

American Culture in the 1990s

Colin Harrison



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Chronology of 1990s American Culture

Date	Events	Criticism	Literature
1990	<p>Iraq invades Kuwait. Reunification of Germany. McDonald's restaurant opens in Moscow. Foundation of Queer Nation, New York City. Nelson Mandela released from prison.</p>	<p>Robert Bullard, <i>Dumping in Dixie</i> Judith Butler, <i>Gender Trouble</i> Mike Davis, <i>City of Quartz</i> Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick, <i>Epistemology of the Closet</i> Cornel West, 'The New Cultural Politics of Difference'</p>	<p>Robert Bly, <i>Iron John</i> Thomas Pynchon, <i>Vineland</i> Li-Young Lee, <i>The City In Which I Love You</i> John Edgar Wideman, <i>Philadelphia Fire</i> Tim O'Brien, <i>The Things They Carried</i></p>
1991	<p>Operation Desert Storm launched to remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. Dissolution of Soviet Union. Slovenia and Croatia declare independence from Yugoslavia, beginning three years of national and ethnic conflicts in the region. Birth of World Wide Web. Anita Hill accuses Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment in Supreme Court hearings.</p>	<p>Susan Faludi, <i>Backlash</i> Donna Haraway, <i>Simians, Cyborgs and Women</i> Fredric Jameson, <i>Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism</i> David Roediger, <i>The Wages of Whiteness</i> Saskia Sassen, <i>The Global City</i></p>	<p>Bret Easton Ellis, <i>American Psycho</i> Tony Kushner, <i>Angels in America</i> Adrienne Rich, <i>An Atlas of the Difficult World</i> Jane Smiley, <i>A Thousand Acres</i> Art Spiegelman, <i>Maus</i> Vol. 2</p>

Film	Television	Music	Art
<p><i>American Dream</i> (Barbara Kopple)</p> <p><i>Dances With Wolves</i> (Kevin Costner)</p> <p><i>Goodfellas</i> (Martin Scorsese)</p> <p><i>Total Recall</i> (Paul Verhoeven)</p> <p><i>Wild At Heart</i> (David Lynch)</p>	<p><i>Beverly Hills, 90210</i> (1990–2000)</p> <p><i>In Living Color</i> (1990–4)</p> <p><i>Northern Exposure</i> (1990–5)</p> <p><i>Twin Peaks</i> (1990–1)</p> <p>Ken Burns's documentary series</p> <p><i>The Civil War</i> broadcast on PBS</p>	<p>Joey Beltram, 'Energy Flash'</p> <p>Public Enemy, <i>Fear of a Black Planet</i></p> <p>2 Live Crew, <i>Nasty as They Wanna Be</i></p> <p>Ice Cube, <i>AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted</i></p> <p>Sonic Youth, <i>Goo</i></p>	<p>Jimmie Durham, <i>Catskill Giveaway</i></p> <p>Philip-Lorca diCorcia, <i>Hollywood</i> series (1990–2)</p> <p>David Wojnarowicz, <i>Tongues of Flame</i> retrospective (cur. Barry Blinderman, Illinois State University)</p> <p>Jenny Holzer is first woman to represent USA at Venice Biennale</p> <p>'New Works for New Spaces', Wexner Art Center, Columbus, OH</p>
<p><i>Boyz n the Hood</i> (John Singleton)</p> <p><i>JFK</i> (Oliver Stone)</p> <p><i>Silence of the Lambs</i> (Jonathan Demme)</p> <p><i>Terminator 2</i> (James Cameron)</p> <p><i>Thelma & Louise</i> (Ridley Scott)</p>	<p><i>The Jerry Springer Show</i> (1991–present)</p> <p><i>The Ren and Stimpy Show</i> (1991–6)</p> <p><i>Sisters</i> (1991–6)</p> <p>Court TV launched</p> <p>Rodney King video shown on national television</p>	<p>John Adams, <i>The Death of Klinghoffer</i></p> <p>Guns N' Roses, <i>Use Your Illusion I & II</i></p> <p>Metallica, <i>Metallica</i></p> <p>Nirvana, <i>Nevermind</i></p> <p>First Lollapalooza festival features Nine Inch Nails, Ice-T and Siouxsie and the Banshees</p>	<p>'Dislocations' (cur. Robert Storr, Museum of Modern Art)</p> <p>Mike Kelley, <i>Hanging Stuffed Animals and Deodorizers</i></p> <p>Glen Ligon, <i>Notes on the Margin of The Black Book</i> (1991–3)</p> <p>John Miller, <i>Dick/Jane</i></p> <p>Lisa Yuskavage, <i>The Ones That Don't Want To: Bad Baby</i></p>

