

Topic Page: [Op Art](#)

Definition: **op art** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

(optical art) US abstract art movement, popular in the mid-1960s. It relies on optical phenomena to confuse the viewers' eye and to create a sense of movement on the surface of the picture. Leading exponents include Victor Vasarely, Kenneth Noland, and Bridget Riley.

Summary Article: **op art**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Type of abstract art, mainly painting, in which patterns are used to create the impression that the image is flickering or vibrating. Often pictures are a mass of lines, small shapes, or vivid, clashing colours that seem to shift under the eye. Op art emerged in 1960 although its roots lie in the colour theories and optical experimentation of Joseph Alber in Germany in the 1920s. Its name, first used in 1964, is a pun on pop art, which was popular at the time.

The first major international exhibition of op art was 'The Responsive Eye', held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1965. The exhibition was popular with the public, although less so with critics, and op art was regarded as an expression of the mood of the swinging sixties (op art designs appeared in women's fashion, for example).

Op art, which relied mainly on mathematics and colour theories to achieve its startling effects, can also be seen as part of the reaction against the subjective emotionalism of abstract expressionism, which had dominated US art in the 1950s. However, op art was not confined to the USA; the two most famous exponents were the British painter Bridget Riley and the Hungarian-born French artist Victor Vasarely.

Op art had passed its peak of popularity by the end of the 1960s, but Riley, Vasarely, and others continued to create work in this style long after then.

essays

Is Modern Art 'A Load of Rubbish'?

APA

Chicago

Harvard

MLA

Op Art. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. Abington, UK: Helicon. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/op_art



© RM, 2018. All rights reserved.



© RM, 2018. All rights reserved.

APA

Op Art. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. Abington, UK: Helicon. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/op_art

Chicago

"op art." In *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*, edited by Helicon. Helicon, 2018. https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/op_art

Harvard

Op Art. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. [Online]. Abington: Helicon. Available from: https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/op_art [Accessed 19 September 2019].

MLA

"op art." *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*, edited by Helicon, 2018. *Credo Reference*, https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/op_art. Accessed 19 Sep. 2019.