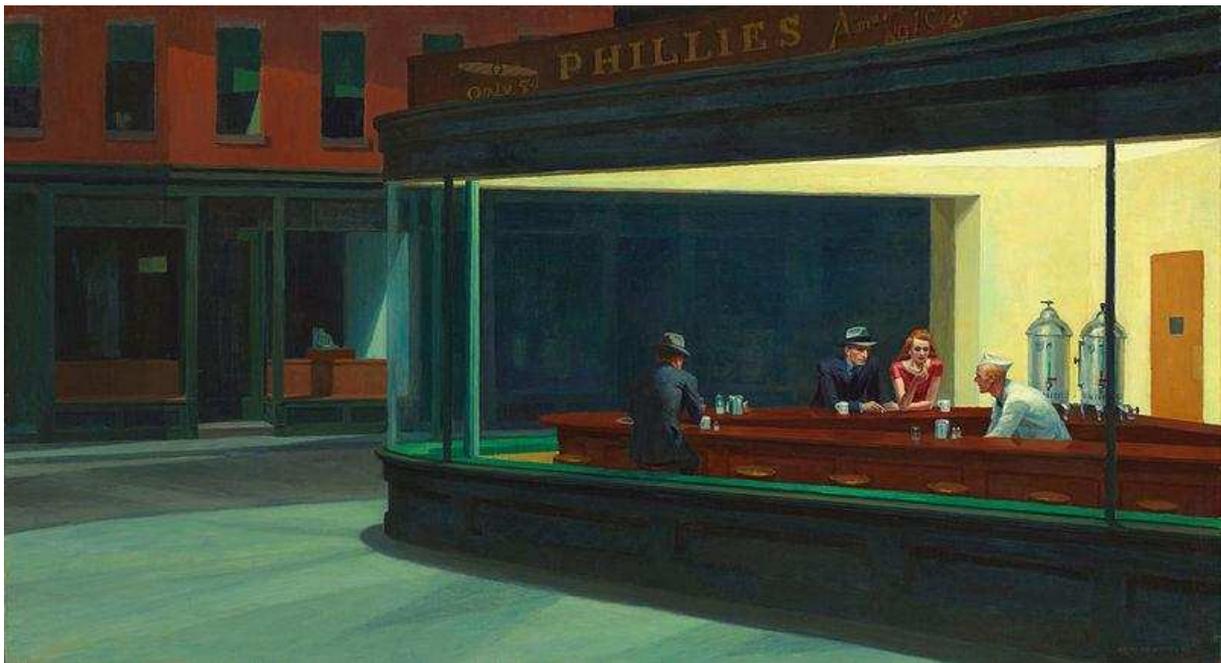


Some works of art influenced by *Nighthawks*, Edward Hopper.

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In this paper, I will talk about the works of art which were influenced by *will Nighthawks* (Edward Hopper, 1942), so I will use a sort of comparative method. I will first speak a little about the painting, describing it and analysing the context in which it was created, then I will develop a list of art objects which are related in a way or another to it, as well as talking in a concise way about some of them.



In *Nighthawks*, we can feel a sort of utopia and much loneliness, too. Four people are in a bar: a couple, a solitary man and a bartender. They seem isolated from one another rather than to be communicative. All of them are very well dressed, in their own tipology – about which I will speak later. In fact, the two men, and I refer to the customers, have similar clothes, in what comes to be a world in which humans have something robotic in them, since they respect a sort of pattern and they get to wear a sort of uniform. Everyone wears a uniform for what she or he is, in that moment. Two men in dark suits, one man in white clothes – the latter is, in this case, typical for the one who serves, and one woman in a blatant red dress. From what we can see, they are very handsome people, very elegant, classy and dignified.

