

The show, a journey through six decades of the history of printmaking in the United States, features works by such great artists as Warhol, Rauschenberg and Lichtenstein

The American Dream Comes to CaixaForum Madrid

- The exhibition *The American Dream: pop to the present* traces the creative momentum of American printmaking over the last six decades, from pop art to abstraction, minimalism, photorealism and figurative art.
- The show features more than 200 works, most of them from the British Museum in London, by artists including Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Rauschenberg, Willem de Kooning, Donald Judd, Jasper Johns, Jim Dine, Richard Estes, Kiki Smith, Robert Longo and Guerrilla Girls.
- The exhibition narrative shows how graphic art, particularly after the emergence of pop art in American visual culture, found a new, middle-class audience affluent enough to buy serialised works. Some artists used the medium as a form of expression to address issues like consumerism, politics, feminism and civil rights.
- The show, which is the sixth collaborative project between the British Museum and "la Caixa" Foundation, will be open to the public at CaixaForum Madrid from 9 October 2020 to 31 January 2021. This is the first time this selection has left the UK.

***The American Dream: pop to the present.* Dates:** From 9 October 2020 to 31 January 2021. **Organised and produced by:** "la Caixa" Foundation in collaboration with the British Museum. **Curators:** Catherine Daunt, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Graphic Art, and Stephen Coppel, Curator of Modern Prints and Drawings, both at the British Museum Department of Prints and Drawings. **Place:** CaixaForum Madrid (Paseo del Prado, 36).

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Madrid, 8 October 2020. At CaixaForum Madrid today, Ignasi Miró, Director of Culture and Science at "la Caixa" Foundation, Isabel Fuentes, Director of CaixaForum Madrid, and the curator Catherine Daunt, this last via live streaming, presented the exhibition *The American Dream: pop to the present*.

The American Dream is a collective exhibition that explores the powerful emergence of printmaking in the United States from the 1960s to the present through works from the outstanding graphic art collection conserved by the British Museum, as well as loans of superb works from other museums and collections such as the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Tate Modern in London, the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation and the studio of the artist Ed Ruscha, these last two in the United States. This is the first time that this large selection of graphic works from the British Museum has been shown outside the United Kingdom.

Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Sol Lewitt, Robert Rauschenberg, Guerrilla Girls, Donald Judd, Ed Ruscha, Louise Bourgeois, Robert Longo, James Rosenquist, Chris Burden and Richard Estes are among the artists represented in the exhibition, which takes pop art as its starting point and also includes iconic creatives from other artistic movements such as abstraction, minimalism, conceptualism, figuration and photorealism. Divided into an introduction and eleven different sections, the show traces a thematic and chronological journey through a brilliant era in the history of American graphic art that also reflects the country's recent history, addressing issues that are still fully relevant today, such as race, AIDS and feminism. The exhibition, which also illustrates the history of collaboration between artists and collective workshops where their prints were produced, features various engraving techniques, including lithography, screen printing, etching, drypoint and photogravure, among others.

Organised with a view to recreating the colour and energy of what was a veritable graphic revolution revolving around a gestural, pop aesthetic, the show features **218 works by 63 artists**. These include many iconic works, such as the popular silkscreens of Liz Taylor and Marilyn Monroe and Jackie Kennedy at her husband's funeral, by **Andy Warhol**; the 1973 series of flags by **Jasper Johns**; **Roy Lichtenstein's** dotted works, influenced by comic strip art; two large prints by **Robert Rauschenberg** – the 1.8-metre high *Booster* (1967), representing his own skeleton, and *Sky Garden* (1969), marking the launch of the Saturn V, whose 2.2-metre height took the record for the largest hand-printed lithography that the artist had first attained two years previously with *Booster*; a 1990 print by the **General Idea** collective in their AIDS campaign; or the famous print by **Guerrilla**

Girls, Do Women Have to Be Naked to Enter the Met. Museum? (1989), on loan from the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The American Dream: from pop to present is also an **elegy to printmaking**, which was elevated from its marginal position in the 1960s to become a centre of attention in the fine arts. The systems available for reproducing images enabled artists to explore new techniques and materials and to aim criticism at the society of their times. This artistic use of printmaking also questioned notions of the unique work. In short, the print became – and has remained over time – a key medium for understanding the life and culture of the day.

