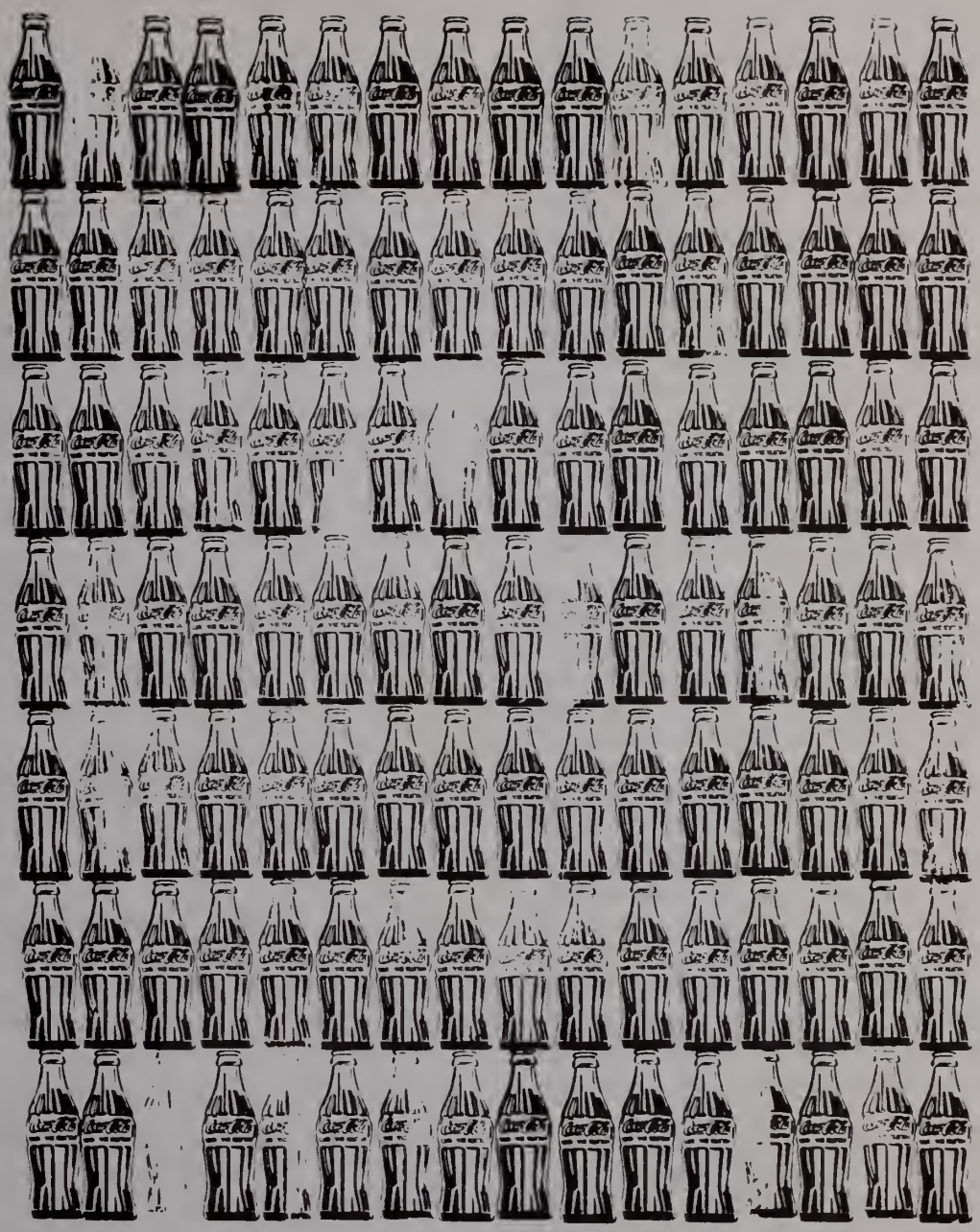
25 STILLS



ANDY WARHOL Green Coca-Cola Bottles 1962

Coca-Cola

WHITNEY MUSEUM
55 WATER STREET
OCT 30-DEC 3 M-F 11-3

CATALOGUE

WMAA denotes works from the permanent collection of the WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Measurements are in inches.
Height precedes width precedes depth.

