

## = Mom and Pop Art =

" Mom and Pop Art " is the nineteenth episode of The Simpsons ' tenth season . It was first aired on the Fox network in the United States on April 11 , 1999 . In this episode , Homer inadvertently becomes a well @-@ praised outsider artist after his failed attempts to build a barbecue pit . His exhibit goes to the Louvre , and after Mr. Burns buys his artwork , Homer becomes a success . However , after his new art appears in the " Art in America " show , Homer 's artwork is criticized for being too repetitive of his first piece . After his recent failure , Homer tries to devise something groundbreaking , after hearing of Christo 's art .

" Mom and Pop Art " was directed by Steven Dean Moore and was the first episode Al Jean wrote after his return to The Simpsons writing staff . The episode 's plot was conceived by Jean , who was inspired by a segment about found artists on the television news magazine 60 Minutes . The episode features contemporary artist Jasper Johns as himself , and also features Italian actress Isabella Rossellini as Astrid Weller . It features references to several famous artworks , such as those of Leonardo da Vinci and Henri Rousseau . In its original broadcast , the episode was seen by approximately 8 @.@ 5 million viewers , finishing in 23rd place in the ratings the week it aired . Following the home video release of The Simpsons - The Complete Tenth Season , " Mom and Pop Art " received mixed reviews from critics .

## = = Plot = =

Homer is relaxing on a Saturday when Marge tells him that he should be doing work around the house and yard . Homer overcomes his reluctance and takes Bart to Mom & Pop Hardware to get some equipment . But while there , Homer sees a do it yourself barbecue pit and is compelled to buy it instead of anything that might help him with his work . Homer tries to install the pit , but bungles the job when he drops the parts of the barbecue into wet cement . He frantically tries to assemble the barbecue pit before the cement hardens , but only makes things worse . In the end , Homer is left with a mismatched collection of parts stuck in hardened cement , which angers him . He vents his rage on the construct , mangling it further . Later , Homer takes the results of his work back to the store for a refund , which he does not receive . On the way home , Homer loses control of the wagon containing the jumbled mess of concrete and bricks . It rolls down the highway and crashes into a woman 's car , wrecking it . Homer flees the scene of the accident , but the woman tracks him down . It turns out that she is an artist named Astrid Weller ( voiced by Isabella Rossellini ) , and sees Homer 's handiwork as being a masterpiece of outsider art . Homer 's exhibit goes to the Louvre : American Style museum and when Mr. Burns buys his work , Homer becomes a success .

Now officially an outsider artist , Homer uses his channeled rage to continue his work and befriends other stereotypically pretentious artists , like Jasper Johns . All the while , his easily achieved fame makes Marge jealous due to her lack of success at becoming a successful artist despite years of effort . Homer later gets a notice from Astrid Weller that his work will be in the " Art in America " show , but his new masterpieces are rejected by Springfield 's residents and his new " friends " for being repetitive of his first piece .

Down on his luck and starved for inspiration , Lisa recommends Homer visit the Springfield Art Museum . But none of the art Homer sees serves to inspire him ; he feels inadequate when he sees what other artists have done , and it only worsens the situation when he takes a nap and has a nightmare of various paintings attacking him . He goes back home , discouraged , but is soon given another suggestion by Lisa . She tells him about the artist Christo , causing Homer to try doing something similarly groundbreaking . He and Bart flood Springfield by opening all the fire hydrants ( having covered the sewer drains with the city 's doormats , including their own ) and putting snorkels in the animals of the zoo ( so that they do not drown ) . Surprisingly , Astrid Weller and even the whole town of Springfield is impressed with Homer 's work , and enjoy the newly made " Grand Canals of Springfield " along with the swimming zoo animals . As Marge and Homer kiss each other on the roof of their house Jasper Johns comes on a boat and steals the painting Marge was painting . The song playing in the end of episode is " Arrivederci Roma " performed by Michael Dees .

= = Production = =

" Mom and Pop Art " was written by current showrunner Al Jean and directed by Steven Dean Moore . It was first broadcast on the Fox network in the United States on April 11 , 1999 . It was the first episode Jean wrote after returning to The Simpsons writing staff . For three years , Jean had worked with Mike Reiss on the fantasy sitcom Teen Angel , a job which he despised . " Every other day [ that I worked on Teen Angel ] I said ' I wish I was back at The Simpsons ' , " Jean said in the DVD commentary for the episode . The idea for the episode came from a segment of the television news magazine 60 Minutes . The segment was about found artists , who , Jean said , " take basically garbage and assemble it [ ... ] and turn it into artwork that would sell for tens of thousands of dollars . " Jean thought that this profession would fit Homer . In the episode , " Start here tomorrow 7 / 17 / 95 " is written in blue paint on the Simpsons ' garage door . The date refers to Scully and Julie Thacker 's anniversary , which was on July 17 , 1995 . In the episode 's setpiece , the Simpsons visit a hardware store . The segment was inspired by Jean 's father , who owned a hardware store that Al Jean used to work in as a child . Later in the setpiece , Homer tries to construct a barbecue that he bought from the hardware store . The scene was also conceived by Jean , and is executive producer and former showrunner Mike Scully 's favorite setpiece .

