

Lichtenstein in Process

Katonah Museum of Art

March 29 – June 28, 2009

Dear Educator,

The exhibition *Lichtenstein in Process* reveals the inside story on how this renowned Pop artist developed and created his unique artworks that combined a “low art” comic-book style with “high art” references. Roy Lichtenstein’s initial ideas, drawn in graphite and colored pencils, are presented alongside his more developed and larger collage works. These explorations of color, line, composition, and subject matter highlight his careful consideration for the elements of art as well as the world around him. The exhibition will introduce your students to Pop Art and enrich your classroom studies in visual arts, social studies, and language arts.

KMA’s museum education philosophy is based on the belief that observation and discussion in a group provides models for problem solving, supports acceptance of divergent views, builds confidence in speaking publically, and develops the capacity to learn from one’s visual experience.

Tours will engage students in active discussion intended to enhance visual literacy skills. All tours will explore the following:

- Language of art and design – How has the artist used line, shape, color, pattern, rhythm, scale, perspective, etc.?
- Close observation, description, and analysis – Compare and contrast. How did the artist change his work from drawing to collage? What effects do his changes have?
- Making connections – Where have you seen similar imagery? What does this make you think about? What is happening in this work?
- Personal responses – What words best describe the mood, movement, and feeling of the work?

Your 75-90 minute class visit will include an interactive tour of the exhibition and an art activity in the Learning Center.

To help prepare your students for their Museum visit we have enclosed the following:

- **Teacher’s Guide**
 - **Introduction to the Exhibition**
 - **Glossary of Art Terms**
 - **Three images from the exhibition for discussion with your students**
- **Pre-Visit Activities**
 - **Read About Pop Art and Roy Lichtenstein**
 - **Appropriation Art Activity**
 - **Art Word Search**
 - **Name Tag Sheet** – We request that each student arrive wearing a name tag with their first name clearly legible. You can use a simple printer label or the sheet.

Thank you for choosing the KMA for your class visit.



Karen R. Stein
Director of Education



Drawing for *Still Life with Picasso*,
c. 1973, 8 ¼ x 5 1/16 inches

Lichtenstein in Process

at the Katonah Museum of Art
March 29 - June 28, 2009



Collage for *Still Life with Picasso*,
1973, 28 ½ x 21 inches

“The art of today is all around us.” Roy Lichtenstein

Though many may be familiar with the work of renowned American Pop artist, Roy Lichtenstein, this exhibition, comprised of 63 works on paper created between 1973 and 1997, offers visitors a unique opportunity to see the artists’ original drawings and collages.

The exhibition, organized in collaboration with the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, New York, seeks to reveal Lichtenstein’s creative process and artistic evolution during the 1970s, ‘80s, and ‘90s. The exhibition, for the first time, presents his initial ideas, which can be traced in his small sketches, drawings and original sketchbooks. More rapid in execution, smaller in format, more intimate in nature, and of a looser style, they are shown alongside the resulting collages in sequence, which are larger in size and more defined and precise, demonstrating the evolution of this process.

FROM THE FORWARD TO THE *LICHTENSTEIN IN PROCESS* CATALOGUE

Roy Lichtenstein’s art, as clear as it appears, can be curiously elusive. I think we can now see that Roy had a public face but a larger, more private world. As genial as he was, beneath that calm quirky exterior was steely resolve, absolute ambition, and a creative mind obsessed with working out questions about what was art, what made it right, how could he make it in our time and place with the artifices of art history and criticism and, finally, with the wonders of the eye, mind, and memory.

Lichtenstein’s art is both a critique and an homage infused with autobiographical content and intention. All this eventually subverts our thinking into *his* terms more than our own. Beneath the forceful colors and lines there is an artist pushing the limits and conventions of visual culture and working against our own comfortable understanding.

The finished, final, large-scale works look so effortless, complete, impersonal and non-handmade that the viewer rarely thinks of how they got to be that way. This exhibition offers a rare opportunity to view some of Lichtenstein’s evolutionary, obscured creative process. I think the artist’s personal sourcebooks, clippings, sketchbooks, and many, many extant drawings and collages offer some of the best clues to his thoughts and process, plus his hand, touch and eye. In these works he is planning and scheming, musing on composition and source, usually on a small sketchbook sheet. Here we do see the selective, editorial artist at work, effecting his trademark transformation of a known or given form or even a form he has thought up “freehand” into something uniquely his own, while pushing at the boundaries or capabilities of art media.

