

MashUp:

The Birth of Modern Culture

3rd Floor

The Post-War: Cut, Copy and Quotation in the Age of Mass Media



Andy Warhol, *Marilyn*, 1967
silkscreen print on paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Permanent Collection

TEACHER'S STUDY GUIDE
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Artgallery

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Vancouver Art Gallery

Teacher's Guide for School Programs

Taking over all four floors of the Vancouver Art Gallery, the groundbreaking exhibition *MashUp* will offer an international survey of mashup culture, and illustrate how it has now become one of the dominant forms of creativity in the early 21st century. This tour will focus on the 3rd floor of the exhibition:

The Post-War: Cut, Copy and Quotation in the Age of Mass Media

In the years following the Second World War, an explosion of mass marketing for consumer goods, cheap printing technologies and broadcast television supported a second wave of mashup culture shaped by Pop art, New Realism and early new media art seen in the work of Robert Rauschenberg, Andy Warhol, Jacques Villeglé and Dara Birnbaum. Emerging from the dynamic increase of images and objects, and their wide public circulation, the mashup method spread rapidly to diverse fields of cultural production, generating new modes of music, architecture, art, design, film and literature.

DEAR TEACHER:

This guide will assist you in preparing for your tour of the exhibition *MashUp: The Birth of Modern Culture – 3rd Floor*. It also provides follow-up activities to facilitate discussion after your Gallery visit. Engaging in the suggested activities before and after your visit will reinforce ideas generated by the tour and build continuity between the Gallery experience and your ongoing work in the classroom. Most activities require few materials and can be adapted easily to the age, grade level and needs of your students. Underlined words in this guide are defined in the Vocabulary section.

The tour of *MashUp: The Birth of Modern Culture – 3rd Floor* has three main goals:

- to introduce students to the work of post-war modern artists,
- to consider diverse artistic traditions and disciplines,
- to explore individual artworks within historical, social and cultural contexts.

THE EXHIBITION:

MashUp: The Birth of Modern Culture – 3rd Floor

In the years following World War II, an explosion of mass-produced consumer goods, dynamic marketing and the widespread broadcasts of radio and television produced a second wave of mashup culture that expanded and escalated globally and across media.

Mashup methodologies—inspired by pre-war collage, assemblage and the readymade—spread rapidly to different areas of cultural production, initiating new modes of music, architecture, art, design, film and literature. Artists such as Andy Warhol and Robert Rauschenberg not only appropriated advertising and popular culture for their imagery, but also replicated the production processes of contemporary manufacturing. The use of found film footage and montage also became popular in this period, as artists such as Dara Birnbaum reconfigured images of mass media to critique modern culture in a dynamic way. In music, advances in multi-track technology spawned dub music, a new remix style that continues to have a profound influence on music production today.

With their interest in consumer goods, advertising and mass media imagery, post-war artists radically transformed both the meaning and process of art making, increasingly blurring the line between art and life. By absorbing aspects of commercial culture into their practices, these artists created works that were both products and critiques of the post-industrial society from which they emerged.

ARTISTS' BACKGROUND

The following background information highlights some of the artists whose work may be explored in the school tour.

Barbara Kruger (b. 1945)

Born in Newark, New Jersey, on January 26, 1945, Barbara Kruger is an American conceptual artist who challenges cultural assumptions by manipulating images and text in her photographic compositions. With a short declarative statement, she synthesizes a critique about society, the economy, politics, gender and culture.

Kruger attended Syracuse University (New York) and continued her training in 1966 at New York City's Parsons School of Design. Best known for laying aggressively direct slogans over black-and-white photographs that she finds in magazines, Kruger developed a visual language that was strongly influenced by her early work as a graphic designer at magazines including *House and Garden*, *Mademoiselle* and *Aperture*. Informed by feminism, Kruger's work critiques consumerism and material culture, and has appeared on billboards, bus cards and posters, at train station platforms, public parks and other public spaces. In recent years, she has extended her practice, creating site-specific installations in galleries and museums consisting of vinyl lettering, video, film, audio and projection. In the Vancouver Art Gallery installation, the walls, floors and ceilings are covered with images and texts, which engulf the viewer. Kruger's work appears in the permanent collections of several major museums, including the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Museum of Modern Art, both in New York City.

