Artist Stores: An Evolution in Art and Commerce

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Artist Stores:
An Evolution in Art and Commerce

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Introduction

“Power is in the hands of those that control the means of production.” – Craig Owens

“It's a lady's handbag...No, it's an iron. No, a typewriter. No, a toaster. No, a piece of pie.” These words were exclaimed by a visitor to Claes Oldenburg's 1961 East Village storefront, trying to figure out what product she had just been examining. As the viewer encountered a series of handmade objects representing mass-produced goods, she found herself in a storefront oddly mimicking a retail space, creating an ambiguous space where common distinctions between “art” and “commerce” had seemingly collapsed. The fine line between “art,” work appreciated primarily for aesthetic quality or emotional power, and “commerce,” buying and selling on a large scale, reoccurs throughout art history. Oldenburg's The Store began as an experimental art project that aimed to counter the commodified exhibition spaces (an early form of institutional critique) in an activist- and performance-oriented mode. Oldenburg's project laid the groundwork for future artists, like Keith Haring and Takashi Murakami, who continued to explore and comment on the growing role of art and commerce through the lens of the artist store. Oldenburg's The Store, Haring's Pop-Shop (1986-2005), and Murakami's ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store (2007-2008) are arguably the most famous examples of artist stores yet their changing roles in the
artistic discourse of the 1960s, 1980s, and 2000s, remains to be examined. By situating each of these artist stores within the context of their respective times and revealing each as a changing paradigm steeped in its time and cultural context, this thesis argues that the artist store has become an intricate part of contemporary artistic practice that reveals a changing set of artistic and critical responses to an increasingly commodified and commercial (art) world.

Artists have long recognized the connection between art and commerce. Pablo Picasso (b. 1881 – d. 1973), for example, repeatedly painted his studio as a theme, and depicted his principal patron in Portrait of Gertrude Stein (1906). Marcel Duchamp (b. 1887 – d. 1968) created Boîte-en-Valise (1950s), a museum-in-a-suitcase that held replicas of his own work, which the artist sold door-to-door as a traveling salesman. Duchamp examined the commercial possibilities of art with the ongoing performance that involved the artist and all of New York City. Constantin Brâncuși (b. 1876 – d. 1957) used his studio (1916-1956), rather than a commercial gallery as a showroom for the public. His reception of visitors has often been described as of a performative character. Once his guests were in the studio, Brâncuși would dramatically emerge from behind a curtain and begin to introduce his works to his company. The early performative nature apparent in Brâncuși’s showroom proved successful and set a precedent for future artists to create interactive environments around their art. Carefully placing each object in
relation to the other, Brâncuși obsessively cared for the exhibition display. His studio itself became an artwork on display at the Pompidou Center in Paris, which makes it an interesting precursor for the artist stores of the 1960s, 1980s, and 2000s.⁴

As the number of products available in consumer culture increased drastically after World War II, concurrent artistic practices began to also embrace, reflect, and respond to this change.⁵ In the 1960s, as art became more political and activist driven, contemporary artists began to also seek ways to comment on the growing commodification of art within consumer society. Performance art, Happenings, and Conceptual Art developed as ways of critiquing an object-based and increasingly commercialized art world, while Pop sought to bring attention to the passive consumer and the media-induced desires affecting both the art market and the rest of consumer society.⁶ The French Situationists, an avant-garde anti-capitalist art group, began to appropriate preexisting images and texts and subvert their meaning while other artists, like Daniel Buren (b. 1938), chose to work within the entrenched system. Art dealers, in turn, almost immediately recognized the market value of anti-consumerist work, which was purchased and commodified because of its individuality and uniqueness.⁷ This dilemma led artists to continuously search for new ways to represent life as they experienced it and try to somewhat control the interaction between art and commerce.
As museums and galleries were commonly viewed as the proper place for displaying and understanding art within a cultural context, many artists struggled with the decision of either seeking representation from a gallery or developing a new and alternative venue for their work. Art galleries in many ways resemble retail stores, but are nevertheless seen as distinct, in part because art sold in commercial galleries has historically been presented as a luxury for the cultivated, and often is considered a symbol of wealth or status. Additionally, the (modernist) myth of the artist as living on the edge of society, poor and radical in his or her practice, anarchically free from any financial bonds or limitations, and therefore better capable of critiquing the existing social, political, and economic system, plays a significant role in the general understanding of art, its function, and its subsequent placement in a gallery. Yet throughout the history of contemporary art, artists who have critiqued the art market system have also had to rely on and benefit from the gallery system. The artist Hans Haacke (b. 1936), for example, describes his decision to work within the system as a necessity:

More often than not it is by way of commercial galleries that one eventually gets invited to shows that attract larger audiences. Documenta [one of the most important international exhibitions in Germany], museum exhibitions, and so forth rarely present works that have not been, at the very least marginally, sanctioned by the art trading posts. However, the problem, as art critic Nancy Marmer points out in a 1987 *Art in
America article, occurs when successful artists who critique commodification in art fail to later critique their own work when it becomes a commodity. If artists accept the benefits and financial successes gained through the art world without comment, they become part of the system, rendering their outsider critique ineffective or even hypocritical.

Artist stores, as a space outside of a gallery or museum, have attempted to critique the art market while being fully immersed within it. Beginning with The Store in the 1960s, artist stores have been designed as stores that critique the art world, particularly its relationship to consumerism. Oldenburg viewed The Store as a statement against the commodification of art in commercial galleries. The Pop-Shop's creation was intended to make fine art accessible to a consumerist society. Murakami's ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store embraced the commercial aspects of art and revealed them to the world by creating a branded empire around his images. Over time, by blurring the line between works of art and other commodities, artist stores came to resemble commercial entities. For this thesis an artist store is defined as a business establishment where an artist sells his or her own work, separate from a gallery or art fair. In addition, the issue of value, both artistic and monetary, is a prominent feature in artist stores because money and market value are often intertwined in the store's mission. These differences contrast with both the commercial gallery, a privately owned for-profit business
exhibiting and dealing in works of art, and the retail store, a business where usually diversified goods are kept for retail sale. However, commercial galleries, retail stores, and artist stores consist essentially of rooms stocked with merchandise for sale to a consumer society. This connection is one not often discussed in academic literature, but warrants closer examination.

Much of the existing literature only provides art historical analyses of each artist and his place in the history of contemporary art, but fails to consider each store's impact on the way the artist store is viewed in a commercial context. Newspapers reviews of the Green Gallery exhibition discuss objects from The Store, but the 107 East 2nd location received little press until the 1990s. In 1967, Something Else Press published Oldenburg's Store Days: Documents from The Store, 1961, and Ray Gun Theater, 1962, a collection of the artist’s writings on the art market's role in shaping the interpretation of art, but without any in-depth explanation of The Store itself. Exhibition catalogs and monographs addressing The Store, such as Barbara Rose's 1969 monograph and Modern Art and Popular Culture: Readings in High and Low, analyze Oldenburg’s stylistic techniques and the store objects as individual works exhibited in three separate spaces—Martha Jackson Gallery, 107 East 2nd Street, and Green Gallery—but fail to address the eventual increase in monetary value of The Store sculptures by galleries and museums in the years after its closure or the artist's writings in Store Days. A
closer examination into Oldenburg’s use of popular advertising techniques, intended to critique commercialism, will reveal how his artist store inadvertently set the stage for the future commodification of artist products in a mass-market arena.\textsuperscript{15}

The lack of examination into the ways in which consumer demands affect art extends to Haring's \textit{Pop-Shop} as well. Essays on Haring and interviews with the artist about the art world and consumer industry, such as David Sheff's 1989 \textit{Rolling Stone} interview, \textit{Keith Haring Journals}, and Robert Pincus-Witten's article “Keith 'R' Us” for the Whitney Museum of American Art retrospective, address the artist's attempts to make his art accessible without delving into the issues of the \textit{Pop-Shop}'s commodification of his works or his style.\textsuperscript{16} Newspaper and magazine articles written during the \textit{Pop-Shop}'s early years, in the \textit{NY Post}, \textit{Village Voice}, and \textit{Metropolitan Home}, discussed the shop, without addressing the effects of the store, such as the intentional non-distinction between art and commercial products.\textsuperscript{17} This is important because the distinction between fine art and commercial product, which began with \textit{The Store} and reached an apex with Murakami, saw the turning point for artist store in the \textit{Pop-Shop}. Haring thought of the \textit{Pop-Shop} as the 1960s version of Oldenburg's \textit{The Store} and an art project that would counteract the elitism of the art world.\textsuperscript{18} However, he inadvertently created an outlet for the commercialization even more so by mass-producing the
sold items and using mass-market means to publicize the project. This evolution of Haring's shop from idealistic art concept to functional retail store paved the way for boutique styled stores like the ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store.

Academic writing often leaves out the fact that Murakami visited the Pop-Shop during his first trip to New York in 1989 and admitted to finding inspiration in Haring's work. Haring's influence was especially important in the commercial development of Murakami's work, as was a functioning version of the Pop-Shop inside of a Haring retrospective at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The current writings on Murakami's artist store, including Scott Rothkopf's essay “Takashi Murakami: Company Man” in the exhibition catalog ©Murakami and many newspaper and journal articles, have addressed both the nature of Murakami's collaboration with Louis Vuitton and the placement of the artist store inside the exhibition, but have neglected to consider the store in the context of previous artist stores or discuss the artist's equal use of commercial and fine art items in his art practice. Other articles, such as Ruth Furla's “The Artist's Fall Collection,” draw comparisons between the ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store and department stores, but ignore the importance of the artist's position that his commercial works and those manufactured by his merchandise company in the gift shop, are of equal value to his fine art. A thorough investigation into Murakami's attempts to equate popular art with fine art illustrates that he moved
the artist store intentionally and irreversibly into a commercial arena in which it embraces both art world and pop culture demands.

This thesis will demonstrate the importance of each artist store in relation to the artists of the time, and explore the impact of consumer society on contemporary art as seen through the evolution of these stores. Each store will be examined as a different response to Duchamp with a changing element of performance running throughout. An in depth analysis of a photograph, representative of each store, serves as the basis of a discussion of their similarities and differences. To further the historical trajectory of the artist stores, the following chapters will explore the different neighborhoods in which each store emerged as well as concurrent artists and discourses of the time. The artist store evolved through a period of fifty years into an increasingly more commercial entity. Oldenburg's store became an early case of institutional critique, influenced by Duchamp, Neo-Dadism, and early Pop. In the case of Haring, the desire to make art more available lead him to create the Pop-Shop, a project influenced by collaborative works of other artists groups of the 1980s with ties to graffiti and AIDS activism. The artist store evolved into the complete elimination of distinctions between art and commercialism with Murakami. Placing the store inside the museum, and a performance element outside, the ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store emphasized the commercial aspect of the institution and the artist.
store. In addition, this thesis will illustrate the artist store as a part of an artist practice that reflects changes simultaneously in the art world and popular culture.
Chapter 1: The Store Is My Art

“Museum in [bourgeois] concept equals store in mine.” – Claes Oldenburg

“I am for an art that is political-erotical-mystical, that does something other than sit on its ass in a museum. I am for an art that grows up not knowing it is art at all, an art given the chance of having a starting point of zero.” – Claes Oldenburg

The 1960s saw the emergence of Pop Art and with it the appeal of the mass-market product. In 1961, Claes Oldenburg (b. 1929) rented a storefront in New York’s East Village and opened his own store as a symbol of emerging hyper-capitalism and a vehicle for institutional critique; The Store (Figure 1) was likely the first model for artists to display and sell their work as commercial products to both the public and the art world. At the same time, Oldenburg’s artist store set the stage for the future commercialization of artist products in a mass-market arena and ultimately turned the artist's sculptures into the commodified products that he was attempting to critique.

The Store and the Man in the Photograph

A photograph of Oldenburg shows the artist seated inside The Store with all of his sculptures displayed behind him (Figure 2). Oldenburg reclines in a chair on the left side of the store, wearing all black and holding one of his sculptures, Strawberry Shortcake (1961) (Figure 3). The sculpture depicts an
oversized and slightly deformed slice of cake; the bright red of the strawberry at
the cake's top drips over the edge of the white creamy frosting onto the yellow
shortcake. Behind Oldenburg, the frame opens into a moderately sized store with
several tables and display counters. Every surface holds several sculptures, some
of which are life-sized while others are large. A high gloss enamel paint on all of
the works is immediately visible. *White Gym Shoes* (1961) (Figure 4), propped up
and positioned on a low table at The Store's entrance, is grossly exaggerated to
several times the size of actual shoes in order to immediately point out the
materialistic desires of society towards commercial products, such as these.
Another free-standing sculpture that shows no regard to realistic proportions,
*Sewing Machine* (1961) (Figure 5) is enlarged to almost six feet wide. The
variance in size appears as if the artist intended viewers to focus on the societal
dependence on clothing and consumer goods.

Immediately behind Oldenburg's chair in the photograph is a plaster wall
from which several large works, including *Yellow Girl's Dress* (1961) (Figure 6)
hang as if on hangers, like clothing in a retail shop. This suspended display
method is copied on the facing wall, where several pieces are clustered together to
allow customers to peruse the merchandise from all angles, although the shopping
experience is far from enjoyable. *Yellow Girl's Dress* is about 32 inches in height
and width and is suspended in the middle of the shop. The brilliant yellow that
represents the body of the garment can be seen from afar and glistens with the curving three dimensional shape of the sculpture; a cobalt blue paint defines the dress's contrasting trim dripping down the neckline and across the skirt area. The textured material and heavy-handed painting on Yellow Girl's Dress, which can be seen in all of the pieces in The Store, illustrates Oldenburg's ironic and mocking commentary on consumer goods.

Positioned next to Yellow Girl's Dress, at the back of the first room leading into the rest of The Store, is Bride Mannikin (1961) (Figure 7), a nearly life-sized mannequin modeling a grotesque wedding dress and veil that drips along her body, complete with a bouquet of roses equally deformed. The free-standing sculpture is reminiscent of models seen in bridal boutiques wearing extravagant dresses, but Oldenburg's crude style becomes a critical statement about the materialistic products he recreated and sold. Bride Mannikin, the artist's misspelling to point out the difference between his work and a department store mannequin, is placed near other “clothing,” so that, as in a department store, customers can see the “garment” on a body before buying the item. The use of only black and red paint on the face results in a Frankensteinish woman, made-up with darkened eye shadow and ruby red lips; thick brush strokes on the white form continue the decayed appearance.25 The eerie quality of the deformed consumer products was intended to quell the desire to spend money, normally
instilled through advertisements. In addition, the crudeness of the objects relates to the poverty stricken neighborhood where *The Store* was located.

Oldenburg filled *The Store* with objects that resembled commodity items, but his distortion of the forms turned the works into grotesque copies of popular goods. On the other side of *Bride Mannikin*, further into *The Store*, is *Braselette* (1961) (Figure 8), another hanging clothing sculpture similar to *Yellow Girl's Dress*. *Braselette* uses the same crimson paint as the rose bouquet in *Bride Mannikin* as a backdrop to highlight the pale yellow camisole and brassiere combination that was popular in the 1960s. The sculpture's breast area protrudes several inches from the rest of the piece to give it dimensionality. Light blue splashes of paint are used to add shadow under the bust to represent the collapse of sexuality by drawing attention in the provocative manner of many advertisements.

The rest of *The Store* contains a selection of display cases consisting of round tables with one work on each, long counter tops, glass cases, and multilevel display shelving, very similar to museum exhibition display options. Hand-crafted glass pastry cases present various foods in an organized manner for customers to look at individually. Small art objects are lined up neatly on shelving, which can be accessed from all sides. Despite the many pieces in the space, the variety of display counters allows room for every work to be seen properly.
Oldenburg’s objective in using papier mâché was to create art out of perishable materials, or more precisely to mock high art by making art out of materials that under normal conditions were perishable. All of the sculptures in *The Store* were made with plaster-soaked muslin placed over chicken wire frames, which were then painted with commercial house paint-enamel to set them apart from their reference objects. The cheap and possibly decomposable materials Oldenburg used had the political connotation of denying high art and allowed him to highlight the difference between his creations and the expensive paintings shown in art institutions.\(^2^6\)

The move from a gallery setting to a storefront was strategic for Oldenburg, combining his mission of contextualizing non-commodified objects and the use of cheap materials for fabrication. Oldenburg postulated that, for the display of art, “A store would be better [than a gallery or museum] (Store – place full of objects).”\(^2^7\) He noted that public squares in New York City, such as Times Square, behaved much like department stores, inundating the masses with new products and displaying goods in vitrines.\(^2^8\) Stores are, by definition, places where merchandise is offered for sale and, like Oldenburg’s work, they employ different strategies to achieve their desired commercial goals. Oldenburg further reasoned that if there were no gallery, then the objects inside could not be defined as art, and conversely, if they were not art, then they would not be sold as
commercial products in a gallery. This desire to create non-art objects led the
artist to reference the structure of the store and the gallery in a particularly salient
passage from his book of writings, aptly titled Store Days: Documents from The
Store:

actually make a store!
14 st or 6 ave
butchershop etc
the whole store an apotheosis!

The store will have a counter
All the objects will be three-dimensional
There will be fragments of walls
chairs etc. 

The Store was to be an apotheosis, a model of excellence, and one having no
equal. Apotheosis, originally used to describe the divination of deceased Greek
and Roman emperors, was later applied to Christian art, specifically holy
figures. Oldenburg's use of the term to describe the store he wished to create
suggests the powerful effect of art and commercialism that he intended to achieve.
The artist attempted to recreate this effect by fabricating commonplace objects,
similar to those from neighboring stores. In all, over one hundred objects, some
freestanding, some hanging, were crowded into the small storefront.

The Lower East Side and Its Residents

Oldenburg modeled The Store on neighborhood dime-stores, which sold
inexpensive items like toys, household goods, and clothing, sometimes at a single
price point. Many early versions of dime-stores, sometimes called variety stores,
also had lunch counters for inexpensive meals. Woolworth's Five and Dime Store
lunch counter (Figure 9), for instance, had a long metal counter with individual
chairs mounted on one side for customers to sit and order quickly. Dime-stores
first rose to popularity in the 1880s as the poor man's department store, and as
their clientele expanded during the 1920s, they became an American institution. As they grew in prominence, some five cent and ten cent variety chain stores
began to resemble general merchandise or dry goods department stores in size and
selection of products. Woolworth's expanded and began to create elaborate
window displays (Figure 10) to advertise the wide variety of goods available
inside. Oldenburg incorporated the elements of dime-store lunch counters into
_The Store_ thematically by including food items into many of his sculptures, such
as _Pie a la Mode_ (1962) (Figure 11), _Glass Case with Pies_ (1961) (Figure 12), and
_Strawberry Shortcake_ (Figure 3). Oldenburg's handmade replicas of
commonplace objects, many of which could be grouped into dime-store
merchandise categories like foodstuffs, clothing, and household goods, blurred the
line between high and low art by combining kitsch consumer products and fine
art, thereby questioning the connection between commodification of art and mass-
market advertisement. With commercially charged names like _Pepsi-Cola_ (1961)
(Figure 13) and 7-Up (1961) (Figure 14), Oldenburg incorporated major international name brands for corporations. The use of recognizable branding, combined with the artist's crude forms, appears to illustrate Oldenburg's criticism that the art world treated artists and their work like commercial products to be bought and sold as such.

Oldenburg was further influenced by his surrounding nearby neighborhoods in the East Village and SoHo (specifically Clinton Street, Delancey Street, and 14th Street). At the time, The Store was located in the northern part of the Lower East Side (L.E.S.), a section that was renamed the East Village in the early 1960s to dissociate it from the image of slums and to associate it with prestigious Greenwich Village, which was popular with artists at the time. The slums, or tenement buildings, were cramped apartment buildings that housed hundreds of people in small dilapidated rooms (Figure 15). Often curtains were used in place of doors, peeling ceilings and walls were common, and large families shared one-room apartments. Ethnic restaurants, butcher shops, churches, and bakeries filled the streets amidst the tenement buildings in the L.E.S., run by first- and second-generation Eastern Europeans. Problems like unemployment, juvenile delinquency, and declining community infrastructure plagued the L.E.S. into the early 1960s. Oldenburg recreated the items he saw in the L.E.S. and displayed the familiar objects in what he thought of as a storefront.
for popular art. The juxtaposition of Oldenburg's artist store with traditional art museums and galleries was meant to bring the lower and upper classes together in a store of high and low class art. However, the connection between classes was not established because the work was not necessarily aimed towards those of low income.

The location of *The Store* was intentional. The artist was himself an immigrant, and as such, sometimes seen as an outsider. Other immigrants settled around *The Store* might be able to relate to Oldenburg's national status, but the avant-garde style of *The Store* was most likely too strange for most inhabitants.

The artist's father was a wealthy Swedish diplomat who moved the family, first to New York and later to Chicago for business reasons. Oldenburg attended both the prestigious Latin School of Chicago and Yale University and was considered an academic. The mixture of high and low in Oldenburg's personal history allowed the artist to create a space that combined both elements.

