

But why should I be original? Why can't I be non-original?

- Andy Warhol, 1963

Pop was one of the defining art movements of the 20th century. Pop elevated popular culture to the level of fine art. Simple bright coloured bold images derived from mass entertainment and consumerism entered the art galleries and museums. These institutions had previously only worshipped at the altar of high art.

For many this new art was a shocking betrayal of high cultural values, for others it was a liberating encounter with the world that people actually lived in.

What does the quote by Andy Warhol refer to?



Made in Australia

Made in Australia is a series of multi-plate lino prints created in a post pop style. International Pop, Modernism, local cultural, conspiracy theories, political and environmental references are juxtaposed in a colourful and irreverent way. This series of prints both hopes to add to the confusion and be a part of the conversation about what is quintessentially Australian. In reality it is just a collection images based on ideas I thought were interesting at the time. I have also tried to borrow images and be non-original.
Jonathon Larsen



Deconstructed Pineapple Can

A painting by Maria Kozic titled MASTERPIECES (Warhol) cites one of Warhol's Campbell's soup cans. 'Blowing up' such an iconic image parodies the precious and 'authentic' status of the original – a Warholian sentiment that was widely invoked in postmodern art of the 1980s. These ideas spread to the far corners of the world. A Golden Circle can of sliced pineapple was the Queensland iconic equivalent to a Campbell's soup can. It also needed to be blown up. The artist used Maria Kozic's same fracture lines to emphasize the conversational nature of making art.

Deconstruction is a form of criticism first used by French philosopher Jacques Derrida in the 1970s which asserts that there is not one single intrinsic meaning to be found in a work, but rather many, and often these can be conflicting. Deconstruction became an iconic term defining postmodernism at the end of the last century.

It is often said that art is a conversation. Discuss appropriation with reference to the painting MASTERPIECES (Warhol) by Maria Kozic.



Margaret's Vegemite Jar

What flowers would Margaret Preston have had in her vegemite jar? Most of her prints feature Australian native flora as their subjects. She had a desire to make uniquely Australian images. Flowers such as the banksia, waratah, gum blossom and wheelflower were featured. The artist studied her work when trying to first understand relief printmaking. This print is a homage to her and acknowledges her iconic place in Australian art. She surely is as Australian as vegemite.

What flowers can you identify? Name some Australian artists who paint flowers.



Ned Ned! You are better off dead!

"I sometimes find myself in front of the vacant block where the Inn at Glenrowan once stood. I imagine Ned Kelly walking out into the smoke and mist on that fateful morning of the siege. What was he thinking?", Jonathon Larsen. Maybe he was thinking he would be better off dead. His gang were already dead. Given the suit of armour and the mythology that preceded this moment he would have seemed super human to the onlookers. In this print Ned has morphed into a comic book super hero, bullets bouncing off him and firing from the hip as he walks towards the troopers. Nolan and Lichtenstein are referenced giving the print a certain immediacy because of the familiarity with the imagery. The title is a line from a song by Australia folk group called Red Gum.

Discuss how the titles can confer meaning to an image (text+image). You could also play the Red Gum song and discuss what other thoughts Ned might have been having that morning.



January 26

Australia Day falls on 26 January and marks the anniversary of the 1788 arrival of the First Fleet of British ships at Port Jackson, New South Wales. It seems like Australia day has always been a part of the Australian Calendar. However it was only in 1994 that all states and territories began to celebrate a unified public holiday for the first time on the actual day.

Once upon a time the Hills Hoist clothes line was a ubiquitous part of Australian life. One Australia day many years ago I walked into a typical back yard and saw multiple Australian Flags pegged on a clothes line like drying washing. I was immediately captivated by the symbolism here.

Does Australia Day unify us as a nation or cause a divide. What pop artist is known for using the USA flag in his iconography?



Nissan Xtrail and Meat Pie

Back in the seventies, Australian made cars dominated our lives. Foot ball, meat pies, kangaroos and Holden cars was an iconic advertising anthem. "Built Aussie tough for Aussie conditions" used to mean something, but consumers eventually figured out Aussie made often means more expensive and possibly not as well built. By the turn of the century the unthinkable had happened with the importing of overseas cars dominating the local product. The eventual end of the local car industry looming. The new era of the Nissan X-trial and meat pie had begun.

What do we still make in Australia? Name some Australian artists famous for painting cars.



Good as Gold

This work is based on a well known pop art image of a soda pop bottle top. Castlemaine Perkins have been brewing beer since 1878. Mr Fourex is a jovial man in a suit with a boater hat. He appears on bottles, breweries and the walls of pubs. Mr Fourex has been declared by the National Trust of Queensland to be the state's second-most recognized heritage icon behind the mango tree.

Do you think the character is an illustration, a cartoon or an artwork? Explain why you have made that choice.



No Sense

For people living outside the anglosphere it is probably difficult to understand why we have a head of state living on the other side of the world. Surveys suggest that most Australians do not know who their head of state is.



