**Lesson 11**

**Pop Art**

*Before you read*

**Warm-up questions**

Is ‘Pop art’ specialized for the youth only? Is there any capitalist

motivation underneath the ‘Pop art’? Where are the origins of ‘Pop art’?

What is ‘Pop art’ famous for? Can you name some ‘Pop’ artist in our

country?

**Skimming the text**

Read the text’s title (headings and subheadings) and

• Write some of the text’s keywords in the following blanks.

……………… ……………… ………………… ………………

• Write the names of some important people and places given in the

reading passage.

……………… ……………… ………………… ………………

• Read the first sentences of each paragraph. What do you think the

reading is probably about?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

**Group work (classroom activity)**

Discuss the following terms in groups and compare your answers with

your partners.

• Optimism • Commercial art

• Mass-culture • Architectural scale

• The media • Globalization

*Part Ι. Reading*

**Pop Art**

**THE COURSE TEXT and WORKSHEET (required to be completed and submitted)**

**Name and parallel group (A or B): ……………………………………………………………………………..**

**Date of submission: ………………………………………………………………………………………………………**

[1] ‘Pop Art’ was the art of popular culture. It was the visual art movement that

characterized a sense of optimism during the 1950's and 1960's. It coincided

with the globalization of pop music and youth culture, personified by *Elvis*

and the *Beatles*. ‘Pop Art’ was brash, young and fun and hostile to the

artistic establishment. 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.

[2] The word ‘Pop’ was coined in 1954, by the British art critic *Lawrence*

*Alloway*, to describe a new type of art that was inspired by the imagery of

popular culture. *Alloway*, alongside the artists *Richard Hamilton* and

*Eduardo Paolozzi*, was among the founding members of the Independent

Group, a collective of artists, architects, and writers who explored radical

approaches to contemporary visual culture during their meetings in London

between 1952 and 1955. They became the forerunners to British ‘Pop art’.

[3] Some young British artists viewed the seductive imagery of American

popular culture and its consumerist lifestyle with a romantic sense of irony

and a little bit of envy. They saw America as being the land of the free -

free from the crippling conventions and a more inclusive, youthful culture

that embraced the social influence of mass-media and mass-production.

‘Pop Art’ became their mode of expression in this search for change. The

‘Dadaists’ had created irrational combinations of random images to

provoke a reaction from the establishment of their day. British ‘Pop’

artists adopted a similar visual technique but focused their attention on the

mass imagery of popular culture which they waved as a challenge.

[4] ‘Pop art’ in America evolved in a slightly differently way to its British

counterpart. American ‘Pop Art’ was both a development of and a reaction

against ‘Abstract Expressionist’ painting. ‘Abstract Expressionism’ was

the first American art movement to achieve global acclaim but, by the

mid-1950's, many felt it had become too introspective and elitist.

American ‘Pop Art’ evolved as an attempt to reverse this trend by

reintroducing the image as a structural device in painting, to pull art back

from the obscurity into the real world again. Around 1955, two remarkable

artists emerged who would lay the foundations of a bridge between

‘Abstract Expressionism’ and ‘Pop Art’. They were *Jasper Johns* and

*Robert Rauschenberg*, the forerunners of American ‘Pop Art’.

**JASPER JOHNS (1930-….)**

[5] If there was one artist who personified ‘Pop Art’ it was *Andy Warhol*. He

originally worked as a ‘commercial artist’ and his subject matter was

derived from the imagery of mass-culture: advertising, comics, newspapers,

TV and movies. *Warhol* embodied the spirit of American popular

culture and elevated its imagery to the status of museum art. He used

second-hand images of celebrities and consumer products which he

believed had an intrinsic banality that made them more interesting. He felt

that they had been stripped of their meaning and emotional presence

through their mass-exposure.

**ANDY WARHOL (1928-1987)**

[6] *Claes Oldenburg* was the ‘Pop’ Artist who gravitated towards sculpture

more than any of his contemporaries. At the start of 1960's he was

involved in various ‘Happenings’; spontaneous, improvised, artistic events

where the experience of the participants was more important than an end

product. *Oldenburg*'s work is full of humorous irony and contradiction: on

one hand he makes hard objects like a bathroom sink out soft sagging

vinyl, while on the other he makes soft objects like a cheeseburger out of

hard painted plaster. He also subverts the relative size of objects by taking

small items like the spoon and cherry above and recreating them on an

architectural scale.