Not only did the artist mimic the visual aspects of the neighboring stores, but the materials that created the products were also visually reminiscent of the neighborhood. Oldenburg noted in *Store Days*, “I am turned on by the thick plaster and green paint of a kitchen in my neighborhood. The accumulation and mystery. The heaped up table with a radio in it. Something frying on the stove.” He was likewise influenced by the plaster of his own home:
The plaster in my bathroom is very nice same goes for the hall, which is now being painted with shiny enamel.37

Oldenburg made note of the combination of plaster and glossy, enamel house-paint used in his home that also comprised the artworks in *The Store*. The papier mâché technique objectified the actual paint and created a texture that copied the walls of *The Store* itself and homes in the nearby L.E.S. slums. There was a lack of hierarchy in the artist's work: the presentation of different sizes and varying colors of sculptures, all created out of plaster, chicken wire, and house paint, had the effect of eliminating high art materials and making the works less definable. The detailing and quality of distorted shapes like *Blue Shirt* (1961) (Figure 16) could depict anything from high-quality silk to worn-out cotton depending upon the viewer. While Oldenburg provided the basic form, the wrinkled exterior and the uniqueness of the artist's hand allowed not only for different views of the work, but for the sculptures to take on new shapes completely depending on the audience's perspective. Through the eclecticism of objects fabricated from the same material as the store's walls, *The Store* forced viewers to look at the objects as a unified group. The nearly identical material for the wall construction and the sculptures intended to remind viewers that art does not exist only as an aesthetic object in a gallery space. Oldenburg's use of materials and location was an intentional critique of the values of the art world and society at large, which he
believed disregarded the original source of art and looked only to commercial

While *The Store* mimicked the appearance of neighboring “dime shops,” Oldenburg advertised the project almost exclusively to fellow artists and members of the art community, and did not actually expect a local audience. There were no advertisements for *The Store* in the arts listings sections of newspapers or reviews in local papers; moreover, the poster for *The Store* (Figure 17) employed a very simple design that listed the artist's name, the location, the name of the store, and the “company” (Ray Gun Manufacturing Company) that produced the products sold inside, and the gallery (Green Gallery) that assisted with funding.

*The Store* was created as a performance installation, which can be categorized somewhere between a Happening and early performance art, that happened to take the form of a store; it was not set up to make money, but to operate like a real shop and sell goods as part of an ongoing performance. As part of this performance, Oldenburg detailed every aspect of his store as if it were a for-profit business, complete with inventory lists and expense reports. He also insisted upon keeping similar hours to neighboring stores, posting his store and studio hours outside the shop. He even created a name for his mock company, The Ray Gun Manufacturing Company, and designed faux letterhead identifying “C. Oldenburg” as its president and sole employee. All of this was part of the
ongoing performance, and visitors who entered the store unaware of the nature of
*The Store* became unknowing participants in the performative critique of
restrictive, elitist institutions. Despite the lengths to which Oldenburg went to
mimic a for-profit enterprise, profit was never actually a major concern, mostly
because the project received funding from Green Gallery in exchange for a small
commission on sales.\(^4\) In fact, gross sales totaled only $1500, only slightly more
that the combination of rent, commission fees to the gallery, and material
expenses.\(^4\) Although he sold nothing at the Martha Jackson Gallery, Oldenburg
broke even at *The Store* and was able to pay his expenses. Many artists and
galleries have a difficult time generating revenue from art, but Oldenburg would
have been more successful in his mission if *The Store* had sold out in its location
on 2nd Street. However, Oldenburg, received very little attention for his project,
and once the objects were moved to the Green Gallery, they were beyond the
artist’s control and no longer part of a statement against art market
commodification.

**Performance and How the Works Emerged**

Oldenburg began his critique of the art market early in his career,
experimenting with several different styles and modes of social interaction. By the
late 1950s, Oldenburg had already begun breaking down traditional methods of
presenting and defining art.\textsuperscript{42} Oldenburg's interest in performative art can be traced to April 1958 and his introduction to \textit{Communication}, Allan Kaprow's first public Happening.\textsuperscript{43} The term Happenings (as coined by Kaprow in 1957) were elaborately scripted performance pieces in which audiences were active participants and meaning was intentionally left open to interpretation.\textsuperscript{44} Happenings could occur anywhere – a gallery or a street – and were often multi-disciplinary with nonlinear narratives that left room for improvisation and interaction. Intended to raise questions about the viewing and consumption of art, Happenings often placed the performing artists at physical risk in order to demonstrate the passivity of spectatorship and its social and ideological consequences.\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Communication}'s exploration of the urban environment, which was becoming a common theme in Oldenburg's work, attracted Oldenburg to attend and participate in future Happenings.\textsuperscript{46}

Oldenburg's new interest in the power of experimental and alternative performance art found a haven at the Judson Gallery in Greenwich Village. The Judson Memorial Church was established in 1890 with the intention of providing a middle ground for the poor Italian immigrants of Greenwich Village and wealthy residents in Washington Square, but by the late 1950s the church had expanded its mission to include an experimental arts ministry.\textsuperscript{47} Oldenburg's background as a wealthy immigrant placed the artist at the epicenter of the
Church's mission and helped form the foundation for *The Store's* design.

Beginning in 1957, visual artists including Oldenburg, Jim Dine, and Robert Rauschenberg were offered gallery space in what became known as the Judson Gallery. The alternative gallery would prove instrumental in providing an arena for Oldenburg to further develop and build upon Kaprow's ideas of performance art and Happenings. Oldenburg incorporated elements of Happenings into the scripted performative nature of *The Store*, which included unsuspecting passersby and the mangled commercial objects inside the space. While Oldenburg's first one-man show in New York and at the gallery in 1959 presented only loosely brushed figurative drawings such as *Dancer* (1959) (Figure 18), it was the catalyst in a series of events and processes that would lead to pivotal collaborations with like-minded artists and large-scale installations like *The Street* (1960) and *The Store*.

In 1960, Oldenburg had his second show at the Judson Gallery, which revealed a transformation of his expressionist, figurative paintings into a found-object environment titled *The Street* (Figure 19). The installation, which filled the entire gallery, consisted of ripped and tattered materials including cardboard and burlap in the form of cars, signs, and human silhouettes. The sculptural forms were hung from ceilings, propped against gallery walls, and draped on floors to create a cluttered, slum-like atmosphere that encompassed the entire room. The
drab colors and torn objects were intended specifically to depict the destitution of life in the slums of cities like New York.\textsuperscript{49} The environment was a harsh criticism of life in New York City for the overlooked lower classes in a time of over-consumption by the wealthy. Oldenburg addressed materialistic values explicitly by focusing on both the people who had nothing and those who spend on unnecessary consumer products.

Within the environment of \textit{The Street}, Oldenburg performed the first of his many Happenings, \textit{Snapshots from the City} (Figure 20), in collaboration with his first wife, artist Patty Mucha (b. 1935) as a series of individual scenes that one might encounter on the street, such as a chance encounter between two people, separated by interludes of darkness. Oldenburg used the performance's garbage-strewn environment as a vehicle for defining art and illustrating the struggle of the poverty stricken in a society dominated by New York's capitalist wealth.\textsuperscript{50} Using a variety of hand-made props, including guns and cars, \textit{Snapshots from the City} explored the adverse effects of luxury renewal projects and the increased traffic that came with greater prosperity and commercialization. \textit{The Street} was a political work that criticized the program of modernist urban renewal, which was then taking place in New York, as a way to think about the limitations of the city and its inhabitants.\textsuperscript{51} Though \textit{The Street} and \textit{Snapshots from the City} were presented in a gallery context, both were instrumental in Oldenburg's path toward
a statement on the commodification of art. In fact, *Snapshots from the City* was originally planned to be performed on the street outside Judson Gallery, but because Oldenburg felt he was seen as only a part of his work rather than the artist, he made the decision to move the performance inside the gallery space.\(^{52}\) Already, these early works were conceived in terms of environments rather than as individual art pieces.\(^{53}\) Thus, while the installations did involve individual pieces, they functioned as complete spaces, environments that encompassed the surrounding architecture and allowed for visitor interaction.

The use of everyday objects made from basic materials in *The Street* and *Snapshots from the City* led Oldenburg to create relief sculptures based on commercial and manufactured items. While the gun and car props used in *Snapshots from the City* were made from cardboard, Oldenburg crafted his next group of objects, like those in *Watch in a Red Box* (1961) (Figure 21), from plaster on wire frames to allow for a more durable structure and recognizable form. First shown as an environment in a group exhibition at the Martha Jackson Gallery in May 1961 titled *Environments, Situations, Spaces*, the new sculptural forms would later become part of *The Store* at 107 East 2\(^{nd}\) Street.\(^{54}\) In fact, in many ways the Martha Jackson exhibition served as a small-scale, preliminary version of *The Store*.\(^{55}\) Oldenburg planned the exhibition as an installation similar to that staged at the Judson Gallery, but because it was a group show in a
commercial gallery, works intended to be displayed as a large environment turned into a few hanging canvases due to space restrictions. Newspaper advertisements for the *Environments, Situations, Spaces* exhibition were limited, and the exhibition did not receive much notice until many years later. As a result of the lack of publicity and space, none of Oldenburg's work was sold in Martha Jackson's gallery. This commercial failure, combined with his inability to present his work as desired, caused Oldenburg to question the value of commercial galleries and to seek alternative avenues of exhibition.\(^\text{56}\)

After the Martha Jackson Gallery, Oldenburg retreated to the country to prepare for his next project that would better convey his statement on the commercialization of art through the conventions of the gallery.\(^\text{57}\) *The Store's* location outside of a gallery space allowed Oldenburg to examine the commercial value placed on art, and the ways in which context changed the meaning of art. “It is my intention to create the environment of a store,” Oldenburg wrote in *Store Days*, “after the spirit and in the form of popular objects of merchandise, such as may be seen in stores and store-windows of the city, especially in the area where the store is.”\(^\text{58}\) For the Christmas season, the most commercially charged time of the year, *The Store* was open for business as an exhibition and as a functioning commercial space that also served as the center of the artist's activities. Organizing *The Store's* opening around Christmas may have been a technique to
ensure more traffic from holiday shoppers and reinforce Oldenburg's message of a materialistic society. Further, Oldenburg received the benefit of publicity for “store” sales that applied to his work, as the ambiguous name could be the referent in the multiple advertisements. In practice and theme, The Store aimed to represent a continuation of Oldenburg's re-imagination of the urban environment from The Street, albeit with brighter colors, but failed because the Green Gallery was involved.

**Oldenburg's Store in Context**

By the late 1950s, Robert Rauschenberg’s combine-paintings and Jasper Johns similar Neo-Dadaist work had already demonstrated that there was room for other styles of art than Abstract Expressionism. Oldenburg used The Store to counter Abstract Expressionism's claim that art should stay within its specified mediums (paintings, sculptures, etc.) and pushed the boundaries of acceptable art. While Johns and Rauschenberg used everyday objects, such as clothing and household goods, in their work, Oldenburg decided to use basic plaster for sculptures to illustrate the destruction of materialistic products.

Following the lead of Marcel Duchamp's (b. 1887 – d. 1968) early Dadaist explorations of the parameters for art and critique of its institutions, Oldenburg's The Store was based on a visual philosophy that was intended to lead society out
of its current repressive existence into a more open and diverse discussion about discourse and form. The work often used modern materials and images from pop culture in its attempt to challenge traditional sets of aesthetics and artistic values.

The idea to display art outside of a gallery clearly derived from Duchamp, who posited that the object's reference, rather than the object or the artist, often decides its artistic value. In 1913, Duchamp demonstrated how everyday objects could become art by combining a bicycle wheel and a stool in *The Bicycle Wheel* (Figure 22). Conceptually, this piece resembles Oldenburg's *Fried Egg in Pan* (1961) (Figure 23), which uses a store-bought frying pan to which the artist added white plaster and muslin with a dab of yellow to resemble a fried egg. The assisted readymade combined the store bought frying pan, similar to Duchamp's purchase of the bicycle wheel and stool, but differed from Duchamp as it showed the artist's hand. A similar case can be made for many of the other store pieces that are almost unidentifiable until given a title that explains the object and identifies it as a work of art. Connections to Duchamp run through other aspects of *The Store* as well. In the 1940s, Duchamp focused his attention on the commercial aspects of art institutions and created the *Boîte-en-Valise* (Box in a Suitcase) (Figure 24). Duchamp created new commercially produced versions of this portable museum project in New York during the 1950s and 1960s, traveling around with multiples of this work that likely influenced Oldenburg.
also looking for a new way to display art, remarked that “[art works are]
displayed in galleries, but that is not the place for them.”[62] The physical
properties of the “products” on display were altered, which turned The Store into a
performative institutional critique, defined as art that “exposes the structures and
logic of museums and art galleries.”[63] Doing this, Oldenburg intended to force
viewers to re-contextualize as art objects the material items that are part of
everyday consumerism.

Out of Neo-Dada arose Pop, the commercially explosive movement that
appropriated advertisements and popular imagery into works geared toward an art
and a mass-market audience. Andy Warhol (b. 1928 – d. 1987), whose popularity
in both the mainstream and art world was on the rise as Oldenburg presented The
Store, similarly commented on the commercial nature of art production. Turning
his studio into a “factory,” Warhol copied ordinary artistic production through an
assembly line structure of assistants who created his work. Oldenburg’s early
interest in institutional critique prompted him to compare the art market to
ordinary production that produced goods for commercial value.[64] Oldenburg tried
to fight against the consumerism that Warhol embraced in the art world, and while
Oldenburg saw the “factory” as standing in for the “art market,” Warhol turned it
into a concept that became a part of his artistic practice.
Uncovering Commercialism Inside the Gallery

For Oldenburg, an artist store represented a way to make art outside an elitist value system: “Museum in [bourgeois] concept equals store in mine.” The artist wanted to forgo the “commercialism and vanity of the long-prepared show” in favor of a new form that would present a response to the growing commercialism of the New York gallery scene. Oldenburg believed that both galleries and museums treat art objects as rarefied commodity items without addressing the matter of commercialism outright. Expanding on this notion, Oldenburg wrote in Store Days that “the bourgeois scheme is that [the bourgeois] wish to be disturbed from time to time, they like that, but then they envelop you, and that little bit is over, and they are ready for the next.” Oldenburg believed that the art world often looked for something different, but once it discovered an artist and commodified his/her work, it would move on to the next new thing. He specifically wanted to expose the materialistic quality of art presented in a gallery or museum atmosphere that was similar to a commercial retail setting. Following Duchamp's notion of art often claimed as important, valuable and artistically relevant because it is shown in a gallery or museum; by selling art as commodity, Oldenburg was suggesting that, in a materialistic 1960s society, the art world commodified artists through gallery display and the fetishization of art objects. By the 1960s, consumer values had come to dominate both the American
economy and culture, defining the “American Dream” in financial terms based on income and access to commodities. Mass marketing and consumerism encouraged this materialistic viewpoint and provided pop cultural products as well as marketable artists that brought about a material conformity. Dime-stores, meanwhile, were so far removed from the elite world that Oldenburg believed *The Store* would create an environment for his work to be safe from the power of bourgeois subversion.

Moreover, Oldenburg believed that, outside a gallery or museum setting, his sculptures could find an audience not normally exposed to “high art” that would look at them for more than their monetary value. In this way, he hoped to escape the inflated pricing that galleries attached to art, and to reexamine what and how art is presented in the art world. Taking art out of the gallery and into a non-gallery location, which blended into its surrounding and opened its doors to the general public, allowed Oldenburg to explore the commodifying effects of artist branding. However, he ignored the local community with a lack of advertising and explanation for *The Store*, and the project was seen mostly by other artists, collectors, and dealers. The artist's statement for the previous Martha Jackson exhibition included a long list of desired objectives, including the creation of art that “does something other than sit on its ass in a museum.” Once a work was in a museum or gallery, it acted as an advertisement for the artist
similar to a logo for a large corporation. The work became part of the artist's image, branding him or her to the objects and creating a specific commodity that the institution could market.

Oldenburg believed that by displaying sculptures in a mock gallery setting in *The Store* and selling them as obvious commodity items, he would create an anti-museum and anti-pedestal setting. In fact, the result was the opposite. *The Store*, much like gallery exhibitions, highlighted the individual sculptures by placing them on pedestals and hanging them as in a gallery space. Following the gallery structure, but using a retail setting and location, provided the arena for Oldenburg's work to be recognized and appreciated by the general public. Unfortunately, the conceptual nature of the project most likely made it difficult for people outside of the art world to appreciate his work because no explanation was given inside the space. *The Store*, however, provided a model for future artists to expand into pop culture. Oldenburg also ensured that, like constantly stocked retail stores or galleries, his store was constantly filled with new work. All three entities, galleries, retail stores, and *The Store*, had a storeroom that was filled with new merchandise to refill the main space so that there were always enough products for customers to buy. This was meant to invoke a comparison between factories and the art market, which Oldenburg saw as also producing goods for profit. But rather than draw attention to the commodification of new artists for
the sake of revenue, Oldenburg revealed that he was able to quickly produce new work in the studio space of *The Store*, a desirable quality for art dealers when exhibiting an artist's work.

Oldenburg employed several advertising techniques in *The Store* as a means to illuminate the tactics used by sellers of both commercial goods and gallery art, which drew the attention of art collectors and commercial galleries. Oldenburg believed that people were inundated with so many advertisements for commercial products that the glimpses of images that remained in their memories caused them to purchase the merchandise later. *The Store* was intended to reflect this fragmented view of the world: the glass store window of the once-empty storefront became a lens for passersby and a model for examining the materialistic concerns of the 1960s. Oldenburg remarked that “the store windows I see now serve as models for clusters – eye-clusters – formal model for a kind of visual experience: fragmentation, simultaneousness, superimposition, which I wish to recreate in clusters.”

In Oldenburg's view, these “eye clusters,” or brief glances of the world, formed fragmented images that piled up endlessly in people's minds. Some of the sculptures, specifically those that depicted brand names like Pepsi-Cola and 7-Up, were intended to remind customers of promotional advertisements in window displays, which created the same effect for passersby as other retail stores. Without understanding Oldenburg's artistic goals,
pedestrians most likely received the same information and the same desire to purchase products as they did through “real” advertisements; as a result, the fractured works acted on equal par with the advertisements throughout the city.

In order to draw customers past the window display, Oldenburg used a technique popular in many retail stores: handing out free samples to increase the customer base and generate sales. During the opening weeks of The Store, the artist handed out 120 pieces of Candy Bar (1961) (Figure 25) to his friends and patrons, such as the artist Dennis Hopper. Lined up on a candy counter in a corner of The Store, the creation of multiple editions of one product evoked a traditional retail atmosphere in which customers could select their desired product. These performance-based interactions with customers and friends may have been studies for later Happenings, such as Something Purchased (1962) and A Lecture to the Salesman (1962), but were too scripted to be actual Happenings.

Unlike identical mass-produced factory products, Oldenburg's sculptures were unique and thus unable to be duplicated exactly. In this way, Oldenburg created limited editions of his art and intended to inspire the desire to collect the complete candy counter set. Collectors, such as Count Giuseppe Panza di Biumo did purchase works that were part of a pastry series in The Store, although not part of a multiples group. In addition, The Store's existence during the commercial Christmas season was employed by Oldenburg with unintentional success.
garnering more attention to *The Store* as a commercial space. Due to the artist's satisfaction with *The Store*, he extended the project, originally intended to last only through the end of December, for a second month.

Oldenburg employed another popular sales technique of not pricing work with round numbers, typically used by galleries, so items appeared less expensive. Examples of this pricing are $399.95 for *Red Pie* (1961), $279.89 for *Oranges* (1961), $299.95 for *Blouse*, and $129.99 for *Ties*. Oldenburg's goal was to use familiar commercial techniques to question the nature of advertising and a consumer culture that aimed to convince buyers that material goods are essential to their happiness. Here again, the conceptual distinction between a real store and an artist's critique or such proved too thin; in a 1962 *Arts Journal* article, art critic Sidney Tillim described *The Store* as “a combination of neighborhood free enterprise and Sears and Roebuck” because Oldenburg's store was virtually indistinguishable from regular retail stores at first glance and operation. In fact, the pricing techniques that worked so well in consumer culture also worked in *The Store*, ultimately catching the eye of gallery directors and art collectors, such as Count Giuseppe Panza di Biumo who commissioned the artist to create works specifically for him. In a 1985 interview with art historian Benjamin Buchloh, Oldenburg recalled: “people came down and bought things at absurd prices. They bought a loaf of bread for ninety-nine dollars...Instead of paying a normal price
for a loaf of bread, they would pay ninety-nine dollars for it.” Although *The Store* was not financially successful, for a no-name artist, breaking even was an accomplishment. In addition, it was successful in presenting a new setting, closer to retail stores, for artists to display their art and maintain control over the products.  

