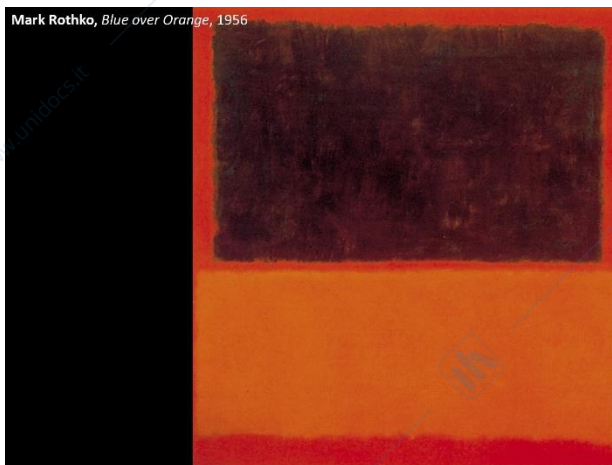


ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM, NEW DADA, POP ART

We are talking about artistic research of the second half of the 20th century. We are more or less in 1945 and there is a fundamental shift not only in terms of political power but also in terms of power between the two parts of the Atlantic Ocean. The capital of the arts moves from Paris to New York. There is a new superpower: United States of America, and in a few years a new war (Cold War) would start in the 1950s. The world would be substantially cut in two; on the one side, Western Countries and on the other, Soviet Union and its alleys. We will talk fundamentally about what happened in Western Countries. It is the end of the World War II and there is a new feeling in the field of the arts. The World War II was fundamentally a matter of rational thinking, engineering, technology, etc. The atomic bomb was invented as a result of human intelligence and the problem was if someone decided to use it (to Japanese countries). The faith for rational thinking that was leading artistic research before the World War II and specially in the period of the avantgarde in the 1920s and 30s was abandoned. Artists still thought that the only way of communicating (specially in the field of visual arts) was related to an abstract language, but they tried to find a new form of expression not related to rational thinking anymore. It is the period of "Informel" (not formal). It is an attempt of finding a new language using abstraction but not using formal elements. The research is somehow extreme and radical.



This is an example by Mark Rothko, who is one of the artists very well know in the USA in the 1950s. He fundamentally interpreted the role of the painter as if he was a house painter. If the act of painting is simply the act of spreading a colour on a surface. His canvases are very huge. This is another feature typical of these years. He is focused on the way in which he can spread the colour in the more effective way on these large canvases.



This is another example: Blue over Orange. The fact that the canvases are very big, the whole environment is pervaded by the colours and by the visual effects of this painting. They say, specially when talking about Rothko's research, that the colour is vibrating and somehow breading, so you have this idea of the colour contracting and expanding (not only on the surface but also in the environment).

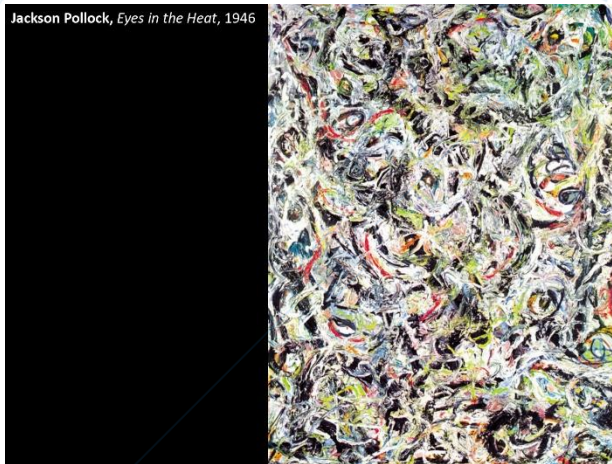


Another extreme and radical research is the one by Piero Manzoni (Italian painter and conceptual artist who worked right at the term of the 1950s). This is an example of his paintings called Achrome. A meaning subtracting colour, but also form and meaning (in a certain sense, the nothing which cannot even communicate anymore after the World War II).

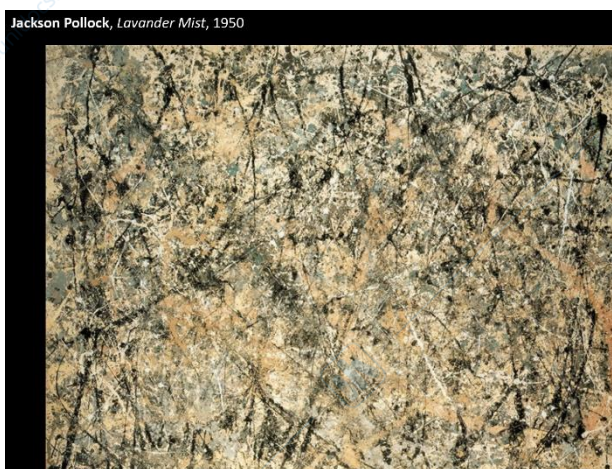


Here we are with the absolute protagonists of those years at the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s. Jackson Pollock is the first American painter who become renowned worldwide. The USA with the new superpower wanted to be also the culture superpower. They absolutely were searching for an author that embodied the American tradition and culture. That is why they supported Jackson Pollock's research. Here you see that Pollock's research is a matter of action. In fact, this

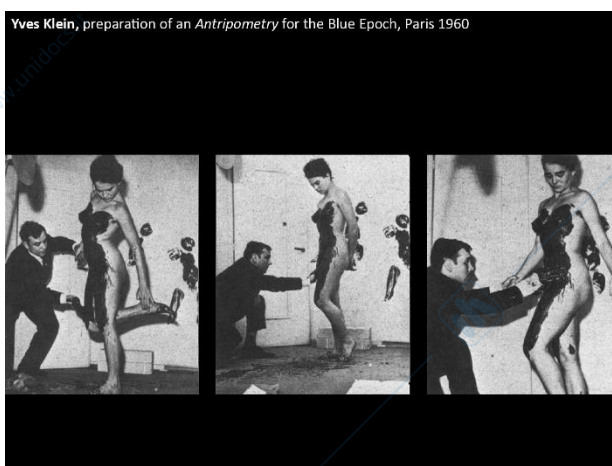
style in the USA is called action painting. There is a huge canvas that is lying on the floor and the artist simply spreads colours on the surface of this large space walking on the surface of the painting, all around the painting in a kind of dancing. Some critic compared this kind of action to the traditional dancing of native Americans. This is a completely new style. Immediately after Jackson Pollock started his research, many others (not only in the USA but in Europe) started developing similar actions or paintings. Summing up, it is the relationship between the body and the passing of time. Philosophically speaking, it is the connection between phenomenology and existentialism that were the most successful philosophical research of the period. It is also a matter of connecting the act (gesture) with communication (speech). What is important is to show the process of producing the painting, so it is a kind of procedural art. Leaving traces of the action of painting in the canvas is in a certain sense leaving traces of life. There is another interesting issue in this. These are very thick paintings. What you see in the pictures must represent the aspect of the works of art. Colours are like a vast relief (?) and the quality of this painting cannot be reproduced with a normal printer. So there is a kind of fight against the idea of an art that can be technically reproduced. Jackson Pollock's paintings are not reproduceable. There is also a fight against the role of the machines.



all these eyes. In fact, Pollock at the very beginning met the tradition of European art through surrealist masters who moved from Paris to New York at the end of the 1930s.



have been about. He has no fear of making changes (destroying the image, etc) because the painting has a life of its own. Professor says that is a power inside a canvas and he is simply trying to get it come through with the action; using his body but not designing the drawing (not using his head but the power of his body).



important the pictures of the process rather than looking at the final result that is the following slide.

