

signs. In *Field Painting* (fig. 21.17), for example, the Ballantine Ale can reappears, this time as itself. The can is magnetically attached along with other objects—ones we might find around the artist's studio—to three-dimensional letters that are hinged to the center of the painting. These metal letters spell out "RED," "YELLOW," and "BLUE," although, like their flat counterparts painted on the canvas, they do not necessarily signify the color we read. Johns frequently presents alternative forms of representation in a single painting, for in addition to these signs, Johns includes color in a welter of Abstract Expressionist paint strokes. One of the foremost print-makers of the postwar era, Johns invoked the names of the primary colors again in a color lithograph titled *Souvenir*, where they encircle his portrait. His drawings and prints usually relate closely to his paintings and sculptures. In *Souvenir*, the various images—the back of a canvas, a flashlight, and a rearview bicycle mirror—are present as actual objects in a painting of the same name. As they often do in Johns's works, the themes here revolve around issues of perception, of looking, and of being looked at.



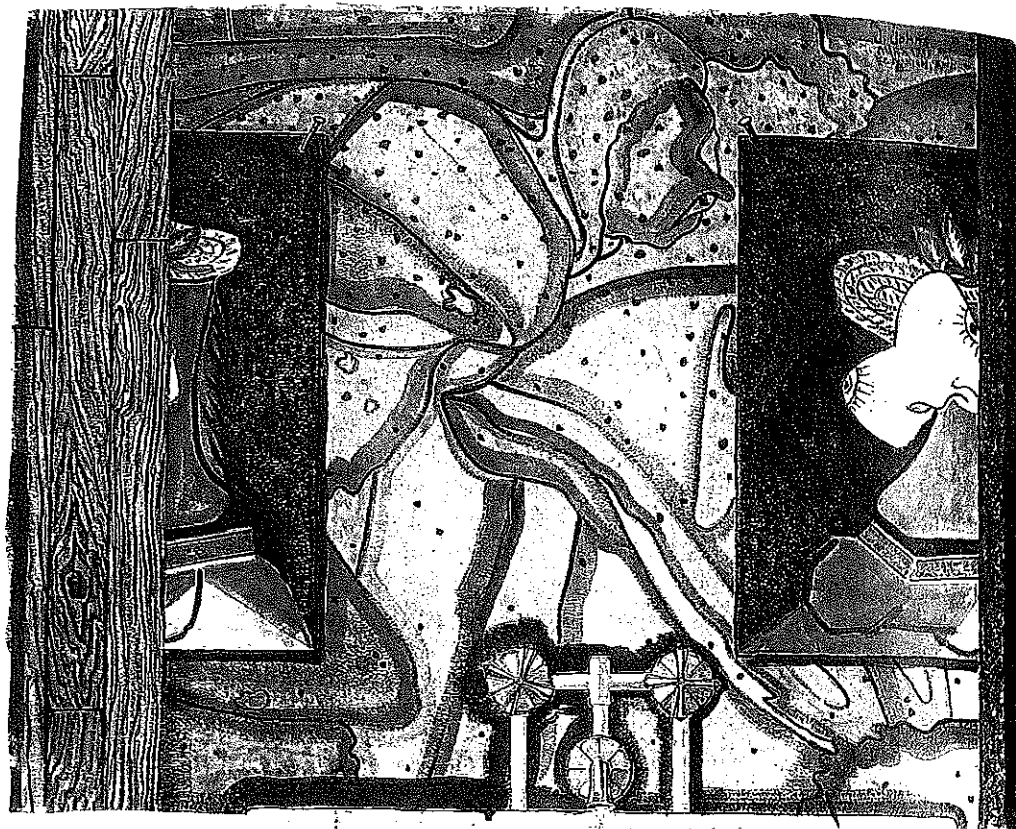
21.17 Jasper Johns, *Field Painting*, 1964. Oil and canvas on wood with objects, $6' \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ " (1.8×0.93 m). Collection the artist.

In the seventies Johns made paintings that suggest a continuing dialogue between figuration and abstraction, as well as a penchant for complex, hermetic systems of representation. In 1972, in the large, four-panel painting *Untitled* (fig. 21.18), he introduced a pattern of parallel



21.18 Jasper Johns, *Untitled*, 1972. Oil, encaustic, and collage on canvas with objects, $6' \times 16'$ (1.8×4.9 m). Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

21.19 Jasper Johns,
The Bath, 1988.
Watercolor and pencil
on paper, 29½ ×
37¾" (74 × 95.9 cm).
Collection the artist.



lines in the far left panel, so-called crosshatches, that have played a role in his work ever since. Johns has said that the crosshatch motif was not one he invented but one he spotted on a passing car, just as he said the flagstone pattern in the two center panels was something he glimpsed on a Harlem wall while riding to the airport in the late sixties. These flagstone-pattern panels—one in oil, one in encaustic—recreate two slightly different sections of the same panel from an earlier painting called *Harlem Light*. If one panel is superimposed on the other so they match up, the panels form an “imagined square,” as Johns described it in his typically enigmatic “Sketchbook Notes.” At the far right, in startling contrast to these flat, abstract forms, are three-dimensional casts made from a woman’s and a man’s body that Johns painted and attached with wing-nuts to strips of wood.

In later work, such as the watercolor *The Bath* (fig. 21.19), Johns introduced coded autobiographical references among images derived from the works of artists he admired. Illusionistically “tacked” to the painting surface is a rendering after Picasso’s Surrealist painting *Straw Hat with Blue Leaves*, but Johns sliced the painting in such a way that we are forced to reconstruct it. Between these two sections, the artist depicted his own bathtub faucet and, at the left, the floorboards of a former studio. The background of this drawing is derived from a detail from Matthias Grünewald’s great *Isenheim Altarpiece* (see fig. 1.7). Johns incorporated imagery from this painting into a large number of his works in the eighties. This particular

motif derives from Grünewald’s portrayal of a diseased demon from the panel dedicated to the Temptation of St. Anthony. Typically, however, Johns obscured the image by rotating the figure and rendering it in monochrome. Another detail from the *Isenheim Altarpiece* can barely be deciphered in the blue background of a 1993 encaustic painting, *Mirror’s Edge 2*, while the demon resurfaces on the section of curling paper that Johns attached to the surface with *trompe l’oeil* masking tape. These forms appear among motifs appropriated from Johns’s own work. Borrowed imagery may, as in the case of two lithographs by Barnett Newman, be cast here in a fresh and ever-ambiguous context. Just as we peer closely at the imagery to bring it into focus, we ponder its meaning, searching for clues to explain the elaborate puzzle of images that simultaneously enrich and contradict one another and, like layers of experience, accumulate meaning the more we look.

Getting Closer to Life: Happenings and Environments

The concept of mixing media and, more importantly, integrating the arts with life itself was a fundamental aspect of the Pop revolution. A number of artists in several countries were searching for ways to extend art into a theatrical situation or a total environment. A leading spokesman for this attitude was Allan Kaprow, who defined a Happening as:

an assemblage of events performed or perceived in more than one time and place. Its material environments may be constructed, taken over directly from what is available, or altered slightly: just as its activities may be invented or commonplace. A Happening, unlike a stage play, may occur at a supermarket, driving along a highway, under a pile of rags, and in a friend's kitchen, either at once or sequentially. If sequentially, time may extend to more than a year. The Happening is performed according to plan but without rehearsal, audience, or repetition. It is art but seems closer to life.

Happenings may have had their ultimate origins in the Dada manifestations held during World War I (see chapter 13). They might even be traced to the improvisations of the *commedia dell'arte* (a genre of Italian comedy) of the eighteenth century. The post-World War II years saw a global interest in Happening-like performance. The Japanese Gutai Group of Osaka staged such performances as early as 1955, and from 1957 onward they were held in Tokyo as well as Osaka. In Düsseldorf, the Zero Group was founded in 1957 with the aim of narrowing the gap between art and life, while similar developments were taking place in other art centers in Europe. Many of the terms, images, and ideas of Pop art and Happenings found instant popular acceptance, if not always complete comprehension, with the mass media—television, films, newspapers, and magazines. Even television and newspaper advertisements, fashion, and product design were affected, resulting in a fascinating cycle in which forms and images taken from popular culture and translated into works of art were then retranslated into other objects of popular culture. Closely linked to Happenings through the concept of directly involving the viewer—as a participant in art rather than a

spectator—was Environment art, in which the artist creates an entire three-dimensional space.

Kaprow, Grooms, and Early Happenings

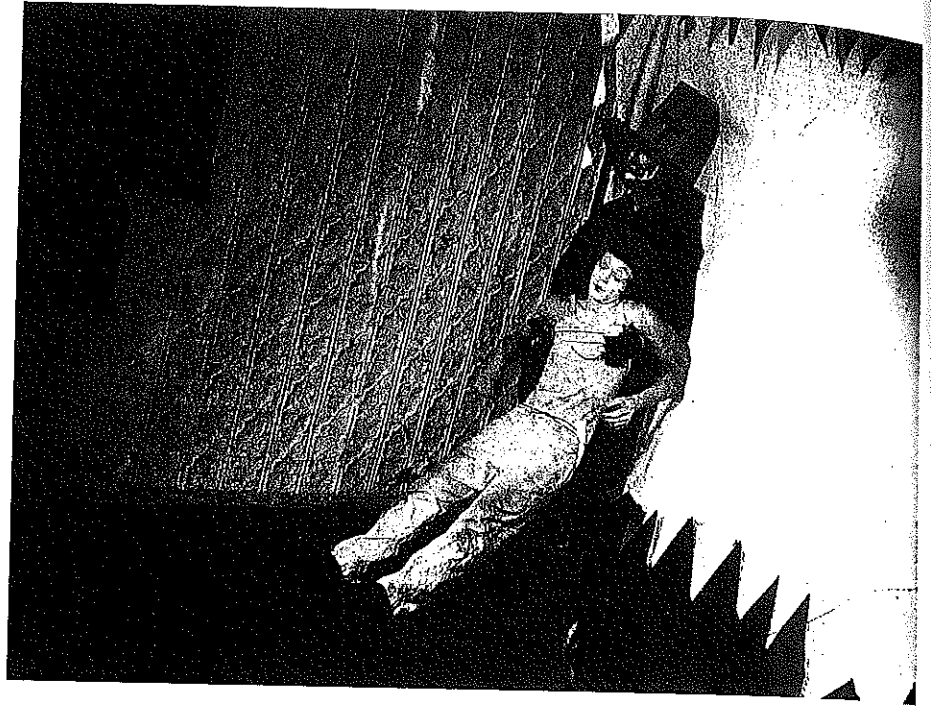
The first public Happening staged by Allan Kaprow (b. 1927), entitled *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, was held at New York's Reuben Gallery in 1959. The Reuben Gallery, along with the Hansa and Judson galleries, was an important experimental center where many of the leading younger artists of the sixties first appeared. Among those who showed at the Reuben Gallery, aside from Kaprow, were Jim Dine, Claes Oldenburg, George Segal, and Lucas Samaras. For Kaprow, the role of Abstract Expressionism was significant. He regarded Pollock's large drip paintings as environmental works of art that implied an extension beyond the edge of the canvas and into the viewer's physical space. Pollock, said Kaprow, "left us at the point where we must become preoccupied with and even dazzled by the space and objects of our everyday life." Pollock's contemporary, the composer John Cage, taught Kaprow at the New School for Social Research in New York City in the late fifties. Cage helped to bridge art and life by experimenting with musical forms that involved unplanned audience participation and by welcoming chance noises as part of his music. His famous composition *4'33"* consisted of the pianist David Tudor lifting the lid of the piano and sitting for four minutes and thirty-three seconds without playing. The random sounds that occurred during the performance constituted the music.

Happenings (a term that was not embraced by all of those involved) could vary greatly in each instance and with each artist. They were not simply spontaneous, improvisational events but could be structured, scripted, and rehearsed performances. Sometimes they were performed

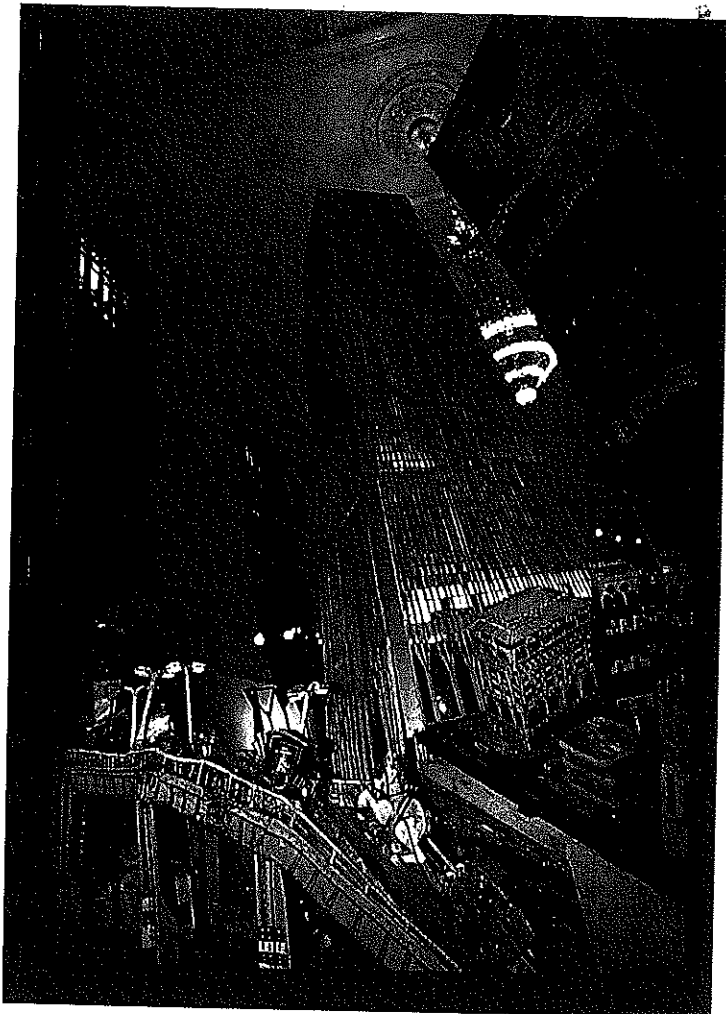


21.20 Allan Kaprow, Photograph from *Household*, a Happening commissioned by Cornell University, 1964.

21.21 Red Grooms, Photograph from *The Burning Building*, a performance at the Delancey Street Museum, New York, 1959.



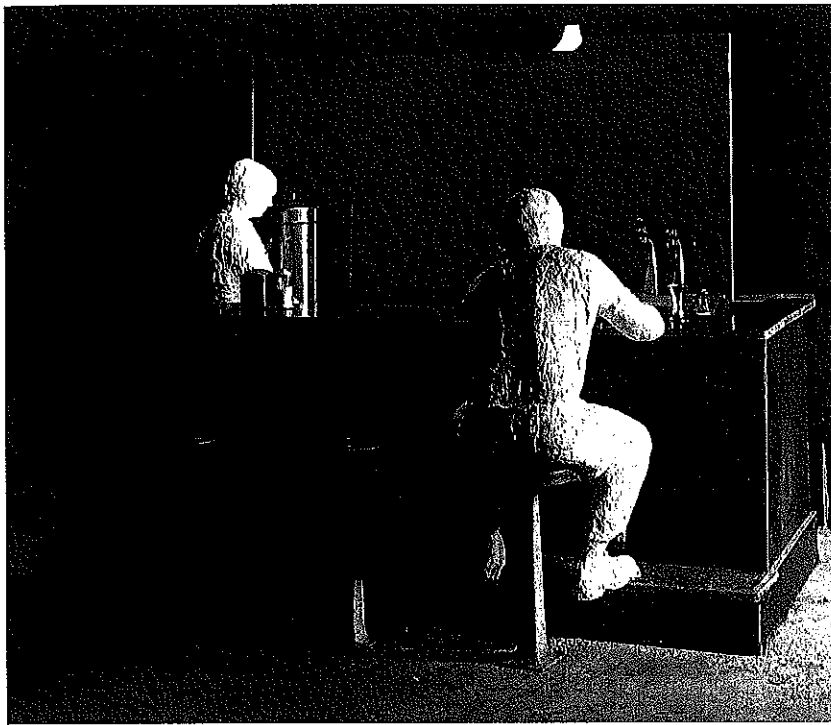
21.22 Red Grooms and the Ruckus Construction Company, Detail from *Ruckus Manhattan* (World Trade Center, West Side Highway), 1975–76. Mixed media. Installation view Grand Central Station, New York, 1993. Courtesy MTA and Marlborough Gallery, New York.



for an audience, which participated to varying degrees according to the artist; sometimes for a camera; and sometimes for no one at all. Because the instigators were for the most part visual artists, visual concerns tended to override dramatic or more conventionally theatrical ones, such as plot or character development. In the moment shown here from Kaprow's 1964 Happening *Household* (fig. 21.20), the participants are licking strawberry jam from the hood of a car that is soon to be set on fire.

Two months after Kaprow's first Happening at the Reuben Gallery, the artist **Red Grooms** (b. 1937) staged—and performed in—*The Burning Building*, his most famous “play,” as he called his version of Happenings, at another New York venue (fig. 21.21). Grooms, a native of Nashville, Tennessee, settled in New York in 1957, the year he met Kaprow. In *The Burning Building* he played the Pasty Man who, in search of love's secret, pursues the Girl in the White Box into a firemen's den. In the still shown here, he has been knocked out by a fireman, who carries him behind the curtain.

From his early work as a painter and performance artist, Grooms began to make multimedia works on an environmental scale, peopling entire rooms with cutout figures and objects painted in brilliant and clashing colors. He has continually enlarged his scope to embrace constructions such as the famous *Ruckus Manhattan*, a gargantuan environment he first built in the lobby of a New York office building. With a team of helpers, Grooms created a walk-in map of lower Manhattan in a spirit of wild burlesque, manic, big-city energy, and broad, slapstick humor (fig. 21.22).

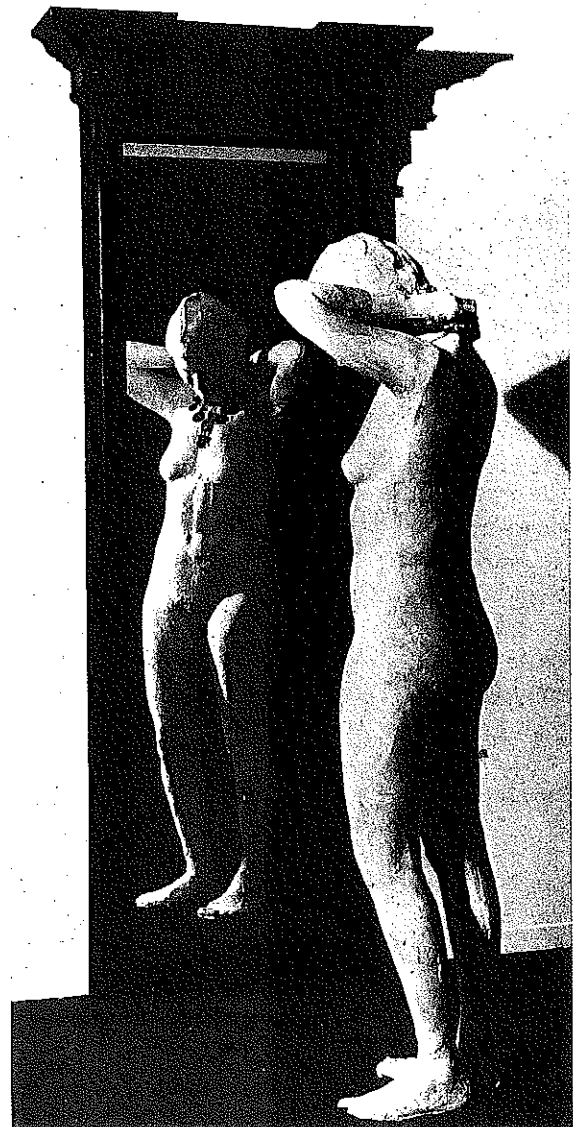


21.23 George Segal, *The Diner*, 1964–66. Plaster, wood, chrome, masonite, laminated plastic, fluorescent lamp, glass, and paper, 7'8¼" × 12¼" × 8' (2.35 × 3.66 × 2.43 m). Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

21.24 George Segal, *Girl Putting on Scarab Necklace*, 1975. Plaster, wood, metal, and glass, 7' × 3'9" × 3'9" (2.1 × 1.1 × 1.1 m). Private collection.