Despite Oldenburg’s attempts to critique art institutions as commercial entities, *The Store* garnered the attention of the commercial Green Gallery, and Oldenburg’s sculptures eventually became valuable objects in themselves. Ultimately, *The Store* took on the appearance of a gallery, displaying works of art on pedestals, with titles and prices for each work, and contributed to the rise of Oldenburg as an innovative contemporary artist. Newspapers like *The New York Times* included advertisements for *The Store*’s incarnation at the Green Gallery and the earlier 1961 Martha Jackson Gallery exhibition. The fact that announcements for *The Store* were limited to the Green Gallery exhibition demonstrates that until the objects in *The Store* were placed in a commercial gallery with and treated as commodity items, they were relatively unknown except to a few art collectors, like Count Giuseppe Panza di Biumo, but he bought almost all of the work from the Green Gallery exhibition.
Afterlife of The Store

The Store ceased operations as an actual functioning store on January 31, 1962. After its closing, Oldenburg used the space as a studio while preparing for the next showing of objects. From September 24 to October 20, 1962, the uptown Green Gallery at 15 West 57th Street held an exhibition, titled Claes Oldenburg, which presented another version of The Store (Figure 26). In addition to Oldenburg, the Green Gallery was known for displaying the work of such artists as Tom Wesselmann, Dan Flavin, James Rosenquist, Donald Judd, and Robert Morris. The Green Gallery and its director Richard Bellamy assisted Oldenburg with The Store at 107 East 2nd Street by paying half of his expenses in exchange for a sales commission. The Green Gallery solo exhibition was a pivotal point in Oldenburg's career because it received several reviews and launched the artist into the museum world as an important contemporary artist. The exhibition displayed the unsold sculptures from The Store in addition to several vastly enlarged pieces created specifically for the occasion. Oldenburg had developed soft canvas props for some of the Happenings that took place in The Store's Ray Gun Theater and, with the sewing help of his wife Patti Mucha; he presented soft sculptures that built upon the idea of the fetishized commonplace item. Included in the Green Gallery exhibition was a 10-foot-long ice-cream cone, Floor Cake (1962) (Figure 27), Floor Cone (1962) (Figure 28), and Floor Burger (1962)
made from synthetic polymer paint on canvas and filled with foam rubber and cardboard boxes, these sculptures were extremely soft and malleable.\textsuperscript{86} To create this pliable effect, Oldenburg first had to create canvas covers for these sewn-object paintings, and then paint their surfaces. \textit{Floor Cake}, for example, had five layers of sewn-and-painted canvas to allow for the pull of gravity to shape the piece.\textsuperscript{87} Unlike \textit{The Store}, the Green Gallery exhibition was not intended to make a statement on galleries or art presentation. In fact, the format of the exhibition was very traditional compared to Oldenburg's previous installations. Individual sculptures were hung on walls or positioned on the floor so that they were identifiable as separate objects rather than parts of a cohesive environment. The individualization of objects allowed for them to be viewed purely based on aesthetics and monetary worth. As Carter Ratcliff points out in his 1988 article, “The Marriage of Art and Money,” art such as Oldenburg's becomes irresistibly consumable precisely because it makes the most fuss about not bending to the commercial or art market.\textsuperscript{88} In effect, by illustrating the commodified status of art through the very structure of the gallery and the store that Oldenburg was critiquing, \textit{The Store} helped to promote the commercialization of art. As art collectors and institutions began to take an interest in Oldenburg's work prices rose and the objects apparently were valued specifically for their anti-commercial nature.
In September 1969, MoMA opened a two-month exhibition, also entitled *Claes Oldenburg*, which included 116 three-dimensional sculptures and over 100 of the artist's drawings. Curated by Alicia Legg, the exhibition was divided into different themed environments that Oldenburg had created before 1969: *The Street*, *The Store*, and *The Home*. *The Home* environment was first constructed in 1963 in Los Angeles and depicted objects that reflected the personal and intimate nature of home. One example is the *Bedroom Ensemble* (Figure 30), a room-size tableau based on a motel, with bed, chair, dresser and night tables constructed of wood.\(^9^9\) Works from *The Store* were displayed on the third floor along with signs and advertisements for the storefront. Also included in *The Store*-themed area were soft sculptures, including *Floor Cone* and *Floor Burger*, created for the 1962 Green Gallery exhibition. Including Oldenburg's sculptures in the museum exhibition, several of which the institution already owned, increased the monetary value of the artist's work and made a statement that the objects were fine art approved by the museum.\(^9^0\) Moreover, MoMA failed to adequately address *The Store*’s critique of the art world, which could have been accomplished by contextualizing the objects and including the artist's writings. They did, however, aid in the commercialization of the artist by turning *The Store* into more of a retail shop than performance piece by displaying the works in a gallery setting as they were shown in Green Gallery. Aside from MoCA's immense Panza Collection,
MoMA currently owns the largest number of advertisements, drawings, and objects from *The Store*, which the institution began collecting when *The Store* originally opened in 1961. Through acquisitions and generous donations over the years, the museum's collection of Oldenburg's store pieces has grown to a dozen or more pieces.

More recently, in November 2003 the Peter Freeman Gallery in Chelsea held an exhibition, titled *Claes Oldenburg: Works from The Store, 1961* (Figure 31), which displayed eight sculptures from the original 1961 location. Soon after *The Store* closed, Oldenburg's items, displayed inside a gallery and resold at auction, were sold for a small fortune. *Yellow Girl's Dress*, originally for sale at *The Store* for $249.99 was purchased from the Peter Freeman Gallery and sold in 2008 at Sotheby's for $1.72 million. The sculpture, no longer part of its original context, has been purchased by several different gallery owners and collectors over the years, only to be resold again for a higher price. This exhibition supported Oldenburg's belief that once an art object is placed in the setting of a gallery, and positioned as art, it is looked at only for its monetary value. In fact, Roberta Smith's review of the exhibition in the *New York Times* discusses Oldenburg's technique and the detailing of the individual pieces without mentioning the history behind *The Store* itself. The eight works were placed in a stark white gallery; one relief work was hung on each of the four large walls.
giving the impression that it was floating in space and unconnected to anything else. A wooden display case was positioned in the middle of the gallery with a free-standing work, *Cash Register* (1961), placed on top; inside the display case rested the other three smaller store pieces (Figure 32). This exhibition was the only one to date that has focused exclusively on *The Store* items. Other museums and galleries have included some pieces as part of group shows about Pop Art or focus exhibitions on Oldenburg's oeuvre, but have not focused solely on *The Store* as part of the artist practice or examined the commercialization of the artist that resulted from the artist's use of a store.\(^98\)

Most recently, the Whitney Museum of American Art presented a retrospective exhibition titled *Claes Oldenburg: Early Sculpture, Drawings, and Happenings Films*. Open from May 7 to September 6 in 2009, the exhibition mainly focused on Oldenburg's soft forms and Happenings. According to Karen Rosenberg's *New York Times* review, “At the Whitney, A Low-Cost Show Reinflates a Big Bag,” the museum only set aside a small room devoted to art and mementos from *The Store* (Figure 33).\(^99\) Similar to the Peter Freeman exhibition, the Whitney created an atmosphere that was exactly what Oldenburg was fighting against: each item was looked at as a work of art and valued as such, and any critique of the art market was forgotten. Rosenberg further describes the room as a sparse and serialized exhibition of Oldenburg's store that mimicked the
atmosphere of an upscale boutique rather than a run-down bodega. Framed posters from *The Store* were hung on the wall over low glass display cases that housed store objects in a manner similar to a department store, unintentionally presenting Oldenburg's work as artist products sold in a commercial setting.

In 1961, Oldenburg used *The Store* in an attempt to break away from the art market, which he believed treated artists and their work as just another commodity item to be bought and sold. Oldenburg's *The Store* followed the structure of commercial galleries and retail stores, but sold deformed commonplace objects in an attempt to reveal societal over-consumption and over-pricing within the art market. By opening a business and displaying his art outside of a conventional gallery setting, Oldenburg created a template for other artists. However, in an ironic twist of fate, Oldenburg's anti-commercial work launched him into a successful career because the art world was drawn to the controversial message of his work. As the artist gained attention, he changed his work to become less crude and more marketable, increasing the value of all of his work. In effect, he turned *The Store* and his other works into the very commodity items that he was struggling so hard to expose as flawed in the art world.
Chapter 2: Pop 'til You Drop

“If it was about money, I could have been the most successful commercial designer and illustrator in the world.” – Keith Haring

“Business art is the step that comes after Art.” – Andy Warhol

Twenty-five years after The Store closed its doors, Keith Haring's SoHo-based Pop-Shop (1986-2005) built upon Claes Oldenburg's desire to take art out of the gallery. However, while Oldenburg's store displayed decayed versions of commercial products, Haring used mass-market items to appeal to the general public in an idealistic attempt to democratize art, ultimately leading to a branded and commercial store. As part of a changing art world facing market inflation and a deepening rift between high and low art, the art project turned commercial venture of the Pop-Shop (Figure 34) emerged as an effort to retain public interest by selling affordable, mass-produced pins, T-shirts, and artist memorabilia. Haring (b. 1958 – d. 1990) intentionally created a store that he knew would be criticized as commercial, but could nonetheless be used as an activist tool to undermine the gallery and museum paradigm by making art accessible and affordable. While Haring thought of the Pop-Shop as the 1980s version of Oldenburg's The Store and an art project that would counteract the elitism of the art world, he inadvertently created an outlet for the commodification of art through mass-market means. This chapter will explore the evolution of Haring's
shop from idealistic art concept to functional retail store that paved the way for boutique-styled stores like the ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store.

**Pop-Shop in New York**

The *Pop-Shop* was Haring's all-in-one solution to several issues. The most important idea behind the *Pop-Shop* was that the rising market values of his work prevented total accessibility to his work. In addition, the continuous instances of counterfeiting forced Haring to create a way to control his images. Also, the mistreatment of the graffiti drawings that had launched his career played a part in the opening of the shop. Julia Gruen, Haring's studio manager for six years and the current executive director of the Keith Haring Foundation, remembered Haring impulsively deciding “let's have a store and let's just put stuff on the shelves and I'll [Haring] just design everything.” In 1986, Haring opened the *Pop-Shop* on 292 Lafayette Street as a statement that his work was not only “reserved for those in the art world, and/or those who would pay for it, that could understand it but for people in the popular culture as well.”

A black and white photograph taken by Charles Dolfi-Michels in 1986 represents the image of the *Pop-Shop* and was used whenever the shop was discussed in the press (Figure 35). The horizontal photograph depicts the artist in the center of the *Pop-Shop* leaning against a large column, staring directly into the
camera with his arms crossed. Immediately visible is how Haring's design for the *Pop-Shop* set it apart from other retail stores: the walls, floors, and ceiling were painted with the artist's signature black and white bold designs, creating a monochrome, graffiti-like appearance (Figure 36). The repetition of patterns on the walls, floor, ceiling, and columns created an all-encompassing and slightly dizzying effect (Figure 37). Similar to specialty boutique stores, the *Pop-Shop* was designed to use the smallest amount of space in the most effective manner; to this end, only one of each product was displayed inside the shop. This technique also gave the appearance that, similar to a gallery exhibition, the pieces shown inside the *Pop-Shop* were one-of-a-kind works unique to the space. Hanging T-shirts and sweatshirts almost completely covered several walls such that each was clearly visible; this hanging style added another element of design to the already painted walls. The clothing prints were simple versions of Haring's artwork, from which iconic images were isolated and placed on the center of each garment. For example, a white sweatshirt on the wall behind and to the left of Haring in Dolfi-Michels's photograph depicts the Radiant Baby, an early image of a crawling baby with short, straight lines radiating outward from its body (Figure 38). Also visible behind the artist are both a long-sleeved and short-sleeved version of the Three-Eyed Man: a smiling mouth with a small curved nose and three identical eyes in a row staring out from a square monochromatic face.
Glass display cases mounted on the walls held pins, patches, and other products with the same iconic images in a variety of colors, each with specific identification codes, which were also used in the *Pop-Shop* catalog (Figure 39). The curved wall to the left of Haring in the photograph was positioned at the rear of the shop, with two small, raised windows through which customers could order and receive merchandise. In the photograph, two employees can be seen through a window, with merchandise stacked neatly on shelves behind them. Above the window in the store, though not visible in the photograph, a brilliant blue and yellow neon star flashed the words “Pop-Shop” throughout the business day (Figure 40). Although the design of Haring's *Pop-Shop* was a unique, hand-painted, architectural environment, the display and the sale of the merchandise was like that of fast food restaurants. Once a customer made a selection, he or she would be given a clip board and a menu-like ordering sheet and would deliver his or her selections to this window. This concept of “fast food or fast art” continued at a second, smaller window where the customer would pick up his or her purchases from another employee. While fast food restaurants like McDonald's and White Castle had existed since the 1930s and drive-throughs since the 1950s, double drive-throughs, which are ubiquitous today, were not common until the 1980s. The double window used in the *Pop-Shop* not only alluded to the increasingly fast-paced lifestyle of the 1980s, but also used the ultimate symbol of
convenience, the drive-through window to make that statement. It also succeeded in creating a connection to an aspect of pop culture that many customers felt comfortable with and could easily understand.

**From the Subway to the Gallery**

In 1980 Haring sketched his first chalk graffiti drawings on the black paper of unused subway wall advertisements. Haring first began drawing in the subway by altering a November Chardón Jeans advertisement depicting a blond-haired woman grabbing a man's jean-clad rear end. The artist covered up the “C” so that the ad read hardón, making the link between sex and advertising more apparent (Figure 41); he proceeded to travel around the subway system changing many of the Chardón Jeans advertisements until other people followed. The next month, Haring took advantage of Christmas advertising, similar to Oldenburg, and added his own drawings to a Johnny Walker liquor advertisement; the artist added a row of crawling radiant babies in the snow-filled area of the ad and incorporated a spaceship beaming up the identical babies below. The two holiday advertisements were a perfect opportunity for the artist to illustrate the connection between the power of advertisements as an incentive to purchase goods, regardless of need. These two altered advertisements inspired Haring to continue this practice of taking over advertisements. Within that same month,
Haring spotted an empty black panel of matte paper, the standard in the 1980s to cover up old advertisements, and decided to create a clean simple drawing with white chalk. Rather than sign his name, since technically the drawings were graffiti, Haring used the image of the radiant baby as his tag.\textsuperscript{114}

Over the next four years, from 1980 to 1984, Haring created hundreds of drawings in the subway system as a type of public performance. The artist sometimes completed as many as forty drawings per day, and New York commuters soon became familiar with Haring's specific images, like the Radiant Baby (circa 1980) (Figure 42), Three-Eyed Man (circa 1981) (Figure 43), the Running Figure (circa 1980) (Figure 44), and the Barking Dog (circa 1980) (Figure 45).\textsuperscript{115} Many people on their way to work would stop to watch the artist as he drew, and Haring described the subway as a laboratory for working out his ideas and experimenting with his simple lines.\textsuperscript{116} To ensure that commuters recognized the radiant baby as his signature icon, Haring created thousands of small white pins depicting a black radiant baby, which he passed out to commuters who stopped to watch him work. This early form of merchandising alerted others to Haring's work and drawing style, and was intended to create a desire for his products. Starting around 1980, Haring also began to screen-print his images onto T-shirts that he would wear while drawing in the subway, to brand himself as the artist.
Haring soon began to draw in as many subway stations as possible, and his simple images told a series of narratives for commuters to view from the moving trains. The lifespan of each work was only the few weeks until a new advertisement was posted, but this meant that Haring could develop narratives with the constantly changing backdrops. Often the ideas Haring explored in his subway art would develop in his studio into more complex work that could be sold in galleries as fine art.\textsuperscript{117}

In 1982, Tony Shafrazi Gallery held Haring's first solo exhibition at an opening event that included CBS news coverage, appearances by art celebrities Roy Lichtenstein (b. 1923 – d. 1997) and Robert Rauschenberg (b. 1925 – d. 2008), and models serving trays of Haring's favorite “All-American drink,” Coca-Cola in bottles.\textsuperscript{118} Prior to the exhibition's opening, Dan Rather had interviewed Haring and filmed him creating a large painting for the gallery; the national broadcast resulted in a nearly sold-out show and brought Haring further into the public eye. Because the radiant baby buttons had proven so popular among subway commuters, guests at the exhibition were given stickers of the three-eyed man, another branded Haring icon. Like the earlier pins, the stickers were mass-produced advertisements for Haring's art that would later become valuable collector items.

In the years that followed the Tony Shafrazi exhibition, graffiti art caught
the attention of galleries and art dealers. The trend incorporated spray and tagging techniques taken from the subway trains as well as more subtle influences from street style such as in themes and attitude. Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat (b. 1960 – d. 1988), both well known for their involvement with graffiti, supported the Fun Gallery, the first graffiti-based gallery in the East Village. The space, run by Patti Astor (b. 1970), presented revolving graffiti-inspired exhibitions and was the location of Haring's first meeting with Andy Warhol (b. 1928 – d. 1987). While Warhol was not involved in the Fun Gallery as more than a collector and friend, the friendship and collaboration between Warhol and Haring was important to future developments, such as introducing Haring to celebrities like Dolly Parton, Cher, and Grace Jones, who Haring used in a 1985 project at Paradise Garage in which he painted her body with his designs. Warhol encouraged Haring to pursue many of his more commercial aspirations, the Pop-Shop included. A photograph from 1984 shows about twenty people, including Warhol, who worked with Haring on the Fun Gallery (Figure 46). In the image, everyone is wearing a different Haring-designed shirt; this arrangement of everyday people (save for Warhol and Haring), all wearing Haring-designed garments paired with their personal apparel, was later used in the Pop-Shop advertisements as a way to entice the general public to buy the merchandise. T-shirts that Haring wore in photographs soon began appearing all over the city.
Haring screen-printed his designs in a multitude of colors on T-shirts and sweatshirts and handed them out to his friends as a form of free advertisement in New York.

Haring's connection with the general public was very different from that of Oldenburg, who only connected with an avant-garde audience. Haring, unlike Oldenburg, had a lower-class background and felt the need to make art accessible to both the lower and upper classes. When Haring moved to New York in 1978, his subway drawings immediately gained him notoriety among the general public that frequented the subway system, and his willingness to talk to everyone and explain his processes changed the way that the common man viewed artists.

In his personal journal, a collection of his inner-most thoughts published posthumously as the *Keith Haring Journals*, Haring described his view of the role of an artist: “It's about understanding not only the works, but the world we live in and the times we live in and being a kind of mirror.” Haring spoke openly about his views on the art world and consumer industry in a 1989 *Rolling Stone Magazine* interview conducted by David Sheff. In the interview, Haring explained that, as his work left the pop culture realm of graffiti, it became too expensive for regular people to purchase. As a result of the 1980s economic structure, the growing inaccessibility of Haring's work created a disconnect between those who enjoyed the art on subway walls and the collectors who
purchased his work for thousands of dollars in galleries. By 1984, the chasm between the two worlds had started to widen as news of the artist’s fame and the rising prices of his works led to the widespread theft of Haring's drawing from subway walls. In the Rolling Stone interview, the artist recalled instances when he would go down to draw in the subway, only to find every piece stolen two hours later. Later, those same stolen subway drawings would inevitably turn up for sale in galleries and auction houses and are still selling at Christie's, Leclere, and private art brokers for $10,000 to $70,000 each. It was then that Haring began to realize that he could use his art and the concept of the Pop-Shop to refute the art world's differentiation between high and low art and make the statement that art is for everyone. Bridging this divide was particularly important to Haring, whose subway graffiti work had been absorbed and embraced by the general public before the art world even took notice of him.

Haring's Pop-Shop in Context

Like Haring's statement for art's accessibility at the Pop-Shop, many artists of the 1980s banded together in resistance to the manipulation of the art market, forming groups to create change through art. These cooperative, collective, communal projects often took the form of temporary exhibitions in abandoned buildings or events organized with local children or other communities not
represented by the art world. Haring may have been inspired to work with youth groups by the artist Tim Rollins and his group of at-risk students, who called themselves K.O.S. (Kids of Survival). In 1984, Rollins launched an “Art and Knowledge” workshop in the South Bronx, working with children and teenagers to create work seen as political allegories. Haring, likewise, worked with organizations like CityKids to access a similar demographic. In addition, when the Pop-Shop opened, Haring planned for the shop to act as a space for kids from the Bronx to gather and learn about art.

Group Material (1979-1996), Colab (1978-1986), and Gran Fury (1988-1994) were perhaps best known for their desire to maintain control over their work and oppose the demands of the art market, similar in philosophical ideas to the Pop-Shop but more aggressive in actuality. Group Material produced exhibitions out of a storefront space in the East Village that revolved around themes such as cultural activism, alienation, politics and consumption. Colab artists, on a similar note, decided to stage their own exhibitions and various members curated group shows in their studios or other temporary sites, in order to control their own work. While Group Material and several other collectives used temporary storefronts, the result was different from Haring's Pop-Shop. Although all of these storefront projects displayed art and no one, not even Haring, made money on the ventures, the Pop-Shop was incorporated as a
commercial enterprise. In addition, Haring's store sold mass-produced objects that had previously been given away for free on the street and at gallery openings, and which, aside from a few works produced for AIDS awareness, were created for profit. Group Material and Colab opened temporary storefront spaces as exhibition spaces to ensure that their message of cultural activism was visible, while Haring used the storefront to open a retail store and manufacture goods.

Gran Fury was more focused as an activist collective that created a number of works representing their anger toward the AIDS pandemic and the government's lack of action to inform the public or find a cure. Each collective had a core group of artists but remained open for others to join. This collaborative effort among artists, such as Jenny Holtzer and Kiki Smith who were both members of Colab, was specific to the 1980s' desire for art activism. Other collectives specifically focused their art on AIDS awareness such as Little Elvis, Testing the Limits, Gang, and Fierce Pussy. Appropriating pop cultural imagery, Group Material and Gran Fury employed a variety of different mediums to generate publicity and focus attention on AIDS. In 1989, Group Material created the *AIDS Timeline* at the University Art Museum in Berkeley that illustrated the governmental response to the syndrome (Figure 47). Doug Ashford, a member of the collective, explains that they “were always trying to get the museum to represent a larger, more diverse vision of culture, asking 'who makes
it, where is it, how does it get constituted?" 132

While not necessarily part of an art collective, Haring, Basquiat, and Kenny Scharf (1958), a friend, artist, and fellow classmate of Haring's at the School of Visual Arts, worked together on projects like the Fun Gallery, as part of the graffiti arts movement starting in the early 1980s. Haring frequently worked with artists involved in the graffiti scene and even collaborated on projects with them. Sociopolitically, the Fun Gallery bears more similarities to other collaborative groups of the 1980s than did the Pop-Shop. The group-organized gallery created a space for often unknown graffiti artists to exhibit their art and collaborate with established artists like Haring and Basquiat. For instance, Haring collaborated on many three-dimensional works with a graffiti artist named LA II (Angel Ortiz) who combined his tag and Haring's abstract shapes.133 These collaborations with LA II, along those at the Fun Gallery, brought attention to an overlooked area of the art scene while also bringing notoriety and success to Haring.