This is one of the early works by Pollock. We are in 1946 and this is a very beautiful painting called Eyes in the Heat. These eyes floating in this strange atmosphere of lines has a mature style in which Pollock develops different techniques and specially what we call the "colour dripping", which means pouring a colour on a can which has holes on the bottom. Simply dripping out from the can you have the colour producing the lines on the surface of the canvas. Here you have still a kind of surrealistic atmosphere with

This is a typical work by Pollock using dripping technique. It is a very huge canvas (more or less is 3x4m), so this is not fundamentally a painting but a whole wall. If put in a gallery, it would be the equivalent of the whole wall of a room. Again you have this environmental effect; you find yourself completely surrounded by the forces that are represented on the surface of the canvas. Pollock says when he is in his painting, he is not aware of what he is doing. It is only a sort of get acquainted period that he sees where

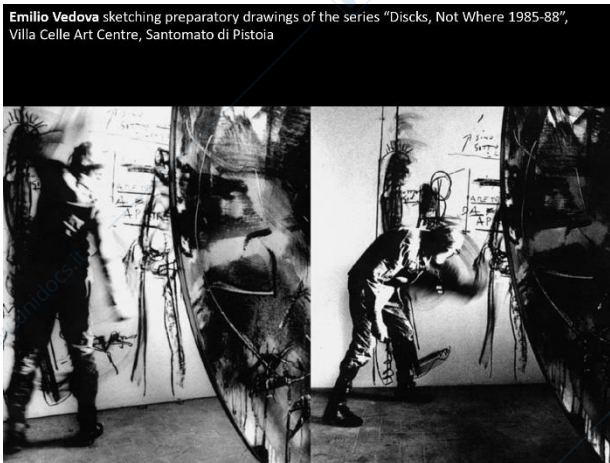
Here we are with another very famous artist of the same period back in Europe (Paris); Yves Klein. Again you see it is a matter of process, of action. The painter is not using brushes but the whole body of a model spreading the colour on the canvas and will somehow print the canvas with the shape of her body. This is a strange and tricky thing of a game, in a certain sense. There is a playful part in this art of using the whole body of a model as a brush or print. Again it is much more



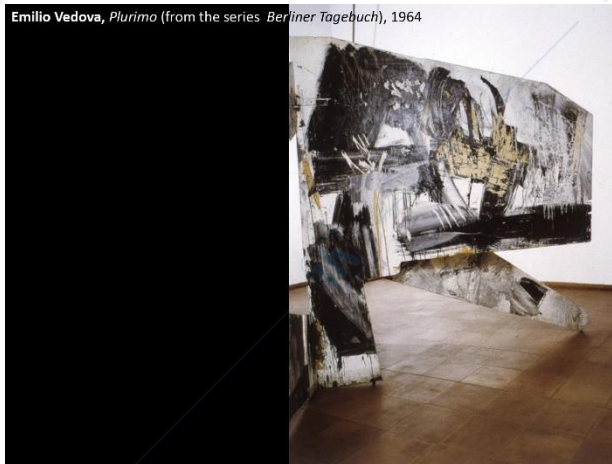
This is the typical Antropometria by Yves Klein. You can see the model printing the surface 4 times.



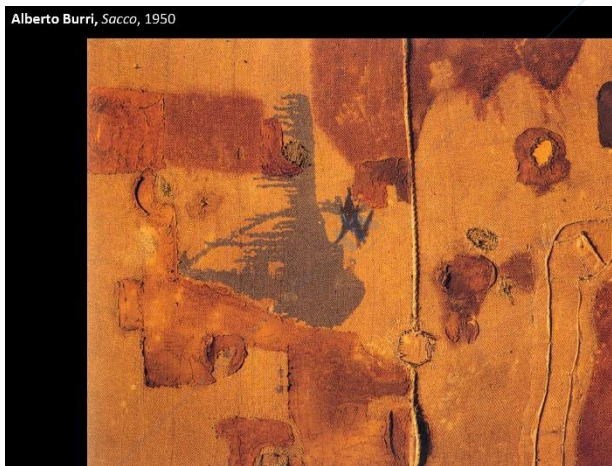
Another artist is the Italian Emilio Vedova. He is in the bottom left part of the picture and he is painting this large disc, completely covered by painting. In a certain sense, he is the same thing that the painting. He is completely inside the painting, his body is strongly immersed into the painting itself. It is still a matter of acting on the surface. The difference between Jackson Pollock and Emilio Vedova is the attitude.



Vedova is really fighting against the surface. You can see the violence of his gesture is much more evident. He not only uses normal paintings but also glue, sand, etc. so the surface of the work of art when is finished it gives strange sensations of being covered by body fluids. The surface of Emilio Vedova's work is a kind of living being.



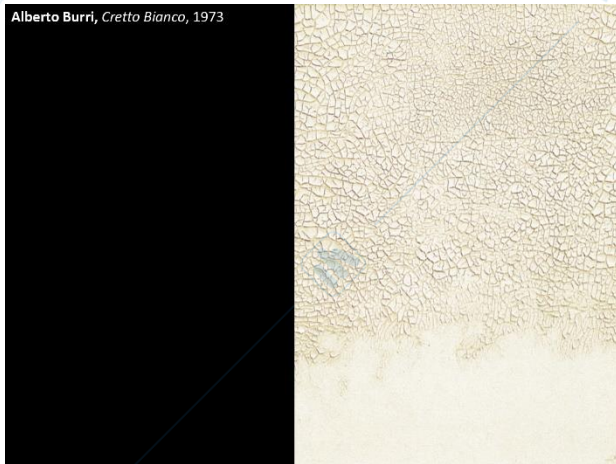
This is from a series that he called *Berliner Tagebuch* meaning Berlin Diary. He went to Berlin in 1964 and stayed there for a period. Only three years before, the German city was cut in two: the western part of the city was completely divided from the eastern part that was the capital of the democratic German republic under the control of the Soviet Union (west Berlin was still part of the federal German republic but completely isolated as a city). That is why there is a strong political meaning in these series of works. Vedova walked across the city and especially close to the neighbourhood that was cut by the wall picking up art objects, wasted materials, cardboards, etc. and using them to make this kind of installations. In this there is an attitude that is related to dadaism: picking up wasted things was a typical procedure adopted by the practitioners. In fact, there is a link between Dada attitude (antirational attitude of Dadaists) during the World War I and some of these artists after the World War II.



