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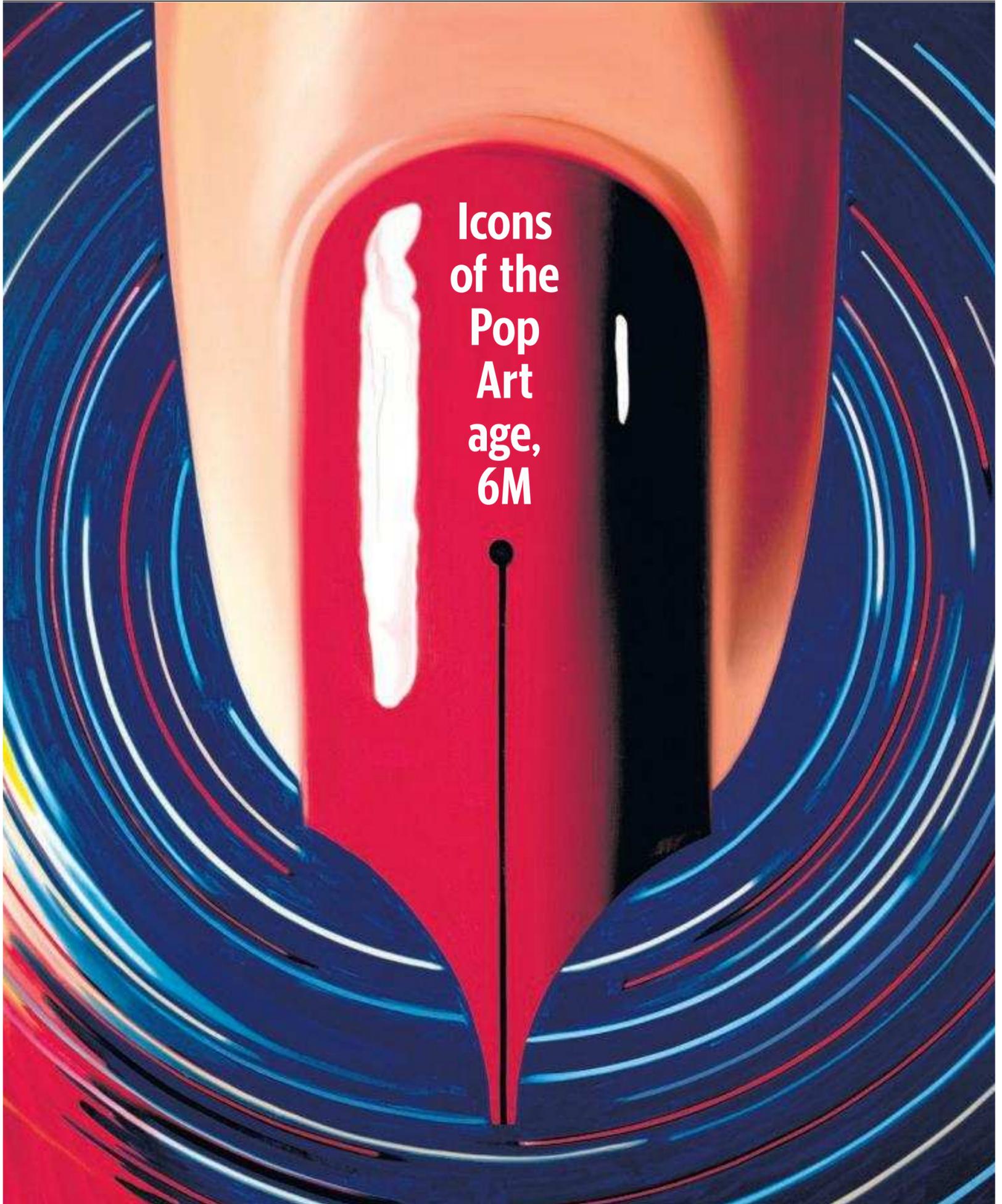


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James Rosenquist's triptic 'Title Year' is part of the show of Pop Art works from the personal collection of Martin Z. Margulies on display through Dec. 10, 2017.

