

PLUNDER

culture as material

Exhibition Information

Fiona Banner
Pierre Bismuth
Candice Breitz
Roderick Buchanan
Edward Burra
Melanie Carvalho
Claude Closky
Factory of Found Clothes
Douglas Gordon
Hannah Höch
Pierre Huyghe
Katarzyna Józefowicz
Gunilla Klingberg
Jakob Kolding
Jim Lambie
Linder
Sarah Lucas
John Maclean
Michael Mallett
Christian Marclay
Rivane Neuenschwander
João Onofre
Gabriel Orozco
Eduardo Paolozzi
Paul Pfeiffer
Jamie Reid
Pia Rönicke
Eva Rothschild
Peter Saville
Kurt Schwitters
Fred Tomaselli
Cathy Wilkes
Michael Wilkinson

‘PLUNDER’ celebrates the strength and diversity of contemporary art as it draws from our shared material culture. With a fascinating and diverse range of work by artists from all over the world, it offers a fresh new look at collage.

‘It is curious that almost no one has apparently taken note of a singular occupation, whose consequences are still not entirely understandable, and to which certain men have devoted themselves in these times in a systematic fashion that recalls more the operations of magic than those of painting. Moreover, it called into question personality, talent, artistic propriety and all sorts of other ideas that comforted the tranquil sensibilities of crenitised brains. I wish to speak of that which one calls collage ...’

Louis Aragon
In Defiance of Painting, 1930

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The use of cut paper in artworks was pioneered by Picasso and Braque in 1912, but today that 'cut and paste' approach extends to a vastly increased range of media. Artists now work with video, film and sound in the same way as others work with paper – extracting material from its original source and intended function to make new and exciting works. The exhibition reflects this development, including everything from a small paper collage by Kurt Schwitters from 1921 to brutally edited pop videos by Candice Breitz and a breath-taking animation by Pierre Huyghe. Artists continue to find the extraordinary in the mundane, the surprising in the everyday.

'PLUNDER' is a rare opportunity to explore contemporary art alongside some examples of earlier work that shares a similar approach. For as much as the 'cut and paste' approach of many of today's artists may be seen to relate to the sampling and borrowings of DJ culture, it also has its roots in the development

of art throughout the twentieth century, from the first use of collage through Dada and Surrealism to Pop.

The earliest works in the exhibition, by Kurt Schwitters (Mz.299, 1921), Hannah Höch (Aus der Sammlung: Aus einem ethnographischen Museum, 1929) and Edward Burra (Collage, 1930) point to the diverse possibilities that collage was to offer. While Schwitters' work is characteristically abstract in its final effect, Höch and Burra both create figurative works that have more in common with Surrealism. Two works by Eduardo Paolozzi (Alive with Innovations, 1949 and Parete con Decorazioni, 1949) from the post-war period are typical of his fusion of man and machine, while his use of images from popular magazines point to the developments that were to come with Pop Art in the 1950s.

The exhibition also includes a number of examples of some of the most influential work done for album covers in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Works by Jamie Reid for the Sex

Pistols and Peter Saville's work for Factory Records became influential in visual culture, not just the music industry for which they were made. Reid's iconic God Save the Queen (1977) was one of a series of images he produced to accompany the release of the Sex Pistols single the week prior to the Queen's Silver Jubilee celebrations.

'The Sex Pistols appeared with all the force of a hand-grenade tossed into an arrangement of gladioli.'

Jon Savage
England's Dreaming, 1991

Reid and Saville's works again show very different uses of existent products for new work, from Reid's cut-up newspapers to Saville's use of 1920s Futurist diagrams and many other sources. Along with artworks by Christian Marclay, their inclusion also acknowledges the extent to which the record cover became an important and powerful part of visual culture.

'There has never been a form

of graphic communication so densely charged with private signals, so personal and intimate, or so inseparably fused to the sense of who you are, as the album cover.'

Rick Poynor
Designed by Peter Saville,
2003

While many of the most recent works in the exhibition continue to use the basic technique of cut paper and glue (Gabriel Orozco, Douglas Gordon, Melanie Carvalho, Katarzyna Jósefowicz and others), others demonstrate the move into new territory enabled by the development of video technology, with easy recording and editing. Roderick Buchanan's Endless Column I (1999) and two works by American artist Paul Pfeiffer make use of recorded TV sports coverage. Pia Rönicke incorporates a number of extracts from film soundtracks in her video projection Somewhere Out There (1998)

'The artistic question is no longer: "what can we make that is new?" but "how can we make