

Avery to Warhol Self-Guided Tour

Empiricism: The Five Senses in Art – Examine the ways art invites the viewer to engage with multiple senses



Marc Sijan
American, b. 1946
Gallery Guard, Seated II, 2011
Polyester with oil paint, clothing and accessories
Museum Purchase with funds provided by the Athena Society

What was your first reaction when looking at this work? For a moment did you think it was real? Why? All of Sijan's figures have a story to tell. What story do you think this Guard is telling?

Marc Sijan is an artist who creates life-size figurative sculptures. They are meticulously detailed to create an illusion of reality. This style of art is called "hyper-realism," a term applied to an art movement in painting and sculpture that developed in the U.S. in the early 1970s. It is an extremely laborious process and often incorporates emotional, social, or political thematic elements.

Sijan's creative process is to first decide on the concept or theme of his work. He then selects a model, who could be a neighbor, friend, relative, or someone he met on the street. Sijan asks the person to pose with the emotion he is seeking. For Sijan, the internal emotion conveyed by the sculpture is as significant as its realistic detail.

Sijan constructs a plaster mold from the live model and casts it in polyester resin, after which he applies 15 or more coats of oil paint to achieve realistic flesh tones and details. He then adds prosthetic eyes, hair, and clothing, donated by his model or found in a thrift shop. It takes six months to one year to finish a piece, but he works on several sculptures at a time. Can you see what our Guard's name is? What is its significance?

Sijan says that "Life's experiences are often painted in the faces of these sculptures." Looking at the *Gallery Guard*'s face, what experiences do you think he is contemplating?

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Federico Uribe
American, born Columbia, b. 1962
Oriente-Poniente (Far East-Far West), 2009
Wooden chopsticks and plastic forks
Museum Purchase with funds provided by the 20/20 Vision for the Future Fund

Take a good look at this sculpture. Try standing about twenty feet away, look; then move closer, look again, gradually move closer. What do you see? What emerges?

Uribe came from Columbia to the US in 1988 to study art in New York. Initially he painted, but was drawn to the beauty he saw in simple objects of everyday use. Uribe transformed this attraction into a new, playful and unexpected visual mode. He uses

various common materials from the everyday environment that are constructed, woven, assembled in careful, repetitive patterns. His work is regarded as Conceptual art with visual references to Pop art. Conceptual art is based on the idea that the concept is the most important aspect of the work while Pop art uses everyday objects in new ways. Uribe uses chopsticks and plastic forks to confront our ideas about cultural relationships. Look again, what else comes to mind?

Distance, proximity and perception are key factors in the interconnection between Uribe's work and his viewers. When observed from close, his works challenge our perceptions and create a sense of wonder. They invite a sensory response via texture, form, volume, and color. *Imagine* touching this piece, what might it feel like? (Please remember touching artworks is *not allowed*.)

Uribe says, "I believe that working is thinking so every idea gives me more ideas." What are some ideas that occur to you after viewing Uribe's work? What big ideas might he be suggesting?

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Patrick Archer
American, b. 1925
Fleur et Klee, 2000
Collage and acrylic on canvas
Gift of the Artist

Take a long look at *Fleur et Klee*. What colors, textures and details do you notice? Do you see anything recognizable? Does it engage your senses in any way?

Fleur et Klee is a geometric abstraction paper collage. The paper has been covered with white acrylic paint, which has been scratched to allow the colors in the paper to show through. At the top, the artist has placed four white paper doilies in a row. Just left of center, we see two elements referred to in the title: a reproduction of a Paul Klee painting and a composite flower.

Does the inclusion of this flower activate your sense of smell? Do the warm yellow tones in the collage evoke any associations? Yellow is a strong, warm, and happy color. Perhaps reminding you of the fall and crisp days with the sun on your back, burning leaves, hay fields, cinnamon apples and pumpkin pie.

Archer said, “Great art is a combination of two things. It’s a combination of a worthwhile topic to discuss...and the ability to express it well.” If he does not like what he sees, he paints over it and moves on: “When I paint, I don’t like to paint on a brand new, fresh surface. I like to paint on something with history to it.” What discussion topics arise from this collage for you? In what ways has Archer embedded history into this collage? What histories has he included? Are there any other artists in this exhibition that make direct reference to history?

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Hunt Slonem
American, b. 1951
Finches A and B (diptych),
2000
Oil on canvas
Gift of Guy W.
Clark II

What might have inspired the painter to choose this subject matter? Compare and contrast the colors and details

in these two paintings (called a diptych)? Are all the finches facing in the same direction?

While living in Nicaragua and Mexico, Hunt Slonem fell in love with nature, the tropical birds, butterflies, and monkeys. He has an aviary of more than 60 birds in his New York studio. He lets the birds fly free and calls them his muses. Close your eyes and imagine hearing the sound of the finches. The purple finch has a rich musical warble. How does Slonem concentrate while painting? Slonem uses mantras (a repetitive chant/song) to direct his attention. The sound like "Aum," "om" or "Elohim" helps him focus on painting.

Looking at the different birds, can you see his painting techniques (paint application, details, repetition)? How about the differences in color? The artist often uses a tongue depressor as a palette knife to apply paint, and adds details with both ends of a paint brush. He also pioneered a crosshatching technique used in painting birdcages.

He felt that "there is a transformative power that is built up through repetition" whether it be the paintings of birds, the mantras for focus, or color. Are there other paintings in the museum that emphasize repetition of imagery? How does Slonem's technique compare with these images?

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Andy Warhol
American, 1928-1987
Pepper Pot from Campbell Soup I, 1968
Color serigraph on paper, ed. H/Z
Museum Purchase

What memory comes to mind when you see a can of Campbell's soup? What is your favorite flavor? Which one of your five senses does this artwork appeal to?

The variety of soup in Warhol's artwork is Pepper Pot which is made with peppercorn and bits of tripe, meat and vegetables. What do you think it tastes like? Have you tasted it?

Andy Warhol is considered the founder of the Pop Art movement, using familiar images from American culture and mass media. He would create repetitive series of iconic images. Starting as a commercial artist, he rose to prominence with his 1962 Campbell's Soup series consisting of thirty-two paintings illustrating all of the soup varieties offered by Campbell's at that time.

Pepper Pot from Campbell Soup 1 was one in a 1968 series of ten soup cans corresponding to the original thirty-two soup flavors. Unlike the original hand painted series from 1962, this print, a serigraph or silkscreen, is created when paint is "pushed" through a fabric screen onto paper. This process erases the artist's hand and makes every print precise and identical. Warhol explained his choice of subject matter when he famously said, "I used to drink it. I used to have the same lunch every day for twenty years, I guess, the same thing over and over again."

Warhol continued using silkscreen throughout his career and it became his signature medium. Largely due to him, this printmaking method, which was originally used in advertising, became an accepted medium in the fine art world. Some of his other recognizable works feature Coca Cola and Bandaid, Marilyn Monroe and Jackie Kennedy. Can you think of another iconic food item that you wish Andy Warhol had used in a series?