This is another very famous Italian artist of the period, well-known worldwide: Alberto Burri. Burri was the physician who got his degree immediately after the starting of the war. Then, he went as a soldier in the world and was captured by the Americans in 1943 and reported in Texas, in a concentration camp for soldiers. When he came back to Italy, he started using these large surfaces that are simply sacks (mended sacks). This action of mending the surfaces (fabrics) remind us the idea of a surgical procedure like mending scars or making sutures. There is a link between his new formal profession of physician and this idea of mending kind of wounds. There is still a memory of the war.

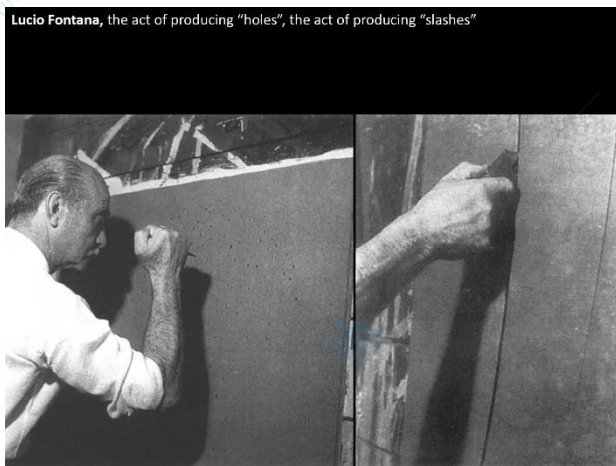


He started using several other materials in the 1950s and 1960s. Especially industrial materials as this one. You have a large plastic sheet on a large canvas that has been burnt in some parts so you have the traces of the fire that has burnt the plastic surface.

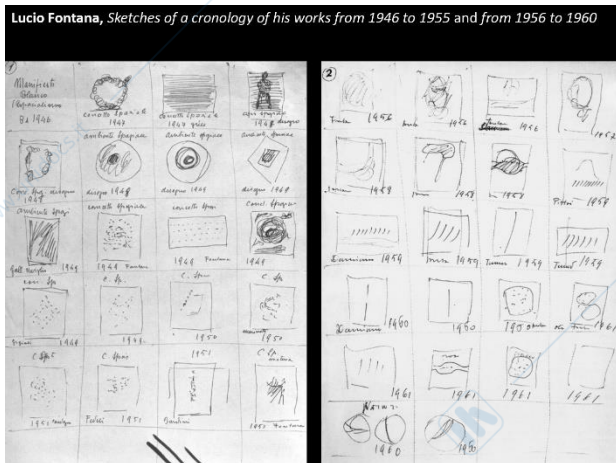


This is again a cardboard covered with a thick layer of chalk. Using the fire, Burri dried the surface and produced this typical effect. The final result comes out using heat and fire. In a certain sense, Burri was the master of fire. This is quite interesting because fire is probably one of the oldest tool humans had for transforming the environment. In the particular case of Alberto Burri, using fire is a strategy to stop time. (Maybe it is more evident in the previous picture in which fire has burnt the surface and precisely

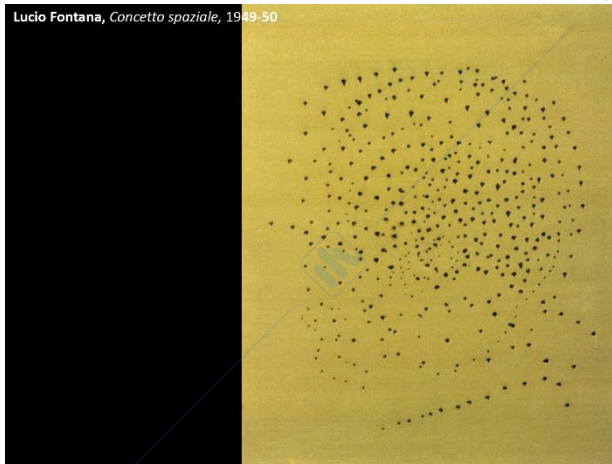
fixed that moment forever). This is the strategy Burri uses: he tries to test the physical property of materials reacting to fire. During this process, what happens is that a moment is fixed in time (stop the flowing of time). In a certain sense, he stops the action.



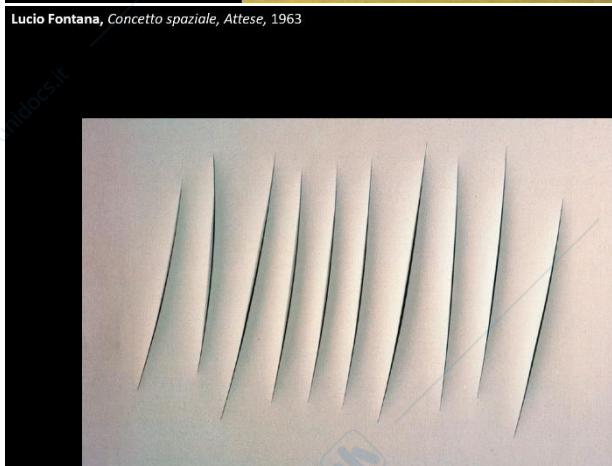
Another Italian artist of the moment that was very famous is Lucio Fontana. Fontana is testing the aesthetic power of action. Here you see the typical gesture of Fontana; the act of piercing the surface of the canvas and the act of subtracting (on one side producing holes and on the other slashes).



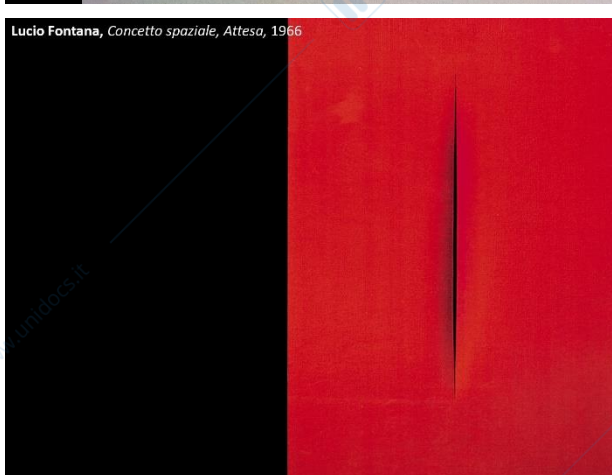
These are a couple of pages in his sketchbook. The fundamental difference between Fontana's research and the typical research of all action painters is that this is a formal research; there is an idea behind, a design of a process. It is a rational process. This makes the fundamental difference.



This is a typical canvas covered by wholes, all are named "Spacial Concepts". It is the concept of the space. There is a space represented in the canvas although the canvas is simply a surface usually covered by a single colour (in this case yellow).



Here you have a complete white surface cut by slashes. This is again the idea of representing the space. In this particular case the title is also "Waiting". We are waiting for something, still in front of the canvas thinking or waiting for something. It was hard to imagine that Fontana was fascinated by technology.