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Arts & Entertainment



Roy Lichtenstein's 1963 'Hot Dog' uses Ben-Day dots to create the sensibility of a commercial advertisement.

PETER HARHOLDT

VISUAL ARTS

Icons of the Pop Art age



Claes Oldenburg's 'Soft Baked Potato.'

BY SIOBHAN MORRISSEY
Special to the Miami Herald

Like a perfect haiku, the Pop Art exhibit at the Margulies Collection says a lot with so little.

The Japanese poetry style conveys abundant meaning in just 17 syllables. Similarly, collection founder Martin Z. Margulies uses just 17 works — if you view the three images of "The American Indian" by Andy Warhol as a triptych instead of individually — to chronicle the history of Pop Art.

Few collections outside of the Museum of Modern Art or the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York can offer anything remotely similar. The majority of the works in the show were created in the 1960s, when the movement first emerged, and includes seminal works by the pillars of pop. On display through Dec. 10, the show features work by Warhol, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, George Segal, James Rosenquist and Tom Wesselmann.

"What makes Pop so important is this is really the first purely American art movement," Margulies said. "The Pop Art movement was a purely American movement about American culture."

"This year, because of the magnitude of what we've done," Margulies said, "it's the best show that we've ever done." The exhibit features all works from his private collection installed in his Key Biscayne home.

"We wouldn't have done it," he said, "except that we're having a charitable gala for the Lotus House homeless shelter for women and children."

A staunch advocate for the Overtown-based shelter run by his former wife, Constance Collins, Margulies has contributed millions of dollars to Lotus House.

The Pop Art exhibit fills the entry salon in the warehouse.

Margulies paired Roy Lichtenstein's "Brush Strokes" painting from 1966 with Lichtenstein's earlier work, "Hot Dog," created in 1963. In his art-imitates-life approach, Lichtenstein painted them to resemble commercial advertisements. To achieve that effect, he used Ben-Day dots, a technique dating to the 19th century and named after illustrator

Benjamin Henry Day Jr.

In addition to the two Ben-Day dot paintings, the show includes three of Lichtenstein's sculptures. Eye-catching and joyful in bold primary colors, the sculptures make masterful use of negative space.

The artist's early sculptures from the 1970s and 1980s used stripes instead of dots to convey a certain airiness. His Ben-Day dot sculptures came later. Today those sculptures sell for millions of dollars.

Margulies also owns Lichtenstein's "Picture and Pitcher," one of the highlights of the show. It depicts a water pitcher that diffracts the image of a picture frame in the background. According to collection curator Katherine Hinds, it is the only work in the entire collection Margulies bought sight unseen, and solely on the advice of Ivan Karp, an art dealer who popularized Pop. Had he waited for Karp to send an image of the artwork, it would have been sold by the time he opened his mail, Hinds said.

Hinds suggests starting an exhibition tour with the Jasper Johns painting, "0-9," which he created in 1959 using encaustic or hot-wax paint, typically composed of beeswax, resin and pigment.

"In many ways, Jasper Johns was the bridge between abstract expressionism and the pop movement," she said. While Johns depicts numbers — which fit into the Pop Art culture of elevating everyday objects — he also created the work by hand. "There's the touch and the hand of the artist with the brushstroke," she said

This later work by Lichtenstein also highlighted mass production through its reliance on stencils rather than laboriously painting each Ben-Day dot by hand. Rather than stencils, Warhol used silkscreens to reproduce like images. He believed that the more an image is seen, the more recognizable, and in turn the more celebrated, it becomes.

In keeping with Warhol's philosophy of repetition, the exhibit includes three of his 50 x 42-inch paintings of "The American Indian (Russell Means)" from 1976. Done in various shades of brown and tan, the individual paintings can easily be viewed as a triptych.

They portray Means in stereotypical Native American dress, his hair in twin braids. An activist and actor, Means was a member of the Oglala Lakota tribe. He participated in various protests to further the rights of his people, including an armed standoff at Wounded Knee and the takeover of Mount Rushmore, located

17 works by seven Pop Art icons are on display through Dec. 10 at the Margulies Collection, where you'll find works by Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist and more.



