American Dream, American Nightmare

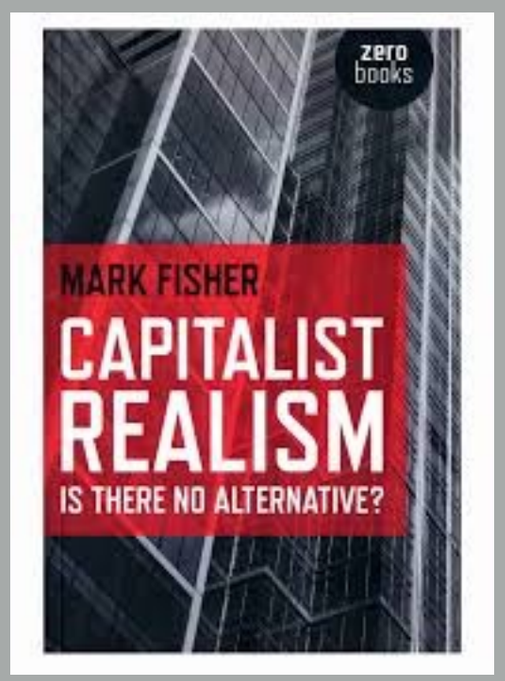
Capitalist Realism in Contemporary Photography



Annie Leibovitz - Donald and Melania Trump (Vogue, 2006)

“Watching *Children of Men,* we are inevitably reminded of the phrase attributed to Fredric Jameson and Slavoj Žižek, that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than it is to imagine the end of capitalism. That slogan captures precisely what I mean by 'capitalist realism': the widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to *imagine* a coherent alternative to it.”

Mark Fisher, 2009



“The entire life of societies in which modern conditions of production prevail, announces itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles.”

Guy Debord - *The Society of the Spectacle*

“The entire life of societies in which modern conditions of production prevail, announces itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles.”

Guy Debord - *The Society of the Spectacle,* (1967)

“The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as ‘an immense accumulation of commodities’…”

Karl Marx - *Das Kapital* (1867)



Annie Leibovitz



Annie Leibovitz

Mark Zuckerberg



Nissan Workers in Sunderland





Crispin Odey



Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937)

Cultural Hegemony

Predominance Obtained by Consent





Breaking Point poster - Leave EU, 2016



Socialist Realism







Socialist Realism

The 1934 Soviet Congress outlined these as the prescribed elements of Socialist realism. The Principles are thought to have been sanctioned directly by Josef Stalin himself:

1. Proletarian: art relevant to the workers and understandable to them.

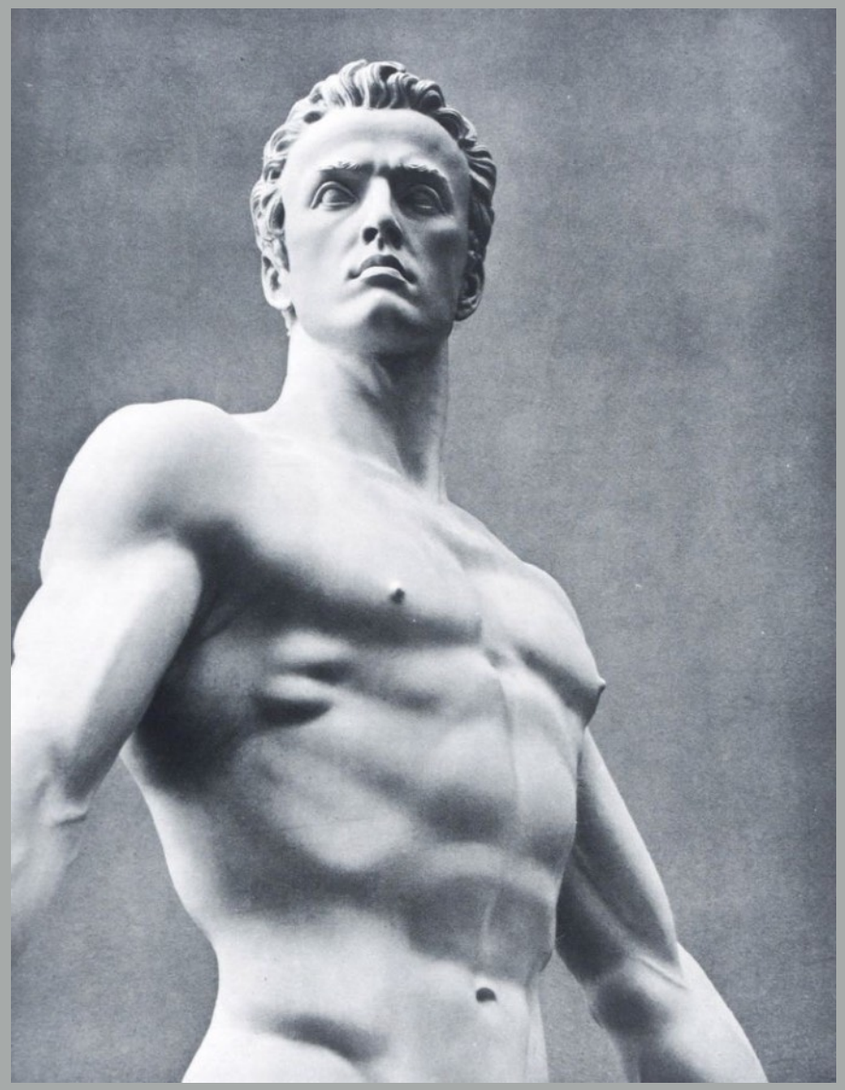
2. Typical: scenes of everyday life of the people.