Tom Slater approaches the painting in a very interesting way: „Hopper contested those viewers who looked beneath the surface, saying that the work showed little more than a restaurant on Greenwich Avenue where two streets meet, but was later forced to admit that „[u]nconsciously, probably, I was painting the loneliness of a large city.” Some key indicators

help us to generate disquiet in a scene which has a calm surface appearance, and situate the composition firmly within the anti-urban mould. It is a scene of contrasting qualities of light - the only light for the empty streets comes from inside the restaurant, amplifying the motif of darkness outside and intensifying the painting's communication of loneliness. Nowhere is this more effective than in the darkness behind the couple at the counter, which sits uneasily with the restaurant's bland cream interior and its glaring lighting."¹

To point out the context in which the painting was developed, I will go to the book intitulated *The Art 'Institute of Chicago: The Essential Guide'*: "Edward Hopper said that *Nighthawks* was inspired by "a restaurant on New York's Greenwich Avenue where two streets meet," but the image—with its carefully constructed composition and lack of narrative—has a timeless, universal quality that transcends its particular locale."² "Hopper was fascinated with cinema, and it is no coincidence that *Nighthawks* was painted at a time when the film noir genre was beginning to penetrate American public discourse."³

Jo Hopper, Edward Hopper's wife, noted some very relevant details in their preparation for the painting: "Night + brilliant interior of cheap restaurant. Bright items: cherry wood counter + tops of surrounding stools; light on metal tanks at rear right; brilliant streak of jade green tiles 3/4 cross canvas at base of glass of window curving at corner. Light walls, dull yellow ocre [sic] door into kitchen right. Very good looking blond boy in white (coat, cap) inside counter. Girl in red blouse, brown hair eating sandwich. Man night hawk (beak) in dark suit, steel grey hat, black band, blue shirt (clean) holding cigarette. Other figure dark sinister back at left. Light side walk outside pale greenish. Darkish red brick houses opposite. Sign across top of restaurant, dark Phillies 5c cigar. Picture of cigar. Outside of shop dark, green. Note: bit of bright ceiling inside shop against dark of outside street at edge of stretch of top of window."⁴ We can observe how meticulous was the documentation for this painting to be made.

Now, let's speak about the works of art which were influenced by *Nighthawks*. First, I will quote long part of a text written by Gordon Theisen in which he mentions, maybe all the works (in any case, a lot of them), then I will select a few of them and point out the linking elements:

- "An episode of *The Simpsons* alludes to *Nighthawks*."⁵

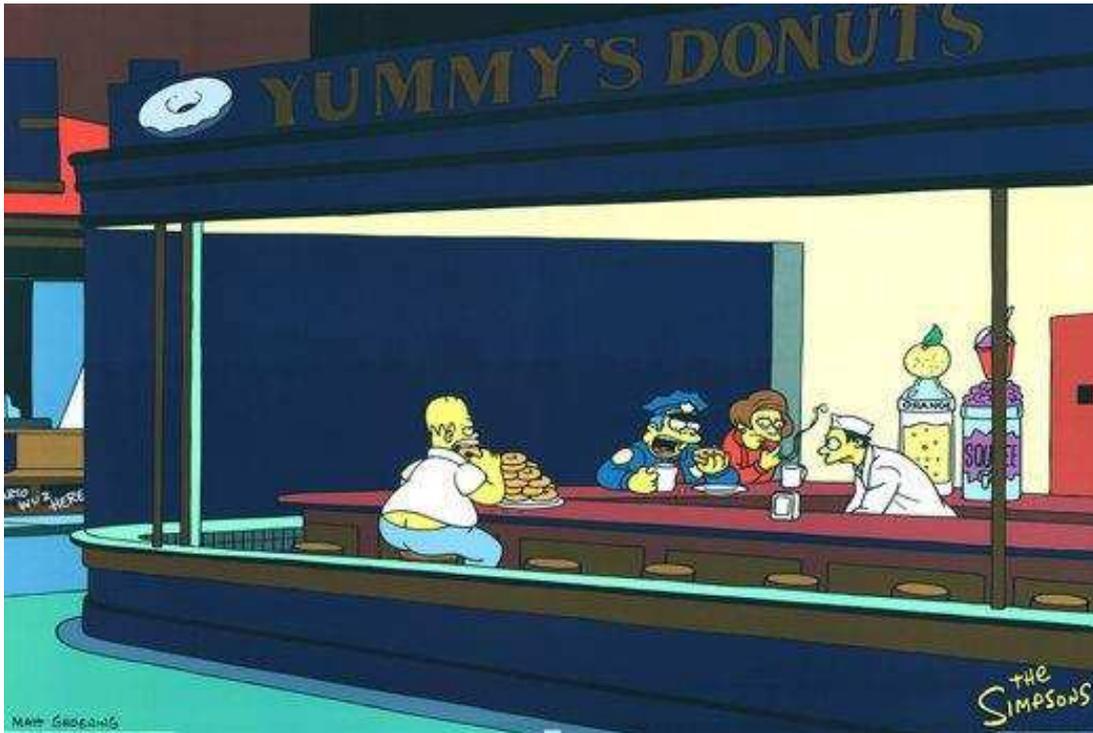
¹ Tom Slater, *Anti-urbanism*, p. 10. Available online: <http://www.geos.ed.ac.uk/homes/tslater/Anti-urbanism.pdf>

