Apart/Together

The Saatchi Gallery’s current exhibitions *Post-Pop: East meets West*, addresses the theme of *Apart and/or Together* throughout its work. The idea of *Apart and/or Together* can portray itself in many different ways, including some of the following:

**Apart:** isolation, displacement, fragmentation, dismantling, individualism, contrast (of movements), distant

**Together:** unity/unification, shared experiences (including communal areas, notion of a promised paradise), collage (to create single environment), community, national/group identity, assemblage, collection, conglomeration of icons

When collecting research and contextual influences:

- Consider **how** the artist has made the work.
- Look at **what materials** have they used.
- **Why** do you think they used these materials?
- Do you think the medium effectively portrays the **concept/theme** of the work?
- Do you think there is **more than one** theme in the work?
- Do you see **inspiration/influences** from other artists, art movements or events in the work?
It is usually the case that Artists, Designers and Craftspeople use materials specific to the theme of their work, so they can illustrate a specific meaning, mood or story. They may also consider composition, scale, colour, text and style. They will develop their ideas, refine them through testing, reflect and record their work in writing and practical outcomes and present their work to reflect the theme running through it.

The following artists in Post-Pop: East Meets West particularly illustrate elements of Apart and/or Together within their work:

**Lisa Milroy** Gallery 1 ‘Hardware’, 1991, Oil on canvas, 193 x 249 cm

Collecting objects as a collection, sanctifying objects when placing them together.

Lisa Milroy is an Anglo-Canadian artist, famous for her still life paintings of everyday objects. These often become decorative in the way that they are laid out and transferred onto canvas through a meticulous order. *Hardware* (1991) turns these rather banal objects that would not even get noticed, most of them door handles and brackets and screws, into something very precious. By placing them all together, these objects become like that of jewellery collection, and the recurring shades of gold and silver turns these items into visually appealing objects of desire. By carefully placing the pieces of hardware together in a very orderly and precise manner, their charming quality is celebrated.

Her careful arrangements of the objects are often placed on plain backgrounds to really accentuate them and give praise to them. Milroy is a contemporary still life painter who has previously painted objects such as shoes, clothing, and vases.
**Ilya and Emilia Kabakov** Gallery 1, ‘Incident in the Corridor near the Kitchen’, 1989, Installation,

Communal area, intersection of life and all its varied aspects, shared experiences; work is together/coincides with the advances of modernism/sci-fi.

Ilya kabakov was one of the founders of the Moscow Conceptualism movement. This has evidently shaped his work, including *Incident in the Corridor near the Kitchen* (1989). The piece is visually fantastical, and there is an element of absurdity to it. This is perhaps because the Moscow conceptualists focused their attention not on form or colour, but on the ‘internal composition of the subjects they depicted or the context in which the artistic method is realized’. Additionally, these artists often incorporated text to give rise to their conceptual ideas and narratives. Here, we have a plethora of hanging saucepans and pots, and several of these contain small figures that appear to be white paper cut outs of humans standing in them. In the background are very banal landscapes of trees and woodlands. There is a text beside the piece which tells a short story of a girl who wakes up one morning to find these flying pans in the corridor.

The composition of the ‘flying saucepans’, juxtaposed by the traditional, picturesque landscape paintings in the background, symbolises the modern communal areas found in apartments where magic and all forms of human relationships are fostered, as well as the type of art that would have been accepted by the state. The dirty and somewhat shabby kitchen appliances contrast with the background paintings.

This piece has themes of community and shared experiences, as the communal apartment would allow for inter-mingling. Particularly the communal kitchen, it is a designated place where people share their lives, including cooking, arguing, and finding love. There is a togetherness in that all habitants get to experience the magical moment here. Anything can happen!
Bill Woodrow  Gallery 1, Hoover Breakdown, 1979, Upright vacuum cleaner, wooden replica vacuum cleaner, 100 x 155 x 125 cm

Breakdown, disintegration, fragmentation, dismantling, components as individual

Bill Woodrow’s *Hoover Breakdown* (1979) in an installation piece that sits freely on the gallery floor. The parts laid out in front of it are all taken from a real Hoover, and they indicate the carefully systematic, clockwork style assemblage that takes place in domestic appliances. All of the parts are carefully laid out in a very orderly and disciplined manner, as if they have been placed in such a way for a larger machine to come and suck them all away.

You could be fooled into thinking that the upright is a real Hoover, but made of wood, the Hoover adheres to one of Pop’s methodologies; notably that of taking found objects and reproducing them, whilst perhaps ever so slightly distorting them. ‘I took the complete thing to bits. And then I added my own version of the Hoover, a wooden replica, to see what the relationship was like.’ By re-creating a domestic object and using a dark material for the Hoover, all of the parts come together as a single unit due to the similar colours in this installation.

