Roy Lichtenstein was born on October 27, 1923, in New York City to an upper-middle-class Jewish family. His interest in art began at a young age, and he attended public school until he was 12, after which he enrolled at Manhattan's Franklin School for Boys, a private preparatory school. Lichtenstein's early art influences came from jazz music, science fiction, and comic strips, which would all play a significant role in his later work. His passion for art was nurtured through classes at the Art Students League of New York and later at Ohio State University, where he was mentored by Hoyt L. Sherman, who had a profound impact on his perception of visual arts. Lichtenstein's early work was not in the pop art style for which he is now known. In the 1950s, his work echoed the then-dominant Abstract Expressionist style, and he experimented with various artistic methods. However, it wasn't until the 1960s that he began to develop the pop art style that would make him famous. His pivotal work, 'Look Mickey' (1961), marked a significant turning point. He adopted a method of using hand-painted dots to mimic the mechanical printing processes of comic strips, which became a hallmark of his style. This technique, known as Ben-Day dots, became synonymous with Lichtenstein's work and pop art as a genre. Lichtenstein's rise to prominence came in the 1960s, during a time when the art world was dominated by Abstract Expressionism. His work, along with that of Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, and others, formed the vanguard of the new pop art movement. This movement sought to challenge the traditions of fine art by including imagery from popular culture such as advertising, comic books, and mundane cultural objects. Lichtenstein's work was often controversial, as it blurred the lines between high art and low culture. His 1963 piece 'Whaam!' is one of the most exemplary works of this period, depicting a fighter jet firing a rocket in a style taken directly from comic book panels. Throughout his career, Lichtenstein was a prolific artist who explored many different subjects and mediums. He created more than 5,000 paintings, prints, drawings, sculptures, murals, and ceramics. His work extended beyond the comic strips for which he is best known, including interpretations of famous artworks by artists like Pablo Picasso and Claude Monet. Lichtenstein's 'Brushstrokes' series, which began in the mid-1960s, is a notable example where he turned the gestural brushwork of Abstract Expressionism into a subject of pop art, thereby critiquing the movement from which he had emerged. Lichtenstein's approach to pop art was intellectual and methodical. He often used a complex system of stencils to create his images and was meticulous in his application of paint. Despite the mechanical appearance of his work, Lichtenstein was deeply engaged in the artistic process and sought to make each composition as perfect as possible. His attention to detail extended to the emotional content of his paintings; he often depicted melodramatic scenes from romance comics and war stories, infusing them with a sense of irony and detachment that was both humorous and critical of cultural values. Roy Lichtenstein's influence on the art world extends beyond his iconic pop art paintings. He was also a significant figure in the realm of public art and sculpture. In the 1990s, he created a series of large-scale outdoor sculptures that were displayed in cities around the world. These works often incorporated his signature use of bold lines and bright colors, and included pieces like the 'Brushstroke' sculptures and 'Tokyo Brushstroke I & II.' His public art installations helped to democratize art by making it accessible to a wider audience outside the confines of galleries and museums. Lichtenstein was not only an artist but also an educator. He taught at various institutions, including a ten-year tenure at Rutgers University, where he was influenced by Allan Kaprow, the creator of 'Happenings,' which were early performance art events. Lichtenstein's interactions with Kaprow and other avant-garde artists at Rutgers helped to shape his artistic perspective and encouraged him to explore new ideas and media. His teaching career was marked by a commitment to sharing his knowledge and passion for art with his students, many of whom went on to become accomplished artists themselves. Despite his commercial success and critical acclaim, Lichtenstein faced accusations of plagiarism because of his use of existing comic book imagery. However, he and his supporters argued that his work transformed the source material and commentary on art and culture. Lichtenstein's technique involved recontextualizing images from mass media, altering them in scale, color, and composition, and presenting them in a new light. His work questioned originality in art and the mass production of images, engaging with the concept of appropriation as an artistic strategy. Roy Lichtenstein's legacy is preserved through the work of the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, established in 1999. The foundation's mission is to facilitate public access to Lichtenstein's work and to foster an understanding of the artist's contributions to modern art. It supports research, exhibitions, and publications related to Lichtenstein and his art. The foundation also manages an extensive archive of documents and materials related to Lichtenstein's career, ensuring that future generations can study and appreciate his artistic achievements. Roy Lichtenstein passed away on September 29, 1997, from pneumonia at the age of 73. His death marked the end of an era for pop art, but his influence continues to be felt in the art world and popular culture. Lichtenstein's work has been exhibited extensively in major museums around the globe, and his paintings are among the most recognizable images of the 20th century. His art has also permeated into the broader cultural consciousness, influencing everything from advertising to fashion, and solidifying his place as one of the most important artists of his time.