Lee "Scratch" Perry (b. 1936)

A towering figure in Jamaican reggae music, Lee "Scratch" Perry is a producer, mixer and songwriter recognized as a major pioneer in the development of dub music, a subgenre of reggae. Born in Kendal, Jamaica in 1936, Perry began his musical career in the late 1950's as a record seller and went on to record and produce with various labels. In 1968, Perry formed his own label called Upsetter Records and in 1973 built a studio in his backyard called The Black Ark. With his own studio at his disposal, Perry's productions became more inventive, as he had free reign over the music he produced. Virtually everything Perry recorded in The Black Ark was done using basic recording equipment in unique ways. Various studio effects and remixing were used to create new instrumental and vocal versions of existing reggae tracks, allowing listeners to experience the music in an entirely different way.

Through the 1970's, Perry released an astounding amount of work, many of which became significant Jamaican and U.K. hits. This solidified his growing reputation as a major force in reggae music, and soon Perry became known throughout the industry for his innovative production techniques as well as his eccentric character. Over the years Perry has worked with Bob Marley and the Wailers, the Congos, and Max Romeo among numerous notable musicians. He pushed the limits of reggae music and his work stands out as a high point in reggae history. In 2003, Perry won a Grammy for Best Reggae Album. In 2004, Rolling Stone ranked Perry #100 on their list of the 100 Greatest Artists of All Time. Perry has remained behind the mixing desk producing new material up until today.

Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008)

Robert Rauschenberg, born in Texas in 1925, imagined he would grow up to become a minister, and later a pharmacist. It was only when he was in the US Marines in his twenties that he realized he was good at drawing, and developed an interest in art. He studied art in Paris, which disappointed him,

and in the United States, where he was inspired by the artistic revolutions of the contemporary dance and music scene.

Rauschenberg experimented with non-traditional art-making materials; he used house paint on canvas, inked the wheel of a car and ran it over paper to create a drawing, and began incorporating found objects into his paintings. In the 1960s, he started working with silkscreen prints, which had previously only been used in commercial applications. He collaged newspaper and magazine images into his photo-silkscreens layered with painted brushstrokes on various surfaces. He worked with photography, papermaking and performance art during his long and influential career as an artist. Rauschenberg became one of the most prominent and respected artists of his generation, particularly known for his work as a Pop artist. He lived in New York for most of his life, then in his later years moved to Florida, where he died in 2008.

Andy Warhol (1928–1987)

Andy Warhol is considered the creator of the Pop art movement in the United States in the 1960s. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, he studied as a commercial artist. On graduation in 1949 he went to New York, where he worked as an illustrator for *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar* and other magazines. He soon became one of New York's most successful commercial illustrators. In 1962 he started making brightly coloured multiple silkscreen prints of widely familiar figures such as Marilyn Monroe and the Chinese leader Mao Tse-tung. He also explored disturbing mass-viewed images such as a newspaper photo of an electric chair, and a graphic recording of the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Warhol was renowned for blurring the lines between fine art and the commercial arts applied in producing magazine illustrations, comic books, record albums and advertising campaigns. He mass-produced his own art in a warehouse space that he named The Factory in 1962. In this art and filmmaking studio, he employed "art workers" to mass-produce prints, posters and shoes that he had designed, and to create more than 300 films. At a time when fine art was seen as separate from commercial pursuits, Warhol challenged the art world to consider the relationship between art, everyday life and the mass production of commercial images. Some of his best-known works are the brightly coloured multiple silkscreen prints of products such as celebrities and Campbell's soup cans. These works were the subject of much debate in the art world, bringing both Warhol and Pop art into the national spotlight for the first time. Warhol died in New York City in 1987.

Jacques Villeglé (b. 1926)

Jacques Villeglé was born Jacques Mahé de la Villeglé in 1926, in Brittany, France. He is a mixed-media artist and affichiste (poster artist) famous for his décollage with ripped posters. Villeglé's early works rejected imagery to concentrate on typography, but in the 1960s he started to focus more on colours and shapes. With other artists he launched the New Realist movement, which appropriated consumer products very much like the Pop art movement in the United States. He found weathered and ripped advertising posters in public places, removed them from their billboards and glued them onto canvas. This décollage technique made the works a witness of time passing by, offering fragmented insights into society's passing concerns and tastes, and sharpening his primary focus on the anonymous and on remnants of consumer society. A keen observer of urban art, Villeglé never wavered from his appropriation technique, and many of his works bear the names of the streets where the posters were collected. His artworks refer to capitalism, literature, cinema, technology and social protest. Villeglé had a major retrospective at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 2008.

Joyce Wieland (1930–1998)

Wieland was born in Toronto, where she studied art at Central Technical School. In 1960 she had her first solo exhibition at the Isaacs Gallery, where she gained instant attention as the only contemporary female artist in Canada represented by a commercial gallery. A self-described "cultural

activist," she is best known for celebrating Canadian national identity and bringing a feminist sensibility to her art in the predominantly male art culture of the time.