3. Realistic: in the representational sense.

4. Partisan: supportive of the aims of the State and the Party.



Paul Duerinckx - Memento Park, Budapest









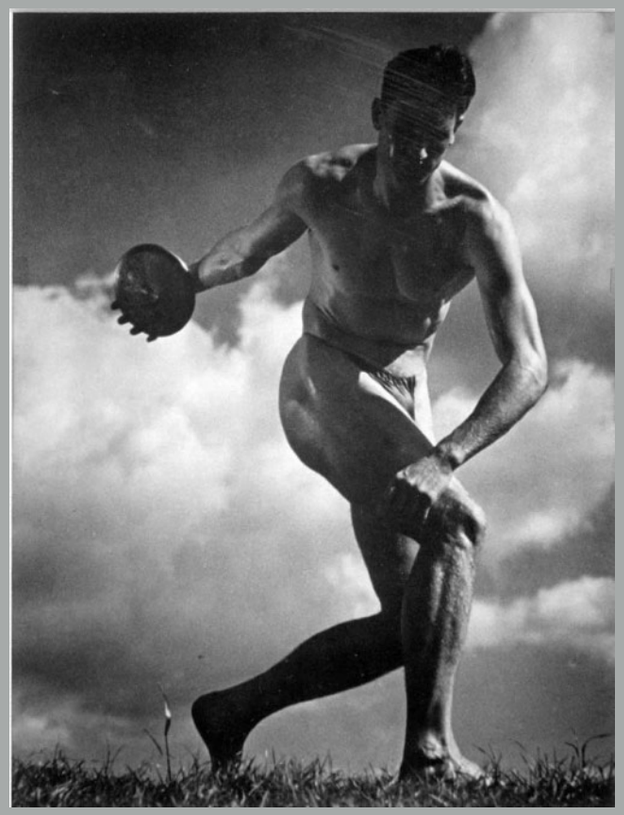
Arno Breker



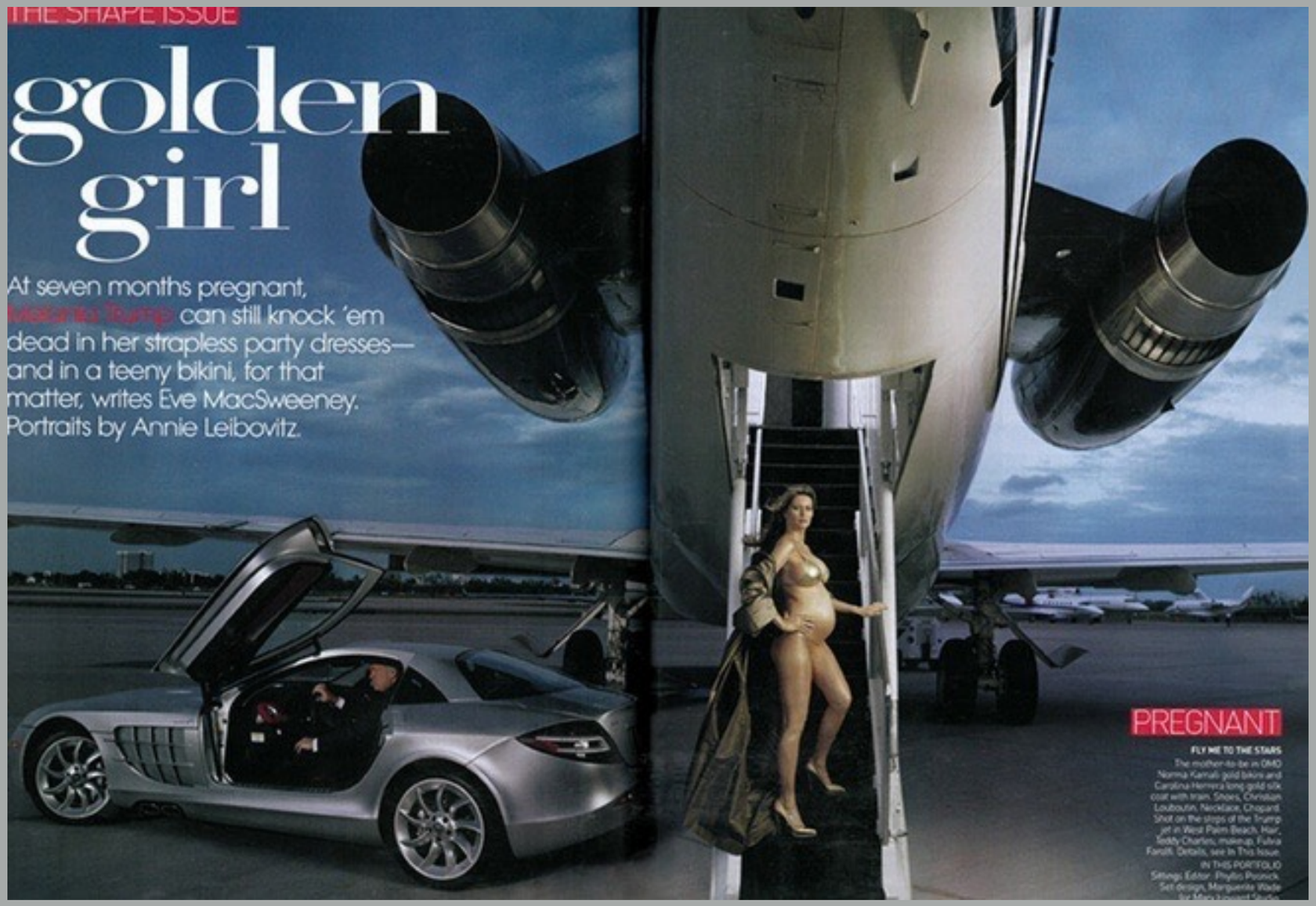
Annie Leibovitz







Leni Reifenstahl - *Olympia*



Annie Leibovitz