160a Markam Street

Australian artists of the late 19th century mythologized and idealized the bush and pioneer life. By the middle of the 20th Century the great Australian dream of owning your own home on the quarter acre block had become an obsession for most. Artist Howard Arkley once said, "Australian art has been dominated by the rural landscape and I think there is something false and overrated - it's romanticized or, at the very least, lopsided. Most of the population live in an urban environment."

Do we have any choice but to reinvent the everyday ordinariness of our soullessness suburban sprawl?

Name an Australian artists who turned the suburbs into art. Do you think their work is more real than romanticized landscapes or is the bush essential part of the way we see ourselves.



Harold Swam to the Sub 17-12-67

One Sunday in 1976, our Prime Minister of the day went for a swim in rough seas near Portsea in Victoria. Harold Holt may well be more famous for the lingering conspiracy theories surrounding his death than his contribution to public life. However he is also famous for proclaiming that he was “all the way with L.B.J.”

Conspiracy theories have included suggestions that Holt faked his own death, was assassinated by the CIA, or was collected by a submarine so that he could defect to China. He was an Australian politician who served as the 17th Prime Minister of Australia, in office from 1966 until his presumed drowning death in 1967

Conspiracies are everywhere in these days of lies and half truths. There is even an art conspiracy involving the CIA in the 1950's. The idea is that by promoting Abstract Expressionism they would make New York the centre of the art world instead of Paris. What do you think of the merits of that idea?



The Cultural Cringe

The problem actually predates Australia. A famous Roman philosopher, Cicero, writing in 45 BC said: 'I can never cease wondering what can be the origin of the exaggerated contempt for home products that is now fashionable.' (De Finibus, I, iii, 10, Loeb Translation.)

Our own inferiority complex came in to focus back in the 60's and 70's. This work called *The Cultural Cringe* is alluding to the way we see ourselves as Australians. It was about uncertainty over our national identity and there were some good reasons. A penal colony starts off as a kind of second rate place. We used to be a British nation but we were increasingly becoming multicultural. We were starting to realize that the Aborigines were here first and that modern Australia was built on taking their land.

We have generally prospered by growing or digging things up stuff and then shipping it over seas. Our collective self esteem seems to have grown as our cultural exports began to compete successfully on the world stage. This image depicts a sheep skull with paint artfully splashed across the surface.

What is the connection the artist is trying to make? Do Australians still disdain and disparage Australian culture?



How can we dance?

“Beds Are Burning” is a 1987 song by the Australian rock band Midnight Oil. This song was written to protest the forcible removal of the Australian Aboriginal people, the Pintupi, from their Western Desert homeland, to the Northern Territories. This removal happened over a forty year period. How can we dance and how can we sleep while all this is going on, is roughly the question asked in the song. Families were torn apart and the culture was being destroyed. There has since been a movement back to these areas called the Outstation movement.

The artist has borrowed the famous image of the dance from Matisse. The figures silhouetted in front of the fire are dark while those facing us are light by the firelight.

What possible idea is suggested by this image?



The Big Bannana, Holden Torana, Mr Clive Palmer

The artist wanted to create an image using the Big Banana. He thought about finding Australian icons that had similar number of syllables. He then set about composing a picture around that small list.

When factoring in how this image was conceived do you think the end result is somewhat superficial? Could this random process inadvertently produced possible meanings?



LandCruiser Country

When driving through country Australia you can not help being angry about the carnage of wildlife on our roads. Many deaths preceded one sign just out side Tamworth. Welcome to Landcruiser Country it states. It seem like you have now entered a new land that is owned by a car company. Perhaps here, having a big bull bar gives you license to make life and death decisions. It seems somewhat sinister like Genesis 1:26 and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

If spraying roadkill with paint is not an artistic expression then what is it all about?



Self Portrait in CMYK

No pop art series would be complete without an experiment using the CMYK printing process. The use of Ben-Day dots was a hallmark of American pop artist Roy Lichtenstein who enlarged and exaggerated them in many of his paintings and sculptures. Comic books of the 1950s and 1960s used Ben-Day dots in the four process colors (cyan, magenta, yellow and black) to inexpensively create shading and secondary colors such as green, purple, orange, and flesh tones on the cheap paper on which they were printed. Warhol also used dots in his silk screened artwork but his were called a half screen dots.

How did Lichtenstein paint his dots?



Moon Face

Bert Newton was a legend of Australian Television. He had worked in television since its inception here in 1956. In the glory days of television there were only a few channels to watch, which is quite unlike the fragmented market of today. Then viewers shared the same experience and discussed it the next day at school or work. The TV industry produced stars suitable for a classic Warholian portrait.

Who was the subject for Warhol's most famous portrait?



Jogging at Sunset

The Sydney Harbour Bridge has been front and centre as subject matter for artists since its construction phase. The bridge appeared in work by well known artists such as Margret Preston, Grace Cossington Smith, Ken Done, Brett Whiteley, Martin Sharp and many more.

Which artist in the list above was called Australia's foremost pop artist?