

# Custom Cars & Lennon Prints

R. Fleck

1970

**Author's Note:** This article is not intended to define or thoroughly explain the muddled swamp which is today's world of art/life/experience. In fact, its only a visceral (gut) reaction to looking at cars, looking at Lennon-Ono prints. In the next issue a more detailed exploration of art and people will be presented. But for the time being...

~~~~~

I really wanted to write about the Custom Autorama, but ended up at the Fisher Building eyeing line drawing prints of Loco Yoko and Big John in the sack.

It was a disappointment. Not because cars are simpler to dig, but because in comparison, the fancy cars are people's art and the fancy sketches are not.

The cars and bikes are mechanical wet dreams and chrome plated old ladies—fiberglass fantasies sprung from the wellspring of modern American folk culture: the streets.

Just like Tom Wolfe lays out in his Candy Colored Tangerine Flake Streamlined Baby, the garages and basements are the lower middle class studios where after work grease monkeys and line workers work out their dreams and visions that no wealthy patron would underwrite.

So this auto art isn't to be indulgently bought by the ruling class's money (as most art forms in modern history have been) and made drawing room presentable.

Instead, it carries the vigor and vitality from the work-a-day world of the creators—the line, garage, the concrete streets—just like the wall murals springing up in our ghettos mirror a black rise to awareness.

For, purposefully, or unconsciously, this kind of creation seeks to destroy the barrier between function and art, to make our familiar objects representations of our dreams.

But back to the Lennon-Ono prints. In this context they only relate a rough translation of the raw and naked life energy in a good lay.

The prints showing John and Yoko making it are low energy and don't really captivate or involve the viewer in the experience.

Partly, this is due to the nature of the artists' reality, and partly because of where the works appear—a posh art gallery with carpeted walls, steep prices, and hushed Beatles' music playing.

The Lennons certainly don't share the people's experiences in their daily real life.

Their world is one of privilege and patronage, not street racing or grease pits. The non-sexual prints are of the couple talking with a man behind a desk or just being alone; abstracted out of time and space but not universal or eternal. The master's skill is absent and the subject is too isolatedly personal.

For the Lennons are in a world of \$10,000 pop art and camp vogue. The vehicles? ...well, next time a gaudy chopper or well done '55 Chevy, tools past, think of the visions of freedom it carries.

# fifth Estate

R. Fleck  
Custom Cars & Lennon Prints  
1970

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/98-february-4-18-1970/custom-cars-lennon-prints>  
Fifth Estate #98, February 4-18, 1970

**[fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net](https://fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net)**