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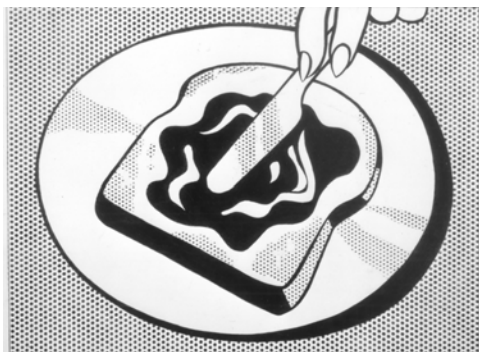
**THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM TO HOLD FIRST
EXHIBITION DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO
ROY LICHTENSTEIN'S BLACK-AND-WHITE DRAWINGS**

INSPIRED BY COMMERCIAL ILLUSTRATIONS AND COMIC STRIPS, THE WORKS WERE ESSENTIAL TO THE ARTIST'S DEVELOPMENT AND ADD AN IMPORTANT CHAPTER TO THE STORY OF POP ART AND THE HISTORY OF DRAWING

Roy Lichtenstein: The Black-and-White Drawings, 1961–1968, Opens September 24, 2010

****Press Preview: Thursday, September 23, 10 a.m. until noon**
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New York, NY, July 9, 2010— Roy Lichtenstein (1923–1997) has long been considered one of the key figures in the development of Pop Art. His signature brightly colored paintings are cornerstones of museum collections the world over. His subject matter drawn from visual fragments of popular culture is emblematic of an entire movement.



Roy Lichtenstein, *Bread and Jam*, 1963, graphite pencil, pochoir and lithographic rubbing crayon. Courtesy Sonnabend Collection © Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

An extraordinary new exhibition organized by The Morgan Library & Museum, opening September 24, presents an important series of large-scale, black-and-white works as a group for the first time and examines Lichtenstein's less known exploration of the medium of drawing. Created during the early and mid-1960s, the fifty-five drawings on view offer a revealing window into the development of Lichtenstein's art, as he began for the first time to appropriate commercial illustrations and comic strips as subject matter and experimented stylistically with simulating commercial techniques of reproduction—the famous Benday dots. The work represents an essential and original contribution to Pop Art as well as to the history of drawing. *Roy Lichtenstein: The Black-and-White Drawings, 1961–1968*, is on view through January 2, 2011.

“The Morgan is delighted to be the first museum to bring together this important group of drawings by Roy Lichtenstein,” said William M. Griswold, director. “The work offers visual evidence of a great artist going in a radical new direction and using the medium of drawing to help him find his way. The Morgan Library & Museum is committed to the study of drawings and their role in the creative process, and Lichtenstein’s black-and-white works are superb examples of this.”

ROY LICHTENSTEIN IN THE EARLY 1960S

The year 1961 was a momentous period of transformation for Roy Lichtenstein. Thirty-eight years old and regularly exhibiting in New York since 1951, he was by many measures already a midcareer artist, working primarily in painting in Cubist and Abstract Expressionist styles. But in 1961 his art made a radical departure from these precedents. Influenced by the happenings staged by Allan Kaprow, George Segal, Claes Oldenburg, and others, which incorporated everyday objects and popular culture, Lichtenstein turned to an entirely new imagery culled from the contemporary world of advertisements and comic books and adopted the graphic techniques of commercial illustration. The exhibition demonstrates how the act of drawing took on a central role in his practice at this stage, both as a favored medium in its own right, as well as a powerful means of translating and transforming his sources of pop iconography.



Roy Lichtenstein, *Bratata*, 1962, frottage and graphite pencil.
Minneapolis Institute of Arts, The Ethel Morrison Van Berlip Fund.
© Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition provides a rare opportunity to study Lichtenstein’s black-and-white drawings as a group, to explore their technique and subject matter, to draw attention to Lichtenstein’s revolutionizing contribution to the history of drawing, and to bring to light the critical insights these drawings offer into the artist’s larger body of work.

The drawings constitute an original body of work independent from Lichtenstein’s paintings. Although he produced many black-and-white paintings during the 1960s, the drawings were in fact conceived independently and cannot be interpreted as studies for the works on canvas. Lichtenstein’s motivations in creating these works—which did not have the commercial value of paintings—remain enigmatic, though the exhibition provides some background. Moreover, these drawings differ significantly from Lichtenstein’s main body of works on paper. They do not belong to the category of preparatory studies and also stand apart

from the drawings of other major pop artists, notably Claes Oldenburg, Andy Warhol, and Jim Dine, whose treatment of pop subjects cultivated an old-master look that is absent from Lichtenstein's black-and-white drawings.