Wieland's early work was clearly informed by Abstract Expressionism, but she soon began moving in the direction of Pop, often dealing with female imagery. In 1963 she moved to New York, where she found the acceptance and acclaim as an artist that she had not received from her peers in Canada. She also became aware of herself as quintessentially Canadian, which had a profound and lasting effect on the subject matter of her artwork. She challenged the traditional materials of high art, such as oil painting and bronze sculpture, and worked in many media from printmaking to soft sculpture to collage, consciously employing traditional female handicrafts such as knitting and quilting.

In the late 1960s and '70s. Wieland devoted herself to her work in experimental film, for which she became well known. In the 1980s she returned to painting and more figurative imagery. Her retrospective at the National Gallery in 1971 was its first ever for a woman artist. Wieland's prolific career lasted more than thirty years and established her as an icon of Canadian art history. She is credited with introducing ideas and breaking conventions that contributed significantly to the development of contemporary art in Canada. She died on June 27, 1998.

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: About the Artists (intermediate and secondary students)

Objective:

Students read, research and share information about some of the artists represented in *MashUp: The Birth of Modern Culture – 3rd Floor*.

Materials:

- ❑ writing materials
- ❑ Internet. Some useful websites:
www.artcyclopedia.com
www.wikipedia.com
- ❑ Artist Information Sheet (p. 9) and Student Worksheet (p. 10)

Process:

1. Divide the students into eight groups. Cut up the Artist Information Sheet (p. 9) and assign one artist to each group.
2. Give each group a copy of the Student Worksheet (p. 10) and ask them to transfer the information about their artist to the appropriate box.
3. Have students figure out what they need to know to complete the section on their artist, and search the Internet, either at home or at school. Older students can find more information; younger students, just the basics.
4. Ask each group to find/copy/sketch a piece of work by each artist on a separate piece of paper. Do not label with the artist's name or any other information.
5. Have each group present the information on their artist while the rest of the class adds the information to their worksheets.
6. After the presentations, lay out the images and have the class guess which image is by which artist.

Conclusion:

Discuss:

- What were some of the most interesting things that students learned or discovered?
- Which artists and/or kinds of artwork made students curious about seeing the actual work in the exhibition?
- Are there any artists, ways of working or ideas that the students would like to find out more about?

Artist Information Sheet

Barbara Kruger (b. 1945)

- Born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1945
- Best known for layering words and direct slogans over black-and-white photographs taken from magazines
- Critiques gender, politics, culture and other aspects of society
- Her work has appeared on billboards, bus cards, posters, public spaces, museums and galleries

Lee “Scratch” Perry (b. 1936)

- Born in Kendal, Jamaica in 1936
- A producer, mixer and songwriter
- Recognized as a major pioneer in the development of dub music
- Used basic recording equipment in innovative and unique ways
- He pushed limits of reggae music and his work stands out as a high point in reggae history

Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008)

- Born in Texas in 1925, died in Florida in 2008
- Used ideas from everyday life in his work as a Pop artist
- Known for his mixed-media artworks and silkscreen prints
- Worked with photography, papermaking and performance art during his long and influential career as an artist

Andy Warhol (1928–1987)

- Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1928, died in New York City in 1987
- Considered the creator of the Pop art movement in the United States in the 1960s
- Mass-produced images from everyday life in a warehouse studio he called The Factory
- Was renowned for blurring the lines between fine art and the commercial arts

Jacques Villeglé (b. 1926) [This artist out of alpha order – OK? –MS]

- Born in Brittany, France, in 1926
- French mixed-media artist and poster artist famous for his work with ripped posters
- His works often refer to capitalism, literature, cinema, technology and social protest
- He had a major retrospective at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 2008

Joyce Wieland (1930–1998)

- Born in Toronto in 1930, died in Toronto in 1998
- Worked in many media, from painting and printmaking to soft sculpture to collage, purposely employing more traditionally female handicrafts such as knitting, sewing and quilting
- Canadian identity had a profound and lasting effect on her subject matter
- Best known for celebrating Canadian identity and bringing a feminist sensibility to her art in the predominantly male art culture of her time
- Her retrospective at the National Gallery in 1971 was its first ever for a woman artist

Student Worksheet

	Personal Information	Type of Art	Known for	An Artwork
Barbara Kruger				
Lee "Scratch" Perry				
Robert Rauschenberg				
Andy Warhol				
Jacques Villeglé				
Joyce Wieland				

PRE- or POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: Object Storyboard (adaptable to all levels)

Objective: Students create a scene or storyboard using a series of objects.

