

Wallpaper*

In memoriam: Robert Indiana (1928-2018)

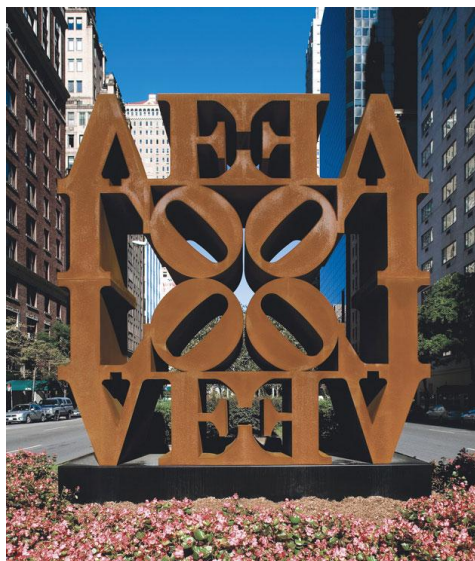
By Elly Parsons
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Portrait: Jack Mitchell, courtesy of Getty Images

Robert Indiana, early progenitor of pop art, has passed away at the age of 89, in his secluded Maine home.

His most famous work, LOVE (1965) is a paradoxical one. At once, it spotlighted his career and eclipsed it, erstwhile lending the artist the now largely rethought critical response as a 'one trick pony'. This signature composition, first created for a MoMA Christmas card, was subsequently printed on 330 million postage stamps, and has since been reproduced innumerable times in paint, print, as a sculpture; as well as being recreated on unauthorised tchotchkes; casting a love-shaped shadow over the artist's otherwise abundant oeuvre.



'LOVE WALL and ONE through ZERO', exhibited by Paul Kasmin Gallery at 515 West Street, New York City in Spring 2018

Indiana once said, 'It's the role of the artist – my particular role, if you will – to make words and numbers very, very special.' It's an idea that preoccupied him for most of his career. Early standout works, like the 1961 oil painting *The American Dream #1*, used bold graphic design and peppy typography to tousele with the perceived superficiality of mid-century American life; a concept Indiana (real name Clark) toyed with by renaming himself after the Midwestern state he was born in.

Indiana remains one of the most important pop artists of all time, his name sitting comfortably alongside Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol. His work with language anticipated a deluge of artists who use words as a pillar in their art – Barbara Kruger and Ed Ruscha, to Tracey Emin and Bruce Nauman. But his most powerful legacy will remain his eternally powerful stamp of LOVE, a rare work on the level of Warhol's Campbell's Soup Cans, that reaches outside of the confines of the art-world and into the fabric of society.



'To Russia with Love' was the first show in Russia for the American artist in 2017. Pictured: 'To Russia with Love' installation view



The artist's ubiquitous LOVE image arguably overshadows its creator in worldwide notoriety. Pictured: installation view of 'To Russia with Love'



Indiana first rose to fame amid the burgeoning American pop art movement of the early 1960s, his bold graphic images inspired by both the commercial and highway signs of 60s America and more highbrow literary influences. Yet Indiana cannot be typecast as purely a pop artist, nor his work seen as paused and suspended in that decade. Pictured: *Autoportrait, 1960*



Though his art was originally born of the American commercial iconography of the Cold War period, Indiana has a long held fascination with Russia. *Pictured: Sixth State, 1959. Courtesy Galerie Gmurzynska*



Robert Indiana's *ART* sculpture on view at the site of Arte, a development of luxury residential properties in Miami by Antonio Citterio

<https://www.wallpaper.com/art/pop-artist-robert-indiana-obituary>