

Postwar Art and Literature: 1945-1990



The Theatre of the Absurd

- As a continuation of “Age of Anxiety”
 - Literature symbolized the meaninglessness of the world through the absurdity of the work
- Best example – Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*



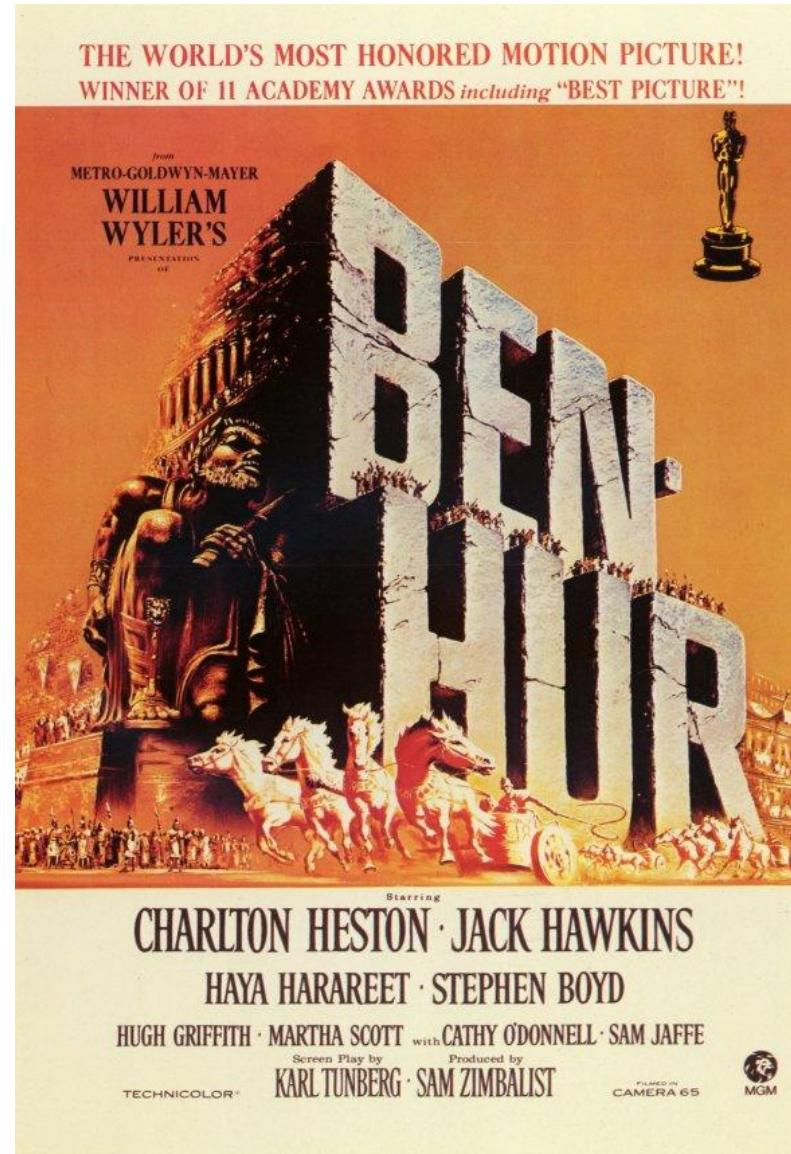
Abstract Expressionism

- Developed in New York by Surrealists who fled Paris during WWII
- Best example – Jackson Pollack
- Style:
 - Completely non-representational
 - Explosion of paint elicits emotion and movement



The Emergence of Popular Culture

- Cause: Consumer Revolution
- “Americanization”
 - Through film
 - 40% of Hollywood’s income came from Europe
 - Through television
 - American shows were cheaper to buy than producing original programming
 - Through Rock!!!
 - 50s – The King
 - 60s – The British Invasion



Pop Art

- Best example – Andy Warhol
- Style:
 - Images of popular culture were transformed into works of fine art
 - Mass-produced!