Segal

George Segal (1924–2000) began as a painter of expressive, figurative canvases, but feeling hampered by the spatial limitations of painting, he began to make sculpture in 1958. For a number of years he was closely associated with Allan Kaprow (who staged his first Happening at Segal's New Jersey farm), a connection that stimulated his interest in sculpture as a total environment. By 1961 Segal was casting figures from live models, both nude and fully clothed. He wrapped his subjects in bandages, which he covered in plaster, allowed to dry, and then cut open and resealed, a process that records quite literally the details of anatomy and expression, but retains the rough textures of the original bandages. The figure—or, as is often the case, the group of figures—is then set in an actual environment—an elevator, a lunch counter, a movie ticket booth, or the interior of a bus—with the props of the environment retrieved from junkyards (fig. 21.23). Although Segal painted the figures in many of his later sculptures, he left them white in the early works, producing the effect of ghostly wraiths of human beings existing in a tangible world. The qualities of stillness and mystery in Segal's sculpture are comparable to the desolate psychological mood of Edward Hopper's paintings (see figs. 18.36, 18.37), while his many treatments of the female nude, including *Girl Putting on Scarab Necklace* (fig. 21.24), are reminiscent of Degas's paintings of bathers engaged in private moments (see fig. 2.35). In the mid-seventies Segal altered his technique and began to use the body casts as molds from which either plaster or bronze casts could be made. As a result, he was able to make work suitable for outdoor public sculpture.

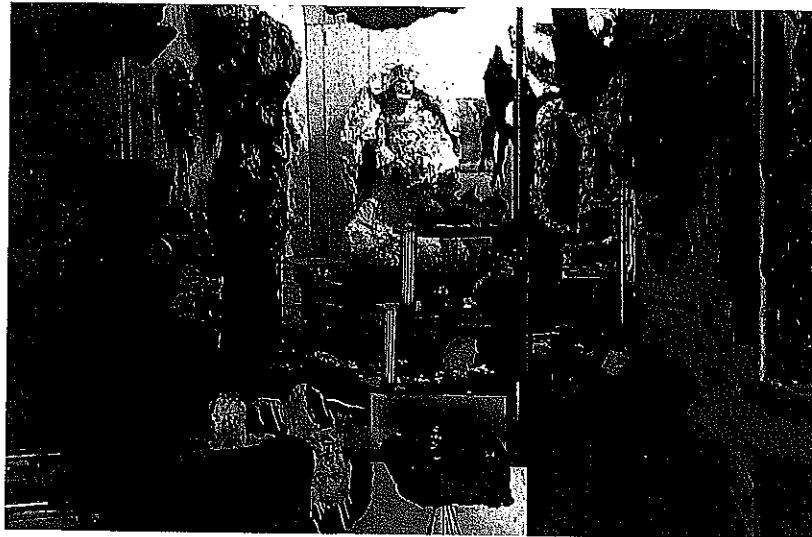


Oldenburg

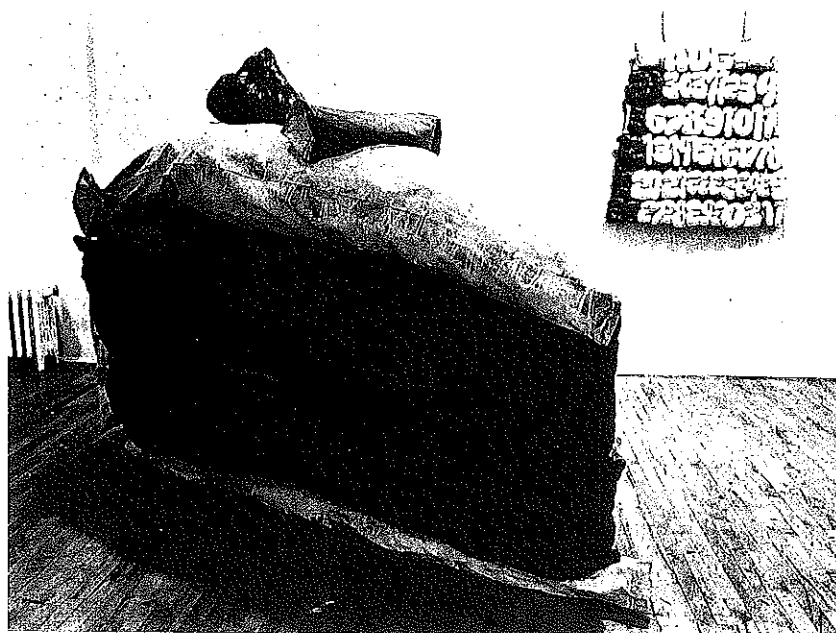
Claes Oldenburg (b. 1929), a native of Sweden who was brought to the United States as an infant, has created a brilliant body of work based on lowly common objects ranging from foodstuffs to clothespins and matchsticks. Through his exquisitely rendered drawings or through the sculpture he has executed in diverse media and scales, Oldenburg transforms the commonplace into something extraordinary. "Art," he has said, "should be literally made of the ordinary world; its space should be our space; its time our time; its objects our ordinary objects; the reality of art will replace reality."

Oldenburg's most important early work consisted of two installations made in New York: *The Street*, 1960, and *The Store*, 1961. The former was created of little more than common urban detritus—newspaper, burlap, and cardboard—that the artist tore into fragmented figures or other shapes and covered with graffiti-like drawing. Leaning against the walls or hanging from the ceiling, these ragged-

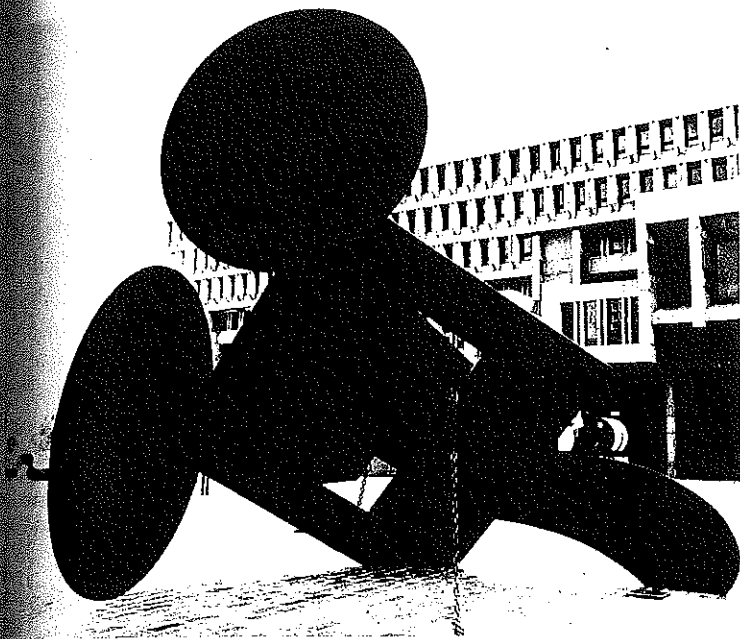
edged objects collectively formed, according to the artist, a "metaphoric mural," that mimicked the "damaged life forces of the city street." Given Oldenburg's willingness to make art from the most common materials, it is no surprise that a crucial early model for him was Jean Dubuffet's *art brut*. In its fullest manifestation, *The Store* (fig. 21.25) was literally presented in a storefront in Manhattan's Lower East Side, where the artist both made his wares and sold them to the public, thus circumventing the usual venue of a commercial gallery. He filled *The Store* floor to ceiling with sculptures inspired by the tawdry merchandise he saw regularly in downtown cafeterias and shop windows. They were made of plaster-soaked muslin placed over wire frames, which was then painted and attractively priced for such amounts as \$198.99. Items from *The Store* depicted everything from women's lingerie, to fragments of advertisements, to food such as ice-cream sandwiches or hamburgers—all roughly modeled and garishly painted in parody of cheap urban wares. Within the installations of *The*



21.25 Claes Oldenburg seated in *The Store*, 107 East 2nd Street, New York, December 1961. Collection the artist.



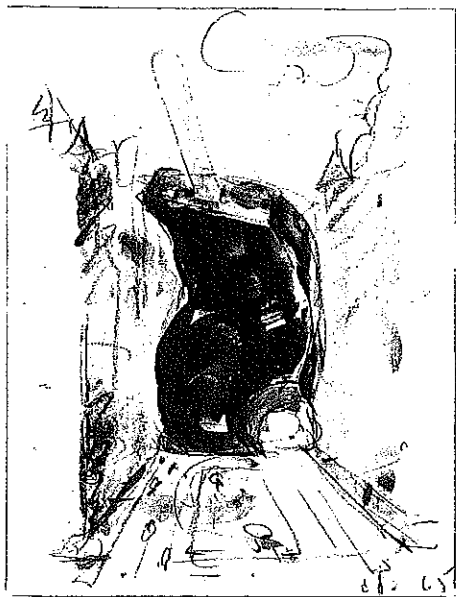
21.26 Claes Oldenburg, *Floor Cake (Giant Piece of Cake)*, 1962. Installation view, Sidney Janis Gallery, New York, 1962. Synthetic polymer paint and latex on canvas filled with foam rubber and cardboard boxes, 4'10 $\frac{3}{8}$ " \times 9'6 $\frac{1}{4}$ " \times 4'10 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (1.5 \times 2.9 \times 1.5 m). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



21.27 Claes Oldenburg, *Geometric Mouse, Scale A*, 1969–71. Steel, aluminum, and paint, height 12' (3.7 m). Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

Street and *The Store*, Oldenburg staged several Happenings between 1960 and 1962. Situating objects within an environment and sometimes using that environment as a context for Performances—a term he prefers to Happenings—has been characteristic of Oldenburg’s art for decades.

The stuffed-fabric props that Oldenburg made for some of these performances (with his first wife doing much of the sewing) led to his first independent soft sculptures. Among his earliest examples were stuffed and painted canvas objects such as the nine-and-a-half-foot-long (2.9 m) *Floor Cake* (fig. 21.26). Soon he was using canvas



21.28 Claes Oldenburg, *Proposed Colossal Monument for Park Avenue, New York: Good Humor bar*, 1965. Crayon and watercolor on paper, 23½ × 17½" (59.7 × 44.5 cm). Collection of Carroll Janis, New York.

as well as shiny colored vinyl to translate hard, rigid objects, such as bathroom fixtures, into soft and collapsing versions. These familiar, prosaic toilets, typewriters, or car parts collapse in violation of their essential properties into pathetic, flaccid forms that have all the vulnerability of sagging human flesh. Oldenburg, who has described his work as “the detached examination of human beings through form,” essentially models his soft sculptures through direct manipulation, but also allows gravity to act upon their pliant forms. Thus, the works exist in a state of constant flux.

One of Oldenburg’s images, the *Geometric Mouse*, is so synonymous with his name that it has come to represent a kind of surrogate self-portrait.

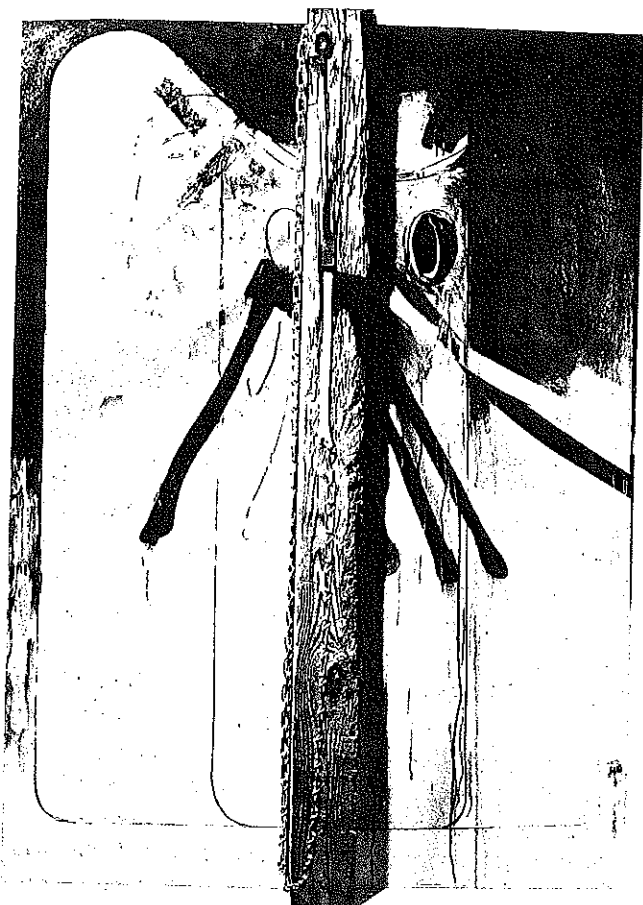
Just as soft sculptures paradoxically metamorphosed hard forms into soft, the *Geometric Mouse*, originally derived from the shape of an old movie camera, is a hard (and highly abstracted) version of an organic subject. Oldenburg has executed the *Geometric Mouse* on several scales ranging from small tabletop versions to an eighteen-foot-high (5.5 m) outdoor sculpture. *Geometric Mouse, Scale A* (fig. 21.27), made of steel and aluminum, consists of a few interlocked metal planes but still bears an eerie resemblance to its namesake.

In the mid-sixties, Oldenburg began to make drawings of common objects to be built to the scale of monuments for the city: a pair of giant moving scissors to replace the Washington Monument, a colossal peeled banana for Times Square, or an upside-down Good Humor bar to straddle Park Avenue (with a bite removed to allow for the passage of traffic) (fig. 21.28). These proposals challenged traditional notions of public sculpture as heroic and commemorative in nature and replaced them with irreverent and often hilarious solutions. Oldenburg later realized his fantastic proposals with large-scale projects that have been built around the globe (see figs. 24.59, 24.60). Most of these have been conceived with his wife and collaborator Coosje van Bruggen.

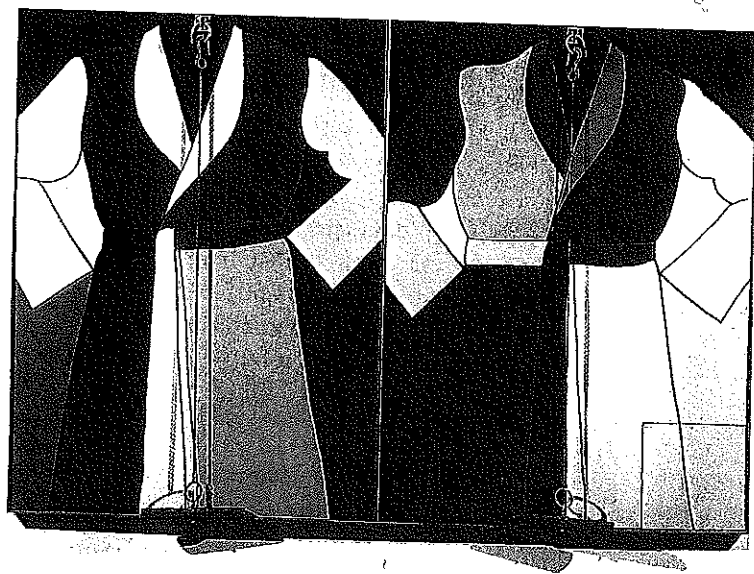
“Just Look at the Surface”: The Imagery of Everyday Life

Dine

Jim Dine (b. 1935), a gifted draftsman and printmaker originally from Cincinnati, was also one of the organizers of the first Happenings, but he gave up this aspect of his work, he said, because it detracted from his painting. Like Rauschenberg, Johns, Kaprow, and others, Dine’s art has roots in Abstract Expressionism, although he seems to treat it with a certain irony, combining gestural painting with



21.29 Jim Dine, *Hatchet with Two Palettes, State #2*, 1963. Oil on canvas with wood and metal, 6' x 4'6" (1.8 x 1.4 m). Collection Robert E. Abrams, New York.



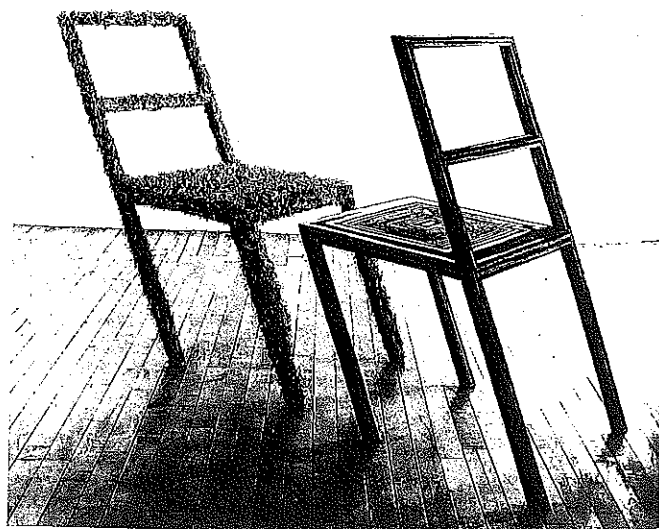
21.30 Jim Dine, *Double Isometric Self-Portrait (Serape)*, 1964. Oil with metal rings and hanging chains on canvas, 4'8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 7'1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.5 x 2.14 m). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

actual objects, particularly tools (fig. 21.29). His objects recall both Duchamp's readymades and contemporaneous works by Johns (see fig. 21.16). In Dine's paintings the tools are not only physically present but are also frequently reiterated in painted images or shadows and are then referred to again through lettered titles. For Dine, the son and grandson of hardware store merchants, the tools as well as the painted image of the palette are self-referential signs, just as his many images of neckties and bathrobes are surrogate self-portraits (fig. 21.30).

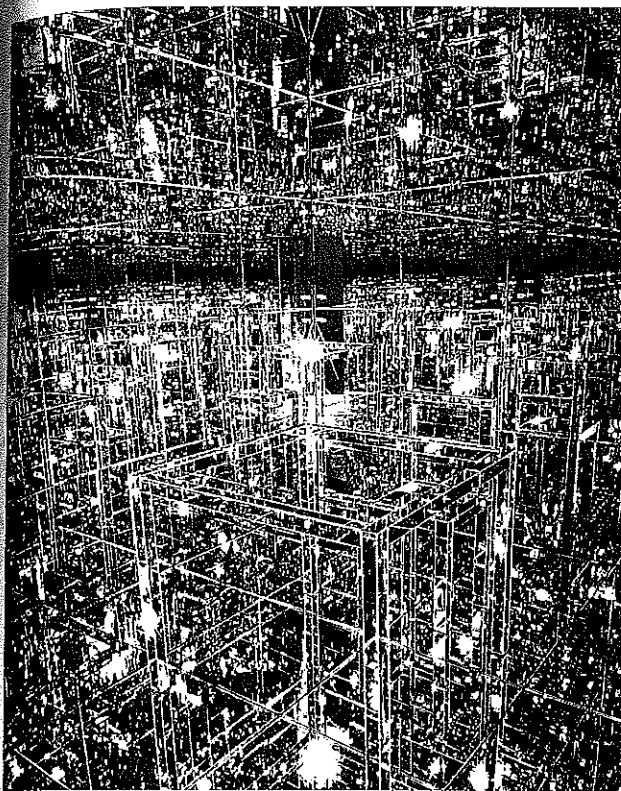
Samaras and Artschwager

Lucas Samaras (b. 1936), a native of Greece who came to America in 1948, participated in early Happenings at the Reuben Gallery, where he had his first one-man show in 1960. Since then Samaras has worked in a broad range of media, including boxes and other receptacles. In his containers, plaques, books, and table settings, prosaic elements are given qualities of menace by the inclusion of knives, razor blades, or thousands of ordinary but outward-pointing pins. The objects are meticulously made, with a perverse beauty embodied in their implied threat. They are not easily classified as Neo-Dada or Pop art; rather, they are highly expressionist works that carry with them a Surrealist brand of disturbance. Samaras sees in everyday objects a combination of menace and erotic love, and it is this sexual horror, yet attraction, that manifests itself in his work. Two chairs—one covered with pins and leaning back, the other painted and leaning forward—create the effect of a grim dance of the inanimate and commonplace (fig. 21.31). To touch one of his objects is to be mutilated. Yet the impulse to touch it, the tactile attraction, is powerful.

In the mid-sixties Samaras began to construct full-scale rooms where every surface has been covered with mirrors (fig. 21.32). Upon entering these reflective environments



21.31 Lucas Samaras, *Untitled*, 1965. Wood, pins, glue, and yarn; chairs, 35 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 35 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 19 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (90.2 x 91 x 49 cm). Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.



21.32 Lucas Samaras, *Mirrored Room*, 1966. Wood and mirrors, 8 × 10 × 8' (2.4 × 3 × 2.4 m). Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo.



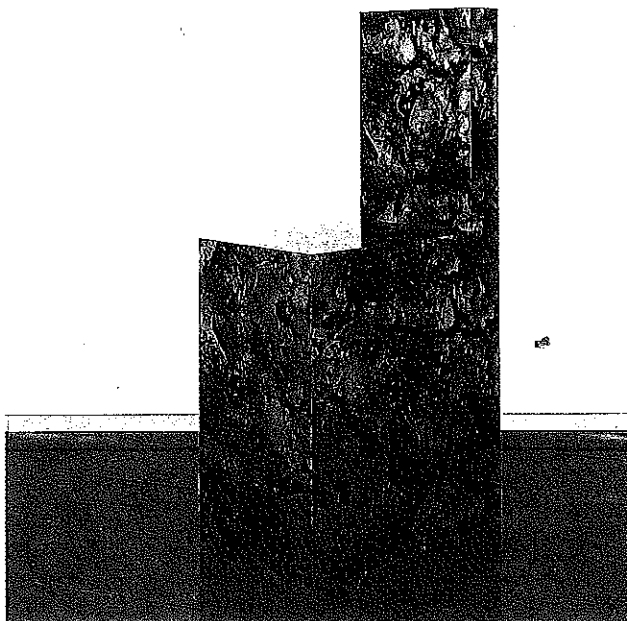
21.33 Lucas Samaras, *Photo Transformation*, 1973–74. SX-70 Polaroid, 3 × 3" (7.6 × 7.6 cm). Private collection.

the viewer is dazzled and disoriented as his or her image is infinitely multiplied in every direction. Such optical experiments have led Samaras to a series of what he calls "photo-transformations" in which his own Polaroid image, placed within his familiar environment, is translated into monstrous forms (fig. 21.33).

