

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art – Roy Lichtenstein



A fascinating new exhibition devoted to the ground-breaking American Pop artist Roy Lichtenstein is to open at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh this spring. Part of the pop art collection and touring programme for 2015, this first presentation of newly-assembled works is made possible by the great generosity of the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, New York. *ARTIST ROOMS: Roy Lichtenstein* will be complemented at SNGMA by a group exhibition entitled *Reflections*, which takes the American artist's work as a point of departure.

Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997) is among the most influential artists of the post-war period. He was a pioneer of Pop Art, the movement which came to prominence in New York in the early 1960s and ushered in a new era in art history. His instantly recognisable style, particularly his signature version of the Benday dot technique used in commercial printing, mimicked the mechanised, industrial look of mass-produced images. Drawing on commercial advertisements, comic books and cartoons for source material, Lichtenstein's blurring of the boundaries between high and low culture would profoundly influence future generations.

The exceptional scope and richness of Lichtenstein's work continues to provoke questions about the ways that images permeate our lives. This major three-room display will have at its centre 16 large-scale prints made in the 1990s which were recently placed on long-term loan to *ARTIST ROOMS* by the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation. These will be shown alongside iconic works dating from the 1960s, including the important early comic book painting *In the Car* (1963), from the Scottish

National Gallery of Modern Art's collection; and a bold, painted steel relief, *Wall Explosion* (1965), on loan from Tate in London.

These works explore some of the major themes that preoccupied Roy Lichtenstein throughout his career, with a particular focus on his fascination with reflections and mirroring. *Reflections: Art* (1988), an important large oil painting on loan from a private collection, will be complemented by five prints from the eponymous *Reflections* series. Made in 1990, these look back to the artist's Pop Art period and feature images based on comic book stories of romance and war. Represented as though seen through glass, the images are partly obscured by abstract bands of colour, collaged elements, parallel lines and Lichtenstein's trademark dots, which cleverly evoke the play of light across a glazed surface.

The exhibition also highlights Lichtenstein's engagement with the history of art, evident in his playful reworking of the imagery of the giants of modern art such as Picasso and Monet. His two *Modern Art* prints from 1996 present Cubist-inspired portraits of comic book beauties. Shown beside these are examples from his *Water Lilies* series, which pays homage to Monet's famous, late *Nymphéas* paintings. Lichtenstein's large-scale versions are produced on steel, using complex printing processes that produce reflections and suggest the pattern of shimmering light as it hits water.

Late in his career Lichtenstein took up one of art history's primary subjects, the female nude, as well as a series of *Compositions* expressing his lifelong appreciation of music, improvisation and composition. These witty visualisations show musical notes floating free from the stave and breaking out beyond the picture frame.

For further information about the ARTIST ROOMS collection, and about the touring programme please visit

www.nationalgalleries.org/artistrooms
www.tate.org.uk/artistrooms

and

ARTIST ROOMS: ROY LICHTENSTEIN

14 March 2015 – 10 January 2016

SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART (Modern One)

75 Belford Road, Edinburgh, EH4 3DR

Admission FREE | 0131 624 6200

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