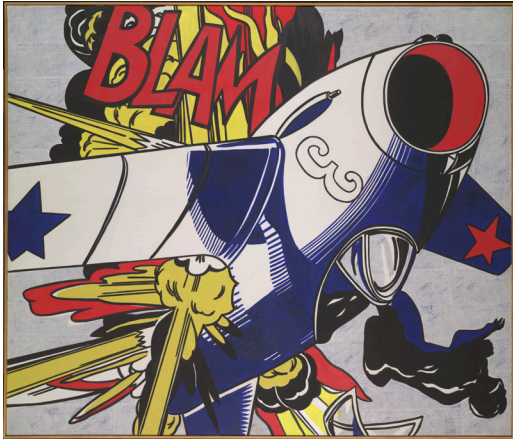


8 • 1

Roy Lichtenstein

art in  
action



**Masterpiece:**

*BLAM*, 1962

Size: 68 in. x 80 in

Media: oil on canvas

**Artist:**

Roy Lichtenstein, 1923-1997

**Project:**

Impact

KEY CONCEPTS

Style: Pop Art

Space: Negative

Design: Emphasis

Texture: Stippling  
Benday Dots

Line: Thick/Thin

ABOUT THE ARTIST

- Born in 1923 in New York where his father was a realtor
- During high school attended Saturday painting classes
- His first Pop Art work was the famous Ten Dollar Bill print
- Combined cropped pictures, thick outlines, and limited colors
- Pop Art paintings show themes of impact, often violent action or romance

## CONCEPTS

Style:

- Pop Art
- Onomatopoeia

Color:

- Flat  
Intensity  
Value  
Contrast

Design:

- Emphasis
- Movement  
Balance

Line:

- Thick/Thin
- Diagonal  
Orthogonal  
Jagged  
Outline

Shape:

- Curvilinear  
Flat

Space:

- Negative
- Project  
Recede  
Static  
Dynamic

Texture:

- Stippling
- Benday Dots

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR KEY CONCEPTS

**How does Lichtenstein's Pop Art style show impact?**

Lichtenstein's Pop Art style illustrates the explosive impact of these objects by using graphics, simple lines, and bright colors. Lichtenstein's impact words use onomatopoeia, or the sound of the word itself, like BLAM, to convey the sound of the action. Words such as pop, tick tock, zip, and clunk use onomatopoeia.

**How do the bright, flat colors add excitement to this story?**

Areas of bright, flat color in the flames have no shading, so they do not appear 3-D. Bright primary colors contrast with the dull blue background and the white underside of the plane. The light values of red, yellow, and white contrast with the darker values of the blue shadows, thick black lines of smoke, and the dark figure of the pilot.

**How does Lichtenstein move the action around the painting?**

The action is emphasized by the bright colors, diagonal lines, contrasting straight and curved shapes, and reversed foreground and background. The cut off image of the fighter plane emphasizes the instant of the impact.

**Where do lines imply motion?**

The diagonal lines of the red and yellow streaks of fire, the blue airplane, and the black figure create dynamic action lines, like vibrations, which show the force of the explosion. Thick black outlines connect the shapes of the plane, flames, pilot and the word BLAM. Thick lines of the yellow streaks and red letters emphasize the strength and noise of the explosion. Parallel thin blue lines show an area of lighter shadows.

**How did Lichtenstein show depth?**

Dynamic flames bursting in every direction imply the depth of space. The force of the explosion pushes the plane through the space of the painting and into our space. The dull background represents the negative space of the sky, providing room for the explosion. The large, black negative shape in the nose of the plane implies space inside the plane.

**How does the texture of the surfaces add realism?**

The stippling, or shading of the dots creates the effect of shading around the cockpit. They are a mechanical technique of darkening an area with dots rather than solid shades of gray. Benday dots, used to add shading to printed images such as newspaper illustrations, were first used by Ben Day. The sharp lines of the exploding fire give rough visual texture, in contrast with the smooth solid texture of the plane's surface.

## MATERIALS

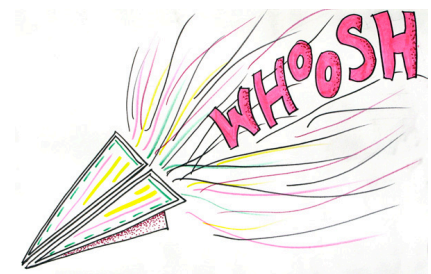
- sketchbooks:
- 9x12 sketch paper
- 12x18 white paper
- shading pencils
- Sharpies: black
- conical-tip markers
- erasers

## SETUP

- Make a sketchbook for each student by folding 12x18 construction paper in half and filling with 10 pieces of 9x12 sketch paper. Staple along folded edge to bind.
- Set out sketchbooks, shading pencils, and erasers.
- Have ready 12x18 white paper, Sharpies, and markers.

## TIPS

- Draw more than one illustration and share ideas before settling on final image.
- Vary size and spacing of the Benday dots, to emphasize shading and form.



## PROJECT: IMPACT

**Sketch:**

1. Sketch a picture to illustrate an impact word, add the impact word to the sketch.

**Project:**

1. Draw impact word on final 12 x 18 paper referring to sketch in an easy-to-read size and shape. Think about rhythm or motion font shows. Diagonal lines may show speed, vertical lines march with rhythm. Circular lines roll smoothly and horizontal lines look lazy. Draw letters of impact word diagonally or vertically, to emphasize the sound the word makes. Vary size of letters, use upper and lower case.
2. Draw action frame around word. How will the frame connect to the impact word and image? Surround the word with a frame that illustrates the sound.
3. Draw object or scene that illustrates impact word. Draw a simple picture illustrating the instant of impact when a noise is made. Images should be large. Connect the image with the impact word and frame.
4. Outline word and illustration. Use sharpie to draw contours. Thicken lines where necessary to make them stand out.
5. Plan and color graphic design. Choose either impact word or image as the focal point.
6. Color areas of image and word. Select a few colors that reflect impact, such as red and orange for loud sounds, blue or purple for heavy noises, or pink, green or yellow for lighter impacts. Decide which areas will be left white as negative space.
7. Draw Benday dots in one part of image, word or background.
8. Use dots to fill a space or add shading. Benday dots can fill an interior shape or spread across an empty background. Vary size and number of dots, making them more dense in some areas or gradually go from large to small to show shading.
9. Evaluate for balance. Add dynamic action lines or repeated thin, parallel lines to draw attention to focal point.