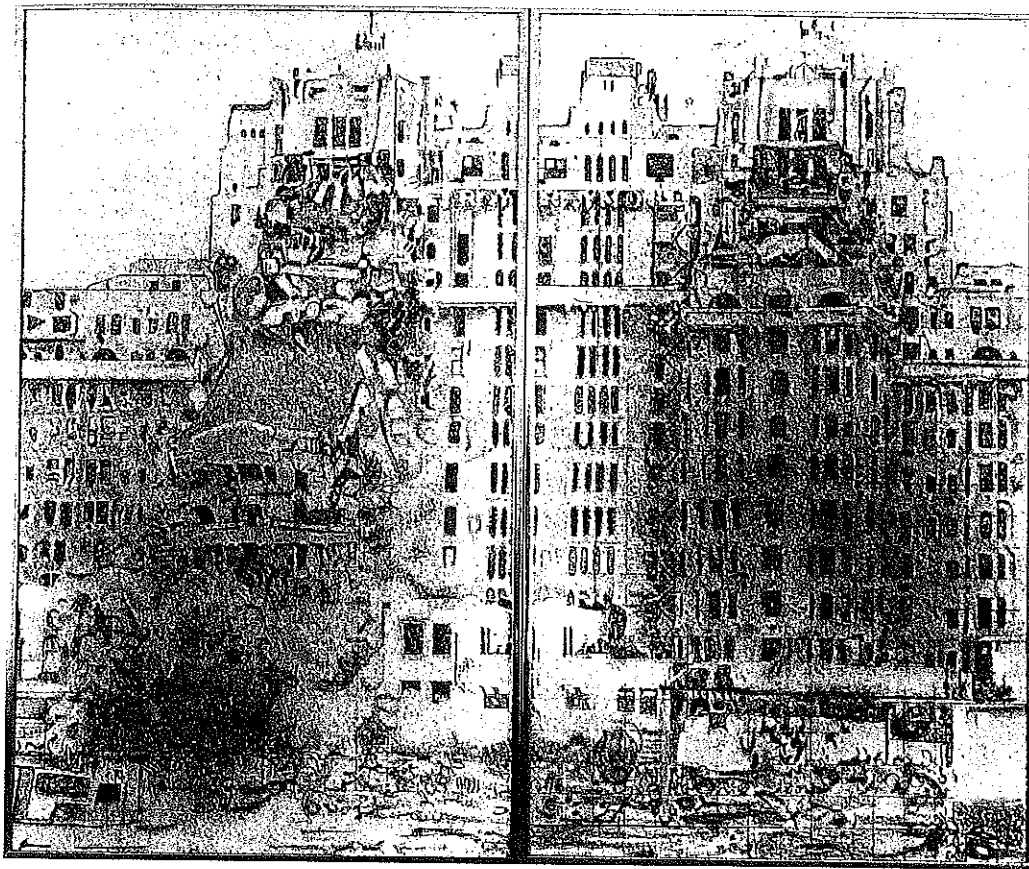
Like Samaras, Richard Artschwager (b. 1923) resists easy classification, for the work of both artists bridges several trends in the sixties, from Pop to Minimalism to Conceptualism. In 1953, after spending three years in the army, earning a degree in physical science at Cornell University, and studying painting for a year in New York, Artschwager began to make commercial furniture. This technical experience, combined with a growing commitment to art over science that was kindled by an admiration for the work of Johns, Rauschenberg, and Oldenburg, led Artschwager to the fabrication of hybrid objects that occupy a realm somewhere between furniture and sculpture.

Chair (fig. 21.34) is fabricated in the artist's favorite medium, Formica (here in an elaborately marbledized pattern he used in the mid-sixties). Though it superficially resembles a chair, it would be difficult to use it as such. "I'm making objects for non-use," the artist once said, recalling Duchamp's use-deprived readymades, which transformed everyday objects into works of art. With its rigid, unforgiving surfaces, the geometricized *Chair* seems to share qualities with the abstract sculptures that Minimalist artists were making at the same time (see fig. 22.51), yet its resemblance to a functional object runs entirely counter to their aims.

Artschwager was also making representational paintings based on black-and-white photographs. For these he used acrylic paint on Celotex, a commercial composite paper that is used less for fine art than for inexpensive ceilings. It has a fibrous texture or tooth and is embossed with distinct patterns, providing a prefabricated "gesture" for the painter. Building façades as well as architectural interiors



21.34 Richard Artschwager, *Chair*, 1966. Formica and wood, 59 × 18 × 30" (149.9 × 45.7 × 76.2 cm). Private collection, London.



21.35 Richard Artschwager, *Destruction III*, 1972. Acrylic on Celotex with metal frames, two panels, 6'2" × 7'4" (1.9 × 2.2 m). Private collection.

figure prominently among the subjects of Artschwager's paintings. A large diptych from 1972, *Destruction III* (fig. 21.35), belongs to a series depicting the demolition of the grand Traymore Hotel in Atlantic City. Like his sculptures, Artschwager's painting presents a distant facsimile of its subject, removed from reality more than once by way of the intermediary photographic source that is then translated into the grainy textures of the Celotex support. This tension between illusion and reality is a central theme of Artschwager's art.

Rivers

Although the same age as Artschwager, Larry Rivers (1923–2002) had very different beginnings as an artist in New York. He came of age artistically during the height of Abstract Expressionism, but has always remained committed to figuration in one form or another. Originally trained as a musician, Rivers studied painting at Hans Hofmann's school in the late forties and made

paintings in the manner of Bonnard and Matisse. By the mid-fifties he had developed a style of portraiture remarkable for its literal and explicit character, particularly striking in nude studies of his mother-in-law (fig. 21.36). After



21.36 Larry Rivers, *Double Portrait of Berdie*, 1955. Oil on canvas, 5'10½" × 6'10½" (1.8 cm × 2.1 m). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.



21.37 Larry Rivers, *Dutch Masters and Cigars II*, 1963. Oil and collage on canvas, 8' × 5'7³/₈" (2.4 × 1.7 m). Collection Robert E. Abrams.

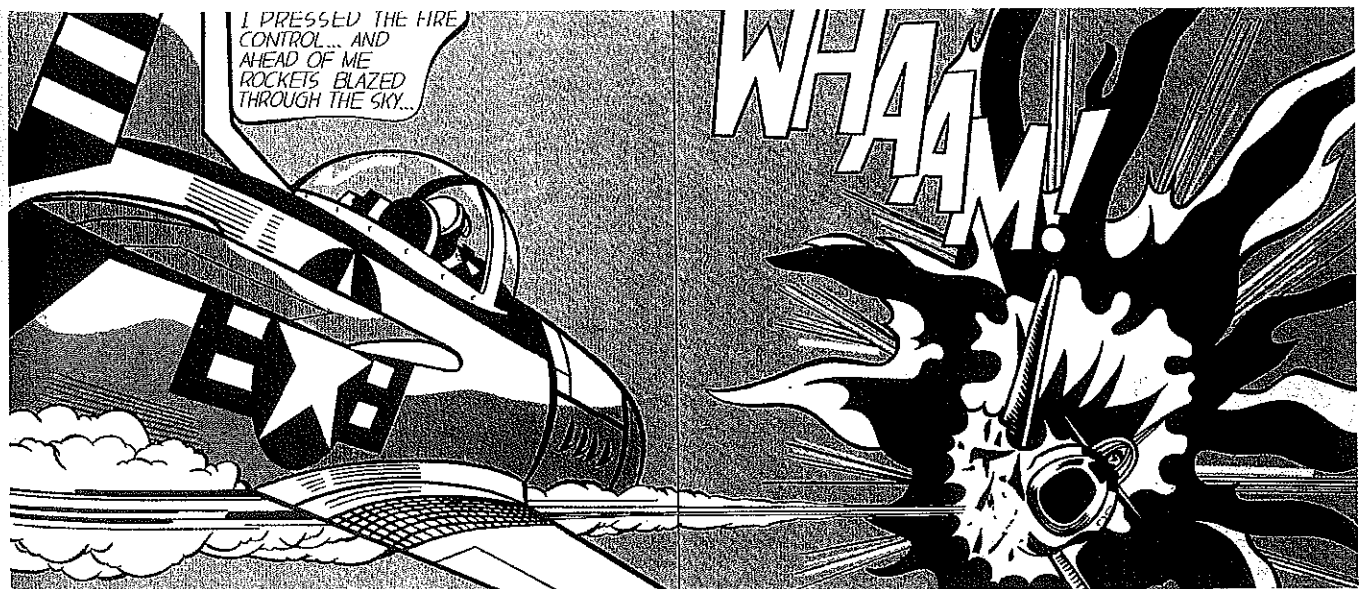
1960 Rivers began to incorporate stenciled lettering and imagery from commercial sources into his paintings, both of which signaled a departure from the naturalistic conventions that guided his early work. The Dutch Master cigar

box, reproducing a painting by Rembrandt, became the subject of several works (fig. 21.37). In the 1963 version shown here, he appropriated the printed image but altered it by means of his characteristically schematic rendering and loose patches of paint. Rivers shares Pop art's concern for the everyday image, but he differs in his continued interest in painterly handling of images.

Lichtenstein

Roy Lichtenstein (1923–97) may have defined the basic premises of Pop art more precisely than any other American painter. Beginning in the late fifties, he took as his primary subject the most banal comic strips or advertisements and enlarged them faithfully in his paintings, using limited, flat colors (based on those used in commercial printing), and hard, precise drawing. The resulting imagery documents, while it gently parodies, familiar images of modern America. When drawing from comic strips, Lichtenstein preferred those representing violent action and sentimental romance and even incorporated the Benday dots used in photomechanical reproduction. *Whaam!* (fig. 21.38) belongs to a group of paintings that Lichtenstein made in the early sixties. By virtue of its monumental scale (nearly fourteen feet, or 4 m, across) and dramatic subject (one based on heroic images in the comics of World War II battles), *Whaam!* became a kind of history painting for the Pop generation. The artist's depictions of giant, dripping brushstrokes, meticulously constructed and far from spontaneous, are a comedic Pop riposte to the heroic individual gestures of the Abstract Expressionists (fig. 21.39).

Lichtenstein frequently turned his attention to the art of the past and made free adaptations of reproductions of paintings by Picasso, Mondrian, and other modern artists. In *Artist's Studio: The Dance* (fig. 21.40), he borrowed an



21.38 Roy Lichtenstein, *Whaam!* 1963. Oil and Magna on two canvas panels, 5'8" × 13'4" (1.7 × 4.1 m). Tate Gallery, London.

21.39 Roy Lichtenstein, *Big Painting No. 6*, 1965. Oil and Magna on canvas, 7'8" × 10'9" (2.3 × 3.3 m). Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf.

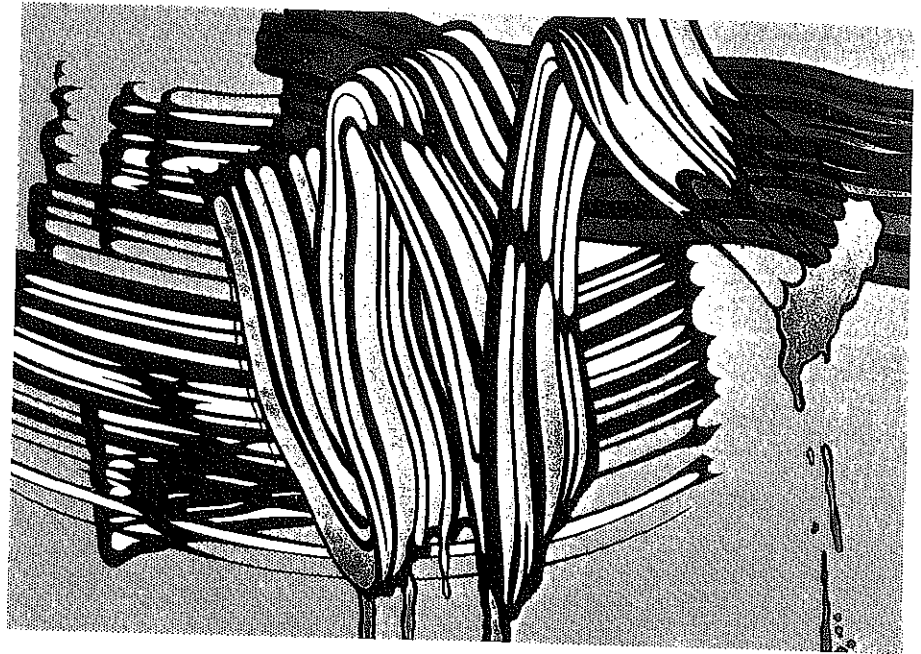
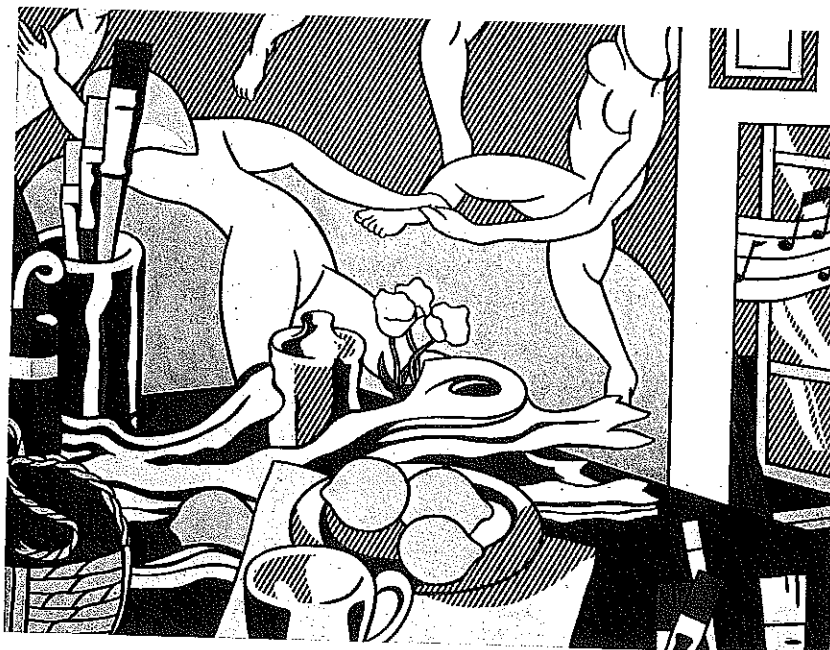


image from Matisse's *Dance (II)* (see fig. 7.19) as a background for his own studio still life. In 1909 Matisse had depicted his own painting *Dance I* in a similar fashion positioned behind a tabletop still life. Although some of the imagery here may have originated with Matisse, the final effect is unmistakably Lichtenstein's. *Bedroom at Arles* (fig. 21.41) clearly derives from Van Gogh's famous painting *The Bedroom*, 1888, at the Art Institute of Chicago, which Lichtenstein knew through reproductions. Not only has he dramatically enlarged the scale of Van Gogh's canvas, but he has transformed the Dutchman's rustic bedroom into a modern bourgeois interior. For example, Van Gogh's cane-seated chairs have become bright yellow Barcelona chairs similar to those designed by the architect Mies van der Rohe.



Throughout his career, Lichtenstein made freestanding bronze sculptures that provide a three-dimensional counterpart to his insistently two-dimensional painting style. Like the paintings, most of his sculpture is essentially two-dimensional in conception and has the appearance of freestanding paintings in relief, rather than volumetric structures in the round. His 1980 *Expressionist Head* recalls the angular anatomies and bold contours of German Expressionist prints. Lichtenstein, himself an accomplished printmaker, regularized the forms within heavy black lines, using bright, primary colors and replacing the characteristic Benday dots with emphatic hatch marks.

The paintings of Lichtenstein, as well as those of Wesselmann, Rosenquist, and Warhol, share an attachment to the everyday, commonplace, or vulgar image of modern industrial America. Often appropriating their subjects wholesale from their sources, they also treat their images in an impersonal, neutral manner. They do not comment on the scene or attack it like Social Realists, nor do they exalt it like advertisers. They seem to be saying simply that this is the world we live in, this is the urban landscape, these are the symbols, the interiors, the still lifes that make up our own lives. As opposed to assemblage artists who create their works

21.40 Roy Lichtenstein, *Artist's Studio: The Dance*, 1974. Oil and magna on canvas, 8' × 10'8" (2.4 × 3.3 m). Collection Mr. and Mrs. S.I. Newhouse, Jr., New York.

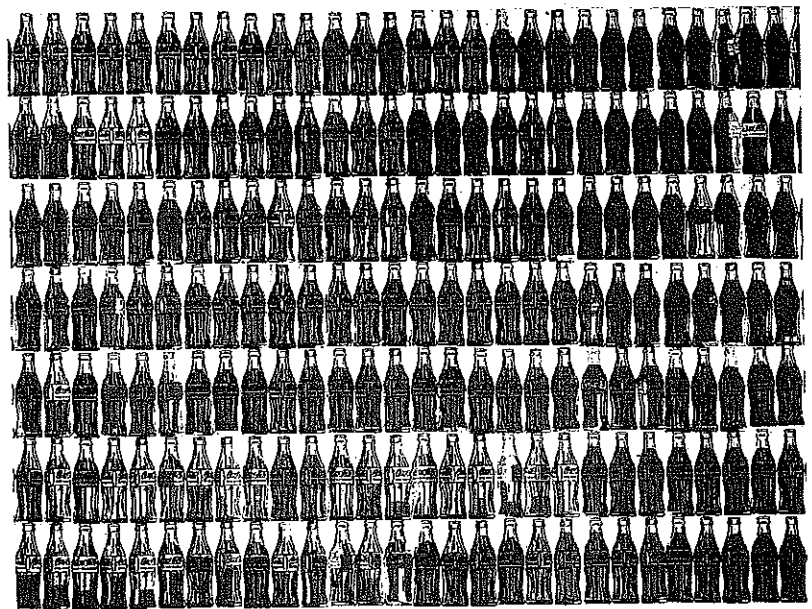


21.41 Roy Lichtenstein, *Bedroom at Arles*, 1992. Oil and magna on canvas, 10'6" × 13'9½" (3.2 × 4.2 m). Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection, Phoenix, Maryland.

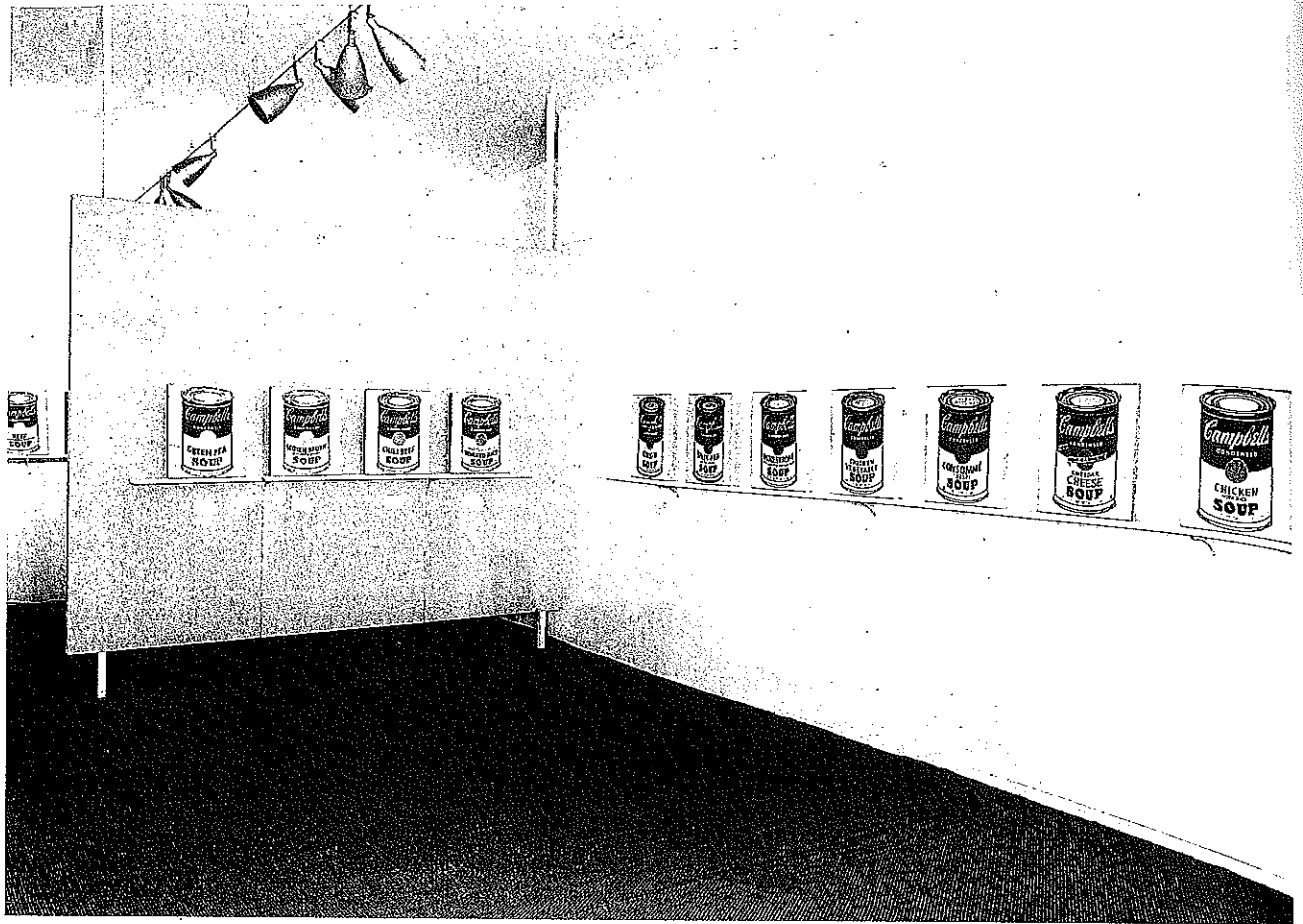
from the refuse of modern industrial society, the Pop artists deal principally with the new, the "store-bought," the idealized vulgarity of advertising, of the supermarket, and of television commercials.