This is a picture professor likes a lot. It is a single slash cutting the canvas in the middle. Fontana defines this painting as spaces that become definitely orphan of the horizon. That is again the idea of the horizon that we have lost. When talking about the horizon we were with Malevich, exploring a completely different space compared to that of perspective. Here we are more or less in the same situation. Fontana was very fund of technology and in the late 1950s and early 60s, he was thinking about the avantgarde (most

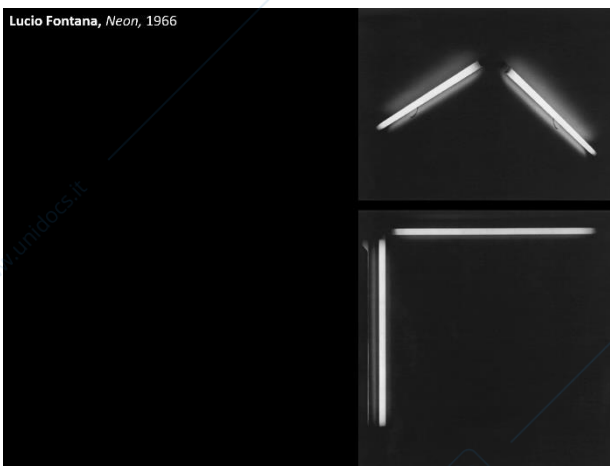
advanced) technology of the moment: satellites, spaceships and coming conquest of the moon. How could art represent this new space (space outside the earth)? The meaning of these paintings is simple: the surface of the canvas is no more suitable for representing new human conditions, it is useless. The only think we can do is cut it and look through the canvas. We can't represent the space anymore on the surface. We have to cut it and look through the canvas, because the real new space is behind the canvas; it is the black line that we see behind the surface of the canvas itself (there is something behind). This new space is an orphan of the horizon. It is no more representable with the rules of perspective (the normal way in which we describe a visible environment).



room in Museo del Novecento in Duomo Square. You always see it shining in the night.



This is another beautiful experiment with neon lights with colours so you can also appreciate the variation of the blue and white neon lights. It is called Neon Ceiling and was made for a very important Italian exhibition: Italy 61, in Turin. This was the pavilion of Sources of Energy so the ceiling, completely covered by these lines of light, represents the power of the new energies.



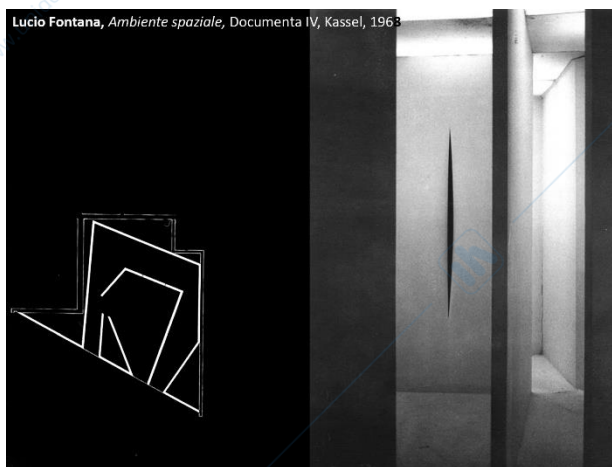
These are other experiments that professor finds them extremely interesting. They are a couple of neon tubes placed at the corner of a wall or corner of a ceiling. It was an experiment that Lucio Fontana did at his own house. He tries to produce a surface simply using two lines made by light. It is an interesting research for interior designers.



These are the original pictures of two very famous exhibitions of the 1960s. The upper picture is called Spatial Environment. This is a small environment designed to be experienced by single persons. You enter the place, and it is completely painted in black. The idea is testing the power of black light. There are very small lamps painted in green that make this very thin lines. Right in the middle of the environment there is a lightbulb producing a particular kind of light: ultraviolet light. This ultraviolet light produces a very interesting effect. This is a typical light effect used in discotheques. The lamp makes white things becoming very shiny and violet. It also makes the colour of your skin becoming very dark, like black. In this strange black environment, you enter the place and walk and if you are dressed up with a white shirt, you find yourself like a shiny body and your skin becomes black. Specially if you are white, you find yourself completely changed by the colour/environment as a kind of shock. This is precisely what Fontana looked for: he wanted us to think as if we were floating in the complete darkness of the space, out of the Earth.



He also experienced other kind of lights and specially completely white lights. Here you have a white environment made in 1966 in collaboration with the very famous Italian architect Carlo Scarpa. Here you have the experience of walking across a completely white environment.

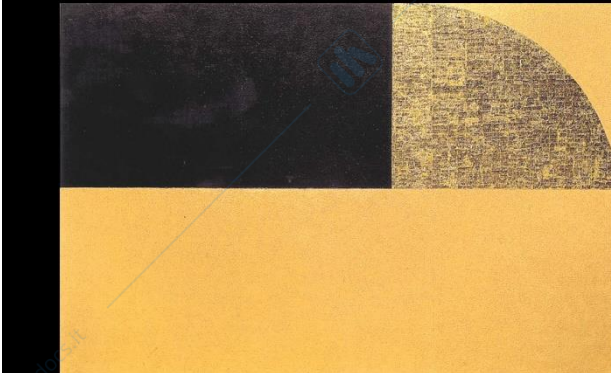


Professor finds this example really interesting in Documenta Kassel 1968. The space was rebuilt several times. As you can see from the layout, it is a strange place; nothing to deal with a rational squared environment. The whole place is really small. You walk through this interior experiencing very narrow spaces, completely white in colour and the effect that happens is your body is a kind of slowing of the time. You start walking as if you were part of a slow-motion scene in a film. You really experience the power of

the shape of an environment and the power of lighting in a particular way. It is a masterpiece, especially for those interested in designing interior spaces.

Yves Klein, *IKB 184*, 1957; *Monopink (MP 16)*, 1960; *Or*, 1960

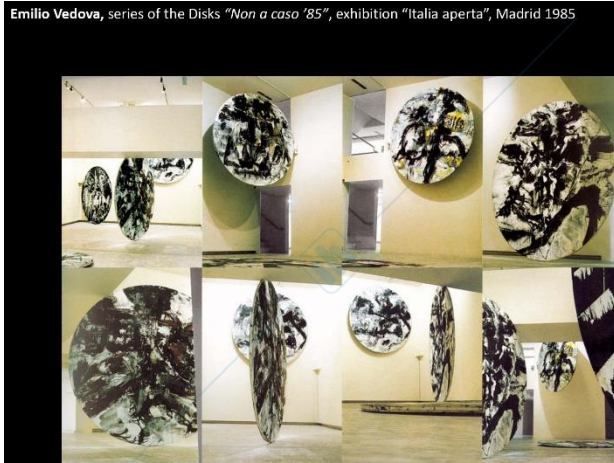
There is a small series of work that are related. These are exploring the relationship between contemporary art (art of the period; of the 1950s) and the history of the arts. When you arise any form of representation, how can you find a connection with the history of the arts? You can experience several strategies. In this case, Yves Klein uses the strategy of comparing colours. There are three paintings, each painted in one single colour (monochromatic). One is completely blue, and it is a special blue: kind of colour that Klein patented and named IKB: International Klein Blue. In the middle you have a surface completely painted in pink, and the third one is painted in gold. Why are these three paintings related to the history of the art? Because they represent the colour of the sky in three fundamental periods in the history of visual arts. To be precise, the gold is the colour of the sky in the byzantine period (between the 7th century and the year 1200). The pink is the colour of the skin in the 13th century and blue is the colour of the sky that we have defined as the final colour of the sky (apart from Malevich). Using simply one colour, Klein is trying to find a relationship between him as an artist in the contemporary age and all the history of the arts.

