Kids @ CAM – At Home Family Projects

Spotlight on CAM's Collection
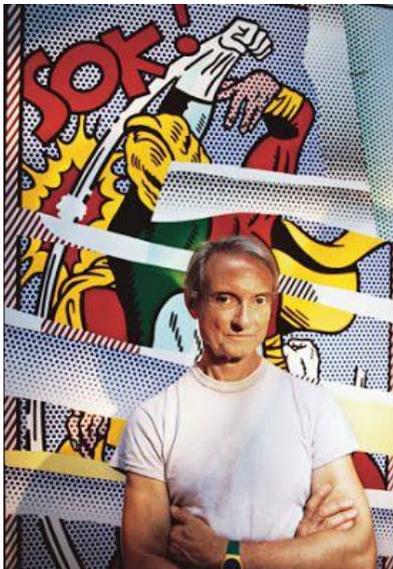
ROY LICHTENSTEIN

About the Artist:

"Pop art looks out into the world. It doesn't look like a painting of something, it looks like the thing itself."

Roy Fox Lichtenstein (1923 – 1997) was an American pop artist. During the 1960s, along with Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, and James Rosenquist among others, he became a leading figure in the new art movement. His work defined the premise of pop art through parody. Inspired by the comic strip, Lichtenstein produced precise compositions that documented while they parodied, often in a tongue-in-cheek manner. His work was influenced by popular advertising and the comic book style. He described pop art as "not 'American' painting but actually industrial painting". Lichtenstein's technique, which often involved the use of stencils, sought to bring the look and feel of commercial printing processes to his work. Through the use of primary colors, thick outlines, and Benday dots (a system devised to increase the tonal range in commercial printing through a dot screen method), Lichtenstein endeavored to make his works appear machine-made. Lichtenstein restricted his paint colors to imitate the four colors of printer's ink. Rather than attempt to reproduce his subjects, Lichtenstein's work tackled the way in which the mass media portrays them. He would never take himself too seriously, however, saying: "I think my work is different from comic strips – but I wouldn't call it transformation; I don't think that whatever is meant by it is important to art." Most of Lichtenstein's best-known works are relatively close, but not exact, copies of comic book panels, a subject he largely abandoned in 1965, though he would occasionally incorporate comics into his work in different ways in later decades. *Whaam!* and *Drowning Girl* are generally regarded as Lichtenstein's most famous works. *Drowning Girl*, *Whaam!* and *Look Mickey* are regarded as his most influential works. His most expensive piece is *Masterpiece*, which was sold for $165 million in January 2017.

ART AT HOME – Pop Art Painting Print

What You Will Need:

- Poster Board or large thick paper
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Markers or Sharpies
- Sharpened pencil with unused eraser
- Ink pad or black paint
- Red, blue, and yellow paint
- Paint brushes

Roy Lichtenstein's work is often distinctive because of his use of Benday dots. Look at images of Lichtenstein's work that use Benday dots to create color and shade. Use these images, as well as 'Sunrise' 1965 from CAM's collection, as your inspiration for your Pop Art painting print!

- Step 1 – Using your pencil and ruler, sketch a picture of a sunrise using 'Sunrise' 1965 as a model. Like Lichtenstein, use minimal lines to create the design.
- Step 2 – Paint in the different parts of the picture using red, blue, and yellow paint, as Lichtenstein does in his work.
- Step 3 – Let this paint dry.
- Step 4 – Carefully outline the different areas of paint using markers or sharpies to add to the comic look that Lichtenstein often created.
- Step 5 – Begin creating your Benday dots by applying rows of small dots using your pencil eraser carefully dipped in paint or onto your ink pad. Fill in certain areas with these dots and leave some without dots, as Lichtenstein does in his work 'Sunrise' 1965.
- Step 6 – Clean up your work area.

Tips:

- You can choose to paint the entire background or leave some parts without paint. When you begin applying the dots, you can do so over areas that are already painted, or in the blank areas.
- Take your time when applying the dots to keeps them as evenly spaced as possible. Lichtenstein strove to make his work look like it was printed on a commercial machine, so spacing the dots carefully adds to this illusion.

Questions for Discussion:

- How did adding the dots effect the way your artwork looks? Do you prefer it with or without dots?
- Lichtenstein had a very specific style. How would you describe your style when making art on your own? Do any aspects of your style align with Lichtenstein's?
- If you could ask Lichtenstein any three questions, what would they be?

Follow Up Project Idea:

- Create another sunrise painting or choose a new Pop Art subject matter. This time apply your Benday dots by using a sheet of bubble wrap! Take a sheet of bubble wrap, approximately the same size as your painting, and brush it with dark paint. Place it carefully on top of your painting and press down gently. Pull the bubble wrap back and you will have evenly spaced Benday dots!