This is the sixth collaboration between "la Caixa" Foundation and the British Museum, the result of the strategic alliance between the two institutions that has allowed us to present to audiences in our country exhibitions devoted to medieval art and culture, the idea of competition in ancient Greece, the figure of the pharaoh, the notion of luxury in antiquity and so on.

The American Dream includes audiovisuals showing some of the artists represented in the exhibition working on different printing techniques and discussing their graphic productions and how they use different printmaking media. Particularly interesting are a video showing Andy Warhol making screenprints and footage of Jasper Johns making a projection simulating a printing press with the camera looking down on him.

Following its presentation in Madrid, the show will travel to CaixaForum Barcelona, where it will be open to the public from 3 March to 13 June 2021, and, in July, to CaixaForum Saragossa.

Printmaking, pop artists' favourite medium

The exhibition begins by focusing on the emergence of pop art in New York and the American West Coast. Many pop artists – the most famous being **Warhol** but also **James Rosenquist**, who had worked painting billboards in Times Square – started out in advertising and illustration and were familiar with marketing strategies aimed at attracting attention through the use of primary colours and striking imagery. The boom in printmaking in the United States in the 1960s is directly linked to the emergence of pop art, whose philosophy admitted no boundaries or differences between cult and commercial art and whose practitioners were fascinated by the media and advertising. Artists used

screenprinting and mass printing techniques to reach a new middle class now able to afford folders of graphic work or small artist's books. The reproducibility of these graphic works enabled artists to reach large audiences.

Pop artists also collected objects from everyday life, and employed elements and themes popular in the mass media, elevating them to the category of art. Just after the death of Marilyn Monroe, **Warhol** used the face that appeared on the film poster for *Niagara* to create his famous screenprints of the actress. **Claes Oldenburg** made an etching of a plug floating on water (*Floating Three Way Plug*, 1976) and **Jasper Johns**, who first painted the American flag in 1954, turned the Stars and Stripes into a pop icon with his series of prints using multiple layers of transparent inks. The second section is devoted exclusively to three pop artists: **Jasper Johns**, **Robert Rauschenberg** and **Jim Dine**.

Section Three illustrates how workshops were key to the boom in printmaking in the United States. The spirit of innovation, and collaboration with creatives at workshops like Universal Limited Art Editions in New York and Gemini G.E.L. in Los Angeles, enabled artists to produce highly experimental pioneering works. These include *Accident* (1963), which Rauschenberg produced on a lithographic stone which cracked during the printing process. The result was surprising and innovative, the fracture creating a stream of light that gave a new aesthetic dimension, a central feature, to his lithograph.

A section is also devoted to printmaking artists from the West Coast, who made more relaxed works resonant of the Los Angeles lifestyle. Their most popular themes include the sun, the sea and landscapes seen from cars. **Ed Ruscha** was among the artists who most effectively reflected this laid-back West Coast scene in series such as *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* (1966) and *Made in California* (1971). **Ruscha's** work, which contrasts with **Bruce Nauman's** black-and-white prints featuring words, is represented in the show by an artist's book, *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*, containing photographs and prints of the landscapes he saw on the drive to his studio. The work is on loan from the Tate Modern in London.

Abstract, minimalist, figurative art and political activism

But it was not only pop artists who enthusiastically embraced printing. Abstract expressionist painters, who continued to be very influential in the 1960s, made profuse use of printing techniques, especially lithography, which suited the gestural nature of their style perfectly. **Willem de Kooning** made large graphic art works, for example, and devoted a series to free-style versions of Minnie

Mouse, the famous Disney character, in which he experimented by using his paintbrush to apply greasy liquids directly to the lithographic plate. **Robert Motherwell** and **Philip Guston** also used printing to express their gestural abstraction, while **Ellsworth Kelly** and **Frank Stella** created works featuring the geometric shapes and simplified forms typical of the hard edge painting movement, with its abrupt transitions between colour areas.