This discourse among art collectives during the 1980s helped fuel Haring's desire to create the Pop-Shop as an alternative space. The Pop-Shop incorporated aspects from several collaborative groups, such as AIDS activism and working with children. Haring created several products, such as a series of condom button-boxes, which he sold in the shop to raise money for AIDS awareness, but his most
vocal activism was separate from these commercial ventures. The same can be said for Haring's involvement with many youth organizations. While Haring did host free workshops at the *Pop-Shop*, he worked even more outside of the space with organizations like CityKids to put up murals around the city. Thus, the *Pop-Shop* was a separate entity from most of Haring's activist work and was more like the epicenter for his commercial, mass-produced art. Even though the *Pop-Shop* was created to make his art more affordable, Haring's store was still a store.

**Art in a Material World: Critical Analysis**

With Haring's commercial and popular success came extensive travel and overseas exhibitions. During these trips, the artist's iconic images and his democratic impulse to draw on everything led to the mass production of counterfeit Haring works. Concurrently, imitation merchandise and prints began appearing before the real products were even produced for sale.\(^{134}\) Haring's practice of giving away his branded T-shirts, buttons, and stickers to friends and exhibition guests had commodified those products and created a real market demand for them.\(^{135}\)

Haring thought of his shop as an art project rather than a retail store, one that could counteract the elitism of the art world by cutting out the middle man and bringing culture directly to the masses.\(^{136}\) At the same time, he wanted to
maintain complete control of his imagery, even as its reach spread across the
globe. As early as 1983, Haring had begun thinking about the merchandising
potential of his art. The artist had been commissioned to produce advertisements
for Absolut vodka and watch designs for Swatch, and he had seen firsthand the
success, financial and otherwise, of his images. As Julia Gruen states:

In retrospect it's difficult to return back to that moment to
ccontextualize where his thinking was coming from but [the Pop-
Shop] was set up to control his imagery. This is something that I
know first-hand from working by him for many years is that yes
he was young, yes he was spontaneous, yes he had good will and
generosity and desire to connect with people through his art, but
he was also pragmatic and straightforward with people about his
art. At the end of the day, while he did not make profit on the Pop-
Shop, he did not want other people to make a profit on his
images.137

Rather than continue traveling the world and seeing imitators and opportunists co-
opting his images, Haring wanted to control his work and its distribution. It was
important to him that only authentic work circulate and that others not receive
profit or credit for counterfeiting his work; he felt that the Pop-Shop was the
setting to accomplish all of these goals.138 If the real products were available in a
store, Haring believed that the difference between the forgeries and authentic
merchandise would be clear, thereby eliminating a demand for counterfeits.

Haring believed that, in order for his work to remain accessible, the barrier
between high and low art needed to be broken, and the Pop-Shop was his way of
removing the art world from the equation. Although Haring continued to show work in galleries, he did not want galleries and museums to be the sole arbiters of culture who took what they wanted from artists and gave mass-produced versions to the general public. High art eventually trickled down to the masses in the form of Piet Mondrian prints on high-heeled shoes, Andy Warhol prints on umbrellas, or Jackson Pollock themed window displays – originally deemed shocking and new. Haring, however, believed that his work originated in popular culture and therefore should exist there and in more elite art institutions simultaneously.  

Furthermore, Haring believed that the art world generally chose to ignore artists' origins and instead claimed each artist as a new discovery. His engagement with the mass media and mass market was therefore meant not only to comment on popular culture but to position him simultaneously in both mass-media culture and the art world, in effect, doubling his celebrity status.

Twenty-five years after The Store, Haring's Pop-Shop attempted to implement Oldenburg's goal of taking art out of the gallery, using pop-culture items to appeal to mass audiences. Although Haring had exhibited and sold his work in galleries, art fairs, and museums, he believed that the art market's success was dependent upon the elitism of its bourgeois rules and high prices. “There isn't much difference between the people I have to deal with in the art market or in the commercial world,” Haring wrote in his journal. “Once the artwork becomes a
'product' or a 'commodity' the compromising position is basically the same.\textsuperscript{141}

Commercialism in a gallery setting is often acceptable, according to Haring and
New York Times reviewer Michael Kimmelman, but inside the white walls of a
gallery, art is considered sacred and often viewed as untainted by
commercialism.\textsuperscript{142} Brian O'Doherty, whose revolutionary 1976 book, Inside the
White Cube, was most likely known to Haring, from his time as a student at the
School of Visual Arts, examined the assumptions on which the modern museum
and gallery were based, comparing the gallery to a medieval church that keeps the
outside world from intruding upon the decontextualized art inside.\textsuperscript{143} Haring no
doubt read O'Doherty's other concept of the gallery space as a white cube and
chose to counteract this idea with the busy designs painted on the walls of the
Pop-Shop. The contrast between a space displaying art and the disruption of the
space by the artist recalls the cluttered atmosphere of Oldenburg's The Store.
Positioned outside of the gallery neighborhood and not labeled or priced as a
gallery, the Pop-Shop was open to the general public in a way that was impossible
or impractical for a commercial gallery. The products were reasonably priced, did
not claim to be fine art, and appealed to the desires of a consumer culture.

Despite philosophical similarities between the Pop-Shop and Oldenburg's
The Store, the two projects varied drastically in their approach to mass-produced
goods and mass-market accessibility. Haring wanted to create a truly accessible
atmosphere, free of financial concerns for people who wanted to collect art.

Employees were all treated well, with exceptional benefits and high wages for a retail store. Unlike *The Store*, which had been the vehicle for an artistic critique on commercialism, Haring's store did have a clear commercial purpose, albeit one driven by the artist's mission: art for everyone. Matthew Barolo, current operations manager at the Keith Haring Foundation, first began frequenting the *Pop-Shop* in 1986 and started working at the store in 1991. Barolo explained that, “in retrospect...I look back at the *Pop-Shop* and it never made a profit. The prices were always really low. Working on this end and seeing the other side, we didn't even do 100% markup.” The low markup of twenty dollar T-shirts and fifty cent pins allowed Haring to draw in a larger customer base and ensure that more of his images circulated throughout New York City. The *Pop-Shop* was therefore designed to sell affordable items with Haring prints as a way to bridge the gap between the elite art world and mass market demands. It allowed consumers products in their respective price range created by the same artist with similar characters and narratives.

The 1980s was a decade of Reaganomics-driven consumption, when young artists became celebrities and the art world promoted inflating prices, and stood out as a time in contemporary art history when many artists knowingly fueled consumerism but nevertheless embraced their role to interpret, reflect, and
transform cultural information. Both a commercial technique for promoting his brand name and an instance of social activism, the Pop-Shop was Haring's medium for reaching people outside the educated art world elite. The Pop-Shop was set up in the then-low-rent neighborhood of SoHo in order to reach the artists in the East Village and CBGB's punk rockers, the skaters that frequented Washington Square Park, neighborhood graffiti artists, and anyone else comfortable outside of a traditional gallery setting. The artists and casual passersby who flocked to SoHo and the surrounding neighborhoods in the 1980s took the place of the immigrant families that had frequented the same areas in the 1960s. While Oldenburg received confused responses from people in the community who wandered into The Store, Haring's Pop-Shop was well received by passersby. In this way the Pop Shop served to fulfill Haring's desire to make his iconic imagery accessible to the widest possible range of people.

The shop succeeded in influencing many people, especially kids from the Bronx with whom Haring collaborated on art projects, and provided a place for local youths and artists to gather. In John Gruen's Keith Haring: The Authorized Biography, Haring explained, “I wanted to continue the same sort of communication as with the subway drawings. I wanted to attract the same wide range of people, and I wanted [the Pop-Shop] to be a place where, yes, not only collectors could come, but also kids from the Bronx.” Haring often invited kids
who visited the *Pop-Shop* to his 676 Broadway studio, the current location of the Keith Haring Foundation, to participate in free round-robin drawing projects with him as a way to gain inspiration and share art with the community.\textsuperscript{152} A 1997 article in *Sphere Magazine* reflects on Sean Kalish, an actor and aspiring sculptor, who first met Haring at the age of seven. Kalish frequented the *Pop-Shop* on his way to auditions; the store manager noticed the boy's love of the art and took him to meet, and work with, Haring.\textsuperscript{153}

Hosting free children's workshops in the *Pop-Shop* was just one of the ways in which Haring used the store to connect with the community and nearby galleries. As AIDS became more of a widespread problem, the openly gay Haring was also very active in donating time to advocate safe sex and awareness of the disease. The *Pop-Shop* provided a space to sell condom button-boxes, display works that carried a social message, and promote activism as part of his oeuvre before his own AIDS diagnosis in 1989.\textsuperscript{154} However, as previously addressed, most of Haring's AIDS activism work was through his fine arts work rather than in the *Pop-Shop*.

Haring did not just use the *Pop-Shop* as a retail store. The shop also hosted a Run DMC music video, photo shoots, and the space for various fundraiser parties (Figure 48).\textsuperscript{155} Haring's art had become prevalent in pop culture as a result of the mass-market goods sold in the shop and the *Pop-Shop*'s walls on album
covers and tour posters brought a larger audience to the shop and created an additional source of revenue for the artist. Several of Haring's printed garments were also featured in fashion magazines like *Harper's Bazaar*, providing additional advertising to the mass media.\textsuperscript{156}

By 1986 most of the East Village galleries had begun to close down seeking better locations, which focused more attention on the Pop-Shop's SoHo location. The community-based publicity that the Pop-Shop had garnered brought new interest to SoHo and the art dealers, like Mary Boone and Leo Castelli, who lived there.\textsuperscript{157}

\textit{Pop-Shop: Performance or Celebrity Hangout?}

Like Oldenburg, Haring viewed his artist store partially as a performance-based installation. Both artists saw their stores as art projects different from galleries that provided a new and interactive environment for visitors. Like \textit{The Store}, the performance aspect of the Pop-Shop was neither a Happening nor performance art, but landed somewhere in the middle. The Pop-Shop allowed visitors to enter the world of the eccentric artist and his celebrity friends. The curved, ominous wall and out-of-reach merchandise stood as a reminder that the work was not immediately accessible, but the space itself was an experience.

Haring thought of the Pop-Shop as a type of clubhouse and would often
stop by on weekends to socialize with guests and sign autographs. Celebrities like Madonna (b. 1958), Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Warhol were known to frequent the shop, creating an exciting atmosphere for patrons. Although the Pop-Shop did not host Happenings, the anticipation of guest appearances nevertheless gave the project the feel of an intimate performance similar to that created in the small space of Oldenburg's *The Store*. The small space of both stores created an audience around Haring when he arrived, with or without guests, to sign autographs and talk to customers. A similar group clustered around Oldenburg in the backrooms of *The Store* to enable every visitor the chance to interact with the artist. Loud music filled the store, and visitors never knew when Haring or another art-world luminary might show up. And, like Oldenburg, who included a studio inside his store, Haring used the Pop-Shop's basement to print T-shirts and prepare other merchandise for the shop's opening.\textsuperscript{158}

Haring also had time to prepare the space exactly to his specifications and publicize the opening of the shop. The majority of the publicity was done through projects that had a similar appearance to the Pop-Shop. For instance, the wall design of the shop was almost identical to one that Haring had already used as a set for an MTV spot with the band Duran Duran in 1985 (Figure 49) and the Biennale de Paris in the Grand Palais in France the same year (Figure 50).\textsuperscript{159} By using the same monochromatic pattern on several projects in the same time frame,
the *Pop-Shop* looked like Haring's other projects, but could be used for more commercial ventures like photo shoots and events.

By the time the *Pop-Shop* opened, Haring had participated in several successful commercial advertising campaigns.\(^\text{160}\) He knew what the mass-media wanted and had turned down the opportunity to become a commercial designer and illustrator. Haring turned those skills toward the creation and merchandising of products for his own shop.

With the *Pop-Shop*, profit was never an issue. Haring was able to treat the store purely as an art project because sales of his paintings in the galleries afforded him financial security.\(^\text{161}\) Oldenburg similarly, was not concerned with the monetary aspect of his store, possibly due to his family's wealth. Haring wrote in his journal: “Very few people understand why someone would want to open a shop and not make money.”\(^\text{162}\) From day one, critics did not understand that Haring could have opened a store for any reason other than a financial one. While Haring did not make a profit on the *Pop-Shop*, he did create a commercial enterprise and intend for it to produce some revenue. The fact remains that if he did not want to make money, the *Pop-Shop* could have been more similar to the other collaborative works of the 1980s. In addition, Haring went on to discuss further commercial ventures related to the *Pop-Shop*, such as designing eyeglasses and radios, and opening another store location.\(^\text{163}\) In describing the
opening day events in 1986, Michael Gross of the *New York Times* lamented that, “Mr. Haring used to offer his art free on subway walls. Now he sells it for five-figure sums. Mr. Haring also used to give away his pins, jigsaw puzzles and comic books, which are now for sale at the shop.”

Although Haring spoke of the *Pop-Shop* as a temporary art installation or environment similar to *The Store*, he did create a name for the shop, used his own money to rent a space, hired an architectural firm to construct the store, and sold products that he had previously distributed for free. These actions suggest a businessman intent on financial success. The commercial structure that *Pop-Shop* projected set a path for the construction of art stores through retail means rather than only through fine art in galleries and museums.

According to Haring, the *Pop-Shop*'s product merchandise philosophy was simple: “The main point was that we didn't want to produce things that would cheapen the art…This was still an art statement. I mean, we could have put my designs on 'anything'…We sold the inflatable baby and the toy radio and, mostly, a wide variety of T-shirts, because they're like a wearable print--they're art objects.” This philosophy was idealistic in nature because it countered the uniqueness of art and turned each print into a mass-market commodity. Haring knew that his images would sell products, regardless of the price or whether the products were considered “art.” Everything was sold in small quantities, which
made the Pop-Shop different from other retail stores, but the fact remained that Haring was selling branded products. Original drawings and prints were sold for a limited time for $100, buttons were released in groups of twenty, and posters in editions of five or ten sold for as little as one dollar.\footnote{167} The limited quantities allowed customers to feel as if every item purchased was special even in multiple editions, and also invoked the desire to collect all of the items since prices were low and market values were certain to rise.

The Pop-Shop was a channel outside of the traditional art world that Haring was able to use to cultivate his artistic persona, and by extension, his brand.\footnote{168} In the early 1980s, the concept of an artist branding himself with signature images like the radiant baby and the barking dog, and using them to sell commercial products, was very new; the closest example was Warhol's 1966 offer to endorse any product through a newspaper advertisement, although Warhol's imagery was not used on mass-market products until after his death.\footnote{169} The Pop-Shop's full stock of products – badges, inflatable babies, “amazing magnets,” baseball caps, jigsaw puzzles, transistor radios, skateboards, Swatch watches – all prominently featuring Haring's signature images, made art available to a mass-market audience.\footnote{170} Haring's prints were so ubiquitous and his branding so pervasive in the pop culture that soon his imagery was recognizable throughout New York.\footnote{171} The idea of icon branding in a commercial consumer way did not
exist before Haring, and this aspect of his art practice was one that many art

critics despised. Haring tried to use the Pop-Shop to make his art accessible to
the general public, but the nature of his images, and his promotional techniques,
inevitably created a product and brand that turned the Pop-Shop into a

commercial entity independent of his fine art. While it may have been initially
intended otherwise, the Pop-Shop was evidence that, when art and stores
combine, some degree of the commodification of art is inevitable. The Pop-Shop
was different from temporary storefronts used by other collectives of the 1980s
because it was a for-profit business that sold commercial goods. Similar to
other collectives, the Pop-Shop displayed work by artists and did not make any
money, but the real difference is that the Pop-Shop was a true business enterprise.
Haring may not have needed income from the shop, but he intended for it to
function as a business and bring in revenue. When the second Pop-Shop in Tokyo,
to be discussed below, failed to succeed financially, Haring quickly closed that
branch. While activism was part of Haring's oeuvre, the shop was truly a retail
entity. Although Haring believed the Pop-Shop, as an artist store, was an
extension of his art practice, he received harsh criticism from critics.
Overwhelmingly, critics claimed that Haring had “sold out” in an effort to make
more money through commercial means. Marc Stevens, a Newsweek art critic,
stated in a 1986 interview: “Is it spiritually, intellectually, morally, forceful stuff?
Does it have imaginative depth? Is it grappling with important issues? And I think you have to say that with Keith Haring's work, while fun, No. It's fast food. It's boogieing on a Saturday night.”¹⁷⁴ Michael Gross' article in the New York Times agreed with this assessment and was not shocked when “someone spray-painted [the Pop-Shop's] threshold with words like 'Capitalist' and others too rude to mention.”¹⁷⁵ To the criticism that came his way, Haring simply responded, “I don't intend for everyone to like it. If everyone liked it, there would be something wrong with it.”¹⁷⁶ This is an easy response to unwanted criticism, but the fact remains that Haring knowingly used his popularity and commercial appeal to attract consumer interest and open a store that sold mass-produced goods. While some of the products were specifically created for charitable and activist causes, such as merchandise for AIDS awareness and posters to Free South Africa, the shop itself was a commercial venture, marketed as such and selling items that were once distributed freely.

**Pop-Shop in Tokyo**

In the 1980s, Haring had experienced a type of celebrity status in Japan and had established there a core group of collectors from previous trips. Haring believed that his celebrity, coupled with the commercial popularity of his iconic images and Japanese society's embrace of consumer culture made Japan the
perfect place for a new *Pop-Shop*. In 1988 *Pop-Shop Tokyo* (Figure 51) opened as an artist shop, following the same basic goal of accessibility as the New York store, but designed specifically for Japanese audiences and without a focus on community outreach in the form of workshops or events. *Pop-Shop Tokyo* combined elements of the New York store and Japanese traditional culture such as lanterns and fans products, both in terms of appearance and merchandise.

One of the few photographs of Haring inside the *Pop-Shop Tokyo* (Figure 52) looks remarkably similar to one taken a few years earlier at the New York store (Figure 35). In it, the artist, wearing one of his printed shirts, stands off center of the frame, staring straight at the camera. Although the New York and Tokyo stores were similar, the Tokyo store had several elements unique to the shop. Three monitors were displayed to the left of the photograph and showed loop videos of the artist painting the exterior and interior of the store and interviews with other artists about Haring (Figure 53). Haring spent the week before the store's opening painting monochromatic designs inside and outside of the new store, and every surface was covered in order to make the two shops look almost identical at first glance. Next to the monitors are two long shelves for displaying garments and other products. The Tokyo shop was constructed from two-and-a-half shipping containers that had been welded together, and the absence of a high ceiling to hang merchandise like in the New York store.
necessitated the use of more traditional shelving. Haring did not feel the same threat of shoplifting from Japanese customers as he did in New York and therefore was able to make the items more accessible.\footnote{177}

The Tokyo store was also created by Haring with a Japanese audience in mind. While the photograph shows a mostly empty space, similar to the photography style of gallery exhibitions, there is one item on the shelves: a large traditional Lucky Cat repainted with Haring's black and white designs (Figure 54). The ceramic sculpture stands about 3 feet tall with its left paw raised, a pose traditionally believed to bring good luck and prosperity to the shop's business owner.\footnote{178} A red collar with large gold coins encircles the cat's neck, and the artist has added thick black lines that drip down the animal's haunches, as well as gold paint to symbolize wealth. Other influences from Japanese culture were reflected in the fans, kimonos, and rice bowls, all printed with Haring images, which were sold exclusively at the Pop-Shop Tokyo. A stone walkway led customers to the entrance of the store, which mimicked the appearance of a Zen garden (Figure 55).\footnote{179} Tall Japanese lanterns were placed around the Pop-Shop overlaid with Haring's black and white designs to integrate the two cultures (Figure 56). As is Japanese practice, customers were required to remove their shoes at the store's entrance and don slippers designed by the artist. The desired effect was to replicate the feeling of entering a temple or a special place rather than a retail
store.\textsuperscript{180} This idea of the \textit{Pop-Shop Tokyo} as a temple not only had roots in Japanese tradition but also evoked O'Doherty's concept of the gallery space as a sacred space in which all objects must be revered and treasured.\textsuperscript{181}

\textit{Pop-Shop Tokyo} received interest from the press as a retail store but ultimately the reception of the shop was not as serious as Haring had hoped. Several television programs turned the news coverage into game-show type programs with show girls rather than approaching the shop as an artist store.\textsuperscript{182} Haring's approach to the \textit{Pop-Shop Tokyo} was also different from the New York shop in terms of community outreach since his work with the community was mostly for the cameras. Prior to the shop's opening Haring went into the streets of Tokyo with a box of chalk to incorporate his designs with the existing street markings, hand out buttons, and sign autographs. However, this was merely a publicity stunt for the shop. Haring was followed at all times by a team of photographers and journalists who had requested a series of photographs for upcoming press about the \textit{Pop-Shop Tokyo}. Possibly due to this lack of real community outreach, on opening day the store was completely empty and the four newspapers that planned to publish stories on Haring pulled their articles.\textsuperscript{183}

Despite Haring's efforts, the \textit{Pop-Shop Tokyo} closed after less than a year. In part, this was because Haring's products were copied freely and few people bought the originals from his store.\textsuperscript{184} The fact that the \textit{Pop-Shop} was in actuality
a high-priced retail store, different from the low prices of the New York store, caused confusion among the Japanese and contributed to Haring's reputation as a commercial artist. As an extremely busy artist, Haring attempted to work on many projects simultaneously without relinquishing creative control. Rather than work exclusively on the Tokyo shop or allow products to be manufactured in Japan, Haring had all of the merchandise made in the United States, so that he could control every aspect of the process. By the time the products arrived in Japan, the cost of export duties and additional expenses resulted in exorbitant prices that few people were willing to pay. Even though Tokyo was, and still remains, one of the most expensive cities in the world, the prices were too high; a T-shirt that sold in New York for twenty dollars was marketed in the Tokyo shop for eighty and an expensive satin jacket priced at 400 dollars increased to 600. Counterfeit products immediately began appearing around the corner at much lower prices. These counterfeits were often perfect replicas of the products that were being sold in the Pop-Shop Tokyo, complete with the artist's signature, and as a result few people noticed or cared about the difference. In the end, the counterfeiting was too prevalent and too difficult to stop. Thus, Haring inadvertently, and somewhat ironically, played a role in creating a market for the knockoffs that he had flown across the world to eliminate.