Date	Events	Criticism	Literature
1992	<p>Bush and Yeltsin sign joint understanding beginning process of post-Cold War arms reduction.</p> <p>Bill Clinton elected 42nd president.</p> <p>Acquittal of LAPD officers accused of beating motorist Rodney King sparks riots in Los Angeles.</p> <p>Opening of Mall of America, Minnesota, America's largest shopping mall.</p> <p>FDA imposes restrictions on silicone breast implants for cosmetic purposes.</p>	<p>Francis Fukuyama, <i>The End of History and the Last Man</i></p> <p>Lawrence Grossberg, <i>We Gotta Get Out of This Place</i></p> <p>Toni Morrison, <i>Playing in the Dark</i></p> <p>Toni Morrison (ed.), <i>Racing Justice, Engendering Power</i></p> <p>Arthur Schlesinger, <i>The Disuniting of America</i></p>	<p>Robert Coover, 'The End of Books'</p> <p>William Gibson, <i>Agrippa (A Book of the Dead)</i></p> <p>David Mamet, <i>Oleanna</i></p> <p>Cormac McCarthy, <i>All the Pretty Horses</i></p> <p>Toni Morrison, <i>Jazz</i></p>
1993	<p>Car bomb detonated underneath World Trade Center in New York City.</p> <p>Clinton announces 'don't ask, don't tell' policy on gays in the military.</p> <p>Eighteen US soldiers die in Black Hawk Down incident in Mogadishu, Somalia.</p> <p>Siege of Branch Davidians at Waco, TX ends in fire killing David Koresh and eighty-one followers.</p> <p>First 'spam' message sent by email.</p>	<p>Paul Gilroy, <i>The Black Atlantic</i></p> <p>Robert Hughes, <i>The Culture of Complaint</i></p> <p>Samuel Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilisations?'</p> <p>Amy Kaplan (ed.), <i>Cultures of United States Imperialism</i></p> <p>First issue of <i>WIRED</i>, magazine of cyberculture</p>	<p>Donald Antrim, <i>Elect Mr Robinson For a Better World</i></p> <p>E. Annie Proulx, <i>The Shipping News</i></p> <p>Denis Johnson, <i>Jesus' Son</i></p> <p>Toni Morrison awarded Nobel prize for literature</p> <p>Philip Roth, <i>Operation Shylock</i></p>

Film	Television	Music	Art
<p><i>Basic Instinct</i> (Paul Verhoeven)</p> <p><i>Malcolm X</i> (Spike Lee)</p> <p><i>Reservoir Dogs</i> (Quentin Tarantino)</p> <p><i>Unforgiven</i> (Clint Eastwood)</p> <p>John Singleton is first black director to be nominated for an Academy award</p>	<p><i>Def Comedy Jam</i> (1992–7)</p> <p><i>The Larry Sanders Show</i> (1992–8)</p> <p><i>Picket Fences</i> (1992–6)</p> <p><i>The Real World</i> (1992–present)</p> <p>Jay Leno takes over <i>The Tonight Show</i> from Johnny Carson</p>	<p>Babes in Toyland, <i>Fontanelle</i></p> <p>Dr Dre, <i>The Chronic</i></p> <p>R.E.M., <i>Automatic for the People</i></p> <p>X-102, <i>Rings of Saturn</i></p> <p>‘Cop Killer’ removed from Body Count’s debut album after protests</p>	<p>Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña, <i>Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit the West</i></p> <p>Felix Gonzalez-Torres, MoMA Projects 34 (public billboard exhibition)</p> <p>Sally Mann, <i>Immediate Family</i></p> <p>Fred Wilson, <i>Mining the Museum</i>, Baltimore Historical Society</p> <p>‘Helter Skelter’, Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art</p>
<p><i>Falling Down</i> (Joel Schumacher)</p> <p><i>Jurassic Park</i> (Steven Spielberg)</p> <p><i>Philadelphia</i> (Jonathan Demme)</p> <p><i>Schindler’s List</i> (Steven Spielberg)</p> <p>Disney buys Miramax Pictures</p>	<p><i>Beavis and Butt-Head</i> (1993–7)</p> <p><i>Frasier</i> (1993–2004)</p> <p><i>Homicide: Life on the Street</i> (1993–9)</p> <p><i>NYPD Blue</i> (1993–2005)</p> <p><i>The X-Files</i> (1993–2002)</p>	<p>Ice Cube, ‘It Was a Good Day’</p> <p>Snoop Dogg, <i>Doggystyle</i></p> <p>Smashing Pumpkins, <i>Siamese Dream</i></p> <p>Whitney Houston, ‘I Will Always Love You’</p> <p>Steve Reich and Beryl Korot, <i>The Cave</i></p>	<p>Tony Oursler, <i>Crying Doll</i></p> <p>Jason Rhoades, <i>CHERRY Makita – Honest Engine Work</i></p> <p>Nancy Rubins, <i>Mattresses and Cakes</i></p> <p>‘Abject Art’, Whitney Museum</p> <p>Whitney Biennial sees white male artists in a minority for the first time</p>