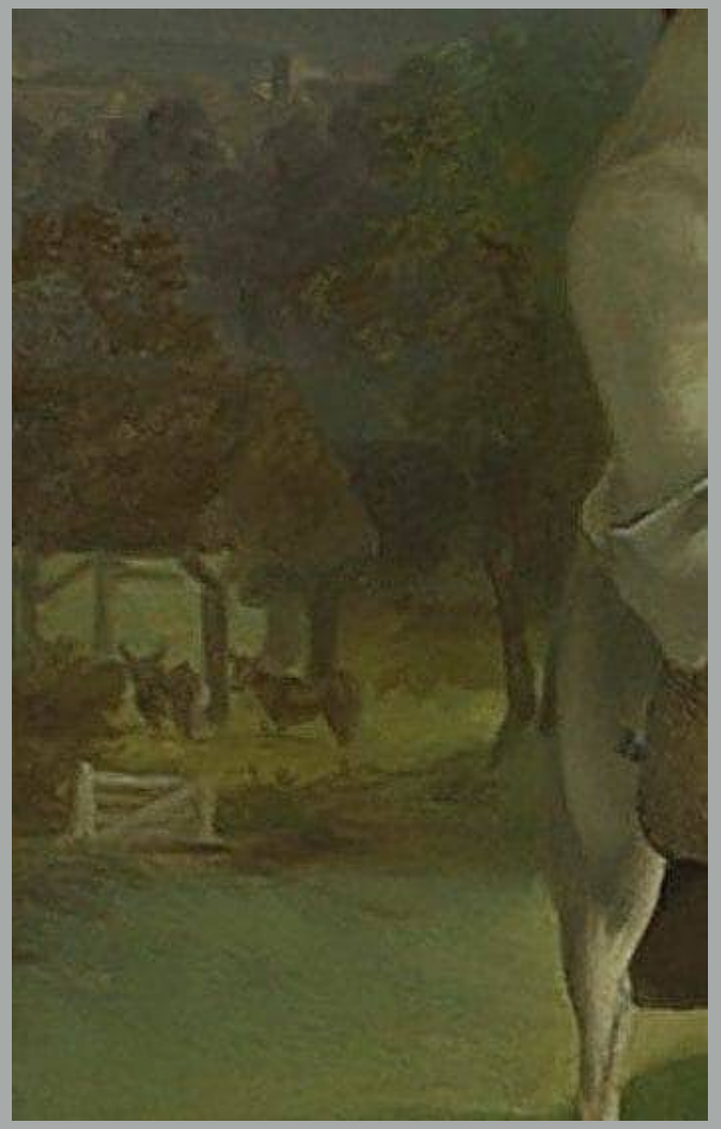


Thomas Gainsborough - *Mr and Mrs Andrews* (circa 1750)









Gainsborough - *Mr and Mrs Andrews* (details)



Jan van Eyck - *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434









Donald Trump’s Trump Tower Apartment

“The Spectacle is capital…accumulated to the point where it becomes image.”

Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*



Apple Macintosh Advert (Dir. Ridley Scott)





R e c u p e r a t i o n

(Co-option)

The commodification of radical ideas or images


DOLLAR


Communism killed
100 million people
and all I got was this
lousy shirt.


1986







Gregory Crewdson - from *Twilight*



Annie Leibovitz - Queen Latifah as Ursula



Gregory Crewdson - set



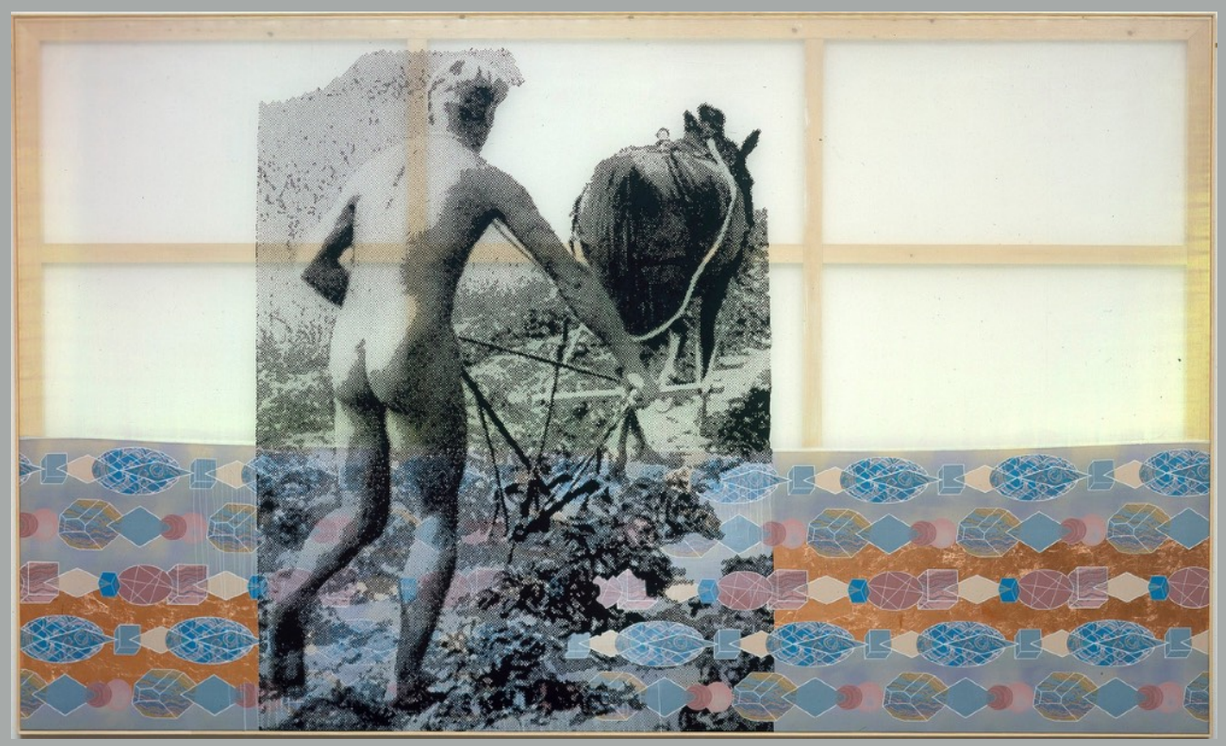
Annie Leibovitz - set



Sigmar Polke - Capitalist Realism







Sigmar Polke - Capitalist Realism

Jackson Pollock -
Number One (1949)





Mark Rothko - *Black on Maroon* (1958)



Willem de Kooning - *Police Gazette* (1955)


Campbell's
CONDENSED
ONION
SOUP
CREAM OF
MUSHROOM
SOUP
BEEF
SOUP
CONSOMMÉ
SOUP
GREEN PEA
SOUP
PEPPER POT
SOUP
VEGETABLE
SOUP
CHICKEN
NOODLE
SOUP
TOMATO
SOUP
BLACK BEAN
SOUP