After the Pop-Shop Tokyo closed in 1989, Haring gave the shipping
containers that had constructed the shop to the art collector George Mulder, with the provision that Mulder pay for the transport and do something of interest with the pieces. Mulder is the owner of George Mulder Fine Arts, a company in Amsterdam and New York that publishes editions of prints and had done three major series with Haring – *Andy Mouse* (1986), *Apocalypse* (1988), and *The Valley* (1989). In 2008 and 2009, Mulder reinstalled the *Pop-Shop Tokyo* in a room of the Beaux-Arts de Mons aux Anciens Abattoirs in Belgium. The painted store, complete with neon lights and shelving but devoid of merchandise, was part of an exhibition called “Keith Haring: All Over,” which examined the artist's desire to make art accessible. The reconstructed *Pop-Shop Tokyo* was displayed empty (Figure 57) and therefore did not provide the excitement and accessibility of the original, functioning store. Instead, the *Pop-Shop* became an artwork that was historicized and decontextualized by the museum and Haring who contributed by giving the store to the art collector. A nearby gift shop to the empty *Pop-Shop Tokyo* sells Haring souvenirs, not too different in appearance from the mass produced items previously sold in the once functioning shop.

**Keeping the *Pop-Shop* Alive**

In 1989, Haring established the Keith Haring Foundation to help ensure that his philanthropic legacy would continue indefinitely. Following Haring's
request, the foundation focused its resources on organizations that provide educational opportunities for underprivileged children and organizations that deal with AIDS research and the care of HIV and AIDS patients. The artist also required the foundation to maintain and protect his artistic legacy after his death. Therefore, the mission of the Keith Haring Foundation is to “sustain, expand, and protect the legacy of Keith Haring, his art, and his ideals.”

When Haring died in 1990, as per the artist's request, the Keith Haring Foundation took over the Pop-Shop and all of his holdings.

For the five years following Haring's death, there was a spike in emotion, public grieving, and nostalgia from Haring fans and friends, and the Pop-Shop continued to see a steady stream of customers. However, since many of the customers were tourists, that base soon diminished. After five years, the foundation's board of directors decided to alter the physical property of the store in order to create a more conventional retail experience. The new design eliminated the tall curved wall and used display cases and hanging racks to create a more welcoming atmosphere (Figure 58). A new entrance opened up all of the store windows, previously covered by full length drawings, so that pedestrians could see directly into the Pop-Shop from the street.

The Keith Haring Foundation maintained its product line in the spirit of Haring for almost twenty years without becoming a souvenir store, although
products were no longer manufactured as limited editions and were instead produced in the hundreds and thousands. The types of products sold changed as well to include specialized items such as sterling silver Radiant Baby cuff links and tie clips for men and Barking Dog bibs for babies. A series of back-to-school products including several different backpacks, water bottles, CD/camera cases, small chalkboards, and notebooks, cashed in on Haring's growing popularity among kids (Figure 59). As fashions and styles changed the shop needed to adjust as well; staff that had worked closely with Haring for years took over the product design, following the fundamentals laid out by the artist. Haring had been adamant that individual images were to be for merchandise and more complex interlinked designs were to be reserved for fine art. The Keith Haring Foundation was also responsible for copyrighting the artist's images and working to continue his legacy, which meant promoting his work and working to eliminate counterfeit goods in ways that had not been possible with the limited technology of the 1980s. As the rents in SoHo increased, the area became more of a big commercial district, the shop became more of a typical retail store, the Keith Haring Foundation could not afford to run the Pop-Shop, which had only broken even most years. Similar to The Store, the Pop-Shop closed its doors due to lack of funds but found success for the artist through the shop's advertisement.

After Haring's death, the Pop-Shop was recreated in several museums
internationally. In 1998 the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMoMA) presented a functioning version of Haring's *Pop-Shop* inside of a retrospective exhibition. While not an artist store, in the sense that it was not designed by the original artist, the shop was organized by the exhibition's curators and was presented as an art object within the exhibition. Eight years after the artist's death, the *Pop-Shop* had officially been deemed a work of art via its position inside a museum exhibition. This modest version of the *Pop-Shop* was staffed by museum personnel, and for a few dollars, visitors could leave with a trademark Radiant Baby or Barking Dog memento. The SFMoMA exhibition led the way for a new appreciation of the store, and Haring's pop-culture oriented art, by the very institutions that prior to his death had criticized the commercial aspects of the *Pop-Shop*. It further increased demand for Haring products even after his death and proved that the artist's self-branding practices in the 1980s had continued to be effective throughout the 1990s.

In 2005, the Keith Haring Foundation decided to close the *Pop-Shop* in an attempt to minimize the increasing expenses associated with operating a retail venture. Ms. Gruen stated that there were opportunities over the years to sell or franchise the *Pop-Shop*, but none felt right. The shop had already been operating for years as an artist store without the artist so franchising would only turn the shop into even more of a commercial entity. Like Haring, Ms. Gruen and her
colleagues at the Keith Haring Foundation never considered the *Pop-Shop* a source of income but nevertheless felt it was irresponsible for the foundation to continue to lose money on a retail business venture. In an attempt to keep the shop alive, the foundation licensed the *Pop-Shop*, making all of the *Pop-Shop* merchandise available through international licensing and exhibition-related projects. The *Pop-Shop Online* operates like other online stores, with numerous items in categories ranging from housewares to clothing for adults, babies, and children, to accessories. The website also promotes gift certificates and wishlists, and has a promotional Twitter page. *The Pop-Shop Online* links to the Keith Haring Foundation, an online forum, and background information about the original *Pop-Shop*, but in all other aspects has completely subsumed Haring's art into the mass market. However, a large amount of the foundation's resources, working with the assistance of an art law firm, are spent copyrighting Haring's images and trying to prevent counterfeiting.

In 2009, the Tate Modern in London presented a reincarnation of the original *Pop-Shop* as part of their *Pop Life* exhibition (Figure 60). The exhibition explored work by artists from the 1980s to today who succeeded over time in self-branding and exploring the relationships among art, commerce, and pop culture. Haring shared space with artists like Damien Hirst (b. 1965), Jeff Koons (b. 1955), Richard Prince (b. 1949), Takashi Murakami (b. 1963), and
Warhol, all of whose iconic imagery has become known internationally. A full
gallery was dedicated to a reconstruction of the Pop-Shop with a neon sign that
read “Pop till you drop,” the original store's curved walls, and Haring's
monochromatic mural painting. T-shirts from the original store and newer online
versions were hung on walls, and a range of merchandise from condom button-
boxes to Swatch watches filled the shop. After the London exhibition, the rebuilt
Pop-Shop traveled to Ottawa and Hamburg, and each time was rebuilt and
repainted inside the museum. Because it depicted the Pop-Shop as part of the
artist's practice and displayed his merchandise as artwork, the exhibition raised
interest in Haring's commercial products. The prices of Pop-Shop merchandise
have since increased, and galleries and private art dealers have sold individual
items for high prices, turning formerly accessible items into valuable commodities
for the wealthy.\textsuperscript{199} This is not in keeping with Haring's concept of affordable
pricing for a non-art world audience. Haring's museum exhibitions during his
lifetime were not of commercial products and did not immediately result in
increased prices of the artist's merchandise. The Pop Life exhibition brought new
attention to the Pop-Shop and resulted in a higher demand for Haring
merchandise.

Currently, there are no plans to reopen the store as a functioning retail
store but New Yorkers will be able to see a part of the Pop-Shop every day
starting November 11, 2011 when the New York Historical Society reopens.

When the *Pop-Shop* closed in 2005, the Keith Haring Foundation was only able to preserve the original mural painted by the artist on the ceiling of the store. Ms. Gruen was quoted in a *New York Magazine* article at the time as having wished that the ceiling would have “a life in some place like the New York Historical Society.”

Haring's mural will be installed in the New York Historical Society's new 1,800 square foot museum restaurant created by renowned restaurateur Stephan Starr, and will be accessible to those who can afford the high price of a meal (Figure 61). Although the historical society's president Louise Mirrer claimed that the price would be appropriate for “an excellent dining experience, but not a rarefied space where only the elite come to gather,” Starr is known for gourmet restaurants and has offered to personally cater special events.

The use of such a high class restaurateur as Starr suggests that the historical society is using the *Pop-Shop* ceiling and the restaurant as lures for wealthy patrons to boost museum attendance. In addition, the historical society will position a small Haring exhibition next to the restaurant and supply, what they term “souvenirs” to their gift shop. Although Haring began his career making art for New Yorkers to enjoy on a daily basis, his legacy will be that of the *Pop-Shop*, to be displayed in an elite art institution providing atmosphere for the wealthy while the general public are left to purchase souvenirs. Ironically, the placement of Haring's work
separates the elite, who have the privilege to enjoy expensive art, from the general public, who can only buy the cheaper inauthentic versions. This class differentiation is one that Haring fought against with the Pop-Shop, as did Oldenburg with The Store. However, once popularity and money enters the equation, art becomes commodified and the original context is altered or eliminated.

Haring's career continued long after his death because of the branding and commercial techniques used by the artist to promote his own images. Not intended as a profit-driven commercial business, Haring's Pop-Shop began in 1986 as an attempt to bring fine art to the general public at lower prices through a retail store, a symbol of accessibility. Haring used his celebrity to sell vast quantities of mass-produced goods, not unlike specialized boutiques that sold commercial products via advertising. Ultimately, Haring's images proliferated in New York City and shortly thereafter the world, branding himself and his images and driving the prices of his work back up. This type of branding was similar to Oldenburg's in that both artists decided what sold well, both in the art world and to the general public, and made that style their identity. For Oldenburg, it was not the decayed objects of The Store, but the oversized work that first took shape with Floor Burger in 1962. Haring, on the other hand, began branding himself and his work in 1980 by handing out buttons in the subway; his style stayed consistent
and wearable merchandise acted as advertisement for the artist. Although the
*Pop-Shop* was created with artistic intentions, the products sold inside the store
turned Haring from just an artist into a businessman as well. The commercial
nature of the *Pop-Shop* set a path for Haring that led toward the commodification
of his images and his persona through the mass-market nature of the enterprise.
Chapter 3: From the Art of Business to the Business of Art

“I think the market of contemporary art should be more visible...Ours is the time
in which the true quality of contemporary art must be discussed.” – Takashi
Murakami

“Art should be exposed to a general audience, entering in an open competition for
their approval or purchase.” – Takashi Murakami

In 2007 and 2008, Takashi Murakami (b. 1963) presented his ©Murakami
Louis Vuitton Store store-within-a-museum as an unapologetic marriage of art and
commerce. Openly embracing the commercialism of art, the artist supplied
products to sell in his own Louis Vuitton (LV) store in the galleries of his solo
exhibition, and the separate museum gift shop located nearby, as well as through
Kaikai Kiki Co. Ltd., his merchandising company. If Oldenburg attempted to use
his store as a symbol for hyper-capitalism within an artist-activist institutional
critique, and Haring used his to bridge the gap between cultural classes,
Murakami intentionally positioned his artist store as the ultimate immersion of
commercial, market-driven art in the fine art arena. Oldenburg and Haring
commented on a commercialized art world of the art gallery and market, while
Murakami’s work extended the discussion to include museums as commercialized
spaces. Like the other two artists, Murakami branded himself with his imagery,
ensuring that his work was recognizable and marketable. Unlike Oldenburg and
Haring, Murakami literally teamed up with a major corporation, Louis Vuitton, to
assist with his branding throughout the world. Copyrighting also played an important role in Murakami's work, but unlike Haring, who struggled with counterfeits throughout his career, Murakami created a business around his art to ensure that he held all the copyrights. This chapter will argue that Murakami's equation of commercial art with fine art moved artist stores irreversibly into a commercial realm in which they face both art world and pop culture demands. In this new realm, Murakami's artist store can also mimic as well as comment on the museum space having become more commercialized in the past two decades.

©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store

©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store was first installed in the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MoCA) in 2007 and later in the Brooklyn Museum in 2008, as part of a retrospective exhibition titled ©Murakami. Unlike Oldenburg and Haring, who posed for documentary photographs of their stores, Murakami is completely absent from photographs taken to document the ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store. This may be because Murakami saw the store as an art project that, following current practices, is more elegant without the artist in the photograph. Instead, the space was photographed as if it were a contemporary gallery space or a store on Madison Avenue. The effect is that the store appears distinguishable from other galleries but still part of the exhibition: pristine,
rarefied, and filled with luxury art objects. In many ways, luxury boutiques do resemble high-end galleries and contemporary museums. Murakami brought those similarities to the forefront by combining both art and commercial aspects of his practice into one store and embedding it within an art institution.

The ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store was an elegant white boutique with a mirrored cash register mounted on a sleek display case (Figure 62). Two walls behind the cash register held wide, brightly lit shelves detailed with chrome to highlight the purses that rested on them. Each item represented a different style of available handbag and was given adequate space to be presented as an individual item. The presentation recalled the common gallery practice of employing track lighting and display stands to ensure that each object was adequately presented and well lit. A full-length mirror in the corner of the store reflected the walls of handbags and created a sense of openness. Directly to the left of the register, a wall displayed black-ground printed bags, and the shelves behind the register contained white-ground printed purses and wallets. Another wall to the right of the register was split vertically, with one half containing white purses and the other half holding black purses. These bags were presented in the same manner on the shelves: the larger bags on the bottom and smaller at the top, each purse meticulously arranged. Here too, the presentation appeared to aspire to that of a curated gallery exhibition, with larger works placed lower on the shelves to create
a sense of balance. Murakami also rebranded Louis Vuitton so that the new prints reflected the artist's aesthetic and were inexorably linked to his name, ensuring that the designer brand conjures up images of Murakami's art whenever a customer sees the product. Murakami's purse pattern, Monogram Multicolore (Figure 63), was a 33-color reinterpretation of Louis Vuitton's traditional linked “LV” and monotone quatrefoils and flowers (Figure 64). As is customary with works of art, each purse was given an individual name and a unique identity, like the feminine Patti bag or friendly Greta purse, although the basic makeup remained the same: Monogram Multicolore canvas in black or white, red microfiber lining, trimmings in natural cowhide leather, and golden brass pieces for clasps and trim. The treatment of the luxury items as art objects inside the store illustrates Murakami's belief that art, much like luxury goods, is collected as a status symbol and valued for its monetary worth.207

The second half of the store was centered around a long display case filled with limited edition LV handbags and original Murakami paintings hung from the wall (Figure 65). This display utilized a type of vitrine that is often used in galleries and museums to display sculptures or valuable artwork that can be damaged by viewers, and, in fact, is used in the exhibition proper to display smaller Murakami sculptures. The presentation drew viewers in for a closer look, at which point they would realize that all of the objects were for sale. Many of the
purses in this display case, like artwork in the *Pop-Shop*, were limited-edition pieces created and sold exclusively at MoCA and the Brooklyn Museum. In addition to the quatrefoils and flowers, these handbags had extra detailing from Murakami's oeuvre, as well as cartoon cherries, Flower Man and Onion Head characters (Figure 66), and eyes with long eyelashes, taken from Murakami's rabbit-like characters Kaikai and Kiki, also the name sake of the artist's merchandising company (Figure 67). The characters' exaggerated “pie eyes” were taken from the graphic traditions of *anime* and *manga*, which in turn borrowed the wide round eyes from Disney characters introduced to Japan during the Allied occupation from 1945 to 1951. The large cartoon eyes have become in Japanese pop culture a signifier of Western influence as well as innocence, childhood and nonthreatening cuteness, as exemplified in Japanese characters like Sanrio's global phenomenon Hello Kitty. As with numbered sculptures or prints, the use of limited-edition handbags created a high demand for the items among both purchasers of consumer goods and collectors of fine art.

Murakami also designed three patterned canvas wall hangings specifically for the store. Titled *Monogramouflage* (Figure 68), these pieces were printed in editions of one hundred each; the first fifty were sold for $6,000 each and the rest were then sold for $10,000 each. Unlike Murakami's fine art in the rest of the exhibition, the *Monogramouflage* pieces were mass produced. These three small
works were hung in the middle of a large white wall and were presented like one-
of-a-kind pieces in a gallery setting. Each of the three earth-toned works used a
different camouflage print with Louis Vuitton's traditional symbols emblazoned
on its surface. The three different colored versions of Monogramouflage were
eventually used as a print on a variety of commercial and leather goods that were
released in January 2009 exclusively at the Brooklyn Museum gift shop and then
in June 2009 at LV stores worldwide. Six months of exclusive sales of a high-
end commercial product resulted in a major financial gain for the Brooklyn
Museum and also turned Monogramouflage into both an advertisement and a
piece of fine art. Monogramouflage is the new version of Eye Love SUPERFLAT
(2003) (Figure 69) and other works from 2003, when the artist first started
working with LV. The paintings are identical to each LV print but specified as fine
art; therefore, in the ©Murakami exhibition, visitors can view the artwork on the
museum walls and then return to the ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store and
purchase an original piece of art similar to what they had just seen. Murakami
designed the new prints but, like the other works in the ©Murakami Louis Vuitton
Store, had no real hand in the making of the work. However, the high-priced
works sold very quickly to an exclusive audience and on the opening night an
extra wall was erected to display multiples of the work (Figure 70).
Melding Art and Commercialism

Initially trained in Nihonga, a traditional style of Japanese painting, Murakami received his doctorate degree from the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music.\textsuperscript{214} Noticing that there was no distinction between fine art and popular merchandise in post-war Japanese society, compared to that of the West, Murakami became interested in \textit{manga}, \textit{anime}, and \textit{otaku}, which he felt was representative of modern-day Japanese culture and used only the technical aspects of Nihonga.\textsuperscript{215} From his background in traditional Asian art, Murakami also incorporated early Buddhist imagery, twelfth-century picture scrolls, Zen painting, and eighteenth-century Edo period compositional techniques to create his own illustration style. Elevating cartoon figures and corporate brand names by locating them in the fine art world, Murakami's work depicts a fantastical world in which a multitude of characters like Cosmos, Kaikai, Kiki, Inochi, Oval, Mr. Pointy, and his alter ego, DOB, appear in different forms creating an interwoven narrative of an alternative world.\textsuperscript{216} He believes that Japan has been living in the shadow of the United States since the Second World War and that these forms of artistic expression are a direct avenue to cultural change:

\begin{quote}
Just look at how many anime have themes of war, of people liberated from the dominant nation, of re-creating the world. Otaku are fighting in the fictional world. The Japanese nation does not function so otaku seeks alternatives.\textsuperscript{217}
\end{quote}
Beautiful two-dimensional images of war are used in Japanese *anime* and video games as a technique to distance the viewer from the real horrors of war, which differs from American video games, which prefer realistic battle scenes; this difference in style is one aspect of *otaku* culture that led to Murakami's interest in pop culture.

Building upon the flatness of imagery already apparent in Japanese pop art, including traditional Japanese painting techniques, and introducing *otaku* culture, Murakami created the painting style Superflat.\(^{218}\) In the strict, hierarchical society of Japan, social status plays a major role; this can be seen directly through commodity goods. While quality is of keen importance, Japanese consumers have also popularized brand names and logos on many products as a status symbol. Superflat illustrates the importance of outwards appearance in consumer products by showing only surface quality. The pictorial flatness of the paintings, sculptures, and films removes all depth and instead uses excessive amounts of color to distance viewers from the reality of the subjects. In addition, Superflat looks critically at the consumerism and sexual fetishism that is rampant in contemporary Japanese culture through distorted figures and *otaku* imagery.\(^{219}\)

In 2001 Kaikai Kiki Co. Ltd., originally called the Hiropon Factory (Japanese slang for heroin and a reference to Warhol's drug use in the Factory), was created to manage Murakami's assistants, collaborators, and protégés,
employing over 130 workers in New York City and Tokyo. Influenced by Warhol's Factory, Murakami created his own more precise version of an art factory in Long Island City, New York and Tokyo, Japan in old industrial factory buildings based upon Warhol's lackadaisical assembly line of assistants in the 1960s who created large quantities of the artist's work. The creation of work by a team of assistants was very different from the process used by Oldenburg, who created every object for *The Store* himself in the back room of his studio. Oldenburg's wife did assist in the creation of some of the works for the Green Gallery exhibition, specifically *Floor Burger, Floor Cake, and Floor Cone*. However, Oldenburg thought of the art world as a factory producing vast quantities of marketable work without the artist present, much like the actual Kaikai Kiki. Haring, on the other hand, began producing work on his own, but after gaining success was able to mass produce his commercial products for the *Pop-Shop*, though never to the extent of Murakami. However, Murakami's updated factory, following the businessman mentality of the 1990s, was much more efficient and functioned like a true factory. According to their website, Kaikai Kiki has eighteen interrelated business functions including:

1. Exhibitions in Japan and overseas, event coordination, contemporary art course planning and production
2. Artwork planning, production, sales and imports/exports
3. Book planning, cover and binding design, editing, publishing, sales and imports/exports
4. Art text book planning, production, sales and imports/exports
5. Clothing product planning, design, production, sales and imports/exports
6. Consumer goods planning, design, production, sales and imports/exports ...
8. Advertisement planning and production ...
11. Copyrights and translation rights management and trading ...
13. Character planning, development and design sales
14. Film and video planning, production, sales and loans for promoting sales of broad programs and character products ...
16. Animation planning, production, sales and imports/exports

Several of the items on this list are worth exploring further. Kaikai Kiki produces artist-related merchandise for sale in exclusive galleries, museum shops, and other stores, and sells products not unlike the art objects Haring sold in his *Pop-Shop*.