PETER AGOSTINI
The Clothesline 1960
Bronze, 63 x 63 x 25
WMAA; Gift of the Howard and Jean Lipman Foundation, Inc.

LOIS BARON
White Stag Deep 1975
Oil on canvas, 43 x 71
Lent by the artist

JOE BRAINARD
Untitled 1972
Watercolor, 10½ x 14
Courtesy of Fischbach Gallery

JOSEPH CORNELL
Soap Bubble Set ca. 1960
Construction, 9 x 14 x 3 3/4
Courtesy of A.C.A. Galleries

JIM DINE
The Toaster 1962
Oil on canvas, metal and wire, 100 x 80 x 7
WMAA; Gift of the Albert A. List Family

JANET FISH
Painted Water Glasses 1974
Oil on canvas, 53 3/4 x 60
WMAA; Gift of Sue and David Workman (and purchase)

JOE GOODE
One Year Old 1962
Oil on canvas, oil on bottle, 67 x 67
Collection of Charles Cowles

JASPER JOHNS
The Critic Smiles 1959
Sculp metal on plaster, 1 5/8 x 7¼ x 1½
Lent by the artist

JOSEPH KOSUTH
One and Three Brooms 1965
Broom, photo of broom, definition of broom, 59 7/8 x 75 3/4 x 3
Courtesy of Leo Castelli Gallery

ROY LICHTENSTEIN
Purist Still Life 1975
Oil and magna on canvas, 70 x 80
Lent by the artist

SYLVIA MANGOLD
Floor with Horizontal Mirror 1974
Synthetic polymer on canvas, 51 x 67½
WMAA; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Marsteller (and purchase)

ROBERT MORRIS
Swift Night Ruler 1963
Painted wood relief, 10 x 28½ x 1
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Leo Castelli

JOHN OKULICK
Spirit's Refuge 1975
Wood, excelsior, 28 x 17 x 4
Courtesy of Nancy Hoffman Gallery

CLAES OLDENBURG
Pickled Slices in Jar 1963
Jar and linen filled with kapok, painted jar, 15 3/4 x 22 x 12
Courtesy of Leo Castelli Gallery

STEPHAN POSEN
Quaker Hill 1972
Oil on canvas, 74 x 48
Collection of Dr. Marilynn and Mr. Ivan Karp

LARRY RIVERS
Dutch Masters Silver 1968
Mixed media, 11 3/4 x 16 x 8¼
Courtesy of Marlborough Gallery

LUCAS SAMARAS
Chair Transformation Number 10A 1969-70
Formica, wood and wool, 38 x 20 x 20
WMAA; Gift of the Howard and Jean Lipman Foundation, Inc.

BEN SCHONZEIT
Cauliflower 1975
Acrylic on canvas, 84 x 84
Courtesy of Nancy Hoffman Gallery

GEORGE SEGAL
Still Life with Red Ball 1973
Mixed media plaster, 37 x 16 3/4 x 8½
Courtesy of Sidney Janis Gallery

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Courtesy of Sidney Janis Gallery

SAUL STEINBERG
Perspective Table 1973
Polychrome wood, 30 x 42
Courtesy of Sidney Janis Gallery

PAT STEIR
Line Lima 1973
Oil and pencil on canvas, 84 x 84
WMAA; Anonymous gift

WAYNE THIEBAUD
Pie Counter 1963
Oil on canvas, 30 x 36
WMAA; Larry Aldrich Foundation Fund

ANDY WARHOL
Green Coca-Cola Bottles 1962
Oil on canvas, 82¼ x 57
WMAA; Gift of the Friends,
Whitney Museum of American Art

IDELLE WEBER
Rusted Miller 1974
Oil on linen, 65 x 45
Courtesy of the Virginia Museum of Art

TOM WESSELMANN
Study for Still Life #61 1975
Pencil with thinned liquitex on rag paper,
22½ x 30
Courtesy of Sidney Janis Gallery

25 STILLS has been organized by the nine participants of the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program. The participants are: Judith Bernstein, University of California, Berkeley; Madeleine Burnside-Lukan, University of California, Santa Cruz; Nancy Drew, California State University, Long Beach; Jeanette Ingberman, Columbia University; Andrew W. Kelly; Sarah Massey, California State University, Long Beach; Carrie Rickey, University of California, San Diego; Curtis Roberts, Swarthmore College; Ann-Sargent Wooster, City University of New York, Graduate Center. The Downtown Branch of the Whitney Museum of American Art is operated under the direction of David Hupert, Head of the Education Department. Administrative coordinator for the Education Department is Toba Tucker.

