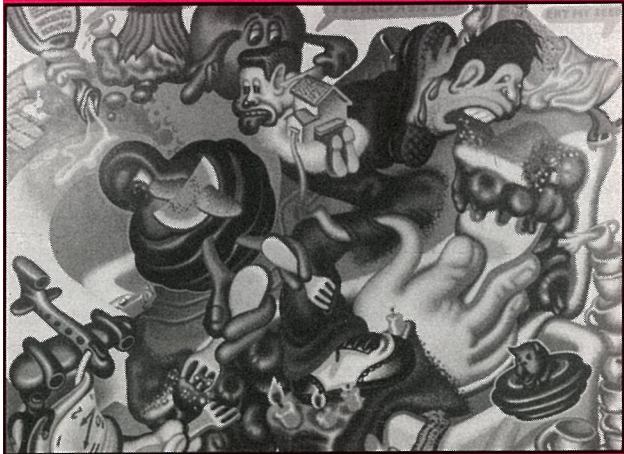


Pop Surrealism



the aldrich museum of contemporary art

June 7 - August 30, 1998

Pop?

The Pop artists of the 1950s and 1960s took a new attitude toward the art object. Central to this attitude was the acceptance of mass media images as art. In reaction to the total "inwardness" of their abstract expressionist predecessors, Pop artists looked out into their everyday environments, finding imagery in modern life. This imagery included advertisements, celebrities, and consumer products. Pop art echoed commercial art not only in its images, but in its processes, by mass-producing work through techniques like silk screening. In this way, Pop artists believed that art comes from everywhere and is accessible to everyone. Popular culture is therefore always contemporary and remains a constant influence on art.

Surrealism?

Born out of the often absurd, intuitive, and fantastic Dada movement, Surrealism succeeded in shedding the reasoned, formal aim of Cubism. Surrealists were interested in the reality of the unconscious mind, which they considered more genuine than conscious, rational thought. Artists combined imagery from deep within their minds with more familiar objects, often creating strange and dream-like compositions. During the 1920s, two styles developed within Surrealism. The hyper-real dreamlike imagery of artists such as Salvador Dalí and Giorgio deChirico often involved morphed images of the body in vast, isolated landscapes. Artists such as Joan Miró and André Masson followed in the Dadaist footsteps, using free association of pictorial elements--or automatism--to create abstract compositions. Obsession with the body, contorted reality, temporal dislocation, and constant change are all manifestations of Surrealism in contemporary art.

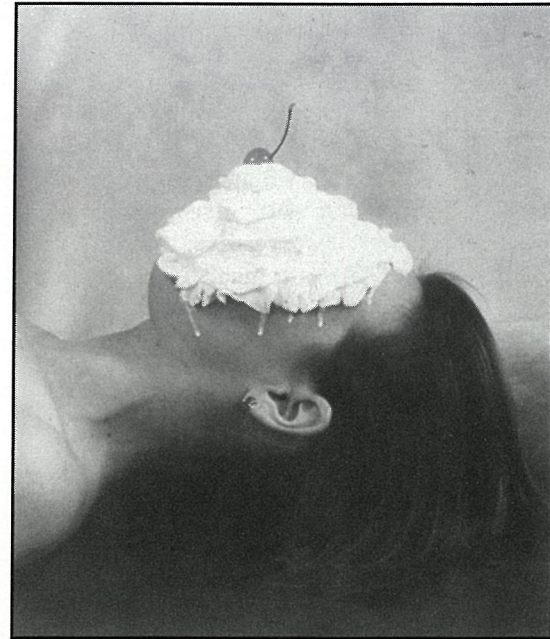


Linda Stark *Thor Girl*, 1997, oil on canvas on panel, 12 x 10 x 1 1/2 inches. Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery.

Pop Surrealism?

Pop Surrealism is an exhibition of work by 73 artists whose surrealist tendencies are informed by popular culture. Both Pop art and Surrealism have remained extremely influential on twentieth century art. Although movie titles and brand names have changed, society's obsession with popular culture has not. Both Pop and Surrealist artists flipped traditional hierarchies upside down, mixing high and low to displace conventional roles in art. Pop Surrealists continue in the tradition of making art a truly popular, fun, and provocative pursuit. These artists grew up surrounded by images in cartoons, films, toys, videos, television, computers, and advertisements. The artists in *Pop Surrealism* look deep into these representations of contemporary culture, mutating them with a surrealist's eye.