Murakami's merchandise ranges from replicas of the artist's sculptures to pillows, bags, towels, key chains, sticker sets, and even soccer balls. The evolution of artist stores moved from Oldenburg's critique of merchandise to Haring's incorporation of merchandise to Murakami's complete immersion into the commercial realm. The *Pop-Shop* merchandise was never intended to infiltrate the world as quickly and powerfully as Kaikai Kiki products. Murakami took the *Pop-Shop* business model to the next level by selling products wholesale to other stores throughout the world, while using the products as advertising and maintaining his branding. The company has a large website with available products (Japanese only) and information about upcoming products; additionally, all items are available through the New York office for retail distributors overseas.
As the CEO of the company, Murakami holds the copyright for all of the products and has ultimate control over all merchandise. The idea of the copyright itself holds an exalted position within Murakami’s practice, as he sees his brand and art practice as a corporate, legal, and commercial entity that combines high art, pop culture, and commerce. Haring struggled throughout his career with copyright issues. During the 1980s it was more difficult to stop counterfeiting because it was hard to understand the scope of copyright infringement. While today the use of internet makes piracy easier, it also allows access to discover counterfeits throughout the world. The assistance of intellectual property law firms also provides assistance protecting artist's property that was not as readily available.

While the merchandise may seem cheapened by the fact that it is mass-produced, it is in fact made by Murakami's company and all the proceeds go directly to the artist. This can also be seen as a type of corporate greed in that the artist has become a corporation that strives to increase its wealth by any means necessary. Neither Oldenburg nor Haring saw profit as a goal in their stores, even though the Pop-Shop was a commercial enterprise. Murakami created Kaikai Kiki mostly as a way to force the issue of the relationship between commerce and art rather than as an activist or community outreach organization, as Haring had done.

Kaikai Kiki also manages and promotes a small group of artists, all
Superflat artists who also assist Murakami in the creation of his painting and sculptures. In 2002, Murakami started GEISAI, a biannual arts festival that mixes the commercial aspects of the Western art fair with traditional Japanese arts festivals. For the festival, artists apply for a booth in which to display and have their work judged by a panel of distinguished judges; artists are also encouraged to sell their art to GEISAI visitors. The GEISAI's mission states:

For its participants, having a booth in GEISAI is not only about selling work, but also about forging communication with visitors, talking about their work, and in general, undergoing practical training for a career as an artist. For visitors, GEISAI is an excellent place to casually purchase work; an experience not often possible in Japan.

Since Murakami has spoken often about the overwhelming consumerism of Japan and the nature of the judges being mostly professionals looking to hire new artists, it seems more likely that GEISAI is just another venue for the artists to sell their work and for Murakami to gain more celebrity. Currently Japan is exposed to avant-garde art from the West primarily from the “museum floors” of department stores, such as Mitsukoshi and Seibu. Since Murakami believed that there is very little differentiation between the commercial and non-commercial aspects of art in Japanese culture, he wanted to use this societal desire for consumer goods to bring people together. Murakami created the festival as another outlet for Japanese consumers to experience and purchase artwork that may someday
increase in value and for Japanese artists to be noticed by animation producers, art collectors, and gallery owners.

Murakami continued to build a strong brand identity with a collaboration and partnership with Louis Vuitton in 2003. According to Yves Carcelle, the chairman of Louis Vuitton, “Louis Vuitton has a long tradition of these collaborations, of relationships with artists, going back to the Impressionists,” but none generated as high sales as the partnership with Murakami. Sales, estimated to be in the hundreds of millions, made it by far the most successful venture in the label’s history. In collaboration with Marc Jacobs, head designer for Louis Vuitton, Murakami created the new Monogram Multicolore canvas print, the monogram in thirty-three colors on a white or black background. The traditional LV print depicts gold monograms on a brown background, which extended to handbags and accessories. Similar to the Monogram Multicolore print was the Eye Love Monogram print, which combines ninety-seven different colors with Murakami's cartoon eyes repeated on black or white backgrounds. A limited-edition cherry blossom pattern, Cherises, depicted smiling cartoon faces inside flowers, which were in turn, placed on top of the Monogram Canvas.

The artist's collaboration with Louis Vuitton reflected Murakami's images, since controlling the copyright and creating a unified image for all of his work was extremely important to Murakami. The large number of colors in each print
made it very difficult to create counterfeit handbags, an important issue for the artist, and also created a huge shift between the traditional LV print and the new designs. Not only did the artist reinvent the designer logo to ensure that it incorporated his aesthetic style, but he also incorporated the “LV,” quatrefoils, and flowers from the brand into his own artwork.\textsuperscript{230}

An April 2003 exhibition at the Marianne Boesky Gallery in New York featured paintings and sculptures with the same “LV” imagery to question the difference between art and commerce and illustrate that the boundaries between commercial and fine art are almost indistinguishable.\textsuperscript{231} The acrylic paintings are meticulous recreations of the LV prints; some of the paintings are large works measuring up to 71 inches that repeat one of the prints as if it were a flattened out piece of canvas, such as \textit{Eye Love SUPERFLAT} (Figure 69), which is painted with both a white and black background, identical to the handbag options. Other paintings are smaller, such as \textit{SUPERFLAT Monogram} (2003), which focuses on the linked “LV” brand in the center (Figure 71); as with the prints, all of the colorways are shown in Murakami's paintings of the prints. The Cherise print is transferred onto a folding screen, entitled \textit{Cherry Blossoms Blooming} (2003), a small work that illustrates the LV print on one half and a Murakami's bright pink blossoms without the logo on the other (Figure 72). In each of the works, Murakami has demonstrated that the identity of LV is in fact linked to his own
and strengthens the branding of both the commercial goods and his own image.

An animation studio was established at Kaikai Kiki in 2004, currently working on a feature length animation titled *Kaikai & Kiki*, featuring two characters that have appeared in the artist's work and are the mascots for the company itself. Murakami's first animation project was a five-minute film for Louis Vuitton's Superflat Monogram collaboration called *Superflat Monogram*, in which a young girl is eaten by a Murakami-inspired Panda character and gets lost inside a Louis Vuitton-inspired fantasy world. The film/commercial was shown internationally at Louis Vuitton stores as well as at the Marianne Boesky gallery in New York. Murakami also displayed a large sculpture of the character from the commercial, *Panda* (2003), inside the Marianne Boesky Gallery. The eight-and-a-half foot tall fiberglass sculpture stands astride an antique Louis Vuitton trunk with a joyful smile on its face, arms outspread, and wide-open eyes (Figure 73). The giant panda is an important image for Murakami to use as it references the successful formal diplomatic relationship between China and Japan in 1972 created by a gift of two pandas to Japan. While the war between Japan and the United States has long past, Murakami's use of the panda alluded to its potential to draw ordinary people together from two nations. The Panda character became an important image in the LV branding through the logo, advertisements, and store displays and was soon seen in stores worldwide (Figure 74). Murakami was
able to incorporate his own image, once again, into the advertisement, so that rather than lose his identity, the short film/advertisement, *Superflat Monogram*, served to further promote his own brand. One other animation project has been completed: a short based upon the character Icchi-kun, which was aired during the pop duo Yuzu’s live concert tour in Japan in 2004 and later shown as a television commercial in Japan.233

By infiltrating all aspects of culture, Murakami has continued to maintain a celebrity status that ensures that his brand and identity are strong. The importance of celebrity status also evolved with the artist store. Oldenburg had no interest in status, except to make his mark as an artist who tried to set art free from the bonds of the art market. However, Haring was an art star of the 1980s who surrounded himself with celebrities like Madonna and Grace Jones, attended popular nightclubs, as well as numerous galas at museums like the Whitney and Dia Foundation. Image was part of Haring’s work, similar to Murakami, and both artists surrounded themselves with famous artists, collectors, and others who could enhance their careers.

Instead of allowing other areas of culture to decide how his work was to be controlled, Murakami created every possible commercial outlet for his work to be displayed and created the work himself. In addition to the figurines created for Kaikai Kiki, Murakami collaborated with toy manufacturers Kaiyodo and Takara
to design a line of one- to four-inch shokugan (which literally means “snack toy”) figures called Takashi Murakami’s Superflat Museum, which included replicas of his sculptures and characters from paintings (Figure 75). The title, Superflat Museum, of Murakami’s work reflected art world and big business enterprises. Specifically note-worthy is the Convenience Store Edition, which was packaged with certificates of authenticity, mini-portfolios including information about the work that inspired them, interviews with the artist, and two pieces of chewing gum. The Convenience Store Edition played on the Pop-Shop’s idea of accessibility in an artist store and addressed children as well as a lower class market. By marketing the toys in convenience stores, Murakami infiltrated another area of Japanese consumerism and reached it at an early age. In addition, it turned commercial merchandise into fine art since the toys include certificates of authenticity. This allowed customers to pay $15 for a reproduction of work, originally priced at $400,000, and learn about the work and the artist, similar to Marcel Duchamp's Boîte-en-valise (1960), which were editions of mass-produced suitcases filled with reproductions of the artist's work that could be displayed as a miniature museum.

Murakami’s artistic conquests do not stop at arts management, commercial product manufacturer, animation creator and producer, fashion and accessory designer, art fair creator, fine artist; there is more in the artist's quest for celebrity
and the proliferation of avant-garde hierarchies that separate commodity from art. In 2005, Murakami published *Geijutsu Kigyo Ron* (Art Entrepreneurship Theory), a large book written only for Japanese readers. He also continues to host a weekly radio talk show, *Geijutsu Dojo* (Arts Seminar), in order to share his experience as a mercantile artist in the West and inspire other Japanese artists to follow his example. Murakami engages the media in a multitude of ways, much more aggressively and systematically than Oldenburg and Haring ever did, thereby ensuring international recognition.

**Murakami's ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store in Context**

Murakami's businessman mentality is not exclusive to the artist or the over-commercialization of Japanese society. The 1990s was a time that brought many artists to the forefront of the art world who had financial backing and the drive to gain success and popularity through their art by any means. Jeff Koons (b. 1955) and Damien Hirst (b. 1965), two of Murakami's contemporaries, share the artist's desire for fame and money.

Koons is an American artist who earned his wealth on Wall Street as a commodities broker. In the late 1980s he began to gain recognition as an artist for his reproductions of commonplace objects like balloon animals, and quickly set up a factory similar to Warhol and Murakami. With a team of thirty assistants,
each assigned to a different aspect of his art fabrication, Koons fabricated mass quantities of art. Koons funded a huge advertising campaign for himself and began selling his art directly to auction houses. Along with exhibitions at galleries and museums, Koons received commissions from the Guggenheim and other institutions for monumental works that his assistants would fabricate. In 2008, sales from work, sold by the artist at auction, brought in $117.2 million of sales, and he continues to compete with Hirst for the spot of the wealthiest living artist.\textsuperscript{239}

Hirst, a British artist, had the financial backing of advertiser and art collector Charles Saatchi early in his career. Hirst's first major project was a shark in a formaldehyde filled vitrine called \textit{The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living} (1992), which was shown at the first Young British Artists exhibition and sold for £50,000. This piece and the ones following were fabricated by a team of assistants and a great deal of money by Hirst's investors.\textsuperscript{240} In 2008 Hirst made an unprecedented move and sold a complete exhibition, \textit{Beautiful Inside My Head Forever}, of 218 works to Sotheby's, raising $198 million dollars and by-passing the gallery and art dealers.\textsuperscript{241} Similar to Murakami, Hirst was focused on business and he demonstrated that artistic production can function as a business and the work as a commodity.

Murakami's art within mass culture plays on similar themes as both Koons
and Hirst: an examination of consumer society and its relationship to the human condition. Unlike his contemporaries, Murakami does not compare commercial products to death and the destruction of society, as Hirst in his pharmaceutical-related works do. Neither does Murakami claim, like Koons, that there is no meaning to his work. While Superflat seems to suggest that there is no meaning in art, it more accurately illustrates the importance of the surface layer. This can be seen in the expensive and pristine surface appearance of Murakami's, Koons', and Hirst's work. All three artists present work absent of the artist's hand, which signifies the importance of perfection in their art. In addition, the three business artists all create monumental works immediately identifiable as their own because of their celebrity and self-branding. Murakami's work twists the images of pop culture and blends them with fine art.

Commercialization through Duchampian Thought

Murakami harbored no illusions about the purity of art, and in fact openly embraced the commercialization of art by partnering with one of the world's most expensive designers and pricing his works exorbitantly. The artist aimed to challenge society's ingrained value system, which prefers monetary value over artistic quality and reveal the superficiality and consumerism that underly both
Western and Japanese cultures. In Japan, as in the United States, a brand is often seen as indicative of the quality of the underlying product, and recognizable brands, especially fashion labels like Louis Vuitton, Gucci, and Christian Dior, become valuable cultural currency. By displaying labels, as Murakami did with his Superflat work, this process of the artist “superflattened” desirable commercial objects into simple brand names. When asked about the inclusion of the Louis Vuitton shop within the exhibition, Murakami explained, “The shop project is not a part of the exhibition; rather it is the heart of the exhibition itself. It holds at once the aspects that fuse, reunite, and then recombine the concept of the readymade.” The ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store illustrated society's lust for status through luxury goods, and since, in the instance of this exhibition, the objects inside the store could be seen as art objects, Murakami was simultaneously exploring art's status as a luxury product.

Murakami referred to the ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store as his urinal, referencing Marcel Duchamp's readymade Fountain (1917). Like Duchamp's work, Murakami's collaboration with LV changed the context of the latter's products, and the placement of the store within a museum changed the nature of the store as well as the museum itself. Murakami referenced Duchamp's controversial submission of Fountain to the Society for Independent Artist's exhibition in 1917 with his own store. As museums are the place for art to be
officially recognized as important work, Murakami took a twenty-first century spin on Duchamp and submitted luxury objects as art. Marc Jacobs hinted at the Duchampian connection: “It's not a gift shop – it's more like performance art. Witnessing what goes on in the boutique in the context of an art exhibition is as much an artwork as the art that went into the bags.”

Performance and Murakami

The ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store was technically financially independent from both MoCA and the Brooklyn Museum. Both institutions claimed that the store's profits did not directly benefit either museum, and Louis Vuitton did not fund any aspect of the exhibition. However, both MoCA and the Brooklyn Museum operated gift shops that sold almost exclusively items created by Murakami's company Kaikai Kiki, which were also displayed in the exhibition. Moreover, the publicity surrounding the collaboration with Louis Vuitton drove large crowds of visitors to the exhibition and the store to purchase the limited edition LV/Murakami handbags and accessories. Beyond substantial store receipts, the institutions most likely gained a new and diverse audience, both consumer and culture-driven, who attended the exhibition and stores to look at art and then purchase it afterward. Murakami capitalized on Louis Vuitton's brand as a way to familiarize a huge Western audience with his style and then attract
them to the exhibition with a brand name that, by 2007, was closely linked to his own. Murakami turned the museums into basic retail operations. He flattened the distinction between gallery and museums, profit and non-profit.

Like Oldenburg's Happenings in *The Store*, Murakami created a so-called performance for the *Murakami* opening night for elite guests to consider the nearby objects in the *Murakami Louis Vuitton Store* in a new light; this was fully funded by Louis Vuitton as it was not considered part of the actual exhibition. The opening night event at the Brooklyn Museum appeared to feature a large area filled with rundown stalls and Canal Street-style booths, with African immigrant street vendors peddling seemingly bootlegged goods on old tarps (Figure 76 and 77). In reality, this one-night-only performance actually employed actors selling real Murakami/Louis Vuitton products in order to raise awareness of the counterfeiting problem facing the fashion and art industries. Edward Skyler, the deputy mayor for operations for the museum, spoke to early arrivals about counterfeiting problems affecting the fashion and art market: “There is nothing good about the gray market in counterfeit goods. There are billions of dollars in lost sales tax and revenue lost.”

Carcelle expanded on this point and further explained the opening night performance in an interview with *Women's Wear Daily*: “We think that by highlighting it in a happening way and not in a boring way, it will make everybody more aware.” This stance on counterfeiting is very
different from those held in the 1980s and the way that Haring's copyright issues were handled with the *Pop-Shop*. Many of the contemporary companies that are subject to copyright infringement are huge corporations. Therefore when Skyler spoke about billions of dollars lost it seems more like corporate greed than protection of artists' property. Murakami and Marc Jacobs *Monogramouflage* canvases were also sold in front of the museum in addition to the store.\(^{252}\) The unprecedented performance was created in support of the protection of intellectual property, following the title of the exhibition, to focus attention on the global responsibility to protect artists' creations. LV, in a move that differed dramatically from the activist actions of Haring and avant-garde Happenings by Oldenburg, donated a portion of the revenues from the ©*Murakami Louis Vuitton Store* on the opening night to the Federal Enforcement Homeland Security Foundation.\(^{253}\) This major shift in artist store focus from the poor and AIDS to national security is also apparent in the fact that neither Oldenburg nor Haring made money on their stores. Murakami's store was so successful that he was able to donate a portion of his opening night proceeds to a major government organization. Cultural concerns shifted from arts and museums to those of business, wealth, and the establishment authorities.

Due to the fact that the opening night was exclusive to VIP guests, ranging from pop culture celebrities to fashion designers to art collectors, large quantities
of Louis Vuitton merchandise were available for purchase and quickly sold. The all-night gala included $1,000-a-person plates, an exhibition preview and cocktail reception catered by the exclusive restaurant Nobu, dinner, an auction of LV products and Murakami artwork, a Kanye West performance, and a late night after party. Every guest was also given limited-edition placemats designed by Murakami, later sold on Ebay for over $1,000 each (Figure 18). While such a blatantly commercial fusion of fashion, art, and luxury goods inside of an institution appeared to many to signal that Murakami (and perhaps the Brooklyn Museum) had “sold out,” it nonetheless represented a new way of looking at commercial items as legitimate art objects and, likewise, art as commercial items. Similarly, Haring received criticisms of selling out when he opened the Pop-Shop since his work also consisted of consumer goods. However, Haring unintentionally pushed his art into the realm of commodified goods through mass-production and commercial products, while Murakami's decisions were intentional. Murakami's approach to art does address the overwhelming power of pop culture and consumer goods society and art, but to ignore the financial impact of Murakami's commercial immersion on both institutions is negligent on the part of both the Brooklyn Museum and MoCA.

Murakami's financial stake in Kaikai Kiki and the company's function in the exhibition further blurred the line between consumer culture and high art on
which the ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store focused. All of the Murakami designed Kaikai Kiki products were on display (though not for sale) in a large museum gallery room, entitled the Merchandise Room (Figure 79). While the objects are items like coffee mugs, key chains, stationary, and stuffed animals with a variety of Murakami's characters, which were created for public consumptions, they are also part of the exhibition; each item is displayed in an individual white cube (Figure 80), both a play on the white cube gallery that O'Doherty described in his 1976 institutional critique, *Inside the White Cube*, as well as mimicking many Japanese-style toy shops that sell similar products, such as Kid Robot and Rotofugi (Figure 81). Like items sold in the *Pop-Shop*, these items are more affordable than Murakami's paintings and sculptures, but presented in the exhibition, the message is clear: these commercial products should be viewed as art. The *Pop-Shop* was shown in its entirety in several museums but not until after Haring's death. Once moved into a museum setting, the *Pop-Shop* was treated as a work of fine art with a separate souvenir shop nearby for visitors to buy merchandise from both the online *Pop-Shop* and the museum gift shop. While the viewer needs to come to the museum to see many of the works, most of them are available for purchase online and the merchandise has been in a variety of American stores for the past ten or more years. The artist has capitalized on a wide market by pricing some objects for as low as eight dollars while others cost
thousands, allowing anyone to purchase a Murakami product. Chairs are set up in the gallery for visitors to sit and examine the work close by, as they would in other galleries. There was no mention of prices in the Merchandise Room, but a majority of the items on display were available for purchase in the museum gift shop at the end of the exhibition. Since these are mass-produced goods, the items for sale in the museum gift shop were identical to those inside the exhibition. Pink 12-inch flower cushions sold for $59 (Figure 82), smaller 3-inch key chains of the same flower sold for $12 (Figure 83), T-shirts with Murakami's signature characters sold for $39 (Figure 84), and limited edition lithographs were priced from $800 to $1200 (Figure 85). Rarely had a visitor been able to view a museum exhibition and purchase an identical work in the same location. In addition to the Kaikai Kiki products, the Merchandise Room also displayed all of the Takashi Murakami's Superflat Museum figurines, with their certificates of authenticity, underneath glass vitrines as fine art objects (Figure 86).