In the 1970s, minimalist and conceptual artists also used graphic work as a reaction to pop art. Artists like the minimalist **Donald Judd** and the conceptualist **Sol LeWitt** closely examined the structure and properties of materials. Colour, shape, texture and material are reduced to their very essence, and simplified lines appear. At around the same time, photorealism, which features highly detailed images from photographs, was taking a very different path. **Chuck Close** and **Alex Katz** produced monumental portraits. The painter **Richard Estes**, the most iconic of hyperrealist artists, depicted landscapes and scenes, motionless and without people, that seem far distant from the reality.

Figurative art without realist intention also resurfaced in the late 1970s. **Philip Guston**, a leading proponent of abstract expressionism, caused great controversy when he returned to figuration. He suddenly moved away from gestural style and began to create caricature-like images of hooded figures, dismembered limbs, spiked boots, and other figurative forms. The exhibition also features figurative prints by artists like **Richard Diebenkorn** – who revives classic genres such as the human figure, the still life and the landscape – **Philip Pearlstein**, **Robert Longo** and **Susan Rothenberg**.

Since its invention in the fifteenth century, printing has always provided an excellent medium for expressing political criticism. Addressing historical events such as the assassination of Kennedy and the Vietnam War, American artists have used graphic art to spread political and social messages about conflicts, the AIDS epidemic, terrorism and economic crises. **Warhol** campaigned for the Democrat Senator George McGovern with a screenprint showing his Republican opponent, Nixon, with a green face and yellow lips. In 1967, **William N. Copley** created a screenprint with the American flag in black and white and the word "Think", which was included in a folder with works by 16 artists to protest against the Vietnam War. Throughout his career, moreover, **Roy Lichtenstein** produced graphic work in order to raise funds for political and social causes. These include the screenprint *I love Liberty*, made in 1982 for an event organised by the progressive pressure group People for the American Way, which defended the rights of minorities and oppressed groups, including homosexuals, women,

African Americans, Hispanic people and Native Americans. Printmaking also played a key role in the work of artists like **Eric Avery** who protested against the Reagan administration's neglect of the AIDS crisis.

Feminism is also represented in the exhibition through works by female artists who protest against the traditional structures of male power. **Louise Bourgeois** reveals her ambivalent attitude to motherhood in the drypoint *Sainte Sébastienne* (1992), while **Kiki Smith** alerts us to how girls and women are treated in children's stories in a 2002 piece that alludes to Little Red Riding Hood, and in which a wolf gives birth to a little girl. Similarly, non-white artists, who encountered many obstacles to entering American art scenes, protested against police abuse and racist violence, some during segregation, which was still legal in the southern states until 1964. In their works, African American artists such as **Emma Amos**, **Kara Walker** and **Willie Cole** return to and denounce the history of slavery, which has been practically silenced.

ACTIVITIES PARALLEL TO THE EXHIBITION

FILM SEASON**DIASPORAS OF THE AMERICAN DREAM**

From 16 October to 20 November 2020

Dreaming is something we have all done since time immemorial. Over the course of its history, the cinema has reflected many of our deepest desires, and one of these is the pursuit of the American Dream. From the birth of film to the present, many movie characters have embodied the desire to forge a place for oneself in America.

This film season, organised parallel to the exhibition *The American Dream: from pop to present*, presents four delocalised perspectives of the American dream. From India, China, Mexico and Honduras, characters with different personal circumstances embark to seek a land of opportunity and freedom in the United States. The films meditate on how this concept has generated displacement and worldviews in different generations.

- **UMRIKA**
PRASHANT NAIR, 2014, INDIA. Original version with Spanish subtitles
Friday, 16 October 2020 / 7.30 pm

This film received the Audience Award at the Sundance Festival and the FIPRESCI Award at the Cairo International Film Festival.

- **A BETTER LIFE**
CHRIS WEITZ, 2011, USA. Original version with Spanish subtitles
Friday, 23 October 2020 / 7.30 pm

Damián Bichir was nominated as best actor for the Academy Award, the Independent Spirit Award and the US Screen Actors Guild Award for his performance in this film.