² *The Art Institute of Chicago: The Essential Guide*, Art Institute, Chicago, 2013. <http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/111628>, read at 9 Nov 2014

³ Slater, p. 11.

⁴ <http://www.edwardhopper.net/nighthawks.jsp>, read at 9 Nov 2014

⁵ Gordon Theisen, *Staying Up Much Too Late: Edward Hopper's Nighthawks and the Dark Side of the American Psyche*, Thomas Dunne Book, New York, 2006, p. 10.



Still from *The Simpsons* <http://img15.imageshack.us/img15/4981/4413082037fb787a901o.jpg>

- "Austrian artist Gottfried Helnwein's *Boulevard of Broke Dreams* (1981), kitschy staple of dormrooms, pizza parlors, and neighborhood bars throughout the land, reproduces the painting while replacing the people in the diner with Humphrey Bogart, James Dean, Elvis Presley, and Marilyn Monroe."⁶

Available online: https://books.google.ro/books?id=NpNw-nNeEbcC&printsec=copyright&source=gbs_pub_info_r#v=onepage&q&f=false

⁶ Ibidem.



Boulevard of Broken Dreams (1981),

http://mentalfloss.com/sites/default/files/styles/insert_main_wide_image/public/boulevard_of_broken_dreams.jpg

- "Accurately detailed, three-dimensional versions of Nighthawks as sets in Wim Wender's *The End of Violence* (1997) and the lip-synch musical *Pennies from Heaven* (1981)."⁷

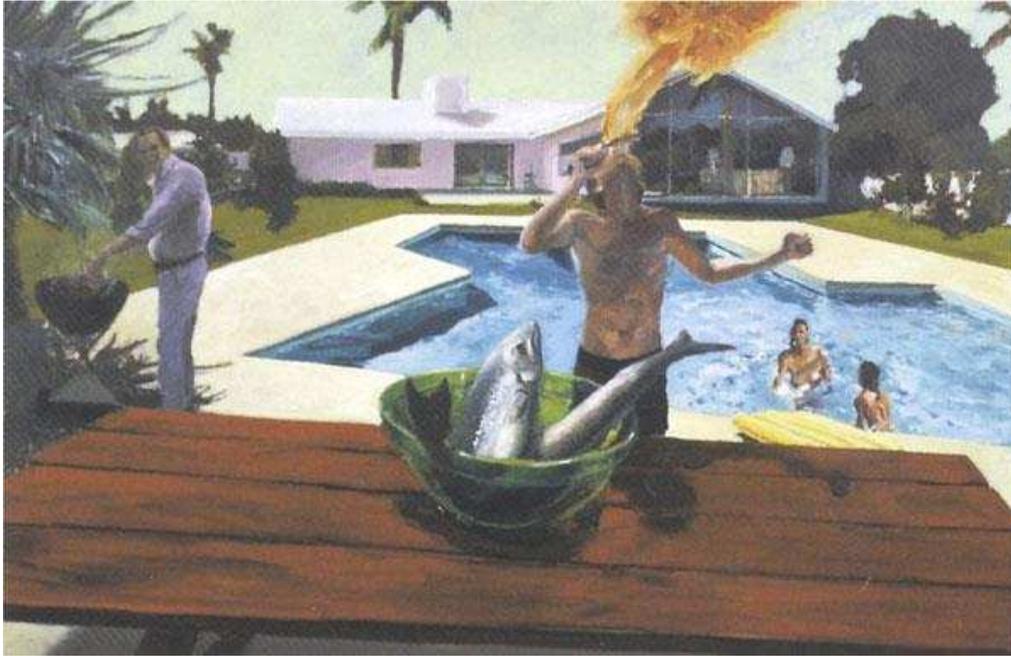


Still from *The End of Violence* (1997) <http://parkstoneinternational.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/pennies-from-heaven-movie1.jpg>

- "Artist Eric Fischl uses a Hopper-like aesthetic to plant loneliness and angst in the postwar middle-class suburbs of his youth."⁸

⁷ Ibidem, pp. 10-11.