Meanwhile Kaikai Kiki was responsible for the design and supply of wallpaper for the galleries, hand-woven carpets for the movie theater, and animated projections, and supplied almost all merchandise from the exhibition for the museum gift store to sell.256 The stairwell connecting the Murakami Louis Vuitton Store to other parts of the Brooklyn Museum was covered with a black Time Bokan print, while other areas of the exhibition had pink Jellyfish Eyes
wallpaper beneath paintings of the same design (Figure 87). The inclusion of the wallpaper design involved Kaikai Kiki even more in the design of the exhibition and allowed for the further integration of Murakami into all aspects of the exhibition's construction.

In addition to Murakami's company's involvement, his three major art dealers, Blum & Poe (Los Angeles), Larry Gagosian (New York), and Emmanuel Perrotin (Paris), were major supporters of the exhibition both in California and New York. Besides covering all of the material costs for Murakami's paintings and sculptures, Blum & Poe donated $100,000 toward the exhibition, paid the freight for sculptures to be sent to the institutions, including the nearly 20 foot tall aluminum and platinum sculpture Oval Buddha (2007), and purchased several $25,000 tables for the opening night gala. In addition, Blum & Poe, Larry Gagosian, and Emmanuel Perrotin paid for all of the exhibition advertisement and owned the majority of the art on display. This allowed for the three dealers to show work they owned and ensure that collectors interested in the works could purchase the art directly after viewing it inside the museum, turning the exhibition into an even larger store. Similar to other successful artists with financial backing, like Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst, very little criticism comes from art institutions receiving funding for these artists or the art collectors who are looking to purchase their work.
By placing an artist store in an exhibition within the museum, Murakami intentionally opened up the fine art world to a luxury-product-driven audience and revealed that the luxury brand and pop culture aspects of the store permeate all aspects of his art. The ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store received praise from fashion aficionados like Simon Doonan, creative director of Barney's New York, who said that the financial success of the store “signifies informed consumption,” and Yves Carcelle, president of Louis Vuitton, who stated that “the bridge between the two worlds [of fashion and art] is more and more obvious.” The fashion world fully endorsed his art because his celebrity brought attention to the counterfeiting problem affecting so many companies in the fashion industry, and because he elevated fashion accessories to high art by placing them inside an art institution. The response from art critics, however, was mixed: Roberta Smith's New York Times review acknowledged its commercial aspect but still declared visually the best part of the Brooklyn Museum exhibition as it “achieved an intensity of artifice, tactility and visual buzz.” In a 2007 New York Times article, Gail Andrews, director of the Birmingham Museum of Art, added that she shared Smith's views that the luxury products pushed the boundaries of contemporary art. A 2007 article by Ruth Furla, cites art critic Dave Hickey's view that the “museum has turned into a sort of upscale Macy's” and that art-world purists believe Murakami's store crosses the line from culture
to commerce. The article also quotes author Elizabeth Currid, who expands on the success of the store as one of the first deluxe boutiques to be integrated into an art exhibition. Other newspaper articles, including two in the New York Times, were also accepting of the integration of high art, mass culture, and commerce, suggesting that Murakami was successful in convincing at least some critics, like Roberta Smith and Elizabeth Currid, that the ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store was legitimately art. If Curid's review is to be considered seriously, then all deluxe boutiques can be considered art and it would not be outrageous to expect any store from Madison Avenue to set up an outpost in a New York museum. However, Murakami is doing something more than purely integrating luxury products into the institution. He is illustrating the status that comes from both owning these luxury products and purchasing expensive works of fine art. In addition, his artist store is branded in such a way that the LV prints are so closely tied to Murakami's artistic style that they are immediately recognized as a form of art fused with commercial goods.

Murakami proved with the ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store that commercial and fine art can be interwoven in the same space and by the same artist. The artist saw the Pop-Shop's trend toward commercialism and incorporated it into many aspects of his art, addressing the consumerism that was just as predominant in Japanese society as in the United States. His ©Murakami
Louis Vuitton Store combined commercial and fine art into one product and presented it inside a retail store organized as a gallery. Placed inside a retrospective museum exhibition, these consumer products brought awareness to the state of art and commerce today. A direction geared towards financial prosperity, artistic and commercial success and a rise in art marketability were all brought to a head with Murakami's store.
Conclusion

“As to selling the works, let's not forget that we are not living in an ideal society. One has to make adjustments to the world as it is.” – Hans Haacke

Artists have adapted the artist store model to meet the changes in society, reflecting consumer demands and art market pressures in their art. This trajectory of artist stores over the course of fifty years — from critiquing the commercial nature of art institutions to embracing the power and commercial aspects of the art market — highlights the inextricable link between art and commerce. Claes Oldenburg used The Store in a failed attempt to criticize the art market. Instead, the result created a retail-driven artist store model, a successful career for Oldenburg, and the increase in monetary value of The Store objects. In the case of Keith Haring, the mass production of merchandise moved the Pop-Shop away from an art project and commodified both the artist and his work, branding him as a product. Takashi Murakami aggressively pursued commercial avenues for his art, overlapping art and commerce. An immersion of popular culture and consumerist demands in ©Murakami Louis Vuitton Store's products illustrates the current place of the artist store. The evolution of artist stores strongly suggesting that when art is displayed for public consumption, art will never escape commodification.

As a critique of the burgeoning gallery scene and the need for people to
distinguish between bourgeois art and mass products, Oldenburg's *The Store* and Haring's *Pop-Shop* paved the way for the many other artist stores that have since opened in the United States, specifically clustered in New York City.\footnote{265}

Murakami's ©*Murakami Louis Vuitton Store*, later, provided a precedent for the equal use of commercial and fine art in artistic practice. More generally, each of these three temporary stores formed a model for contemporary artist stores; Oldenburg's store has been copied in the gas station atmosphere of Okay Mountain's *Corner Store* (2009) (Figure 88) in Miami, Florida, and John Brodie's *Store For a Month* (2009) (Figure 89), which sold art and food, and curated performance events in Portland, Oregon.\footnote{266} Banksy's *The Village Petstore and Charcoal Grill* (2008) (Figure 90), located in New York's West Village, was a faux-pet store that blended into the neighboring stores with a humorous artistic element, much like Oldenburg's *The Store*.\footnote{267} Like the *Pop-Shop*, Shepard Fairey's *OBEY Pop-Up Shop* (2010) (Figure 91) in SoHo sold clothing, pins, and posters with the artist's designs at a discounted price and, like Takashi Murakami's store, represented a collaboration with an art-world institution, namely the Deitch Gallery.

Today, with economic conditions leaving many storefronts vacant for months or years at a time, artist stores continue to proliferate throughout New York City, many influenced by or similar to these three stores. Short-term artist-
run sale spaces, often also called pop-up shops, allow artists or even commercial businesses to create a unique environment that engages visitors and generates interactivity.\textsuperscript{268} The sacred and elite space of the gallery, in which money is never discussed except with serious art collectors, is very different from the unique spaces that bear more similarities to the comforts of everyday retail shopping. Moreover, the relationship between inflating costs in artist works and existence of many artist stores as a means to provide art to the general public is not one to be overlooked. Artist stores often provide art at a lower cost and therefore generate more traffic and more sales.

Artist stores also highlight the gap between galleries, museum, and stores, while seeking publicity and art world attention. For example, Damien Hirst opened \textit{Pharmacy} (1997) (Figure 92), a restaurant filled with art that mimicked an actual pharmacy, using a space immersed within society to illustrate the modern obsession with medicine and contrast these life-changing and life-prolonging substances with over-indulgence. In 2010, Shepard Fairey's \textit{OBEY Pop-Up Shop} (Figure 4) sold clothing and other memorabilia at reduced prices while also promoting his exhibition at Deitch Gallery, following the model established by Haring and Murakami. Customers shopping in the SoHo neighborhood saw the store as another luxury boutique but were then alerted to the gallery exhibition and those interested in Fairey's art were able to purchase affordable limited-
edition pieces during the exhibition.

Pop-up stores have the potential to be more profitable than gallery representation, and with a number of vacant storefronts in New York, this may be the direction that many emerging artists choose. A pop-up show allows for self-representation, meaning that any artist can show work as long as he or she has enough money to pay the store's rent. There are advantages and limitations to this paradigm. Art can become more accessible absent the rigors of gallery hierarchies, but without any control, or financial backing, there is a tendency to lean towards the commercial to recoup financial losses. As artists like Murakami, Jeff Koons, and Damien Hirst continue to become wealthy art-world celebrities with teams of assistants hired to manufacture their work, it appears that the near-complete immersion of art and commerce in our society will continue to be reflected in artist stores as well.


Art collector Gertrude Stein acquired Picasso's drawings and paintings, exhibiting them in her informal salon at her home in Paris with the addition of her own self portrait and her nephew Allan Stein's Portrait of Allan Stein (1906). She also introduced Leo Stein; their older brother, Michael Stein; and his wife, Sarah, to Picasso's work and the couple quickly became collectors. The Steins introduced Picasso to the art collectors Claribel and Etta Cone, who began to acquire his work as well; see Ingo F. Walther, Pablo Picasso, 1881 – 1973: Genius of the Century (Cologne, Germany: Benedickt Taschen, 1993), 10, 91. Brâncuși opened his studio doors and let the audience see his work surrounded by tools and other sculptures as well as displaying work in an adjacent showroom. The studio has been reconstructed and is now in Paris next to the Centre Pompidou; see Albracht Barthel, “The Paris Studio of Contantin Brancusi: A Critique of the Modern Period Room,” http://www.arch.columbia.edu/files/gsapp/imceshared/gjb2011/V3N2_Atelier_Brancusi_Barthel.pdf, accessed 22 February 2011; Athena Tacha, “Brancusi: Legend, Reality and Impact,” Art Journal 22, no. 4 (Summer 1963): 240-241; and Anna Chave, Constantin Brancusi: Shifting the Bases of Art (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), xi, 16, 222, 268. The artist studio has always played an important role in the art world since it is often the meeting point for the artist and the gallery owner or art dealer. However, aside from Brâncuși, other examples of the studio used as more than a work space include Jean-Léon Gérème (b. 1824 -d. 1904), who turned the studio into new environments that would reflect their painting styles with luxuries such as oriental rugs, lion skins, and stuffed wild animals from travels; see Liza Kirwin and Joan Lord, Artists in their studios: Images from the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art (New York: Harpers Colins, 2007), 8, 10.

Sandler, Art of the Postmodern Era, 375.

Happenings, as coined by Allan Kaprow in 1957, were elaborately scripted performance pieces in which audiences were active participants and meaning was intentionally left open to interpretation. The term environment art was also used to describe installations associated with live performance art and Happenings in the 1960s, but originated in the international Surrealist exhibitions of the 1930s and 1940s; see Alfred Pacquement, “Environmental Art,” Oxford Art Online, http://www.oxfordartonline.com.cnyc-proxy1.libr.ccny.cuny.edu/subscriber/article/grove/art/T026392?q=Environmental+Art&search=quick&pos=19&_start=1#firsthit, accessed 21 March 2011; and Allan Kaprow, “Legacy of Jackson Pollock,” in Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1993), 1-9.


15 Oldenburg compared the art market to a factory, which produced goods for commercial value. In dime stores, when an item was sold it would be immediately replaced with a new, identical item. Oldenburg mimicked this practice by replacing sold items with work made on the premises, sometimes even on the spot. In this way, Oldenburg managed to sell art as commodity while explicitly pointing out the uniqueness of art objects; this did, however, made the art even more desirable because the work was rare and more valuable. The writers used to discuss institutional critique will be Hal Foster and Daniel Buren; see Hal Foster, “Subversive Signs,” in *Art in Theory 1900-2000*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 1992), 1036; Peter Halley, “Nature and Culture,” in *Art in Theory 1900-2000*, 1045; and Daniel Buren, “Function of the Museum,” in *Theories of Contemporary Art*, 222.


23 Ibid., 39.

24 While there is no concrete evidence that confirms that Oldenburg's *The Store* is the first artist store, there are postulations that this is the case; see Christie's Lot Notes, http://www.christies.com/LotFinder/lot_details.aspx?intObjectID=4387831, accessed 22 February 2010. The lack of evidence also confirms the need to record artist stores in order to have an accurate archive for future academic inquiry.

25 Kohl, a black eyeliner originally used by Egyptians, was made popular again in the 1960s by
designers like Mary Quant. In 1961 the style for woman was a pale face, white eye shadow cream and eyes as the main focus, darkened and smudged with kohl eyeliner and mascara; see "Life in Ancient Egypt: Kohl Pots," Welcome to Carnegie Museum of Natural History, http://www.carnegiemnh.org/exhibitions/egypt/kohlpot.htm, accessed March 30, 2011; and Audrey Gillan, “Mary Quant Quits Fashion Empire,” Guardian UK, 2 December 2000, News.


Ibid., 27.

Store Days is an important part of the artist's practice providing insights into Oldenburg's philosophy and approach to art such as the previous quote; see Oldenburg, Store Days: Documents from The Store, 1961, and Ray Gun Theater, 1962, 15.

Apotheosis (from Greek word apoteoun “to deify” and Latin deificatio “to make divine”) is a term that has meaning in art as the elevation of a subject to a godlike status, and in art, where it refers to a subject being treated in an exalted manner. In ancient Rome, apotheosis was a process in which a deceased emperor was recognized by his successor, a degree, and popular consent as divine; often the deceased emperor’s loved ones were deified as well, given the prefix Divus or Diva, and temples were erected to provide a space for worship. Christian theology uses the words deification, divinization, or theosis, instead of apotheosis as use it in the context of discussing Jesus Christ as a God who became a human to bring the rest of mankind to his level. In art the matter is practical: the elevation of a figure to divine level entails certain conventions. The apotheosis genre exists primarily in Christian art and can be seen in subjects that emphasize Christ's divinity, such as transfiguration and ascension. The term is more commonly used now to refer to the elevation of an assassinated or martyred leader to a heroic, godly stature; see “Apotheosis (religion),” Encyclopedia Britannica Online, www.britannica.com/apotheosis, accessed 17 March 2011.


Rose, Claes Oldenburg, 199.

Ibid.


Ibid., 10.

Ibid., 29,31-34,150.

Ibid., 16.

The expenses totaled $400 for such costs in the space like construction, telephone, and utilities. Green Gallery helped Oldenburg pay half of the expenses in exchange for a one third commission on all sales above $200. Oldenburg payed the gallery several hundred dollars as well as sales tax on works sold; see Oldenburg, Store Days: Documents from The Store, 1961, and Ray Gun Theater, 1962, 150.

See note 40.

Institutional critique describes the inquiry into the assumptions, ideologies and operation of institutions such as galleries, museums, publications and private collections, by artists who aim to reveal the frameworks of classification and circulation in these institutions that give art its supposed meaning or value. Artists who use institution as the subject of their critique often highlight the preexisting conditions of the institution in order to expose the economic and political system of art, and reveal that the gallery is anything but a neutral space; see Nizan Shaked, “Institutional Critique,” *Oxford Art Online*, http://www.oxfordartonline.com.cnny-proxy1.libr.ccny.cuny.edu/subscriber/article/grove/art/T2086985?q=Institutional+Critique&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit, accessed 10 March 2011: Rosalind Krauss, “The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum,” *October* Issue 54 (Fall 1990): reprinted *Theories of Contemporary Art*, 285-300; Hans Haacke, “Museums, Managers of Consciousness (1984),” in *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists*, ed. Alander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2009), 276-290; and Daniel Buren, “Function of the Museum,” 219.

The term environment art was also used to describe installations associated with live performance art and Happenings in the 1960s, but originated in the international Surrealist exhibitions of the 1930s and 1940s. Conceived as theatrical events, but using unlikely materials, environmental art transformed the gallery into a work that could not be transported not transposed. Today, the term environmental art refers to art that deal with ecological issues and these works from the 1960s are referred to as performance art or Happenings; see Alfred Pacquement, “Environmental Art,” *Oxford Art Online*, http://www.oxfordartonline.com.cnny-proxy1.libr.ccny.cuny.edu/subscriber/article/grove/art/T026392?q=Environmental+Art&search=quick&pos=19&_start=1#firsthit, accessed 21 March 2011.


*Communication* was first presented in the winter of 1957 as a private performance and was made public in April of 1958; it was at this point that Oldenburg became aware of the Happening and befriended Kaprow; see Rose, *Claes Oldenburg*, 25. Kaprow subsequently introduced Oldenburg to other artists, such as Jim Dine and George Segal, who were also interested in exploring the theme of city slums through performance.


Ibid.


Ibid., 145.

Ibid., 136.


The exhibition \textit{Environments, Situations, Spaces} took place at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York from May 25 - June 13, 1961. Five other artists were involved in this group show: George Brecht, Jim Dine, Walter Gaudnek, Allan Kaprow, and Robert Whitman.

Rose, \textit{Claes Oldenburg}, 64.

Ibid.


Ibid., 16.


According to a letter between Duchamp and his sister on page 57 of this book, the \textit{Bicycle Wheel} and the \textit{Bottle Rack} are dated as the earliest readymades but were dated and signed by Duchamp's sister several years later at the artist's request. In \textit{Advance of the Broken Arm}, a snow shovel readymade from 1916 was the first readymade to be called by that name; see James Mink, \textit{Duchamp} (London: Taschen, 2000), 48.

The first edition of works contained small-scale reproductions of 68 of his readymades and paintings that were inside of a leather attache case which would fold out to display all of the works like a mini-museum; each version was slightly different in terms of design and content. The later edition in the 1950s and 1960s consisted of six different series and used fabric instead of a leather suitcase; in addition, each work included one original work, and other works included frames and were presented in a small gallery; see Calvin Tomkins, \textit{The World of Marcel Duchamp 1887 –} (New York: Time Inc., 1966), 156, 166.


Ibid., 15.

Ibid., 8.

Ratcliff, “The Marriage of Art and Money;” 77-84.


Oldenburg records the full list of prices; see Oldenburg, \textit{Store Days: Documents from The Store, 1961, and Ray Gun Theater, 1962}, 31-34.

Sidney Tillim, “Month in Review: New York Exhibitions,” \textit{Arts Magazine} 36, no. 5 (February


81 After expenses and payment of the commission to Green Gallery, Oldenburg profit $1000 or less. See Note 35; and Oldenburg, Store Days: Documents from The Store, 1961, and Ray Gun Theater, 1962, 150.

82 About $1,500 of work sold, mostly to important art collectors and museums. So, in fact, no one grasped Oldenburg's concept that the work was not supposed to be art. Instead, they thought of the work simply as contemporary art.


86 Both Floor Cone and Floor Cake are now in MoMA's collection as are a dozen other pieces from The Store, many of which were purchased at this exhibition.


89 The MoMA exhibition also included later objects such as a complete “soft” furnishings for a bathroom, including a washstand, toilet, medicine cabinet, scale and tub made of vinyl filled with kapok and painted; see “Oldenburg Show at the Museum of Modern Art,” The Museum of Modern Art 115, (July to December 1969): 2.

90 One of MoMA's wall label's read, “The works in this exhibition, with the exception of a few early drawings, represent a selection from [Oldenburg's] extraordinary productivity since 1959, when he had his first one-man show in New York. The examples shown here are rich and varied.” In the 1969 newsletter Oldenburg is described as a prolific painter with an oeuvre so diversified in style, scale, and medium that each theme is organized to show the artist's skill. Another press release mentions which works are owned by the museum and the MoMA purchased one work from The Store; see Alicia Legg, MoMA Painting and Drawing Archives, “Claes Oldenburg” Exhibition, September 25 - November 23, 1969, Wall Text; and Helen M. Franc, MoMA Members Newsletter, 1969.


Candy Bars from Candy Counter in The Store sold at Christie's 11-12 January 2011 for $10,625 originally priced at $399.97 for the whole candy counter and $49.95 for each candy bar, which as previously stated, the artist gave away 118 pieces for free. Watch in a Red Box sold at Sotheby's on 10 September 2008 for $98,500 originally priced at $129.95. Fried Egg in Pan sold at Sotheby's on 12 November 2008 for $52,500 originally priced at $34.98. Sewing Machine sold at Sotheby's on 12 May 2004 for $1,464,000 originally priced at $449.99. Six Store Ray Guns sold at Sotheby's on 11 May 2006 for $228,000 originally priced at $249.95. Strawberry Shortcake sold at Christie's on 11 November 2010 for $80,500 originally priced at $84.95; see Sotheby's Lot Price, http://www.sothebys.com, accessed 20 February 2011; and Christie's Lot Price, http://www.christies.com, accessed 20 February 2011.


Provenance is as follows: The Store, New York; Jean and Leonard Brown, Springfield


102 Interview with Gruen; and Keith Haring Foundation Operation Manager Matthew Barolo, interview by author, 1 March 2011. New York City, audio recording, Keith Haring Foundation, New York City.

103 Interview with Gruen.

104 Ibid.


107 The Radiant Baby is sometimes also referred to as the radiant child or the radiant Christ and is reminiscent of Haring religious fundamentalist Christian youth. Similarities can be seen between the radiating lines from the baby and glowing dome around the baby Jesus depicted in many panting such as *Hosios Loukas, Virgin Enthroned with Christ Child (Mother of God in Concha)* (early 11th ce), *Nativity* (1350) by Giotto, *Madonna and Child Enthroned* (1400-1500) by Filippino Lippi, *Virgin and Child* (1406-1481) by Sano di Pietro, and *Christ Blessing (Salvator Mundi)* (1491-1507) by Quinten Metsys. The Radiant Baby was one of Haring's original subway tags used as a signature to symbolize a hope for the future. One of these sweatshirts was sold in 2008 at Freeman's Auctioneers & Appraisers for $1,500; see Modern and Contemporary Works of Art – Sale 1306 – Lot 155, *Freeman's Auctioneers & Appraisers*, http://www.freemansauction.com/asp/fullCatalogue.asp?salelot=1306+++++155+&refno=++548877, accessed 16 April 2011.

