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The influence of collage, photo montage, and assemblage is seen in multiple art movements- “beginning in the modernist period and continuing into the contemporary art world, the collage art form has undergone a series of changes as more and more artists opt to explore it”(Richman- Abdou, 2017). This essay will be focusing on 3 key art movements where the medium is most associated with in this essay: Cubism, Dadaism, and Pop-Art.

The impact collage, montage, and assemblage has had in the traditional art world will be considered, and also the discussion of topics such as consumerism and mainstream marketing, fashion and music, and the effect these mediums have had in politics.

The mediums of collage, montage, and assemblage are often overlooked in how large of an impact the art form has, and how far its reach is. Deemed possibly too accessible or mainstream to be considered a serious influence in the art world, a shallow example being: “every semi-creative teenage girl’s walls will inevitably become a massive collage” (Temple, 2011). However, I wholeheartedly believe collage, montage, and assemblage have had a significant cultural impact on imagemaking. Said best by Brazilian collage artist Pavel Zoubok: “Collage is the most representative of where we’ve been for the last 100 years.” (Wolfe, 2014)

The 20th century began with traditional art norms being challenged. Fauvism, which lasted from 1904-1908, was influenced by impressionism and specifically impressionist painter Vincent Van Gogh. The vivid, unnatural colours which were key to the movement “led the critic Louis Vauxcelles to derisively dub their works as les Fauves, or “the wild beasts,” which the artists then appropriated as the title for their movement” (Lumen Learning, 2020). This is a good example that as the western world began to urbanise and change, and it became easier to be exposed to more styles and ideas, artists wanted to push boundaries, and create more controversial pieces. They wanted to shock the wider public.

When considering the context of the art world in the beginning of the 20th century, it seems only logical that art forms like collage and assemblage would be born out of such great experimentation- the need to create something different.

Collage, derived from the French verb *coller*, literally meaning *to glue*, was a term first coined by Cubist artists Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. Generally, all three mediums were established concepts by the Dadaism movement, but “the [collage] movement itself emerged under this pair of artists, who began working with various mediums to create avant-garde assemblages around 1910” (Richman- Abdou, 2017).



Figure One



Figure Two

Picasso and Braque were instrumental in the cubist movement. Continuing the need for radicalism in art, the two developed the style to what is called 'Synthetic Cubism'. This furthered the basics of cubism, the more analytic, angular subjects now had "separate elements in collage fashion to create a layered look" (Monroe, 2003)

By mixing different materials like paper or photographs within their paintings, both artists were able to create a more dimensional image; unlike with paintings alone collages never risked appearing completely flat. With the collage and assemblage style, the artists could also be more thoughtful in their choice of materials, deepening the meaning of what the image represents. Alongside using non-traditional materials, the use of collage allowed to provoke what is the distinction between high art and popular culture.

Starting in 1916, Dadaism was a direct response to the discontent towards world war 1 and the post war effects - it was

intensely anti-war, anti-bourgeois, and held strong political affinities with the radical left. For many participants, the movement was a protest against the bourgeois nationalist and colonialist interests, which many Dadaists believed were the root cause of the war. (Lumen Learning, 2020)



