

RICHARD HAMILTON



TATE GALLERY

CATALOGUE

Catalogue entries on individual works in the exhibition have been edited by Richard Morphet in close consultation with the artist, by whom they have been approved. The entries were drafted by Jacqueline Darby, using information from a number of sources including earlier catalogues and other publications. The drafts were supplemented by extensive new information from Richard Hamilton.

The entries on works between 1949 and 1969 draw extensively on those in the catalogue of the Tate Gallery's Hamilton retrospective of 1970. Much material in the 1970 catalogue entries has been omitted here for reasons of space, not least that which traces the development of a work in relation to its sketches, studies and related prints. Equally, the present entries on works of 1949-69 contain information not present in the 1970 catalogue.

The entries on the works in this catalogue should be read in conjunction with the chronology of Richard Hamilton's life and work on pp. 186-92. In the sequence of catalogue entries passages have been introduced at appropriate points to summarise Hamilton's activity in a number of areas (such as his thematic exhibitions and his concern with the work of Marcel Duchamp) which have an exceptionally close bearing on his work as a fine artist.

The catalogue entries quote frequently from Hamilton's published writings on his works and on the culture of our time. For the fullest compilation of these texts the reader is referred to Hamilton's *Collected Words* (Thames and Hudson, 1982). The fullest catalogue to date of Hamilton's prints is *Richard Hamilton Prints 1939-83* (Waddington Graphics, 1984). Both these publications are Edition Hansjörg Mayer. References to 'bib.' in the text are to entries in the Bibliography, pp. 193-201.

In the titles of the works, capitalisation follows Richard Hamilton's original designation. Measurements are given in centimetres followed by inches in brackets, height before width.

Student paintings

In 1938 Hamilton became a student at the Royal Academy Schools in London at the age of sixteen, a good deal younger than was usual. Three paintings survive from the period. They exemplify his preoccupation at that time with the accurate rendering of tonal adjacencies in the motif as observed. The clarity of Hamilton's manner and the precision of the borders of each block of colour were unusual among students of his generation at the Royal Academy Schools. Hamilton was predisposed in this direction through awareness of the work of Wyndham Lewis and through having seen the drawing style of Merlyn Evans and Matvyn Wright at the Reimann Studios where they taught in the life class.



1
Figure study (Flossie)

1940
Oil on canvas
50.8 × 43.1 (20 × 17)
The artist

Students sometimes volunteered the task of modelling if professionals were not available. Flossie, a friend and fellow student, was the subject in the life-room on this occasion. The sombre tonality of these student oils results from a method of working introduced to the RA Schools by Flossie herself. Paint is mixed with a palette knife and a sample of colour held on its tip is compared directly against an area of colour on the model; the process is repeated until a match is made. The technique inevitably produced darkly-hued paintings to the despair of Sir Walter Russell, then Keeper of the RA Schools, whose method of teaching was to smear, without comment, each student's canvas in turn with white paint.



2
Nude

1940
Oil on canvas
61 × 50.8 (24 × 20)
The artist

This painting, typical of the art school life-room, shows early signs of Hamilton's eclecticism. It is a flirtation with Cubism which follows the pattern of many life-drawings he made at the RA Schools at the same time – they explore different traditional Beaux Arts techniques and styles and also reveal a curiosity about current modernist modes. The painting has more in common with Jacques Villon's approach to Cubism than Picasso's, yet it is unlikely that Hamilton could have been aware of the work of the brother of Marcel Duchamp, an artist who was to become so important an influence.



3
Portrait of James Tower

1940
Oil on canvas
55.8 × 40.7 (22 × 16)
The artist

James Tower (1919–88), a fellow painting student and later an outstanding artist potter, sat for this portrait in Hamilton's home. The painting indicates a willingness in the youthful artist to seek for alternative solutions to any problem. Instead of the angular divisions seen in the two previous pictures, there is here an attempt to define a contour around an area of tonal difference. These stepped boundaries of light and shade define form in much the way that contour lines on a map show hills and valleys.

A larger early portrait, 'Inge' (c.1941 (untraced)) had similarities to the portrait of Tower. After leaving the RA Schools in 1940 Hamilton was substantially prevented from painting by war work.

Ulysses



fig. 1 The Transmogrifications of Bloom 1984-5 Soft-ground and aquatint



fig. 2 In what posture? 1986 Heliogravure in 1 colour and 2 blacks from 3 plates

Among the strongest influences on Hamilton's approach to image making was the novelist James Joyce. Hamilton began illustrating *Ulysses* in 1948, for his own pleasure, because he found Joyce's use of language 'demonstrated a stylistic and technical freedom that might be applied to painting'. He determined to modulate form, technique and style in each illustration, echoing the varied treatments of the eighteen chapters of the book, in order to create a visual equivalent to the changing fabric of Joyce's prose.

Complexity is compounded within a single episode known as 'Oxen of the Sun', which moves relentlessly from primitive utterance through to modern colloquial speech parodying, in chronological sequence, paragraph by paragraph, most of the great masters of English literature (figs. 2, 3, 4 on p. 50).

Hamilton's parodic prose style in his text 'Urbane Image' (bib. A19), written in 1963 – the verbal equivalent for his painting style of 1957–64 – follows Joyce in the use of a separate literary style for each paragraph. The concept of 'epiphany' (cf. no. 27) derives from Joyce's first novel, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and the ambition to explore the possibility of an epic narrative poetry expressed in purely visual terms can be traced to his last, *Finnegan's Wake*. The jokey titles of works between 1949 and 1955, in which words are broken into small units of sound and syllable (several separate meanings may be communicated in a single word or phrase), also owe a debt to *Finnegan's Wake*.

Joyce's interest in patterns of the 'quotidian' (contemporary daily life and experience), the complex relationship between image and idea, visual sign and meaning, form and message, kindled Hamilton's contribution to the genesis of Pop art.

Early works 1950–55

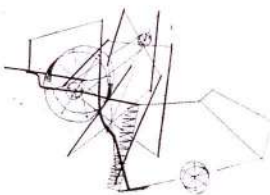
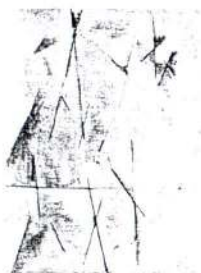


fig. 3 Reaper (a) 1949 Etching

During his period of studentship at the Slade School of Art (1948–51) Hamilton made few paintings. His first year was spent drawing in the life-room, the second mainly in the etching studio, where he produced, among other prints, twenty engravings of a type of agricultural machine, the reaper (fig. 3). These were exhibited under the title 'Variations on the theme of a reaper' at Gimpel Fils in 1950. The third year was spent researching and producing *Growth and Form* (see p. 145).

In his first three abstract oils, paralleling similar etchings and also painted at the Slade, the description of form is schematic, so too is the use of colour. The spectator is taken from the essential contrivance of a pictorial system to its physicality as paint on a surface.

Hamilton's approach was always to assess the essential nature of the activity in hand and then to construct a painting from a predominantly intellectual premise. In 1950 he decided to rethink from scratch the process of representing the world through painting. To do this, he had first to consider the nature of image making itself. He therefore started with, as it were, a *tabula rasa*, into which blank arena he first introduced marks, then space, and only then forms of life, beginning with the most primitive. Not until 1954 did the human figure reappear in Hamilton's oils. The crowded Pop compositions which followed were a natural development of this progressive engagement with the surroundings in which Hamilton found himself.



4

Induction

1950
Oil on canvas
51 × 40.5 (20½ × 16)
The artist

Three paintings (of which this is the most abstract), a drawing and two prints were first titled 'Microcosmos', to suggest a visual analogy between works of this type and Bartok's piano exercises, simple enough to be played by anyone.

Hamilton's preoccupation at this time is with the use of minimal elements to articulate the picture surface (see also nos. 5, 6). His aim was that such articulation should result from relationships naturally developed as one mark leads to another. He deliberately eliminated style, to emphasise that the life of the picture lies within itself as an autonomous, self-explanatory organism and container of ideas.

A white surface is given structure by the use of only the most primitive and fundamental indications, beginning with the simplest, a point, its location determined by what already exists (in this case the size and shape of the canvas). Hamilton concluded that even the simplest mark on a ground tends to suggest space: its relative shape, size, colour, tone, position and direction will all be subconsciously interpreted by the human mind as having three-dimensional implications. Hamilton has indeed stated that 'perspective is the dominant clue in our interpretation of any image' (ibid. p. 33). In 'Induction', as in 'Chromatic spiral' (no. 6), a rudimentary horizon line inevitably implies extension in depth.

The emphasis, here, is on investigating and constructing form rather than on representation. Hamilton was concerned that there be a reason for making each mark in order to form some kind of systematic relationship over the picture surface.

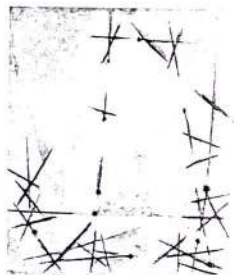


5

Microcosmos: tangential ovoid

1950
Oil on canvas
38.2 × 51 (15 × 20½)
Private Collection, England

A simple negative form is generated by a ring of tangential lines.



6

Chromatic spiral

1950
Oil on panel
53.5 × 47 (21 × 18½)
Private Collection

Describes a process of systematic increase: around a single point nine further points form a spiral. Each point is part of a group of crisscrossed straight lines which increase in number from group to group, from one to nine. As each line moves across the surface it has an organic life of its own. The line extending upwards from the first point leads the eye to the second point and in each subsequent group one line points to the group that follows. The lines are in the seven colours of the spectrum, plus black and white: one colour is added in each group. Black starts the sequence, white ends it.

Hamilton had become interested in Klee's *Pedagogical Sketchbook* (which from 1952 he would use as a primer in teaching). This painting was influenced by Klee, as were the sculptures of William Turnbull, which interested Hamilton and which simi-

larly involved constructing a work from the simplest elements of point and line. Fundamental to 'Chromatic spiral' was D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson's discussion of the processes of growth in nature (see pp. 29, 145). The painting symbolises Thompson's appreciation that organic physical structures develop as a result of mathematically definable processes and that they often take a spiral form.

Growth and Form

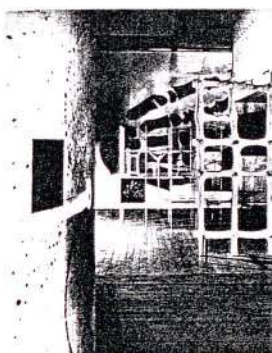


fig.4 Installation view of *Growth and Form* 1951, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London

Between 1951 and 1958 Hamilton created all or part of five major environmental exhibitions, each described below, which parallel the investigation of the subject matter pursued in his paintings. *Growth and Form*, organised and designed by Hamilton, was a contribution by the ICA to the Festival of Britain in 1951 (fig.4). The exhibition was inspired by D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson's book *On Growth and Form* (first edition 1917). Its theme was the way in which biological function in nature produces its multiplicity of forms. The exhibition was opened by Le Corbusier, whose contributions to international exhibitions Hamilton had admired, particularly in his concern with making a synthesis from disparate sources and with creating a specifically modern environment.

Like much of Hamilton's work since, *Growth and Form* was an investigation into what the world is composed of, the processes which structure it, and the means by which we perceive and understand it. In *Growth and Form* he juxtaposed actual scientific specimens with diagrams and, more importantly, with photographs taken by a wide variety of means. Images were transmitted by cinematic projection onto horizontal surfaces above and below the spectator's eye level, by split-second illumination by high-intensity strobe flashes, and by infinite multiplication by means of mirrors.



fig.5 *Refraction* 1952 Oil on panel
Mary Banham, London



fig.6 Terry Hamilton with *Super-Ex-Position* 1953-4
Oil on hardboard Destroyed

7 Particular System

1951
Oil on canvas
101.5 x 127 (40 x 50)
The artist

Biological function produces forms many of which are invisible to the naked eye. It is photographic technology which reveals these structures, unseen either through vast distance, microscopic proximity or obstructions overcome only by x-rays or infra-red. 'Particular System' is directly inspired by images from D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson's book on morphology, *On Growth and Form*, witness the sea urchin, lower right, and the micro organism, top right. It also owes a debt to Kathleen Lonsdale's x-ray diffraction patterns, which are produced on a photographic plate by the scattering of electrons beamed at a fragment of crystal (see fig.4, left of photograph).

In this 'particular system', the encircled black spot (a diagrammatic

symbol used often in these paintings to mark vanishing points) denotes 'centre of vision'. Its central place as well as its form make it a powerful visual target but its alignment with the eye and its size introduce an ambiguity – is it on the horizon or closer? Perhaps it is as close as the nearest part of the painting, the flat area of colour in the foreground, to which there is a strong link. The painting's punning title refers to the particularity of this central spot, as well as to the image being composed of particles. It is as though the world were being created by deflection from the visual point of focus.

Spatial location is here indicated by simple perceptual clues, such as colour and distribution of non-figurative marks – green and yellow denote proximity (and ground), blue, distance (and sky). The tall, transparent foreground object standing on its own rectangular base has no particular source, though displayed in conjunction with biological organisms it reflects the preoccupation with museums and exhibitions then current in Hamilton's circle. A similar transparent vessel appears in his painting 'Refraction', 1952 (fig.5), in which he examined the distortion produced when something is seen through water.

In 1978 Hamilton wrote of his charted perspective studies 'These empty notations invited habitation and my reaction was to populate the diagrammatic space with token life forms abstracted from primitive orga-

nisms.' (bib. D33) Another painting, 'Super-Ex-Position' (fig.6), concerned with movement in space, for which some studies exist, was completed in 1954. It was destroyed a few years later – storage was becoming a problem.

8 d'Orientation

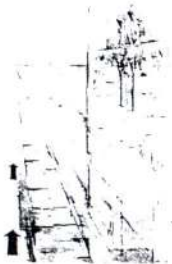
1952
Oil on hardboard
117 x 160 (46 x 63)
The artist

'd'Orientation' is the most extreme example of Hamilton's preoccupation with systematic representations of space. The rigidity of the Renaissance concept of fixed, idealised viewpoints is confronted by modern ideas of time and flux.

Here, three perspective viewpoints are prescribed with their corresponding vanishing points (one of which is common to all), to postulate an observer moving to three different locations in a notional space. A dual

or multiple role is allowed for any mark occurring within more than one of the 90 degree angle viewpoints created. The marks also conform strictly to a two-dimensional grid of squares and golden sections, thus introducing the ambiguity of the possibility that the rectangular grid is a fourth viewpoint looking at the scene from above: a reasonable hypothesis since the three locations, denoting the positions of the viewer, appear as on a map.

Between these perspective systems and the spectator Hamilton interposes an object – part of a jellyfish – which is both natural (organic, in contrast with the artificial device of perspective) and outside the established perspective systems. It is anomalous because it cannot be integrated into any of the possible schema, especially the fourth, since the hanging, suspended, character of the natural form contradicts a vertical view.



9
Transition III

1954
Oil on canvas
76 × 56 (30 × 22)
Private Collection

Four pictures titled 'Transition', of which 'I' was a preliminary version of 'III' and 'II' a trial run for 'III', carry the exploration of schematic treatments of simultaneous movement of spectator and subject into a new area of representation. The study of motion perspective seen in such paintings as 'd'Orientation' emerged from purely conceptual notions into the world of direct visual experience. The paintings were made at the time of Hamilton's frequent travelling by rail between London and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where he was teaching. The title is a pun on 'Train sit I on', as the typographic of the numbering is a pun on the structure of railway lines, which rest on sleepers. In 'Transition III' the observer gazes in the direction of travel.



10
Transition IIII

1954
Oil on panel
91.5 × 122 (36 × 48)
Tate Gallery, Purchased 1970

'Transition IIII' adopts the viewpoint of an observer looking out of the train at 90 degrees to the direction of travel. The painting investigates the experience of focusing on a middle distance object (a tree) from the right-hand window of a moving vehicle (a train). Everything between train and tree appears to move from left to right (the opposite direction to the movement of the train), while everything behind the tree appears to move from right to left. Diagrammatic arrows (which recall Klee) register this movement. Two other figurative elements in motion are a telegraph pole (seen three times in the instant when it intersects the point of attention) and a car (moving at the same speed in the opposite direction to the train and thus displaced at an interval double that if it had been static).

Hamilton was interested in how, in a mobile situation, the only fixed point is the one on which the observer focuses at any moment. If the focus is changed to another position, closer or further away, the direction of movement of objects and surfaces in front of and behind the point of focus relates to that new visual pivot.

These studies of relative motion are contemporaneous with Hamilton's investigation into Marcel Duchamp's analysis and representation of movement and there are echoes of Duchamp's own 'Sad Young Man in a Train', in which movement is conceived as a metaphor for the fluctuations and transitions of mood and ambience.

The paintings show a growing involvement with subjects peculiar to the accelerating, ever more technically sophisticated pace of life of the 1950s. As Lawrence Alloway pointed out at the time, they are concerned, among other things, with a classic situation of the Hollywood movie of the day – the speeding car seen from a moving train. Hamilton's painting 'Carapace', 1954 (Private Collection)

represents the view looking out through the windscreen of a moving car. At the approach to a crossroad, the word 'Slow' is seen in perspective.

'Transition IIII' bears a striking, if fortuitous, resemblance to Francis Bacon's painting 'Landscape', 1952 (repr. in col. Ronald Alley, *Francis Bacon*, 1964, No. 40) and is the first indication of Hamilton's path running parallel with an artist he admires greatly. He sees Bacon's work as having a relation of opposites to his own: anguished rather than cool; black as against white magic; painterly rather than delineated; mysterious instead of lucid. Hamilton's pastiche 'Portrait of the artist by Francis Bacon', 1970 is a friendly homage.



11
re nude

1954
Oil on panel
122 × 91.5 (48 × 36)
Moderna Museet, Stockholm

The painting is a reflection on the rules of depiction which govern the traditional nude genre (hence the pun on the word 'renewed') and examines the process of movement from and towards the object, comparable to the tracking movement of a movie camera or the motion of a train (see no. 10). The title also marks a return to the subject of the female nude after a break of fourteen years.

Here the subject is 'still'. An art school nude model (with a blank white panel destined to become the painting standing behind her) is approached in three stages. Because the unpaid model posed in her limited spare time Hamilton worked on a watercolour study (fig. 8) to provide information to be transferred onto the painting in the model's absence. The process has something in common with André Gide's stragem of writing a diary while writing a novel about an author keeping a diary.



fig. 7 Crossroad 1954 Pencil and watercolour on paper *The artist*

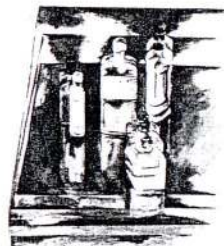


fig. 8 Study for 're nude' 1954 Watercolour and pencil *British Museum*

When the second session with the model commenced the subject had changed. The notations of the watercolour had been worked into the oil painting, only to find themselves ready to be recycled back into the watercolour during the next period with the model. The painting itself had become part of the image and the subject evolved into a process of continuous feedback. The sessions with the model, moving between three marked positions, are multiplied again by three in the painting, which thus produces a nine times replication of the model as seen in the painting as subject.

Hamilton's interest in the representation of movement was stimulated by the precedents of Futurism and Duchamp, but also by the photography of Marey and Muybridge, who had represented successive stages of movement respectively on a single plate and by breaking it down into multiple images. The influence of Duchamp is strong in 're Nude', but in a negative sense. In Duchamp's 'Nude Descending a Staircase' his nude treads lightly down, watched by the artist locked in contemplation. Hamilton's nude is led back to the life-room and firmly seated on a stool: she sits immobile while scrutinised by the artist from several viewpoints. As distance closes on the subject there is a change of scale, with the increase appearing as an expansion about the central vanishing point (the top of the model's left arm), the only unchanging feature of the painting (see also no. 7). 're Nude', like Duchamp's descending nude, represents not only movement through space but also the passage of time.

While all the paint marks in 're Nude' identify the exact location of things seen, they are at the same time tokens for those things' presence. They are necessarily selective in order to avoid the incoherence of image that would result if all facial parts were repeated three times and then three by three. Hamilton omitted most of them, allowing one in particular, a single pair of lips, to stand for the facial features as a whole. After 1954 Hamilton's next seven works would each draw attention to the female body and six of them would highlight specific parts of body or head, three of these again being the lips.



12 Still-life?

1954
Oil on canvas
61 × 51 (24 × 20½)
Private Collection

Using the motif of a group of artist's oil and turpentine bottles in his stu-

dio, Hamilton here experimented with Cubist-derived overlapping views created by the motions of the observer; hence the question mark in the title. Because the bottles are below eye level on a table there is an apparent progressive tilting of the surface on which they are standing, as the eye moves in three stages towards the subject. Image is superimposed on image so that the linear drawing comes close to the idea of multiple exposures on a single photographic plate, which then produces the serial image.

Not only the subject but also the sober hues of this painting (as of 're Nude', no. 11) recall Cubism. Although the world of mass media imagery into which Hamilton would shortly move was reflected by most Pop artists in ways that emphasised its brashness, most of Hamilton's Pop paintings would continue the preference his earlier work had shown for restraint, tonal subtlety and careful compositional construction. His move from pure paint on canvas to the attachment of found materials, starting in 1956, paralleled Cubism's movement from its 'analytical' to its 'synthetic' phases.