We’ve been able to document a life’s *oeuvre* of about three thousand sketches, drawings, and collages dating between the years 1949 to 1997. In them we can infer a kind of “process” story, a private growth, an evolution into a more public product. We have focused the core of this exhibition on sequences from the 1970s to the 1990s of preliminary sketches that then led to collages, just before the more finished paintings, prints or sculptures. Such series give a sense of the personal hand and spirit of the artist. And then, we have included one of the “*grand finales*” – a completed painting – in its almost unimaginable and colorful large scale and high, technically brilliant finish.

Superficially, some of the exhibition’s works are “inside” depictions, suggesting an interior or a studio. The other works set figures or things “outside,” in fictive landscape. But, in the final analysis, everything Roy Lichtenstein did was always very much *inside* his own creative intelligence.

Jack Cowart
Executive Director, Roy Lichtenstein Foundation

LICHTENSTEIN IN PROCESS

GLOSSARY OF ART TERMS

Abstract (adj.): Simplified into lines, colors, and shapes

Appropriate (v): The act of borrowing images or forms to create something new

Balance (n): The placement of elements of design, such as colors and forms, in such a manner as to produce a pleasing or harmonious whole.

Benday dots (n): Named after American printer Benjamin Day (1838 – 1916). A dot/grid system used in commercial screen printing to create tones or shades of color. Tones can be changed by changing the color, number, and size of the dots. Today, our computers use pixels in a similar way.

Collage (n): Artwork made using a combination of different materials. Roy Lichtenstein often started his works with a drawing, then made a larger collage version, and finally created his a painting or print.

Color scheme (n): A group of colors an artist purposefully chooses to use. Different color combinations can create a variety of moods such as peaceful, active, or discordant. Lichtenstein frequently used black, white, and primary colors.

Comic/Cartoon style (n): A bold, simplified, sometimes humorous drawing for a newspaper, magazine, or comic book.

Composition (n): The organization, design or placement of individual elements in a work of art

Context (n): The usual or expected place where something can be seen. Pop artists took everyday images of objects out of their usual context and turned them into works of art.

Contour line (n): A dark line that outlines important shapes. Contour lines are often seen in cartoons and coloring books.

Editing/Cropping (v): Removing unnecessary spaces or shapes from a picture or photo. Artists such as Roy Lichtenstein edited and cropped images to help viewers focus on the most important features and ideas.

Pop art (n): An art style, developed in the 1960s, which took inspiration from objects and pictures found in everyday life. Pop artists enlarged their images to make a statement about the role of mass-marketing and media in our lives. Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, and Claes Oldenburg were three of the most famous Pop artists.

Scale (n): A consideration of the size of one object relative to another object

Symmetry (n): The same arrangement of parts on both sides of a line, point, or page

Text balloon (n): The area of a cartoon that contains words

ART WORD SEARCH

W U Y B Y E L A C S V N Q P O P
T K T T A A T Q S B T S G X Z N
A Q G L X L P T M O A I F S U F
N A N V I X L P I E K L Y J L Z
Y C N V C N H O R W G L A G M S
T O V D O C E Y O O S A H N F A
X M O I N O A O R N P G L A C Q
E P C S T L C R T T T R F L F E
T O G T E O J R T C E I I G O Z
N S C O X R K S O O A M A A B C
M I O D T Y K Z B P O R M Z T F
M T N T V A P H L V P N T Y X E
W I T Y M D K P G V A I V S S Q
Q O O R T N D W Y G L D N K B I
K N U I A E V M X H J S B G P A
A D R J N B Z Y B F S E L Y T S