Warhol

The artist who more than any other stands for Pop in the public imagination, through his paintings, objects, underground movies, and personal life, is **Andy Warhol** (1928–87). Like several others associated with Pop, Warhol was first a successful commercial artist. Initially, like Lichtenstein, he made paintings based on popular comic strips, but he soon began to concentrate on the subjects derived from advertising and commercial products for which he is best known—Coca-Cola bottles, Campbell's soup cans, and Brillo cartons (fig. 21.42). His most characteristic manner was repetition within a grid—endless rows of Coca-Cola bottles, literally presented, and arranged as they might be on



21.42 Andy Warhol, *210 Coca-Cola Bottles*, 1962. Silkscreen ink on synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 6'10½" × 8'9" (2.1 × 2.7 m). Collection Martin and Janet Blinder.



21.43 Andy Warhol, Installation view of *Campbell's Soup Cans*, Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles, 1962.

supermarket shelves or an assembly line (Warhol appropriately dubbed his studio "The Factory"). "You can be watching TV and see Coca-Cola," Warhol wrote in his 1975 autobiography, "and you can know that the President drinks Coke, Liz Taylor drinks Coke, and just think, you can drink Coke, too. A Coke is a Coke and no amount of money can get you a better Coke than the one the bum on the corner is drinking." Warhol's signature image is the Campbell's soup can, a product he said he ate for lunch every day for twenty years, "over and over again." When he exhibited thirty-two paintings of soup cans in 1962 at the Los Angeles Ferus Gallery, the number was determined by the variety of flavors then offered by Campbell's, and the canvases were monotonously lined up around the gallery on a white shelf like so many grocery goods (fig. 21.43).

From these consumer products he turned to the examination of contemporary American folk heroes and glamorous movie stars, including Elvis Presley, Elizabeth Taylor, and Marilyn Monroe (fig. 21.44). He based these early paintings on appropriated images from the media; later he photographed his subjects himself. From 1962 on, Warhol used a mechanical photo-silkscreen process that further



21.44 Andy Warhol, *Marilyn Monroe*, 1962. Silkscreen ink on synthetic oil, acrylic, and silkscreen enamel on canvas, 20 × 16" (50.8 × 40.6 cm).

21.45 Andy Warhol,
Last Self-Portrait, 1986.
Acrylic and silkscreen on
canvas, 6'10" × 6'10"
(2.1 × 2.1 m). The
Metropolitan Museum of
Art, New York.



emphasized his desire to eliminate the personal signature of the artist and to depict the life and the images of his time. As in his portrait of Monroe, Warhol allowed the layers of silkscreen colors to register imperfectly, thereby underscoring the mechanical nature of the process and encouraging many observers to contemplate the fate of the then recently deceased Monroe.

At the same time that he was beginning his portraits, Warhol created a series of canvases that applied his disturbing sense of impersonality to press photographs of death and disaster scenes. In doing so he suggested that familiarity breeds indifference, even to such disturbing aspects of contemporary life. In his gruesome pictures of automobile wrecks, for example, the nature of the subject makes the attainment of a neutral attitude more difficult. *Electric Chair*, taken from an old photograph, shows the grim, barren, death chamber with the empty seat in the center and the sign SILENCE on the wall. Presented by the artist either singly or in monotonous repetition, the scene becomes a chilling image, as much through the abstract austerity of its organization as through its associations.

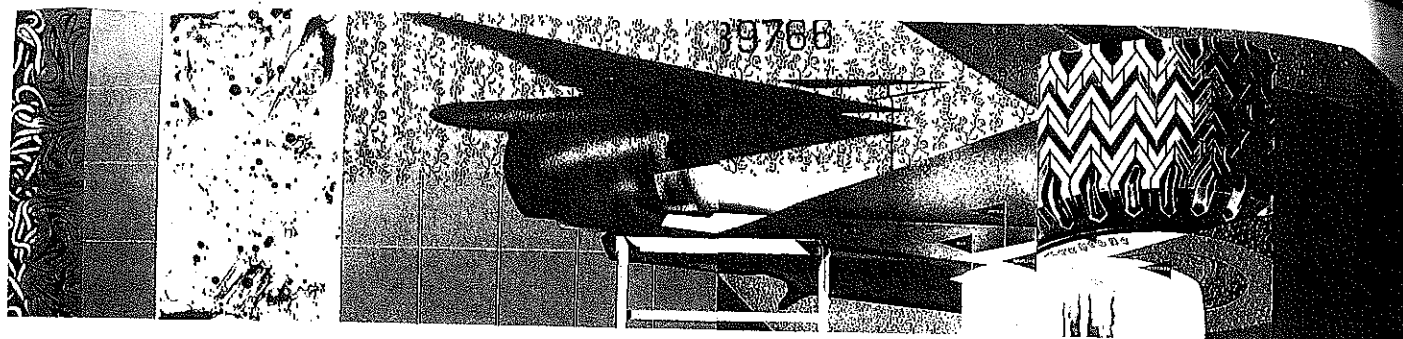
In the later sixties, Warhol increasingly turned to the making of films, where his principle of monotonous repetition became hypnotic in its effect, and to the promotion of the rock band The Velvet Underground. At the same time, he made himself and his entourage the subject of his art. Equipped with his famous silver-sprayed wig and an attitude of studied passivity, Warhol achieved cult status in New York, especially after he nearly died in 1968 from gunshot wounds inflicted by Valerie Solanas, the sole member of S.C.U.M. (the Society for Cutting Up Men).

Throughout the seventies, Warhol worked primarily as a society portraitist, making garishly colored silkscreen paintings of friends, artworld figures, and celebrities. Among his most haunting images are the camouflage self-portraits he executed in the eighties; the one illustrated here was executed the year before his death (fig. 21.45). Disguising his own well-known visage in a camouflage pattern was a highly appropriate gesture for this artist, who fabricated his famous persona for public consumption but who remained privately a shy, devout Catholic and devoted son. "If you want to know all about Andy Warhol," he once said, a little disingenuously, "just look at the surface: of my paintings and films and me, and there I am. There's nothing behind it."

Rosenquist, Wesselmann, and Indiana

For a period, James Rosenquist (b. 1933) was a billboard painter, working on the scaffolding high over New York's Times Square. The experience of painting commercial images on an enormous scale was critical for the paintings he began to produce in the early sixties. His best-known and most ambitious painting, *F-111*, 1965, is ten feet high and eighty-six feet long (3 × 26.2 m), capable of being organized into a complete room to surround the spectator (fig. 21.46).

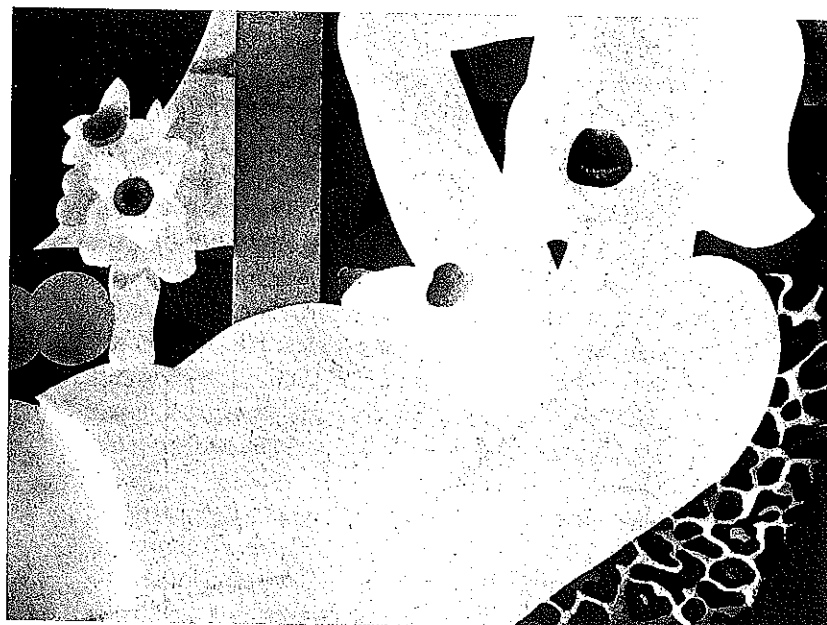
Named after an American fighter-bomber whose image traverses the entire eighty-six feet, *F-111* also comprises a series of fragmented images of destruction, combined with prosaic details including a lightbulb, a plate of spaghetti, and, most jarring of all, a little girl who grins beneath a bullet-shaped hair dryer. Surrounded by this environment of canvas, visitors experienced the visual jolt of the painting's



21.46 James Rosenquist, *Portion of F-111*, 1965. Oil on canvas with aluminum, overall 10 × 86' (3 × 26.2 m). Private collection.



21.47 Tom Wesselmann, *Interior No. 2*, 1964. Mixed media, including working fan, clock, and fluorescent light, 60 × 48 × 5" (152.4 × 121.9 × 12.7 cm). Private collection.



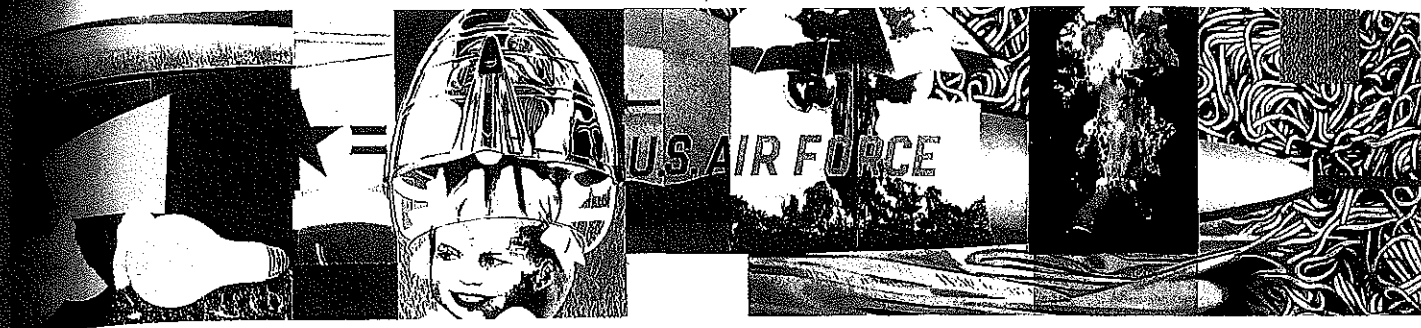
21.48 Tom Wesselmann, *Great American Nude #57*, 1964. Acrylic and collage on board, 48 × 65" (121.9 × 165.1 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

garish, Technicolor-like palette, augmented by reflective aluminum panels at either end, and its barrage of imagery on a colossal scale. Between 1965, when it was first unveiled at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York, and 1968, *F-111* traveled to several countries, gaining notoriety not only as an aggressive indictment of war, but as one of the seminal works of the Pop era.

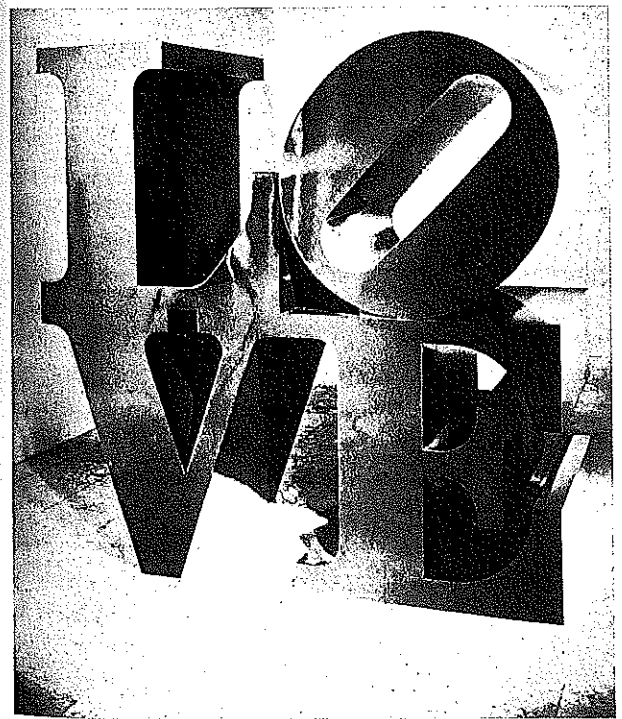
Tom Wesselmann (b. 1931) parodied American advertising in his sixties assemblages, which combined real elements—clocks, television sets, air conditioners—with photomontage effects of window views, plus sound effects. In works such as *Interior No. 2* (fig. 21.47), the literal presence of actual objects dissolves the barriers between depicted forms and reality itself. Wesselmann's most obsessive subject has been the female nude, variations on which comprise a series he called *Great American Nude* (fig. 21.48). For decades, Wesselmann has painted this faceless American sex symbol, whose pristine and pneumatic form mimics the popular conventions of pinup magazines.

Robert Indiana (b. 1938) could be considered the Pop heir to early-twentieth-century artists such as Charles Demuth and Stuart Davis (see figs. 18.29, 18.30, 18.64). He painted a figure five in homage to the former (fig. 21.49) and, like Davis, he has painted word-images, in his case attaining a stark simplicity that suggests the flashing words of neon signs—EAT, LOVE, DIE. These word-paintings are composed of stenciled letters and precise, hard-edge color-shapes that relate Indiana to much abstract art of the sixties.

Unlike most Pop art, which manifests little or no overt comment on society, Indiana's word-images are often bitter indictments, in code, of modern life, and sometimes even a devastating indictment of brutality, as in his *Southern States* series. However, it was with his classic rendering of "LOVE" that Indiana assured a place for himself in the history of the times (fig. 21.50). He continued to produce, among other new images, many LOVE variations on an ever-increasing scale, as in the aluminum sculpture seen here.



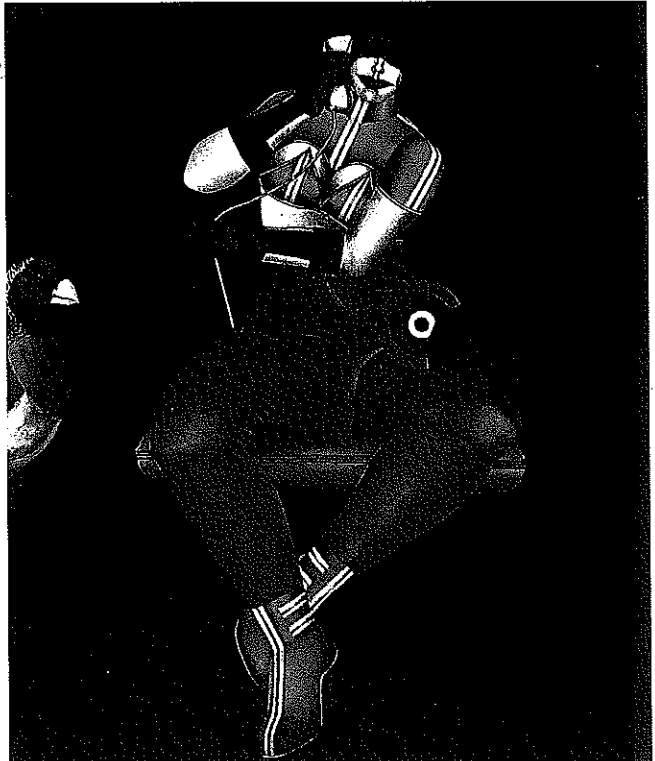
21.49 Robert Indiana, *The Demuth Five*, 1963. Oil on canvas, diagonal measurements 68 × 68" (172.7 × 172.7 cm). Private collection.



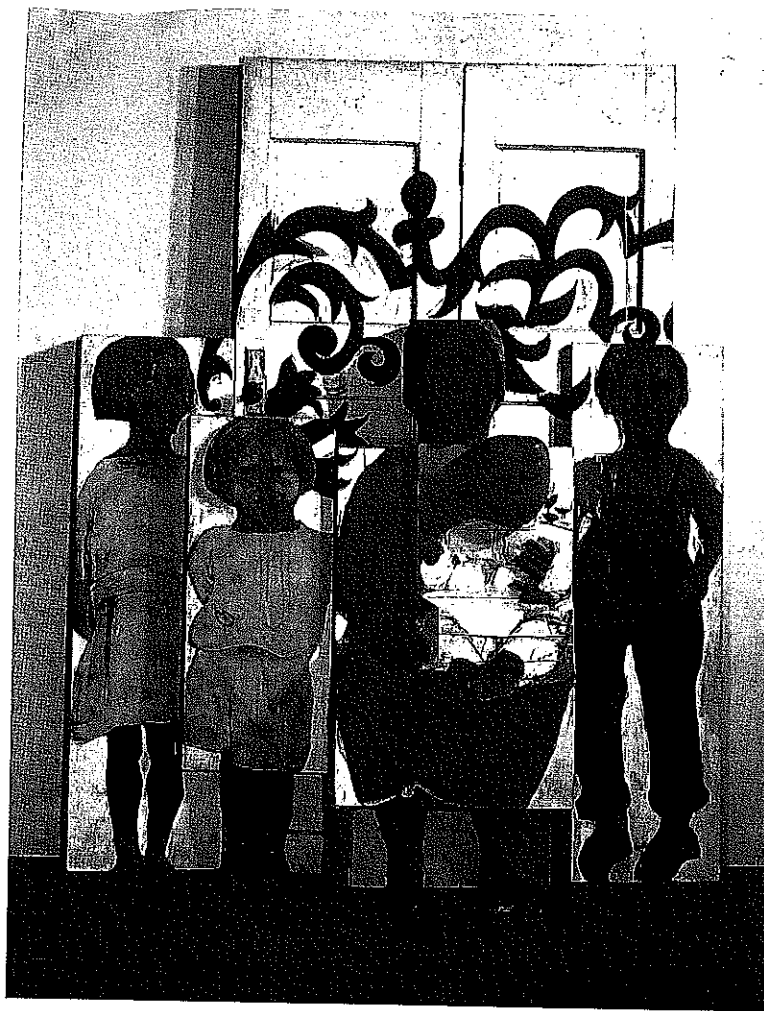
21.50 Robert Indiana, *LOVE*, 1972. Polychrome aluminum, 6 × 6 × 3' (1.8 × 1.8 × 0.9 m). Multiple, Formerly Galerie Denise René, Paris.

Lindner and Marisol

Richard Lindner (1901–78), the son of German Jews, emigrated first to France (where he was temporarily interned in a concentration camp after the outbreak of World War II), and later, in 1941, to New York. There, he first gained a reputation as an illustrator and teacher during the fifties. Because the paintings he began to make in the early sixties, with their figurative subject matter, slick finish, and urban imagery, bore a superficial resemblance to Pop art, his name has been associated with that movement. But his work is rooted in European literary and artistic traditions and is more appropriately related to the machine Cubism of Léger as well as to the work of earlier German artists such as Schlemmer. He created a bizarre and highly personal dreamworld of metallic, tightly corseted mannequins who at times seem to be caricatures of erotic themes, with bright, flat, even harsh colors (fig. 21.51). These fetishistic images, which are filled with personal and literary associations (his mother had run a custom-fitting corset business in Germany), recapitulate the artist's past.



21.51 Richard Lindner, *Hello*, 1966. Oil on canvas, 70 × 60" (177.8 × 152.4 cm). Collection Robert E. Abrams.



21.52 Marisol, *The Family*, 1962. Painted wood and other materials in three sections, overall 6'10½" × 5'5½" × 1'3½" (2.2 × 1.66 × 0.39 m). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Edward Kienholz, Jess, and Ed Ruscha—made work that is only tangentially related to Pop.