While Hamilton was spending time in his studio comparing and contrasting Futurist and Cubist approaches to the problem of representing a mobile object, and the different graphic means adopted to communicate the complexities of an eye moving relative to a subject, he was engaged in a companion project. This was a didactic exhibition on the theme of man's achievements in aiding and controlling his own movement through space.

Man, Machine & Motion



fig. 9 Installation view of *Man, Machine & Motion* 1955, Hatton Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Designed and organised by Hamilton over a two-year period, *Man, Machine & Motion* was shown in the summer of 1955 at the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and at the ICA in London (fig. 9). It was a pictorial review, in over two hundred photographs and photographs of original drawings, of machines which extend the power of the human body and increase man's capacity for autonomous movement. It was assembled in four distinct groups: Aquatic (underwater devices), Terrestrial (surface locomotion), Aerial (aircraft) and Interplanetary (space travel), the images from each group being disposed accordingly below, at or above the spectator's eye level.

Emphasis was predominantly on the seventy years preceding 1955, since photography is more or less coeval with mechanised transport and belongs to the same technological environment. The material was selected so that 'each image should show a machine and a recognizable man' (Reyner Banham, 'Man, Machine & Motion', *Architectural Review* 1955, pp. 51-3).

Large photographs were fixed at various levels in a slender, modular framework, thereby producing semi-architectural spaces which were as important to the effect as infill. The arrange-

ment permitted the spectator to see photographs of different subjects and periods in an infinite number of permutations. *Man, Machine & Motion* recalls Duchamp and Picabia in their ironical interpretations of the machine becoming one with human beings, a theme Hamilton was to develop in the coming years.

In writing about the exhibition Hamilton noted that man 'has realised an aspiration which lies deeper than thought, the longing for a power with no natural limits; he finds himself in real life the super-human inhabitant of his dearest fantasy' (bib. D4, preface).

Paralleling the development of Hamilton's painting from 1950 to 1954 *Man, Machine & Motion* represented a more advanced stage of evolution than that dealt with in *Growth and Form*. A theme common to both exhibitions, as to Hamilton's paintings, was the way in which form is determined by function. Precisely this theme also underlies the yet more sophisticated world of mass media imagery which Hamilton would now explore in art. It should further be noted that the theme of bodily appurtenances which was so prominent in *Man, Machine & Motion* would be addressed repeatedly by Hamilton in the years ahead, for example in works as diverse as the 'Cosmetic studies' (nos. 57–68) and 'The citizen' (no. 82) and 'The subject' (no. 87).

This is Tomorrow

Held at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, in 1956, *This is Tomorrow* (fig. 10) investigated the possibility of collaboration between groups of artists and the integration of different arts. Each of twelve groups, consisting of a painter, a sculptor and an architect, worked to produce an environment. Hamilton worked with the sculptor John McHale and the architect John Voelcker.

This exhibition attempted to summarise the various influences that were beginning to shape post-war Britain. Hamilton's group included a profusion of carefully chosen images from advertising, popular magazines, comics, film, and even fine art. Voelcker's structure of a fun house (for which Hamilton constructed a cut-and-fold diagram reproduced in the catalogue) and John McHale's six-foot high collaged close-up of food. Twenty-two years later Hamilton would again use a colour reproduction of Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' in an installation, though in the very different setting of the National Gallery.

A feature of Hamilton's section was the involvement of all the senses, including smell and touch. Hearing was engaged by pop music and the loudness of this in combination with the intense colours, the pictorial immediacy and often the scale of the imagery from mass popular culture was controversial and considered by some to be provocative; parallels were drawn with Dada manifestations. The tone of presentation was in marked contrast to that of the other contribution most remarked, both then and now, that of Henderson, Paolozzi and the Smithsons, which was concerned with basic human habitation and dominated by an archaeological ethos. Hamilton viewed the component elements of his 'fun house' as raw material from which new kinds of art might be made. Popular images were disposed in a reverse perspective, moving from a screen of small-scale images merging different modes of visual communication to a robot sixteen feet high.

The tactic of the 'fun house' was to juxtapose popular imagery with a demonstration of the ambiguities of perception. 'Just what is it ...?' (no. 13) faced a negative-positive image in black and white on the opposite page of a double spread of the catalogue, in prophetic anticipation of two of the chief preoccupations of art in the 1960s – Pop and Op. Hamilton's catalogue statement reads 'We reject the notion that "tomorrow" can be expressed through the presentation of rigid formal concepts. Tomorrow can only extend the range of the present body of visual experience. What is needed is not a definition of meaningful imagery but the development of our perceptive potentialities to accept and utilize the continual enrichment of visual material.'

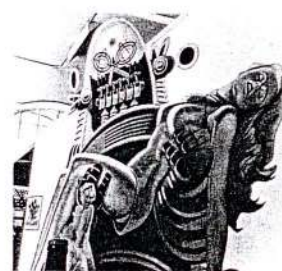


fig. 10 Installation view of *This is Tomorrow* 1956, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London



13
Just what is it that makes
today's homes so different, so
appealing?

1956
Collage
26 × 25 (10¼ × 9¼)
Kunsthalle Tübingen, Zundel Collection

The collage was conceived as both catalogue illustration and poster for the exhibition *This is Tomorrow*. Hamilton found the title, a caption to some long-forgotten magazine illustration, among cast-off trimmings while working on his collage. With the caption pasted beside it his picture answered perfectly the question posed.

Thirty-five years later, the scene Hamilton created here 'seems to define the dreams and aspirations of an entire era' (Andrew Graham-

Dixon, 'Popping On', *The Independent Magazine*, 15 June 1991, p.59), with its packaged cultural commodities. In this consumer paradise excerpts, quotations and whole passages are 'lifted' from photographic sources and advertising, popular culture and mass-media art, in the spirit of what Hamilton was to call 'self-confessed plagiarism'.

Before scavenging his material Hamilton typed a list of categories as a programme for the collage: 'Man, Woman, Food, History, Newspapers, Cinema, Domestic Appliances, Cars, Space, Comics, TV, Telephone, Information'. It is an inventory which gives not a hint of the rich play of witticisms and dual roles found in this compendium of different ways of communicating information, ranging from words, printing, painting, symbols, photography, film, television and diagram to recorded sound (cf. the tape recorder in the foreground).

Hamilton made this collage at the London home of fellow Independent Group member, the artist Magda Cordell. She and Terry Hamilton searched through piles of magazines, many brought back by John McHale from the United States, extracting illustrations of objects which exemplified Hamilton's categories of subject specified in the previous paragraph. His choice of any particular image to use within each category

was determined by its ability to relate convincingly to the perspective space he was building up.

The small picture initiated Hamilton's fascination with the theme he developed in the sixties: the ambiguity of interior/exterior space. In 1990 he wrote of the collage:

'Though clearly an "interior" there are complications that cause us to doubt the categorization. The ceiling of the room is a space-age view of Earth. The carpet is a distant view of people on a beach [cf. no. 34, for a review of the same theme]. It is an allegory rather than a representation of a room. My "home" would have been incomplete without its token life-force so Adam and Eve struck a pose along with the rest of the gadgetry.' (bib. D46, p.44).

The 'POP' on the lollipop is possibly the first use anywhere in a corresponding work of art of the word that would come to designate a major new tendency in art. The comic strip image (here framed and hung on a wall) anticipates by some years a theme of Lichtenstein's. 'Just what is it...' has been described as 'perhaps the closest that the British side of the [Pop] movement came to producing a work comparable in importance to Picasso's "Demoiselles d'Avignon" in relation to Cubism' (Marco Livingstone, 'In glorious techniculture', in *Pop Art*, exh. cat., Royal Academy of Arts, 1991, pp.12-19).

Works of the Pop art period 1956-62

The subject matter of Hamilton's paintings after 1956 (the cinema, domestic appliances, car styling and clothes) had been explicit topics of discussion for Independent Group members at the ICA, London, in the preceding years. Originally the term 'Pop art' was not a designation of an art movement but a label they applied to an important part of contemporary culture: those entertainment products made by skilled professionals for a mass market.

Duchamp's antipathy towards the sensuous hedonism of Abstract Expressionism sanctioned Hamilton's quest for an art which evenly balanced image and idea, icon and meaning, symbol and concept. By the mid-fifties he had come to feel that pop culture, mass media and the language of advertising offered a web of messages about contemporary patterns of life and feeling out of which he could tease more intellectual kinds of statement, rich in allusion and commentary.

In 1957 Hamilton defined Pop art (in the Independent Group's sense of the term) as: 'Popular (designed for a mass audience), Transient (short-term solution), Expendable (easily forgotten), Low cost, Mass produced, Young (aimed at youth), Witty, Sexy, Gimmicky, Glamorous and Big business'. Ten of these eleven criteria are essential to his paintings from this date on: the issue of expendability is still open to speculation. In his subsequent works Hamilton sought to revive fine art by openly deploying its essential elements in terms relevant to the time. As he was to declare

in an article suggestively entitled 'For the Finest Art Try – POP' in 1961: 'If the artist is not to lose much of his ancient purpose he may have to plunder the popular arts to recover the imagery which is his rightful inheritance' (bib. A15). He goes on to say that 'the artist in twentieth century urban life is inevitably a consumer of mass culture and potentially a contributor to it'.

The Pop works which Hamilton would now begin to create were concerned not simply with popular imagery but also with the means by which that imagery was created. Essentially the subject of these paintings is the world of advertising and the mass media. Hamilton explained in 1968: 'One wasn't just concerned with the car and the idea of speed but [with] the way it was presented to us in the mass media ... presenting a glamorous object by all the devices that glamorous advertising can add' (bib. c8). The Pop paintings are anthologies of the mechanics of visualisation.

Each of Hamilton's Pop works was the result of his carrying through a predetermined programme. First, solving the specific problem addressed in the individual work. Secondly, ensuring that his works as a whole should constitute a solution to the wider problem of how to realise in fine art the fresh insights offered by mass popular culture. From the perspective of the 1990s it is difficult to appreciate just how original were both this endeavour and the forms given by Hamilton to its realisation in his Pop paintings.

A typographic version of Duchamp's Green Box (1957–60)

Marcel Duchamp's *Green Box*, 'a literary masterpiece having a unique form', supplements his large painting on glass titled 'The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even', yet it was little known in the 1950s. The neglect of this great text by the art world was probably due to the rarity of the original edition and because so little had been done to assist a clear understanding of what the notes say. Even in French there was no typeset version until 1959.

The *Green Box* was published in 1934 in an edition limited to 300 copies. In what serves as an imprint on the inner spine are the words '*cette boîte doit contenir 93 documents (photos, dessins et notes manuscrites des années 1911–15) ainsi qu'une planche en couleurs.*' Each handwritten note is reproduced in exact facsimile, including torn edges, blots, erasures and occasional illegibility. To date there had been four published translations into English of fragments of the documents.

Hamilton's aim was that 'the complete typographical translation with its accompanying diagrams, should have very much the appearance of a primer to the Glass' (bib. A6).

Hamilton writes in the appendix to his typographic version that 'Duchamp's intention was that the Large Glass should embody the realization of a written text which had assisted the generation of his plastic ideas, and which also carried layers of meaning beyond the scope of pictorial expression. The text exists beside the Glass as a commentary and within it as a literary component of its structure. Without the notes the painting loses some of its significance and without the monumental presence of the Glass the notes have an air of random irrelevance ... What the facsimiles present, above all else, is the evidence of a prolonged meditation on art – a conscious probing of the limits of aesthetic creation'. It was almost impossible to project the sporadic nature of much of the writing, so a mixture of type was used to show the changes of hand or change in the writing medium. As Hamilton explained, 'all oddities of phrasing, punctuation, layout and typesetting are considered attempts to render as closely as possible the form of the original documents'. The typographic version he had designed was published in 1960.

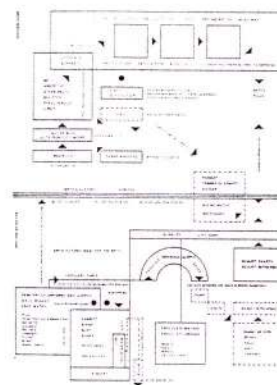


fig.11 Diagram from Richard Hamilton's typographic version of Duchamp's *Green Box*



14 Hommage à Chrysler Corp.

1957
Oil, metal foil and collage on panel
122 × 81 (48 × 32)
Private Collection

Together with 'Hers is a lush situation' (no. 15) this is the first Pop work to synthesise imagery and thematic motifs in a manner inspired by Duchamp's *Green Box*. Correspondences of shape, colour, function and idea between separate elements with different origins are accentuated, with a view to each painting's imagery reading as a continuous system.

The subject matter springs from a topic originally aired by Reyner Banham in the Independent Group discussions of the early 1950s on the 'rhetoric of persuasion' written into

car design, advertising, and marketing. The sources of imagery were the texts and photographs collated for the *Man, Machine & Motion* exhibition and the specific passages which deal with the 'Bride apparatus' in Duchamp's *Green Box* notes and preparatory sketches for the 'Large Glass'. Hamilton was fascinated by the similar metaphor at the heart of both sources – a comparison of the automobile's mechanical functions and components with the physiological processes and erotic drives of the female body. Hamilton recalled recently of 1957: 'There are a few Futurist paintings of cars, but ... you have no idea how ... hard it was to find a car in art at that time ... the thing which has probably changed the world more than any other, and it was virtually absent from painting!' (quoted in Andrew Graham-Dixon, 'That Was Then', *The Independent*, 13 August 1991).

The 'Hommage à' of the title was chosen for its high-art associations with the Parisian Cubist milieu of fifty years before and 'Chrysler Corp.' is a *double-entendre* for both a corporated industrial organisation and the body (corps) of a car or woman. The female body can be identified with a car chassis just as her breasts can be the car headlamps. The association of automobile and lover is a cliché of product promotion technique. As Hamilton said 'My sex symbol is, as

so often happens in the ads, engaged in a display of affection for the vehicle.' (bib. D5) The 'dream boat' joins the 'dream car'. 'Hommage' is the first of five Pop paintings (nos. 14–17, 19) to explore the allusive play of idea and image between girls and machines.

It is also the first of Hamilton's works in which paint and photographic print are integrated and it uses a composite of themes derived from automobile advertising. Pieces are taken from Chrysler's Plymouth and Imperial ads, and others from General Motors and Pontiac material. The sex symbol, constructed from the Exquisite Form bra diagram and the lips of Voluptua, star of an American late night television show, stands behind the car, which she caresses. She evokes, in Hamilton's words 'a faint echo of the "Winged Victory of Samothrace"' (bib. D5).

The setting is a showroom in the International Style as represented by Mondrian and Saarinen; the hovering lips and floorboards parallel to the picture plane are quotations from 're Nude' (no. 11); the horizontal black bar (shorthand for modern architecture) is so placed that it recalls the catalogue and exhibition of *Man, Machine & Motion*; the dotted line, lower right, signifies movement; and the spiral configuration of the Exquisite Form bra brings to mind organisms from *Growth and Form*.

an Exhibit

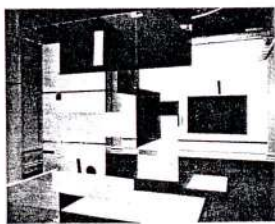


fig. 12 Installation view of *an Exhibit* 1957. Hatton Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Victor Pasmore, Lawrence Alloway and Hamilton conceived *an Exhibit* as 'a game/an artwork/an environment'. The exhibition was first shown at the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1957 and later that year at the ICA, London (fig. 12). It was an abstract, non-thematic exhibition, consisting of a kit of standard-sized sheets and suspension devices which enabled the artists to place panels anywhere within a notional 16 inch rectangular grid. Nylon threads held thin acrylic panels (each 4 foot × 2 foot 8 inches) in varying degrees of transparency, at varying heights. A standard size of module and panel permitted freedom of choice in determining the position of the panels.

The installation was empirical; no plans were preconceived and the position of each panel was determined solely as a result of consideration of the space and the location of earlier placement of panels. Each installation would result in a completely different improvisation to create a constructivist work of art on an environmental scale.

Hamilton's role was to design and organise the components. Victor Pasmore, who had for eight years been producing increasingly geometrical abstractions in two and three dimensions, disposed the panels by joint decision with Hamilton. Pasmore then placed cut paper shapes on them wherever he chose. Alloway contributed to discussions on the theoretical concept and wrote the catalogue text.

Two years later a revised version, *Exhibit 2*, was shown only at the Hatton Gallery (fig. 13). Because of the difficult, labour-intensive installation demands of *an Exhibit* a marriage was made between the modular framework of *Man, Machine & Motion* and the acrylic panels of *an Exhibit* to create a self-supporting structure which allowed something of the flexibility and improvisatory nature of the earlier show.

an Exhibit, reminiscent of the architectonic conceptions of De Stijl, blurred the boundaries between the formulative framework and the exhibited object and, at the same time, invited the viewer to an exhibition experience of a quite novel kind.

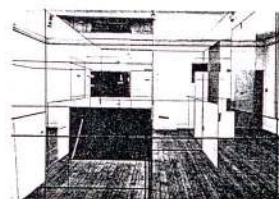


fig. 13 Installation view of *Exhibit 2* 1959, Hatton Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

A Gallery for a Collector

Hamilton was among a group of designers invited to contribute proposals (it could be anything from kitchen to bedroom to music room) for an interior to be shown in the Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition, 1958. His proposal for a living room cum exhibiting space was among the schemes adopted (fig. 14).

An extremely simple, elegant room with all its storage and appliance requirements placed in a single, slender, centrally placed unit was maximally functional as a gallery for the type of large-scale art just emerging in Europe. Works decorating the space included a battered humanoid sculpture by Paolozzi, an Yves Klein, a Sam Francis and Hamilton's own 'Hommage à Chrysler Corp.' (no. 14). A floor-to-ceiling picture-window enabled an avant-garde car, the Citroen DS parked outside, to be appreciated on equal terms with the works of art. Integration with popular culture was further represented by modernist chairs designed by Harley Earl, chief stylist of General Motors, which would not have been known to Hamilton had they not been published in the popular magazine *Look*.

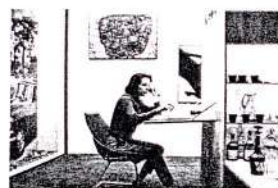


fig. 14 Terry Hamilton in *A Gallery for a Collector* Ideal Home Exhibition, 1958



15 Hers is a lush situation

1958
Oil, cellulose, metal foil and collage on panel
81 x 122 (32 x 48)
Private Collection

In the American magazine *Industrial Design*, containing an annual review of automobile styling, the analysis of a 1957 Buick ended with: 'The driver sits at the dead calm center of all this motion; hers is a lush situation'. The painting aims to merge three inter-connecting spaces – the girl in the

car; the car among others in a flow of traffic; and a cityscape (New York in the vicinity of the United Nations building which, collaged, doubles as a windscreen).

The painting has many common references and similarities with 'Hommage' (no. 14) yet the treatment here is more complex. There is a pronounced linear emphasis in which forms continually overlap or share a common outline, and shallow relief (sprayed and sanded to a high finish) is used to convey the pressed steel quality of automobile bodies. Sophia Loren's collaged lips, reasonably placed anatomically but isolated in space above the car, are among the few references to the 'her' of the title.

Hamilton's text 'Urbane Image' (bib. A19), an evocation of all his paintings from 'Hommage à Chrysler Corp.' to 'AAH!', included the following commentary on 'Hers is a lush situation': 'In slots between towering glass slabs writhes a sea of jostling metal, fabulously wrought like rocket

and space probe, like lipstick sliding out of a lacquered brass sleeve, like waffle, like Jello. Passing UNO, NYC, NY, USA (point a), Sophia floats urbanely on waves of triple-dipped, infra-red-baked pressed steel. To her rear is left the stain of a prolonged breathy fart, the compounded exhaust of 300 brake horses.'

Although this is the first of many paintings by Hamilton which employ relief, projection from the pictorial surface goes back to the etchings of his Slade period – a hole cut in the plate produces a raised area in the print. This is an example of the kind of direct interaction that can take place between one fine art medium and another but Hamilton's adoption of relief was also an acceptance of the changed sense of surface brought about by new developments in the cinema. Where painting had traditionally represented a 'window' on a scene and had then, from the late nineteenth century, increasingly stressed the surface itself, he instincti-

vely felt that it should now reflect the new world of space opened up by CinemaScope and 3-D projection, in which the image was thrust from the screen to meet its audience.



16 She

1958-61
Oil, cellulose and collage on panel
122 x 81 (48 x 32)
Tate Gallery. Purchased 1970

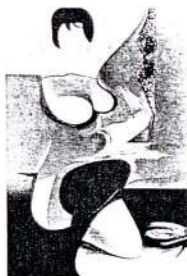
'She' was the outcome of an investigation into domestic appliances for Hamilton's Independent Group lecture 'Persuading Image' (bib. A7). A recollection of the phrase 'Women in the Home', announced with a leer by Groucho Marx, as though it were a title for the long monologue he was about to deliver straight to camera, directed his thoughts while working on 'She'.

