

Ways of Perceiving (ADAD4019)

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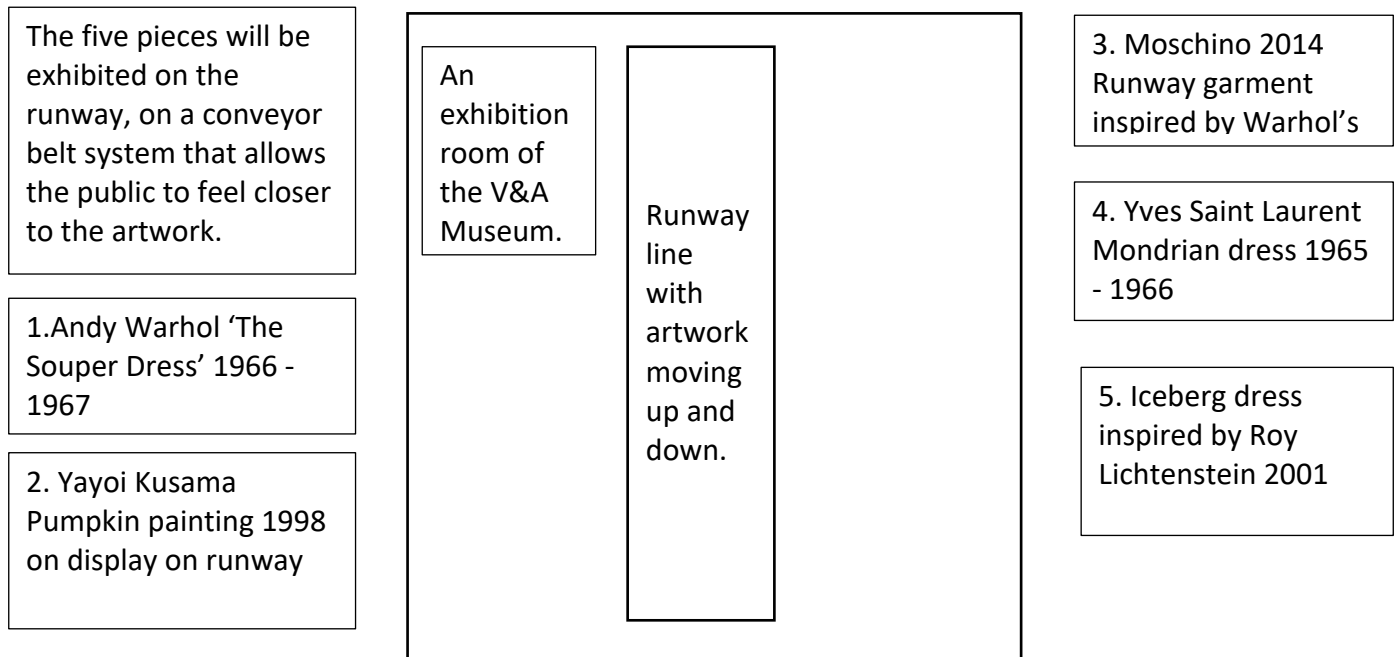
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My exhibition will be an interactive runway show of influential fashion pieces inspired by the pop art movement. I would like the exhibition to take place at the V&A Museum in London as it is very well known for its fashion and textiles departments. I would like the exhibition to demonstrate how abstract imagery from popular and mass culture, has then been reflected and developed in fashion-based pieces on display in the show.

The Pop Art movement emerged in the 1950s in the UK and USA and peaked in the 1960's, taking inspiration from sources in popular and commercial, consumerist culture of the time and rejected traditional approaches to art (Tate, 2022a). The British artist, Eduardo Paolozzi is considered to be one of Pop Arts pioneers (Royal Academy, 2022).

Paolozzi's 1947 work 'I was a Rich Man's Plaything', which incorporated a simple collage made from magazines is the first to have included the word 'Pop' in a comic-like depiction of the firing of a gun. The work showcases Paolozzi's interest in popular culture and technology, combined with the glamour and excitement of American consumerism. Although, arguably the first work of 'Pop Art', I have chosen not to include Paolozzi's 1947 work in the exhibition as the subject of a gun being fired towards a woman can be interpreted as misogynistic.

The emergent new wave of exciting 'Pop Art' artists focused their work on real-life commercial images that reflected the time, where capitalism was very prominent after the grimness during war time. Capitalism made artwork more accessible to the masses.

A main characteristic of Pop Artwork was using the subject matter to make a statement to the world on current events. The artwork 'sought to blur the lines between high – art techniques, such as painting and industrial methods like photography' (Mackay Stewart, A. 2020).

Another innovative technique of the movement that hadn't been seen in the previous fine art style were the quick mass-produced printmaking processes, that enabled art to be accessible to those that fine art could not (Tate, 2022a).

Pop Art can be identified by its bold and bright colours combined with its popular use of symbols and household objects. Roy Lichtenstein said of the movement that 'Pop art *looks out into the world, it doesn't look like a painting, it looks like the thing itself*' (Lichtenstein, R. 1971). This emphasises the movement's simple but effective style. For example, Andy Warhol used a tin of beans for his famous 1962 piece, that went on to become 'The Souper Dress 1966' (see Fig. 1) that will be exhibited at my exhibition.