abstract
appropriate
art
balance
balloon
benday
cartoon

collage
color
composition
context
contour
cropping
dots

line
pop
scale
style
symmetry
text



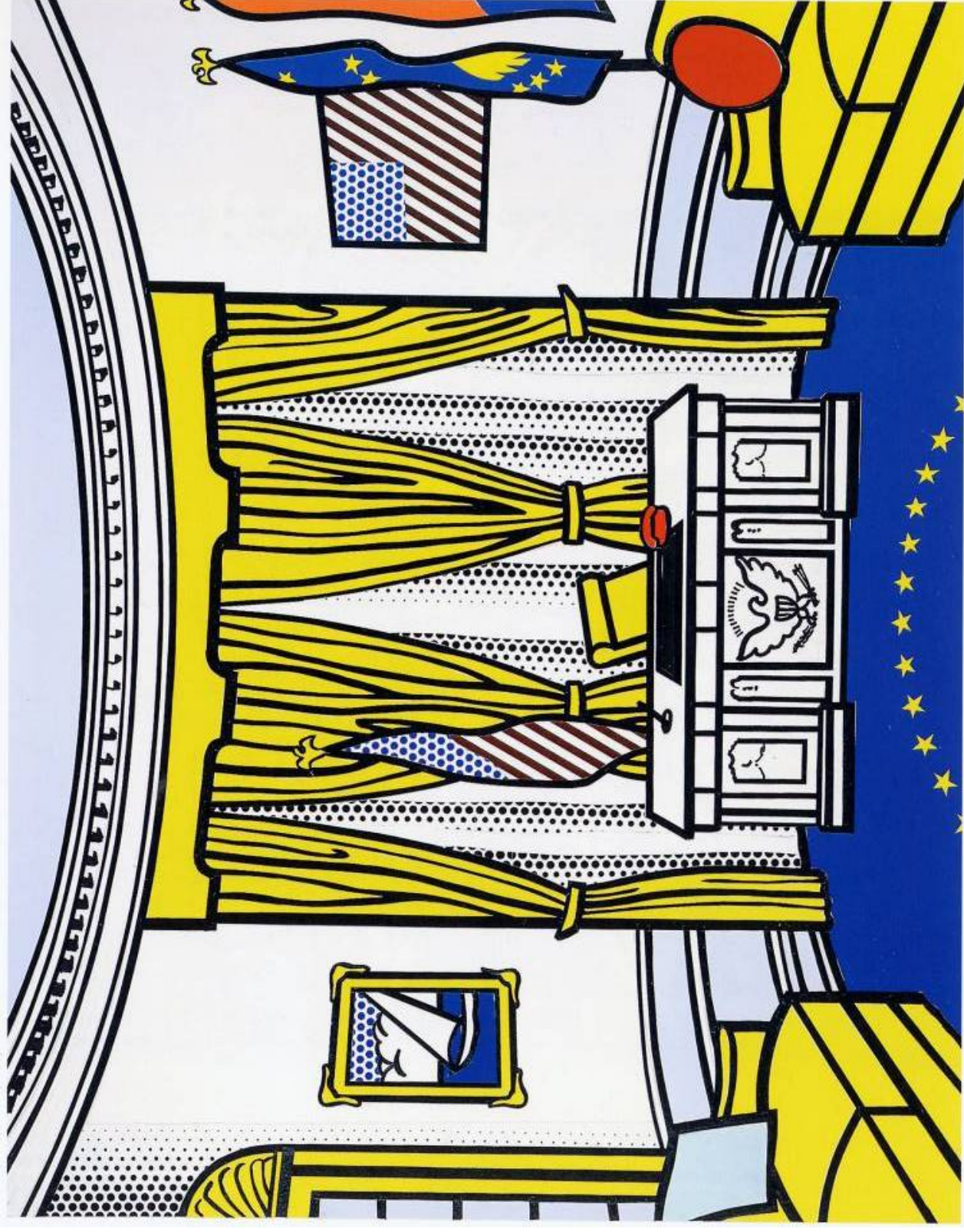
© ROY LICHTENSTEIN 1973

LICHTENSTEIN'S PROCESS: COLOR, PATTERN, LINE, SHAPE

Roy Lichtenstein shows us his thoughts on paper.

Can you name all the things that he changed from his drawing to his collage? (Look carefully!)