The source of imagery is American advertising. 'She', the overt sex symbol, a creature of the media, is derived from an *Esquire* photograph of Vikki ('the back') Dougan. The ambiguous combination of front and back views shows the backless dress as an apron topped by an airbrush-smooth shoulder/breast. The Cadillac-pink fridge is inspired by high-shot photographs favoured in American car advertisements and the toaster/vacuum incorporates an overlapping of presentation styles and techniques. Dotted lines are once more diagrammatic of movement. The plastic eye, a late addition, winks as the spectator moves. Ten of Hamilton's sources of imagery for 'She' are reproduced in bib. A16.

In his 'An exposition of She' (bib. A16), Hamilton commented that 'The worst thing that can happen to a girl, according to the ads, is that she should fail to be exquisitely at ease in her appliance setting... Sex is everywhere, symbolized in the glamour of mass-produced luxury - the interplay of fleshy plastic and smooth, fleshier metal... This relationship of woman

and appliance is a fundamental theme of our culture; as obsessive and archetypal as the western movie gun duel.'

Lawrence Alloway observed in 1961 (see bib.): "'She' is characterized by the cool, clean, hygienic surface of kitchen equipment. It embodies the possibility of identification that the advertising of household appliances offers to women which, until now, her clothes alone had done.' He added that Hamilton had candidly exposed the sources of his imagery in American ads 'in the proud spirit in which Constable could point to Suffolk and say "these scenes made me a painter".'



17 Pin-up

1961
Oil, cellulose and collage on panel
122 x 81 (48 x 32)
Lux Corporation, Osaka

'Pin-up' embodies the essence of Pop Art expression - fine art motifs with Pop ingredients in a diversity of stylistic language: stylised hair; stockings and shoes in advertising shorthand; three-dimensional moulded breasts in a pseudo-Constructivist style; the gestural brushwork of the Tachistes and naturalistic illusionism (cf. a photograph of an actual bra collaged onto the painting).

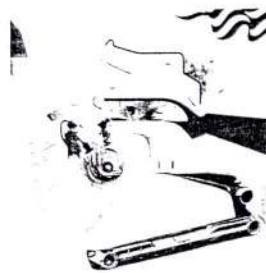
In the 1940s Hamilton was invited to join a group of students in an occasional practice studio established by *Vogue* magazine for potential fashion artists. Fashion drawings provided him with a readymade iconography of stance and gesture, posture and positioning. It was a source upon which he was to draw for 'Pin-up' as he freely used the 'sophisticated and often exquisite photographs in *Playboy* magazine, but also the most vulgar and unattractive to be found in such pulp equivalents as *Beauty Parade*' (bib. D5).

The fine-art odalisque has become a 'Pin-up'. This temptress recalls

Matisse and his flat paint surfaces, the restricted colour range of flesh tints Picasso, and there is a conscious analogy with works by Renoir and Pascin. Hamilton's flesh tones are those produced by photographers of girle magazines with their particular colour printing requirements and limitations. The treatment of the motif recalls 're Nude' (no. 11) and Duchamp's theme of the Bride stripped bare. The striptease image alludes simultaneously to the denuding of the consumerist myth and the 'stripping bare' of styles of pictorial representation.

All elements additional to the figure reflect *Playboy* magazine's obsession with significant accessories. A telephone (the Princess by Bell) and a record player named the Wundergram have a psychological role in implying the subject's availability. 'Pin-up' is an essay in accessibility: by technology, by divestment and by projection into the spectator's space.

Details of the imagery in 'Pin-up' include the merging of telephone and record player (comparable to that of toaster and vacuum cleaner in 'She', no. 16), references in the breasts to sunbathing and to lactation (both indicated through the crisp line dividing two hues, the lower one white) and the adumbration of movement, both in the different breast positions and in the dotted line suggesting a kicking leg.



18 Glorious Technicuture

1961-4
Oil and collage on asbestos panel
122 x 122 (48 x 48)
Private Collection

Hamilton's first thought for a title was 'Anthology', since the work was conceived as a compilation of the principal myths of popular culture and the styles and techniques in which these were rendered. It became 'Glorious Technicuture', a punning reminder of a lecture titled, 'Glorious

Technicolor. Breathtaking Cinema-Scope and Stereophonic Sound' (a line from a song in a Hollywood musical of the period), which Hamilton delivered in 1959 with a battery of slide projectors, pop music, and an early demonstration of the Polaroid camera (bib. A5).

This is a reworking of a painting produced at the request of Theo Crosby for the Congress of the International Union of Architects, London, July 1961 (fig. 15). The conference was held in a pavilion on the South Bank giving on to twin open-air patio areas isolated from the public by eight-foot high hoardings decorated externally with lettering by Edward Wright. In addition to sculptures, the patios included works of art by some of Crosby's artist friends which were attached to the internal side of the hoardings. Hamilton's picture was of a dream New York cityscape with a simulated giant wide-screen outdoor projection of Charlton Heston as Moses at the top of a skyscraper. The original 8 foot x 4 foot panel was found by Hamilton to be too large and heavy to house, so the cut-down bottom half was heavily modified to become the present work. It is the first of Hamilton's paintings not to be unified into a credible whole.

Hamilton draws on a wide range of visual material: the crisp black line, top centre, is derived from a diagrammatic cross-section of a General Motors Corvair engine. Inserted into the profile of a rifle, in a space suggesting the interior of a car, is a bride. Two figures (like tiny knights in armour) result from partial obliteration of a complete cross-section of a car engine with certain parts

painted out: the little one bounces on something freely adapted from the Corning Glass prismatic lens for air-field illumination.

The guitar lying flat on the picture plane recalls Cubism and is derived from a *Life* magazine photograph of the pop musician Tony Conn, whose name was written in string on his guitar. Hamilton's paintings of this period often use three-dimensional objects and material glued in shallow relief to articulate the surface.



19
AAH!

1962
Oil on panel
81 x 122 (32 x 48)
Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt

Tony Conn's name (used in 'Glorious Techniculture', no. 18) and the stylised lettering of the onomatopoeic 'AAH!' (ballooned in comic strip style) introduce lettering into Hamilton's paintings for the first time since the word 'Slow' loomed large in perspective through a car windshield as it approached a crossroad in a painting of 1954. (See also 'POP' in no. 13.) It is a device which is to play a significant role subsequently.

'AAH!' is concerned with the phenomenon of depth of field. Things are either sharp or out of focus in varying degree; photographic idiom is translated into painterly codes. It is one of the earliest manifestations of Hamilton's continuing interest in photographic qualities and their representation in paint, for 'Much of the hedonism comes from the lush visual pleasure that only photographic lenses can provide' (bib. D5).

A car interior, showing the dashboard and gear switch, was a logical follow-up to the exteriors of cars dealt with in nos. 14, 15 and 18. Yet in 'AAH!' the original theme of the car interior has become subordinate to the overall sensuality. The fleshy photographic quality and metaphorical overtones of engagement (advertising's concept of 'finger touch control' here becomes a visual pun on the creation of man as represented by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel) make the painting the erotic culmination of a dominant theme in Hamilton's works since 'Just what is it ...?'. The association of sexual gratification and wonder at the sight of consumer goods is one that advertisers relish. Ronson had been advised by their motivation research consultant to play up the sexual symbolism of the flame in their advertising. An exaggerated flame from the Varafame cigarette lighter ads is seen to the right of the painting.

The secondary source is purely graphic in its language. It was appropriated from the paperback cover of van Vogt's novel *The Weapon Shops of Isher*. The 'Isher Weapon' is pictured in the mechanomorphic style favoured by science fiction illustrators and of which they are the masters.

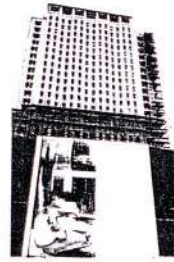


fig. 15 *Glorious Techniculture* (first state) in the IUA exhibition, 1961, with Shell Building under construction behind

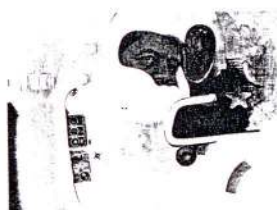
A definitive statement on the coming trends in men's wear and accessories

The idea for this group of paintings came directly from a text – an annual feature on male fashion in *Playboy*. Hamilton added the word 'Towards' to the article's headline for his title because he found the 'definitive' a trifle presumptuous. He wrote: 'fashion depends on an occasion, season, time of day and, most importantly, the area of activity in which the wearer is involved. A definitive statement seemed hardly possible without some preliminary investigation into specific concepts of masculinity' (bib. D5).

The concepts he explored were (a) man in a technological environment; (b) sport; (c) timeless, classical aspects of male beauty; and all three areas were combined in (d). Each work contains an appliance thought of in a *Playboy* context as a typical adjunct of the male persona – (a) transistor

radio, (b) telephone, (c) chest expander, (d) jukebox. They recapitulate the main stylistic vocabulary of the period. The first three paintings continue Hamilton's thesis of the interchangeability of ideas by contributing something to a larger, final working of the theme in (d), which Hamilton found to be no more definitive than the rest.

Frames for the three small paintings were specially made by Hamilton to extend the particular ambience of each.



20
Towards a definitive statement on the coming trends in men's wear and accessories
(a) 'Together let us explore the stars'

1962
Oil and collage on panel
61 x 81 (24 x 32)
Tate Gallery, Purchased 1964

The first of the 'definitive statements' is derived from photographs, transmitted back to earth, of astronauts in the early orbits: top right are painted scan lines acknowledging the television source. The treatment harks back to the ancient myths of Icarus and Mercury. The accessories refer to several related contexts: a helmet from a Lucky Strike ad; a racing driver's stitched headguard; a five-pointed knob, as much a sheriff's star as the control device from which it was taken. Technology is represented by a transistor-radio printed circuit and a fruit machine dial. Top left is derived from the reflex systems of the Canon cine camera. The painting was completed on the day that one of the great Soviet space orbits was announced (15 August 1962). 'CCCP' was introduced into the camera sight-line in recognition of the event.

The astronaut's face is that of US President John F. Kennedy and the sub-title 'Together let us explore the stars' is a phrase from a famous Kennedy speech inviting all peoples to join together in the great tasks awaiting mankind.



21
Towards a definitive statement on the coming trends in men's wear and accessories
(b)

1962
Oil and collage on panel
61 x 81 (24 x 32)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery

Hamilton mixes references to racing motoring (windscreen, aluminium rivets, upright numeral), American football (helmet, slanting numerals) and gambling (the face of a man in the New York Stock Exchange looking through binoculars at the latest share prices) for the sporting look. The surface is modulated by relief (helmet, rivets) and illusion (contrasting orientation of numerals). The spattering of the windscreen was achieved by throwing a pad of paint-soaked cotton wool at the panel.

When reprinted in *Collected Words*, 'Urbane Image' was accompanied by small reproductions of sixteen source images for Pop works and of the cover Hamilton made for *Living Arts* 2, 1963 (fig. 16). This wrap-around cover (photographed by Robert Freeman) was a 'self-portrait' in which he appears as a baseball player surrounded by some favourite objects which had either influenced or appeared in his Pop paintings.



22
Towards a definitive statement on the coming trends in men's wear and accessories
(c) Adonis in Y-fronts

1962
Oil and collage on panel
61 x 81 (24 x 32)
Private Collection, courtesy of Raymond Danowski

The theme is 'timeless aspects of male beauty', yet of the series it is perhaps the most concerned with contemporary interpretations of the theme; indeed, the painting's sub-title, 'Adonis in Y-fronts', is an adaptation of the title of a current pop song, 'Venus in Blue Jeans'.

Man is shown as a figure in a bare Hellenic landscape. Three separate contours, each taken from a different profile of the 'Hermes' of Praxiteles as found in a group of photographs in *Life* magazine, uncertainly define the left of his torso, as if penitenti. These serial profiles simulate movement, in this case, expansion and contraction, a suggestion sustained by a chest-expanding appliance enlarged from an advertisement in a muscleman magazine (fig. 8 on p. 43).

Pictorial and diagrammatic functions are doubled – in the implications of movement and in the brand of underpants, which, as stressed in their advertising, are functional for comfort (indicated by the recurrent Hamilton motif of dotted and crossed lines). Twin rivets double as nipples and as parts of the appliance.



fig. 16 Photograph used for the cover of *Living Arts* 2, 1963 (photograph by Robert Freeman)



23
Towards a definitive statement on the coming trends in men's wear and accessories (d)

1963
Oil, collage and Perspex relief on panel
122 × 81 (48 × 32) or 81 × 122 (32 × 48)
Museum Ludwig, Cologne
[Not exhibited]

An amalgam of themes from the three smaller paintings. The American football headgear of no. 21 evolves into a NASA spaceman's helmet. John Glenn, who made the first American orbital space flight on 20 February 1962, substitutes for John Kennedy (Glenn made a bid to become Democratic presidential candidate in the 1984 presidential election). The number '1' is repeated from (b) and the rivets, in another application, from (c). The striped trunks, like the striped T-shirt in (c), are copied directly from a men's fashion photograph in *Playboy*. The detail of a jukebox, extracted from a page in *Esquire*, shows a music machine in the Times Square subway, New York, the only jukebox known to Hamilton which plays a selection of classical music.

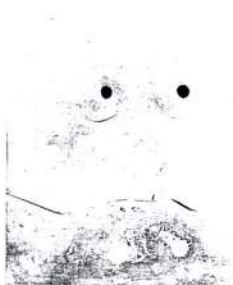
The painting may be hung in any orientation, attesting the lack of gravity in outer space. One view, however, horizontal with the head on the right, is less favoured.



24
'AAH!' in perspective

1963 (second version, 1973)
Oil on board
26 × 17 (10½ × 6¼)
The artist

Joe Tilson asked his friends to provide a small painting, of prescribed dimensions, for his contributive picture 'A-Z Box of Friends and Family' 1963 (repr. in col. *Pop Art*, exh. cat., Royal Academy, 1991, p. 187). This consisted of rows of vertical panels in which contributors were designated by either fore- or surname initial. Hamilton was allocated 'R' for Richard but he preferred the pun 'R' for 'AAH!'. The upright panel was the wrong way round for Hamilton's original version of 'AAH!' (no. 19) so he took a sidelong, perspective view of his 1962 painting to force it to a new proportion. Because Hamilton was unable to borrow the original, he made a second version for his retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum, New York.



25
Study for 'Portrait of Hugh Gaitskell as a Famous Monster of Filmland'

1963-70
Copper on aluminium relief and collage on motorised disc
45.5 × 45.5 (18 × 18)
The artist

Though begun as a trial to test the effects of relief and of an overall copper priming which could gleam through later applications of oil paint, the base of metallic paint proved so unsatisfactory that the study was developed in a quite different direction from the painting.

Holes one-inch in diameter were drilled through the board to stand for eyes and there was found to be a change of mood when the relief was placed by chance on different backgrounds. This gave Hamilton the idea of attaching a motorised aluminium disc behind the relief so that fragments of coloured paper and printed matter (including a photograph of Harold Wilson, Gaitskell's successor as Leader of the Labour Party) produced a slowly changing sequence through the holes.

The original plywood relief was used to make a mould from which an aluminium casting could be taken. This was then electroplated with copper and treated to encourage a mottled green oxidation.



26
Portrait of Hugh Gaitskell as a Famous Monster of Filmland

1964
Oil and collage on photograph on panel
61 × 61 (24 × 24)
Arts Council Collection, The South Bank Centre, London

Hamilton's paintings since 1956 had often been interpreted as 'satirical' in intention, though an equal body of opinion was disconcerted by what it considered to be a 'glorification' of the American way of life. Neither of these readings was seen to be appropriate by the artist. He has consistently argued that his purpose at that time was to demonstrate an amoral position in line with the non-Aristotelian philosophic tendencies of the 1950s. That is to say value judgements, the concepts of good and bad, might be seen as an irrelevance in the

context of certain kinds of scientific and mathematical or indeed art thinking.

An awareness of the difficulty experienced by his audience in grasping the ironic contradictions which were the means adopted to express his null-A aspirations (the Independent Group's hip synonym for non-Aristotelian was adopted from van Vogt's novel *The World of Null-A*) brought Hamilton to a consideration of what form a truly satirical painting might take. Hugh Gaitskell (Leader of the Labour Party for seven years in opposition) seemed to him an ideal target for acerbic treatment. The left wing of the Labour Party was feeling bruised by Gaitskell's successful overthrow of a majority opinion within the party that the British government's determination to hold on to 'an independent nuclear deterrent' was absurd and dangerous jingoism. Hamilton, as an advocate of nuclear disarmament and a Labour supporter, was glad to find a vehicle for the bitterness felt by many in the Labour Party at what was seen as a betrayal. Hamilton's wife, Terry, a more ardent CND activist than he, and to whom the painting was a tribute, died in a car accident in 1962, a few months before Gaitskell's death. Hamilton overcame his doubts about continuing the project: 'there were good reasons for suppressing any squeamishness that Gaitskell's death might have occasioned.' (ibid. A 51, p. 58)

In the 1950s, Hollywood and Hammer films had given renewed life to the monster myth, along with the publication of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, a magazine devoted to film stills, publicity pictures and make-up shots. 'In the search for archetypes the monster emerges inevitably along with those other primal figures: the hero of the western, the pin-up girl, the spaceman.' (ibid)

Hamilton used a photographic enlargement of a newspaper picture of Gaitskell as the painting's ground. He then overlaid it with a mask inspired by a cover of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* showing Claude Rains in make-up for *The Phantom of the Opera* and placed it against a lurid red background. The head terminates abruptly across the forehead in reference to another film-still of a man-monster (*The Creature with the Atom Brain*), showing the effects of hamfisted brain surgery. Material was drawn from a number of other sources, among them a bloodshot eyeball from a film of *Jack the Ripper* and the determined look of the *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*. Seven of Hamilton's sources for the work are reproduced in *Collected Words*, p. 59.



27 Epiphany

1964
Cellulose on panel
122 (48) diameter
The artist

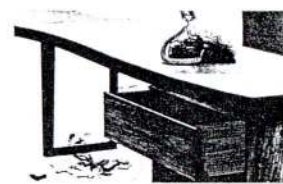
The painting is based on a lapel button found by chance in a joke shop in Pacific Ocean Park (POP) in Venice, Los Angeles, when Hamilton first visited America in 1963. 'Slip It To Me' epitomised what Hamilton most admired in American art at that time: 'its audacity and wit'. It is an ironical fusion of the twin concerns – Pop and Op – of Hamilton's contribution to *This is Tomorrow*. Both its message (enigmatic and open to interpretation, but also understood in the culture of the 1960s as a sexual invitation) and its form clearly relate the button to the fringes of the popular arts, while the colour treatment (a carefully judged pair of complementaries, orange and blue, which cause an optical flicker) puts the object into the sphere of Op art.

The purpose of Hamilton's visit to the United States was to attend the first-ever Duchamp retrospective, at the Pasadena Art Museum. Viewed as a readymade, 'Epiphany' shows its indebtedness. It also owes something to Duchamp's optical work 'Fluttering Hearts' (1936, repr. on the cover of *Cahiers d'Art*), in which the juxtaposition of complementary colours causes the fluttering of the title.

Another of Hamilton's heroes is recalled in this reincarnation of a commonplace object, for the button represents an epiphany, in the sense James Joyce used the word, a manifestation, a revelation, a sudden moment of insight. At a vulgar level the Feast of the Epiphany, with its Magi bearing gifts, could invite the glad reaction 'Slip it to me'.

'Epiphany' was made as a multiple in an edition of twelve in 1989. An aluminium disc fabricated to the form of a button had been an attractive proposition from the beginning but the cost made it impractical. The wooden 'original', shaped by the artist, was a cheaper alternative.

Twenty-five years later a giant metal button was more marketable and production costs were less of a burden.



28 Desk

1964
Oil and collage on photograph on panel
61 x 89 (24 x 35)
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh

A number of studies were made for the 'Interior' subject before two large paintings were embarked upon. Three interior collages were developed from a diverse range of collaged elements and several drawings were directed at specific components of 'Interior I'. A desk was drawn on a printed perspective grid used by graphic artists and engineers; it followed the form of the desk in the foreground of the film still (see no. 29) which inspired the series. The range of readymade commercial perspective sheets provided empty three-dimensional spaces into which, as into a box or room, or one of Hamilton's earlier paintings of a conceptual space, anything may be inserted.

A photographic enlargement of the drawing provided a base for the painted study, which carries a surprising number of different treatments. There is a Tachiste passage of loose paint lower left. Areas of flat colour in Mondrianesque primaries contradict the strange perspective. The drawer (its woodgraining part painted and part veneered with a printed self-adhesive plastic film simulating wood) and the telephone (here transparent, from a Bell advertisement) are elements which Hamilton, who did not see the film *Shock-proof* until 1968, twenty years after it was made, correctly sensed to be crucial in the film's narrative. They both imply connection with the world outside the picture: the telephone in the same way as it did in 'Pin-up' (no. 17), and the drawer working like a relief projection into the spectator's space.

