

LICHTENSTEIN

Janis Hendrickson



TASCHEN

Taschen
LICHTENSTEIN (I) #BASICART

Janis Hendrickson

BA

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In evidenza

Le opere di uno degli artisti che hanno spalancato le porte ad una nuova epoca dell'arte americana, dando vita alla Pop Art, raccolte in questa monografia, nella collana Basic Art.

La Pop Star

Whaam!

L'artista **Roy Lichtenstein** (1923–1997) spalancò le porte a una nuova epoca dell'arte americana, irrompendo sulla scena nei tardi anni Cinquanta in una New York dominata dall'espressionismo astratto. Aggiornò il vocabolario dell'arte con le voci di una nuova era.

Grazie allo stile pionieristico che mescolava tecniche di produzione industriale e immagini frivole, legate al quotidiano, come **i fumetti e le pubblicità**, Lichtenstein si unì alla schiera di artisti contemporanei, tra cui Andy Warhol e James Rosenquist, che **rappresentavano e satirizzavano la cultura mediatica e consumistica americana**. In diverse opere, come *Look, Mickey!* (1961), *Drowning Girl* (1963) e *Whaam!* (1963), l'artista si servì delle tecniche di produzione di massa, in particolare del **metodo di stampa a puntini Ben-Day**, per creare **un effetto esplosivo e lo stile pixellato** che lo contraddistinguono.

Questa fedele introduzione ripercorre la vita e le opere di Lichtenstein, dalle prime affermazioni pop fino alle "pennellate" in risposta all'espressionismo astratto e le reinterpretazioni di capolavori contemporanei, tipici delle ultime fasi della sua carriera. Il volume mette in luce **il ruolo fondamentale che Lichtenstein ricoprì nel modernismo di metà secolo e le modalità con cui riuscì a criticare e, al contempo, documentare l'America del Novecento tramite le sue opere**.

L'autore:

Janis Hendrickson ha studiato Storia dell'arte presso lo Smith College, addottorandosi ad Amburgo sotto la guida di Martin Warnke. Attualmente è scrittrice e curatrice d'arte.

La collana:

Ciascun volume della collana Basic Art di TASCHEN comprende:

- Una sintesi dettagliata che ripercorre cronologicamente la vita e l'opera dell'artista, soffermandosi sulla sua importanza a livello storico e culturale
- Una biografia concisa
- Circa 100 illustrazioni a colori con didascalie esplicative

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As I Opened Fire, 1964
 Magna on canvas, three panels,
 67 x 141.5 cm each (26 x 56 in.)
 Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum

work, but Lichtenstein went one step further and cited actual commercial processes of depiction and reproduction. He broke through the traditional barrier of definition and crossed over into dangerous territory. In contrast to Castell's foresighted collectors, most of the major critics reacted angrily against his work.

Still, Lichtenstein did not exactly support the cause of commercial art, even if he admired certain aspects of it. Pop Art is not affirmative as much as diagnostic. For example, when Lichtenstein brings truncated parts of human anatomies into play with consumer objects, the viewer does not feel herself or himself "being sold" a new idea. One such especially funny image is the double-panel work, *Step-on Gun with Leg* (1960; ill. p. 30), which might well be taken from a graphic instruction sheet that came with a new waste-bin. A petite female lower leg enters the picture at a diagonal from the left. A checked skirt - the checks do not behave as if they were printed on soft

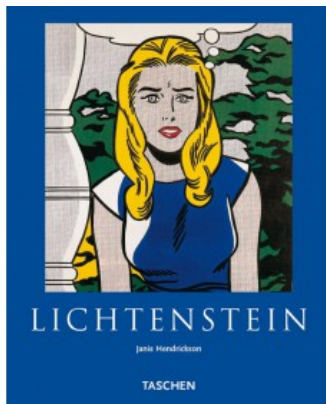


material - primly covers the knee, while the dainty high-heeled shoe - not at all appropriate for housework - reaches out for the bin's pedal. The "story" continues on the second panel, which seems at first to be merely a repetition of the first. Yet a barely distinguishable pressure of the lady-like foot brings about the result: an opened bin into which rubbish or nappies could simply disappear. The flowers decorating the bin suggest an industrially achieved hygienic freshness, most in keeping with the idea that it is no longer necessary to come into actual contact with a waste bin in order to open it. The pretty artifice and mannered daintiness of the situation is absurd. The main actor, one finally realizes, is not the woman who is attached to the leg, but the little bin she is being used to demonstrate. Several of Lichtenstein's early works ironically deal with the way women are used as an extension of the household appliance. It was a theme that the English Pop artist Richard Hamilton had already touched upon in his epoch-making

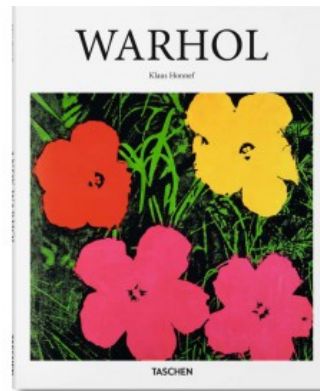
"A minor purpose of my war paintings is to put military aggressiveness in an absurd light. My personal opinion is that much of our foreign policy has been unbelievably terrifying, but this is not what my work is about and I don't want to capitalize on this popular position. My work is more about our American definition of images and visual communication."
 - ROY LICHTENSTEIN

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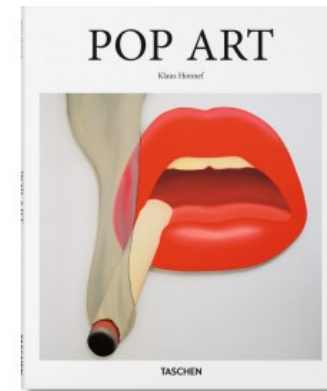
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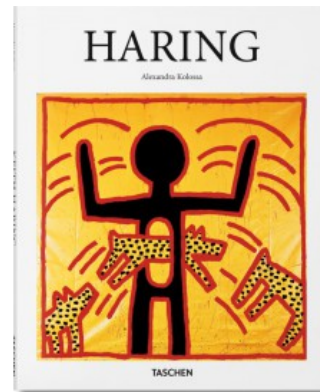
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