Postmodernism

- Unlike the “avant-garde” of modernism, postmodernism favors the use of “tradition”
 - Mixes past tradition with Modernist innovations
 - Elevates traditional crafts to the level of fine art
 - Ex: Weavers, potters, glassmakers, blacksmiths, furniture makers



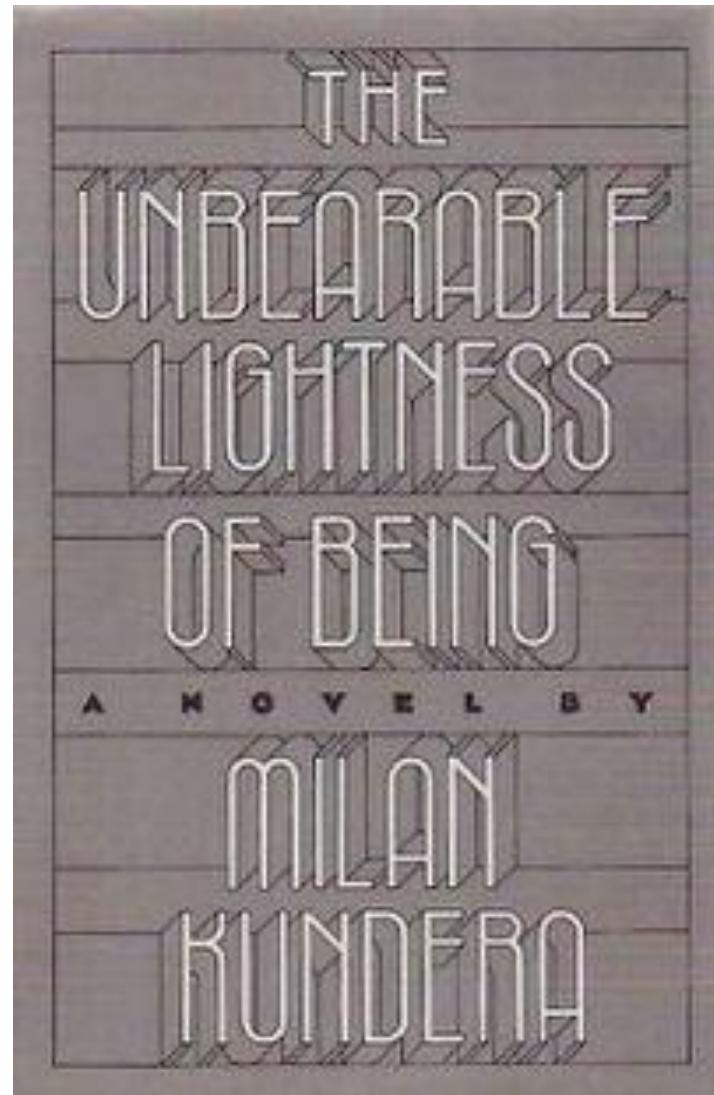
Postmodern Visual Art

- 60s – “Happenings”
 - Action painting → Unscripted events with audience participation
- 70s – “Land Art”
 - Robert Smithson’s *Spiral Jetty*
- Architecture
 - Combo of traditional elements and modern elements
- Photorealism
 - Painting or sculpture so detailed that it looked like a photograph!!



Postmodern Literature

- “Magic Realism”
 - Blending fact and fantasy to demonstrate the relativity of knowledge
- *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984) by Milan Kundera
 - Despite hardships within the Eastern bloc, he remains optimistic about the human spirit



Globalization of Popular Culture

- Golden Age of Rock
 - 1967-73
- Age of Punk Rock
 - 1976-79
- 1980s – MTV
 - Emergence of rap and hip-hop
- Mass sports
 - Olympics as the “war without weapons”
 - Soviets dominated from 1956-88
- Marshall McLuhan’s “Global Village”
 - Positive or negative?