Characteristic of Hamilton's work

is the way offshoots from one art object to the next arise as explorations into the constituent parts of a particular piece. Typical in this respect is the desk which, although a still-life in subject, grew from a study of 'Interior I'.



29

Interior I

1964

Oil and collage on panel with inlaid mirror

122 × 162 (48 × 63)

Erna and Curt Burgauer Collection

'Just what is it ...?' (no.13) began an involvement with the domestic interior theme which was to develop in the 1960s through a chance encounter. Hamilton became intrigued by a photograph of a modern interior that surrounded a mysteriously transfixed actress (Patricia Knight) in a publicity still for the film *Shockproof*, 1948 (fig.17), in which she co-starred with her husband Cornel Wilde.

He noticed that the studio photograph conveyed in a single exposure more of the film's plot and mood than one would expect from a split-second image taken from the action. The magic of the still resulted from the peculiarities of cinematographic technology as much as from the masterly control of *mise en scene* exercised by the great director Douglas Sirk working on a B movie. 'A very wide angle lens must have been used because the perspective seemed distorted ... Since the scale of the room had not become unreasonably enlarged, as one might expect from the use of a wide angle lens, it could be assumed that false perspective had been introduced to counteract its effect – yet the foreground remained emphatically close and the recession extreme. All this contributed more to the foreboding atmosphere than the casually observed body on the floor, partially concealed by a desk.' (bib. 05).

The curtain on the left-hand side of the film still assumes a stronger role in the drama when replayed by

Hamilton. It is brought more to the foreground in an attempt to place the witness outside the action. The importance of the curtain is confirmed in three small collaged studies, all of which, though quite different in other respects, rely heavily on a curtain to turn the observer into a *voyeur*.

Again allusion and ambiguity play their part: the mirror behind the woman is real and it reflects back the spectator's space, a further endeavour to bring the area in front of the picture plane into the action. A real pencil glued on the desk points towards the focus of attention. Hamilton used part of a colour supplement feature showing Berthe Morisot's daughter, the elderly Mme Rouart, in her drawing room, hanging in which was a Morisot painting, 'The Cherry Tree'. Hamilton painted this passage in the drab greens, greys and ochres of the printed image, which are quite unlike the colours of the original Morisot painting; thus 'Interior I' acknowledges the possibility of transformation of an artwork into a new image by the processing it receives through photography and printing and back again into painting. Included upper right is a photograph of 'Interior I' at an earlier stage – like 're Nude' (no.11) in other ways, the painting tells the story of its own making.



30

Interior II

1964

Oil, cellulose, collage and metal relief on panel

122 × 162.5 (48 × 64)

Tate Gallery. Purchased 1967

The pair of 'Interior' paintings were born together. Two large panels were primed ready, a photo silkscreen of Patricia Knight was prepared by Christopher Prater who came to Hamilton's studio with black screen ink and the figure was squeezed on the white surface in a more or less arbitrary position – no composition had been established for either

picture nor preliminary thought given to the placement. The figure of Patricia Knight therefore compelled all subsequent elements to relate to it.

When 'Interior I' was completed, Hamilton approached his second 'Interior' with the benefit of experience. The first painting had been pushed by its sources into a period atmosphere. He was conscious of the fact that 'Any interior is a set of anachronisms, a museum, with the lingering residues of decorative styles that an inhabited space collects' (bib. 035). The more contemporary treatment of 'Interior II' tries to press home this point.

The polished back of the Eames 'La Fonda' chair, constructed in relief rather than painted, reflects the spectator's space. Both paintings show a view into another room: here the secondary space is derived from a colour photograph of Larry Rivers's studio published in *Esquire*. The artwork leaning against the wall in the far room is an Yves Klein monochrome, a radical example of 'modern' painting emphasising the historical range of the art adorning the two 'Interior' paintings. A fragment of wall and ceiling in a low-angle shot at top right is an extreme view of an interior and absurdly unrelated to the many perspective viewpoints in the painting.

Appearing on a television screen, presented more as a picture than an actual TV, is a colour film of the assassination of John F. Kennedy on 22 November 1963 (unnoticed by the occupant of the room) which introduces 'an element of blatant drama as an aside, offstage, unnoticed' (bib. 035). In the film still the desk obscures the body of a man Patricia Knight has just killed in a struggle for a gun. In the painting 'The dramatic role of the dead man is transferred to the lurid colour treatment of the carpet.'

Both 'Interior' paintings have an overt dramatic intention. They appear to tell a story but the narrative is masked with ambiguities, red herrings, diversions and abstraction. Attempts to read the pictures are forced back to an acceptance of their totality. The drama is felt at first sight or not at all – we await the punchline in vain.

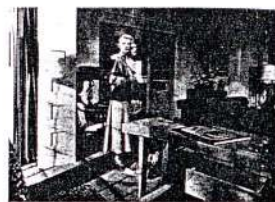


fig.17 Publicity still from the film *Shockproof* 1948

Photography

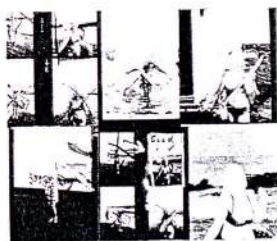
After his exhibition at the Hanover Gallery in 1964, which followed the long gap since his first in 1955, Hamilton's longstanding engagement with photography became a central rather than a contributory factor in his work. It had already played a generative role: collages almost entirely constructed from photographs ('Just what is it ...?', no.13) and those painted on a photographic base ('Portrait of Hugh Gaitskell', no.26) confirm the importance the artist placed upon photography as a source of subject matter and as part of his medium.

Preoccupation with how we see what we see leads Hamilton to investigate means of construction and illusion. Photographs can be simply reproduced and are therefore ideal vehicles for Hamilton's continued reflection on sustaining and elaborating ambiguity.

With his interest in figuration Hamilton is a forerunner of other contemporary trends towards adopting photography as a foundation for painting, for example, in the work of Robert Rauschenberg, Andy Warhol, and Gerhard Richter. In the 1960s many artists were using the camera to transfer imagery onto their canvases. 'Direct photographic techniques, through half-tone silk-screen, for example, have made a new contribution to the painter's medium. In my own case there was a time when I felt that I would like to see how close to photography I could stay yet still be a painter in intent.' (bib. A29)

'I would like to think that I am questioning reality. Photography is just one way, albeit the most direct, by which physical existence can modulate a two-dimensional surface. Painting has long been concerned with the paradox of informing about a multi-dimensional world on the limited dimensionality of a canvas. Assimilating photography into the domain of paradox, incorporating it into the philosophical contradictions of art is as much my concern as embracing its alluring potential as a medium.' (bib. A29)

In selecting photographic subjects for his paintings Hamilton's approach was systematic and analytical. As he was continuing to do with pop imagery, he asked how photography as generally experienced broke down into categories and then dealt with the subdivisions of high style photography (nos.31, 32, 57-68); with the commonplace photography of holiday postcards (nos.33, 55-6), amateur snaps (no.84) and flashbulb photo-journalism (nos.48-54); and with his own photographs (nos.92-103). He went on to examine photographs modified electronically by computer (nos.91, 104) and images which owe more to the computer than to the camera (no.89). He asks whether clear boundaries exist beyond which a photograph ceases to fulfil its function of communicating information, and submitted photographs to extreme enlargement (no.34), near obliteration (no.45) and colour reversal (no.46). Equally vitally, in a field where the intended image is customarily read as a photograph's only texture, he scrutinised the facture of the emulsion itself.



31 My Marilyn

1965
Oil and collage on photograph on panel
102.5 x 122 (40 1/4 x 48)
Stadt Aachen, Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst

Marilyn Monroe's contract with photographers gave her a right to approve their work for publication and to veto those exposures she regarded as unsuitable. In the months following her death George Barris and Bert Stern felt able to pub-

lish some of the sheets she had marked-up to indicate her wishes. 'My Marilyn' starts with the signs she made on proofs and transparencies and elaborates on the possibilities they suggest.

These markings include crossings-out, scratches, ticks and words of approval, notes for retouching, even the venting of physical aggression by attacking the emulsion with a nailfile or scissors. The marked photographs have become rich illustrations, in themselves, of media-mixture and of the juxtaposition of types of visual communication. This interference of

brutal marks made in direct conflict with high photographic quality coincided with Hamilton's interest in seeing conventions mix, and in relationships which multiply the levels of meaning and ways of reading.

The individual shots are spread across the panel like a comic strip – four photographs are each repeated three times on a different scale and show various stages in the combination of photography and painting, from the straight reproduction of the source to a free reworking of it. Unlike in previous pictures the perspective is respected only within each frame. Hamilton crops the photographic sources and makes us aware of the calculated effort behind the media image of a carefree Marilyn.

'My Marilyn' is essentially an assisted readymade and almost reads like a contributive picture (cf. no. 24) with compartments filled with works by de Kooning, Wesselmann and Peter Blake. Hamilton possibly had de Kooning's 'Woman' series in mind. Aspects of the latter's Marilyn Monroe are imitated here. The colouring, too, is reminiscent of de Kooning. There are half-quoted phrases from Francis Bacon's style. The spots obscuring the figure in the bottom left cross-refer to Bert Stern's photographs of Marilyn with a spotted veil.



32
Still-life

1965
Photograph with sprayed photo tints
89.5 x 91 (35 1/4 x 35 1/2)
Museum Ludwig, Cologne

Eleven years after Hamilton's first 'Still-life' (no. 12) his return to the genre is based closely on a photograph, rather than on direct observation as previously. Here he comes closest in his quest to retain the essentially photographic nature of his material.

'My Marilyn' (no. 31) used a photograph as a base but the work is an

exploration of the many possibilities of enriching the picture's surface: from flat areas of colour to collage from a magazine, word to image, crude outline to subtle infill, impasto to staining. 'Still-life' explores the opposite extreme of intervention. Whereas Hamilton's earlier works had often been thought of as anthologies, collections of parts which retain their character and idioms, here the still-life is an entity in itself and the photograph pure and intact (or so it appears).

'Still-life' is a readymade with minimal assistance. It is an enlargement of a high-style commercial photograph from a Braun catalogue of electrical appliances showing one corner of a portable combination grill. The original qualities of the illustration are not particularly enhanced: though some sprayed photographic dyes have been added surreptitiously to tint the background it is evidently not expected that the colour will make the work more 'painterly'. There is no cropping of the original photograph, other than that proposed by the designer of the brochure. Only one change is made, the spelling of the brand name Braun is anglicised to the 'Brown' of German pronunciation. The only significant contributions made by the artist are the choice of his subject and his decision to enlarge it.

Two factors influenced that choice. Duchamp, in his nomination of a readymade, was explicit in his avoidance of any aesthetic bias in his selection. He did not 'choose' an object because he admired, or indeed, had the slightest interest in its form. Hamilton, in a spirit of experimentation, reversed the principle and asked what happens if an object of aesthetic quality, an admired form by an admirable designer, Dieter Rams, is chosen. A second consideration was another polarisation. What would be the consequence of espousing a high-style, well-designed commodity instead of the meretricious subject matter normally associated with Pop, the art movement into which Hamilton found himself neatly slotted?



33
Whitley Bay

1965
Oil and photograph on panel
81 x 122 (32 x 48)
Private Collection

Picture postcards provided Hamilton with the material for several works with figures on a beach as subject (see also no. 34). 'Whitley Bay' examines a small area of a postcard view of the beach in this seaside town on the North-east coast of England. All the usual summer activities are taking place, people swimming and paddling, playing with boats and balls and making sandcastles. Enlargement takes the scene to a state where the halftone dots introduced by the printing process are unable to carry information about details of form. Holiday-makers are reduced to blobs which we read as representing human beings simply because their relationship with other blobs tells us that this is so.

A black and white enlargement was mounted on a panel and colour applied with loose washes of dye, in much the way that a photographic retoucher might have applied colour had he been working on the original scale.



34
People

1965-6
Oil and cellulose on photograph on panel
81 x 122 (32 x 48)
The artist

'People' was also derived from a Whitley Bay postcard but one which was unusual in being a real photograph printed on emulsion, rather than a halftone reproduction. It also

had the fascination of showing a vast area of beach which, when magnified through many stages of photographic enlargement, provided a rich store of information about many thousands of people. 'As this texture of anonymous humanity is penetrated, it yields more fragments of knowledge about individuals isolated within it as well as endless patterns of group relationships.' (bib. A29)

The scene was examined piecemeal in a procedure allied to zooming. A 35mm negative was made of a detail in the postcard, using an extension bellows on the camera which allowed extreme close up. An 8 x 10 inch enlargement was printed and the process repeated with another negative from the enlargement and so on until the prints lost legibility. At this stage an analysis was made to assess just where a figurative reading became impossible. It was found that the breakpoint in the photograph, where contact was lost between an abstract shape and a recognisable person, could be precisely located.

'People' touches the fringes of perception, the narrow line between semblance and abstraction. In the chosen frame the figures at the bottom still imply specific ages, activities and human relationships, whilst towards the top coherence is dissolved. Hamilton's additions, all black and white, are slight yet important. Their main purpose is to give the photographic surface some further textural

interest without destroying the essentially photographic values. There are touches of matt and gloss black paint, apparent when close-to, which reinforce the figures yet which, once noticed, can tip the reading into abstraction. Other painted and sprayed forms towards the top of the picture hint at a figure or deny it completely.



35

Landscape

1965-6
Mixed media on photograph
81 x 244 (32 x 96)
Museum moderner Kunst, Ludwig
Collection, Vienna

'Landscape' takes the divergent propositions of 'My Marilyn' (no. 31) and 'Still-life' (no. 32) and restates them in one picture. A postcard is a handy, portable image. Substantial enough to be carried around in a pocket or propped on a shelf, postcards have a unique convenience of form and they effortlessly offer themselves as objects of study. Available everywhere, the postcard will fascinate and instruct.

The source of 'Landscape' was unusual in format, an elongated card showing a panoramic, aerial view of the South Downs. It was a hand-tinted photographic postcard, so each example was marginally different. The girls who tinted the black and white prints worked speedily on batches of hundreds, therefore no great accuracy or precision could be expected – the result is a charming mixture of coloured dyes loosely disposed over a perspective of roughly-rectangular shapes.

If a copy negative had been made from the postcard and then enlarged the quality would be likely to suffer, so Hamilton decided to search for the postcard's source. Enquiries led him to Hunting Aerosurveys who had a research library in Central London. An exploration of the 'South Downs' files produced a negative number, and an eight-foot wide print of the area shown in the postcard was ordered. 'Painting' consisted of adding many different types of mark to the long panel, ranging from filling in different fields with transparent dyes or opaque colour to adding passages which bear little or no relation to the subject. Some parts, on the other hand, are made more specific in their representation of the scene, with tiny houses modelled in false perspective from balsawood and glued to the surface and areas of woodland made from colour-soaked sponge (cf. fig. 1 on p. 27).

Duchamp's 'Large Glass' (1966)

After his immersion in Duchamp when working on a typographic version of his *Green Box* notes, Hamilton was a natural choice as organiser of the second of only two retrospectives held before Duchamp's death in 1968. The exhibition at the Tate Gallery took place three years after the first, organised by Walter Hopps, in Pasadena in 1963.

'The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even' (*La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même*) (fig. 18) – better known as the 'Large Glass' – cannot be moved from its home in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. A retrospective of Duchamp without the 'Large Glass' is like *Swan Lake* without the swan, so Hamilton spent a year recapitulating the procedures followed by Duchamp in his construction of 'The Bride Stripped Bare ...'. As well as the resulting 'Large Glass' now owned by the Tate Gallery, the studies were reconstructed. These devotional exercises, a retracing of the path taken by Duchamp over a period of twelve years, took less time for Hamilton. Some diminution of his output is apparent during the years 1957-60 and 1965-6 when a great deal of time was lost to his own creativity by working on Duchamp, but the dates of this close involvement with Duchamp coincide with positive stages in his own development.

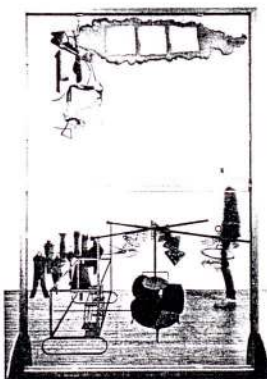


fig. 18 Marcel Duchamp and Richard Hamilton *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)* 1915-23, replica 1965-6
Mixed media on glass Tate Gallery



36
Trafalgar Square

1965-7
Oil on photograph on panel
81 × 122 (32 × 48)
Museum Ludwig, Cologne

Hamilton adapted the principle of the Whitley Bay series to an urban postcard scene. The detail chosen for elaboration gives the painting a quite distinct character: an uneven distribution of elements, some massive or

speck-like, some geometrical or fluid and others isolated or clumped. There is even greater room for ambiguity and, in line with the photo-tinter's crude exaggerations, a sharper range of even bolder colour.

Hamilton has more fully 'embedded' the printed screen into his semi-invented imagery; here it intensifies the wavering character of all the forms and confounds any sense of constant illusion.

The Guggenheim Museum

Between 1964 and 1967 Hamilton produced an interior, a still-life, a landscape, a self-portrait, a mother and child and a scene of bathers. His approach to subject matter was to think in terms of categories. During this time he also examined buildings as a possible class of subject matter. Piranesi's romantic ruins, Lichtenstein's paintings of classical temples and Artschwager's skyscrapers are examples of the genre. Hamilton's choice of building represents a structural antithesis to the post and lintel or steel-frame grid but he was interested to know if a successful work could be based on a new building – one conceived as a work of high art in itself, an aim related to his use of Braun appliances.

Hamilton's ventures into perspective are wide ranging: from the extreme of side-stepping the issue in 'Still-life' (no. 32) to the mockery of the convention apparent in 'Just what is it ...?' (no. 13). When he does undertake a serious project involving perspective it is liable to be absurdly problematic. His 'Five Tyres remoulded', 1971 (fig. 19), which required putting into accurate perspective the patterns on the double curve of a torus, was solvable only with the help of a computer. The expanding helix in false perspective of the Guggenheim Museum is another such exercise.

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum on Fifth Avenue in New York was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright between 1943 and 1946 and was built 1956-9. The spiral form of the museum looks back to the shells and horns of *Growth and Form* and, like the spiral structure of the Exquisite Form bra, encourages a false illusionistic reading as concentric circles (here stacked). The spectator is again made very conscious of shifting viewpoints and the use of heavy relief is the culmination of a preoccupation originating in 1951.

In both their appearance and the process of their making the Guggenheim reliefs contrast with Hamilton's work to date. A single centralised image represented a departure from anthologies of shape, technique and source, and the careful preparatory plan, elevation and section drawings he made were quite different from previous 'studies' for his paintings, being analogous to the blueprints for a building. These constitute an account of Frank Lloyd Wright's magnum opus which Hamilton went to great lengths to distil for this essay on style. They show Hamilton's interest in process – whether aesthetic or technical – the reliefs echoing the design and construction. He writes: 'It was an attempt to mirror the whole activity of architecture in the confines of a 4 feet square panel.' (bib. c8)

Although the form of each relief is the same there is a considerable variation of treatment in the cellulose lacquer finish, always applied with an air-gun. All six treatments disembody the building's dramatic three-dimensional form by transposing it into a skin of colour and texture with quite independent associations and effects.



fig. 19 Several screenprints from portfolio *Five Tyres remoulded* 1971



37
The Solomon R Guggenheim
(Black and White)

1965-6
Fibreglass and cellulose
122 x 122 x 18 (48 x 48 x 7¼)
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

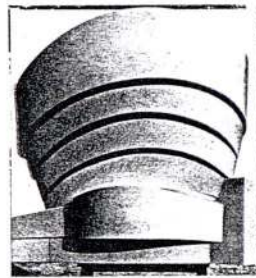
Painted to contradict the facts of relief by giving the appearance of a drawing or a diagram flat on a sheet: an effect exaggerated by hard, false shadows.



39
The Solomon R Guggenheim
(Black)

1965-6
Fibreglass and cellulose
122 x 122 x 18 (48 x 48 x 7¼)
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Arises directly out of the possibilities seen in the recessed bands of the 'Black and White' Guggenheim (no. 37). A high gloss black surface is highly reflective. The result of spraying the relief entirely black produced a distorting mirror so that the surface throws back a deformed image of its surrounding environment: hence a form of marked clarity becomes the vehicle for a total fluidity.

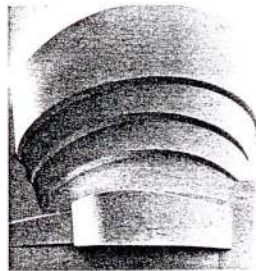


41
The Solomon R Guggenheim
(Metallflake)

1965-6
Fibreglass, acrylic and metallflake
122 x 122 x 18 (48 x 48 x 7¼)
Private Collection

Refers back to Hamilton's car-styling interests. 'Metallflake' is a brand of automobile finish in which particles of anodised aluminium are mixed with a clear lacquer to produce a glossy crystalline surface beloved by the car customising industry of California. Among the 'colours' offered is a mixture of the individual tints called 'bouquet': each particle retains its own colour in a shimmering blend.

It is the most pictorial of the reliefs and the only one which isolates the building from its background, sprayed with 'Sky Blue' Metallflake.