The Downtown Branch of the Whitney Museum of American Art, located on the third floor of the Uris Building at 55 Water Street, is supported by the business community of lower Manhattan. The Independent Study Program is supported by the Helena Rubinstein Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. The museum is open Monday through Friday 11-3. Admission is free.

DOWNTOWN BRANCH
WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
55 WATER STREET
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10041
212 483-0011

25 STILLS
OCTOBER 29-DECEMBER 3, 1975

Whether one places the origin of still life in the illusionistic imitation of nature and of the food and the plates and vessels in which food was served found in the panel paintings, frescoes and mosaics of fourth- and fifth-century B.C. Greeks; or in the symbolic substitution of objects for people and religious concepts in medieval manuscript illuminations; or in the commemoration of the accoutrements of domestic and social life in seventeenth-century Dutch painting, still life has always involved a humanist presentation of objects. These were chosen from the accessories to private or studio life and serve as a kind of alter ego or portrait of their possessors. Meyer Shapiro sees the trend toward still-life subject matter which intensified in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as being indicative of a change in focus of the content of art:

> The preponderance of objects drawn from a personal and artistic world does not mean that the pictures are now more pure than in the past, more completely works of art. It means simply that the personal and aesthetic contexts of secular art now condition the formal character of art, just as religious beliefs and practices in the past conditioned the formal character of religious art...[1]

The immobile instruments of artistic and domestic life have long been used as the subject of art because they are more readily available to the artist than the human figure or landscape and, more importantly, they do not wiggle or radically change with the passage of seasons or time of day. Their very stillness has permitted artists to use them as personal laboratories to experiment with the changes in viewing

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1. Meyer Shapiro, "The Social Bases of Art," Social Realism: Art As A Weapon, David Shapiro, ed. (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1973), p.125

the world (science, philosophy and motion--the actual speeding up of everyday life through the introduction of trains, automobiles, etc.) which were due to alterations in technology and psychology in the late nineteenth century. It is predictable that it is in the area of still life--whether in the apples of Cezanne or the guitars and glasses of Braque and Picasso--that one finds the development of the new styles and sensibilities in painting and sculpture which characterize modernism.

When abstraction achieved artistic hegemony, as it appears to have done throughout most of the twentieth century, a counter current emerges which cherishes and manipulates physical objects. This thread may take the form of an analysis of the boundaries of our normal awareness of the world, as did the Surrealists' deliberate disturbance of known objects--a fur-lined teacup, an iron studded with nails, or melting watches. Or it may be the celebration of the power of material artifacts and environments of our culture, as occured with the emergence of Pop art in the late fifties and the Super-Realism of the early seventies.

In its depiction of concrete objects still life may be seen as part of a continuing thrust toward realism, and whenever contemporary artists choose to work in this genre they are asserting their desire to participate in one of the varieties of realism. But it is within the boundaries of this most traditional of genres that some of the significant differences between current attitudes about art and objects and traditional ones emerge.

The largest body of recent works concerned with still life are those paintings which employ a close-up vision of banal subjects. Paintings of this kind express an urge to get in close and almost microscopically examine the details of their subjects.Frequently called Super-Realism,

paintings such as Schonzeit's Cauliflowers and Weber's paintings of trash and rusted beer cans are based both in their subject matter and their composition on the frozen or stilled moment of the photograph. Although such paintings purport to be literal renditions of objects, and the use of photography is offered almost as a scientific proof of their verisimilitude, they differ significantly from the originals through an increase in scale and the impression they give of being composed of a glittery crystalline substance. The sheen on the objects is probably a product of their having been seen not with the naked eye, but through the glass of a camera's lens. Sharing with Super-Realism the sense that they are photographic trompe l'oeil illusions of reality but enacted in a more subdued manner are Sylvia Mangold's paintings of mirrors and wooden floors, Steve Posen's swathed boxes, and Lois Baron's wet suit. Just as Monet used the strictures of the depiction of realist subjects such as water lilies to make abstract paintings, many contemporary artists have chosen the photographic depiction of objects as the starting off point for an exploration of painterly concerns: Tiebauld dwells on the physicality of paint, Janet Fish deals with the chromatic possibilities of light reflections, and Andy Warhol deliberately exploits slippage in the silk-screening process to make a blurry more painterly image.