Thiebaud

One of the most distinguished artists to emerge in California in the sixties is the painter Wayne Thiebaud (b. 1920). He located his work as part of a long realist tradition in painting that includes such artists as Chardin, Eakins, and Morandi, and he was not comfortable with attempts to tie his work to the Pop movement. When his distinctive still lifes of mass-produced American foodstuffs were first exhibited in New York in 1962, however, they were regarded as a major manifestation of West Coast Pop and were seen by many as ironic commentaries on the banality of American consumerism. Thiebaud specialized in still lifes of carefully arranged, meticulously depicted, lusciously brushed and colored, singularly perfect but unappetizing bakery goods (fig. 21.53), the kind one would find illuminated under harsh fluorescent lights on a cafeteria counter or under a bakery window. Thomas Hess, who had been an

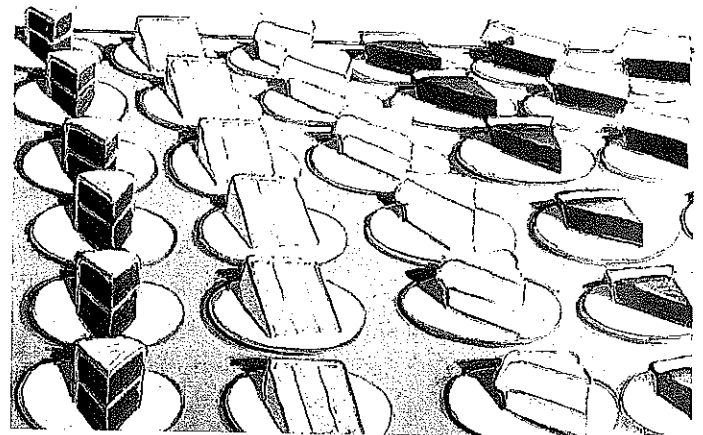
advocate of the Abstract Expressionist painters, wrote of Thiebaud's East Coast debut:

looking at these pounds of slabby New Taste Sensation, one hears the artist screaming at us from behind the paintings urging us to become hermits: to leave the new Gomorrah where layer cakes troop down air-conditioned shelving like cholesterol angels, to flee to the desert and eat locusts and pray for faith.

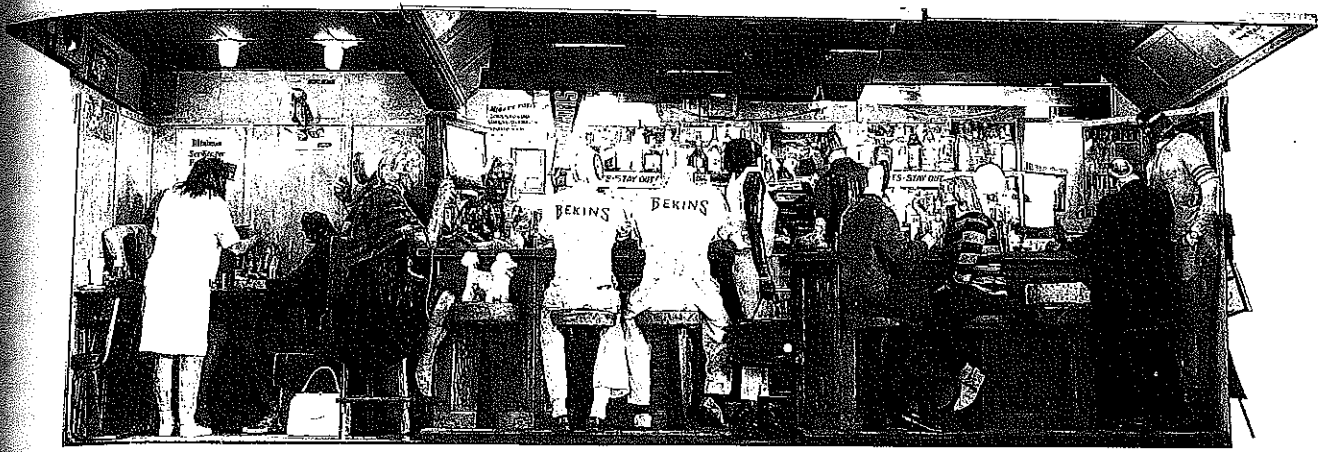
Since the early sixties, Marisol (Marisol Escobar) (b. 1930), a Paris-born Venezuelan artist active in New York, has created life-size assemblages made of wood, plaster, paint, and found objects, which she sometimes arranges in environments. These are primarily portraits of famous personalities such as President Lyndon Johnson, Andy Warhol, and the movie star John Wayne. Marisol based her more anonymous sitters in *The Family* on a photograph of a poor American family from the South (fig. 21.52). Their features are painted on planks of wood, but the artist added three-dimensional limbs and actual shoes for some of the figures to create her peculiar hybrid of painting and sculpture. Reminiscent of photographs by Walker Evans (see fig. 18.45), *The Family* contains a pathos alien to most Pop art.

Poetics of the "New Gomorrah": West Coast Artists

Pop had also begun to emerge from the distinctive culture of California by the early sixties, although the four California artists discussed here—Wayne Thiebaud,



21.53 Wayne Thiebaud, *Pie Counter*, 1963. Oil on canvas, 30 × 36" (76.2 × 91.4 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.



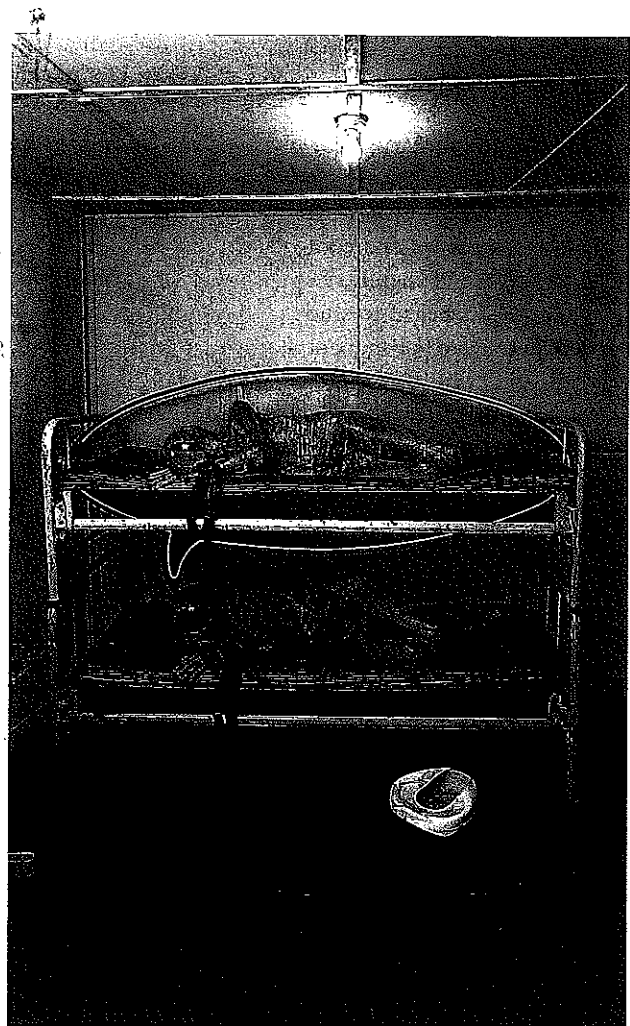
21.54 Edward Kienholz, *The Beanery*, 1965. Mixed-media tableau, 7 × 6 × 22' (2.1 × 1.8 × 6.7 m). Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

Nevertheless, Thiebaud insisted that these works reflected his nostalgia and affection for the subject, rather than any indictment of American culture. While the repetitive nature of the motif generated compositions as ostensibly monotonous as Warhol's grids and series, the paint handling has little in common with the flat, deadpan surfaces favored by the East Coast Pop artists. Thiebaud used the oil medium to recreate the very substance it depicts, whether cake frosting or mustard or pie meringue, building up his colorful paint layers into a thick, delectable impasto. From the sixties onward, Thiebaud, who had a distinguished career as professor of art at the University of California, Davis, also produced landscapes that often elicit marvelous chromatic and spatial effects from the vertiginous streets of San Francisco.

Kienholz

In strong contrast to Thiebaud's traditional oil paintings is the subversive art of Los Angeles artist **Edward Kienholz** (1927–94). Like George Segal, he created elaborate tableaux, but where Segal's work is quietly melancholic, Kienholz's constructions embody a mordant, even gruesome, view of American life. For his famous bar, *The Beanery* (fig. 21.54), he produced a life-size environment, one where the viewer can actually enter and mingle with the customers. The patrons are created mostly from life casts of the artist's friends. Kienholz filled the tableau, as he called this and similar works, with such grotesque invention and such harrowing accuracy of selective detail that a sleazy neighborhood bar-and-grill becomes a scene of nightmarish proportion. The seedy customers, who smoke, converse, or stare off into space, wear clocks for faces, all frozen at ten minutes after ten. "A bar is a sad place," Kienholz once said, "a place full of strangers who are killing time, postponing the idea that they're going to die." *The State Hospital* (fig. 21.55) is a construction of a cell with a mental patient and his self-image, both modeled with revolting realism and placed on filthy mattresses beneath a single glaring lightbulb. The man on the upper mattress is encircled by a neon cartoon speech bubble, as though unable to escape reality even in his thoughts. The two effigies of the same creature—one with goldfish

swimming in his glass-bowl head—make one of the artist's most horrifying works. Though he could not have known Duchamp's late work, *Étant Donnés* (see chapter 13), Kienholz adopted a very similar format for *The State Hospital*, which can be viewed only through a barred window in the cell, thus implicating the viewer as a voyeur in this painfully grim scene.



21.55 Edward Kienholz, *The State Hospital*, 1966. Mixed-media tableau, 8 × 12 × 10' (2.4 × 3.7 × 3 m). Moderna Museet, Stockholm.

said he would go on with his collecting and that was all there was then of discussing and this is a little description of something that happened once and it is very interesting.



21.56 Jess, *Will Wonders Never Cease: Translation #21*, 1969. Oil on canvas mounted on wood, 21 × 28½" (53.3 × 71.4 cm). Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Jess

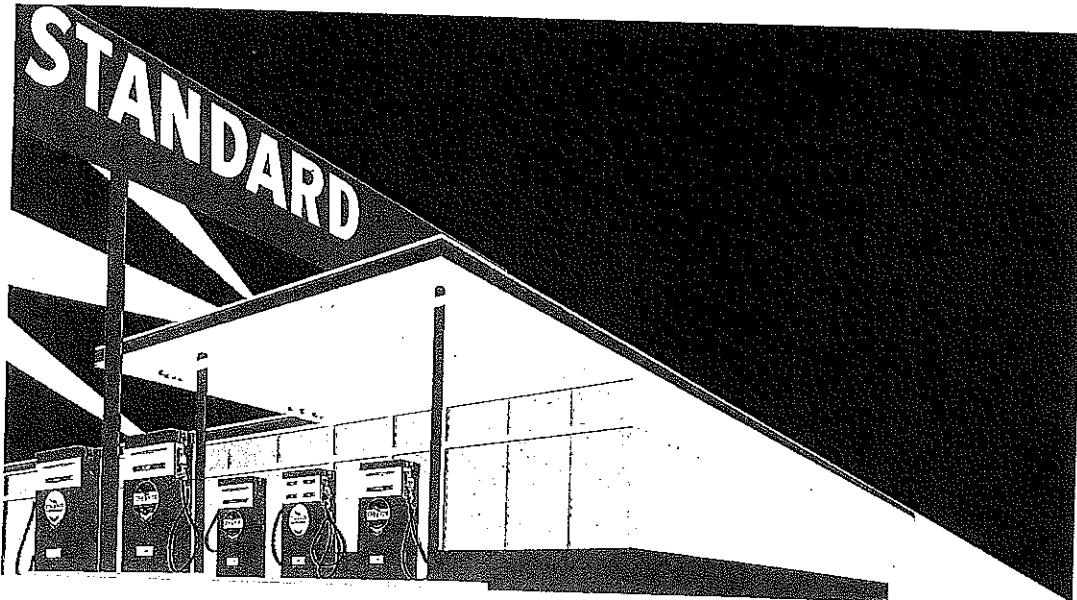
The West Coast artist Burgess Collins, known as Jess (b. 1923), came to public attention in 1963 when his comic-strip collage was included in *Pop Art U.S.A.*, an exhibition at the Oakland Art Museum. But the reclusive Jess felt no kinship with the Pop artists who were his contemporaries, and most of his mature work is so saturated with romanticism, nostalgia, and fantasy that it seems a far cry from the cool detachment of Pop. After earning a degree in chemistry at the California Institute of Technology, Jess began to study painting in San Francisco under a number of prominent Bay area artists, including Clyfford Still, who, he said, taught him the "poetics of materials." The abstract paintings he made in the first half of the fifties bear the imprint of this leading Abstract Expressionist. Jess's longtime companion and frequent

collaborator was the Beat poet Robert Duncan, who died in 1988.

In 1959 Jess began a series of paintings that he called *Translations*, for which he took preexisting images, usually old photographs, postcards, or magazine illustrations, and "translated [them] to a higher level emotionally and sometimes spiritually." The *Translations*, which he continued to make until 1976, are painstakingly crafted, built up into thick, bumpy layers of oil paint where the impasto resembles a kind of painted relief (fig. 21.56). They usually feature an accompanying text. The words at the top of the canvas here come from a text by Gertrude Stein in which a boy learns from his father about the cruelty of collecting butterflies as specimens. The hauntingly tender image, painted in pastel colors in a deliberately antinaturalistic, paint-by-numbers style, is based on an engraving from an 1887 children's book titled *The First Butterfly in the Net*. Since the early fifties Jess has also made elaborate works, which he called "Paste-Ups", inspired by Dada and Surrealist collage and photomontage, especially the work of Max Ernst. Composed of images clipped from magazines and other sources, the Paste-Ups contained layers of meaning as dense and complex as the tightly woven imagery.

Ruscha

The work of Edward Ruscha (b. 1937), who settled in Los Angeles in 1956, is not easily classified. His hard-edge technique and vernacular subject matter allied him with California Pop art in the sixties, while his fascination with words and typography, exemplified by his printed books and word paintings, corresponded to certain trends in Conceptual art that surfaced in the following decade. In 1963 Ruscha, who had already worked as a graphic designer of books, published *Twenty-six Gasoline Stations*, a book containing unremarkable photographs of the filling stations on Route 66, a road he had frequently traveled, between Oklahoma City, his birthplace, and Los Angeles. He based



21.57 Edward Ruscha, *Standard Station, Amarillo, Texas*, 1963. Oil on canvas, 5'5" × 10' (1.65 × 3 m). Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.

**EVERY BUILDING
ON THE
SUNSET
STRIP**

EDWARD RUSCHA

1 9 6 6



21.58 Edward Ruscha, Title page (above left) and opening pages (above right) of *Every Building on the Sunset Strip*, 1966. Artist's book.

his large painting *Standard Station, Amarillo, Texas* (fig. 21.57) on one of those images, though he transformed the mundane motif into a dramatic composition, slicing the canvas diagonally, turning the sky black, and transforming the station into a sleek, gleaming structure that recalls Precisionist paintings of the thirties.

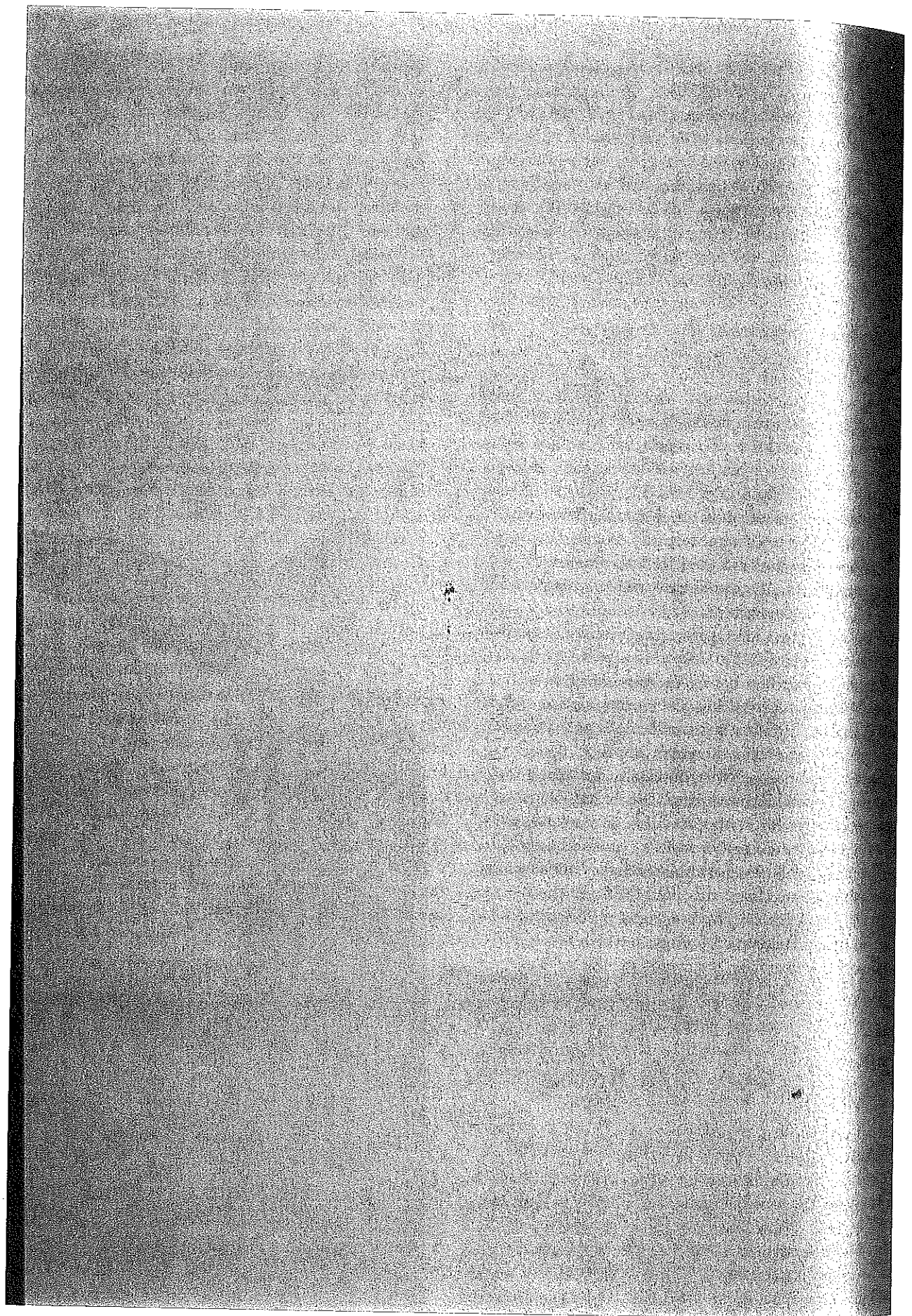
Another of Ruscha's books, *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (fig. 21.58), documents exactly what its title indicates in a series of deadpan photographs. "I want absolutely neutral material," he told one interviewer. "My pictures are not that interesting, nor the subject matter. They are simply a collection of 'facts'; my book is more like a collection of readymades." Ruscha's citation of Duchamp is a reminder that the Frenchman's first major retrospective was held in 1963 at the Pasadena Art Museum. In the eighties Ruscha began to make tenebrous paintings, in which mysterious objects float, like the words of his earlier paintings, in a nebulous space.

Jiménez

Luis Jiménez (b. 1940), a Mexican-American artist from El Paso, Texas, is not associated specifically with California, but rather the southwestern part of the United States where Mexican and American cultures meet and sometimes clash. Jiménez draws from his Mexican heritage, looking especially to the artistic examples of the Mexican muralists (see chapter 18), as well as the myths, technologies, and mass media of "el Norte." He shares certain concerns with Pop artists for, as he has said, "I am making what I would consider people's art and that means that the images are coming from popular culture and so is the material." Jiménez, who learned sign painting techniques in



21.59 Luis Jiménez, *Man on Fire*, 1969. Fiberglass, 7'5" × 5' × 1'7" (2.3 × 1.52 × 0.48 m). National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.



21.60 Yves Klein, *Blue Monochrome*, 1961. Dry pigment in synthetic polymer medium on cotton over plywood, 6'4 $\frac{3}{4}$ " \times 4'7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (2 \times 1.4 m). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

his father's El Paso shop, uses fiberglass for his sculpture, a material that, he has pointed out, is used to make canoes, cars, and hot tubs. He then applies a jet aircraft acrylic urethane finish with an airbrush, giving his surfaces a hard plastic, autobody glow that is repellent and seductive at the same time. It is a finish that, the artist says, "the critics love to hate." His dramatic *Man on Fire* (fig. 21.59), a subject previously treated by Orozco, is based on the heroic figure of Cuauhtémoc, the last Aztec emperor, whom the Spaniards tortured by fire.