38
The Solomon R Guggenheim
(Neapolitan)

1965-6
Fibreglass and cellulose
122 x 122 x 18 (48 x 48 x 7¼)
Tate Gallery, Purchased 1970

Derives its colour and shading from the modulated fall of light. Hamilton sprayed a relief with an even coat of white then photographed it with careful lighting. It was then sprayed a creamy tint (vanilla), and over this he sprayed a graduated soft colour (strawberry) to simulate tonal articulation of the lighting in the photograph: the recessed bands were then sprayed a pale green tint (pistachio) to complement the general effect of soft blushes. The analogy of both colour and form with icecream is direct.



40
The Solomon R Guggenheim
(Gold)

1965-6
Fibreglass, cellulose and gold leaf
122 x 122 x 18 (48 x 48 x 7¼)
Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark

Covered with gold leaf, the form becomes an object of special veneration. Gold gives the relief quite special properties, in that it appears to absorb light and then to emit it as a magical radiance.



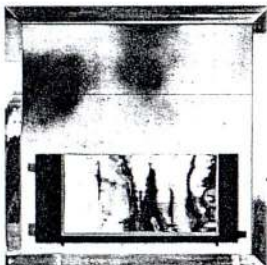
42
The Solomon R Guggenheim
(Spectrum)

1965-6
Fibreglass and cellulose
122 x 122 x 18 (48 x 48 x 7¼)
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

The form of the Wright building from a low vantage point is reminiscent of a rainbow. To reinforce the banded structure with arcs of colour, overlaying one rainbow on another.

would have been too obvious. By rotating the colour through 90 degrees Hamilton turns the Guggenheim into the crock of gold at the fairy-tale end of the rainbow.

Studies show an intended painterly freedom of treatment to oppose the relief's smooth lines in this version but the controlled gradations of the spray gun were maintained for the sake of the unity of the series.



43 Toaster

1966-7 (reconstructed 1969)
Chromed steel and Perspex on colour photograph
81 x 81 (32 x 32)
The artist

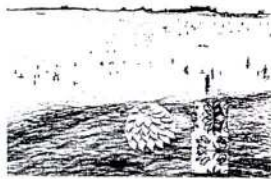
Like 'Still-life' (no. 32), 'Toaster' and its related print (fig. 20) is derived from promotional material for Braun domestic goods. In the print version Hamilton added text compiled from Braun brochures for several different products and from technical data particular to the print, modified only by an occasional word change. The peculiarities of the writing style (evidently translated to English from a German original) and the minutiae of the typographical layout are wholly faithful to precedents set by Braun literature.

The object was in shallow relief set against a black and white photographic background. On its return from an exhibition in Germany in 1968 the work was found to be in a badly damaged state. After the usual protests from a German insurance company that the collection of broken and scratched parts, wrapped in brown paper and tied with string, were unlikely ever to have been a work of art, it was reconstructed. Hamilton made a new out-of-focus photograph for the background, this time in colour, and substituted chromium-plated sheet steel for an aluminium slab. The colour-photograph background itself was sprayed, almost imperceptibly, to bring it

closer to the desired colour modulations.

The absence of depicted shadow asserts the reality of the work of art as a relief constructed with almost banal simplicity from rudimentary elements – only the shadows are literal, anti-illusionistic, cast against a flat background across the shallow depth of a few millimetres (cf. Hamilton's observations on Duchamp's Chocolate grinder, No. 2, 1914, in bib. A20). The juxtaposed textural extremes of blurred background and crisp machine-wrought steel unexpectedly switch roles, the clean rectangle becoming a container of shifting unfixed reflections – the colour emulsion and atomised paint read as an accumulation of discrete spots. The Braun logotype was replaced by the artist's own so that the object should be clearly seen as no longer a toaster nor an advertisement for one but Hamilton's conceptually operating work of art.

In response to a request from the International Design Centre, Berlin, on the occasion of an exhibition of the work of Dieter Rams, chief designer for Braun (and of their toaster), Hamilton wrote: 'My admiration for the work of Dieter Rams is intense and I have for many years been uniquely attracted towards his design sensibility: so much so that his consumer products have come to occupy a place in my heart and consciousness that the Mont Sainte-Victoire did in Cézanne's'.



44 Bathers I

1966-7
Mixed media on photo-sensitised fabric
84 x 117 (33¼ x 46¼)
Museum Ludwig, Cologne
[Not exhibited]

Hamilton continued his examination (nos. 33-6), of the limits of recognition of the human image through photographic marks. His practice had been to accept readymade photographs, often in the convenient form of postcards. While on holiday in

Greece in 1965, with the opportunity of frequent sightings of people bathing, he used his camera to record gatherings of people on beaches and elsewhere. The source for both 'Bathers I' and 'Bathers II' (no. 45) was a 35mm colour transparency taken on a Greek island mainly used by German families on vacation. Both are enlargements of the original slide but the photograph is integrated into the painting surface more closely by the use of photo-sensitised canvas instead of the earlier practice of mounting a photograph on board. 'Bathers I' had a piece of printed fabric suggestive of a particularly hideous bathing costume sewn to the canvas beside a two-dimensional reconstruction of a bathing cap covered with rose coloured petals.



45 Bathers II

1967
Oil on colour photo-sensitised fabric
76 x 114.5 (30 x 45)
The artist

'Bathers II' is unique in being a primitive experiment in putting colour emulsion on a canvas. Here everything except the figures and anything manmade (boats, rafts, kicked-up spray) has been obliterated with white paint applied in a gradation of impasto – rough in the foreground and becoming smoother in the distance. The individual figures, so unnaturally isolated, appear to have been placed by collage rather than by a reverse process. Yet from these scattered indications of incomplete bodies, varying depths of water, the purpose of assembling in one place, the activities pursued and a general topography can all be discerned.



fig. 20 Toaster 1967
Offset lithograph in 4 colours,
screenprinted from 4 stencils, and
collaged with metalised polyester



46
I'm dreaming of a white
Christmas

1967-8
Oil on canvas
106.5 x 160 (42 x 63)
Ludwig Collection, Kunstmuseum Basle

The idea of a painting based in reversed, negative colour emerged from material researched for a lecture (bib. A5): like most of Hamilton's subjects it had been with him for several years. The project had been put aside because Jasper Johns's 1965 version of the Stars and Stripes in colours complementary to red, white and blue seemed to pre-empt the exercise. Hamilton's intentions were sufficiently distinct to overcome this reluctance. There was the extreme complexity of translating a figurative subject into an opposite colour sense, and again there is the ambiguous space of the film industry's interior designs.

The motifs are similar to those in the 'Interior' paintings (nos. 29, 30): a film still, a figure in an interior with further spaces beyond, the spectator drawn into the picture space. "I'm dreaming..." almost fits the category of an "Interior" but the emphatic human presence makes it more a "portrait" (bib. D35). Bing Crosby is seen in a hotel lobby in the film *White Christmas*, 1954 (a musical rejig of *Holiday Inn*, 1942), whose theme song became a smash hit, thereby representing the epitome of 'formula' mass culture commodity.

The reversal of the imagery suggests that the spectator is gazing into a mirror-world through the medium of a photograph (which contains, in a literal manner, its obverse). Scientific thought posits that a non-world exists adjacent to our world, and that this world has as real an existence, in an opposite phase, as the one we experience. The photographic negative becomes a readymade token of this.

Bing Crosby in negative also becomes racially reversed (the song makes an apt title): he becomes a sharp American black. His clothes are colour reversed – a black shirt, white hat, yellow cardigan and light blue coat. The exterior seen through the window is lurid too, the normally

blue sky is orange, the green trees red. In many ways the scene becomes that much more magical and mysterious and beautiful and more rewarding when meditated upon than the scene as we would normally know it.' (bib. A29)

The initial idea was formulated in a watercolour study, additional sketches were made while the painting was in progress and ideas for prints continued after the completion. The subject was brought full cycle with a print titled 'I'm dreaming of a black Christmas' (fig. 21) which reversed the painting back into a positive.



47
Picturegram

1968
Oil on photograph on photo-
sensitised fabric
101.5 x 65 (40 x 25½)
The artist

Hamilton was one of a large number of artists asked to contribute a work inspired by Guillaume Apollinaire and his ideas to the exhibition *Tout Terriblement – Guillaume Apollinaire* at the ICA, London in 1968. The starting point for his homage was Apollinaire's concept, in his calligrammes, of words (poetry) constituting a visual work of art in which the same topic is expressed at both a literary and a pictorial level simultaneously.

'Picturegram' is an elaboration of Apollinaire's calligramme 'Il pleut'. It is painted on a photographic enlargement on canvas of Apollinaire's original handwritten version of 'Il pleut'. Faintly visible through the paint are the printed ruled lines and the rubber-stamped monogram 'PAB' (Pierre-Albert Birot, publisher of the calligrammes in 1916) on the original manuscript, now owned by the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

Taking Apollinaire's pictorial calligraphy into a painterly extension whereby the verbal allusions could be

further reinforced by colour and tonal nuances has a special relevance to Hamilton. There are strong connections between 'Picturegram' and his painting of Marilyn Monroe's notations on photographs (no. 31), since in each painting he elaborated marks in the very forming of which, originally, another hand had revealed much about its owner's mind and feelings. Equally, the restrained tonal range, the masking of a photographic base, and the quality of an abrupt, insistent impasto have a close correspondence with 'Bathers II' (no. 45).

In the manner of his painting Hamilton seeks to evoke the mood of Apollinaire's poem, in which the observation of falling rain is fused with nostalgic sadness. Painted at the time of Duchamp's death in October 1968, 'Picturegram' became (through its analogy with tears) a personal expression of sorrow showing a curious synchronicity, since both Hamilton and Apollinaire – involved with the same calligramme fifty years apart – had been personal friends of Duchamp.

fig. 21 I'm dreaming of a black
Christmas 1971 Screenprint on
collotype, plus collage

Swinging London 67

Police raided a party at the home of Keith Richard of the Rolling Stones on 12 February 1967. Among the guests were Mick Jagger, lead singer of the group, Marianne Faithful and Hamilton's art dealer Robert Fraser. Keith Richard was charged with allowing his house to be used for the smoking of cannabis resin; Jagger and Fraser were charged with being in possession of different drugs, and after court proceedings both were sentenced to imprisonment (Fraser for six months; Jagger's sentence was commuted on appeal to a twelve months conditional discharge).

The arrest and prosecution of the Rolling Stones was front page news for weeks. Fraser's gallery closed but the secretary continued to receive a vast collection of press cuttings from an agency the gallery employed to collect exhibition reviews. Every mention of Robert Fraser's name was duly snipped and delivered. Fraser's secretary agreed to Hamilton's request to give him the large bundle of cuttings. It proved to be a mine of extraordinary information, or misinformation. There were innumerable reports of the same incident, each varying at the whim of reporters: colour of clothes, age of accused, food carried from restaurants to prisoners, police statements, judges' opinions, all were savoured to the utmost. It led to a collage published by a distributor of art posters in Italy (fig. 22).

A press photograph (upper left on the collage) by John Twine showed Mick Jagger and Robert Fraser handcuffed together, seen through the window of a police van as they arrived at the court in Chichester to be charged for unlawful possession of drugs. This photograph was the source of a series of paintings titled 'Swinging London', an ironic comment on the contrast between excesses of individualism and freedom of behaviour attributed to the London pop world of 1967 and the restraints on privacy and personal choice and freedom represented by the Jagger/Fraser prosecution and the sentences imposed. A *Time* magazine cover (15 April 1966) had blazoned an article on 'London: the Swinging City' which focused on the social revolution towards light-hearted permissiveness and gave international currency to the phrase 'Swinging London'. That slogan, and a reported statement of the judge presiding over the hearing, that 'There are times when a swinging sentence can act as a deterrent', were combined for Hamilton's title.

The character of the image – the action and formal analogy with successive frames of film – is cinematic. It is also yet another variant on the theme of the relationship of the human figure to a motor vehicle. The blurred photographic quality and the slanting angle of the upright of the window almost fit it as an exhibit in *Man, Machine & Motion*. It extends Hamilton's interpretations of inner and outer spaces, transparency, varied focus and photographic marks. It combines the directness of the socio-political concern of the Gaitskell portrait (no. 26) with the compassion for the socially inflicted suffering of a public image seen in 'My Marilyn' (no. 31).

Hamilton proposed to make a work which captured the sense of the handcuffed 'swingers' in the police van. The frame was to be like the window of a van through which the picture is seen. The first task was to obtain a copy of the original photograph from the *Daily Mail* picture library. This was enlarged and retouched to remove the outside of the van and extend the interior to provide a photographic image that could be silkscreened in black over a coloured, conventional oil painting. The uncertainty inherent in the process required tests to be made so Hamilton prepared six versions of the subject.

With the linear outline of his composition transferred to six canvases Hamilton painted them in contrasting texture, colour, intensity and style, some academically painted and others broadly worked, one with flat areas of poster-like colour. When completed, black pigment was screened over the paintings. Common to all is a basic colour scheme (allowing wide variations) derived from press reports, and the colouring of the two windows behind the figures. The right-hand window always suggests sky or landscape, to represent the freedom left behind, and the left-hand window is the colour of brick, symbolising impending enclosure: the press photograph was taken by flash light as the van drove from the street past the gatepost of the court building.



fig. 22 Swinging London 67—
poster 1968 Photo-offset lithograph



48
Swingeing London 67 (a)

1968-9
Oil on canvas and screenprint
67 × 85 (26½ × 33½)
Rita Donagh

Here the underpainting was as straightforward as possible, the aim being a clear simplicity of image and maximum smoothness of surface. The painting hidden by the screenprint was the most developed and self-sufficient of the group.



50
Swingeing London 67 (c)

1968-9
Oil on canvas and screenprint
67 × 85 (26½ × 33½)
Private Collection
[Not exhibited]

An airbrush was used to give soft modulations and a slightly softer quality.



52
Swingeing London 67 (e)

1968-9
Enamel on canvas and screenprint
67 × 85 (26½ × 33½)
Private Collection

Heightened colour was applied evenly in well-defined areas. Instead of oil paint the medium was enamel, creating a markedly harsh and gritty texture in the screened black.



49
Swingeing London 67 (b)

1968-9
Oil on canvas and screenprint
67 × 85 (26½ × 33½)
Museum Ludwig, Cologne

Contrasting with (a) (no. 48), painted with heavy impasto, vigorous brushwork and academic flamboyance.



51
Swingeing London 67 (d)

1968-9
Oil on canvas and screenprint
67 × 85 (26½ × 33½)
Private Collection, Switzerland, courtesy Massimo Martino S.A.

The paint was again applied with heavy impasto, but with a dramatically exaggerated colour: fierce oranges and purples were applied at the places where the screen would print darkest, to allow the pigment to glow through the black deposits.



53
Swingeing London 67 (f)

1968-9
Screenprint on canvas, acrylic and collage
67 × 85 (26½ × 33½)
Tate Gallery, Purchased 1969

The last variation was an exception: a canvas primed with white was screened with the black image and the oil colour applied on top. It was also different from others in the group in that collage was added: it was used for the views through both windows and for the handcuffs. Realisation of the handcuffs presented the particular problem of how to give them adequate definition while remaining true to their out-of-focus vagueness in the photograph. Hamilton's solution was to formalise the glinting, rather uninformative shapes in the photograph into a progression of arbitrary-seeming discrete elements sculpted in way that the La Fonda chair in 'Interior II' (no. 30) is formed from thick aluminium.



54 Swinging London 67

1968
Relief, screenprint on oil on photograph on hardboard
58.5 × 79 × 7.5 (23 × 31½ × 3)
Private Collection

The version of 'Swinging London' to which the testing was directed is slightly smaller than the trials. There is another major difference: the painting was done on a smooth primed hardboard surface rather than on canvas. The style of its underpainting was closest to version (a) (no. 48) but the lack of surface texture allows the halftone screenprint to print more cleanly.

Where the final version achieves its finality is in its box-frame presentation. The figures return to the police van, confined within the bounds of the frame, but they are seen through a plywood simulation of the van with sliding glass windows. A marked departure from its source photograph is that the window frame is sloping, instead of upright. This is clearly designed to increase the picture's direction of impulsion – the movement is clearly from right to left. Dieter Roth, a great friend of Hamilton, once explained to him that when he (Roth) pictured a man on a motorbike going from right to left he is leaving home. If the motorcyclist goes from left to right he is returning there.



55 Chicago project I

1969
Acrylic on photograph on board
81 × 122 (32 × 48)
The British Council

An invitation from the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, to participate in their *Art by Telephone* exhibition, to be held in November–December 1969, demanded a conceptual solution. Hamilton decided there could be interesting possibilities in trying to create a painting through the medium of a message passed over the telephone wire. He prepared a schedule which was designed to produce an acceptable painting by prescribing rigid procedures but introducing wide tolerances within that framework.

It was agreed that a young Chicago painter would paint the picture according to telephoned instructions. The artist who offered his services is now a distinguished member of the Chicago School of painters. The instructions dictated to Ed Paschke on the telephone were these:

'Get a coloured postcard in the Chicago area of a subject in Chicago. Either get it yourself or, if you are worried about the aesthetic responsibility of choosing something, ask a friend to provide it. [The postcard obtained by Ed Paschke was an upright of the tall Prudential building in Chicago with part of Grant Park in the foreground (fig. 24).]

'Take a piece of paper and cut a hole in it 1 inch high by 1½ inches wide. The hole should be square with a corner of the paper 1 inch to the left of the edge and ¼ inches from the bottom edge. Place this in the bottom right-hand corner of the postcard. Get a photographer to enlarge the area of postcard revealed in the hole to a size of 2ft 8in × 4ft, preferably on sensitized canvas but if this isn't possible have a paper print dry mounted onto hardboard (Masonite).

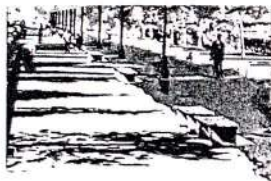
'Leave 20 per cent of the surface untouched black and white. Paint 40 per cent in roughly the colours apparent in the postcard. Paint 40 per cent in complementaries of the colours apparent in the postcard. Either transparent stains or opaque colours, some thick, some thin, which areas at your discretion'.

The Chicago Project takes further the ideas expressed in nos. 33–6. Hamilton's interest being in the potential of extraction from any given material. Even if the responsibility for selecting source material and final motif are removed as far as possible from the artist or anyone else, the result will have a vitality independent of its source and a distinct visual dialect. This and no. 56 are among the most formal of all Hamilton's works. The arrangement of a figure amid shadows and foliage reinforces the inherent ambiguity of the photographic marks: a sinister elusiveness

which is also seen in Antonioni's film *Blow Up* and in the vastly enlarged amateur photographs of scenes adjacent to John F. Kennedy's assassination.

There is an arbitrariness about the way a coloured postcard of Chicago was selected and a detail enormously enlarged. We eavesdrop a scene which seems to have disclosed some seductive possibilities as might a view stolen through a keyhole, or overlooked by a telescope. The hand application of colour to an enlargement is a metaphor of the postcard retoucher's craft, which Hamilton had been examining for several years.

'Such "painting by dictation" compels a radical redefining of what is understood by the creative act. The traditional concept of creativity as a wholly "original" event is put into question. It is deliberately pictured as a much more "secondhand affair" – something which can be done "by proxy" – implying that it is more a matter of "copying and altering", than of inventing from scratch.' (Sarat Maharaj in thesis, 1985; see Bibliography.)



56 Chicago project II

1969
Oil on photograph on canvas
81 × 122 (32 × 48)
The British Council

When Hamilton saw the Chicago postcard which had been used for no. 55 he decided it would be interesting to follow his own instructions to see what differences might result. The second painting was made in Highgate, London.

A postcard designed by Hamilton was published in 1974, with the title 'Composer' (dedicated to John Cage). This was a plain white card with a rectangular hole exactly as prescribed for the Chicago project. Printed at the top of the card was the instruction 'place "composer" over any picture postcard so that the bottom and right hand edges align then examine the chance composition defined by the rectangular hole'.



fig. 23 Source postcard for Chicago project I

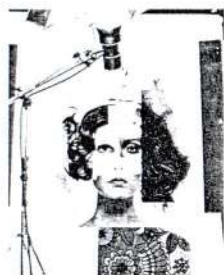
Fashion-plate

The 'Cosmetic studies' continue the consideration of genres in our culture that called for assimilation into fine art. It was Hamilton's intention to produce a life-size, perhaps three-quarter length, figure painting, a 'fashion-plate' based on contemporary photography such as that found in *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Queen*, from which much of the collage material here is taken. The studies are a bizarre combination of the irrational and fantastic emotions projected by models' expressions (whether seductive, frigid, rapturous or distraught); the magazines' obsession with colour, stylistic innovation, or accentuated bodily gesture of the moment; and the magazines' instructional emphasis concerning make-up, skin culture and hair.

