







## **POP ART**

50 Works of Art You Should Know



Gary van Wyk

# POP ART

## 50 WORKS OF ART YOU SHOULD KNOW

PRESTEL

Munich · London · New York

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# INTRODUCTION



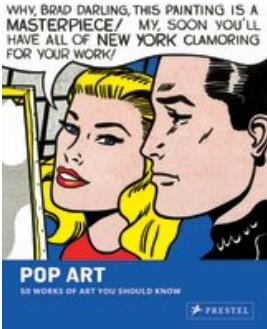
Eduardo Paolozzi, **Bunk**, 1972,  
screenprint, private collection

In Eduardo Paolozzi's 1947 collage *I was a Rich Man's Plaything*, the word "Pop" pops from the barrel of a gun. The images collaged into this work were carried on the wings of war to Europe by American GIs in World War II. Inside its puffy, comic-book thought cloud, "Pop" literally hangs in the air between a pistol and a prostitute whose intimate confessions are emblazoned on a masthead with other trashy stories. Surrounding her are a B-52 bomber, a Coca-Cola ad, free-floating words, and a slice of cherry pie positioned between "sin" and her "moneymaker."

Paolozzi lived in Paris between 1947 and 1949, imbibed the heady mix of liberation, and collected such fragments of American popular culture for his collages. In 1952, Paolozzi assembled a coterie of fellow intellectuals into the Independent Group (IG), which met at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London. In Paolozzi's inaugural lecture there, entitled "Bunk," he showed them projected images edited from American magazines. The IG pondered the implications of mass media, mass marketing, and technology for modern life, and how these would shape the future.

Postwar Britain lacked pop and pizzazz. While Britain struggled to resurrect itself in the 1950s, the United States boomed, spurred by the increased industrial and manufacturing capacity that the war had brought, easy credit, and mass marketing. America's prosperity delivered such labor-saving devices as vacuum cleaners and washing machines, and such conveniences as refrigerators and shiny cars—inevitably advertised using attractive females—to the ideal modern home, which had a stay-at-home housewife and a TV set at its heart. Americans had work and wages, plenty of products to buy with their disposable income, "wheels," and leisure time to enjoy the movies, the beach, a drive, a Coke, or reading a comic or magazine: *TIME*, *Life*, *Fortune*, *LOOK*, *Mad*, *Esquire*, *Vogue*, *Playboy*. Such products and pastimes—many democratically accessible to rich and poor equally—exemplified America.

Advertising everywhere—especially on the color TV sets that entered American homes in the early sixties—enticed consumers



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