Figure Three

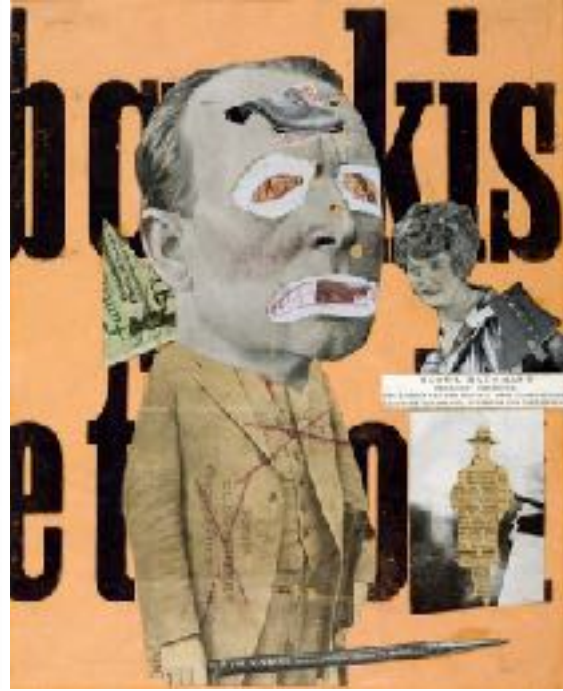


Figure Four

The Dadaism movement continues to develop the disparity between what is seen as high art, and what is seen as popular culture. Its use of prefabricated materials “negates the importance of artistic skill, and the fact that collage is frequently sourced from mass-produced advertising and journalism collapses boundaries between “high” and “low” culture.” (Cramer and Grant, 2020) More materials were incorporated into their pieces than what was seen in the Cubist movement, and Dadaists were “particularly renowned for their innovative use of seemingly worthless or often overlooked items” (Richman-Abdou, 2017). By using mundane items such as tickets, food wrappers or magazine clippings and “transforming ephemera into polished pieces, the Dadaists challenged traditional perceptions of art.” (Richman-Abdou, 2017) There is also the implication of societal rejection by cutting up these materials, “a refusal of the ideas or directives it was intended to convey.”

Dadaism use of collage, photomontage, and assemblage brought a significant political factor into image making that had not been explored by Picasso and Braque. Photomontage as an art form was invented by Dadaists, incorporating “photographs, sometimes along with other collaged and painted elements” to create their political and satirical pieces. This is one of the most important points to mention when considering the significant cultural impact these mediums have had on imagemaking.

Specifically focusing on photomontage, we can see the how the art form has transformed into current day when regarding the creation of doctored images and the spread of ‘fake news’. Not only is this method being used to create art and satire, but the medium has transformed itself in the digital world. There is now an

element of personal gain attached to photomontage techniques, holding real consequences with the circulation of misinformation.

In the digital sphere, images hold more power than the written word. Images collaged together, or misleading images and titles (clickbait) are easier to digest from a viewer scrolling down their timeline. A viewer is much more likely to take the image and title at face value instead of clicking on the link and informing themselves. In a 2016 survey by *Pew Research Center* they found that “a majority of US adults- 62%- get news on social media... In 2012, based on a slightly different question, 49% of US adults reported seeing news on social media.” (Gottfried and Shearer, 2016)



Figure Five

The Trump War Room Twitter account - which is run by Donald Trump's campaign team - tweeted a bizarre photoshopped image of the Washington Monument being torn down alongside the accusation that it would be an image of "Joe Biden's America". (Graziosi, 2020)

Using the image above as an example, the doctored photo shows the demolition of the Washington Monument in Washington DC supposedly just days after the 2020 United States election. It is formatted with a 'breaking news' headline and the recognisable and trusted news station CNN is added into the photo to add credibility. An additional key element to the image is the fact it was shared by a verified account linked to the Donald Trump campaign- to a Donald Trump supporter possibly using Twitter as its main source of news, they could believe this as the truth.

The more we hear a piece of information repeated, the more we're likely to believe it. Even things that people have reason not to believe, they believe them more. (Resnick, 2017)

Photomontage, in this specific example, exhibits clearly the significant cultural impact it, as well as collage, has had on modern day image making.

This point can be proved further when we consider the impact collage, photomontage, and assemblage has had on the Pop-art movement. Pop-art contrasts what we see today, the darker side to photomontage and collage in the digital space. Instead pop-art seemed generally used as a form of protest and rebellion in terms of the political sphere. This is not to say that these three art forms are not used in a protest form in our current day. The use of collage was prominent on social media when widespread protesting began in Chile in 2019,

Social media has become a key way for artists and activists to circulate and exchange information and ideas. Independently curated Instagram feed @CollageChile has taken a particularly prominent role. The work, in form and dissemination, echoes 20th-century mail art and collage practice from Latin America. (Bustamante- Brauning, 2019)

However, examples of protest are perhaps easier to identify and more consistent in the pop-art movement.