Date	Events	Criticism	Literature
1994	<p>Ethnic conflict erupts in Rwanda.</p> <p>Republicans win back both houses of Congress for first time since 1954.</p> <p>North American Free Trade Agreement creates world's largest free-trade region (US, Canada and Mexico).</p> <p>Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray's book <i>The Bell Curve</i> incites controversy over the relations between race and intelligence.</p> <p>Protests over Smithsonian Institution's proposed exhibition on end of World War II featuring <i>Enola Gay</i>.</p>	<p>Harold Bloom, <i>The Western Canon</i></p> <p>Shere Hite, <i>The Hite Report on the Family</i></p> <p>Tricia Rose, <i>Black Noise</i></p> <p>Donald E. Pease (ed.), <i>Revisionary Interventions into the Americanist Canon</i></p> <p>Edward Said, <i>Culture and Imperialism</i></p>	<p>Denise Chávez, <i>Face of an Angel</i></p> <p>E. L. Doctorow, <i>The Waterworks</i></p> <p>Louise Erdrich, <i>The Bingo Palace</i></p> <p>Lorrie Moore, <i>Who Will Run the Frog Hospital?</i></p> <p>Elizabeth Wurtzel, <i>Prozac Nation</i></p>
1995	<p>Founding of World Trade Organization.</p> <p>Bombing of Alfred Murrah Building, Oklahoma City is most fatal act of terrorism on American soil.</p> <p>Trial of O. J. Simpson for murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman.</p> <p>Million Man March.</p> <p>Netscape Communications goes public, marking beginning of dotcom boom.</p>	<p>Benjamin Barber, <i>Jihad vs. McWorld</i></p> <p>Walter Benn Michaels, <i>Our America</i></p> <p>bell hooks, <i>Killing Rage: Ending Racism</i></p> <p>Robert Putnam, 'Bowling Alone'</p> <p>Sherry Turkle, <i>Life on Screen</i></p>	<p>Sherman Alexie, <i>Reservation Blues</i></p> <p>Richard Ford, <i>Independence Day</i></p> <p>Chang-Rae Lee, <i>Native Speaker</i></p> <p>Charles Wright, <i>Chickamauga</i></p> <p>John Updike, <i>Rabbit Angstrom: The Four Novels</i></p>

Film	Television	Music	Art
<p><i>Forrest Gump</i> (Robert Zemeckis)</p> <p><i>Go Fish</i> (Rose Troche)</p> <p><i>Natural Born Killers</i> (Oliver Stone)</p> <p><i>Pulp Fiction</i> (Quentin Tarantino)</p> <p>Paramount Pictures bought by Viacom</p>	<p><i>Ellen</i> (1994–8)</p> <p><i>ER</i> (1994–2009)</p> <p><i>Friends</i> (1994–2003)</p> <p><i>TV Nation</i> (1994–5)</p> <p>Lesbian kiss features on episode of <i>Roseanne</i></p>	<p>Jeff Buckley, <i>Grace</i></p> <p>Sheryl Crow, ‘All I Wanna Do’</p> <p>Philip Glass, <i>Symphony No. 2</i></p> <p>Nas, <i>illmatic</i></p> <p>Kurt Cobain commits suicide</p>	<p>Janine Antoni, <i>Lick and Lather</i></p> <p>Matthew Barney, <i>Cremaster 4</i> (first of <i>Cremaster</i> cycle)</p> <p>Robert Gober, <i>Man Coming Out of Woman</i></p> <p>Vitaly Komar and Alex Melamid, <i>America’s Most Wanted</i></p> <p>First Gramercy International Art Fair (becomes Armory Show in 1999)</p>
<p><i>Se7en</i> (David Fincher)</p> <p><i>Strange Days</i> (Kathryn Bigelow)</p> <p><i>Toy Story</i> (John Lasseter)</p> <p><i>The Usual Suspects</i> (Bryan Singer)</p> <p>Dreamworks SKG founded</p>	<p><i>Murder One</i> (1995–7)</p> <p><i>Star Trek: Voyager</i> (1995–2001)</p> <p><i>Taxicab Confessions</i> (1995–present)</p> <p>Launch of networks UPN and The WB</p> <p>BBC/PBS history documentary series</p> <p><i>The People’s Century</i></p>	<p>Guided By Voices, <i>Alien Lanes</i></p> <p>Emmylou Harris, <i>Wrecking Ball</i></p> <p>Alanis Morissette, <i>Jagged Little Pill</i></p> <p>C. Dolores Tucker campaigns against gangsta rap</p> <p>TLC, <i>CrazySexyCool</i></p>	<p>Kerry James Marshall, <i>The Garden Project</i></p> <p>Allan Sekula, <i>Fish Story</i></p> <p>Jessica Stockholder, <i>Sweet For Three Oranges</i></p> <p>‘Video Spaces: Eight Installations’ (cur. Barbara London, MoMA)</p> <p>Richard Meier, Museum of Contemporary Art Barcelona</p>