Discussion:

While living in New York in the 1960s, Joyce Wieland opened up her art practice to include a range of new materials and media. For example, she began making sculptural assemblages using found objects and discarded boxes. Influenced by American Pop culture and filmmaking, she divided each box into frames that show a sequence of events, allowing the viewer to construct a story. The themes evoked by the individual objects suggest travel, tragedy, love and the passage of time.

Materials:

- one or more shoe boxes per student
- various small objects, old toys, etc.
- old magazines, wallpaper, fabric
- scissors, glue or reusable adhesive such as Blu Tack

Process:

1. Have students look at Joyce Wieland's works, such as *Cooling Room No. 1* or *Young Woman's Blues* (see images on p. 14). What do they notice? What story do they think Wieland is trying to tell?
2. Discuss how a series of objects can tell a story. Explain the concept of a storyboard to the students:
 - A **storyboard** is a series of illustrations or images displayed in sequence for the purpose of pre-visualizing and planning a motion picture, animation, motion graphic or interactive media sequence.
3. If materials are available at school, have students choose a series of objects to create a scene that tells a story. It could connect to their personal life, a movie, a book, etc.
4. If materials are not available at school, have students source objects from home, such as Lego pieces, small dolls, other old toys, etc., and items such as Starbucks cups, pencils, rocks, twigs, candy wrappers and small packaged items.
5. Have students place their objects into one or more shoeboxes to create a scene or sequence of scenes.
6. Students can glue fabric, wallpaper or magazine cut-outs as a background in their boxes.
7. Objects may be placed carefully or fixed with Blu Tack.
8. Have students explain their finished works to the class.
9. Display students' work.

Conclusion:

- How were the finished works similar? How were they different? Discuss use of objects, sources of inspiration, process and technique of creating the work.
- How would the process be different if they were to draw their story?

Works by Joyce Wieland



Young Woman's Blues, 1964



Cooling Room No. 1, 1964

PRE- or POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: Pop Ads (adaptable to all levels)

Objective: Students examine advertising images and create a mixed artwork that changes the original context and meaning of a borrowed commercial image.

Discussion:

Andy Warhol and other Pop artists were informed and inspired by ordinary and everyday objects and images. Commonplace things and mass-produced goods became the subject matter of fine or “high” art. Pop artists often appropriated and borrowed images from advertising and media and used design elements such as line, contrasting colour and repetition of image for visual effect.

Materials:

- magazines and newspapers
- scissors, glue
- white background paper
- markers

Process:

1. Have students look through magazines and newspapers and flag advertisements that appeal to them.
2. Spread out everyone’s choices and have students discuss why those images caught their attention. Helpful questions can include:
 - What design choices have the advertisers used to make their ads stand out?
 - Is it the colours? texture? patterning? repetition?
 - Is it an appealing background or setting?
 - Is your attention focused on the product because of the size or scale of it?
 - Can you tell immediately what is being sold?
 - Is a celebrity or model being used to sell the product?
 - What other design elements are used to sell the product?
3. Have each student select one image of an object, product or person taken from a magazine or newspaper, and cut it out.
4. Have them glue the cut-out image onto the background paper.
5. Have them use markers to create a background or a new context for the image.
6. Display the finished artworks.

Conclusion:

- Discuss how the image changed in moving from its original context to the new one.
- What are the similarities and differences?
- How effective is the image in communicating its new message?

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: Image ConText (intermediate and senior levels)

Objective: Students use found images and text to create new meanings and bring awareness to social issues, stereotypes and identity.

Discussion:

Barbara Kruger is known for works that provocatively integrate photographs and text (or, as she says, “pictures and words”). Her art reveals and challenges the ways in which images used in the commercial media often perpetuate stereotypes, objectify women and encourage conformity. Informed by her earlier profession as a graphic designer, her imagery draws from television, advertisements and American films of the 1940s and '50s. To these images she adds her own blunt slogans that challenge how the viewer might otherwise interpret the pictures. Because she alters images and uses text taken from other sources, her work is sometimes referred to as appropriation art. Kruger takes images from their original context in magazines and sets them as the background against which she places confrontational phrases and words.

Materials:

- ❑ old magazines, or black-and-white photocopies of magazine images
- ❑ background paper
- ❑ scissors
- ❑ glue

Process:

1. Introduce students to the work of Barbara Kruger, using Google image search or images provided on p. 17.
2. Have students make artworks using two hallmark techniques of Barbara Kruger’s work: dramatically cropped found images and the addition of text.
3. Distribute old magazines or black-and-white copies of magazine images. Have each student select an image and crop it into a square or rectangle, bearing in mind the importance of what they crop out and what they retain.
4. Have students mount their cropped images to construction paper with glue. Instruct them to create a short sentence that makes use of pronouns to change the meaning of the picture.
5. Have them write their text on a strip or square of paper. Have them think about where to place it on the image, moving it around to see how it looks, then gluing it down.
6. Display students’ work.