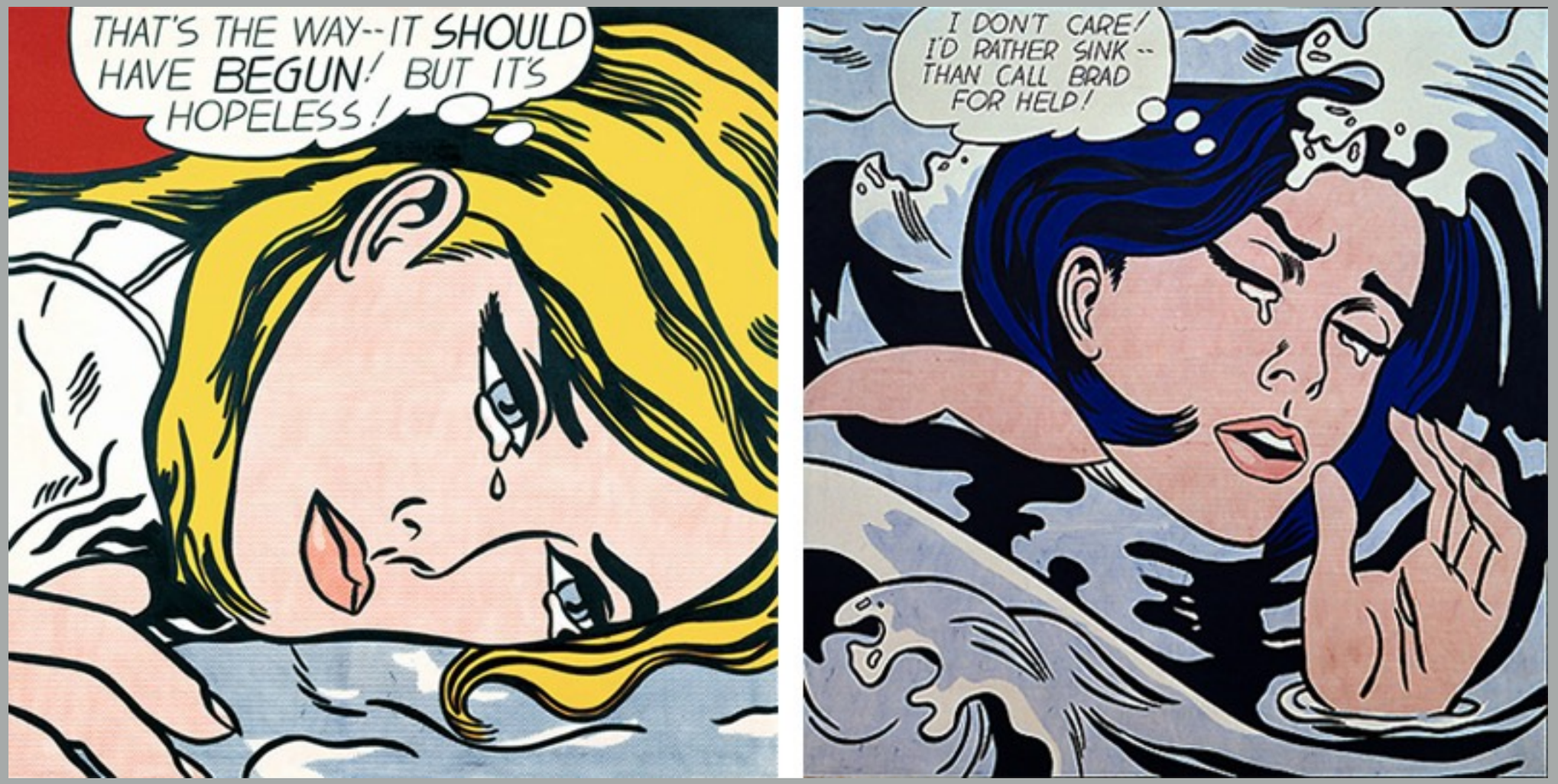


Andy Warhol





Ed Ruscha



Roy Lichtenstein