Roy Lichtenstein, *Foot Medication*, 1962, frottage and graphite pencil.
The Menil Collection, Houston, Bequest of David Whitney. Photographer: George Hixon, Houston. © Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

The exhibition traces the development of Lichtenstein's drawing style in the 1960s, notably his technique of simulating the Benday dot printing process—a characteristic feature of his style. The viewer can follow the development of the black-and-white drawings through the rendering of these dot patterns. Lichtenstein never drew them freehand but experimented with a variety of approaches, which he perfected over the years to mimic the effect of mechanical printing.

This technique became inseparable from the meaning of the finished work, producing, in the words of critic Lawrence Alloway, “an original artwork pretending to be a copy.” By imitating mechanical modes of reproduction, Lichtenstein presented a critical challenge to prevailing notions of artistic originality and authorship, paradoxically achieving an unmistakable hallmark of style in the process.

The exhibition also explores the sources—comic strips, advertisements, magazines, and mail-order catalogues—of Lichtenstein's subjects. In addition to the drawings themselves, related sketches are on display as well as clippings from newspapers, magazines, telephone books, and other sources from which Lichtenstein drew inspiration for the works in the exhibition. The show underscores the two themes that came to dominate the drawings—household objects and comic-book scenes of war and romance—and illustrates how Lichtenstein endowed them with a heightened psychological resonance and formal intensity, raising them to the level of high art.

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS

The earliest drawings are also the most basic. A centrally placed, single object often stands against a blank background: an airplane, a couch, a cup of coffee. Others are based on diagrams demonstrating how to use a product by depicting a hand or foot interacting with an object, such as *Hand Loading Gun* and *Foot Medication*. When figures are included, as in *Man with Coat* and *Girl with Accordion*, they have plain, ordinary features, as oppose to the conventional beauty of male and female figures that would soon appear in his comic-inspired works.

By 1962, the drawings began to incorporate more elaborate source images, which introduced more complex compositions. *Keds*, for instance, was inspired by an advertisement for Sears, Roebuck & Company. In a sly reference to contemporary abstract art, Lichtenstein significantly reworked the composition to give greater emphasis to the geometric pattern of the sole. *Bratatat* and *Jet Pilot* are two drawings inspired by war comics. Both are close-up views of a pilot in his cockpit, with much attention lavished on the details of his accoutrements.

The exhibition also includes a piece from a little-known installation done by Lichtenstein in 1967 that represents an extension into three dimensions of his black-and-white drawings on paper. As part of the Aspen Festival of Contemporary Art, Lichtenstein drew with black tape on the wall of a white room, outlining its architectural elements. The only extant part of this project, a door with the words *Nok!! Nok!!* is featured, together with unpublished photographs of the whole room.

Roy Lichtenstein: The Black-and-White Drawings, 1961–1968 introduces an entirely new dimension of the artist's work to audiences more accustomed to seeing his brightly colored paintings. Although Pop art in general has been the subject of a number of shows, they have featured few drawings and rarely addressed the practice of drawing by Pop artists.

The exhibition is organized by Isabelle Dervaux, curator of Modern and Contemporary Drawings at the Morgan. After it closes in New York, it will travel to The Albertina in Vienna, Austria (February 4 through May 15, 2011).



Roy Lichtenstein: The Black-and-White Drawings, 1961–1968 is underwritten by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Major support is provided by an anonymous donor, The Broad Art Foundation, Doris Fisher, Agnes Gund, and Larry Gagosian, with additional assistance from Barbara Bertozzi Castelli, the Dedalus Foundation, Inc., and David Nash and Lucy Mitchell-Innes.

The Terra Foundation for American Art is dedicated to fostering exploration, understanding, and enjoyment of the visual arts of the United States for national and international audiences. Recognizing the importance of experiencing original works of art, the foundation provides opportunities for interaction and study, beginning with the presentation and growth of its own art collection in Chicago. To further cross-cultural dialogue on American art, the foundation supports and collaborates on innovative exhibitions, research, and education programs. Implicit in such activities is the belief that art has the potential both to distinguish cultures and to unite them.



