

## **American Art of the 1960s**

<b>Date/Time</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2025 11.00 to 16.00	<b>Price</b>	£98 for members
<b>Venue</b>	Lettsom House 11 Chandos Street, W1G 9DP	<b>Lecturer</b>	Ben Street

### **Introduction**

The 1960s in American politics was a time of great social upheaval and transformative, often traumatic events. The same might be said for its culture. In art, the legacy of the 1950s Abstract Expressionists was often challenged, and popular culture tentatively embraced. Artists looked to a diverse range of media to articulate the shocks of their time. The groundwork for what we now call "contemporary art" begins here.

### Day 1

Lecture 1 **From the fifties to the sixties.** How did American art of the 1950s pave the way for that of the 1960s? Artists and institutions that defined that decade.

Lecture 2 **The rebirth of Pop.** Artists worldwide had been inspired by popular culture since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. By the 1960s this interest was pervasive in "Pop Art". How pop is Pop Art?

Lecture 3 **Pop politics.** How did Pop artists confront or think about the political context of their day? How did they use popular imagery to reflect the turbulence of their times.

Lecture 4 **Saying nothing: minimal art.** A very American embrace of industrial materials and plain-spoken aesthetics emerges in the 1960s, changing art forever. A look at minimalism's artists and thinkers, and at the work of the counter-movement.

### Day 2

Lecture 5 **Art as idea.** Emergence of a conceptual art movement as artists turn away from manufacture towards a cerebral, playful form of art.

Lecture 6 **Image work.** Unprecedented use of photography and video as artistic media, all of which opened the doors for the art of now.

Lecture 7 **The figure in 60s art.** A look at Boston, San Francisco and Chicago, whose artists refuted Abstract Expressionism to use figuration to confront many of the horrors of the century.

Lecture 8 **Beyond the sixties.** What was the legacy of these artists? A look at the influence of conceptual art, minimalism, pop and figuration in work made in the 1970s, 80s and beyond.

### **Lecturer**

Dr. Ben Street is an art historian, author and lecturer. He has written many books on art for general audiences and is a contributing writer for Art Review, Apollo and the Times Literary Supplement. He teaches for the University of East Anglia and the University of Oxford, and has been an educator and lecturer for many museums in the UK and USA.