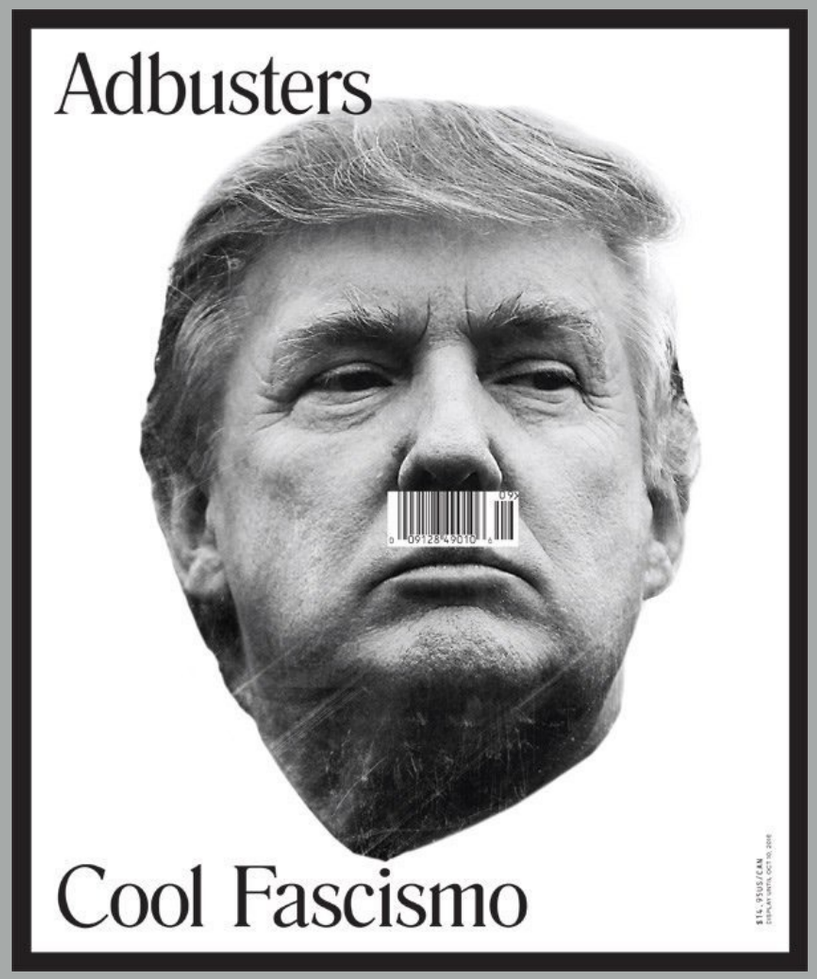


Richard Prince - Untitled (Cowboy)