Conclusion:

- Discuss the process: how easy or hard was it to create the work?
- How did the image change from its original form?
- How did the text change the meaning of the image?
- Compare students’ works. How are they similar? How are they different? Consider subject matter, composition, layout, clarity of message, etc.

Works by Barbara Kruger



Your Body Is a Battleground, 1989



Untitled, 1987



Belief + Doubt, 2012

VOCABULARY

Abstract Expressionism: A post-World War II American art movement known for its loose, expressive brushwork. The best-known artist associated with this movement was the New York painter Jackson Pollock. Abstract Expressionism is also described as action painting because of Pollock's practice of placing large canvases on the ground and to pour, drip and splatter paint across their surfaces using sweeping arm movements. This gestural painting technique was thought to be a non-rational expression of an artist's unconscious.

affichiste (French): poster artist or poster designer, a graphic designer of posters.

appropriation: the act of using text, images or objects, often without permission, in a context other than originally intended. In the visual arts, appropriation is the intentional borrowing, copying and alteration of pre-existing images and objects.

assemblage: a sculptural visual artwork, usually created on a defined substrate, consisting of three-dimensional elements projecting from the substrate. It is similar to collage, a two-dimensional medium. Assemblage typically includes found objects, but is not limited to these materials.

collage: a two-dimensional visual artwork in which fragments of paper and other materials are arranged on and glued to a supporting surface.

conceptual art: art whose idea or concept is more important than the finished artwork, and whose form does not necessarily conform to traditional art objects such as paintings or sculptures.

décollage: the opposite of collage. Instead of an image being built up with existing images or parts of them, it is created by cutting, tearing away or otherwise removing pieces of one or more original images. *Décollage* translates from French into English literally as "take off," "become unglued" or "become unstuck."

dub music: a genre of electronic music that emerged from studios in Kingston, Jamaica, in the 1960s. From its roots in reggae music, and sometimes referred to as a subgenre of reggae, dub expanded into a new and innovative realm in both form and function. Consisting primarily of instrumental remixes of existing recordings, dub significantly manipulates and reshapes these recordings, typically omits vocals and emphasizes drum and bass rhythms. Other dynamic techniques include adding extensive echo, reverb, panoramic delay and occasional dubbing of vocal or instrumental selections from original versions or other works. Listeners hear familiar tracks in an entirely different way, with emphasis on the rhythm rather than the singers' voices.

installation: art that is created from a wide range of materials and installed in a specific environment. An installation may be temporary or permanent.

mashup: a mixture or fusion of disparate elements taken from different sources as related to music, visual art, literature, film, fashion and other creative forms.

new media art: art that encompasses artworks created with digital art, computer graphics, computer animation, virtual art, Internet art, interactive art, video games, computer robotics, 3D printing, cyborg art, art as biotechnology and other new media technologies.

New Realism (Nouveau réalisme): an art movement founded in 1960 by the art critic Pierre Restany and the painter Yves Klein for a group art exhibition at the Apollinaire Gallery in Milan. Pierre Restany wrote the original manifesto for the group, titled the "Constitutive Declaration of

New Realism," in April 1960, proclaiming "Nouveau Réalisme—new ways of perceiving the real." The group believed in a method of direct appropriation of reality, equivalent in Restany's terminology to a "poetic recycling of urban, industrial and advertising reality."

Pop art: The term *Pop* was first used in the late 1950s to refer to the work of artists who took both their art forms and their subjects from popular consumer culture. Using photography, printmaking and found objects, Pop artists brought the techniques and aesthetics of advertising, comic strips, movie stardom and product packaging to fine art, generating new modes of music, architecture, visual art, design, film and literature, and taking art out of the museum and into everyday life.

readymade: an ordinary mass-produced object that is moved, rearranged or modified slightly, and defined and presented as art. The term was coined by Marcel Duchamp, who pioneered the form. The display of the readymade provoked questions about artistic creativity, and the very definition of art and its purpose in society.

retrospective: an exhibition or compilation showing the development of a body of work by a particular artist over a period of time.

silkscreen: a printing technique in which the artist uses glue to make an image on a screen made of silk, then pushes coloured inks through the silk onto a piece of paper or fabric, so that the ink reaches only the areas without glue.

site-specific: created for a specific site or venue. Usually a site-specific work is destroyed by the process of dismantling it.

RESOURCES

Print:

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www.artic.edu

www.biography.com

www.britannica.com

www.moma.org

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