Alberto Burri, *The Journey No.6*, 1979

Another strategy by Alberto Burri is confronting his own research with the history of the arts in terms of shape and material. The circular part of this painting is real gold. The black rectangle and the whole surface are made with wood. This painting is strongly inspired by the following one:

Piero della Francesca, *Polyptych of the Misericordia*, 1418-1420

This is Polyptych of the Misericordia. You immediately recognise that there is a kind of connection between this famous painting by Piero della Francesca (an absolute master) and the research that Alberto Burri is trying to develop.



From Piero, we go to these series by Emilio Vedova. In this particular case, the problem is how a contemporary artist can use the shape of the canvas in a new way comparing his research with that of the masters of the past. In this case, the master, Emilio Vedova, is looking at his Michelangelo.



He is trying to make a connection between his research in a complete abstract language and the way in which Michelangelo was painting this very famous circular painting called Doni Tondo. Again, there is a comparison in terms of contemporary age and the role of the past.

Until here, it was the part devoted to the art of the 1950s that we usually call "Action Painting" or in Europe "*Informel*". Now we will move to the USA.



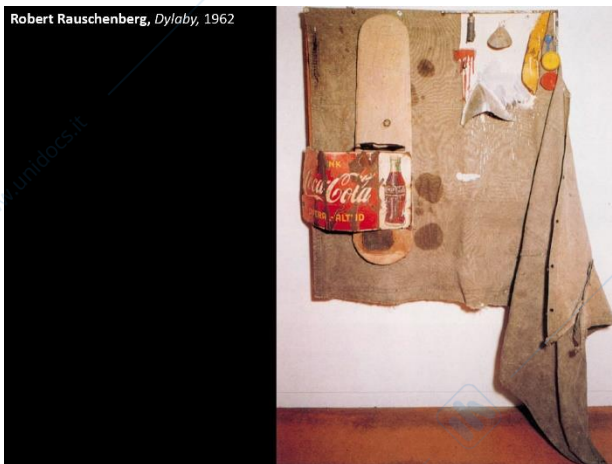
Robert Rauschenberg is a very interesting artist. We were talking about the relationship about contemporary art and the history of the arts. Here you have a completely different interpretation of the role of history in the contemporary age. This is also a fundamental difference between European art and the USA art in that period. USA art in that period is looking at new technologies and media, particularly at television; the way in which we watch television, etc., that completely changed our way of thinking about the

past. In this work you see there is a confused mixing of several different elements, scales and periods. At the centre, there is a copy of a very famous painting by Rembrandt and it is surrounded by other elements like dishes, apple, urban scene and the streets of New York (elements belonging to the everyday life); the urban scene and the past. They are put on the same surface. This means we do not perceive the story as something belonging to a deep past, there is no depth in the perception of the history. The history is part of our present and lies on the same surface of everyday events. There is no distinction, everything is mixed up. This is precisely what happens when you watch television and you change from one challenge to another, and you find yourself once watching something happened today and swapping to

another channel you find historical events. There is no distinction. This idea of a single whole surface connecting all the different times and spaces on the earth is the result of new media. In a certain sense, here at the end of the 1950s we are experiencing an idea of the world that is the same idea of the world we have today due to the internet (we are stepping on the same surface). For this reason, professor thinks this is a real masterpiece: it represents our own condition 70 years before our experience of today.

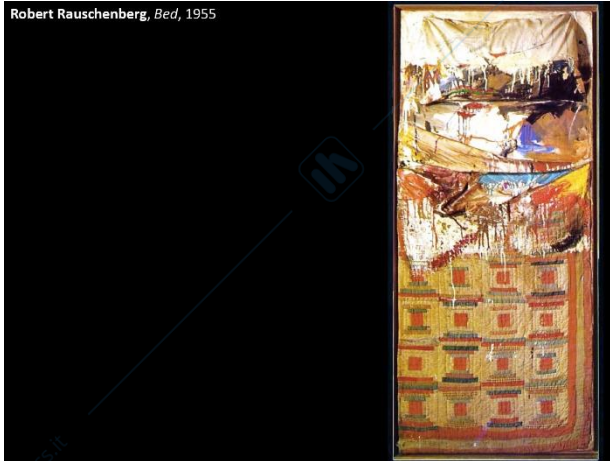


This is compared to different approaches by the typical modern painter of the 19th century. In the upper part of the slide there is Olympia by Edouard Manet that was painted in 1863 and below, Venus of Urbino by Titian painted in 1520. The comparison between the two works of art clearly shows the relationship between the two. Both are more or less inclined on the same bed, the whole environment is sharply cut in two and the description of the space is more or less the same. But the two women are completely different; Venus is a goddess and Olympia is a woman. Edouard Manet is looking at history but transforming it in terms of meaning and updating the content. The content is: what is the role of the woman in the family and in society? The role has been completely transformed in 4 centuries. In fact, Olympia is a prostitute, so she is a woman that knows the power of her body, and becomes powerful because she knows how to use it. In the other representation, the woman is a goddess but at the same time she is imprisoned in her role: the role of beauty (in a certain sense). In this case you have a representation of the relationship between the history of the arts and the contemporary age in a modern way, while in Robert Rauschenberg this mixing up of all the layers which means that you do not have hierarchies anymore between the epochs is a representation of contemporary age.



Again Robert Rauschenberg with this very famous work that is an installation hanging on the wall but being in a certain sense the description of the arts or of what is a work of a painter. In fact, the painter acts on the surface of the canvas but here the canvas is a truck cover. He paints and in fact there is some white painting on the top of the work and then, there are real objects: there is an ironing board and an advertising panel from Coca-Cola. The modern painter doesn't use brushes anymore, he simply represents the elements as they appear in reality. He picks up the elements and organises them on a surface that is itself a real object. You can easily recognise that this is a Dadaist thinking, especially a strategy developed by Kurt Schwitters in the 1930s. The meaning of this work is that when we are facing a work of visual arts, we are not exploring a different space from real space; we are part of the same space. In a certain sense, there is nothing to see behind the canvas, because the work of art belongs to the real space and is part of the same environment in which the viewer is standing. It is an answer to Lucio Fontana. [Professor introduces his personal interpretation]. Fontana says we can no more paint on the surface of the canvas, we have to cut it and behind the canvas we find the new real space. Rauschenberg says there is nothing to cut

because the only space we can investigate is the real space in which we are. (Precisely the opposite).



