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| Vulgar Modernism |
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| J. Hoberman first introduced his concept of 'vulgar modernism' in 1981 to describe a particular sensibility found on the *looney* fringes of American popular culture—that is, the 'vulgar equivalent of modernism itself'. This self-conscious and self-reflexive sensibility was developed between 1940 and 1960 in such ironic and subversive works as Warner Bros. cartoons by Tex Avery and Chuck Jones, Jerry Lewis and Dean Martin comedies directed by Frank Tashlin, *Mad Magazine*'s graphic parodies of Disney characters, and the television programs by comedian Ernie Kovacs. These lowbrow works are heavily embedded with intertextuality, forgo restraint and naturalism, flout conventions and sentimentality, and crack the veneer of acceptable materialism and frenzied consumption in mid-century American society. As such, these examples of so-called 'para-art' may be appreciated alongside experimental or avant-garde works commonly associated with high art, including Lettrist poetry and the films of Jean-Luc Godard. |
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| Further reading:  (Hoberman)  (Jenkins)  (Jenkins, Mel Brooks, Vulgar Modernism, and Comic Remediation) |