Andy Warhol's 1964 'Brillo Boxes.'

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Jasper Johns' '0-9.'



James Rosenquist's triptych 'Title Year.'

on land sacred to the Lakotas. He also appeared in numerous movies, including "The Last of the Mohicans." The three nearly identical portraits placed side by side reinforce the notion of Russell's celebrity status.

Warhol was fascinated with the idea of celebrity and the culture of fame. "It's because pictures of them become ubiquitous and repeated and repeated," Hinds said. "He foresaw that at a time before what our society became today — celebrity based. He really saw that visual, ubiquitous, repeated image. That's why I think that's an important work."

Warhol also saw how something as common as mass-marketed scrubbing pads, cereal or juice could become art. When Warhol first sent his assistant to a nearby grocery, he returned with distinctive, exotic kinds of boxes, said Hinds. "He said, no, go back and get the most ordinary thing that you can find. And regardless of your economic class, it's immediately recognizable."

Those boxes, and ones like them, became icons of Warhol's art. The show includes five of his wooden boxes silkscreened to advertise Kellogg's Corn Flakes, Brillo soap pads, Del Monte peaches, Campbell's tomato juice and Heinz ketchup.

"These boxes really hold the whole show together," Hinds said. "This is Andy Warhol, and it's a complete look at him."

While Warhol originally stacked his boxes on the floor for collectors to gather as if from a factory floor, here they are placed on a shelf, away from wayward feet. Similarly, the Claes Oldenburg "Soft Baked Potato" installation in clear Plexiglas. Set at a child's eye-level, the installation is sure to attract a lot of attention, even if people are admonished to look but not touch.

An ingenious work, the potato appears to be made from an unzipped beanbag that reveals a pillowy interior with two large pats of butter. "He made the hard concepts soft and the soft concepts hard," Margulies said. "So, the butter patties are made out of wood."

Tom Wesselmann also used wood to recreate a bar of soap in his "Bathtub Collage #6." Famous for his busty blondes on the beach, Wesselmann took a minimalist approach with this work done in black, white and gray. It incorporates a real toilet seat, a bar of soap made of wood, plumbing fixtures and even a tiled wall behind a black tub. A bathing woman can be identified simply by her full lips and left nipple.

A 16½-foot-wide triptych

by James Rosenquist plays counterpoint to Warhol's three Russell Means portraits. Rosenquist, who died at his Florida studio earlier this year, was known for his surreal paintings that included industrial and commercial imagery. In the Margulies show, the triptych shows multiple tubes of lipstick, molten metal being poured from a crucible, and a polished fingernail that resembles a fountain pen nib. Here, Rosenquist repeats the tubular shape of the lipstick and modifies it in each of the three panels.

"He painted in three panels because when he was a commercial billboard painter they would only work on certain sections of the billboard at a time," Hinds said. "He retained that through his work."

George Segal also focused on one of the most recognized images of the era: the New York subway car. Created in 1968, the installation includes an original subway car with three rattan seats and an old map, years before Massimo Vignelli updated it with a modernist streamlined version. In his book about the collection, Margulies explained that Segal tried for days to obtain a scrapped section of a subway car from the New York surplus yard. Apparently, city employees lacked the authority to sell city property. But when he returned to the yard after hours one day, an arrangement was reached with a wink and a nod — and the exchange of a few dollars.

Years later, in 1991, Segal recreated another iconic image — the "Depression Bread Line" — part of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt memorial in Washington, D.C. The sculpture depicts five men with sagging shoulders and hands jammed into their overcoat pockets. Segal placed himself in line and included four friends for the remaining models: then-Walker Art Center director Martin Friedman, Daniel Burger of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, photographer Donald Lokuta and former WPA artist Leon Bibel.

At 9-foot-tall, the men are larger than life but emblematic of the pop movement. They memorialize something we've all come to recognize through repeated exposure to the black-and-white photographs of Dorothea Lange and other Depression images.

That holds true for each of artist in the show. Their work emphasized repetition of the recognizable, from the everyday to the extraordinary. What they captured in paint and sculpture would later be memorialized as icons of their day, foretelling the future through their art.