The exhibition was curated by a team of four people with three themes in mind. The first, the grotesque body, was tackled by curator Dominique Nahas. This portion of the exhibition deals with the fragmented body, the popular quest for its perfection and our obsession with its imperfections, as well as the body as a site for mutation and change. The second theme, explored by writer and curator Ingrid Schaffner and Museum director Harry Philbrick, is popular iconography. Keep your eyes open for familiar cultural icons like Snow White, Michael Jackson, and even Dalí's melting clock, which has been transformed from a surreal icon to a pop icon. Finally, the Museum's assistant director, Richard Klein, explored the irrational and fantastic in comic art, an underground culture that has seeped into the mainstream. You may recognize artists such as John Kricfalusi, creator of *Ren and Stimpy*, or Robert Williams, whose "chrome style" of drawing was credited as the influence for the styling of liquid metal in James Cameron's film *Terminator 2* (1991). The broad range of mediums employed by the artists in *Pop Surrealism*--painting, sculpture, film, photography, drawing, installation, books, prints, and video--reflects the breadth of influence surrounding contemporary society.



Jeanne Dunning *Sundae*, 1997, chrome mounted to plexiglass, 24 3/4 x 22 1/2 inches. Courtesy HEIGEN Contemporary

Shonagh Adelman John Alfano Richard Artschwager Michael Bevilacqua Ashley Bickerton Charles Burns Mary Carlson Amanda Church Bonnie Collura Miles Coolidge Tony Oursler Judith Page Gary Panter Alix Pearlstein Lari Pittman Ernesto Pujol Paul Henry Ramirez Michael Rees Peter Saul Kenny Scharf Pieter Schoolwerth Christian Gregory Crewdson John Currin Nancy Davidson Georganne Deen Carroll Dunham Jeanne Dunning Brad Eberhard James Esber Inka Essenhigh Tom Friedman Anna Gaskell Schumann TEAM SHaG Jim Shaw Cindy Sherman Alyson Shotz Shahzia Sikander Art Spiegelman Linda Stark Laura Stein Haim Steinbach Robin Tewes Nicola Tyson Graham Gillmore Cameron Jamie Kaz Mike Kelley Jeremy Kidd John Kricfalusi Yayoi Kusama Charles Long Giles Lyon Ruth Marten Patty Martori Tony Matelli Paul Mark Dean Veca John Waters John Wesley Robert Williams Sue Williams Lisa Yuskavage Michael Zansky McCarthy Sean Mellyn Annette Messenger Curtis Mitchell Mariko Mori Takashi Murakami Daisuke Nakayama Rachael Neubauer Manuel Ocampo Tom Otterness

Exhibition Lecture Series

CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT: KENNY SCHARF

Friday, July 17, from 6 - 8 pm

\$5 member; \$10 non-member

Emerging out of the East Village art scene in the late 70s, Kenny Scharf became internationally recognized for his paintings, sculptures, and installations, which combine surrealism with the comedic genius of his childhood heroes Walt Disney and Hanna Barbera. Scharf's paintings address issues ranging from the environmental to the absurd in his own hybrid style. Kenny Scharf will travel to The Aldrich from his home in Miami to discuss the evolution and content of his work, and his philosophy that art should be made available and accessible to the public. Refreshments provided, call to reserve your seat.

ASPECTS OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Thursdays: July 9, 16, 23, 30, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm

Series: \$25 member; \$35 non-member

Prominent contemporary artists in our current exhibitions come to The Aldrich and discuss their work and its evolution. These informal gallery talks offer stimulating dialogue and a chance to get acquainted with the exhibiting artists. Teachers can earn .8 CEUs for the whole series. Call the Museum for a listing of artists scheduled to speak and to reserve your seat.

On the cover: **Peter Saul Lunch**, 1997, oil on canvas, 66 1/2 x 83 inches. Courtesy George Adams Gallery

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