"Extroversion is the Rule": Europe's New Realism

The movement known as *Nouveau Réalisme* or New Realism developed in the fifties when the prevailing trend in Europe was geometric abstraction and *Art Informel* (see chapter 20). New Realism was officially founded in 1960 by the French critic Pierre Restany in the Parisian apartment of artist Yves Klein. A manifesto was issued and exhibitions of the group were held in Milan in 1960 and at Restany's Gallery J in Paris the following year. The latter was labeled 40 Degrees Above Dada, indicating a kinship, at least according to Restany, with the earlier movement. Though certain aims of the group were comparable to those of Pop art, such as their revolt against the hegemony of abstract painting, the results proved as different as the artists involved. In general, the Europeans were less interested in literal transcriptions of popular culture and were less indebted to the processes and imagery of commercial media. The original members included Klein, Martial Raysse, Arman, Jean Tinguely, Daniel Spoerri, Raymond Hains, Jacques de la Villeglé, and François Dufrêne. All of these, with the exception of Klein, were included in the 1961 exhibition *The Art of Assemblage*, at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and in the *New Realists show* the following year at Sidney Janis. In the catalogue for the latter, Pierre Restany is quoted as saying:

In Europe, as well as in the United States, we are finding new directions in nature, for contemporary nature is mechanical, industrial and flooded with advertisements. ... The reality of everyday life has now become the factory and the city. Born under the twin signs of standardization and efficiency, extroversion is the rule of the new world ...

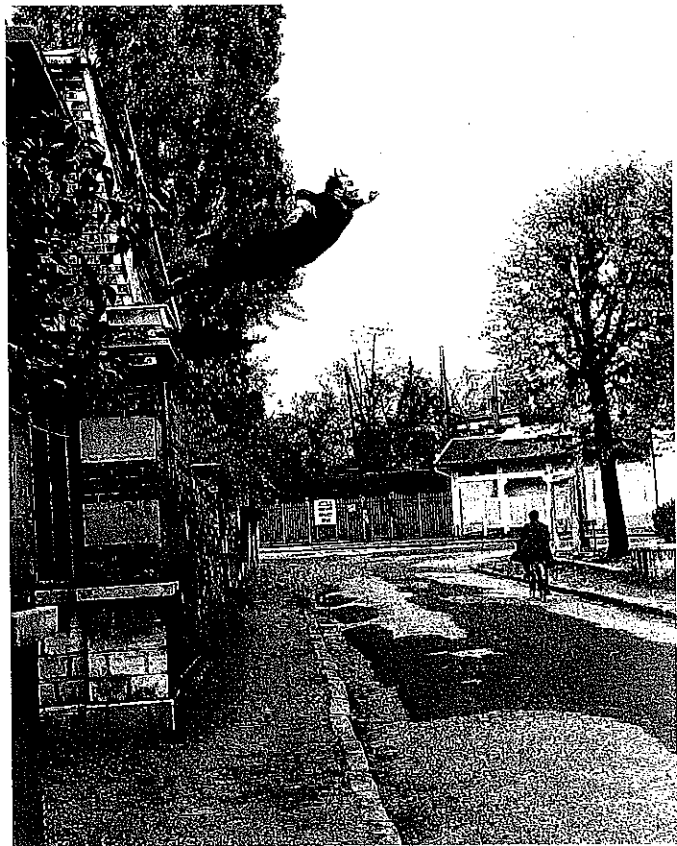
Klein

A central figure of Pierre Restany's *Nouveau Réalisme* was Yves Klein (1928–62), who was an early practitioner of Conceptual, Body, Minimalist, and Performance art. Klein and his followers were concerned with the dramatization of ideas beyond the creation of individual works of art, and the mystical basis of his art set his work apart from his American Pop contemporaries. He was a member of an obscure spiritual sect, the Rosicrucian Society, and held the advanced black belt grade in judo from Japan. He even

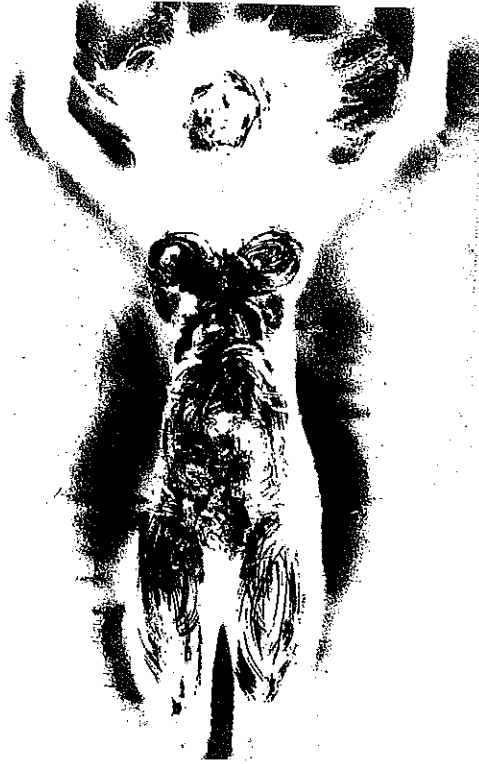
opened his own judo school in Paris in 1955, the year of his first public exhibition in Paris. In his blue monochrome abstractions (fig. 21.60), paintings that caused an uproar when first shown in Milan in 1957, he covered the canvas with a powdery, eye-dazzling, ultramarine pigment that he patented as IKB ("International Klein Blue"). For Klein, this blue embodied unity, serenity, and, as he said, the supreme "representation of the immaterial, the sovereign liberation of the spirit." Though not exactly identical, the prices for instance differed, these flat, uninflected paintings carried no indication of the artist's hand on their surface and were a radical alternative to gestural abstraction.

In 1958 Klein attracted audiences to an exhibition of nothingness—*Le Vide* (The Void)—nothing but bare walls in a Parisian gallery. In 1960 he had himself photographed leaping off a ledge in a Paris suburb as a "practical demonstration of levitation" (fig. 21.61). The photograph was doctored to remove the judo experts holding a tarpaulin below, but Klein, a serious athlete, was obsessed with the notion of flight or self-levitation. In this altered image he presents less a prankish demonstration of levitation than an artistic leap of the imagination. He wrote:

Today the painter of space ought actually to go into space to paint, but he ought to go there without tricks or fraud, not any longer by plane, parachute or rocket: he must go there by himself, by means of individual, autonomous force, in a word, he should be capable of levitating.



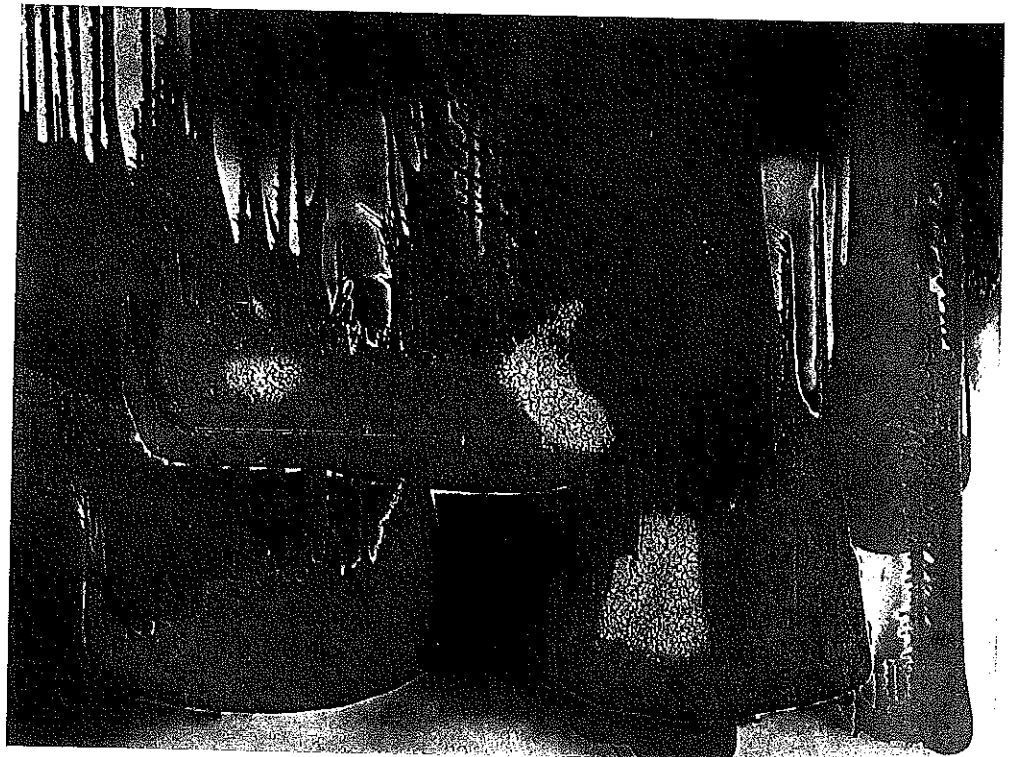
21.61 Yves Klein, *Leap into the Void*, Fontenay-aux-Roses, October 23, 1960. Photograph by Harry Shunk.



21.62 Yves Klein, *Shroud Anthropometry 20, "Vampire,"* c. 1960. Pigment on canvas, 43 × 30" (109.2 × 76.2 cm). Private collection.

The artist's blue "Anthropometries" (a term invented by Restany) of 1960 were realized with nude models, his "living brushes," who were covered with blue paint and instructed by Klein to roll on canvases to create imprints of their bodies (fig. 21.62). In the *Cosmogonies*, he experi-

21.63 Yves Klein, *Fire Painting*, 1961–62. Flame burned into asbestos with pigment, 43 × 30" (109.2 × 76.2 cm). Private collection.

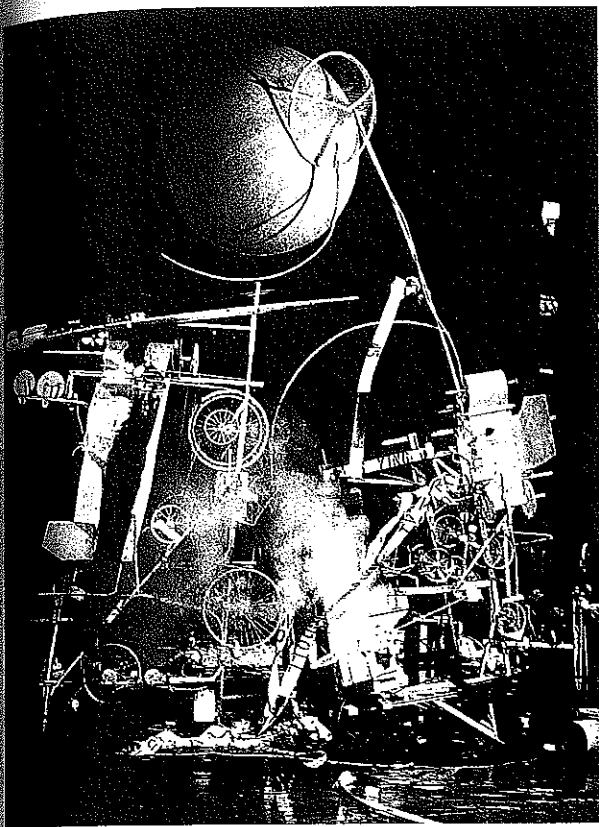


mented with the effects of rain on canvas covered with wet blue paint. To make his fire paintings, he used actual flames to burn patterns into a flame-retardant surface and, in later works, added red, blue, and yellow paint (fig. 21.63). With his passion for a spiritual content comparable to that preached by Kandinsky, Mondrian, and Malevich, Klein was moving against the trend of his time with its insistence on impersonality, on the painting or sculpture as an object, and on the object as an end in itself.

Tinguely and Saint-Phalle

Other artists associated with New Realism had interests ranging from assemblage to kinetic sculpture, to forms closer to those of American Pop. For Swiss artist Jean Tinguely (1925–94), a friend and collaborator of Klein's, mechanized motion was the primary medium. "The machine allows me," he said, "above anything, to reach poetry." After the formulation of metamechanic reliefs and what he called "metamatics," which permitted the use of chance and sound in motion machines, he introduced painting machines in 1955, another attempt at debunking the assumptions surrounding so-called Action Painting or French "*Tachisme*." By 1959 he had perfected the metamatic painting machines, the most impressive of which was the *metamatic-automobile-odorante-et-sonore* for the first biennial of Paris. It produced some forty thousand paintings in an Abstract Expressionist style on a roll of paper that was then cut by the machine into individual sheets.

In 1960 Tinguely came to New York, where he and his companion, the artist Niki de Saint-Phalle, collaborated with like-minded American artists including Johns,



21.64 Jean Tinguely, *Homage to New York*, 1960. Mixed media. Self-destructing installation in the garden of The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Rauschenberg, and John Cage. His 1960 *Homage to New York* (fig. 21.64), created in the garden of New York's Museum of Modern Art from refuse and motors gathered around the city, was a machine designed to destroy itself. In the era's spirit of Happenings, an audience watched for about half an hour as the machine smoked and sputtered, finally self-destructing with the aid of the New York Fire Department. A remnant is in the museum's collection.

Parisian-born **Niki de Saint-Phalle** (b. 1930) lived in New York from 1933 to 1951 and exhibited with the New Realists from 1961 to 1963. In the early sixties she began to make "Shot-reliefs," firing a pistol at bags of paint that had been placed on top of assemblage reliefs. As the punctured bags leaked their contents, "drip" paintings were created by chance methods. These works were both a parodic comment on Action Painting and a ritualistic kind of Performance art. Saint-Phalle is best known for her *Nana* or woman figures, which came to represent the archetype of an all-powerful woman. These are rotund, highly animated figures made of *papier-mâché* or plaster and painted with bright colors (fig. 21.65). *SHE* ("hon" in Swedish) (fig. 21.66), an eighty-two-foot, six-ton (25 m, 6.09 tonne) reclining *Nana*, was made in collaboration with Tinguely and a Swedish sculptor named Per-Olof Ultvedt for the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, where it was exhibited. Visitors entered the sculpture on a ramp

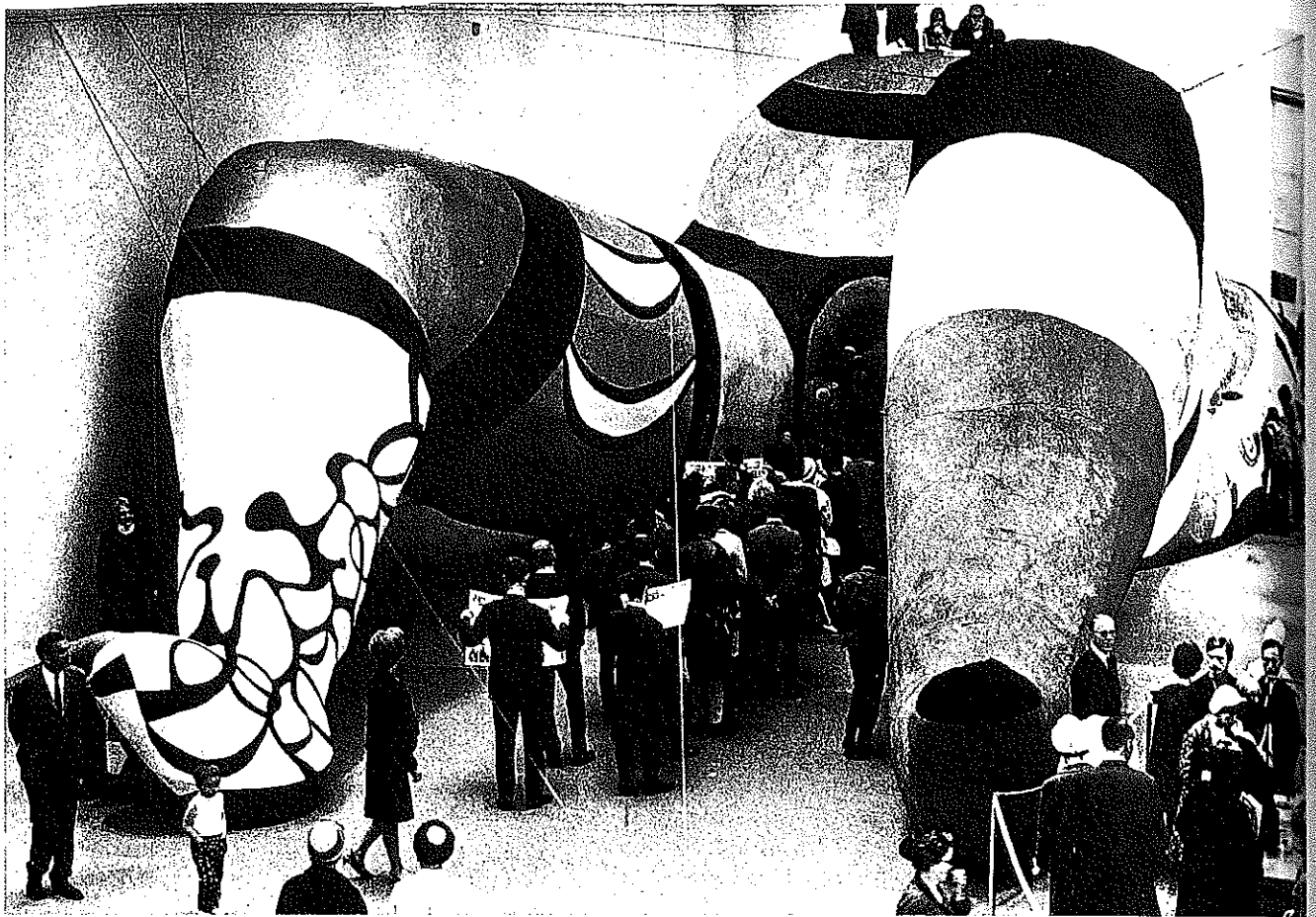


21.65 Niki de Saint-Phalle, *Black Venus*, 1965–67. Painted polyester, 9'2¼" × 2'11" × 2' [2.8 × 0.89 × 0.61 m]. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

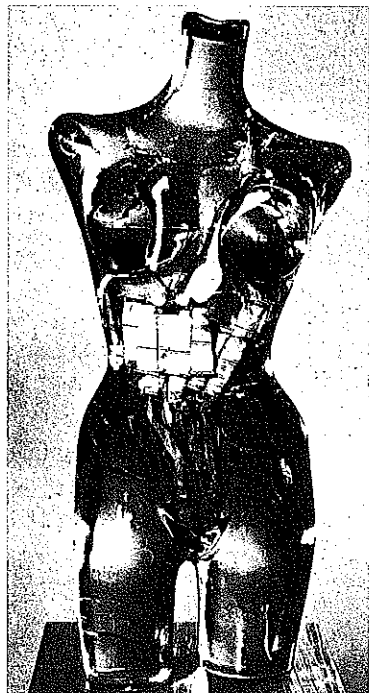
between the figure's legs. Inside this giant womb they encountered a vast network of interconnected compartments with several installations, including a bottle-crunching machine, a planetarium, and a cinema showing Greta Garbo movies. The work was destroyed after three months, although the head remains in the permanent collection of the Moderna Museet.

Arman

Arman (Armand Fernández) (b. 1928) was a friend and in some degree a competitor of Klein's. In 1960 he filled a Parisian gallery with refuse, calling it *Le Plein* (Fullness), thus countering Klein's exhibition of nothingness or *Le Vide*. Arman either fractured objects such as violins into many slivers or made assemblages, which he called "accumulations," that consisted of reiterated objects—such as old sabres, pencils, teapots, or eyeglasses. He placed these objects under vitrines or imbedded them in transparent, quick-setting polyester. Later he created clear plastic figures to act as containers for the objects. Thus a transparent nude torso (fig. 21.67) contains a cluster of inverted paint tubes that pour brilliantly colored streamers of paint down into the belly and groin.



21.66 Niki de Saint-Phalle, *SHE—A Cathedral*, 1966. Mixed-media sculptural environment, 20 × 82 × 30' (6.1 × 25 × 9.1 m). Moderna Museet, Stockholm (fragmentary remains).



21.67 Arman, *La Couleur de mon amour*, 1966. Polyester with embedded objects, 35 × 12" (88.9 × 30.5 cm). Collection Philippe Durand-Ruel, Paris.