108 The *Pop-Shop* catalog was designed in a manner fitting the store with different artistic formats
to inspire further interest, such as elaborate fold-out designs. The catalog was organized similar to the actual store with code numbers by each item and an ordering form that could be filled out and mailed back to be filled. The catalog was filled with images of Haring and his friends dressed in his merchandise below quotes by the artist.

109 Slesin, “An Artist Turns Retailer,” A22; and interview with Barolo.

110 The double drive through consists of an open lobby space with only a pickup window and two drive-through windows to create a faster paced atmosphere. See John Jakle and Keith Sculle, *Fast Food: Roadside Restaurants in the Automobile Age* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 61.


113 Ibid., 104.


115 The animal and crawling baby icons began in 1980 when Haring was drawing and P.S. 122 and starting tagging around the city and the *Three-Eyed Man* developed when the artist drew a face off center and squeezed an extra eye in as an attempt to fix it: see Deitch, *Keith Haring*, 96. The *Radiant Baby*, or *Radiant Child* as it is sometimes called, is an image of a crawling baby surrounded by radiating lines which some critics believe may represented Haring as an absolute beginner see Jack Bankowsky, “Pop Life,” in *Pop Life: Art in a Material World*, edited by Jack Bankowsky, Alison M. Gingeras, and Catherine Wood (London: Tate Publishing, 2009), 28.


117 In addition, because the subway drawings were created so quickly, the figures often did not have hands and sometimes were even missing arms; in the studio, Haring had the time to explore each character and create intricate scenes.

118 Sol LeWitt, Richard Serra, and Andy Warhol also attended the exhibition but not during the opening. This was the first time that Warhol saw Haring's works on display and became familiar with them; see Deitch, *Keith Haring*, 212.


122 Warhol had attended several of haring exhibitions before this point, but the two artists had never officially met. At the Fun Gallery, Warhol approached Haring about trading one of his pieces for a work of Haring's. Haring went to the Factory and picked out a piece. Warhol and Haring began attending each others parties and spending more time together and the two became friends. (It is also through Warhol and the Fun Gallery that Haring met Madonna.) It is interesting to note that both artists used screen printing in their work and Haring did a series of successful prints after he met Warhol of each of his iconic images (barking dog, radiant baby,
etc.) as well as a Pop-Shop series with the encouragement of Warhol; see Deitch, *Keith Haring*, 212, 232, 248.

125 Ibid.

128 Ibid.
131 Little Elvis, Testing the Limits, Gang, and Fierce Pussy (1987-today) are all artist groups associated with ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, founded in 1987 to undertake direct action to end AIDS); see Foster, et. al., “1987,” 605-7.
134 Examples of the fake merchandise included T-shirts made in Thailand and jeans made in Brazil; Haring collected samples that he encountered in order to remain aware of the counterfeiting; see *Evening Magazine Interview with Peter Max*, interview with Keith Haring conducted by Peter Max, news footage from the Keith Haring Foundation Archives (New York: Evening Magazine, 1986).
135 While T-shirts, buttons, and stickers with the artist's images were not largely for sale before the *Pop-Shop*, aside from the Whitney Museum of American Art gift shop and Patricia Fields store, Haring mass-produced these products and handed them out freely to his friends and guests at openings. Haring designed a T-shirt for the Whitney Biennial, and some shirts and buttons that were sold at the original Patricia Field's store in Greenwich Village.

136 Interview with Gruen.
Deitch, Keith Haring, 276.
Haring, Keith Haring Journals, 209.
Interview with Barolo.

Reaganomics refers to the economic policies promoted by President Ronald Reagan during the 1980s. The four pillars of Reagan's economic policy were the reduction of government spending, the reduction of income and capital gains marginal tax rates, the reduction of regulation, and control of the money supply to reduce inflation; see William Niskanen, “The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics: Reaganomics,” Library of Economics and Liberty, http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/Reaganomics.html, accessed 24 February 2011.

Interview with Gruen.

Annia Nosei, Ileana Sonnabend, and Tony Shafrazi were also art dealers based in SoHo; see Pearlman, Unpackaging Art in the 1980s, 4.

Andy Warhol's Factory was his original New York City studio from 1962 to 1968 that was located on the fifth floor of an old factory building at 231 East 47th Street and often referred to as the Silver Factory because it was covered with tin foil and silver paint. Warhol had many people assist him with his screen prints and films, creating an assembly line for others to produce the screen prints for him; see Foster, Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism, 486; and Johnathan Jones, “My 15 Minutes, The Gardian UK, 12 February 2002, Arts and Design.

In addition, prior to opening the Pop-Shop, Haring used the space to host parties and fundraiser events such as the American Emergency Relief Fund to help curb famine in Ethiopia (Haring organized an exhibition and created a poster in collaboration with Roy Lichtenstein, Yoko Ono, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Warhol) and raise awareness of the location in SoHo; see Gruen, Keith Haring: The Authorized Biography, 129.

Haring was approached to contribute additional creative work to Saturday-morning television and advertisements for breakfast cereals, Kraft cheese, and Dodge truck but turned them down because he did not need the money; see Sheff, “Keith Haring, An Intimate Conversation,” 60.
Interview with Gruen.

162 Haring, Keith Haring Journals, 116.

163 Ibid., 198.


167 Interview with Barolo.


169 In 1966 Andy Warhol posted an advertisement in the Village Voice which read: “I’ll endorse with my name any of the following: clothing, AC-DC, cigarettes, small tapes, sound equipment, ROCK ‘N’ ROLL RECORDS, anything, film and film equipment, Food, Helium, Whips, MONEY!! love and kisses ANDY WARHOL. EL 5-9941;” see Ruth La Ferla, “20 Years on, the Branding of Warhol,” International Herald Tribune, 27 October 2006, Culture.


171 Pop Goes His Easel on ABC with Dick Shapp, interview with Keith Haring conducted by Dick Shapp, news footage from the Keith Haring Foundation Archives (New York: ABC, 1986).

172 While Warhol is believed to be the father of artist branding, the majority of his product licensing and branding occurred after his death through the Andy Warhol Foundation. Currently licensed there are thousands of Warhol products, although some are only limited runs; licensing fees totaled $2.5 million in 2009 as compared with $400,000 in 1997 and are still rising: see Eileen Kinsella, “Warhol Inc.,” Art News 108, no. 10 (November 2009).

173 Fashion Moda was a storefront gallery located in the South Bronx and organized by Stefan Eins and Joe Lewis; see Foster, “1987,” 606.


177 Deitch, Keith Haring, 474.

178 The technical name is Maneki Neko which literally translates to Beckoning Cat, but it is also known as Welcoming Cat, Lucky Cat, Money Cat, or Fortune Cat. The sculpture is almost always created out of ceramic and depicts a Japanese Bobtail beckoning with an upright paw. It is displayed at the entrance to shops, restaurants, and other businesses; a raised left paw supposedly attracts money, while a raised right paw protects it; see March Schumacher, “Maneki Neko – Beckoning Cat of Japan,” Japanese Buddhist Statuary, http://www.onmarkproductions.com/html/maneki-neko.shtml, accessed 27 March 2011.

179 Pop Shop Tokyo, news piece about the Pop-Shop Tokyo, news footage from the Keith Haring Foundation Archives (Tokyo, 1988).

180 Ibid.

181 O’Doherty described the gallery spaces as “constructed along laws as rigorous as those for building a medieval church... The ceiling becomes the source of light... The art is free, as the saying used to go, ‘to take on its own life.’ ... Works of art are mounted, hung, scatted for study. Their ungrubby surfaces are untouched by time and its vicissitudes;” see O’Doherty, Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space, 15.

182 Haring, Keith Haring Journals, 214.

183 Ibid., 214-215.

184 Haring’s high expectations for the Tokyo store’s success deterred him from considering opening other outposts of the Pop-Shop. Haring had received offers to open stores in Paris, London and Los Angeles but he believed that Tokyo and New York were the two most
important places in the world because of the high level of technology and culture in these locations: see Weekend NY: Keith Haring, interview with Keith Haring, news footage from the Keith Haring Foundation Archives (New York, 1988).

Haring was also working on Hans Mayer's sculpture, a print project for Marty Binder, a print project with Bill Burroughs, a collaboration with Brion Gysin, among many other social obligations; see Haring, Keith Haring Journals, 198-199.

Ibid; and interview with Gruen.

In an interview with Julia Gruen, she gave an example of a T-shirt that would have sold in the New York Pop-Shop for $20 marked up to $80 in the Tokyo location.

John Gruen, Keith Haring: The Authorized Biography, 182.


Haring was a big advocate for organizations that helped AIDS patients and responded to this disease in his artwork; Haring was also a big proponent for organizations, like City Kids, that helped fund educational programs for underfunded schools and spent time working with these organizations. However, the Pop-Shop did not make enough of an income to be any more that a space to obtain more information about the artist. The majority of the funding from Haring for these organizations came from the provisions made by the artist through the Keith Haring Foundation. The Keith Haring Foundation also bears many similarities to the Andy Warhol Foundation, which was set up three years prior in 1987. The Andy Warhol's mission is to support the creation, presentation and documentation of contemporary visual art, particularly work that is experimental, under-recognized, or challenging in nature; see “Creative Impact,” The Andy Warhol Foundation, http://www.warholfoundation.org/foundation/index.html, accessed 27 March 2011.

Haring's original design blocked the main windows with large drawings and his window displays were only visible from inside the store.


Interview with Gruen.

The website www.pop-shop.com has limited interaction with the Keith Haring Foundation except to receive approval on new products. While the Keith Haring Foundation does not control very much of the online store, the foundation feels that it is important for Haring's products to be out in the world in an online retail environment. There was such an enormous outcry from Haring fans and former Pop-Shop patrons when the store closed that the Keith Haring Foundation also created an online forum on http://haring.com, which allows personal recollections and comments about the store to be written; see Jade Dellinger, “Keith Haring: Art and Commerce,” Haring Foundation Essays, http://www.haring.com/cgi-bin/essays.cgi?essay_id=15, accessed 11 February 2011.

Interview with Gruen.

Elizabeth Day, “Is it art, or is it a shop? Keith Haring's iconic Pop Shop is reborn as both,” The Observer, 27 September 2009.


204 Ibid.

205 Kaikai Kiki Co. Ltd, http://english.kaikaikiki.co.jp/whatskaikaikiki/activitylist/artgoods/, accessed 10 February 2011. Murakami did, however, visit the Pop-Shop during his first trip to New York and was inspired by Haring's work. Haring’s influence was important in the commercial development of Murakami's identity, as was a functioning version of the Pop-Shop inside of a Haring retrospective at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; see Rothkopf, “Takashi Murakami: Company Man,” 143-144; and Knight, “Public Art, Remade by Keith Haring,” 21 June 1998.


209 Cherises is a print featuring the iconic brown Louis Vuitton monograms on a black background, but it is overprinted with cartoon cherries. Eye Love Monogram combines ninety-seven different colors with Murakami's cartoon eyes repeated on black or white backgrounds; see Paul Schimmel, “Making Murakami,” in ©Murakami, 77.


212 “Takashi Murakami x Louis Vuitton “Monogramouflage” Collection,” Hypebeast, 4 April
2008.

Edition one to fifty sold for $6,000 each and edition fifty one to one hundred sold for $10,000 each. The handbags and small leather goods sold cost around $1,000 to $4,000 for the Multicolore prints and more for the limited edition bags.

Nihonga literally means Japanese-style paintings and is used to describe either monochrome or polychrome painting created on Japanese paper or silk using brushes in accordance with traditional Japanese artistic techniques. While most nihonga are now produced on paper stretched onto wooden panels, traditionally they were created as hanging scrolls, hand scrolls, or folding screens; see Penelope Mason, History of Japanese Art (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993), 371-74.

Anime are Japanese cartoons, animated TV series, or animated movies. Anime is a major outlet for artistic expression and mass entertainment in Japan. Manga are Japanese comics and graphic novels. Otaku is loosely translated into a cult fan or specialist of Japanese anime, manga, and video games, and is also an ultra-consumer who spend extensive amounts of money on these products regardless of economic problems; see Patrick W. Galbraith, The Otaku Encyclopedia: An Insider's Guide to the Subculture of Cool Japan (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2009), 19, 140-42.


Galbraith, The Otaku Encyclopedia, 182.

Other artist whose work is considered to fall into the Superflat genre include Chiho Aoshima, Mahomi Kunikata, Sayuri Michima, Yoshitomo Nara, Tatsuyuki Tanaka, and Aya Takano; some anime and manga designers are considered Superflat, such as Koji Morimoto (owner of the animation studio Studio 4°C), and Hitoshi Tomizawa (author of Alien 9 and Milk Closet).

“Hiropon” is slang for heroin in Japanese and alludes to Warhol's drug use in the 1960s. The Hiropon Factory runs similar to Warhol’s Factory with assistants working in assembly line fashion creating work for the artist; see Roxana Marcoci, Comic Abstraction: Image Breaking, Image Making (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2007), 33. The Hiropon Factory was founded in 1996 as a studio filled with assistants for Murakami’s painting and sculptures; he had set up a similar space around the same time in New York while on a scholarship but after Murakami’s 2001 “Superflat” exhibition at MoCA, the scale of his company had grown into a professional art production and management organization. In 2001 Murakami officially registered the company as Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd.; see “Laying the Foundation for A Japanese Art Market,” Kaikai Kiki Co. Ltd., http://english.kaikakiki.co.jp/whatskaikakiki/message, accessed 10 February 2011.


Kaikai Kiki currently represents seven Superflat artists including Murakami. The other artists are Aya Takano, Chiho Aoshima, Mr., Chinatsu Ban, Rei Sato, and Akane Koida. Aya Takano works as a manga artist, illustrator, and science fiction essayist taking influences from 14th Century Italian religious painting and futuristic worlds. Chiho Aoshima uses computer science and technology to explore themes of gender and body politics in her artwork. She often uses her own images, as well as images of women from past and present, to challenge traditional representations of beauty and identity.
software to create printed works that involve ghosts, zombies, and teenage girls. Mr., aka Shigeo Nagashima has worked with Murakami for eight years and creates otaku inspired art that portray sexual content in painting, performance, and video art. Chinatsu Ban uses tradition Japanese material like washi paper in her paintings but illustrates strange, fearful characters floating against the surface. Rei Sato combines manga, Impressionism, and abstract painting styles to create youthful compositions that play with real life. Akane Koide is a fifteen-year old artist who Murakami discovered who deals with the difficulties of junior high life; see “Artists,” Kaikai Kiki Co. Ltd., http://english.kaikaikiki.co.jp/artists, accessed 2 April 2011.

Judges range from animation studio heads, interior design firms, and art directors at advertising companies, to fashion designers and art world celebrities. GEISAI has recently expanded to Taiwan; see GEISAI Official Website, http://www.us.geisai.net/gt2, accessed 1 April 2011.

The museum-in-a-department store phenomenon appeared in the 1970s in Tokyo; see Kerri L. MacPherson, Asian Department Stores (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 21. It is also making an appearance again in New York City with the appearance of Galerie Elysees' “Dali: The Vision of a Genius” exhibition on two floors of the Time Warner Center, which is selling original sculptures and drawings by Salvador Dalí, amongst commercial stores and restaurants, for $13,000 up $2 million dollars.


“Superflat First Love 2009” a three minute film/commercial similar to “Superflat Monogram” was created in 2009 and shown as another advertisement for Louis Vuitton; see “Animation Production,” Kaikai Kiki Co. Ltd., http://english.kaikaikiki.co.jp/whatskaikaikiki/activitylist/animation, accessed 20 February 2011.


See Figure 24 in Chapter 1.


Murakami's radio show is available via podcast: http://www.tfm.co.jp/podcasts/dojo/

Foster, Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism, 600.


242 Darling, “Plumbing the Depths of Superflatness,” 83.

243 Ibid.


245 Janis Mink, Duchamp (New York: Tashen, 2000), 63-64.

246 Sarah Thornton, Seven Days in the Art World (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008), 212.


248 The collaboration brought many people to the museum to purchase limited edition items and attend the exhibition; both museums also say a high increase in young visitors. Paul Schimmel, the exhibition curator, stated that many people came because “they heard about the show through various kinds of cross-branding; Names like Louis Vuitton, Kanye West and eBay.” See: Vogel, “Watch Out, Warhol, Here’s Japanese Shock Pop,” Art & Design.

249 Ibid.

250 Trebay, “This is Not a Sidewalk Bag,” Fashion & Style.


252 Trebay, “This is Not a Sidewalk Bag,” Fashion & Style; and “Murakami Exhibit at Brooklyn Museum Opening Night,” Hypebeast, 4 April 2008.


256 Katz, “Resistance is Futile.”

257 Thornton, Seven Days in the Art World, 184.

258 Ibid.

259 Furla, “The Artist's Fall Collection,” G1, G5.


262 Furla, “The Artist's Fall Collection,” G1, G5.


Figure 1: Claes Oldenburg, *The Store*, photograph, 1961-62

Figure 2: Oldenburg in *The Store*, photograph, 1961
Figure 3: Oldenburg, *Strawberry Shortcake*, Muslin, plaster, chicken wire, and enamel, 1961

Figure 4: Oldenburg, *White Gym Shoes*, Muslin, plaster, chicken wire, and enamel, 1961

Figure 5: Oldenburg, *Sewing Machine*, Muslin, plaster, chicken wire, and enamel, 1961
Figure 6: Oldenburg, *Yellow Girl's Dress*, *Muslin, plaster, chicken wire, and enamel*, 1961

Figure 7: Oldenburg, *Bride Mannikin*, *Muslin, plaster, chicken wire, and enamel*, 1961
Figure 8: Oldenburg, *Braselette*, muslin, plaster, chicken wire, and enamel, 1961

Figure 9: Woolworth's Five and Dime Store Lunch Counter, photograph, 1960

Figure 10: Woolworth's Five and Dime Store, photograph, 1931
Figure 11: Oldenburg, *Pie a la Mode*, muslin, plaster, chicken wire, and enamel, 1962

Figure 12: Oldenburg, *Glass Case with Pies*, muslin, plaster, chicken wire, and enamel, 1961

Figure 13: Oldenburg, *Pepsi-Cola*, muslin, plaster, chicken wire, and enamel, 1961
Figure 14: Oldenburg, 7-Up, muslin, plaster, chicken wire, and enamel, 1961

Figure 15: L.E.S. Tenement Buildings, photograph
Figure 16: Claes Oldenburg, *Blue Shirt*, muslin, plaster, chicken wire, and enamel, 1961

Figure 17: Claes Oldenburg, *The Store Poster*, Letterpress, 1961
Figure 18: Oldenburg, *Dancer*, charcoal on paper, 1959

Figure 19: Oldenburg, *The Street*, 1960
Figure 20: Oldenburg, *Snapshots from the City*, 1960

Figure 21: Oldenburg, *Watch in a Red Box*, muslin, plaster, chicken wire, and enamel, 1961
Figure 22: Marcel Duchamp, *The Bicycle Wheel*, 1913

Figure 23: Claes Oldenburg, *Egg in Pan*, plaster, enamel, and aluminum frying pan, 1961

Figure 24: Marcel Duchamp, *Boite-en-Valise* (Box in a Suitcase), 1950s
Figure 25: Claes Oldenburg, *Candy Bar*, muslin, plaster, chicken wire, and enamel, 1961

Figure 26: Green Gallery exhibition, photograph, 1962
Figure 27: Oldenburg, *Floor Cake*, 1962

Figure 28: Oldenburg, *Floor Cone*, 1962

Figure 29: Oldenburg, *Floor Burger*, 1962
Figure 30: Oldenburg, *Bedroom Ensemble*, 1963

Figure 31: Peter Freeman Gallery, “Claes Oldenburg: works from The Store, 1961,” 2003
Figure 32: Peter Freeman Gallery, “Claes Oldenburg: works from The Store, 1961,” 2003

Figure 33: Whitney Museum of American Art, “Claes Oldenburg: Early Sculpture, Drawings, and Happenings Films” exhibition view, 2009
Figure 34: The *Pop-Shop*, photograph, 1986-1990

Figure 35: The *Pop-Shop*, photograph by Charles Dolfi-Michels, 1986
Figure 36: The *Pop-Shop*, wall detail, photograph

Figure 37: The *Pop-Shop*, column detail, photograph

Figure 38: Haring, radiant baby sweatshirt from the *Pop-Shop*
Figure 39: *Pop-Shop* products, catalog page, 1986

Figure 4: *Pop-Shop* neon sign
Figure 41: Haring, Altered Chardón Jeans advertisement, 1980

Figure 42: Keith Haring, *Radiant Baby*, circa 1980

Figure 43: Haring, *Three-Eyed Man*, circa 1981
Figure 44: Haring, *Running Figure*, circa 1980

Figure 45: Haring, *Barking Dog*, circa 1980

Figure 46: Fun Gallery, photograph, 1983
Figure 47: Group Material, *AIDS Timeline*, 1989

Figure 48: Keith Haring and Run DMC in the *Pop-Shop*, photograph, 1986
Figure 49: Set painting on MTV during guest appearance of Duran Duran's Nick Rhodes and Simon Le Bon, film stills, 1985

Figure 50: La Biennale de Paris in the Grand Palais, installation view, 1985
Figure 51: *Pop-Shop Tokyo* bag, photograph, 1988

Figure 52: *Pop-Shop Tokyo*, photograph by Tseng Kwong Chi, 1988
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