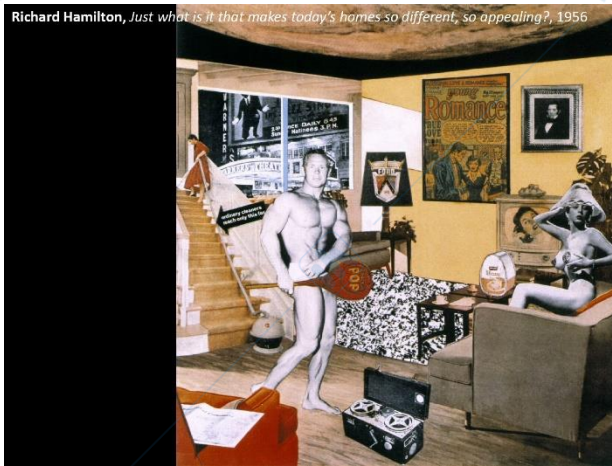
Similarly, when Rauschenberg wants to represent the world of the arts in the very moment in the USA (1955), he uses a real bed. A real object hang on the wall, cut into two: the upper part (where the pillow and sheet are) is painted according to an "action painting" style. The lower part, with geometric decorations, is the other side of the arts; those who follow the tradition of abstract painting. We don't need to paint on the surface of anything, we simply have to look at real things and we will find the objects that can be part of

our research and of the arts nowadays. This fundamentally what Rauschenberg is trying to tell us. For this reason, Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns are called New Dadaists, because they developed a kind of research that was typical not of old Dadaists as Kurt Schwitters' research.



We find ourselves in the UK in the late 1940s, and we see the birth of a new language. This is Eduardo Paolozzi, originally Italian but very well-known artist in UK as one of the forerunners of this new style: Pop Art (popular art). The typical consumerist culture of the USA arrives in the UK after the World War II and invades in a certain sense all Europe. But British artists react before others and try to find a way to represent this new condition. The world of the art has to recognise this shift. Consumerism is the

new culture, so why not the typical icons of consumerism reproduce a new language in the field of the arts? This need is colonised picking up pictures from magazines and advertisings using them to represent this new culture that is, in the end, popular culture. There is an interpretation in this kind of paintings. We can not look at higher culture anymore; if we want to say something really new, we have to look at what people like, what is part of everyday life. Everyday life is the consumer's life; the world of products, mass communication, mass production of goods and the way in which these goods are represented. This is the style.



Another very famous example is Richard Hamilton. He is probably the most interesting British artist in this group of Pop Artists. This is probably one of the most famous works, that is in fact a poster for an exhibition held in London in 1956. It was an exhibition gathering art critics, designers, architects, photographers and even urban planners responding all together to the question: what is tomorrow? This is tomorrow is the title of the exhibition and this was the poster of it. It is really interesting also the title of the poster "Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?". Richard Hamilton himself, defined pop art this way: "Pop art is popular, transient, expendable, low-cost, mass-produced, young, witty, sexy, gimmicky, glamorous, and Big Business, stressing its everyday, commonplace values." The typical features of Pop Art are related to the market, revealing this world consumerism. Professor likes a lot the interior of the poster and thinks the mixing up of several references related to the world of those years can be inspiring, probably still influencing the way in which we organise our homes (there are elements related to the past and it is the typical representation of a home that is focused on beauty and glorifying this consumerist culture). Professor particularly likes the table in front of the sofa, which has on top a can of ham that is a typical kind of food you can buy in a supermarket. There is a very strong ironic sense in all these paintings. They want to investigate this world of consumerism, but they are also extremely sceptical and suspicious about this new lifestyle coming from the USA. This is the typical British attitude: British pop is fundamentally ironic.



Ironic in situations like this; Allen Jones who wants to investigate the role of women in society. He is not talking about normal women but the typical women object like a sex toy. He is representing women as sex toys for men. They become tables and chairs, simply to delight their man. There is an interesting thing about this; these sculptures were very famous in the late 1960s in the UK.

[Professor shows a screenshot from a famous film by Stanley Kubrick called Clockwork Orange from 1971, only two years after the sculpture seen].



Here, there is a strong similarity between the interior of this bar and the sculptures by Allen Jones. There is a nice story about it: Stanley Kubrick was fascinated about Allen Jones' sculptures and he wanted to use them directly inside this Moloko bar (in the scenography of the film). They say Kubrick called on the phone Allen Jones telling him he would be delighted to host some of his sculptures inside the interior and scenography of the film, because he had the same ideas. Allen Jones said he was willing to do so and asked for the salary, but Stanley Kubrick told him he would do it for free because he was going to work with him (meaning he was a renowned person). This is why Allen Jones kindly declined the invitation and Kubrick had to rethink the interior of the Moloko bar in a different way, but still with a strong similarity between Allen Jones' armchairs and these tables in the scenography.



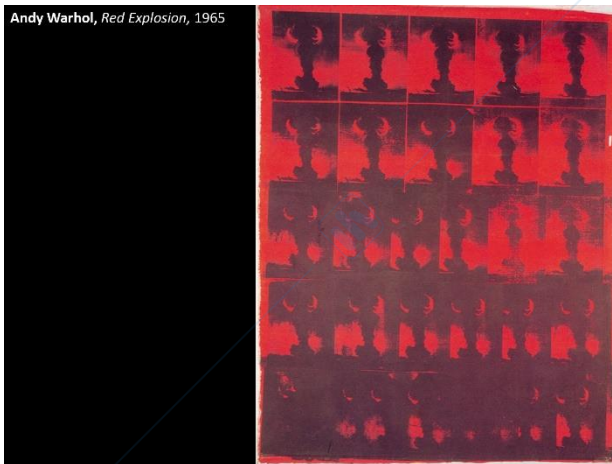
Going back to the USA we find Jasper Johns. The philosophy of this sculptor and painter is very easy. He simply says "I want to represent objects that need no explanation. Objects that belong to everyday life and everyone knows what they are." In this particular case we have a sculpture made in bronze (very artistic and important material) representing some ale cans. What is interesting is also that the bronze base of the two cans is very similar to the typical bronze base of Giacometti's sculptures. Giacometti represents human being fighting for life or being heroes. Here you have the same base used in a certain sense for glorifying two cans of beer. It is normal life.



This is another similar example. Here you have a couple of USA flags. Jasper Johns says "I don't have to explain anything. Because there is a flagpole in any garden of any USA inhabitant. Everyone has a national flag at home, and we all know the meaning of the stripes and know how many stars (50) it has. I don't need to explain anything. I don't need the mediation of an expert; not me as an artist and not the viewer." In this sense, it is a distinction of what belongs to the world of the art, that is cultivated people, and normal people, not cultivated. The art belongs to everyone, it is a very democratic approach to the art typical of the USA.



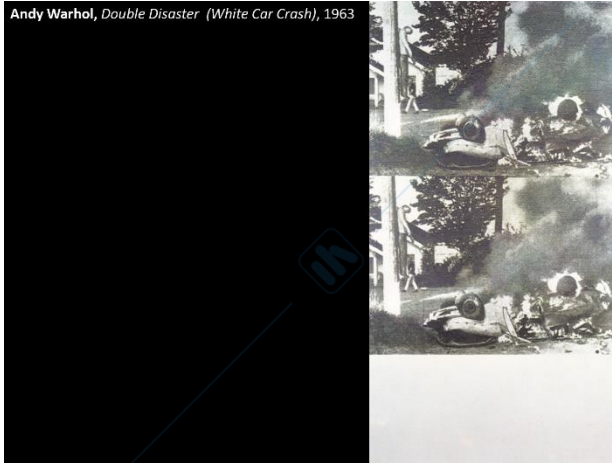
Here we arrive at the core author of American pop art: Andy Warhol. He really represents this new approach in the way it is developed in the USA: no irony, simply the representation of everyday consumer society. This installation called *Various Boxes*, has several boxes printed (not painted) with the typical art graphics of very famous goods you could find in the supermarket (Heinz tomato ketchup, etc). The art goes with the typical objects that you could find in a supermarket. These boxes are not ready made; meaning that these are wooden boxes and each one of them has been printed by Warhol and his assistant. There is a real work dealing with printing. The new painter is not someone who uses brushes or oil painting traditional techniques; he uses a typical technique of the contemporary age. You can reproduce a large number of boxes by printing their surfaces. Warhol acknowledges the idea that we are in the world of mass production, so the artists are not using the same techniques that you can find in a factory (mechanical reproduction). In a certain sense, he copies.