The Morgan exhibition program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

PUBLICATION

A 208-page fully illustrated catalogue, compiled by Isabelle Dervaux, is produced in association with this exhibition. It will include essays by Graham Bader, Clare Bell, Thomas Crow, Isabelle Dervaux, and Margaret Holben Ellis and Lindsey Tyne and provides a detailed analysis of the drawings, their subjects, sources, and technique. In addition, it addresses the key exhibition themes: the significance of the drawings within Lichtenstein's oeuvre and their unique place in the art and culture of the 1960s.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Symposium

Lichtenstein in Context: Drawing in the 1960s

This half-day symposium explores the role of drawing in the 1960s in the work of Lichtenstein and his contemporaries. It will address the technique, style, and function of drawing in Pop, Minimal, and Conceptual art. Speakers to be announced. For a complete agenda, visit www.themorgan.org. This program coincides with the exhibition *Roy Lichtenstein: The Black-and-White Drawings, 1961–1968*.
Saturday, November 20, 2–5 pm

Films

Roy Lichtenstein on Screen

To coincide with the exhibition *Roy Lichtenstein: The Black-and-White Drawings, 1961–1968*, the Morgan is screening several films that examine the work of Lichtenstein and his contemporaries.

Roy Lichtenstein

(1976, 53 minutes)

Director: Michael Blackwood

In this film by acclaimed director Michael Blackwood, we travel to Lichtenstein's Long Island studio and observe, from start to finish, the creation of one of his most elaborate compositions, *The Artist's Studio*. During the process, narrated by Lichtenstein himself, we learn that his parody of works of such artists as Picasso, Matisse, and Leger, serves to portray his ideas about what art—its imagery and stylistic modes—is. Courtesy of Michael Blackwood Productions.

followed by:

The Drawings of Roy Lichtenstein 1961–1986

(1987, 20 minutes)

Directors: Edgar B. Howard and Seth Schneidman

Lichtenstein once said that drawing was “a way of describing my thoughts as quickly as possible.” This lively look at Lichtenstein's vision and technique provides a useful overview of his work, showing the genesis of many of his great works as they evolve from drawings into the slick, industrial style surfaces we all know. Produced in association with The Museum of Modern Art. Courtesy of Checkerboard Film Foundation, New York.

Friday, October 1, 7 pm

American Art in the 1960s

(1973, 57 minutes)

Director: Michael Blackwood

This film examines the key figures of the 1960s, including Rauschenberg and Johns, two contemporaries of Lichtenstein who were crucial transitional figures between abstract expressionism and the sensibilities of the new decade. *American Art in the 1960s* explores how the art of that time mirrored the optimism and affluence, as well as the technology and crassness of those boom years. Courtesy of Michael Blackwood Productions.

Friday, November 12, 7 pm

Family Program

Dot Dot Dot: Do Pop Art

After a short tour of *Roy Lichtenstein: The Black-and-White Drawings, 1961–1968* with educator and artist Sarah Mostow, children will explore the versatility of the black dot, a trademark of the famed Pop artist. They will take a new look at daily objects, such as a shoe, a watch, a cell phone, or a glass, and, using the stencil technique, they will interpret them in a palette of grays. Appropriate for ages 6–12. This workshop is limited to families with children. There is a limit of two adult tickets per family.

Saturday, October 2, 2–4 pm

Gallery Talk

Roy Lichtenstein: The Black-and-White Drawings, 1961–1968

Isabelle Dervaux, Curator, Modern and Contemporary Drawings, Department of Drawings and Prints, and Margaret Holben Ellis, Director of the Thaw Conservation Center, The Morgan Library & Museum

Friday, October 22, 7 PM

The Morgan Library & Museum

A complex of buildings in the heart of New York City, The Morgan Library & Museum began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan, one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today, more than a century after its founding, the Morgan serves as a museum, independent research library, musical venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. Located at Madison Avenue and 36th Street, with a world-renowned collection that ranges from Rembrandt to Picasso, Mozart to Bob Dylan, Dickens to Hemingway, and Gutenberg Bibles to Babar the elephant, The Morgan Library & Museum maintains a unique position among cultural institutions in New York, the nation, and the world.

General Information

The Morgan Library & Museum

225 Madison Avenue, at 36th Street, New York, NY 10016-3405

212.685.0008

www.themorgan.org

Hours

Tuesday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; extended Friday hours, 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; closed Mondays, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Day. The Morgan closes at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve.

Admission

\$12 for adults; \$8 for students, seniors (65 and over), and children (under 16); free to Members and children, 12 and under accompanied by an adult. Admission is free on Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m. Admission is not required to visit the Morgan Shop.