

*Revised Feb 2012*

**FAMOUS ARTISTS SERIES: ROY LICHTENSTEIN (1923 - 1997)**

"Mr. Bellamy"

Oil on canvas, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas

**Supplies Needed:**

- \* Framed Prints: "Mr. Bellamy", Warhol's "Soup Can", Oldenburg's "Spoonbridge and Cherry", Matisse "Goldfish"
- \* Colored Comics from art supply box
- \* Magnifying glasses from supply box, one for each student
- \* 8 1/2" x 11" paper from teachers' workroom — photocopy paper
- \* Students will need their rulers and colored markers
- \* [Gummed reinforcement label sheets \(to use as stencils on project\)](#)
- \* Laminated cards of Lichtenstein's work from supply box (7 total)
- \* ***Roy Lichtenstein – The Artist at Work*** and ***Roy Lichtenstein, Modern Masters***, by Alloway book from supply box for reference.

**Reference Books**

- \* Brushstrokes: Four Decades Dave Hickey
- \* Roy Lichtenstein Janis Hendrickson
- \* Roy Lichtenstein Diane Waldman
- \* Roy Lichtenstein Mike Venezia

***AHEAD-OF-TIME NOTE: Color comics are required for this project. Optional: you may bring in a classical music C.D. for the students to listen to while they work. Lichtenstein listened to classical music while he created. In addition, please make copies of the master note "Famous Artist Series" to hand out to students.***

***Also, using the new technology in the classrooms, you can go to Google Images and type in Roy Lichtenstein. The screen will be filled with his fun, colorful images. It's a great background for your presentation!***

***Presentation:***

Artists take inspiration for their artwork from many places – nature, people, things they see around them. Do you suppose an artist could be inspired by the yellow pages from the phone book or a classified ad in the newspaper? ***Show laminate #1, newspaper ad and resulting painting (flip sides).***

Roy Lichtenstein (pronounced Lick ten stine) was on the cutting edge of the “Pop Art” movement. The word “pop” is an abbreviation for “popular”. The Pop style he helped to develop transformed things from everyday life and made us, the audience, take a second look. Lichtenstein made huge versions of what he found, using his unique style. He took ads he found in the yellow pages and made them into large, colorful paintings. He created a style that was like no other — his paintings look like pictures out of a Marvel or DC comic book using very strong, primary colors (red, blue and yellow, from which all other colors are made).

***Present “Mr. Bellamy”. Ask students what they think the comment in the balloon might mean. The artist reported that the balloon was referring to the person who owned the gallery where his works were shown. Knowing that, why might the artist have used the symbolism of the military uniform? Perhaps because he felt like he had little say in how his works were to be exhibited -- like in the Navy or Air Force, a soldier has little or no say in what activities he or she will undertake.***

Other famous Pop artists you may know are Andy Warhol (***show “Soup Can” framed print***) and Claes (pronounced like Santa Claus) Oldenburg (***show “Spoonbridge and Cherry” framed print***).

Lichtenstein's interest in art began in high school and continued through college, where he majored in art. He became a professor of art at three different universities and also worked as a commercial artist and window designer.

Lichtenstein made hundreds of paintings, and like many other artists had phases where he concentrated on particular themes. During one phase, he copied famous artists' works, like Picasso, Mondrian and Matisse (***show print of Matisse’s “Goldfish” and laminate #2, Lichtenstein’s “Goldfish”***). He also created a number of works based on comic strip characters, including Dick Tracy and Mickey Mouse, and completed a series of paintings of house interiors (***pass around 4 laminated postcards of interiors***). Over and over again, his paintings use the dots you see in the newspaper color printing process, especially noticeable in the Sunday comics if you take a close look. ***These dots are called “Benday Dots” because they were invented in 1879 by Benjamin Day. Lichtenstein used screens to make the dots in his paintings big so they were noticeable.*** Lichtenstein invites the audience to look carefully and see the dots. Lichtenstein said, “The purpose of art is to point out something that hasn't been pointed out before.” Lichtenstein is pointing out something, that art doesn't have to be highly stylized or complex with hidden meanings to be good — it can simply be fun.

Lichtenstein's art remains very popular. A piece of his work was up for auction in New York in 2002. It was a painting from 1969 entitled "Red Barn I". They expected the painting to sell for around \$1,500,000, but someone paid \$2,429,500 for it! **(Show laminate #7 of "Red Barn I" advertisement from Christie's. Explain auctions if the students do not know what they are).**

I'd like to flip through this book about Roy Lichtenstein (**show cover – portrait of artist**) to quickly show you how he approached and created his artwork. **(Take a few minutes to show steps he went through.)** You can take a closer look at the book after I explain what the art project will be.

## **Project:**

**Using Sunday comics, we will make a Lichtenstein-type picture. I will pass around magnifying glasses for you to examine the comic frames in the strips. The dots and lines that make up the background in the colored printing process are called “Benday dots”, named for the inventor, Benjamin Day. Using markers and rulers (or any other straight edge) *along with the reinforcement “stencils”, you will create your own dots and lines. Show the students how to use the reinforcement sheet as a stencil by holding in place on paper and coloring in a couple dots and removing the sheet. You may directly copy a frame of a comic strip or try to come up with your own picture. A simple image works best – an apple, soccer ball or ice cream cone are examples. Maybe you can think up an unusual phrase or comment like the ones Lichtenstein used to invite the audience to think about the picture. Show examples made with stencils.***

**After the discussion of the project, invite the students to take time to leaf through the book about Lichtenstein. (Show cover, with photo of artist). The book shows his painting process from blank canvas to completed painting.**

**If there is extra time, mount the comic strips completed by the students on one long sheet of roll paper. Display in the classroom or hallway.**

**PLEASE LEAVE TIME AT THE END OF CLASS FOR THE STUDENTS TO PRESENT THEIR WORK.**

# FAMOUS ARTISTS SERIES

## Lichtenstein

Today in class a volunteer parent presented the works of Pop artist Roy Lichtenstein. They learned about his life and how he was drawn into the Pop art movement. Ask your child what Pop art means.

The Art Institute of Chicago has one of Lichtenstein's works, "Brushstroke with Spatter."

**Sincerely yours,**

Art Volunteer