They are a further example of Hamilton's tendency to elaborate studies until the planned conclusive work is, to some extent, diluted. It is as though the 'studies' become a set of variations which constitute the total work, so the twelve 'Cosmetic studies' should essentially be seen as an integrated group. As is often the case with Hamilton, a subject is first entered in a series of forays armed with different forces using a variety of weapons. Given the objective of a large figure-painting it would be characteristic of him to narrow the problem and begin a research programme through some print medium. His first step, in this instance, was to create an environment in which to place his subject and that, naturally, should be a photographic studio. A photographer friend, Tony Evans, provided the space to photograph a stage empty of performers. Lights and reflectors were set up, to frame a hypothetical model against a white paper background. The black and white photograph they made was printed by lithography on paper in Milan in a sufficient number to provide a common starting point for all the studies and enough to produce an edition of one of the variations.

Full-page heads in fashion magazines are commonly found in the pages devoted to make-up and articles on the application of cosmetics and they often show gross imbalances. Pictorial demonstrations of technique are displayed in such a way that one side of a model's face can be different from the other – a left eye drawn, coloured and decorated quite differently from the right. The fascination lies in the fact that the motif of the artwork, the face of a beautiful woman, can itself be a painted artefact. This theme, the relationship between paint and subject and the varying levels at which intervention can take place, recurs in Hamilton's output (see nos. 31, 36, and the serial interference of the self-portraits nos. 92–103). These pages of instructions on the use of cosmetics also led to the thought that cosmetics should be the pigment through which his images could be brought about – the message is the medium.

They continue Hamilton's preoccupation with the immediate juxtaposition of contrasting visual languages (cf. nos. 17, 31), such as diagrammatic motif next to illusionistic modelling, next to abstract smear of pure pigment. Once again he merges disparate ingredients into new wholes, whilst also stressing the sense of discrepancy and ambiguity between the different parts. In this sense the 'Fashion-plates' are similar to the 'Interior' series (nos. 29, 30), in the way they examine how oddly disturbing multiple viewpoints and substitutions may be and yet remain acceptable.



57
Fashion-plate
(cosmetic study I)

1969
Collage, enamel, acrylic and cosmetics on lithographed paper
100 × 70 (39½ × 27½)
Whereabouts unknown
[Not exhibited]

A disc of pure colour adjoins the most realistically-painted eye of the series on a doll-like persona owing a lot to Twiggy. The bland, neutral, totally innocent stare is a perfect confection of purity. A sample of real fabric exemplifies the use throughout the series of tokens for substances or concepts (see 'Bathers I', no. 44). This work was purchased from Waddington Galleries by a gallery in Johannesburg and was lost by the shippers.



59
Fashion-plate
(cosmetic study III)

1969
Collage, enamel, acrylic and cosmetics on lithographed paper
100 × 70 (39½ × 27½)
Private Collection

Here the proportion of collage to paint is reversed. 'Study III' began with a complete face in collage which was then altered. The relationship of word and colours, lower right, is intended to be evocative of mood and sound in much the same way as the word 'Brown' in no. 32. Each of the collaged fragments has been placed next to the nearest painted approach in the adjoining paint to the colour it describes.



61
Fashion-plate
(cosmetic study V)

1969
Collage, acrylic and cosmetics on lithographed paper
100 × 70 (39½ × 27½)
Private Collection

The leaps of scale which are common to the series are demonstrated by the small area below the neck, formerly a complete set of shoulders.



58
Fashion-plate
(cosmetic study II)

1969
Collage, enamel, acrylic and cosmetics on lithographed paper
100 × 70 (39½ × 27½)
Private Collection

Contrasts with the other eleven studies in starting with the painted image and moving towards the collage so the proportion of paint to collage is high. The swathed hair, right, is that of Jane Holzer, Andy Warhol's first superstar.



60
Fashion-plate
(cosmetic study IV)

1969
Collage, enamel and cosmetics on lithographed paper
100 × 70 (39½ × 27½)
Private Collection, Switzerland

Nine of the 'Cosmetic studies' contain a constant element: Varushka's lips and part of her neck was printed on all but a few sheets in black and white as the first stage in an editioned 'Fashion-plate'.



62
Fashion-plate
(cosmetic study VI)

1969
Collage, enamel and cosmetics on lithographed paper
100 × 70 (39½ × 27½)
Massimo and Francesca Valsecchi

A grotesque character appears for the first time in the series. The impression of constructed personality puts the model into the 'Bride of Frankenstein' class. In the first five examples the disparate elements add up to a distinctive, plausible personality. If the elements are attractive in themselves it is possible to maintain an appeal in the whole. Unlike all others there is a wide disparity here between not only the size of the eyes but also the directions in which they look.



63
Fashion-plate
(cosmetic study VII)

1969
Collage, pastel, acrylic and cosmetics
on lithographed paper
100 x 70 (39½ x 27½)
Private Collection

This study developed into a country girl: wearing gingham, cherries and violets, she also has a picture hat, its wide brim defined at one point by the negative collage of part of a neck.



65
Fashion-plate
(cosmetic study IX)

1969
Collage, acrylic, pastel and cosmetics
on lithographed paper
100 x 70 (39½ x 27½)
Rosenthal and Rosenthal

Most of the twenty-four eyes in the series are collaged but none is a true pair. Within the photographic range there are many different treatments: false lashes, eye shadow of various colours, mascara, penciled eyebrows and eye linings. This model accepts the fact of drawn features and her right eye is copied faithfully from a cartoon-like eye by Roy Lichtenstein.



67
Fashion-plate
(cosmetic study XI)

1969
Collage, acrylic and cosmetics on
lithographed paper
100 x 70 (39½ x 27½)
Danae Art International

Apart from the surrounding props and Varushka's lips there are other motifs recurring on one or two examples of the series. A token breast, an eye, a hank of hair returns inverted (see study 'III', no. 59), a piece of jewellery. These shared elements do not give the studies a common identity. A curious property of the 'Cosmetic studies' is their tendency to recall for any spectator particular people, in terms of personality as well as appearance.



64
Fashion-plate
(cosmetic study VIII)

1969
Collage, enamel, acrylic and pastel on
lithographed paper
100 x 70 (39½ x 27½)
Massimo and Francesca Valsecchi

Here the magazines' preoccupation with white face-packs is pushed in the direction of ritual which the associations of masks imply: the lips are painted in an aperture of the mask. Hamilton had in mind the photographs like those in Boris de Rache-wiltz, *Black Eras* (1963, first English edition: 1964), where black girls' faces are whitened by thick plaster.



66
Fashion-plate
(cosmetic study X)

1969
Collage, enamel, pastel and cosmetics
on lithographed paper
100 x 70 (39½ x 27½)
Private Collection

Make-up comparisons are sometimes made with a sharp dividing line between 'before and after' – the split personality is emphatic here. While it is difficult to identify specific models a glimmer of Jean Shrimpton carries through the mask.



68
Fashion-plate
(cosmetic study XII)

1969
Collage, pastel and cosmetics on
lithographed paper
100 x 70 (39½ x 27½)
Private Collection

The last of the series projects a quality typical of the species 'fashion model', a look of haughty disdain. Perhaps the series' most striking feature when seen, evenly spaced around the spectator at eye level, is the hieratic, awesome, ambiguous but timeless character of these twelve images.



69 The critic laughs

1971-2
Electric toothbrush with teeth, case
and instruction book
27 × 11 × 6.5 (10¼ × 4¼ × 2½) (cased)
The artist

When given a giant-sized set of edible teeth (a block of sugar in the form of an upper denture) as a present by his young son who had been on holiday in Brighton, Hamilton fixed the teeth to his Braun electric toothbrush. He was delighted that the assisted-ready-made brought a recollection of Jasper Johns's sculpture 'The Critic Smiles' (1959), showing a normal toothbrush with molars substituted for the bristles, so the grotesquely shuddering teeth were given the title 'The critic laughs'. Johns followed his toothbrush with 'The Critic Sees' (1961), representing a pair of spectacles, behind which the eyes have been replaced by open mouths which reveal teeth. This dealt with the art critic's 'optical apparatus', a metaphor for the shortsightedness or critical myopia of his or her aesthetic perception. 'The Critic Smiles' and 'The critic laughs' denote the 'oral apparatus', a metaphor for the critic who 'bad mouths' artists.

Hamilton's assemblage remained in his studio until, in 1968, René Block asked some artists to donate a print to the Documenta Foundation in Kassel. Hamilton conceived of a laminated offset-litho print, and photographed 'The critic laughs' in the style of promotional material for a product. With time, the sugar became sticky and began to crystallise so Hamilton asked Hans Sohm (a dentist and Fluxus archivist) to reproduce the sweet teeth in dental plastic. It was when he was asked by René Block to produce a multiple for his Berlin gallery in 1971 that the idea of making a small edition in the style of a mass-produced consumer product developed. It was possible to get a headstart by purchasing the mechanical part from the manufacturer. Packaging and presentation problems were solved by the design of

a case styled and made (indeed they were produced by the company which modelled prototypes for Braun) in the manner of the box for the Braun Sixtant electric razor. An instruction leaflet and guarantee card completed the analogy, although as Hamilton acknowledges 'art usually comes without a guarantee' (bib. A51, p.73). The cycle of product, packaging and promotional matter was followed precisely.

Nine years later the BBC asked Hamilton for a contribution to 'The Shock of the New', a television series written and presented by Robert Hughes, on art since 1880. Since the interview form held no appeal for Hamilton he proposed to the producer that he should make a 'TV commercial' advertising 'The critic laughs' (fig. 24) and he wrote a 'script' for his product. The storyboard calls for a beautiful young woman to enter a luxurious bathroom bearing a gift for her partner who, bemused at the sight of the assembled teeth and electric brush, realises that the vibrating object is more for Her than for Him. Meanwhile the voice-over says the following:

'For connoisseurs who have everything... at last, a work of art to match the style of modern living... "The critic laughs"... a perfect marriage of form and function... created for you and yours by Europe's caring craftsmen in an exclusive edition of only sixty examples... "The critic laughs"... Feel the thrill of owning... "The critic laughs"...
'Hamilton is proud to present its new multiple...
'"The critic laughs"... by Hamilton.'



70 Soft pink landscape

1971-2
Oil on canvas
122 × 162.5 (48 × 64)
*Hungarian National Gallery, Ludwig
Collection, Budapest*

A group of advertisements for a new coloured line of Andrex toilet papers became visible in the early 1960s. It was not until 1980 that Bridget Riley told Hamilton of her role as visualiser for the promotion of the product when she worked in the advertising agency from which the campaign emanated. The full-page photographs showed two girls posed equivocally in a forest glade. Hamilton described this encounter with lyrical advertising in equally lyric terms:

'Nature is beautiful. Pink from a morning sun filters through a tissue of autumn leaves. Golden shafts gleam through the perforated vaulting of the forest to illuminate a stage set-up for the Sunday supplement voyeur. Andrex discreetly presents a new colour magazine range. A pink as suggestively soft as last week's blue - soft as pink flesh under an Empire negligé. The woodland equipped with every convenience. A veil of soft-focus vegetation screens the peeper from the sentinel. Poussin? Claude? No, more like Watteau in its magical ambiguity.' (bib. D19)

In 'Soft pink landscape' there are paint marks which have little to do with a likeness of anything, they exist as paint on a surface and mean little else. There are also sprayed marks. While they could also be read as meaning only themselves, they introduce a confusion because they are reminiscent of the results of out-of-focus photography. Something intruding into the frame, close to the lens, will produce a blurred haze. These effects are used in 'Soft pink' to give an impression of concealment, as though the viewer is watching through a screen of vegetation.

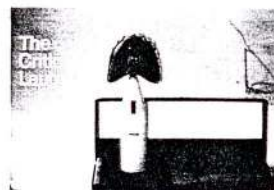


fig. 24 Still from 'The critic laughs' television commercial, 1980

Flowers

Given Hamilton's habit of working through the traditional genres of painting it is surprising that the 'flower-piece' escaped his attentions for so long. Over a period of twenty years the main subjects had been covered: nude, interior, portrait, seascape, landscape, architecture, still-life, self-portrait. A flower-piece had become inevitable. Perhaps the reason this important genre took so long to assume its rightful place in the oeuvre was its very ubiquity and, as Hamilton said, 'Naturally there are inhibitions to overcome – flowery allure is an irrelevant anachronism in the context of cultural ideas of our period. It takes perversity and a touch of irony to make it tolerable.' (bib. D28)

As is often the case with Hamilton, a subject, once noticed, will be accorded a number of different treatments, but in such a way that the group has a single identity. The two large 'Interior' paintings (nos. 29, 30), the twelve 'Cosmetic studies' (nos. 57–68), the two 'Soft landscapes' (nos. 70, 77) add up to something more than the individual works. That is even more true of the three 'Flower-pieces'. They lose some of their meaning if they are not hung together.



71 Flower-piece I

1971-4
Oil on canvas
95 × 72 (37½ × 28½)
The artist

All three flower-pieces were painted from three-dimensional postcards of the type laminated with a special plastic film. Hamilton made a three-dimensional print in 1974, a self-portrait titled 'Palindrome' (fig. 25), and showed a great interest in the lenticular system of photography that made this possible. It is, of course, the material used for the winking eye in 'She' (no. 16).

'Flower-piece I', unlike others of the series, bears evidence of its three-dimensional source. There is some duplication in the outlines, a reminiscence of the treatment in 're Nude' (no. 11) and in 'Transition' (nos. 9, 10), and for very much the same reason. This is the consequence of changing the angle of view on the postcard so that relative positions change within the subject. It is these relative changes, dependent on the distance from the focus of the camera, that create the perception of

depth. One part of the composition shows no movement and that is the roll of Andrex toilet paper adopted from the concurrent 'Soft pink landscape' (no. 70). This was not part of the original postcard and it demonstrates an interesting phenomenon. Sharpness of definition in the lettering as well as the firmness of its outline puts the toilet roll at the point of focus of the image.

The manner of painting is Cézannesque and so is the subject matter. The basket of fruit and the earthenware pot are not unlike Cézanne's still-life subjects. There is another connection with Cézanne in that it has been said that the peculiarity of Cézanne's perspective lies in a possible willingness to let his head move in front of the subject.

The Andrex toilet roll in 'Flower-piece I' has clear associations with 'Soft pink landscape' (no. 70) and the intentions are doubtless similar. The toilet roll shows a reluctance to let the sentimentality of the genre get by without some hint of cynicism. 'Flower-piece II' pushes the references further, beyond the bounds of good taste. The introduction of excrement into the elegant arrangement of flowers and fruit appears to throw doubt on the artist's willingness to accept the genre at all, but there are art historical precedents. 'This compulsion to defile a sentimental cliché was perhaps, though subconscious initially, a conformity with a well established tradition in the flower-piece, the convention of placing, often lower right, a memento-mori: an insect, a crab, a skull – some sinister motif which suggests that life is not all prettiness and fragrance.' (bib. D28)

While he was working on the plates for an etched version of 'Flower-piece II' at the studio of Aldo Crommelynck in Paris, Sonia Orwell, a close mutual friend, saw Hamilton's motif for the first time. She took him by the arm, led him apart from the company and sternly said 'You know Richard, life's not all shit and flowers'. Hamilton found the remark, and the tone of motherly concern, hilarious but reflected that without the 'not' her opinion became profound; life was truly 'all shit and flowers'.

The critical response to Hamilton's excremental works had not been favourable, but Marcel Broodthaers, a much respected friend, was one of few to appreciate them (Gustav Metzger and Mark Boyle were



72 Flower-piece II

1973
Oil on canvas
95 × 72 (37½ × 28½)
The artist



fig. 25 *Palindrome* 1974 Lenticular acrylic, laminated on collotype in 5 colours

others). Broodthaers was moved to write a text he titled *'Éloge du Désespoir'*, which Hamilton used to accompany the publication 'Trichromatic Flower-piece progressives' (1973-4), a complete set of colour progressives for an etched version of 'Flower-piece II'. Marcel Broodthaers saw Hamilton's flower-piece as a frank acceptance of the natural cycle. 'These flowers, ... remote from seeds and seasons, do not speak the language of the heart as once was the fashion ... such beauty ... effaces the reservations we may have had about the excremental form lying low ... Like manure nourishing the colour in the blossoms (the conventions of horticulture are fully respected) it accompanies each stage of the progression and builds a definitive mass. And indeed it is a question of form and mass, obliterating direct reference to reality. It would seem that the subject is not flowers but technique.' Broodthaers, in his choice of an archaic style of language (the original was written in old-world French), is sensitive to the atavistic pictorial treatment and he recommends to us a transcendental reading of the image.



73 Flower-piece III

1973-4
Oil on canvas
95 x 72 (37 1/2 x 28 1/2)
The artist

The 'abstract' intention of the third flower-piece is indisputable. The washes of colour, apart from a few hints, have little relationship with specific floral forms. The subject is evoked with colour and its placement. What is important is the difference between two shades of green, or the balance between opaque and transparent, between a mark that looks drawn and another that is merely a stain. The formal emphasis is stressed in all three flower-pieces by the loosely floating character of the

painted marks – each brushstroke retains a calligraphic quality which would be lost if it were required to abut the hard line of the canvas edge. The boundaries of the worked area in the flower-piece paintings, like those of the print, are loose because a severe conjunction of image and edge seemed alien to the freedom of the painted mark.' (bib. D28)



74 Sign

1975
Vitreous enamel on steel
34.7 x 80 (13 3/4 x 31 1/2)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery

Trademarks appear with regularity in individual works by Hamilton. 'Still-life' (no. 32), 'Toaster' (no. 43), 'Flower-piece I' (no. 71) all incorporate some label and the logos are always the name of a manufacturer or company rather than a monogram or an abstract design – Braun, Andrex, Ricard – as though there might be some meaning to be gained from the word if it could only be decoded. At times Hamilton has appropriated a Braun product ('The critic laughs', no. 69) and branded it with his own name.

The Ricard trademark (designed by Paul Ricard, who heads the company producing one of the two best selling anis-flavoured drinks in the South of France) is immensely bold and self-assured: it produced in Hamilton an explosion of self-advertisement. In 'Still-life' there is a change of two characters, Braun becomes Brown. There is one small modification to Paul Ricard's image: Ricard has only an h inserted to make Richard. The vitreous enamel signs were manufactured in London for a brief exhibition (a weekend only) in a small gallery in Cadaqués, Spain. The gallery was 'hung' with variant groupings of the single 'Sign', singles, pairs, triplets and so on. Ricard provided free pastis and tapas in the gallery for the whole weekend and a good time was had by all.

The preferred presentation in exhibitions is to show a group of three 'Signs', juxtaposed one above the other, together with a 'Carafe' (no. 78) and an 'Ashtray' (no. 79).



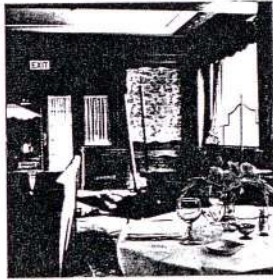
75 Sunset

1975
Oil on canvas
61 x 81 (24 x 32)
The artist, courtesy of the Anthony d'Offay Gallery

There were four sub-groupings within the fifty-one entries in the catalogue for Hamilton's scatological exhibition *Paintings Pastels Prints* held at the Serpentine Gallery, London, in 1975: soft landscapes based on Andrex advertisements, prints and drawings inspired by postcards from Miers (the French spa famed for the laxative properties of its waters), flowers, and sunsets. Nine pastels, 'Sunset (a-i)' and one 'Sunrise', all derived from postcards of the typical romantic image of the setting sun – skies shot with gorgeous colour from orange to violet, all with a giant turd in the foreground despoiling the sentiment.

While the exhibition had a kitsch aspect, Hamilton has referred to some less frivolous implications. Having used a postcard of Cadaqués for the one sunrise (Cadaqués faces east), with a turd covering the town's glory, its church, he encountered a famous description by Jung, in his *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Jung describes a reverie which he felt to be of great personal significance. He says 'I saw before me the cathedral, the blue sky, God sits on his throne, high above the world – and from under the throne an enormous turd falls upon the sparkling new roof, shatters it, and breaks the walls of the cathedral asunder.'

Two oil paintings of sunsets, of which this is one, were under way at the time of the Serpentine exhibition. One was completed, the other, with uninvited additions by Dieter Roth, abandoned.



76 Langan's

1976
Oil on photograph on photo-sensitised fabric
92 x 92 (36½ x 36½)
Private collection

Hamilton's painting of the interior of a restaurant is a key work. It reopens some of the ideas of his early interest in pictures of pictures in a room (see 'Just what is it ...?', no. 13 and 'Interior I', no. 29), to which he would return in later ventures into the genre.

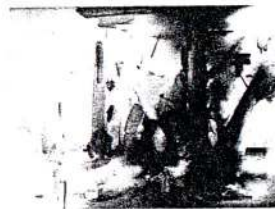
Peter Langan asked artist friends to produce paintings for a new brasserie he planned to establish on the site of the *Coq d'Or*, an old-style French restaurant in Stratton Street. The room was surrounded by panels lined with a fabric printed, like the curtains, with a hunting scene in a rusty pink colour. Each panel was to be allocated to a different artist. Hamilton took his camera to the gutted restaurant and photographed the room, especially the corner which included the wall due to receive his work. He wanted his panel to be left exactly as it was, retaining the original fabric and its scalloped frame, the image of which entered his commissioned painting when he had his photograph of the interior enlarged onto photo-sensitised fabric.

