

# Nancy Heller

Session 4 - Erasing Boundaries: Redefining Art by the Innovative Use of Traditional materials and techniques

Innovative use of traditional materials and techniques

- stained glass
- needlework
- book binding
- Photography
- Performing Arts
- "Kitsch"
- Glass Beads

7 artists to describe this.

The "Pictures Generation" - a popular title defined in the 70's and 80's. They are questioning the value of art. Images shaped by the ever popular mass media. Political power, gender & politics

## PHOTOGRAPHY

### Cindy Sherman (b 1954)

Born in Long Island. She went to school and majored in Photography. And would collect vintage clothing and jewelry and would wear them to exhibitions to highlight how different you can look. After Graduation she moved to NYC. All of her first works were black and white and numbered and looked like film stills

Idea was to show female stereotypes. She was the model, the choreographer. She loved "B" films and used her knowledge of these films to style her photos. They are not political - they are not meant to be an indictment on feminism. Doesn't like to refer to these as "self-portraits"

Her next series was in color - she was still the subject. She is able to convey lots of different characters. They immediately attracted attention. - she was a mere 26 years old. Her success grew fast. Recognized with a Guggenheim fellowship - a rare honor for a photographer.

All of her art was staged, it was large and the type of work she was doing was unheard of. She had a retrospective at age 33 at the Whitney, quite a remarkable feat for someone her age.

Then she started mining art history for her work

Exhibits at MOMA

One of her photographs sold at Christies for 3.8 million - breaking the record for a photograph.

## **KITSCH**

### **JEFF KOONS (b. 1955)**

People just cant figure him out. He is somewhat despised. Is it just Kitsch. Called funny, brilliant and whimsical. From York, PA. A studied at University of Chicago. Began as a painter. Changed his career focus and was a successful commodities broker on Wall street - then became a full time artists.

First seriew was his Equilibrium Series in 1985.

A basketball in a floating tank of water, signed by Julius Irving. Very Duchamp. Followed by 3 wet shop vac's painted and stacked in plexiglass. In interview he would maintain they had a deeper meaning, but would spout "artspeak" that there were bigger ideas. All arts come with certificates of authenticity to distinguish them from shop vacs we could all buy. He presents this as art, and claims it is art... but is it?

Some people criticize him as laughing at us - all the way to the bank, they are extremely popular and sell for large amounts

Balloon Dogs.. are everywhere - all sizes, made by apprentices. Sotheby's sold one for 48 million.

Small, Medium, Large and copyrighted on items such as bags and purses.. etc. His art keeps commanding large prices. He has as many as 100 interns working for him to make these sculptures.

In 1991 he married a famous Italian porn star Ilona Staller. Has a PR person. Big billboards of them having sex. Some say it's distasteful, exhibitlonist. He's not naive. He keeps becoming more despised and famous.

"Puppy" - is one of his most famous... a topiary with wall to wall flowers that self waters. - A huge success

All over the world - at the Guggenheim in Bilbao, Rockefeller center, In 2014 hat a retrospective at the Whitney

## **PEFORMANCE ART**

Began In the 1970s. Related to Happenings for the 50's and DADA.

Could and often did come from events without actors, done in alternative venues. Performance artists are now trained and disseminate it through social media

**Spaulding Gray** (1941-2004). Poet turned performance artist. Swimming to

Cambodia - well known.

He disappeared on a ferry and was considered a suicide.

**Eric Bogosian** (b 1953) "Wake up and Smell the Coffee"

Story tellers that segway to performance art.

**Karen Finley (b 1954)**

Her NEA rejection for being covered in chocolate

**Laurie Anderson (b 1947)** - famous for her car horn series, Electric violin. Does interesting things. Put together multimedia high tech performances. DVD's - a bit of a pop superstar. Solo's and groups with groups of artists.

Married to Lou Reed

**Vito Acconci (1940-2017).**

Known for body art. Subversive..things like masturbating and talking about his sexual fantasies. Taking it to Extremes. **Chris Burden (1946-2015)** took it to the extremes. Early works were about physical pain and vulnerability

Crucified to a VW Bug. Convinced a friend to shoot him as art. Crawled through broken glass, modified electrocution.

**Pat Oleszko** (b 1947) Known for making sculptural costumes

## **BOOK ARTS - ARTISTS BOOKS**

**Molly Van Nice** -

Swiss army book - based on the swiss army knife.

Artists make the book a piece of art. Accordion..

## **QUILTS**

Quilts as fine art. Been around a very long time.

**Faith Ringold (b 1930).**

A civil rights black activist who moved over to quilting. Painted, taught in the NYC public schools in 1983 she devised her story quilts. They made her name and International name. Painted on large quilts with lines of text all around the borders. Stories are based on her life and leaders of politics.

Her best known is this, on exhibit at the Guggenheim. Based on her life.. 79x69".

Acrylic paint on the fabric. Text is in the lower frame of the quilt.

Has written a children's book called Tar beach as well.

## **STAINED GLASS**

### **Judith Schaechter (b 1961)**

Macabre themes - flight of the maggots, porno panel

Went to RISD, and had been pursuing alternatives to traditional stained glass.

Labor intensive work. She does all her glass work. Her images are sometimes shocking.

## **BEADS**

More than decorative embellishments

Liza Lou (1969)

started her career in a

Beaded underwear

Beaded Kitchen. Real size Kitchen completely covered in beads.

beaded water and dishes... faucet. Took an enormous

Followed up with a lifeszie Backyard. Installation measures 600 Sq feet and has over 3 million beads.

The Backyard... she actually used helpers for this one after having carpal tunnel and issues from her kitchen project.

Work has turned more political.