The viewer is then conflicted with thoughts as to whether this is a real object or a model. There is a clever juxtaposition of the components and the final product, which answers questions of what certain set of components make up an object.

http://www.billwoodrow.com/dev/texts.php?page=2&text_id=1

Unfinished, materials, assembling, layout plans  cohesion, individualism  DIY

Ilya and Emilia Kabakov (husband and wife, and lifelong collaborators on conceptual/ contemporary art) explore the notion of DIY, which has more prominently come about since the advent of furniture stores such as IKEA. This tongue-in-cheek piece is self-reflexive, in that it is essentially an installation of an installation. One could most certainly be fooled into believing that this is an area in the Gallery where technicians have been working.

The installation comprises actual materials and tools, such as framed paintings in protective wrapping leaning against the wall ready for hanging, planks of wood sealing off the area, layout plans and diagrams left on the planks, and large, opened pots of paints and other accessories on a mat on the floor.

By having the choice to purchase materials, this allows for individualism, which can be linked to the theme of ‘apart’, as the post-modern world is often linked to the power of choosing and selecting. Moreover, as the area has not been assembled yet, the actual materials are apart as well in all their elements of the ‘unfinished installation’. They have all been left in this particular area of the gallery space, as if to suggest that once they are all comprised together, there will be a unified and cohesive installation.
Irina Korina  Gallery 1, ‘Chapel’, 2013, Installation, dimensions variable

Displacement, Isolation, Suppression/Confiscation, Returning

Irina Korina’s background has ultimately influenced her artistic practice. Previously working as a theatre designer Chapel (2013) takes shape as something of a stage set. Highly stylised through its theatrical and artificial nature, the work is quite captivating. A large installation that incorporates motifs of traditional Russian church architecture, Korina is in some ways parodying Russian craftsmanship.

Chapel has themes of displacement as it alludes to the suppression of religion under the Soviet Union, which is symbolised by the corrugated iron that could be found in Soviet Russia around churches that were closed down. This leads to a sense of isolation as science became more prominent, symbolised by the images of scientific practice on the coloured stained glass. Churches were confiscated as part of an ideological objective, to make room for science. Underlying themes include state management and control. However, symbols such as the dead trees standing – a Russian concept, suggests a returning and a togetherness with the people again. This can be supported by the repatriation of the church following the fall of the Soviet Union.
Jonas Wood Gallery 1, ‘Kitchen with Aloe Plant’, 2013, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 223.5 x 198.1 cm

Collage, Amalgamation, Idealistic Environment

Jonas Wood is an artist who paints what is around him in his daily life. He often draws from former living situations, and in *Kitchen with Aloe Plant* (2013), he has created an interior by re-making a space that comprises various aspects of his former living environments placed together to create an animated collage of images and colours.

By employing oil and acrylic, Wood has created a piece that looks like a layering of images and textures has taken place, as if he has cut out from magazines. There is a disparity towards the final space, as the wallpaper in certain places seem incongruent to one another, as does the flooring, and the outside views of magical places. Even though the colours and textures are inconsistent, they come together through an amalgamation of his imagination to create his ideal world. Additionally, the colours are all quite cheerful in their tone and this consequently yields a rather charming and warm-hearted scene. Reminiscent of original pop artist Richard Hamilton and his seminal piece *Just what is it that makes today’s Homes so Appealing?* (1956)
Jeff Koons  Gallery 5, ‘Three Ball Total Equilibrium Tank (Two Spalding Shaq Attaq, One Spalding NBA Tip-Off)’, 1986, Glass tank, steel, stand, sodium chloride reagent, distilled water, three basketballs, 152 x 129 x 40 cm

Immortalising objects, shared culture, national identity, celebratory, highlighting iconic national/cultural influences ï shared identity

Both Three Ball Total Equilibrium Tank and Encased were produced in the mid-eighties, at a time when basketball as a sport reached its high point, and which still persists today. This was due to the rise of key sporting figures like Michael Jordan. Koons captures a national culture here and documents a major part of U.S sporting culture. By doing so, he brings people together by creating a national identity that celebrates this national sport. Koons says that he is all for the artist regaining ‘the responsibility for manipulation and seduction.’

