

Gallery 400 (M/C 033)
College of Architecture, Art, and Urban Planning
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SLICE AND DICE

Curated by Susan Sensemann

Collage and montage are innovations of the twentieth century that have challenged traditional notions of surface, narrative, and representation. Artists, photographers, filmmakers, designers, and composers have used collage and montage techniques to strategically juxtapose fragments from disparate sources for formal, metaphorical, or ideological reasons.

REVEAL/CONCEAL

"Collage is the primary formula of the aesthetics of mystification developed in our time."
Harold Rosenberg

The fragmentation and re-contextualization inherent in the medium of collage are particularly well-suited to preoccupations of the postmodern era. Issues of cultural representation, the construction of identity, and saturation by the media require an analysis of prevailing representations of gender, ethnicity, and class. The flexibility and viability of collage allow for juxtapositions of image that deny a fixed or absolute meaning and are accessible on more than one level.

DECONSTRUCT/RESTRUCTURE

"Collage is in perpetual deconstructive motion."
Donald Kuspit

"Slice and Dice" refers to the well-known photomontage, Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Weimar Beer Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany, made in 1920 by Hannah Hoch, a member of the Berlin Dada group. Hoch's collage is a complex and biting response to the political, economic, and social upheavals of the era between the world wars. Images were excised from mass-media publications in an attempt to provoke and undermine assumptions about pretenses of cultural and political hierarchies and gender and class stereotypes. Images were snipped and scores were settled.

IDENTIFICATION/DIFFERENTIATION

"Collage blurs distinction between art and the direct experience of Life."

Andre Breton

This exhibition includes work by fourteen artists from Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and London. Although the perspectives of the artists are varied, the works reveal social critique or commentary that is as political as it is personal. The underlying intentions disclose feminist issues, plays of power, the effects of cultural conditioning, and the use of allegory as a means to social change. Humor, satire, and parody are conjoined with dislocation and rage.

ESTRANGEMENT/RECONCILIATION

"The mechanism of irony can be defined as simultaneously representing a sign and its opposite, reconciling the two through distancing humor."

Maud Lavin

Superimposed images embody paradox. Contradictory elements shift, collide, merge, and separate again as images seem to inhabit more than one space. Uneasy alliances subvert the context and defy the constraints of the sources of origin. Found materials and images from popular media are juxtaposed; words, images, signs, and symbols are compressed into works of art that elucidate fragmentation and distraction in our culture. As a response to mass-consumerism of the 1950's, the British artist, Richard Hamilton made a collage that is cited as the first example of Pop Art. Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?, 1956, is playful, ironic and critical. The dual nature of collage allows for the enjoyment of cultural detritus while simultaneously critiquing mass consumerism and representing our society's accompanying fears and anxieties.

AMBIGUITY/CERTAINTY

"Collage is a meta-language of the visual...in direct opposition to modernism's search of perceptual plenitude and unimpeachable self-presence."

Rosalind Krauss

Complex linkages, multiple viewpoints, and shifts in narrative syntax demonstrate the flux in everyday life. Fragments of images and texts from a wide-range of sources merge with the substance of art as the artist makes judicious placements and decisions.

ACTUALITY/BECOMING

"The art of collage proves to be one of the most effective strategies of putting into question all the illusions of representation."
Jacques Derrida

Disruption, dislocation, discord, and disorientation are aspects of a process of assimilation and reconciliation. The uncertainty of the re-constructed images, their seeming imbalance, defy categorization. Yet, a balance is established in the midst of rupture.

NATURE/TECHNOLOGY

"Collage is the most poetic movement, the most revolutionary, the touching flight toward... a greater intimacy with daily truths."
Tristan Tzara

Humor and anger, the mundane and the numinous, are truths that are conflated in collage.

PRESENT/FUTURE

"Juxtapositions operate as a kind of erotic encounter."
Robin Lyderberg

Fragments find their ways into fields of artistic certainty.

RESIST/ENGAGE

"...the restless sense of becoming."
Donald Kuspit