In a realist form of sculpture, commonplace objects chosen for their concreteness and universality are introduced as the artwork. Either through casting in plaster or bronze or by brushing on a substance such as sculptmetal, light bulbs, bottles, pieces of cloth, toothbrushes, teeth, etc. are coated with a layer of a hard substance. The masking of the object with a sculptural veneer does not align them with the Ready-mades of the Dada tradition which are often said to be their immediate ancestors:ordinary

objects of commercial manufacture borrowed and used directly as they were made. Instead, in spite of their intention of being literal presentations of objects they may be seen as a continuation of Western realist sculpture.

Since the psychological and scientific work of the late nineteenth century on how we actually perceive and experience the world and its objects, artists have sought to include information about what is a priori known about perception and cognition in their work. In One and Three Brooms Joseph Kosuth presents three of the ways a subject is normally identified: the object itself(an actual broom), an image or visual record of it (a photograph), and its verbal definition(language). The title indicates that although the types of perception are thought to be identical one actually responds differently to each of them. On one level Kosuth is presenting three views of one broom and on another level he is giving the viewer three seperate brooms. Just as ancient Egyptian artists selected the angle of presentation of the parts of the body that would give the quickest identificaion of them--a frontal view of the eye, the leg and head in profile--Jim Dine in Toaster is making a statement about the kind of information needed to visually identify an object. His painting juxtaposes the painted outline of a toaster in varying degrees of abstraction from a blank oblong to one with all the significant details (toast slot and electrical cord) sketched in three quadrants of the canvas, with an actual toaster in the fourth. Like Magritte's painting Ceci n'est pas une pipe which asserts that a painting of a pipe is not

the same as an actual pipe Dine, by contrasting the outline of the toaster with the actual toaster, is didactically asserting the difference between outline and the actual object.

Alain Robbe-Grillet's thoughts about the products of attempts at a literal depiction of a subject, though expressed about fiction, have a particular relevance to understanding the major shift in still life represented by the preceeding realist painting and sculptural attitudes:

> To describe things, as a matter of fact, is deliberately to place oneself outside them. It is no longer a matter of appropriating them to oneself, of projecting anything onto them. Posited from the start as not being man, they remain constantly out of reach and are, ultimately, neither comprehended in a natural alliance nor recovered by suffering. To limit oneself to description is obviously to reject all other modes of approaching the subject.[2]

The thrust toward a complete objectification of the subjects in recent art has had the effect of negating the objects' functions as mirrors of specific owners or life-styles. The paintings and sculpture come to speak about a type of abstraction that is a product of estrangement and distancing from our objects. "Things" no longer belong to individuals or the makers of artworks but are seen as only lent from a vast industrial matrix.

Another approach to realism retains the humanist content of objects but involves the abandonment of the replication of objects and seeks to invent them anew. Some artists use humor and parody as does Claes Oldenburg in his fabric translations of objects and artifacts into oversized flaccid entities and Larry Rivers in his three-dimensional "sketch" of a Dutch Masters cigar box. Some challenge assumptions about the

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2. Alain Robbe-Grillet, For A New Novel:Essays on Fiction, Howard Richard trans.(New York: Grove Press),p.105

given nature of the existence of 'things,' such as Lucas Samaras's explosion of half a normal chair into multicolored yarn filaments causing doubts as to qualities of strength and contour normally attributed to a chair. Others, such as Pat Steir's painting Line Lima or Joseph Cornell's boxes, construct still lifes of the mind in which objects are seen suspended in a mysterious environment. Through their disassociation from the outside world and enclosure within the artist's private vision they challenge conventional notions about the boundaries of time and space. These created objects have an existence totally apart from their original subject, yet their potency is such that the viewer is forced to reinterpret the original because of them.