⁸ Ibidem, p. 11.



Truman Capote in Hollywood, http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_eiHIYjYd0_8/SRio729HCZI/AAAAAAAACIQ/j4gr96Tikrc/s1600-h/Las+Vegas+fischl.jpg

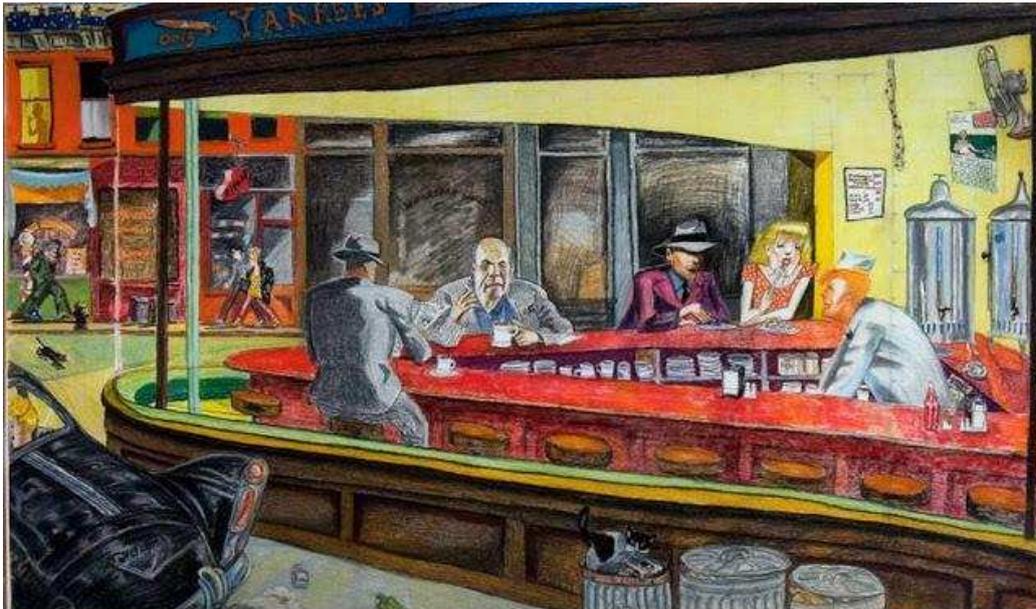
- "Sculptor George Segal did his own dreary diner using his signature white plaster figures
Diner (1964/66)."⁹



Diner (1964/66), http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_c6UbZk2Uwel/S3jrbZTe-QI/AAAAAAAARI/f4KHcSSVYaQ/s1600-h/george-segal-the-diner.jpg

⁹ Ibidem, p. 11.

- “The great abstractionist Mark Rothko based some of his early works directly on Hopper paintings.”¹⁰
- “Red Groom’s *Nighthawks Revisited* (1980) shows the diner during the day, with piles of plates and cups, a calendar, flypaper, and newspaper, and on the street outside a jumbly profusion of litter, trash cans, scrawny cats, pedestrians, and a car with 1950s-style tail fins. For the man facing us from across the counter, Grooms inserted Edward Hopper himself, with cigarette, coffe, and disapproving frown.”¹¹



Red Grooms - *Nighthawks Revisited*, 1980 - Colored pencil on paper, 44 x 74 1/2 in.
Collection of Lysiane Luoung Grooms and the artist. / Photographer: Rick Echelmeyer

Nighthawks Revisited (1980) http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_6-fl-32fvg0/S84Z3sjyVII/AAAAAAAAAGlg/Bs6ljKqqYE8/s640/Red-Grooms-Nighthawks-Revisited.jpg