- **PARA NO VOLVER (NEVER GOING BACK)**
JANETTE LÓPEZ, 2019, MEXICO. Original version
Friday, 6 November 2020 / 7.30 pm

This documentary was selected for the Mexico Opera Prima section at the 2019 DocsMX festival.

- **MAO'S LAST DANCER**
BRUCE BERESFORD, 2009, AUSTRALIA. Original version with Spanish subtitles
Friday, 20 November 2020 / 7.30 pm

This film received the Australian Film Institute News Limited Reader's Choice and Best Original Music Score awards.

VISUAL ART SEASON

SHADOWS AND LIGHT IN THE MYTH OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

BY THE JOURNALIST AND AUTHOR LUCÍA LIJTMAER

From 26 October to 23 November 2020

What is the American dream founded on? What are its bases, its hidden places, its dark sides? From the first colonial settlements on the east coast in the seventeenth century to the contemporary period, the United States has been shaped by the oscillations between a series of myths that form what is known as the American Dream. The pillars that underpin this dream – progress, social mobility and freedom – are the icons which form the foundations of this society, reflected in art, literature and contemporary pop culture.

- **THE ORIGINS OF THE AMERICAN MYTH: RELIGION, INDIVIDUALISM AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY**
Monday, 26 October 2020

The birth of the United States is based on solid religious foundations: Calvinism and Protestantism serve as discursive models for the creation of a nation based on the idea of individuality and economic prosperity. This session will be devoted to exploring the bases of the subject in the American dream will be explored through intellectuals like Ralph W. Emerson and Walt Whitman, the myth of freedom used for the great conquest of the West, the California Dream and the creation of the image of the American nuclear family, in which the house and the car operate as symbols of economic well-being and family stability. Examples from pop culture will be used in the shape of archetypes created by advertising to serialise images of freedom, masculinity and desire as a model of the American Way of Life.

- **THE "OTHER" IN THE AMERICAN DREAM**
Tuesday, 3 November 2020

The myth of the American dream is solid and transparent in its boundaries: salvation is guaranteed by your actions and success is within everyone's reach

through hard work and individual determination. But is that really true? In this session we will explore the idea of evil in the community and expulsion from the American dream, the figure of the outsider and notions of dissent and otherness, which have historical roots in the colonies. Another key theme is the rupture of the American dream in modernity due to the two world wars and the importance of the atomic bomb in pop art. We will discuss the first subcultures (bebop, beatniks, mods, rockers) and the extraterrestrial as a metaphor for racism, using examples from prepunk culture, 60s counterculture and fantasy film.

- **IDENTITIES: FROM THE BABY BOOM TO THE DECONSTRUCTION OF GENRE. PART 1**

Monday, 16 November 2020

The adaptation of the American dream for the new generations necessarily requires that it should be guaranteed for all strata of the population. The gender gap, the first feminist waves and the dissociation between wife, mother and worker generate images and discourses on femininity that vary throughout the twentieth century. The emergence of LGBTI movements and sexualities considered non-normative also affect the American dream, which oscillates between integration and dissent as the new century approaches. Over the two sessions, we will explore examples of androgyny and the new masculinities, the AIDS epidemic, gender fluidity and pop (from Madonna to Genesis P-Orridge, from Bowie to Kurt Cobain), art by Keith Haring and David Wojnarowicz, Generation X and the rise of social media.

- **IDENTITIES: FROM THE BABY BOOM TO THE DECONSTRUCTION OF GENRE. PART 2**

Monday, 23 November 2020

The adaptation of the American dream for the new generations necessarily requires that it should be guaranteed for all strata of the population. The gender gap, the first feminist waves and the dissociation between wife, mother and worker generate images and discourses on femininity that vary throughout the twentieth century. The emergence of LGBTI movements and sexualities considered non-normative also affect the American dream, which oscillates between integration and dissent as the new century approaches. Over the two sessions, we will explore examples of androgyny and the new masculinities, the AIDS epidemic, gender fluidity and pop (from Madonna to Genesis P-Orridge, from Bowie to Kurt Cobain), art by Keith Haring and David Wojnarowicz, Generation X and the rise of social media.

El sueño americano

Del pop a la actualidad

From 9 October 2020 to 31 January 2021

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