

Room 8

Pop Crowd

The 1960s saw direct political action taking place across the world, and the image of protesters pouring onto the streets would become symbolic of the decade. The crowd is also the counterpoint to advertising strategies that apparently appeal to the individual consumer's unique taste, while in fact reaching out to multitudes.

Images of collective action by Claudio Tozzi and Equipo Crónica suggest the potential of the protesting crowd to rescue the individual from dictatorships, while Nicola L's **Red Coat** turns eleven people into a single unit liberated from distinctions of class, gender or ethnicity. The crowd is not always synonymous with freedom. Jozef Jankovič proposes an individualistic alternative to the enforced uniformity of obligatory marches through Bratislava with citizens holding portraits of Lenin or Stalin.

Pop art did not only represent the protesting crowd. Pop aesthetics also featured on political placards held aloft by activists across the world – from the Black Panthers to the Viet Cong.

Wall labels

Clockwise from right of wall text

Claudio Tozzi 1944

Born and works Brazil

Multitude

Multidão

1968

Acrylic paint on agglomerate

In 1968 the military regime in Brazil became notoriously more oppressive. In São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, political protests were a daily occurrence. Here Tozzi addresses the contentious political situation by depicting the protesting crowd, adopting pop's accessible visual style to reach a wide audience. He enlarged a detail from a mass media image juxtaposing it with a series of raised fists. The combination highlights the power of the individual within the multitude.

Coleção Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo,

Fundo para aquisição de obras para o acervo MAM – Pirelli.

X50839

Jozef Jankovič 1937

Born and works Slovakia (formerly part of Czechoslovakia)

Private Manifestation

Súkromná manifestácia

1968

Wood, plaster, fabric and polyester

This work attacks official demonstrations in Bratislava, at which the public was encouraged to hold portraits of Vladimir Lenin, Karl Marx or Joseph Stalin. Combining sculpture and painting, as in many of Jankovič's works from the 1960s, it rebels against the regime not only by replacing the socialist icons with a self-portrait, but also by working in an anti-socialist realism visual style, inspired by pop art. 'At the time when loyalty to socialism was permanently manifested in the portraits of the icons of socialism, I felt the need to counterbalance it with the manifestation of myself,' Jankovič recalls.

Meulenstein Collection. X57210



Equipo Crónica

Rafael Solbes 1940–1981

Born and worked Spain

Manuel Valdes 1942

Born Spain, works Spain and USA

Juan Antonio Toledo 1940–1995

Born and worked Spain

Concentration or Quantity becomes Quality

Concentración o La cantidad se transforma en calidad

1966

Acrylic paint on canvas

This is an early work by the Spanish collective Equipo Crónica. Mass gatherings represented one of the biggest threats to Spanish dictator Francisco Franco's social repression. This sequence of manipulated press photographs showing a developing crowd celebrates the possibility of individual action solidifying into collective resistance to the regime.

Francisco Fandos. X51046

Nicola L

Born Morocco, works USA

Red Coat

1969-1970s

Super 8 film digitalised

Running time: 12 min 39 sec

Collection of the artist. X51072

Nicola L

Born Morocco, works USA

Red Coat

1969

Vinyl, eleven slits and eleven hooded jackets

Nicola L designed **Red Coat** for Brazilian musicians performing at the Isle of Wight Festival in 1969. The garment clothes eleven people at once, protecting them from the rain and from the risk losing one another. After the festival she took the **Red Coat** to various cities, inviting different people to wear this collective skin and walk in it through the streets together. Created during the socio-political upheavals of the late 1960s, the work became, as the artist recalls, 'an ephemeral monument to freedom'.

Collection of the artist. X51071



Sergio Lombardo 1939

Born and works Italy

John F. Kennedy

Nikita Krusciov

1962

Enamel paint on canvas

These works represent the leaders of the world's two superpowers during the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union. Directly copied from images found in the media and given a deliberately non-artistic, mass-produced appearance, the silhouettes point east or west in an accusatory gesture. They were made at a time of great tension between the two nations when a third World War seemed a very real possibility.

Private collection. X59438–9

Kiki Kogelnik 1935–1997

Born Austria, worked Austria, USA

Friends

1971

Oil paint and acrylic paint on canvas

Kogelnik was fascinated by the impact of new technologies on people and embarked on a humorous exploration of the body within the environment of high-tech post-war consumer society. These brightly coloured divided bodies are silhouettes of Kogelnik's friends, but pegged up they lose any strong sense of individuality.