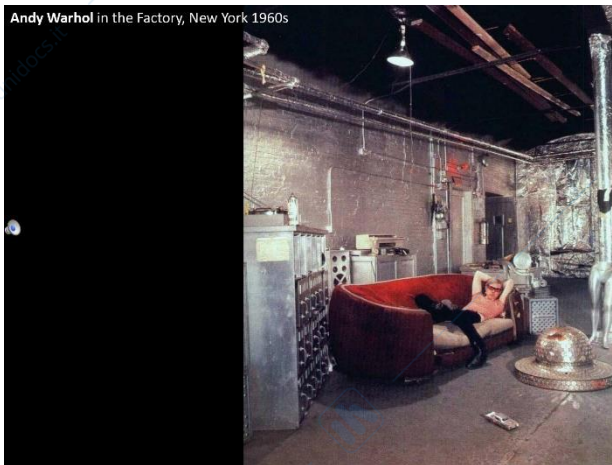
Again, this is a printing. The same image of a bomb explosion happening somewhere in the world. This was a period in which many experiments about making exploding bombs in the atmosphere were developed not only by the American but also French and Russians. Professor belongs to a generation that was in the middle of these nuclear experiments. This is the description of an event. This event is repeated several times on the surface of the canvas. As you see, the image is that of the event that progressively disappears. In the consumer society, also news are part of the system (you have to consume them). The strategy is precisely that of repeating the same news until people are no more interested. This was the strategy in 1960s and still is nowadays. No matter what news are, the more dreadful event of the explosion of a bomb can be consumed.



We also consume or destroy people. The very meaning of these 9 Marilyn, which is a really beautiful print, is again the same. We repeat until we completely lose contact with reality. We don't know Marilyn Monroe; we only know an icon. We only know a picture showing the beautiful face of an actress, but we know nothing about the person. Still, we think she is part of our life because it has been digested by media. It is a process of depersonalization. Even the most famous actress in the world can become a two-dimensional image, nothing to deal with the real person. This again is what happens in consumer society.



Warhol is very cynical; describing an art piece like this he says "I give people what they like. I don't investigate into the meaning of image; I know that these are the typical images people like. When they open up a newspaper, they want to see pictures like these." This is a dreadful image but it is what Warhol likes. Warhol simply picks up images from the papers that he knows are representing the taste of consumers and uses these images for his works.



It is not only a matter of being an artist and producing works of art. It is a whole lifestyle. Warhol was really the forerunner of a new style: a new urban style. For example, he and some of his colleagues in the 1960s started living in this huge, abandoned warehouses closed to New York harbour (what we now call loft living). This happened for the first time in New York, and he was probably the first using a warehouse as both a workshop and a place for living. This is an image for the first factory he called The Factory, and it is

the silver factory because all the surfaces were painted in silver. By the way, silver foil was very successful in that period (1960s) because it had been developed for going to the moon. It was a completely new material which now we use at home for food, but in that period it was a really up to date material which he uses for designing the interior of the space. The other object that is quite important is this big red coach. Warhol says that simply after a party early in the morning they went out for a walk and found this huge piece of furniture abandoned, picked it up and put it into the factory being a kind of central element of the environment.

[Professor plays singing from Lou Reed to have an idea of the kind of music in this place.]

There are many pop artists. By the way, none of them accepted the level of pop artists. They simply said each one of them was developing his own research and by chance, they were looking at the same kind of language. They were not a group and this is a difference between what happened in this period and in the period of the avantgardes. Avantgarde artists were group of artists related one to the other and they really wanted to collaborate. In this case, simply each artist is developing his own language and is rather a matter of art critics, art merchants, who find the right level to send this kind of art. Pop art is a level and it was invented by very important merchants and art critics of the period.



less Lichtenstein is simply copying an image that he found somewhere else. He enlarged the strip fundamentally using the same style, sentences and so on. But if you copy something, the act of copying makes the object become something different; it becomes a detail from a context. You don't know the story, you simply have one single image and this movement from one context to another, even if the image is the same, changes the meaning of what we see. It is a meaningful process, even if we look at it and say it is copied, it becomes something different.



This is James Rosenquist and this is probably the most famous work of art he did in 1965. It is a huge work shown in MoMA. It is a long stripe in which behind you see the silhouette of a fighter-bomber that gives the name to the work as The F-111. But fighter-bomber was used (precisely in that moment) for bombing the Vietnam war. So, behind there is this kind of "ghost" of the war. In the forefront you have several objects belonging to everyday life: there is a truck tire, lightbulbs, a beautiful girl with a head dryer, an umbrella and some spaghetti. It represents really these two different layers of everyday life in the USA in that period. Behind, there is the tragedy of the war; a war that no one wanted in the USA, the killing of many people in Vietnam (not only American soldiers but also the Vietnamese living there) all mixed up with absolutely normal and banal objects of everyday life. It means that Pop Art is not only a matter of representing consumerism; it becomes also (specially for people as James Rosenquist) a very powerful mean of communication for very strong social and political messages. As it happens with Andy Warhol, it seems a matter of beautiful colours but in the end the message behind all these works of art by Warhol is always related to death. Consumerism is a kind of society strongly related to this idea of buying; consuming and buying. Nothing funny.

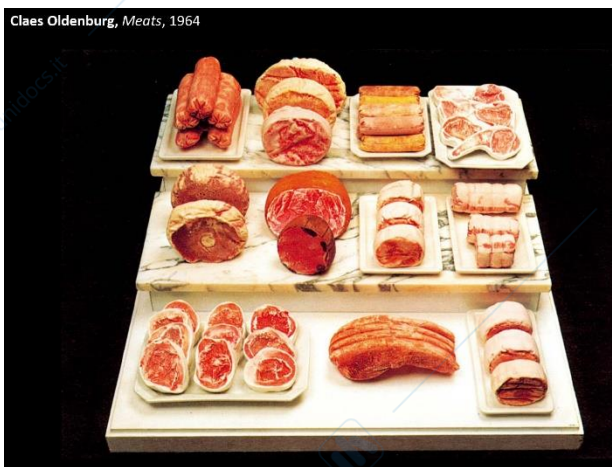
Here we are with Roy Lichtenstein. He is famous worldwide for this particular style. He simply picks up single frames of comics and redesign them becoming paintings. The final result is an atmosphere that is full of nostalgia (because there is a period of our life in which we like reading comics, when we are young) and also irony (because comic strips are not dealing at all with art). Looking at this images, elder people think of when they were young and were reading comics. The other is that more or

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This is a typical strategy that pop artists use: enlarging everyday objects. In this case you have a pan that you use to cook a tomato soup, but the scale is gigantic. It looks like a monument. This idea of changing the scale of objects is typical of Pop Art; not only of James Rosenquist but of Claes Oldenburg.