Figure Six

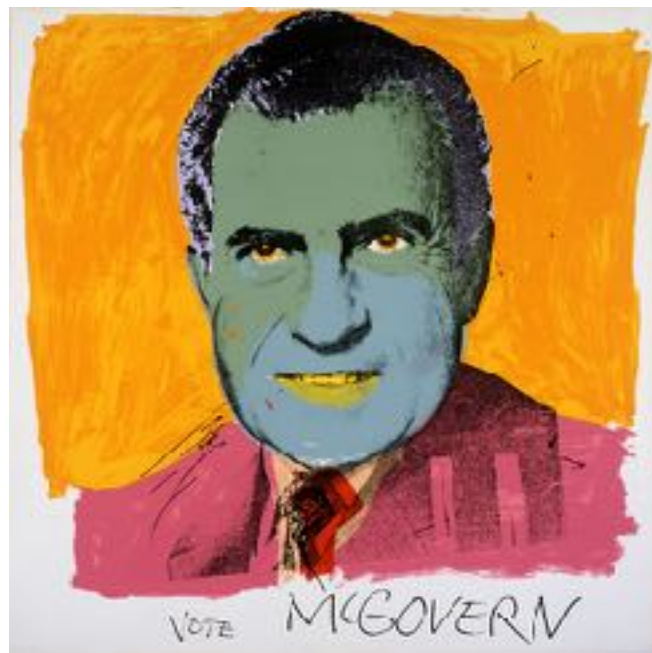


Figure Seven

The Pop-art movement emerged in the mid-1950s, reaching its peak in the 1960s. As a parallel to dadaism, the collage and photomontage style became an incredibly effective way of artists creating artwork in a discontented society. After the first world war, the 1950s to the 1960's saw a time of huge cultural change. Life after a second world war, the united states being involved in the Korean and Vietnam war as well as the Cold war with Russia, more regions of the world were being affected by communism, and the change in society that came with protests for civil rights-equality for people of colour and for woman.

The use of collage, photomontage, and assemblage techniques was a freeing art form. In the terms of politics and censorship, pop-art was an ingenious way for artists to be outspoken in a communist regime, or to be outspoken in general- "Compared to written artforms, like novels, plays and poetry, Pop Art was relatively difficult for the authorities to control". (BBC, 2015)

Given that pop-art was so simple, it was easy to understand, there was no language barrier. It can be argued that in such an unequal time, it was non-classist,

The Pop art movement aimed to blur the boundaries between "high" art and "low" culture. The concept that there is no hierarchy of culture and that art may borrow from any source has been one of the most influential characteristics of Pop art. (The Art Story, 2012)

There is no pomp and grandeur to pop-art, and the materials to create collaged pieces were easily accessible to anyone:

Young artists felt that what they were taught at art school and what they saw in museums did not have anything to do with their lives or the things they saw around them every day. (Tate Museum, 2020)

Pop-art pieces were more reflective on what was happening in the wider world, and with the incorporation of more photographs and the context of people having increasingly more ways to become informed, possibly that's why it has the appeal and popularity even in current day. Through-out history these techniques always resurface. Using real photographs is effective and personal, so I believe that helps argue why the techniques of collage and photomontage are so significant to image making- in ways one could argue an oil painting can appear dated, the simple and readymade materials of collage keeps the style fresh, current, and exciting. In ways that paintings can appear traditional, and reference to other painter's styles could be more obvious, collage is more loose, "it allows artists to explore and experiment with creating truly new, exciting and often unexpected results" (Smith, 2009)

Whilst political culture is heavily engrained into the collage, photomontage, and assemblage processes, Pop- art helped to rebalance the art form. The movement

brought back the playful experimentation that collage was born out of by Picasso and Braque 40 years previous.

Despite the social and political issues of the 1950's and 1960's, Pop-art brought a sense of optimism. As the name conveys, Pop-art was heavily influenced by popular culture,

It coincided with the globalisation of pop music and youth culture, personified by Elvis and The Beatles... It included different styles of painting and sculpture from various countries, but what they all had in common was an interest in mass-media, mass-production and mass-culture. (Belgravia Gallery, 2020)



Figure Eight

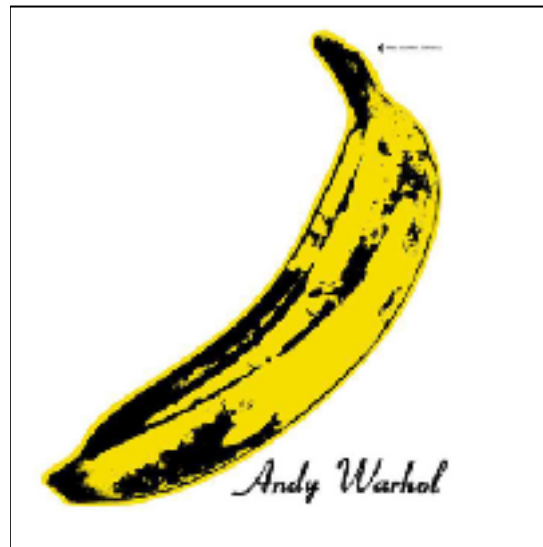


Figure Nine

This was the first era of the 'teenager' and nothing embodies the fun, youthful, rebellious foundations that are integral to being a teenager like Pop-art did.