Warhol was a very influential person within the movement, he described the industry as 'anything you can get away with' (Warhol, A. 2000. *Speech at Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco*). This reinforces his desire of choosing image over content and using mechanical methods within his work, showing his idea for creating social change and works that make an impact within society.

Warhol created work that '*painted movie stars not from life but as they appeared in publicity photographs*' (Sooke, A. 2015. *Pop Art – A Colourful History*). This reinforces the revelation the movement had on the mass media and commercial imagery of the time.



Figure 1: Warhol, A. The Souper Dress. 1966 – 67.

Warhol started his career in the fashion industry as a fashion illustrator for Vogue and Harper's Bazaar. He became very well known within the industry's top designers. The dress was originally made to be a disposable garment, as it was created out of paper. The garment made a huge statement on the consumerist type of lifestyle and the throwaway culture of

the 1960s (Met Museum, 2022a). Due to this success, fashion designers decided to incorporate Warhol's prints into their own collections. Yves Saint Laurent produced a show in 1966 titled the Pop Art collection showcased the revelation the movement had on creating accessible fashion for all that had a fun side. I think this piece due to its popularity and fame would be a create focus point within my runway show. The bold bright colours would really stand out and make an impact in the V&A juxtaposed against the plain interior walls of the exhibition space.



Figure 2: Kusama, Y. Pumpkin. 1999.

Yayoi Kusama is a famous Japanese artist, known for her use of polka dots a technique often used in the Pop Art movement. She worked within a variety of styles including sculpture, performance art and large interactive installations. Her work was often exhibited alongside other artists including Warhol during New York's Avant – Garde movement.

The pumpkin (see Fig. 2) known in Japanese as Kabocha, is a positive image to Kusama representing a cheerful, positive reflection of her childhood in Matsumoto, Japan. The use of the colour yellow symbolises optimism and energy, which are often characteristics of Pop Artwork. Also, used within Kusama's work and the Pop Art Movement is the polka dot, with the form of the sun, that symbolises the energy of the world (Michalska, 2022). Due to Kusama's artistic influence within the movement, I think displaying her work in my exhibition will show how Pop Art has influenced more generic artwork and will tie in well with the similar Pop Art style garments exhibited, for example the Iceberg Collection, inspired by Lichtenstein (see Fig. 5)



Figure 3: Moschino Spring/Summer Collection. 2014

Moschino's Spring/Summer 2014 collection showcases the colourful and funky prints used within the movement. The designer of the collection Jeremy Scott wanted to capture the iconic themes of the movement and modernize them to current times. The collection consisted of many symbols and colours used in the fast-food chain McDonalds.

This heart shaped motif on this garment (see Fig. 3) draws in the comparison between fast – food and the huge issue of fast fashion (Blanks, 2014). This comparison is a reminder of how Pop Art represents the culture of consumerism today, selling fast fashion clothes as the mass fast – food chain does. As the issue of fast fashion is very prominent in society today, I think incorporating this piece in my show will help to modernize the movement and show how the movement of the 60s is still influencing designers today.



Figure 4: YSL Mondrian Dress Fall/Winter. 1965

The iconic Yves Saint Laurent (YSL) cocktail dress of 1965 made from a jersey and silk blend (see Fig. 4) comprised of black lines and blocks of white and bright primary colours referencing the abstract work of Mondrian. The simplistic geometric lines and bold colours gave the collection a modern feel which became very successful. '*Fashion is art, and you are the canvas*', stated by the designer showcases how this was one of the first examples of fine art and fashion blended together (Met Museum, 2022b). After the success of the Mondrian Dress, in 1966 the designer created a range of dresses inspired by Andy Warhol's Pop Artwork, and then again in 1980 based on another abstract artist Picasso (Verner, 2022).

Fine art remains a core inspiration for the YSL fashion house, and the 1960 Mondrian dress continues to be seen as one of the fashion houses most iconic successful designs. Overall, the piece would work well with the other work on show in my exhibition, Yves Saint Laurent has captured the contemporary abstract style of the movement, that I want to get across to the public within my exhibition.



Figure 5: Iceberg Collection. Inspired by Lichtenstein. 2001

Roy Lichtenstein, another leading figure within the pop art movement, created work inspired by advertisements and comic strips. Using the bright bold prints of the Pop Art movement (Tate, 2022b). This garment (see Fig. 5) was featured in Iceberg and Lisa Perry's 2001 collection (Annika D, 2015).

Lichtenstein's use of the ben-day dots (MoMa, 2022) adds a mechanical commercial feel to the artwork. That would also work well as a comparison with Yayoi Kusama's polka dot style work (see Fig. 2) within my exhibition. I like the use of the bright primary block colours used in this piece and others in the show. Furthermore, I think that these five pieces of work, showcase how iconic the Pop Art movement was to society in the 1960s and continues to make an impact today.

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Yves Saint Laurent. (1965 – 66) *The Mondrian Dress Fall/Winter 1965 – 66*.

Figure 5

Iceberg. (2001) *Ready – to – Wear Fall/Winter 2001*.

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