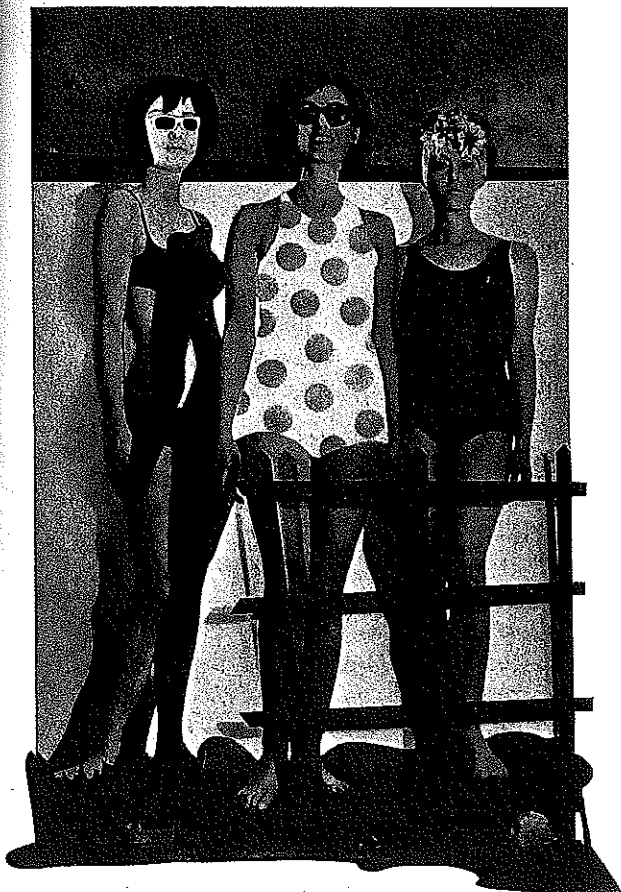


21.68 Arman, *Long-Term Parking*, 1982. Sixty automobiles embedded in cement, 60 × 20 × 20' (18.3 × 6.1 × 6.1 m). Centre d'Art de Montcel, Jouyen-Josas, France.

Arman called one group of his assemblages “*poubelles*” (trash cans), a term that comments on the prodigal waste inherent in contemporary consumerism while also alluding to the potential for visual poetry in life’s recycled detritus, as we have seen in the art of Schwitters and Rauschenberg. In 1982 Arman realized a work on a grand scale with *Long-Term Parking* (fig. 21.68), a sixty-foot (18.3 m) concrete tower with some sixty complete automobiles embedded in it. The parklike setting outside Paris affirms the artist’s contention that, far from expressing the antiart bias present in Duchamp’s original use of found objects, *Long-Term Parking* reflects a desire to restructure used or damaged materials into new, aesthetic forms as a metaphor for the hope that modern life may yet prove salvageable.

Raysse

The work of **Martial Raysse** (b. 1936) perhaps has the most in common with British and American Pop artists, though his beach scenes are more reminiscent of his native Côte d’Azur than Coney Island (fig. 21.69). In 1962, for an exhibition at Amsterdam’s Stedelijk Museum, the artist created an installation called *Raysse Beach*. Using life-size, photographic cutouts of bathing beauties set in an actual environment of sand and beach balls, he achieved a synthetic re-creation of an expensive watering place, a kind of

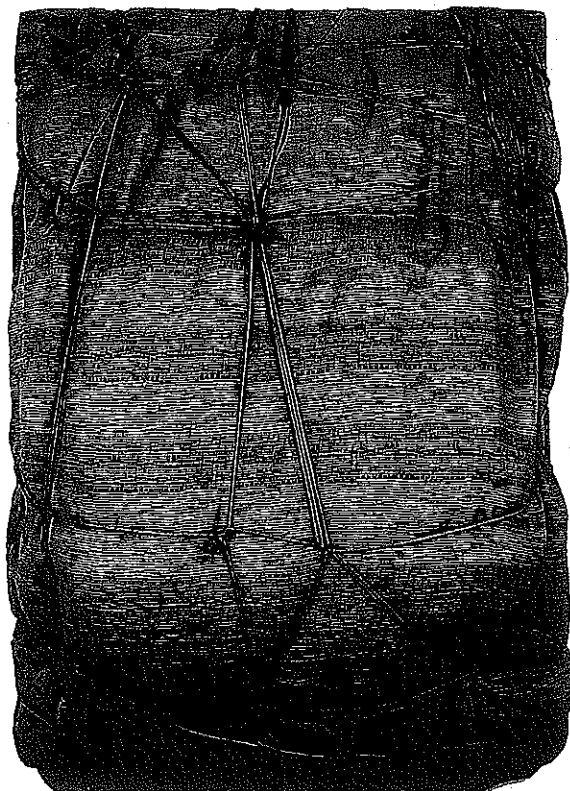


21.69 Martial Raysse, *Tableau dans le style français*, 1965. Assemblage on canvas, 7'17" × 4'6¾" (2.2 × 1.4 m). Collection Runquist.

artificial paradise for the Pop generation. Central to *Raysse Beach*, as in the work of his American and British contemporaries, are the stereotypical images of women drawn from advertising. After participating in Janis’s New Realists exhibition in 1962, Raysse spent time in both New York and Los Angeles and associated with American artists such as Oldenburg and Rauschenberg, whom he had already met in Paris.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude

Bulgarian-born **Christo** (Christo Javacheff) (b. 1935) escaped from the Eastern bloc in 1958 and settled in Paris. There he came into contact with the New Realists and began to wrap found objects in cloth. In the context of New Realism, Christo’s work had the most in common with that of Arman, although Arman chose to expose his found objects while Christo elected to obscure them within his packages, placing the emphasis less on the contained than on the container. These wrapped forms could range from more recognizable shapes like a chair, a woman, or a Volkswagen automobile, to unidentified objects, in essence a new kind of abstract, highly enigmatic sculpture (fig. 21.70). Like Oldenburg’s proposed colossal monuments, Christo’s most ambitious projects were at first carried out only in drawings and collages. But in 1968, working side by side with his wife, **Jeanne-Claude** (b. 1935), he actually wrapped his first building, the Kunsthalle in Bern, Switzerland.

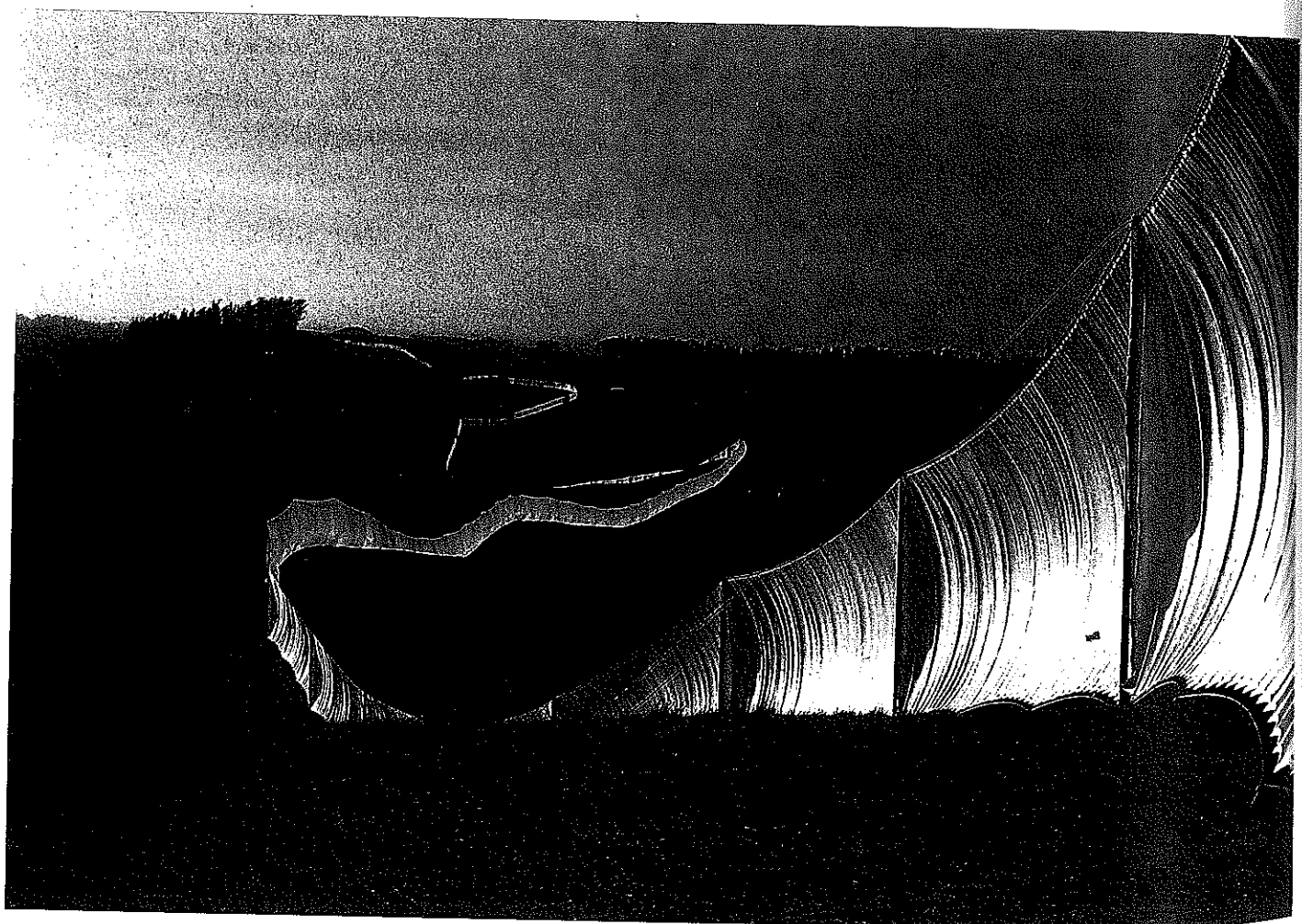


21.70 Christo, *Package 1962*, 1962. Fabric and rope mounted on board, 36¾ × 26¾ × 12¼" (93 × 68 × 31 cm).

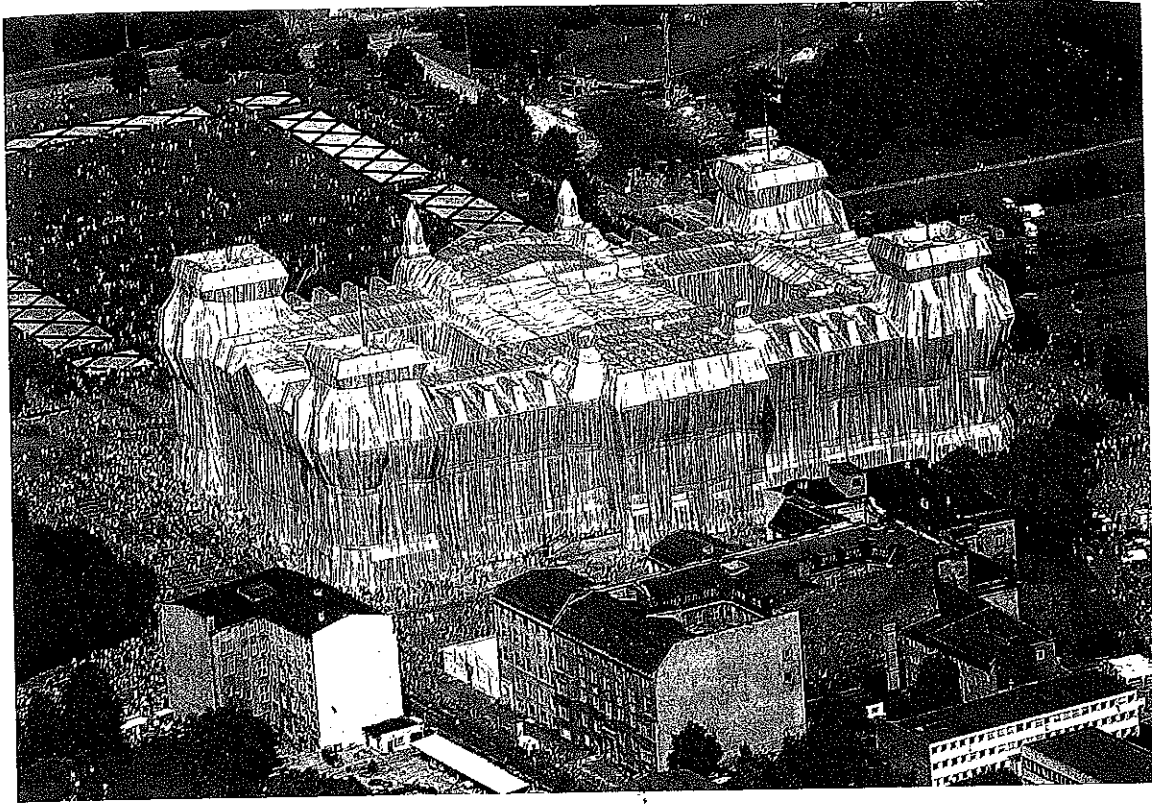
The Christos are best known for their vast environmental projects, involving wrapping not only whole buildings but even significant portions of open nature. Christo and Jeanne-Claude have had to excel at public relations as much as at fine art, since to carry out their epic proposals they must engage the sympathetic attention of countless public and private interests. *Running Fence* (fig. 21.71), a 1972–76 work executed in the California coastal counties of Marin and Sonoma, entailed raising \$3.2 million exclusively through the sale of Christo's preparatory drawings, as well as collages, project-related photographs, books, and films. A significant part of the process also involved persuading the ranchers who owned the land and participating in numerous public hearings and sessions in California courts to overcome local bureaucracies and calm the concerns of environmentalists. Christo and Jeanne-Claude managed sixty-five skilled workers who anchored twenty-four and a half miles (39.4 km) of infrastructure, and then three hundred and fifty students who strung 2,050 panels of white nylon fabric, measuring eighteen-by-sixty-eight feet (5.5 × 20 m), along steel cables and poles. As with the earlier wrapped objects, *Running Fence* made the familiar

visible in a new way. When finally in place, it undulated like a luminous ribbon of light through fields, hills, and valleys (with passages left for cattle, cars, and wildlife), finally tapering off into the Pacific Ocean. *Running Fence* stood for two weeks and then was dismantled, leaving no ecological damage to either flora or fauna.

In 1995 the Christos realized a project that had been in gestation since 1971. They wrapped the Reichstag in Berlin, the traditional seat of the German parliament and a building with a long and violent history (fig. 21.72). Although the project came to fruition well after the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, the Reichstag appealed to Christo, a native of a Soviet-bloc country, as a symbol of the divisions of East and West. The tenacious Christos took on a formidable bureaucracy and marshaled a massive team, including ninety professional climbers, to pull 119,603 square yards (100,003 m²) of silver fabric around the building, resulting in an extraordinary apparition in the urban landscape. As with all of the Christos' projects, the wrapping of the Reichstag, in itself a work of Performance art, was heavily documented each step of the way through myriad photographs.



21.71 Christo and Jeanne-Claude, *Running Fence*, Sonoma and Marin Counties, California, 1972–76 (now removed). 2,050 steel poles set 62' apart; 65,000 yards of white woven synthetic fabric, height 18' (5.5 m), length 24½ miles (39.4 km).



21.72 Christo and Jeanne-Claude, *Wrapped Reichstag, Berlin*, 1971–95 (now removed).

Rotella, Manzoni and Broodthaers

The Italian artist **Mimmo Rotella** (b. 1918) was an early practitioner of the New Realist technique known as *décollage*, which he began to use in 1953 (fig. 21.73). The antithesis of collage, *décollage* is the art of tearing up posters—promotions for films or commercial products—to create new compositions, not in pristine Pop art guise, but torn and tattered with one superimposed image intruding on another. A familiar feature of any urban landscape is the layers of half-torn posters—modern urban palimpsests—that decorate billboards and walls. Rotella stripped these posters, usually promoting Italian films, from city walls and mounted them on canvas only to tear them off layer after layer. “What a thrill, what fantasy, what strange things happen,” he said, “clashing and accumulating between the first and last layer.”

The idiosyncratic art of the Italian **Piero Manzoni** (1933–63) ushered in much of the conceptually based work of the sixties and seventies that would follow his death. A significant event in Manzoni’s career, which was even more short-lived than Klein’s, was the 1957 exhibition in Milan of the French artist’s monochrome paintings. The young Manzoni was an *agent provocateur* in the Dada tradition, as when he signed cans purportedly containing his own excrement. He also made “living sculpture” by signing the bodies of friends or nude models and providing certificates of authenticity, resulting in a kind of “living readymade.”



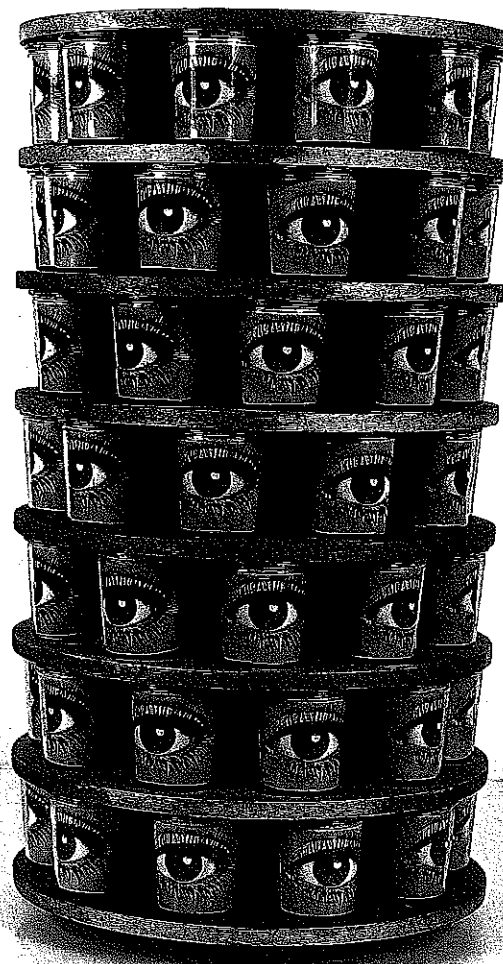
21.73 Mimmo Rotella, *Untitled*, 1963. *Décollage*, 47¼ × 39¾" (120 × 100 cm). Location unknown.



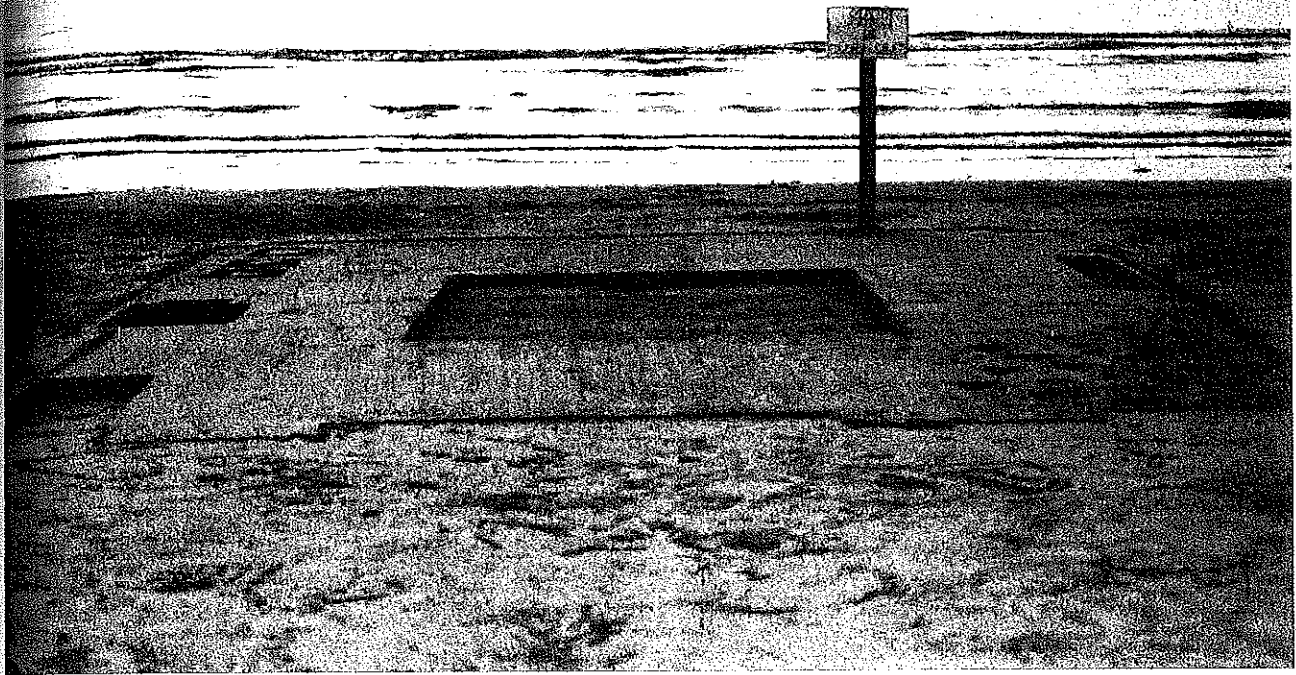
21.74 Piero Manzoni,
Achrome, 1959. Kaolin
on pleated canvas,
55½ × 47¼" (140 ×
120 cm). Musée National
d'Art Moderne, Centre
d'Art et de Culture
Georges Pompidou, Paris.

Manzoni was involved with the Italian group *Arte nucleare* (Nuclear Art), which denounced the idea of personal style and, like latter-day Futurists, called for an art of explosive force in the postnuclear age. Klein also exhibited with this group in Milan in 1957. That year, after seeing Klein's show, Manzoni ceased to make tar-based paintings and began his series of *Achromes*, monochrome works with neutral surfaces that were emphatically devoid of any imagery. The *Achromes* consisted of a whole range of media, including plaster or cotton balls, or pebbles mounted on canvas. *Achrome* of 1959 (fig. 21.74) is reminiscent of the work of an older Italian artist, Fontana (see fig. 588), for Manzoni simply manipulated the canvas by folding it into pleats.