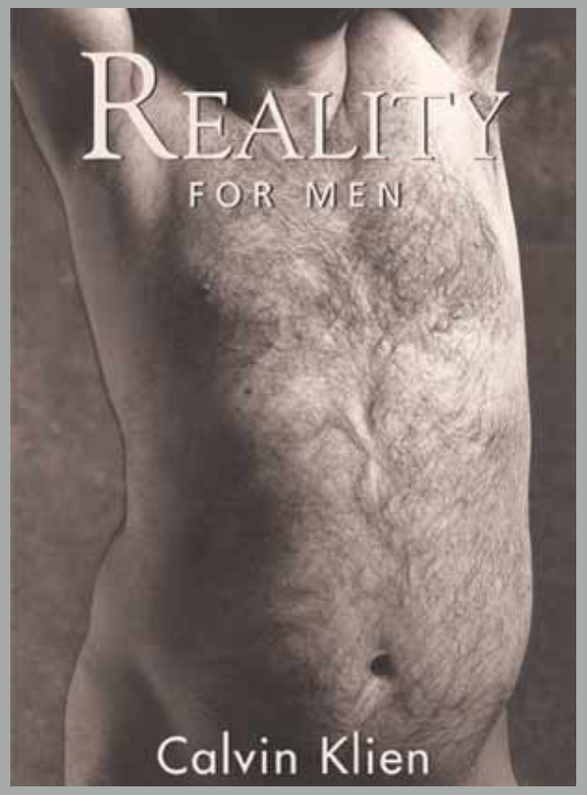
Détournement

To turn expressions of capitalism against themselves









Adbusters; Subvertisments; Culture Jamming









Led by Donkeys







Barbara Kruger





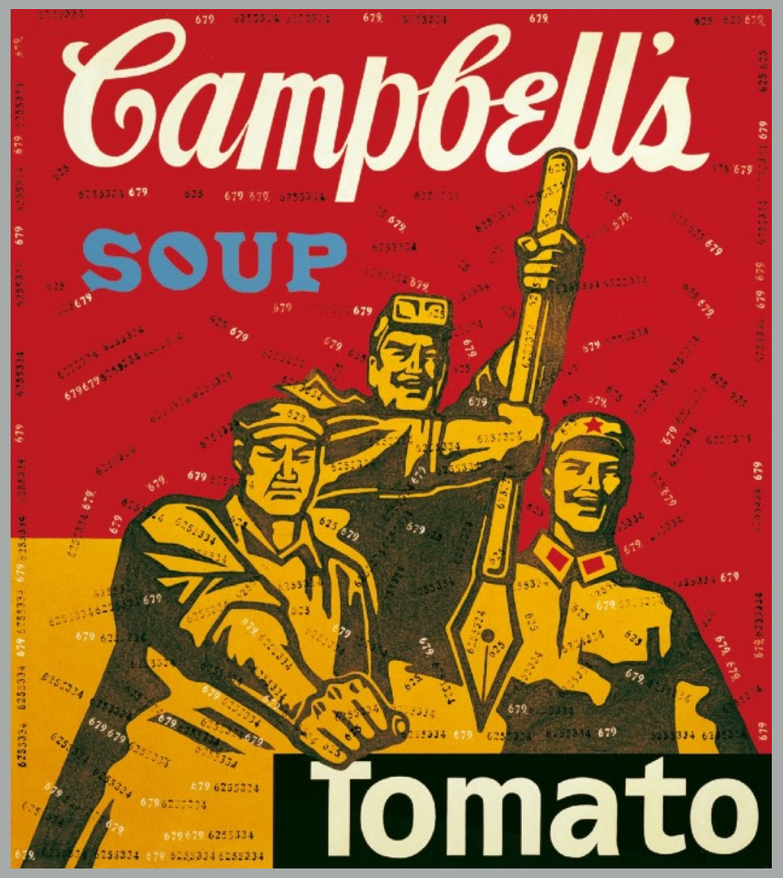


Jeff Coons



Wang Guangyi









Wang Guangyi



Gregory Crewdson - *Beneath the Roses*



Gregory Crewdson - *Beneath the Roses*





Gregory Crewdson - *Beneath the Roses; Twilight*



Gregory Crewdson - from *Cathedral of the Pines*

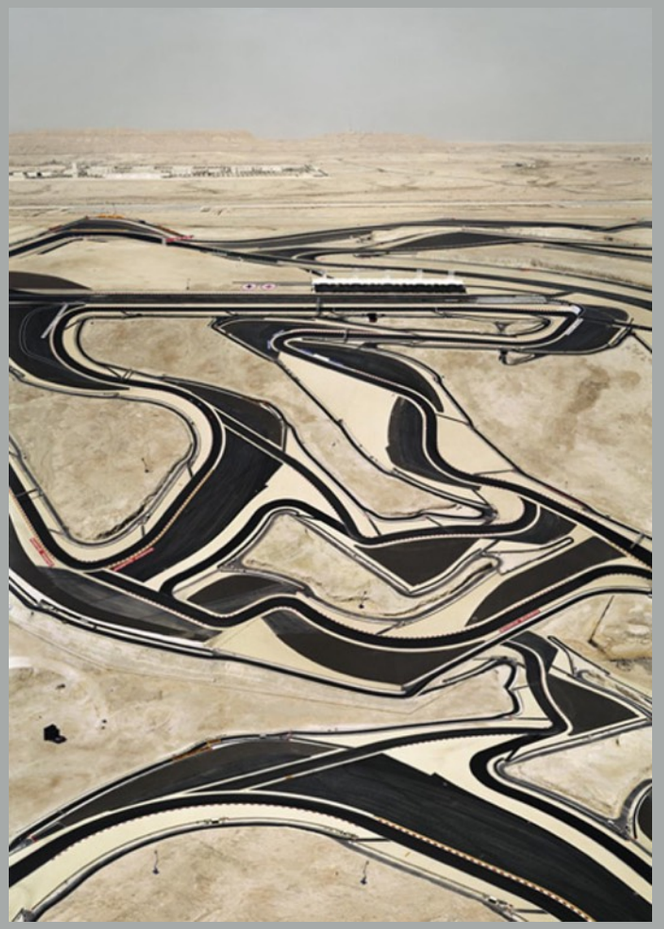


Gregory Crewdson - from *Cathedral of the Pines*



Andreas Gursky - Salerno (1990)