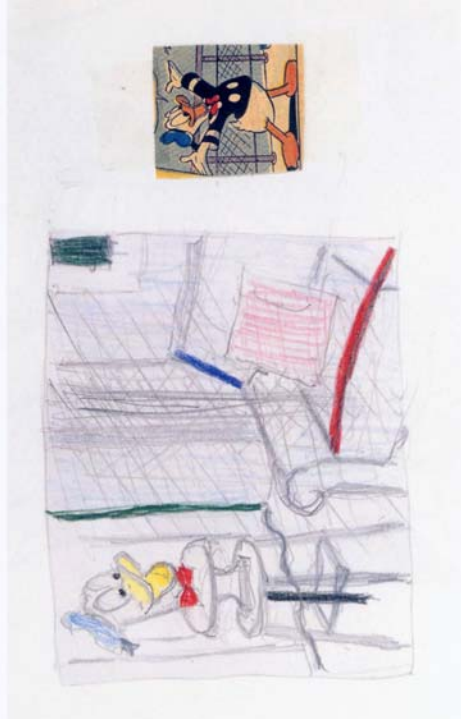
Left: Drawing for Still Life, 1973, 8 1/4 by 5 inches Right: Collage for Still Life, 1973, 35 5/8 by 24 1/2 inches



LICHTENSTEIN'S PROCESS: COMPOSITION

Artists think about line, color, and shape when creating their artworks. In *Oval Office II*, Lichtenstein has used these elements to create symmetry and balance. Name the shapes that you see. Where are they placed to create balance? What colors do you see? How are the colors used for balance? How would you describe the lines in *Oval Office II*? If you were sitting in this room, how would you feel?

Collage for *Oval Office II*, 1992, 29 1/2 x 37 1/2 inches



LICHTENSTEIN'S PROCESS: INSPIRATION FROM THE COMICS

Roy Lichtenstein liked to start his art with something familiar to everyone, like the comics. He believed this very popular graphic form would draw your interest. Lichtenstein was also fascinated by the printing techniques used in the 1960s for producing comics. This printing technique used Benday dots to create tones. Lichtenstein used Benday dots for his artwork too.



Where do you see the Benday dots in this artwork? What happens when the size of the dots change?

What else do you notice about this picture?

Left: Collage for Virtual Interior: Portrait of a Duck, 1995, Tape, painted and printed paper on board
Right: Drawing for Virtual Interior: Portrait of a Duck, 1995,, Graphite and colored pencils on paper

Read about . . .

Pop Art

Pop Art is short for Popular Art. Pop Art started in America during the 1950s. Before Pop Art, many artists painted in the style called Abstract Expressionism. This type of art did not paint recognizable things; instead brushstrokes and colors were used to express artists' moods and feelings. Pop artists wanted to represent what they saw around them. They took their inspiration from popular culture, for example cartoon characters, supermarket items, and logos; things that everyone could recognize. The artists of the Pop Art movement questioned the boundaries between art and things in every day life. Pop art confused what people considered "High" or fine art and "Low" or commercial art because the artists used every day objects as art. Their art is easy to recognize which made it appealing to everyone. Two of the most famous artists of this movement are Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein.



Roy Lichtenstein

Roy Lichtenstein was born in New York City in 1923. As a young boy Roy was interested in many things. At first he thought he was going to be a scientist but by the time he was fifteen he knew he wanted to be an artist. During WWII, Lichtenstein was drafted into the army and was deployed all around the world. While he was stationed in Paris, France he visited many museums and saw paintings by artist such as Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee, and Paul Cezanne. These and many other artists were a strong influence on his early paintings. During the 1960s Lichtenstein began to be inspired by comic books. It is easy to see the influence of comic books in Lichtenstein's works. You can find the simple lines, bold colors, Benday dots, and even thought bubbles typical of comic books represented in his drawings and paintings. He said "All my art is in some way about other art, even if the other art is cartoons." Roy Lichtenstein attempted to make his paintings look mechanical rather than painted by hand; he wanted to hide his brush strokes. Eventually he moved from comic books to advertisements for inspiration. By the time Roy Lichtenstein died in 1997 he had become a famous artist with many paintings in museums all around the world.