- “Hopper also inspired and influenced the painters David Hockney and Willem de Kooning; Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Mark Strand; fiction writers Paul Auster and Walter Mosley; and moviemakers Paul Schrader, Terence Malick, Todd Haynes, and George Stevens, who directed James Dean in *Giant* (1956).”¹²
- ”A similarly conceived French version replaces the people in the diner with characters from the comic strip ”*Tin-Tin*”.”¹³
- “Hopper influenced the look of Charles Addam’s wonderfully macabre cartoons detailing the antics of the Addams Family, which initially appeared in *The New Yorker* in 1938 and later became basis for a television show and two feature films.”¹⁴

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 11.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 11.

¹² Ibidem, p. 11.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ Ibidem, pp. 11-12.

- “Singer Tom Waits put out a live album called *Nighthawks at the Diner* in 1974. The opening track, “Eggs and Sausage (in a Cadillac with Susan Michelson),” begins with the lines: “Nighthawks at the diner / of Emma’s ’49er, there’s a rendezvous / of strangers around a coffee urn tonight”¹⁵
- “*Basic Instinct* happens to include a late-night diner scene. Underrated by critics, *Basic Instinct* achieved easy notoriety for combining torrid sex with horrid violence, but is truly unnerving for its desolate, amoral view of late-twentieth-century America.”¹⁶
- “Miles Davis’ melancholy *Kind of Blue* (1959), one of the greatest and most popular jazz albums, nicely complements *Nighthawks* as a sort of soundtrack.”¹⁷
- For the look *Blade Runner* (1982), Ridley Scott cites *Nighthawks* as a major influence, even though its settings are futuristic. In Paul M. Sammon’s *Future Noir: The Making of Blade Runner*, Scott notes, “I was constantly waving a reproduction of this painting under the noses of the production team to illustrate the look and mood I was after.”¹⁸
- “Legendary street artist Banksy added his own bit of fun to Hopper’s painting with his 2005 parody, in which a shirtless soccer hooligan smashes the diner’s window in a drunken stupor.”¹⁹



Nighthawks (2005), <http://mentalfloss.com/article/50703/10-artists-influenced-edward-hoppers-nighthawks>

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 12.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 12.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 13.

¹⁸ Paul M. Sammon, *Future Noir: The Making of Blade Runner*, HarperCollins, May 1, 1996.

¹⁹ <http://mentalfloss.com/article/50703/10-artists-influenced-edward-hoppers-nighthawks>

As important as his praiseworthy overview, is the idea which Theisen formulates, relating the painting to American society: "What keeps Nighthawks fresh and striking despite its familiarity is that evokes a generally unacknowledged side of a nation that touts its optimism, and offers up hope and progress as its very reason for being. (...) Nighthawks is deeply relevant to essential aspects of American – especially twentieth-century American – culture. In a single, cogent, concentrated image, Nighthawks manages to reflect our attitudes toward individuality, cities, technology, nature, freedom, sexuality, women, money, experience, success, and religion. But it does so darkly, through its dejected sensibility, its desolation."²⁰ So, this painting is a sort of ostentatious advertising for America. It speaks about this country in a doubtful way.

It is certain that in addition to these works of art, there are other visual objects that are inspired by Nighthawks, but belong to popular culture, created by various Internet users and therefore are not subject to analysis of this paper.

Nighthawks is a classic and a cult painting, impregnated into collective memory. It is one of the greatest paintings American culture gave and its creator, Edward Hopper, received the ultimate homage when Gustav Deutsch released in 2013, *Shirley: Visions of Reality*. This movie is exclusively composed from sets which copy paintings made by Hopper. It is directed, thought and written by this Austrian which is as elitist as painstaking and precise in selecting and making the subjects he approaches. Deutsch is not just a filmmaker. He created drawings since 1962, music since 1964, photography since 1967, architecture since 1970, videos since 1977, films since 1981, sounds since 1981, performances since 1983 in Austria, France, Germany, Luxemburg, England, Marocco, Greece and Turkey. What bigger tribute can you get than a movie totally dedicated to your work made by such an important artist?

Bibliography

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²⁰ Theisen, p. 13.