Although the collage form was highly significant towards political art during the 50's and 60's, it also had the flip side of having a major impact on marketing and how we can still see these processes in our current day marketing and advertising tactics. This provokes a juxtaposition to the outcomes of pop-art, since the capitalistic policies that were being criticised were arguably amplified significantly by the commercialism within the art produced.

The work of Andy Warhol is the most recognisable from this period and conveys the consumeristic aspect to the movement.

Warhol was already a highly successful magazine illustrator and graphic designer, both of these aspects gave Warhol an edge in the Pop-art world since his "background in the commercial art world trained [him] in the visual vocabulary of mass culture as well as the techniques to seamlessly merge the realms of high art and popular culture" (The Art Story, 2020) , he knew how to give his audience what they wanted.

Warhol captured the interest in celebrity by the public in this decade, and he effectively used collage and photomontage to sell this image.

Warhol's artwork represents a multilayered process that incorporated photographs, screen prints, paintings and graphics. Though he used scores of Polaroid images for later commissioned portraits, Warhol initially relied on "source images," such as newspaper clippings, for many figure studies. (Weekes, 2008)

These techniques when specifically used in Pop-art prove to be significant on imagemaking today,

the use of recognizable images and artistic flair prove to be very beneficial and welcome in terms of advertising... pop art advertising is an enriching brand strategy that creates a beautiful harmony between art and marketing concepts. (Butss, 2015)

Considering this, it is no surprise that collage and the world of fashion go hand and hand. Collage and Photomontage appear consistently in fashion campaigns. Large names in the fashion industry such as Stella McCartney, Dior, Céline, Courrèges, and Coach 1941 have used the techniques to create eye catching advertising images.



Figure Ten



Figure Eleven

The fashion industry is a great example as to how the techniques of collage and photomontage have transformed in the digital age. The two forms of design go hand and hand,

It has this background that's rooted in the surreal and fashion is about fantasy," says [Brazilian artist Pedro] Nekoi. "With collage, it's easy to do and you can really go crazy with it and end up with something amazing. (Bobila,2016)

both fashion and collage are two extremely open and freeing forms of art and design so both are complemented by each other.

This eye-catching form of imagery is even more powerful on social media, the main player being photo sharing sites like Instagram. Images are incredibly influential to consumers online, "if you pair a relevant image with your material, people can remember 65% of the information after three days" (Medium, 2017), so using a collage/ photomontage approach in fashion advertisement works well. Brands can incorporate multiple items, and for lack of a better word, create a mood board of the image you are trying to sell to your customers.

When one can look back through the history of collage, photomontage, and assemblage, it is clear to see that these three techniques have had a widely significant cultural impact on image-making. Not only have they had influence on multiple modern art movements, but the three techniques have an overarching reach into popular culture. Collage and Photomontage styles are apparent in fashion, music, and helped inform what we see in modern day marketing, especially on social media- without the use of these three techniques it's difficult to imagine what our popular culture landscape would look like.

Figures

Fig. One: Picasso, P (1912) Photograph found at: <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/event/picassos-turning-points-cubism-papier-colle>

Fig. Two: Picasso, P (1912) Photograph found at: <https://www.theartstory.org/artist/picasso-pablo/artworks/>

Fig. Three: Hartfield, J (1923) Photograph found at: <https://www.varsity.co.uk/music/14163>

Fig. Four: Hausmann, R (1919) Photograph found at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/photomontage>

Fig. Five: @TrumpWarRoom (2020) Photograph found at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-election/trump-biden-washington-monument-washington-dc-election-b1542697.html>

Fig. Six: Rancillac, B (1966) Photograph found at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/gzDdqjldkcKsFkxRvTNFvq/the-politics-of-pop-art-a-dissenting-world-view>

Fig. Seven: Warhol, A (1972) Photograph found at: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/warhols-pop-politics-89185734/>

Fig. Eight: The Beatles (1967) Photograph found at: <https://www.udiscovermusic.com/stories/25-iconic-album-covers/>

Fig. Nine: The Velvet Underground & Nico (1967) Photograph found at: <https://www.udiscovermusic.com/stories/25-iconic-album-covers/>

Fig. Ten: Courreges (2016) Photograph found at: <https://fashionista.com/2016/01/fashion-collage-art>

Fig. Eleven: Celine (2016) Photograph found at: <https://fashionista.com/2016/01/fashion-collage-art>

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