Henri Matisse, *Goldfish*, 1912

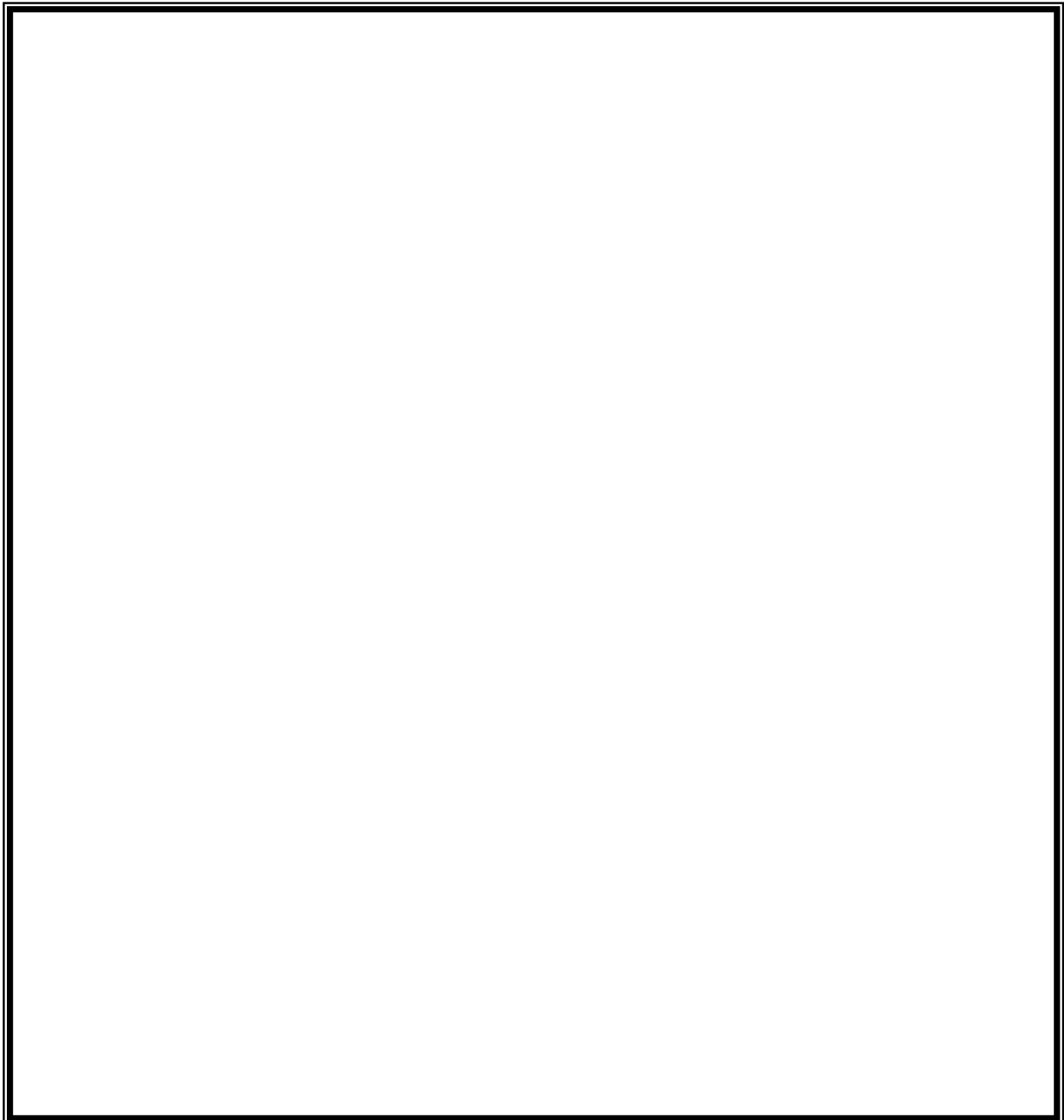


Roy Lichtenstein, *Collage for Still Life*, 1973

Lichtenstein in Process Pre-Visit Activity: Appropriation

Appropriate: To borrow from other sources.

Lichtenstein was inspired by other artworks and often borrowed elements that he incorporated into his own art. What did he use from Henri Matisse's *Painting*? What did he change? Create your own work of art that borrows from these famous examples. Use your own style, colors, patterns, etc.



Nametag Activity Sheet: *Lichtenstein in Process*

Pop artist Roy Lichtenstein used the comic book style in his art. On your visit to the Katonah Museum of Art you will see his amazing work. In the space below, write your name, decorate, and cut out the word bubble. Wear these nametags on your visit.

