

# Living Arts

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## Perspectives

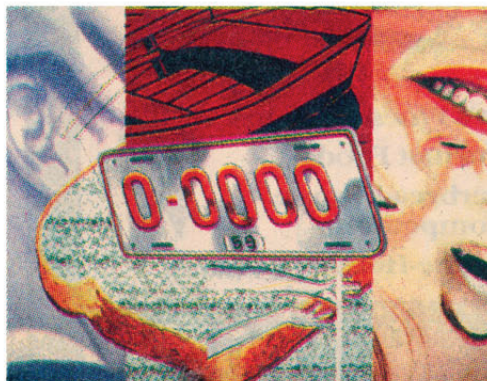
### Rose exhibit shows that art hasn't lost its Pop

By Christine Temin  
GLOBE STAFF

WALTHAM – Two blown-up comic book images a la Roy Lichtenstein, one a man, the other a woman, flank the entrance to the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University. The guy's balloon says, "I'm convinced it's the persistence of Pop!" The woman's asks, "What about area artists like Sheila Pepe and Santiago Hernandez?"

Their fretting is unnecessary. Both "The Persistence of Pop" and work by Pepe and Hernandez are on view in the Rose galleries, in two shows that connect nicely. The Pop show is drawn mainly from the permanent collection of the Rose, which boasts the largest holdings of contemporary American art in New England.

PERSPECTIVES, Page F4



James Rosenquist's "Two 1959 People" (1963).



ROSE ART MUSEUM

Rona Pondick's 1993 "Red Bowl" (left) draws from Claes Oldenburg's 1962 "Tray Meal."

## Just can't stop that Pop

The Rose itself is celebrating its 35th anniversary, which means that it and Pop Art got started at about the same time. Some of the Rose's earliest acquisitions were by the movement's stars: Warhol, James Rosenquist, Robert Indiana – and Lichtenstein, whose 1962 "Forget It! Forget Me!" is the painting those entrance images spoof. The real thing is a spoof too, on comics and their soap opera messages, primary emotions conveyed through primary colors.

The real subject of the "Persistence" show is how aspects of Pop – repetition, the use of mass media images, the incorporation of found objects – have survived into the '90s. Rona Pondick's 1993 "Red Bowl" is a case in point, a vessel that, from afar, looks as if it's filled with waxy apples. Up close, they turn out to be red plastic "heads" whose only facial feature is a gaping mouth filled with out-size teeth. Pondick's piece is related to those of Claes Oldenburg, here represented by the 1962 "Tray Meal," plaster "food" slathered with sickly swaths of paint.

The telling juxtapositions make the Rose show sing, most harmoniously in a trio of works: a small de Kooning pastel, "Woman (Seated Woman I)"; Robert Colescott's big painting "I Gets a Thrill Too When I Sees DeKoo"; and Mel Ramos' equally large "I Still Get a Thrill When I See Bill No. 1." Both the 1976 Ramos and the 1978 Colescott are based on an icon, de Kooning's 1950-52 "Woman, I," a leering image owned by the Museum of Modern Art. The later painters make it their own, Ramos through slick brushwork – Rose director Carl Belz writes that it looks "as though it had been painted with lipstick and eyeliner" – and Colescott, an African American, through replacing the devilish face of "Woman, I" with his trademark Aunt Jemima image.

Other juxtapositions are subtler but no less effective. One of the best is a trio of huge black-and-white pieces: Warhol's 1964 "Saturday Disaster," Kiki Smith's 1992 "Lucy's Daughters" and Annette Lemieux's 1995 "Left Right Left Right." Besides scale and palette, they share repetition. Warhol's car crash is seen twice, as if on a scrolling television screen; the silk-screened female silhouettes in the Smith are repeated dozens of times and are linked with collaged-on twine that turns them into a unified sisterhood; the fists on Lemieux's placards propped against the wall are raised in either violence or triumph, conveyed through hints of context.

**Roy Lichtenstein's "Forget It! Forget Me!" (1962): primary emotions, colors.**