**CLAES OLDENBURG (1922-…..)**

*Part ΙΙ. Word study: Pronunciations, definitions and examples*

**Austerity (n.) /**ɒˈstɛrɪti/

Extreme plainness and simplicity of style or appearance.

*The war-time's* ***austerity*** *was bitter but memorable.*

**Brash (adj.)** /bræʃ/

(1) Self-assertive in a rude, noisy, or overbearing way. (2) Strong,

energetic, or irreverent.

*The science community uses* ***brash*** *approaches to discredit superstitions.*

**Celebrity (n.) /**səˈlebrəti/

A famous person.

*Each country's* ***celebrities*** *are usually rich.*

**Coincide (v.) /**ˌkəʊɪnˈsʌɪd/

Occur at or during the same time.

*When heavy winds* ***coincide*** *with high tides, it becomes impossible for the*

*fishing boats to go to the sea.*

**Cripple (adj.) /**ˈkripəl/

(1) Cause (someone) to become unable to move or walk properly. (2)

Paralyze.

*There will be an attempt to severely* ***cripple*** *this emerging new market to*

*protect the existing one.*

**Elevate (v.) /**ˈɛlɪveɪt/

Raise or lift (something) up to a higher position.

*Thanks for trying to inform and* ***elevate*** *the public's awareness.*

**Envy (n.) /**ˈenvi/

A feeling of discontented or resentful longing aroused by someone else's

possessions, qualities, or luck.

*The tensions between the sisters, who* ***envy*** *each other's lives, has lasted*

*for nine now.*

**Forerunner (n.) /**ˈfɔːrʌnər/

A person or thing that precedes the coming or development of someone or

something else.

*His design was the* ***forerunner*** *of the majority of present-day telescopes.*

**Gravitate (v.) /**ˈɡrævɪteɪt/

Move toward or be attracted to a place, person, or thing.

*We* ***gravitate*** *toward people who share our view of the world.*

**Introspective (adj.) /**intrəˈspektiv/

Given to examining own sensory and perceptual experiences.

*Music at that time was contemplative and* ***introspective****.*

**Obscurity (n.) /**əbˈskju:riti/

The quality of being difficult to understand.

*Now our understanding of this civilization is threatened with* ***obscurity****.*

**Personify (v.) /**pərˈsanəfī/

Represent (a quality or concept) by a figure in human form.

*In his poem, he* ***personified*** *the autumn.*

**Sag (adj.)** /sæg/

(1) Sink or subside gradually under weight or pressure or through lack of

strength. (2) Decline to a lower level, usually temporarily.

*The bed did not* ***sag*** *after such a long time.*

**Seductive (adj.) /** siˈdəktiv/

Tempting and attractive; enticing.

*There is also a very* ***seductive*** *look in her face.*

*Part ΙΙΙ. Exercises*

**A. Open questions**

Based on the text you have read, answer the following questions orally.

1- How do you define mass-culture?

2- Who were the forerunners to British ‘Pop art’?

3- How were British and American ‘Pop art’ different?

4- How did Warhol personify ‘Pop Art’?

5- Is ‘Pop art’ popular these days?

**B. Comprehension check**

Read each statement and decide whether it is true or false. Write “T”

before true statements and “F” before false ones.

…..... ‘Pop art’ as a movement for intellectuals characterized a sense

of optimism during the 1950's and 1960's.

……. 2. Like other schools of art ‘Pop art’ initiated in France.

……. *3. Richard Hamilton* and *Eduardo Paolozzi* were the forerunners

of ‘Pop art’ in America.

……. 4. American ‘Pop Art’ evolved as an attempt to reintroduce the

image as a structural device in painting.

……. 5. ‘Pop art’ as an instrument can be employed in commerce.

**C. Multiple choice questions**

Read the reading passage carefully and select the most appropriate

answer for each of the following multiple-choice test items.

1- All of the following statements are true about ‘Pop art’ except

…………….

A) ‘Pop Art’ was brash, young and fun.

B) ‘Pop art’ focused on the mass imagery of popular culture.

C) ‘Pop art’ was a new way of expressing anti-bourgeois perspectives.

D) ‘Pop art’ was hostile to the artistic establishment.