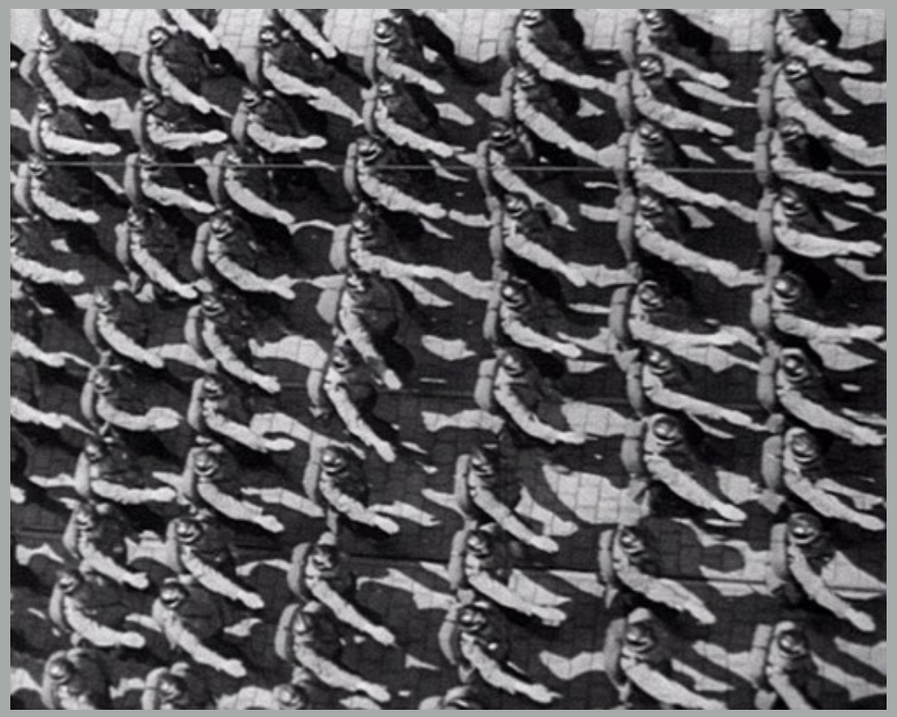






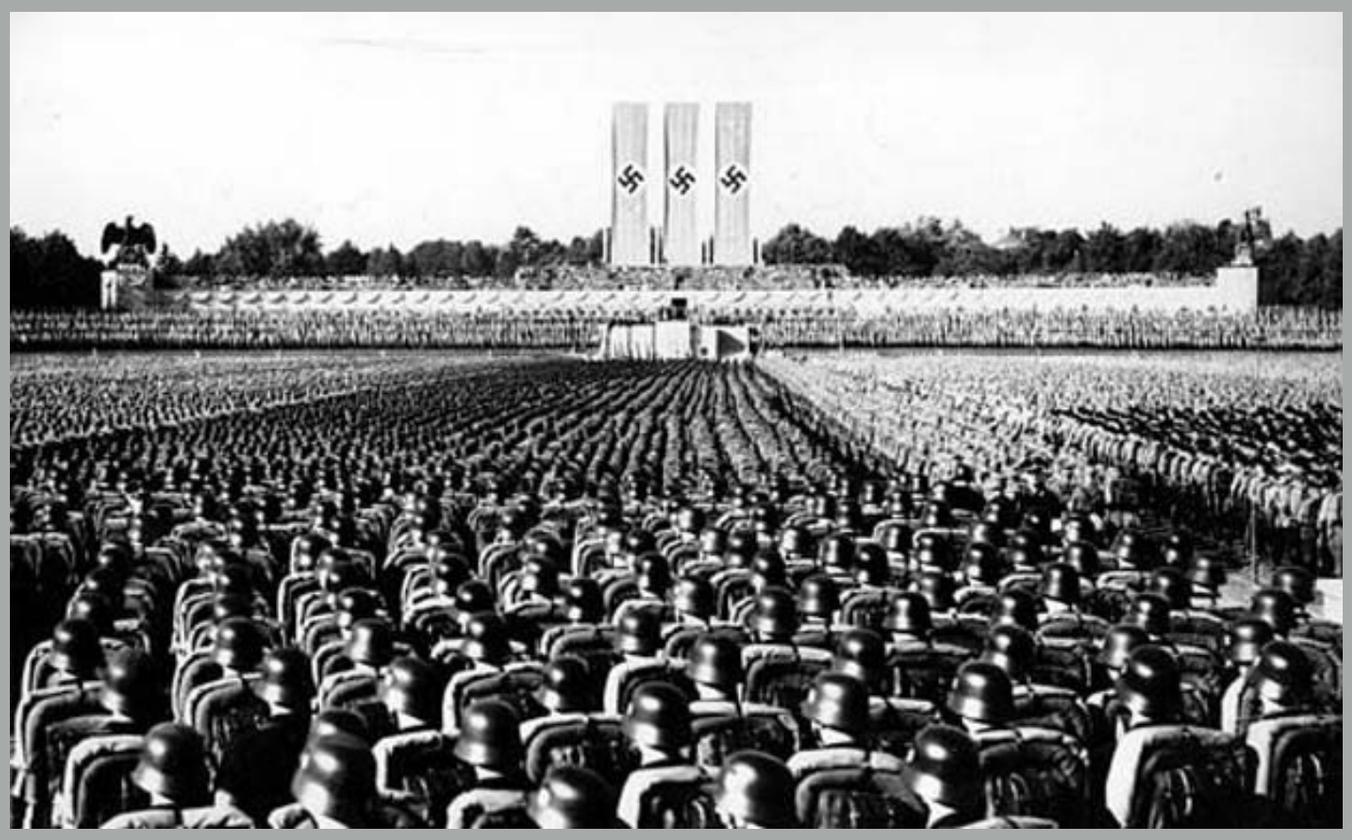


Andreas Gursky - (clockwise from left) Grand Prix Boxstop 1; Bahrain I (2005); Chicago Mercantile Exchange (1997); Hyatt Regency, Atlanta (1996)





Andreas Gursky - *Chicago Board of Trade II* (1999)



Leni Reifenstahl - *Triumph of the Will*

The Accumulation of Spectacles



Gregory Crewdson - from *Cathedral of the Pines*

American Dream …



…American Nightmare



‘Some day we shall no longer need pictures: we shall just be happy.’

Sigmar Polke and Gerhard Richter, 1966

(Founders of the Capitalist Realism movement)

Key Thinkers:
Antonio Gramsci
Mark Fisher
The Frankfurt School
Guy Debord

Capitalism and Culture
Hegemony
Capitalist Realism
Detournment
Recuperation
Image and ideology