After the renovation Hamilton returned to what had been transformed into Langan's Brasserie, set up his camera in exactly the same position as before and photographed, this time in colour, the room that now included tables laid with the new-style place settings. A table, laid ready for a meal, was painted on the black and white canvas and the painting was then hung on the panel that appears in the picture itself. Sitting at the table the diner was in same perspective relationship to the space as that represented in the painting now forming part of his own visual environment. As well as the identifiable scalloped frame were other relics: the 'Exit' sign and door

frame echoed in the painting.

Shortly after the opening there were complaints from Peter Langan's partners that the panel, with its retained *Coq d'Or* printed cotton, did not match the other panels, and it was painted cream like the rest of the place. Hamilton was unhappy that his concept had been vandalised so he removed his painting, with the sad consequence that the work was dissociated from its context.

Pictures of rooms with pictures of rooms in them hold a fascination for Hamilton. They offer 'the possibility of sub-encounters, two-dimensional simulations of interiors within the three-dimensional envelope of an actual interior' (bib. A56). That the picture should portray itself in its own setting would be an added attraction. The idea of a painting specifically sited to include its environment as part of the subject was later revived (see nos. 85 and 91).



77 Soft blue landscape

1976-80
Oil on canvas
122 x 162.5 (48 x 64)
Private Collection

The 'Soft blue' and 'Soft pink' (no. 70) landscape paintings were conceived together (indeed there is a 'Soft blue' drawing dated 1971), yet there is a gap of four years between the completion of the 'Soft pink' painting and the beginning of work on the 'Soft blue'. They are clearly a pair and the relationship is all the more evident when the two pictures are seen together. They share their horizon, the figures in both paintings occupy an identical perspective space, the toilet roll is in precisely the same position in both pictures, there is a similar intention in the handling of paint and, despite their contrasting titles, the difference in colour is one of emphasis rather than of total disparity.

There is, however, a subtle but important dissimilarity between the two paintings: it centres on the paradox that lies at the heart of all Hamil-

ton's work, the polarity between representation and abstraction. Since his paintings of the 1950s he had shown a strong awareness of a fundamental incongruity at the heart of the pictorial arts. Among the skills developed in Western art has been the ability to create, through the use of coloured powders mixed with a binding agent, a semblance of what the eye sees. By the twentieth century the mark itself was taking precedence over what it signifies.

While 'Soft pink landscape' has some marks little concerned with appearance there are many which stand for 'seen out-of-focus through a lens'. 'Soft blue' carries a greater conviction. It takes a programme and carries it through to its consequences, as does 're Nude' (no. 11). There is a centre of focus which is representational, in an almost photo-realist sense, but as we move further from the point of focus so do the marks become increasingly autonomous. There is a slow progression towards abstraction, but it is introduced in such a way that there is no boundary. There is an indefinable region in which it is no longer possible to say 'this brushstroke means foliage and this gestural mark means itself'.



78 Carafe

1978
Vitrous enamel on glass
9 × 20 × 6 (3½ × 8 × 2½)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery

The opportunity arose to make an edition of the famous Ricard Art Deco water bottle. Paul Ricard gave permission for the 'Carafes' to be made by the same manufacturer who produced them for Ricard with Richard fired on instead.

'Carafe' is a Duchampian ready-made in the same sense as Gilbert and George's multiple 'Reclining Drunk', 1973 (an ashtray made from a collapsed gin bottle) or Marcel Broodthaers's 'The Manuscript', 1974 (a white Bordeaux wine bottle with the words 'The Manuscript' fired onto the glass). Unlike Duchamp's ready-mades, always nominated for their anonymity and for their lack of appeal as designed objects, Ricard's water bottle is a rightly celebrated form, almost a cult object; Hamilton's perverse intention in appropriating the ubiquitous icon is to make his artwork anonymous: he sees as the ideal placement for his carafe a bar in the South of France, where the change in the logo goes unnoticed.

79 Ashtray

1979
Vitrous enamel on opaque glass
3.4 × 15.5 × 13.5 (1¼ × 6¼ × 5¼)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery

The Richard ashtray was manufactured to complete the set of artworks based on the promotional products made in enormous numbers for the Ricard company for use in cafes (see nos. 74, 78).



80 Lux 50 – functioning prototype

1979
Aluminium support, cellulose and
anodised aluminium
100 × 100 (39¼ × 39¼)
Private Collection

'Lux 50' is a response to a commission from Lux Corporation, Osaka, to design a work of art based on their hi-fi equipment. The project, begun in 1973, was to produce a high quality amplifier, in a limited edition, for release in 1975, the date of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of their company. It was not as unlikely an invitation as it might seem, for Hamilton worked as a draughtsman in the EMI (Electrical and Musical Industries) factory from 1942 to 1945, where he developed an interest in acoustical equipment: he had formed friendships with audio research engineers and collaborated on the design of homemade pick-ups and speakers.

Hamilton had qualms about accepting the proposal because his interests as a painter lay in illusion and paradox, rather than in three-dimensional objects. The resolution was to suggest an amplifier thin enough to be hung on a wall as a picture of itself – a flat portrait of the functioning object represented in the manner of a table-top still-life. The general specification was provided by Hamilton and he designed a control panel to satisfy his own domestic needs for hi-fi. What might be seen as a disadvantage to wall-mounted equipment was made a virtue by putting an input/output panel at the front. A full-size mock-up was painted in 1976 and a functioning prototype was completed in 1979.

There is a slow but persistent move towards the Lux painting through a number of works over more than a decade. 'Still-life' (no. 32) is a flat image of a domestic appliance. 'Toaster' (no. 43) has a constructed character: it is even fabricated with the same materials as those used to make the object depicted. It portrays

an appliance in shallow relief on a background of soft, out-of-focus colour so that there is a confusion between the photographic nature of its presentation and the urge the depicted object has to assume a reality. 'The critic laughs' (no. 69) moves into full dimensionality: it works, but its activity is futile. 'Lux 50' straddles the boundaries between product design and fine art: it is 'a two-dimensional representation of a piece of equipment which also performs the functions expected of the object portrayed' (bib. 045). Hamilton's computer (no. 88) crosses the border into full three-dimensional functionality but it looks surprisingly like minimal sculpture.



81 Study for 'The citizen'

1982
Acrylic underpainting and oil on
canvas
87.7 × 67.7 (34½ × 26½)
*Cultural Foundation against Apartheid,
Paris*

The immediate source for this study and for the larger painting which it preceded was images which Hamilton saw on television in England. These were filmed inside the British government's high-security prison at Long Kesh, near Belfast. The prison was also known as the Maze and as the H Blocks. Hamilton's attention was caught first by a Granada Television 'World in Action' programme on Long Kesh, but the main source of the imagery for his painting came from a BBC film on the same subject shown some weeks later.

The conflict in Northern Ireland began to intensify in terms of violence in 1969. After a number of years, IRA prisoners in the Maze demanded to be classified as political rather than criminal offenders, and thus to be accorded a number of rights and living conditions which were being denied them. The British government refusing to grant political status, IRA



fig. 26
Fruit...



fig. 26 The citizen installation.
Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh 1988

prisoners escalated their protests. Refusing to 'slop out', to wear prison clothes, to cut their hair or to obey any prison regulations, the prisoners lived in their own squalor, wearing only the blankets they were provided as bedding. After five years the 'no wash' protest was deemed a failure so a further tactic was introduced, the hunger strike. One by one, daily. Republican prisoners were refusing to eat and were finally dying, to achieve the objectives of the long protest. In the television film which so greatly struck Hamilton, cameras filmed Republican inmates 'on the blanket', with the result that the British public were able to witness the extraordinary sight of men who lived in the confined space of a prison cell surrounded by walls daubed with their own excrement.

Hamilton saw the image of the blanket man as a public relations contrivance of enormous efficacy. It had the moral conviction of a religious icon and the persuasiveness of an advertising man's dream soap commercial – yet it was a present reality; he decided to make a life-size figure painting. It was a genre not so far attempted in his output, though it touched upon and deepened the significance of earlier themes. He obtained some pieces of the 16mm film shown on television and printed Cibachrome enlargements from selected frames.

Having prepared a canvas, Hamilton decided to colour his acrylic gesso priming with a blue/green/grey tint and to make a quick underpainting in acrylic. This was a method unfamiliar to him, so he tried out the technique on a full-size detail – the head and shoulders of the figure.



82

The citizen

1982–3
Oil on canvas
2 canvases, each 200 × 100
(78½ × 39¼)
Tate Gallery, Purchased 1985

Two collage studies established the overall composition. Because the size of the prison cell prevented the 16mm camera from seeing more than a partial view it was necessary to assemble a complete figure from different frames. Hamilton made his first study by fitting together three homemade Cibachrome prints, two of which produced the top and bottom of the figure. The third print was mounted beside the other pair without any attempt at integration. For the second study, prints were sized to provide a better relationship between the parts of the figure. Oil paint was used on both collages to fill up blank areas and to improve the joins in the photographs.

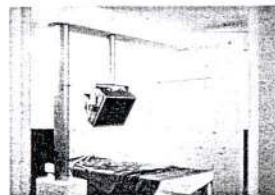
The decision to make a diptych, with each canvas 2 metres × 1 metre, eased the problems of handling in the studio and gave other advantages. In continuance of Hamilton's interest in figuration/abstraction (see no. 77) the subject provided an opportunity to present this interdependence in stark conjunction. If the left-hand canvas were to be separated from its neighbour it would be taken as abstract in the milieu of modern art; the right-hand panel is acceptable as an example of mainstream figurative painting.

Hamilton describes the scene as 'a strange image of human dignity in the midst of self-created squalor... endowed with a mythic power most often associated with art.' It was 'shocking less for its scatological content than for its potency' (bib. A53). It is the first of his works in which a religious quality is apparent and unmistakable, however equivocal on Hamilton's part it may be.

The painting's title bears direct reference to the beginning of the present 'troubles' in Northern Ireland, the Civil Rights marches of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The title 'The citizen' is taken from the 'Cyclops' episode of *Ulysses*, in which Bloom, Joyce's hero, comes into conflict with a pugnacious Fenian bar-fly known to all as 'citizen' (Hamilton follows Joyce's invariable use of a lower case 'c'). The citizen is associated by Joyce with an heroic Irish chieftain, Finn MacCool, as well as with the giant Polyphemus of Homer's *Odyssey*. Hamilton recalls that when Rita Donagh traced the name of the particular Maze detainee from his source photograph she was informed 'the young man's name is Hugh Rooney. He's just a little fellow'.

'The citizen' was first shown at the Guggenheim Museum in New York in 1983 and then, in the same year, at the Orchard Gallery, Derry, Northern Ireland, with Rita Donagh's paintings about the H blocks at Long

Kesh prison, in an exhibition titled *A Cellular Maze*. The museum's concern about showing the painting in New York was overcome, though the subject was thought to be a sensitive one soon after a controversial St Patrick's Day parade which had been led by an IRA spokesman. The gallery in Derry had no qualms about the painting, in spite of some worried questions from local government officials: having seen the painting they were less perturbed. On the other hand, the artist was asked by a young woman 'why have you made him look so evil?'. In fact, the painting has often been mistakenly thought, particularly by Americans, to be a portrait of Charles Manson. There were four installations in the 1988 Fruitmarket Gallery exhibition in Edinburgh, among them a 'cell' made to house the citizen painting (fig. 26). Hamilton decorated the walls in imitation of those in the protesters' cells at Long Kesh and put a sponge-rubber mattress and a dirty pillow in a corner to complete the furnishing.



83

Treatment room

1983–4
Installation
275 × 550 × 550 (108 × 216 × 216)
Arts Council Collection, The South Bank Centre, London

In 1984 Hamilton was invited by Michael Regan to take part in a show on the theme of rooms. The Arts Council proposal, *Four Rooms*, was that Anthony Caro, Marc Chaimowicz, Howard Hodgkin and Hamilton should each be free to create any environment they wished for a touring exhibition.

Hamilton sees 'exhibition' as a form in its own right. 'It demands mobile involvement on the part of the spectator to absorb whatever idea or information is being presented. The static experiencing of books, television, or movies from which a stream of sequenced material is directed at a captive reader of word or image is quite different from the kinetic interaction of an audience with a contrived space' (bib. A56). 'Treat-

ment room', like all his exhibition projects, is planned on the expectation that its audience will circulate within the space; where possible there are openings on opposite sides to allow passage through the room. He took the opportunity in *Four Rooms* to deal with a category of interior he had not considered before, that of the public institution: 'a space ... inspired by the bleak, disinterested, seedily clinical style of the establishment institution ... a space as impersonal (yet loaded), or as neutral (yet disquieting) as a dentist's waiting room, a prison cell, a DHSS Labour Exchange or anywhere in an NHS hospital.' (bib. A56)

The main source of inspiration for 'Treatment room' was Hamilton's experience of visiting hospitals for routine diagnosis on several occasions. In particular, the X-ray theatres impressed him with their pronounced display of power: thick cables, protective screens, the circumstance of an examination so intense that there was nothing left to hide, even the bones being laid bare. To simulate the feeling of being scrutinised Hamilton assembled a TV monitor over a table resembling a mortuary slab. It was possible to put a continuously running video image on the screen, so he chose a recording of Mrs Thatcher delivering the final Conservative Party election broadcast in the General Election of 1983.



84 Mother and child

1984-5
Oil on canvas
150 x 150 (59 1/2 x 59 1/2)
Mr and Mrs Keith L. Sachs

While working in Milan on the first stage of 'Fashion-plate' in 1969, Hamilton was pressed, with typically Italian enthusiasm, by a young lithographic printer to go to his flat for a cup of coffee. They sat awkwardly, unable to communicate because neither spoke the other's language.

Then the young Italian had an idea. He grasped his wallet and pulled out the quintessential photograph of his son by an indulgent father; the camera had focused on a smiling infant supported by his mother, whose head is chopped off by the frame. Hamilton, with genuine interest, said that the photograph was beautiful and the father immediately insisted that he should keep it.

The photograph remained in Hamilton's studio for fifteen years, fading a little and getting dusty, until it began to assume its place among the genres as a 'Mother and child'. The painting's proximity in time to 'The citizen' makes it possible to see that the themes of abstraction and figuration are again balanced. Instead of the blatant juxtaposition of two canvases, one abstract the other figurative, or the slow progression to abstraction outwards from a point of focus, the figurative element is framed by an elaboration of the background so that, in so far as the painterly character is concerned, background takes precedence.



85 Lobby

1985-7
Oil on canvas
175 x 250 (69 x 98 1/2) within an
installation 305 x 550 x 550
(120 x 216 x 216)
The artist

Postcards had often been the source of Hamilton's subjects. Sometimes they were bought, or picked up from hotel reception desks, but the origin of 'Lobby' came through the mail from an artist friend, Dorothy Iannone, staying briefly at the Europa Hotel, Berlin. The card (fig. 27) shows a generous foyer with a glimpse of wide stairs leading to the first floor. There are floor-to-ceiling mirrors on some walls and a free-standing, mirror-faced, rectangular column in the middle of the room which causes the patterned carpet on which it stands to run mysteriously unhindered throughout the structure. To add to the confusion, parts of the ceiling are reflected by the column.

On his next visit to Berlin, Hamilton went to see the Europa Hotel for himself, 'armed with a camera - supposing the space to be a photographer's paradise - a potential mine of source material for paintings. It was a disappointment to find a small hotel with a lobby the size of a domestic living room. There was only one position in which a camera could make an interesting shot and it needed a much wider angle than my 35mm lens. The postcard photographer had found just the spot and s/he possessed the lens to perform the magic.' (bib. B46)

In 1973 a pencil drawing was made, using the complexities of the Europa Hotel lobby as a perspective exercise; watercolour was added and then, a year later, a piece of a Spanish postcard showing a young couple was pasted on. Nearly ten years went by before Hamilton used the watercolour as the basis for a screenprint. A further year passed before an ambitious painting of the subject was begun. It was the largest canvas he had attempted and its scale presented problems. The canvas had to be fixed to a wall of his studio so that the vanishing points of the perspective could be accurately located far beyond the edge of the painting - the studio was just large enough to accommodate the canvas and the threads attached to nails marking the distant vanishing points.

When 'Lobby' was approaching completion after two years of concentrated work Mark Francis approached Hamilton to discuss the possibility of making an exhibition at the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh. They decided to put together a show of installations, each of them related to a type of institution. 'Treatment room' (hospital) existed, the idea of making a special presentation of the 'Lobby' (hotel) painting was already in Hamilton's mind, and a cell-like setting for 'The citizen' (prison) (no. 82) was also possible.

Ideally 'Lobby' should be installed (fig. 28) in an area of the same dimensions as 'Treatment room' (no. 83). The floor is covered, wall to wall, with a material screenprinted to simulate the polka-dot pattern of yellow spots on a green ground to be seen in the painting. A mirror-faced column stands near the middle of the room, a few treads of a staircase lead directly into the wall, and what purports to be the same staircase returns out of the wall and into the ceiling. 'Lobby' is hung a little to the left of the centre of the wall opposite the entrance. The watercolour study for the painting and the colotype/screenprint are hung to the right of



fig. 27 Source postcard for 'Lobby'

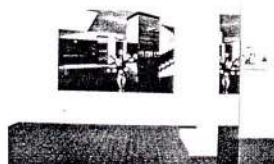


fig. 28 Lobby installation, Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh 1988

the entrance so that the reflected paintings to be seen in the large canvas are echoed by reflections of the small versions of 'Lobby' in the real mirror. Visitors should enter the space to experience physically the uncanny perspective which originally attracted Hamilton to the postcard.

The flowers which form a central feature of the painting proved a problem because there was too little information in the postcard and their organic nature, unlike the rest of the picture, gave no help in systematic extrapolation. Painting flowers from imagination was too taxing. It happened that some special irises, bred by Cedric Morris, had been given to Rita Donagh by Nancy Morris, Cedric's sister, and they were flowering in the Hamilton garden. Some cut blooms and many photographs provided the necessary inspiration. The chrysanthemums (unseasonable companions for irises) are a hangover from earlier attempts at the bouquet, an anachronism which Hamilton enjoys.

The sentimental couple in the watercolour and print disappeared from the painting as Hamilton began to find the supernatural mood of the painting diminished by the human presence. He was 'reminded of *Huis Clos*, Sartre's existentialist play, which is staged in a single set, a public room in a hotel. It is a metaphor for purgatory, the limbo in which we await transit to another condition' (bib. D16, p.47). A person can be seen, but even this marginal hint of habitation is an illusion for he is only a reflection in a mirrored wall of a figure in a dining room located behind the reception desk.

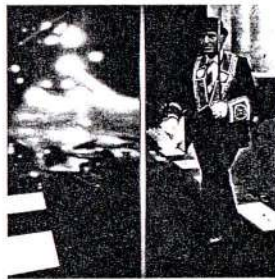


86 Hotel Europa

1986-91
Oil on canvas
100 x 100 (39½ x 39½)

The artist, courtesy of Anthony d'Offay Gallery

After working on 'Lobby' (no.85) for some months, Hamilton became doubtful about the figures which had been part of his subject from 1974. He decided to make a trial canvas of the part containing a young couple by a red sofa. Before the painted study was complete he returned to 'Lobby' with the decision taken to remove the figures. Not until the larger work was finished did he return to the detail.



87 The subject

1988-90
Oil on canvas
2 canvases, each 200 x 100
(78½ x 39½)

The artist

Northern Ireland is likely to be perceived as a region of dichotomy. Polarities abound - between Catholic and Protestant, republican and loyalist, outsider and insider, have and have not, green and orange. It would not be possible to be gripped by the image of the blanketman seen in 'The citizen' (no.82) without giving some consideration to his antonym. When Hamilton was asked to participate in a group of short television programmes in which artists would use the Quantel Paintbox, the most advanced image-processing computer available, he already had a project in mind, a companion piece to his 'citizen'. His selected material finally included a black and white photograph, a 35mm colour transparency, a still from a video tape he had made from televised events in Northern Ireland and a transparency of his 'citizen' painting. 'The citizen' had been constructed from several parts so the plan was to 'cut and paste' an electronically generated subject. The film, made by Griffin Film Productions for BBC TV, was broadcast in 1987 as part of a series of six programmes called 'Painting with Light'.

The scale and composition of both 'citizen' and 'subject' had to be equi-

balanced if they were to be seen as a pair, or at least two sides of the same coin. Many more components were used for 'The subject' than were used for 'The citizen'. The computer Paintbox allows a much greater fluency in manipulating visual material but the task of creating a match for the less complex 'citizen' was more demanding. One passage from 'The citizen' was transposed into 'The subject': it is the top right-hand corner of each of the paintings. What is the metal-grilled window of the republican's cell becomes a window on a building seen behind the parading Orangeman. The abstract/figurative dichotomy is common to both paintings. The left-hand, 'abstract' panel of the 'The subject' is from the video tape which shows an 'incident' filmed at night by infra red photography, in which an armoured vehicle is approaching the camera down a street littered with bomb damage. The implication is that the Orangeman, too, is surrounded by ordure.