2- ‘Pop Art’ characterized a sense of ……………. during the 1950's

and 1960's.

A) optimism B) pessimism

C) capitalism D) secularism

3- ‘Status’ in paragraph 5 is closest in meaning to …………….

A) time. B) degree.

C) condition. D) requirement.

4- American ‘Pop Art’ was both a development of and a reaction against

…………….

A) ‘Impressionism’. B) ‘Cubism’.

C) ‘Post-impressionism’. D) ‘Abstract Expressionism’.

5- Oldenburg's works are famous for …………….

A) their humorous irony and contradiction.

B) their novelty and expressive power.

C) their ‘Expressionist’ style.

D) their consumerist style.

**D. Word formation**

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words from the following table.

Make necessary changes.

**Noun Verb Adjective Adverb**

coincidence coincide coincident coincidently

envy envy envious enviously

personification personify

seduction seduce seductive seductively

1. What does this statue …………….?

2. Famine was ……………. with serious economic problems last year.

3. Do not shout about your good scores. Others may be ……………. of your

success.

4. Finally, his ……………. suggestion made him sign the contract.

5. ……………. is one of literary ornamentations which Hafez used a lot

in his poetry.

**E. Synonym finding**

Find a single word in the passage which means:

1 unfriendly (para.1) ……………………..

2 next to, beside (para.2) …………………….

3 severity, shortage (para.3) …………………….

4 satire (para.3) …………………….

5 paralyzing (para.3) ……………………..

6 thoughtful (para.4) ……………………..

7 attain, get (para.4) ……………………..

8 ordinariness, dullness (para.5) ……………………..

9 paradox (para.6) …………………….

10 observer, audience (para.6) ……………………..

**F. Matching**

Match the words in column Ι with their appropriate equivalents in

column ΙΙ. Insert the letters in the parentheses provided. There are more

choices in column ΙΙ than required.

**column Ι column ΙΙ**

1 elevate (……) a. comic

2 sag (……) b. description

3 imagery (……) c. motivate

4 forerunner (……) d. raise

5 provoke (……) e. noticeable

6 remarkable (……) f. vulnerable

7 humorous (……) g. pioneer

h. sink

**G. Cloze test (classroom activity)**

There are some missing words in the following text. Find the best

choice for each blank and mark it in your book.

‘Pop art’ employs aspects of mass-culture, such as advertising, comic books

and mundane cultural objects. It is widely …..(1)….. as a reaction to the

then-dominant ideas of ‘Abstract Expressionism’, as well as an expansion

….(2)….. them. And due to its utilization of found objects and images it is

similar to ‘Dada’. ‘Pop art’ is aimed to employ images of popular as

opposed to ….(3)….. culture in art, emphasizing the banal elements of any

given culture, most often …..(4)….. the use of irony. ‘Pop art’ often takes

as its imagery ….(5)….. is currently in use in advertising. Product labeling

and logos figure prominently in the imagery chosen by ‘Pop’ artists, like in

the Campbell's Soup Cans labels, by Andy Warhol.

**1**. A) personified B) presented C) found D) interpreted

**2**. A) upon B) out C) up D) from

**3**. A) elitist B) humanist C) capitalist D) Cubist

**4**. A) as B) from C) through D) upon

**5**. A) whom B) which C) where D) when

**References**

Francis, M. and l Foster, H. (2010). *Pop*. London and New York: Phaidon.

Hapgood, S. (1994), *Neo-Dada: Redefining Art, 1958-62*. New York: Universe

Books.

Harrison, S. (2001). *Pop Art and the Origins of Post-Modernism*. Cambridge

University Press.

Haskell, B. (1984). *BLAM! The Explosion of Pop, Minimalism and Performance*

*1958-1964*. New York:. Norton & Company, Inc.

Lippard, L. R. (1966). *Pop Art, with contributions by Lawrence Alloway, Nancy*

*Marmer, Nicolas Calas.* New York: Frederick Praeger,

Livingstone, M. (1990). *Pop Art: A Continuing History*, New York: Harry N.

Abrams Inc.

Source: KHAGHANINEJAD, Saber Mohammad. *English for the Students of Art*. Fars: Shiraz University Press 2016. ISBN 9789644626636.

(Adapted for Academic English course, Catholic theological faculty, Charles University, Prague.)