Kiki Kogelnik Foundation Vienna / New York. X54173

Mario Schifano 1934–1998

Born Libya, worked Italy

Comrades comrades

Compagni compagni

1968

Enamel and spray paint on canvas and Perspex

In 1968, Italian artist Mario Schifano made a number of works in response to the global wave of protests. Among them are these paintings belonging to the **Comrades** series. Spray-painted silhouettes of political protestors holding the Communist symbol of hammer and sickle recur throughout the series, accompanied by the same political slogan calling for a fair solution to society's social and political contradictions. Only the background varies. By reiterating the same motif Schifano may be demonstrating how protest, slogans and politics generally fall prey to the dulling effects of repetition.

Private collection, Courtesy Fondazione Marconi.

X58491–3



Öyvind Fahlström 1928–1976

Born Brazil, worked USA, Sweden

Mao-Hope March

1966

16 mm film, black and white, sound

Running time: 4 mins 50 sec

Fahlström organised and filmed a street demonstration in which seven people carry placards with portraits of American entertainer Bob Hope and Mao Tse-tung, Chairman of the Communist Party of China. Passers-by are asked, 'are you happy?', their answers offering spectrum of views on the politics and media of the mid-1960s.

Sharon Avery-Fahlström, The Öyvind Fahlström Foundation.

X50871

Gérard Fromanger 1939

Born France, works France and Italy

Album The Red

1968–1970

Serigraphs

The first work in this series was the French flag with its dripping – or bleeding – red stripe. Fromanger submitted it to his peers at the Atelier Populaire, a radical group of artists and art students that produced political posters to disperse in the streets of Paris in support of the anti-capitalist protests of May 1968. Although the Atelier rejected the image, Fromanger pursued the idea, developing twenty further prints based on other national flags with dripping red elements or scenes of urban protests with figures blocked out in red, based on photographs by Elie Kagan.

Collection of the artist. X51207



Gérard Fromanger 1939

Born France, works France and Italy

Film-tract n° : 1968

1968

16mm film digitalised, colour, silent

Running time: 2 min 49 sec

The filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard was drawn to Fromanger's image of the 'wounded' French flag and asked the artist to create with him what became their 'ciné-tracts', a series of short films based on **Album The Red**.

Collection of the artist. X54174

Henri Cueco 1929

Born and works France

The Red Men, bas-relief

Les Hommes rouges

1969

Cold enamel glycerophthallic paint on plywood

Figures spring out of this painting, infusing the city around them with revolutionary red. Among them is a woman with a raised fist – an allegory of revolution who also appears in Cueco's **Large Protest** installation in this room. Cueco's figures come from images in magazines, newspapers and books, and his compositions were inspired by his interest in Marxist theories and anthropological writing. He was part of a group who identified themselves as 'figuration narrative' artists, distinguishing themselves from American pop artists by deliberately focusing on political themes.

Collection of the artist. X50867

Evelyne Axell 1935–1972
Born and worked Belgium
The Pretty Month of May
Le joli mois de mai
1970
Enamel paint on Plexiglas

Considered Axell's most political work, **The Pretty Month of May** addresses women's social and sexual liberation in the wake of the May 1968 Paris protests, in which workers and students campaigned against capitalism and consumerism. At the centre is a naked 'sit-in' demonstration. The woman brandishing a revolutionary red flag is reminiscent of Eugène Delacroix's **Liberty Leading the People** 1830, as well as a contemporary photograph of a female protester holding a Vietnamese flag. On the left is art critic Pierre Restany, champion of French New Realism, acting as a preacher of sexual revolution, while the nude figure on the right is a self-portrait.

Mu.Zee Oostende. X50800



Henri Cueco 1929

Born and works France

Large Protest

Grande manifestation

1969

Iron tubes, plywood, cold enamel glycerophthallic paint

Exhibited for the first time in 1970, and never since then,

Large Protest is part of a body of political works by Cueco reflecting the May 1968 protests in France, the Vietnam War and the Western fear of communism during the Cold War. The artist had worked with a theatre company and originally used stage lights to intensify the silhouettes of the floating figures. Despite the dreamy atmosphere produced by this staging, revolution is close at hand, personified as a woman with a raised fist.

Collection of the artist. X50868