One of the "living sculptures" that Manzoni signed in 1962 was the Belgian Marcel Broodthaers (1924–76), a poet who began to make art objects in 1964. Like many of his contemporaries discussed in this chapter, Broodthaers staged Happenings and drew the materials for his reliefs and assemblages from the artifacts of everyday life. He also



21.75 Marcel
Broodthaers, *La Tour
visuelle*, 1966. Glass,
wood, and magazine
reproductions, 33½ ×
31½" (85 × 80 cm). The
Scottish National Gallery
of Modern Art, Edinburgh.



21.76 Marcel Broodthaers, *Ground plan of Musée D'Art Moderne at Le Coq, on the North Sea coast of Belgium. View of the ground plan of the Section Documentaire, August 1969.*

took part in exhibitions that included work by New Realist or Pop artists. Yet his was a highly individual and hermetic form of expression, one shaped less by the Pop model than by the Surrealist climate that dominated postwar Brussels, thanks largely to the example of his fellow countryman Magritte. A case in point is *La Tour visuelle* (fig. 21.75), a mysterious construction of small glasses covered with magazine reproductions of an eye which recalls Surrealist objects of the thirties.

Broodthaers, who detested commercialism and what he saw as fashion trends in art, accused the New Realists of acquiescing to the “industrial accumulations that our era produces.” Much of his activity centered on Dada-inspired inquiries into the nature of art and subversive alternatives to traditional art institutions. In 1968 he designated his own fictitious *Musée D'Art Moderne* whose various “sections” were manifested in differing venues, from his house to temporary exhibitions. In 1969 he created his virtual museum on a Belgian beach, on the North Sea coast, by tracing its grand plan in the sand. Wearing “museum” hats, he and a colleague set up signs warning visitors not to touch the objects, only to have it all washed away by the tide (fig. 21.76).

Personal Documentaries: The Snapshot Aesthetic in American Photography

As the vernacular sources and the mixed media of Pop artists would suggest, photography had become an even more dominant presence in Western culture by the early sixties. A number of artists discussed in this chapter used photography in their art, including Hamilton, Hockney, Rauschenberg, Warhol, Samaras, Ruscha, and Christo. At the same time, a growing number of young professional photographers were attracted to the common activities and artifacts of everyday life and conveyed them in seemingly casual compositions devoid of pictorial convention and overt commentary. Their goal was not an exquisitely crafted and designed print but rather an authentic, directly communicated image. Photographers of the period tended to deheroicize the mystical pretensions and technical perfection sought by, for instance, Strand, Weston, and White. In place of such elevated straight photography came the “snapshot aesthetic,” with its subject matter derived from the most banal urban and suburban landscapes and its procedures deceptively haphazard.



21.77 Robert Frank, *Political Rally, Chicago, 1956*, From *The Americans*, 1958. Gelatin-silver print.

These new attitudes were most fully realized in the work of the Swiss American **Robert Frank** (b. 1924). Aided by a Guggenheim grant, in 1955 Frank set out on a journey of discovery throughout the United States, using his

35mm Leica camera to take a fresh, detached, but ultimately critical—if not absolutely damning—look at post-war American society consumed by violence, conformity, and racial and social division (fig. 21.77). “Criticism,” said Frank, “can come out of love.” Frank published eighty-three of his photographs, edited from the original 20,000, in book form, first in France and then in the United States as *The Americans* (1959), with an introduction by novelist Jack Kerouac. When judged by conventional standards of the medium, Frank’s photographs look harsh, informal, blurred, and grainy, more like glimpses than concentrated views of a subject. Their individual strengths build within the cumulative effect of the book as a whole, the sequential nature of which led the artist to filmmaking.

In the sixties, *The Americans* became a celebrated icon of American photography and a model for young photographers who shared Frank’s outlook. Frank retained a sequential format in much of his later still photography, including the triptych *Moving Out* from 1984 (fig. 21.78). From the streets of America he turned inward to haunting meditations on his own life, as shown here with depictions of three abandoned rooms from different moments in his past. The text the artist attached to these images includes the words, “Just accept lost feelings—Shadows in empty room—Silence on TV.”

American-born **Gary Winogrand** (1928–84) said he took photographs in order to see what the things that interested him would look like as photographs, implying that his artistic vision was something discovered in the course of making pictures. This partly explains the look of his photographs, which record scenes so bluntly real, so familiar, that they are usually absorbed into the scanning process of normal vision. Winogrand was working as a photojournalist and commercial photographer when



FORGOTTEN POSSESSIONS IN JOHN TURNERS FINAL ROOM. LONG GONE SHADY OF MARRIAGE ON THIRD AVE LEFT LAST LOOK AT MY PARENTS WORNZIMMER IN ZURICH

21.78 Robert Frank, *Moving Out*, 1984. Silver-gelatin developed-out prints with acrylic paint, 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 47 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (50.6 × 121.4 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

21.79 Gary Winogrand, *Peace Demonstration, Central Park, New York, 1969*. Gelatin-silver print.

he encountered the work of Walker Evans and Frank, whose approach to the medium helped shape his mature work. In 1969 he abandoned commercial photography to focus on his personal work and received his second Guggenheim grant, this one to explore the “effect of media on events.” A number of the prints made under the grant eventually formed a catalogue and an exhibition called *Public Relations* (1977). Given the years Winogrand worked on the project (1969–73), it is no surprise that the Vietnam War played a central role in this group of photographs (fig. 21.79). Winogrand forgot little of the aesthetic principles learned while a painting student at Columbia University, for however informal *Peace Demonstration* may appear, as in the tipping of the camera, the resulting image is a marvel of conflicting patterns contained with great rigor.

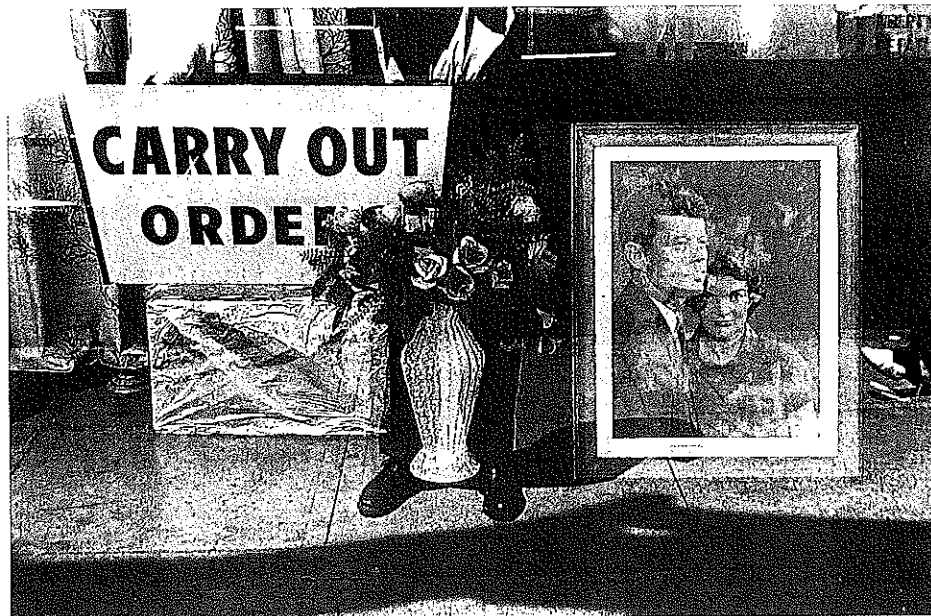
Like Frank, Lee Friedlander (b. 1934) found telling imagery among the vast array of visual accident available in America’s streets, whether it was a jazz band’s procession in a New Orleans neighborhood, or abruptly cropped views of anonymous pedestrians in New York City. Friedlander, who said he wanted to record “the American social landscape and its conditions,” exploited the layered reflections of shop windows, often including his own image in such works in a kind of deliberate appropriation of a



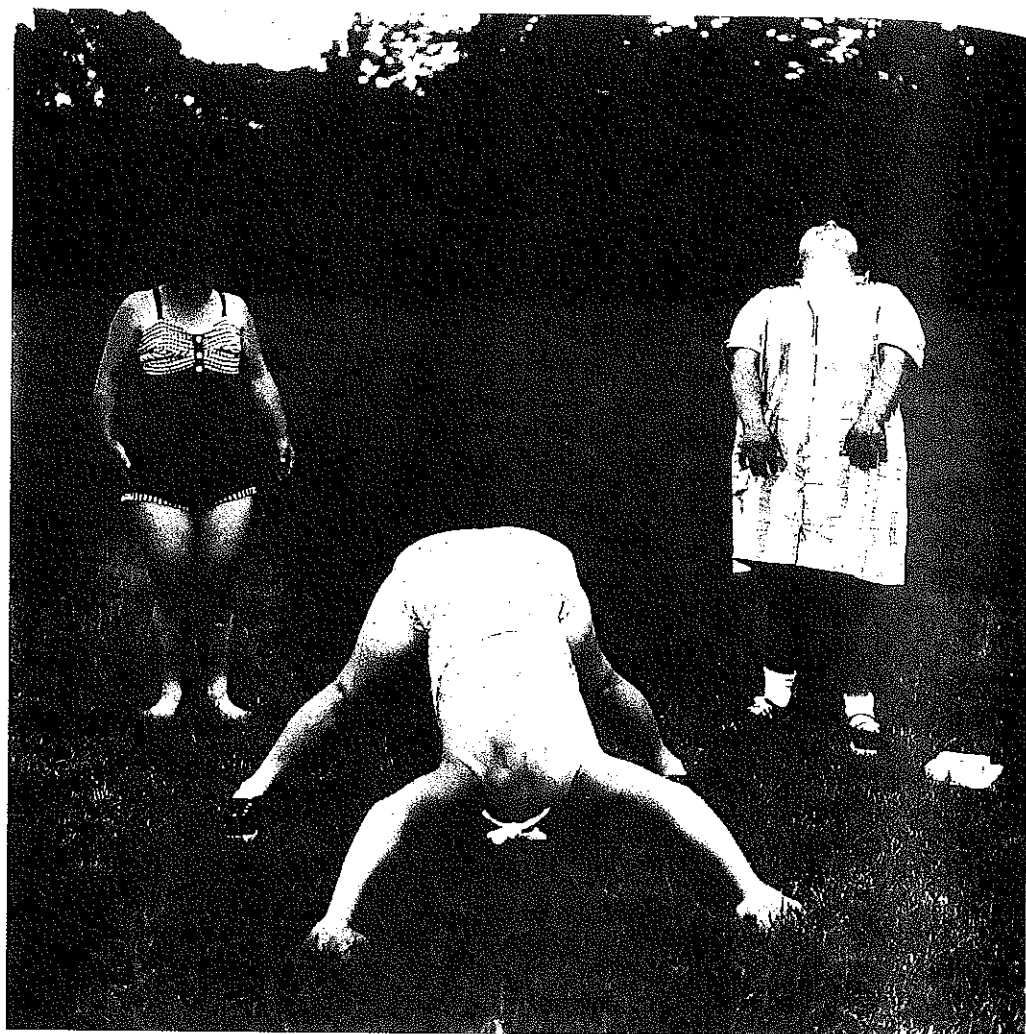
standard mistake of amateur photography (fig. 21.80). Even at their most banal, his photographs, such as this shot of a tawdry restaurant window featuring a portrait of President and Jacqueline Kennedy the year before the assassination, could possess a strange poignancy.

The work of Winogrand and Friedlander was featured in a 1967 exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art called *New Documents*. According to John Szarkowski, the show’s curator, such artists represented a new generation of photographers who were directing “the documentary approach toward more personal ends. Their aim has been not to reform life, but to know it.” Also included in the show was the work of New Yorker Diane Arbus (1923–71), whose startling photographs issued from her enormous curiosity about human nature in all its manifestations. Her primary mentor was Lisette Model

21.80 Lee Friedlander, *Washington, D.C., 1962*. Gelatin-silver print.



21.81 Diane Arbus, *Untitled #6*, 1970–71. Gelatin-silver print, 10 × 10" (25.4 × 25.4 cm).



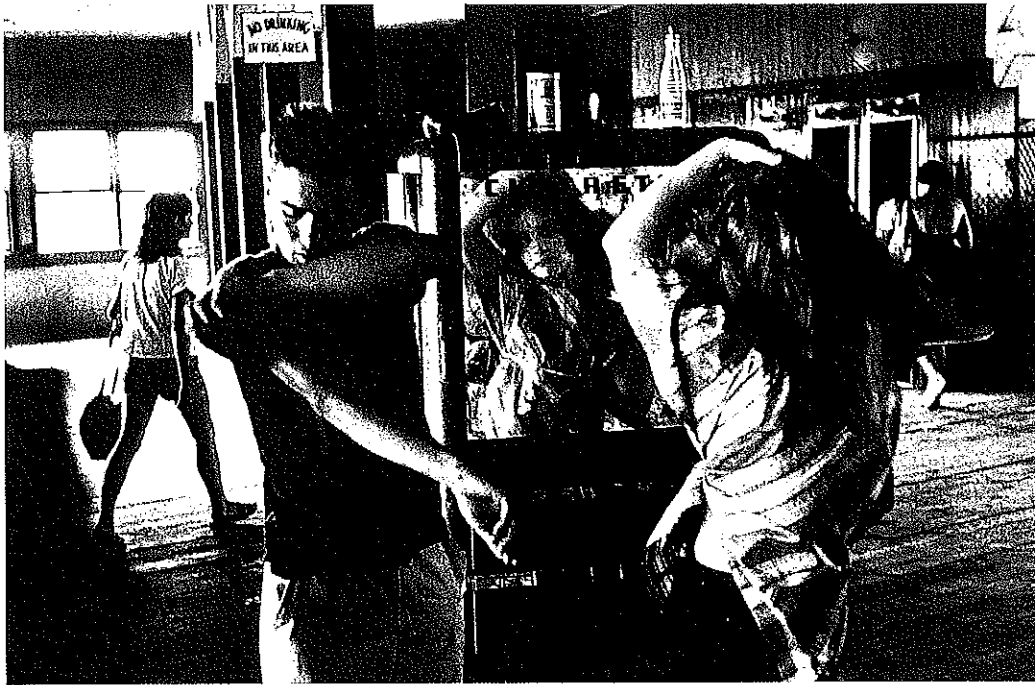
(see fig. 15.67), but Arbus probed the psyche of her subjects even more deeply than her teacher. In the fifties Arbus made grainy 35mm photographs of anonymous subjects whom she encountered in Coney Island or on the streets of New York City.

From 1960 until her death she made photographs for magazines such as *Esquire* and *Harper's Bazaar*. Her best-known photographs are the portraits she made in the sixties, often of traditionally forbidden subjects, of people existing on the fringes of society, including transvestites, nudists, circus performers, or residents in a home for people with mental disabilities. Arbus's ability to gain the trust of her subjects resulted in sometimes painfully honest images (fig. 21.81). Her photographs are simultaneously disquieting and wondrous, for she captured a world at which we are not allowed to stare. As her daughter, Doon Arbus has written, "She was determined to reveal what others had been taught to turn their back on."

Frank's book *The Americans* provided a critical example for New York photographer **Bruce Davidson** (b. 1933), who was working for *Life* magazine by the late fifties. Davidson favored gritty subjects drawn from New York's subways or Coney Island and sometimes worked in series such as one following the teenage members of a Brooklyn

street gang (fig. 21.82). The Brooklyn Gang photo-essay was published in *Esquire* magazine in 1960 with an accompanying text by Norman Mailer extolling the rebelliousness of youth. Davidson's grainy snapshot presents the subject, teenagers primping before vending machines, without criticism. His explanation that he "force-developed the film to increase the harsh contrast that reflected the tension in their lives" reveals a willingness to manipulate the photographic process to convey the drama and pathos of his subject.

The serial arrangements, narrative content, and even the narcissism found in Warhol's art appeared in the photography of **Duane Michals** (b. 1932), who acquired such traits from the same source as Warhol—Madison Avenue, where Michals has worked as a commercial photographer. Convinced that a single image offers little more than the record of a split second cut from the ongoing flow of time, Michals constructs "photostories," or playlets, to expose or symbolize the reality behind our perceptions of it. His 1968 *Paradise Regained* coolly transforms a young couple in a neutral contemporary interior into a version of the biblical Garden of Eden (fig. 21.83). "I use photography," the artist said, "to help me explain my experience to myself. ... I believe in the imagination. What I cannot see is infinitely more important than what I can see."



21.82 Bruce Davidson, *Coney Island* from the series *Brooklyn Gang*, 1959. Gelatin-silver print.



21.83 Duane Michals, *Paradise Regained*, 1968. Series of gelatin-silver prints.

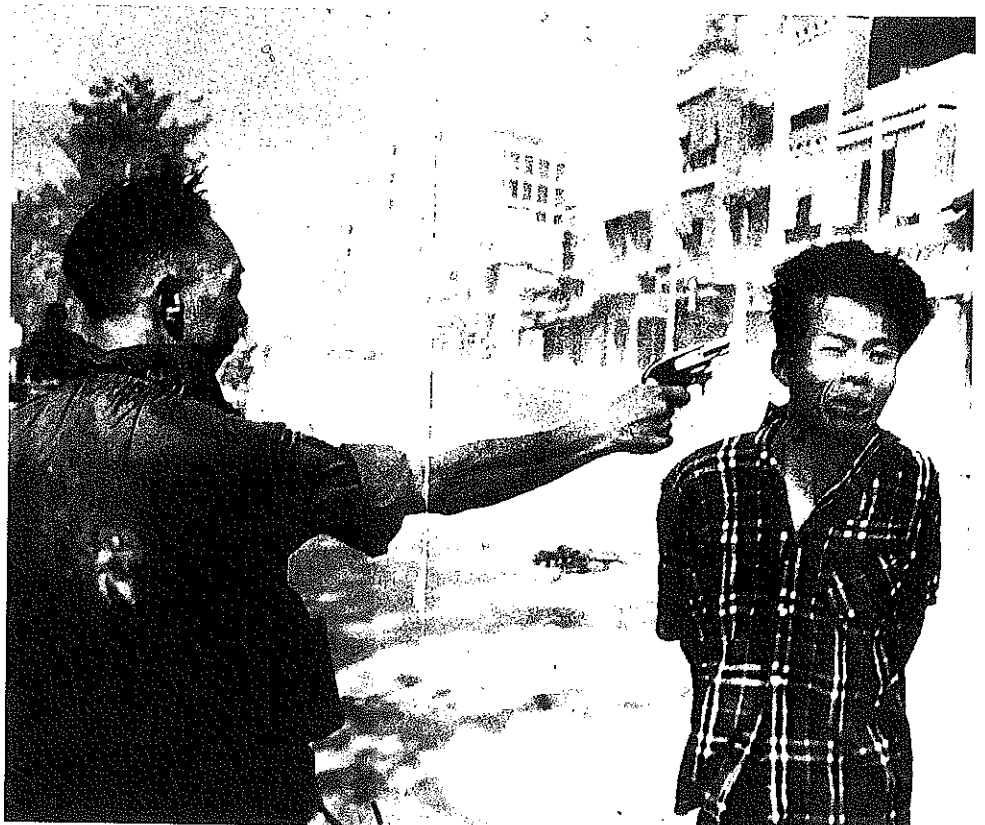
Richard Avedon (b. 1923) spent time as a street photographer both in his native city of New York and also in Italy (fig. 21.84). But he is known for his elaborately staged fashion photographs from the fifties that appeared in *Harper's Bazaar*, a magazine that attracted some of the best talents in photography, including Model, Brandt, Brassai, and Frank. At the age of nineteen Avedon served in the merchant marines, where he had to take thousands of head shots for ID photos, a fact that may have determined a preference in later years for photographing his subjects straight on, at excruciatingly close range, and against a stark white background. Since the early fifties Avedon photographed many of the most celebrated personalities of his era, from Marilyn Monroe to Giacometti to the Beatles. In 1969 he switched from a Rolleiflex to a much less maneuverable eight-by-ten-inch view camera, sometimes printing in a square format. The images that Avedon produced with the larger camera have installed a sense of imposing beauty upon a spectrum of humanity from fashion models to vagrants.

The forties and fifties were the heyday of American photojournalism, with picture magazines such as *Life*, *Harper's*, and *Vogue*, among others, supporting the work of many of photography's leading practitioners. Some of the most memorable photographs of the sixties came from professional photojournalists, including this gripping image from the war in Vietnam that was captured by the Associated Press photographer **Eddie Adams** (b. 1933) (fig. 21.85). So powerful was the response to this photograph of an execution of a suspected communist



21.84 Richard Avedon, *Zazi, Street Performer, Piazza Navona, Rome, July 27, 1946*. Gelatin-silver print.

sympathizer as it was circulated across American newspapers that it served to escalate opposition to the war and to raise questions about the role of photographers who witness violent events and may even encourage them by their presence.



21.85 Eddie Adams, *Vietnamese General Executing Vietcong, 1968*. Gelatin-silver print.

