Student name: Group:

Art movement.....Pop Art XX, c.
Timeframe.....1952 – 1970's
Topic Focus.....Popular culture and its critique of consumer society

Teaching material: The instructor will provide video materials for educational purposes. ~15'

Background information: Rooted in Neo-Dada and other movements that questioned the very definition of "art," Pop Art emerged in the United Kingdom during the 1950s amidst a post-war sociopolitical climate. Artists turned to celebrating ordinary objects, elevating the everyday to the level of fine art. Pop Art was specifically and uniquely American in its content and style, as the United States had taken the lead in creating kitsch—art's debased counterpart—the raw material for Pop artists.

Pop Art opposed the following concepts: the "artistry" of "art," the "masterpiece," the "artist as genius," and the creation of art based on personality and art history.

In the United States, Pop Art arose from post-war American materialism. Its ranks were filled with young, irreverent artists who had not experienced the hardships of the Depression and were too young to grapple with the moral issues raised by World War II. American artists such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and James Rosenquist, among others, soon followed the example set by the British and became the most famous proponents of the movement. They rejected traditional historical artistic themes in favor of the pervasive infiltration of mass-produced goods and images that dominated the contemporary visual landscape.

Any element of popular culture could be elevated to high art by changing the materials and context of the image. The public was delighted to finally see art that they could recognize and understand. Pop Art was an early indicator of changing times and new attitudes.

Discussion questions: Is Pop Art a critique of consumerism and mass culture, or simply a celebration of it? (10')

Main activity: The artists of the ICA (Institute of Contemporary Arts) preceded the Pop artists of New York by almost a decade in their experiments with popular culture. Unburdened by the weight of Abstract Expressionism or the mission to supplant Paris as the art world's capital, these young British artists laid the groundwork for how to turn life into art.

The small collage created in 1956 by British artist Richard Hamilton posed the question, *What is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* and depicted a new Garden of Eden filled with American personalities and products, from television sets to canned ham.

Class activity: Discuss this key work in groups and compare it to the visual references in works by Lichtenstein and Warhol. Examine the techniques of Appropriation and Repetition, which were significant as they reflected the mass culture and serial production of the era. By using pre-existing elements and repeating them, Pop Art artists were critiquing consumer society while simultaneously creating artworks that were accessible and understandable to a wider audience.

Relevant texts: *Artforum* magazine, founded in 1962, became a major platform for discussing contemporary art, including Pop Art.
Lucy R. Lippard's book *Pop Art: A New Generation of Style* (1966) was one of the first to analyze Pop Art as an important artistic movement.

1. Notes on the art movement POP ART.

3. Key artists and key artworks.

2. Notes on “popular culture”.

4. Summary and Conclusions.