These two works by the artist, whose practice often includes taking found objects that are rather ordinary and using these for large sculptural works, turns seemingly insignificant objects into sacred and precious artefacts. By placing the basketballs in a tank of distilled water and sodium chloride reagent, he suspends them in mid air and thus preserves them. Similarly Koons places multiple basketballs in a glass case as if they are highly valuable. This process of multiples is additionally reminiscent of Andy Warhol and his silk-screens, and is therefore incorporating a common feature of Pop methodology. In doing so Koons immortalises these objects and American History, and, as a social commentary which Pop often suggests, the artist allows visitors to share this cultural artefact and create a cultural identity.
Alexander Kosapolov Gallery 7, ‘Hero, Leader, God’, 2007, Painted resin, 230 x 211 x 115 cm

Placing diverse figures together, analogies, metaphors

Alexander Kosapolov has created a sculpture of the iconic figures, Lenin, Mickey Mouse and Jesus all hand in hand. The name is intended to be humorous; *Hero, Leader, God* (2014) because we are unsure who is meant to be the hero, the leader or the god in this situation.

Kosapolov has created a large scale work here, like a public sculpture, and its size makes it powerful. The painted resin alludes to the Soviet Union, but also to plastic toy figurines. By grouping these figures together a strength is created between them, it is as if a common goal. It also removes them from reality in a sense, they preside over humanity from a distance. By placing Jesus next to Mickey Mouse, he becomes a media symbol, and together they all evoke a myth.
Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid  

Gallery 7, The Red Flag, 1983, Oil and tempera on canvas, 244 x 204 cm

Ideology — National Identity vs. Oppression and isolation from rest of the World

The Red Flag (1983) can be described as the Russian equivalent of Andy Warhol’s Brillo Pads. Created by Komar and Melamid, a partnership who founded ‘Sots Art’ and who worked together to subvert the Social Realism of the Soviet Union. This is a very simple piece but it is tremendously powerful. Themes include national identity, and a symbolising of ideology. The deep red contrasts heavily with the plain black background, and it evokes instantly the politics and culture of the Soviet Union. Whilst this piece represents the East and gives the people their own iconography, it connotes something negative. The ideology that it symbolises has, in effect, isolated the people from the rest of the world. This can be seen in the face behind the flag which seems to be highly distressed.

Red Flag is painted in oil and tempera which makes the painting look like it could have been made centuries ago with this very traditional method. The painterly effect is interesting as it contrasts with the contemporary subject matter and the painting style.
**Liu Dahong**  
**Gallery 7, Sacrificial Altar, 2001, Oil on three canvases, 219 x 100 cm**

Everybody happy′ promise of luxury to the masses, paradise, collective spirit, Cultural Revolution/ identity

Drawing from traditional altar pieces, *Sacrificial Altar* portrays a land of paradise, which refers to the Cultural Revolution in China under Chairman Mao. The revolution aimed to bring together the mass population as one collective. However, the piece is overtly critical. We can detect this through the exaggeration of the figures and their loyalty to the state. Dahong’s piece is very similar to Jan Van Eyk’s Ghent Altarpiece which depicts God in the middle, and the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist on either side. The colourful tones help to depict a paradise and aims to subvert the Social Realist art which was so prevalent in China during Mao’s reign. A parody takes place that dismantles the ideology and the promise of a collective spirit.

**Komar and Melamid**  
**Gallery 11, Nostalgic View of the Kremlin in a Romantic Landscape, 1981-82, Oil on canvas, 183 x 221 cm**

Inaccessibility ′ public vs. Private

Komar and Melamid depict the famous Kremlin here, through a very romanticised view. The far away land is picturesque, but it perhaps refers to the inaccessibility of the building, in that the ordinary Russian can never reach it. There is a clear juxtaposition of this Shangri-la in the background, and the foreground where the viewer stands, who is surrounded by rubble and darkness. This contrast suggests that there is a division between the greater majority and the government. The disparity brings the people together, as they are left on one side of the water, peering in on this distant mini-utopia which they do not have access to.
Leonid Sokov  Gallery 11, ‘Meeting of Two Sculptures’, 1990, Bronze

Juxtaposition, division between masses and government

Sokov’s *Meeting of Two Sculptures* (1990) is similar to the Kremlin piece in that Sokov interrogates the communist ideal by scrutinizing the authorities who are more privileged than the rest. Sokov draws from Art History for inspiration, to create a clever piece that employs juxtaposition for effective contrast.

Andreev’s statue of Lenin stands face to face with Giacometti’s *Walking Man*. From the logic of totalitarian monumentalise, we see the juxtaposition of two statues – one famous and widespread through the territory of the socialist camp and the other meaningless and ugly. In the logic of academic naturalism we see a meeting of a starving subject with a well-fed and smug leader. This contrast perhaps suggests that there is no unity, if politics is corrupt and contradictory like these two sculptures when placed beside one another.

GU Wenda  Gallery 13, United Nations - Man and Space, 1999-2000, Human hair, white glue, burlap

Internationalism, universal identity, transculturalism, transnationalism, hybridity

This installation speaks of a single single identity that encapsulates everyone and all the different ethnicities. Sanctifying and preserving human hairs – the space creates a visceral experience that is reminiscent of a burial chamber.