

Form Matters, Matter Forms

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Starting in the 1960s, consumer products and advertising begin to occupy an increasingly prominent position in art. What had begun as a part of the accumulations of Nouveau Réalisme became the characteristic feature of Pop Art: the transformation of everyday objects into works of art. This strategy stems from the Readymades that Marcel Duchamp began producing in 1913. Although it was still a marginal phenomenon at that time, in emerging consumerism the process was successfully copied and proved to be suitable for the mass market. Working ostensibly without a visible artistic process, which in the form of the creative gesture still legitimizes art to this day, Pop artists appropriated mass-produced goods and popular images using the best capitalist logic and presented them on the art market as profitable limited editions. The DNA of consumer society was explicitly integrated into the art world both visually and economically, putting its symbolic capital to the test. While the products were glorified through the appropriation and turned into icons, their bold optimism and the promise of prosperity was also revealed. The succinct appropriation that can be seen as an ambivalent commentary on the strategies of capitalistic needs for designing, extends to include a form of luxury fetish.

Since then, the exploration of the constantly intensifying spiral of consumption has not stopped in the visual arts. The fusion of art and consumerism is expressed in the blurred boundaries between luxury goods, consumer items, and artworks. Materialism has become one of the formative strategies of visual arts. From the perspective of contemporary art, Form Matters, Matter Forms examines the influence of consumerism and consumer aesthetics on the perception of art and how this perception in turn changes the view of society.

With works by John M Armleder, Monica Bonvicini, Marcel Duchamp, Sylvie Fleury, Wade Guyton, Richard Hamilton, Sherrie Levine, Cady Noland, Richard Prince, Andy Warhol, and others.

Curator: Lynn Kost