While the designs of Homer 's new art friends were not based on anybody in particular , the " German guy " was drawn to hold his cigarette in a " European way " by animation director Jim Reardon . When visiting the Springfield museum , Homer and Marge see a painting showing Akbar and Jeff , two characters from The Simpsons creator Matt Groening 's comic strip Life in Hell . The painting 's frame was also signed by Groening himself in real life . The painting next to Groening 's was drawn by Scully 's friend Tom Gagnon , who is an artist . Some of the paintings in the episode 's second act were also drawn by friends of Dean Moore . At one point in Homer 's dream , the Vitruvian Man appears and attacks him . According to Groening , there were " some controversy " over whether or not the Vitruvian Man would be in nude or not , as he is in the original painting . In the episode , he is wearing a jockstrap . At the end of the episode , Springfield is flooded with water , and Marge is seen painting a picture on the Simpsons ' roof . Her painting was drawn by staff animator Amy Clese , who drew it as a recreation of a painting by J. M. W. Turner , an English Romantic painter . According to Dean Moore , the painting was " pretty difficult " to animate , as it was drawn with a lot of washes and gradients . He added , however , that he was " very happy " with it .

" Mom and Pop Art " features American contemporary artist Jasper Johns as himself . His lines were recorded over the telephone , and Jean stated that it was " extremely exciting " to have him appear in the episode . The episode also features Italian actress Isabella Rossellini as Astrid . Jean stated that her performance was " terrific " and that she was " wonderful to work with " , although there was one line in particular that she had difficulty performing . In a scene in the episode , Astrid introduces the audience in an art club to Homer 's art . Originally , she would have said " you snorted my father 's ashes " , but because of Rossellini 's accent , it sounded like she said " you snorted my father 's ass " , according to Jean . Because none of the recorded takes sounded good , the line was ultimately scrapped from the episode .

= = Cultural references = =

In the beginning of the episode , Homer sings " Coconut " by Harry Nilsson , changing the lyrics .

" Mom and Pop Art " features several references to famous works of art . In Homer 's dream , Homer is lying in a similar way to the woman in French Naïve artist Henri Rousseau 's painting The Sleeping Gypsy . The lion that licks Homer in the dream is also based on the lion from The Sleeping Gypsy . After he is waken up by the lion , Homer is attacked by the Vitruvian Man , a drawing by Italian polymath Leonardo da Vinci . Then Homer gets attacked by Three Musicians by Pablo Picasso in which their instruments turn into machine guns and shoot at Homer . At one point in his dream , Homer sees a clock that drips water . The scene is a reference to The Persistence of

Memory , a painting by Spanish Catalan surrealist artist Salvador Dalí . Near the end of his dream , Homer meets American painter Andy Warhol , who throws soup cans at him . It is a reference to Campbell 's Soup Cans , a painting by Warhol .

Also , Johns is portrayed as a kleptomaniac , a person who compulsively steals objects of little to no value . It is a reference to Johns 's art style , as he usually uses objects from everyday life for his artwork . In a scene in the episode , Homer channels his anger into his art . The scene is a reference to the 1959 comedy horror film *Bucket of Blood* , in which an artist is screaming at a piece of clay to be a nose . After having flooded Springfield , Homer tells Marge that the city is " like Venice , without the black plague " . The line refers to the outbreak of the bubonic plague that swept through Europe in the 14th century . In the scene , a lion can be seen swimming in the water . The notion that lions can swim is a reference to the season 2 episode " Bart the Daredevil " , in which the famous daredevil Lance Murdock performs a stunt which involves swimming lions .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast on April 11 , 1999 , " Mom and Pop Art " received an 8 @. @ 5 rating , according to Nielsen Media Research , translating to approximately 8 @. @ 5 million viewers . The episode finished in 23rd place in the ratings for the week of April 5 ? 11 , 1999 , making it the fourth most watched program on Fox that night , after a new episode of *The X @-@ Files* , *Ally McBeal* , and *Family Guy* . On August 7 , 2007 , the episode was released as part of *The Simpsons - The Complete Tenth Season* DVD box set . Matt Groening , Mike Scully , Al Jean , George Meyer and Steven Dean Moore participated in the DVD 's audio commentary of the episode .

Following its home video release , " Mom and Pop Art " received mixed reviews from critics . Giving it a positive review , Chris Barsanti of *Filmcritic.com* described it as " one of the show 's most gratifying ep [ isode ] s " . He wrote " Amidst Homer 's accidental acceptance as a producer of rage @-@ filled outsider art , the episode concocts a knowing satire ? but also warm appreciation ? of modern art , " and added that it " includes one of the show 's best cameos of all time : a kleptomaniacal Jasper Johns . " Both James Plath of *DVD Town* and Jake MacNeill of *Digital Entertainment News* considered it to be one of the season 's best episodes . The A.V. Club named Milhouse 's line " Everything 's coming up Milhouse ! " as one of the quotes from *The Simpsons* that can be used in everyday situations . Giving the episode a mixed review , *DVD Movie Guide* 's Colin Jacobson described it as " pretty average . " He wrote that " Mom and Pop Art " " offer [ s ] more than a few elements that echo bits from earlier years " . He concluded by writing that the episode " isn ' t a bad program , but it lacks much inspiration " . Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood of *I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide* wrote , " Well , Marge is justifiably upset when , as an artist herself , it is Homer who is suddenly getting the kudos for producing rubbish . It 's a good gag but probably not enough to stretch out for an entire episode . " However , they added that the last scenes , along with Johns ' cameo , were " pure joy " , even though the episode " drag [ s ] in the middle " .