Oldenburg mixes different strategies. One is that of making very big objects that are very small, or changing objects that are soft and become hard (and viceversa). Here is an example. Claes Oldenburg had a workshop and it was a normal shop along the sidewalk with a shop window. People walking on the pavement could have a look inside and watch Claes Oldenburg working. At a certain moment, he decided to use the shop window to exhibit his works and here you have a display as if his work was the

butcher's shop with all these pieces of meat precisely made as if they were real pieces of meat. It is a display of food that is absolutely impossible to eat.



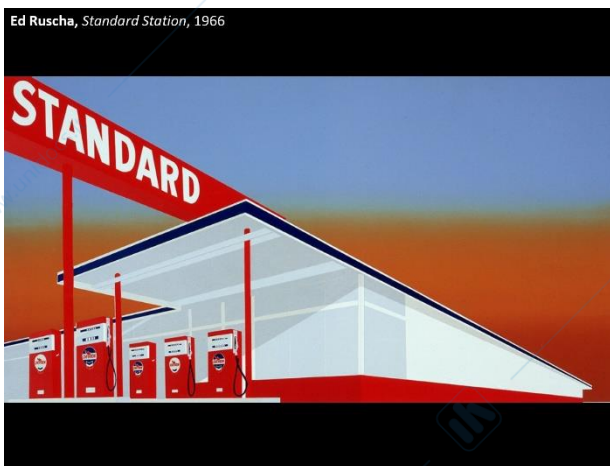
This is another example, the Soft Washstand. The size of the washstand has been enlarged and at the same time, a hard object made of ceramic is soft. The material has been completely changed. Professor finds it nice and funny because it looks like a fat, tired washstand. It makes you laugh in a certain sense. For this reason professor likes the irony by Oldenburg in that period of the 60s.



the American beauty; the new way of being a beautiful woman in this kind of consumerist society.



fundamentally what Tom Wesselmann tries to represent with all his beautiful American nudes.



Ed Ruscha is not precisely a pop artist but belongs to the same kind of climate (cultural atmosphere). They say he is the poet of highways. Highways are really the living place for many Americans in that period; they spend hours a day driving their cars along the highways, commuting from home to the office and vice versa. The gas station is one of the emblems of this new landscape. In a certain sense, we are moving from the representation of a natural landscape into the representation of a totally artificial landscape. There is precisely the place where hundred of thousands of people really live (inside their cars driving along these big highways). The emblem is represented here. What is interesting in this case apart from the beauty of the technique using colours, is also the fact that is strongly related to a kind of constructivist language. You immediately recognise the end on Ródchenko inside this very strong diagonal cut of the surface in two dividing in the lower left to the upper right part of the painting.

Talking about bathrooms, we move to another very famous artist of the period who is Wesselmann. He describes a completely different bathroom. There is a beautiful woman drying herself after a shower. It is a complete environment; a bas-relief. There is a kind of technique that is similar to the one we have seen adopted by Robert Rauschenberg. It is a real environment, with all the typical colours and situations you can find in a bathroom at home, and it is a chance of representing what Wesselmann says is

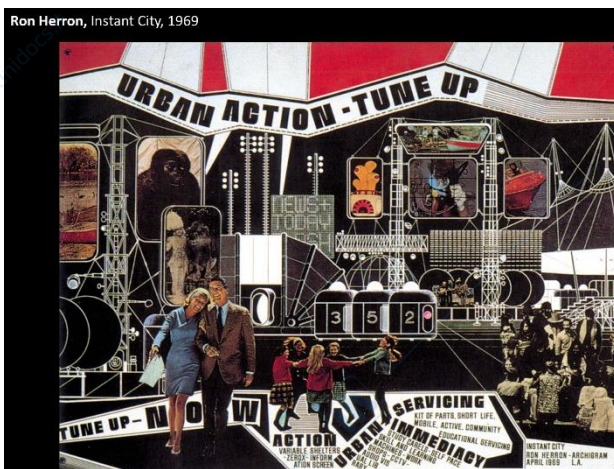
It is even more clear in this work Smoker No.8. Undoubtedly, we are talking about a beautiful woman with this red lipstick on her lips and red nail varnish. She has very accurate fingers and is smoking. The act of smoking was not even in the early 1970s very polite. This woman is at the threshold between two different roles: she doesn't even know if she wants to be still the angel of the earth or she wants to become an independent woman working and having a new social world. She is uncertain what to choose. This is

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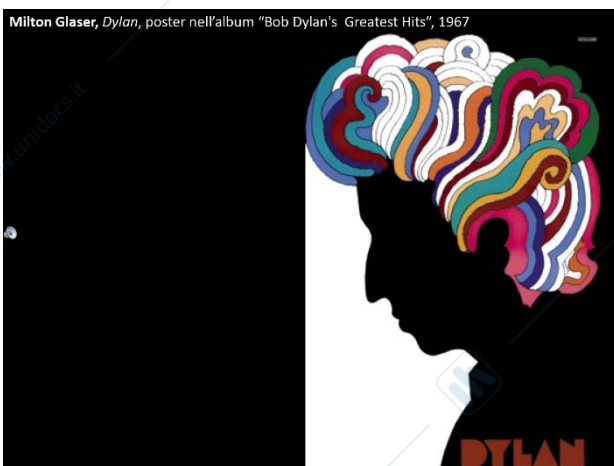
consumerism in the more effective way.

If we move from the very world of the visual arts, it is a period in which other intellectuals are investigating the field of consumerism and in particular, there are architects and urban planners that try to find new meanings for this completely new way of designing the city. There is this book that was published in 1972 and called *Learning from Las Vegas*, which compares the typical nights in Las Vegas fundamentally made with lights and signs and consider Las Vegas as the new city that interprets the meaning of



can easily understand how strong the message that is at the core of many things we say as interior designers even nowadays. We say that the real way of experiencing the urban space is through design, not through architecture.

Similarly, other British artists and architects are investigating the same general atmosphere. For example, Ron Herron, who is one of the architects belonging to the avantgardes. This is an image of the Instant City; a city substantially made of technology and furniture. Buildings disappear, it is no more a matter of architecture but a matter of actions. Living in the big city is simply acting, participating in public life and interacting with technology on the one hand, and furniture in the other. You



poster of the end of the 1960s.

This poster was inside Bob Dylan's greatest hits album in 1967. Milton Glaser was probably the most famous graphic designer of those years and it is the father of what we define as a psychedelic style. This picture is a mixing up of the colours belonging to the pop art. The style of the hair is inspired by the very famous British artist Audrey Beardsley, that was working more or less 100 years before. Then, there is also a series of black and white sharp effects that belong to optical art. The mixing of styles produces this very famous

[Professor plays a song by Bob Dylan.]