Quantel's TV Paintbox is far exceeded in power and resolution by another machine, the Graphic Paintbox, designed for the print industry. Hamilton repeated the electronic collaging procedures of the TV Paintbox on the Graphic Paintbox to create a high-resolution image which he went on to use for a dye-transfer print on which his painting 'The subject' is based: this required working with Martin Holbrook, the artist member of the Quantel team which had developed the Paintbox.

Along with the bombings, shootings, and other atrocities defiantly claimed by the IRA, its image of imprisonment is part of a public relations programme with the avowed intention of keeping the subject of Ireland's partition in the news. The fact of separation is also preserved in civic consciousness by the opposing side in its display of symbols of the Orange Order. This secret society, formed in 1795, took its name from William of Orange, who invaded England from Holland with the intention of overthrowing James II. He was then invited to become King William III of England in 1689, in part because he agreed to uphold the established Protestant religion. William crossed to Ireland in pursuit of James, who had landed there as part of his plan to regain the English throne, and whose aim, if restored, would have been to re-establish Catholicism in England. Dutch King Billy was regarded thereafter as a hero by many Irish Protestants, for securing the hegemony of their religion.

Hamilton wrote in 1991 that 'The Orangeman in full ceremonial rig is

scarcely less extreme than is the blanket man. The present-day uniform of a member of the Orange Lodge of Freemasons in Belfast consists of a black suit, bowler hat, and well-polished shoes; an orange sash adorned with insignia hangs on his chest and there are large, matching, seventeenth-century-style cuffs on his white kid gloves. Every Orangeman carries a black umbrella on parade except those privileged to possess a 'King Billy' sword which is always held unsheathed and erect. During the marching season the streets of Ulster's towns resound to pipes and drums and the crunch of leather on asphalt that assert allegiance to British rule.

'Apparently eccentric, the Orange garb is well chosen. The hard bowler hat is not unlike a helmet and an umbrella is clearly a substitute for the sword intended to clear Catholicism from Ireland. From beneath the orange frippery emerges a twenties-vintage City of London business man (late of the Brigade of Guards) – the conservative image to which Northern Irish politicians still aspire.' (ibid. 169)

Though a pair, it was not Hamilton's intention, or expectation, that the two Northern Irish paintings should be kept together. Since the completion of 'The subject' they have always been shown together. Sometimes side by side, Orangeman on the right, apparently moving towards each other; on one occasion transposed so they appeared to be moving apart; on another they confronted each other across a large gallery. They should always be hung low on the wall, a foot or so above the floor, as though another step would take the citizen out into the viewer's space. In common with 'I'm dreaming of a white Christmas' (no. 46), there is a strong sense of the subject moving forward out of the frame by which he is contained.

The title first given to no. 87 was 'The Apprentice Boy'. This was changed to 'The Orangeman' when Hamilton became aware that the name 'Apprentice Boy' is specific to members of the Londonderry lodge of the Orange Order – differentiated even to the extent of using a purple rather than an orange sash. In spite of the fact that the painting had been exhibited and catalogued with the title 'The Orangeman' Hamilton's realisation that the opposite of a citizen, in the republican sense, is a subject, one who accepts the dominion of a monarch, begged a further change of title, which he made in 1992.



88 Diab DS-101 computer

1985-9
Mixed media
70 × 50 × 50 (27½ × 19½ × 19½)
Diab Data AB

The Hochschule für Gestaltung, Ulm, the most prestigious industrial design school in post-war Europe, conjectured in its later years that the increasing engagement of industrial designers in consumer product design introduced commercial obligations which would lead to a deviation from the highest standards. A correct moral stance could be maintained only if the designer directed his talent at the design of tools which produced goods rather than at the goods themselves. Hamilton had the opportunity in 1983 to be involved in just such a design project with an invitation from OHIO Scientific (owned by Isotron, a Swedish company) to collaborate on the design of a minicomputer to which he gave an appropriately digital name, '01-110'.

After receiving a list of components, with the overall dimensions of each item, a collection of Polaroid photographs and some of the actual parts, Hamilton came up with a proposal to house the elements in three boxes, divided into the three groups into which they naturally fall:

1. Drive unit; Winchester, floppy disc drive, back up streamer.
2. Central processing unit; card cage, operators I/O panels, system I/O panel.
3. Power supply unit; rectifiers, transformers, etc.

The units would stack, on 1 cm spacers, so that the gaps between the boxes would provide ventilation. The size and proportion of the boxes were carefully planned to be integrated with office furniture. The boxes when stacked make up a block 72 × 50 × 50 cm, the international standards for desk width and height. Isotron went into liquidation before the project was fully realised but a mock-up using a Diab board was available to be shown in London 1986, Stockholm 1987, Edinburgh and Oxford 1988.

In 1986 Diab Data AB, who had

taken over Isotron, decided to make a limited production of Hamilton's concept but employing circuit boards used in other models of their range. This revival of interest was largely due to the enthusiasm for the project shown by Ingvar Larsson, Diab's research director. Work began seriously on the design of the internal engineering of the machine and the utmost precision was necessary to pack the hardware into the small space available, a procedure which would have been impossible without the Computer Aided Design system used by Diab's consultant engineer, Bertil Lohman. The Diab computer was finally brought to completion and exhibited in the Moderna

Museet, Stockholm in 1989, by which time the original specifications for power and performance were greatly increased, the design had been refined and elegantly engineered but the proportions of the boxes remained exactly as originally proposed. One reason for Diab's interest in carrying the idea through to completion was that it seemed to fit a gap in their range of products. They had two models, one a large cabinet of rack units and the other a small 'tower' computer designed to go under a desk: all run the UNIX operating system. Hamilton's DS-101 was functionally the equal of the cabinet three times its size: it can serve up to forty users and runs at 2.5 mips (million instructions per second).

Placed in an art exhibition it is difficult at first to see how the computer fits into the context of Hamilton's work as a painter. When it was exhibited in Stockholm he took the opportunity to photograph the computer in the beautiful installation by Ulf Linde devoted to Marcel Duchamp. The act of photographing a computer designed by an artist beside a urinal chosen by an artist and titled 'Fountain' calls into question the work's status. Duchamp himself suggested that a painting is an assisted ready-made: 'Since the tubes of paint used by the artist are manufactured and ready made products we must conclude that all the paintings in the world are 'readymades aided' and also works of assemblage.' (Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (eds.), *The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp: Marchand du Sel – Salt Seller*, London 1975, p. 142) Hamilton's computer is a work of art in that he does not distinguish between it and his other works and it has been exhibited along with his paintings since it was first produced: its form even has some relationship with Minimal art (Donald Judd's stacked boxes are not dissimilar). Hamilton's

computer is different from most other works of art in that it also functions as something other than a work of art. When Duchamp nominated a typewriter cover or a bottle rack as a work of art he did so by depriving it of its separate functionality. Would Duchamp's typewriter cover still be a work of art if it was used to cover a typewriter – even in a museum?

Hamilton has always insisted that his computer should be operative when it is exhibited. In the first showing in 1986 the computer was programmed to enable visitors to relate to it interactively. By choosing from a menu of catalogue listings and texts about the exhibition, they could read on a monitor, or printout, any text or list. Since the 1987 exhibition in Stockholm a graphics board and a colour graphics terminal (not designed by Hamilton) have replaced the simple VDU and keyboard. A sequence of coloured pictures and information relating to Hamilton's art is held in digital form in the computer and repeats continuously during the course of the exhibition.



89 Countdown

1989
Humbrol enamel on Cibachrome on canvas
100 × 100 (39½ × 39½)
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Holenia Purchase Fund 1991

Working on the Quantel Paintbox (see no.87) was an exciting experience but it posed a large question for Hamilton which he termed 'the hard copy problem'. The computer is incredibly well able to process images and it can store these images in digital form with great efficiency. Sooner or later the image must be given a form that can be perceived with human eyes and it is the output from the computer that presents difficulties for an artist. It is possible to see the

image on a cathode ray tube and a 'high definition' monitor can provide very good resolution. It can be output to a scanner to make a transparency as large as 10 × 8 inches, but at that size resolution would be unsatisfactory unless the very powerful Graphics computer had been used initially.

An unexpected bonus from the BBC 'Painting with Light' programme of the Orangeman was that, due to the unusual circumstances, the whole of the process of creating the image on the Paintbox had been video recorded so Hamilton was able to review the intermediary stages. Some of these had a crude energy that he thought worth investigating. A transparency was made from a frame of the video editing tape (this accounts for the frame numbers). This was then used to make a Cibachrome print for mounting on canvas. Broad sweeps of enamel paint added to a drama which is evoked by the strangeness of a casually assembled image compounded from fragments of photographs, filtered by coarse TV scanning, to which a further intermediary stage of electronic masking has been applied.



90 La Scala Milano

1989
Oil on photograph on canvas
100 × 144 (39½ × 56½)
Private Collection

Many of Hamilton's prints are studies for paintings; a print more often contributes to a painting than vice versa. There are cases of a print emerging as a review of a subject already executed as a painting. 'La Scala Milano' is a rarity in being a painting based on a print: the print itself was a rarity in being the sole treatment of its subject.

The etching was made in Milan in 1968, while working on an etched stage in the development of 'Swinging London' (no.54). It was the outcome of seeing an extraordinary proliferation of postcards of the interior of the Scala opera house. Most of them were on the same theme, a view

of the auditorium with a packed audience seen from the stage. The cards came in a wide variety of shapes and sizes with many small differences of colour. Hamilton began to build a large collection of variations. The image coincided with a number of his current interests. There was a large massing of humanity, as in 'Bathers' (nos.44-5), 'People' (no.34), 'Trafalgar Square' (no.36); there was the phenomenon of a straightforward colour photograph that was not what it appeared to be; and the image had a humorous relationship with another architectural motif, the Guggenheim Museum – was it the interior, the negative, of the Wright building?

The making of the original black and white photograph was itself a feat of administrative and technical skill. It is clearly not a normal audience; every box is full, every square metre of space except the central aisle is crammed. The cream of Milan is there in full evening dress; it is a unique social document. To evenly illuminate a theatre of this size with sufficient power to produce identifiable portraits of many hundreds of individuals is a remarkable technical feat. Then, the transformation of this into a multiplicity of hand-coloured representation was a perfect example of Hamilton's thesis of the anonymous artist surreptitiously dabbling onto the 'truth' of the lens. Having had the good fortune to find a postcard printed photographically on emulsion rather than halftone reproduction, Hamilton engaged in the same procedures, first in his small etching/screenprint and then, twenty years later, with a painting on a black and white print on sensitised cloth.



91 Northend I

1990
Oil on Cibachrome on canvas
100 × 109.5 (39½ × 43)
*The artist, courtesy of the Anthony
d'Offay Gallery*

Rita Donagh, Hamilton's wife, while accepting the necessity, regretted the wrenching of the Langan picture (no. 76) from its intended site; she always hoped there would be an opportunity to repeat the idea of a painting which depicted the location

in which it was itself intended to hang. A 35mm transparency existed from a visit in 1975 to the house which was to become their home, Northend Farm. It was a photograph taken from outside through what had been a window, looking across a derelict space to Rita standing in the second of two doorways which opened onto a room bathed in light. As is often the case in Hamilton's paintings there is a reminiscence of some classical motif – in this case it is the figure silhouetted in a doorway in Velásquez's 'Las Meninas'; though a background feature in the Velásquez painting, the image has been discussed at length by art historians. There are also overtones of Vermeer, not only in the colour and the illumination of the figure, but in the way the paint is handled to integrate the painted area into the overall grainy, photographic quality; the kind of demands that Vermeer was the among first to experience when he used the camera obscura to project his subject onto the canvas.

The Quantel Paintbox was again

brought into service to square-up the source photograph: the diagonal angle of view into the room introduced convergences and warps which could be forced back into a clean parallel perspective with electronic manipulation; in particular, the door frames were extended and realigned. While the flaws, dubious colour quality and camera shake, were welcomed as an abstract enhancement of the enlarged Cibachrome print, the door opening, the figure and the view into the other room were painted in a pointillist manner to match the grain of the enlarged emulsion.

Self-portraits

Since 1968 Hamilton has been engaged in an ongoing project of Polaroid portraits. Three volumes have been published of the intended four (bib. A36.A45.A55) Each volume contains thirty-two Polaroid photographs of Hamilton by artist friends and acquaintances.

The first two published volumes had been issued in specially bound limited editions containing a unique self-portrait Polaroid frontispiece. For the third volume Hamilton decided in 1980 to unify the individual unique self-portrait photographs by setting up an area in his studio with flash lights and a sheet of glass with a few marks applied in oil colour, which remained almost constant. The painted glass was placed between the artist and the camera in such a way that he could operate the shutter with a foot-operated bulb. Changes of lighting, distance of the glass from the lens and focus of the camera would create quite dramatic differences of scale, colour and sharpness of the standard paint marks. Only a few Polaroids were made on any day and only the best shots were retained; about one in three succeeded. Thick acrylic-colour was applied directly to some of the Polaroids afterwards.

The limited edition was not completed and only about twenty Polaroids were made. In 1989 Hamilton used some of the Polaroids to make a group of twelve self-portraits by having the Polaroids scanned for the Quantel Paintbox. Polaroid photographs often have flaws at the edges and spots in the middle; they can be very easily retouched on the Paintbox to prepare the pictures for enlargement. It is also possible to apply additional colour anywhere at this stage. When the electronic work was completed the portraits were put to a scanner and 10 × 8 inch transparencies were produced, which were used to make Cibachrome enlargements bonded to canvas. An additional painting procedure was then undertaken with oil paint on the Cibachromes. The titles give the date on which the photograph was originally made; where there was more than one useful exposure on any given date an alphabetic character is added.



92
Self-portrait 12.7.80 a
1990
Oil on Cibachrome on canvas
75 x 75 (29½ x 29½)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery



95
Self-portrait 13.7.80 b
1990
Oil on Cibachrome on canvas
75 x 75 (29½ x 29½)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery



98
Self-portrait 04.3.81 c
1990
Oil on Cibachrome on canvas
75 x 75 (29½ x 29½)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery



93
Self-portrait 12.7.80 b
1990
Oil on Cibachrome on canvas
75 x 75 (29½ x 29½)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery



96
Self-portrait 04.3.81 a
1990
Oil on Cibachrome on canvas
75 x 75 (29½ x 29½)
Private Collection



99
Self-portrait 05.3.81 a
1990
Oil on Cibachrome on canvas
75 x 75 (29½ x 29½)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery



94
Self-portrait 13.7.80 a
1990
Oil on Cibachrome on canvas
75 x 75 (29½ x 29½)
IVAM Centre Julio González. Generalitat Valenciana



97
Self-portrait 04.3.81 b
1990
Oil on Cibachrome on canvas
75 x 75 (29½ x 29½)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery



100
Self-portrait 05.3.81 b
1990
Oil and Humbrol enamel on Cibachrome on canvas
75 x 75 (29½ x 29½)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery



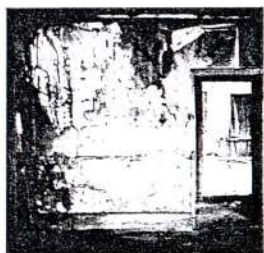
101
Self-portrait 05.3.81 c
1990
Oil on Cibachrome on canvas
75 x 75 (29½ x 29½)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery



102
Self-portrait 05.3.81 d
1990
Oil on Cibachrome on canvas
75 x 75 (29½ x 29½)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery



103
Self-portrait 05.3.81 e
1990
Oil on Cibachrome on canvas
75 x 75 (29½ x 29½)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery



104
Northend II
1991
Oil on Cibachrome on canvas
99.3 x 108.7 (39¼ x 42¼)
Rita Donagh

Rita Donagh was unhappy to see herself in the painting she had initiated (no.91). Hamilton made a second version of 'Northend', replacing her figure with bluebells on a table. On the first encounter with Northend Rita had found a large bunch of fresh bluebells left mysteriously like a welcoming gift in the ruined house. They were in the sunlit room seen in the photograph. The table on which they lie in the painting was given to Hamilton by Rita Donagh in 1982. It is a folding wine table, which appealed to Rita Donagh through the clarity of its geometry. It consists solely of a circle, a triangle and a square.

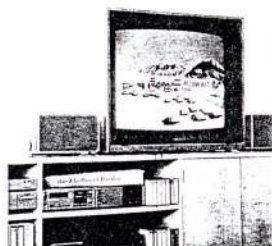


105
Two gentlemen of Alba
1991
Oil on Cibachrome
100 x 78 (39¼ x 30¼)
Giorgio and Giò Marconi Collection,
Milan

Studio Marconi. Milan, has exhibited Hamilton five times since their first show in 1967. After the latest, in November 1990, Giorgio Marconi arranged a weekend trip to Alba to visit wine-makers and eat white truffles. While waiting for departure to the vineyards in the lounge of their

hotel in Alba, Giorgio Marconi and his son Giò were photographed by Hamilton with a 110 format camera. To enlarge a miniature, negative colour frame to a 1 metre wide Cibachrome is optimistic but possible with an intermediary 5 x 4 inch transparency.

This was another of the 'Interior' subjects so beloved by Hamilton. The attraction of the photograph was its 'given' abstract qualities. The picture plane is broken down into more or less rectangular areas. David Sylvester has compared Hamilton with Godard in their shared propensity towards 'planes running parallel to the picture plane' (bib. 047). 'Two gentlemen of Alba' (not far from Verona) is like a stage set in the way it seems to be composed of 'flats'. An abstract arrangement of near-rectangles demanded only literal rectification and this was done with simple blocks of oil paint. To establish an even greater degree of precision some edges were straightened with a pointillist treatment to match the film grain and other parts of the image painted out or extended in simulation of the photograph. The flat treatment is reinforced by colour, the red, green and white, however muted, being appropriately reminiscent of the Italian flag.



106
War games
1991-2
Oil on Scanachrome on canvas
200 x 200 (78¼ x 78¼)
The artist

The Verein Kornbrennerei, a distillery converted to an art centre in Hanover, Germany, is confronted by a long wall made with concrete posts and beams with brick in-fill. The director of the Kornbrennerei had the idea to commission artists to produce works as a permanent outdoor public exhibition with each artist assigned an area approximately five metres square. Hamilton agreed to make a

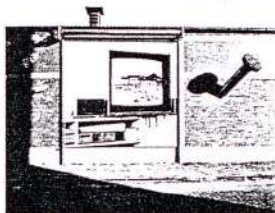


fig. 29 War games, first version (1991) at Kornbrennerei, Hanover



fig. 30 Kent State 1970 Screenprint



fig. 31 Still from BBC 'Newsnight' programme showing Peter Snow in the Sandpit

panel using the computer-controlled Scanachrome system of colour enlargement (fig. 29).

In his search for a subject Hamilton resorted to a method similar to that which he had used in 1970 when television offered 'Kent State' (fig. 30) to his monitoring camera (see p. 51); but here, instead of a camera, he used a video recorder over a period of several days, taping short television sequences of particular interest: these were usually news items. It happened to be the period of the Gulf war of 1991 and the BBC 'Newsnight' programme provided many entries to the tape (fig. 31). In these, presenter Peter Snow was seen delivering his famous commentaries on the battle over a model of the war zone dotted with balsawood tanks and pinned with the adversaries' flags – the model itself has achieved some fame as the 'Sandpit' and has been exhibited in the Imperial War Museum, London. Selected still frames from the video were photographed on the TV screen in Hamilton's living room, surrounded by the video equipment associated with it. In the midst of bombs, missiles and general carnage it was the Sandpit which communicated the most telling image of the war. The headline in the newspaper seen in the painting, 'the Mother of Battles' was a threatening phrase coined shortly before the outbreak of hostilities by the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein.

Out of many trial 6 × 6 cm exposures one was selected to be enlarged on the Scanachrome machine. The transparency is put in a scanner at one end of the axle of a very large drum. The material to be printed is stretched over the drum. As the drum rotates, four airbrushes controlled by the computer reading the transparency spray blue, red, yellow and black inks to create the picture as the bank of jets move slowly along the axis of the drum. On a large-scale Scanachrome the distance between the scanning lines can be as much as 4 mm: this has the effect of giving the whole image the character of television. Hamilton decided to confuse the issue by himself painting the TV screen, with an assistant, so that the only part of his image without scanning lines is the part where they might be expected. The large, outdoor version of 'War games' must have a limited life expectancy so the need to redo the painting on a gallery scale became an early imperative. The 2 metre square scale gave an opportunity for Hamilton alone to work more meticulously on the painted area.

To a domestic audience, one way

in which the war seemed to be being played out was on television. Not only was the action transmitted by satellite to screens in every home but the television screen often showed the participating generals delivering their press conferences with the aid of monitors, so that video replays were replayed on countless television tubes throughout the world: the television set was itself the image on our screens. The irony was emphasised by Peter Snow when the war was transferred to a simulated desert scattered with national symbols and model weaponry. It seemed to Hamilton, as to many others, that the prominence of the war game as a phenomenon in itself obscured the fact that thousands of Iraqi conscripts were dying in their 'sandpit'. Blood can be seen seeping from the bottom of Hamilton's television.