Date	Events	Criticism	Literature
1996	Clinton re-elected president. Google founded by Larry Page and Sergey Brin. Proposition 209 ('California Civil Rights Initiative') passed, marking beginning of legal challenges to affirmative action programmes in state institutions. Unabomber arrested. Telecommunications Act passed.	Arjun Appadurai, <i>Modernity at Large</i> Manual Castells, <i>The Rise of the Network Society</i> Kimberlé Crenshaw, <i>Critical Race Theory</i> Michael Denning, <i>The Cultural Front</i> Hal Foster, <i>The Return of the Real</i>	Anonymous (Joe Klein), <i>Primary Colors</i> David Markson, <i>Reader's Block</i> George Saunders, <i>CivilWarLand in Bad Decline</i> David Foster Wallace, <i>Infinite Jest</i> Launch of Oprah's Book Club
1997	Successful cloning of Dolly the sheep. <i>Mars Pathfinder</i> lands on Mars. Foundation of Project for a New American Century. Clinton issues apology to victims of Tuskegee syphilis experiment. Mass suicide of Heaven's Gate cult.	Lauren Berlant, <i>The Queen of America Goes to Washington City</i> Angela Davis, <i>Blues Legacies and Black Feminism</i> Henry Louis Gates, <i>Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man</i> Manuel de Landa, <i>A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History</i> Toni Morrison, <i>Birth of a Nation'hood</i>	Russell Banks, <i>The Sweet Hereafter</i> Don DeLillo, <i>Underworld</i> Toni Morrison, <i>Paradise</i> Bharati Mukherjee, <i>The Holder of the World</i> Philip Roth, <i>American Pastoral</i>

Film	Television	Music	Art
<i>Fargo</i> (Joel and Ethan Coen)	<i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i> (1996–2003)	Aaliyah, <i>One in a Million</i>	Gregory Crewdson, <i>Hover</i>
<i>Independence Day</i> (Roland Emmerich)	<i>The Daily Show</i> (1996–present)	Marilyn Manson, <i>Antichrist Superstar</i>	Nan Goldin, <i>I'll Be Your Mirror</i> , Whitney Museum of American Art
<i>Lone Star</i> (John Sayles)	<i>Judge Judy</i> (1996–present)	Mikel Rouse, <i>Dennis Cleveland</i>	Felix Gonzalez-Torres dies of AIDS
<i>Scream</i> (Wes Craven)	<i>Millennium</i> (1996–9)	DJ Shadow, . . .	'Conversations at the Castle' (cur. Mary Jane Jacob, Atlanta)
<i>When We Were Kings</i> (Leon Gast)	<i>The O'Reilly Factor</i> (1996–present)	<i>Endtroducing</i> Tupac Shakur murdered	'Hall of Mirrors: Art and Film Since 1945' (cur. Kerry Brougher, Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art)
<i>Amistad</i> (Steven Spielberg)	<i>Ally McBeal</i> (1997–2002)	Erykah Badu, <i>Baduizm</i>	Robert Colescott is first African American artist to represent US at Venice Biennale
<i>Boogie Nights</i> (Paul Thomas Anderson)	<i>The Chris Rock Show</i> (1997–2000)	Missy Elliot, <i>Supa Dupa Fly</i>	Bill Viola retrospective, Whitney Museum
<i>Men in Black</i> (Barry Sonnenfeld)	<i>King of the Hill</i> (1997–2009)	Lilith Fair women's music festival	Kara Walker awarded MacArthur Foundation fellowship
<i>Starship Troopers</i> (Paul Verhoeven)	<i>South Park</i> (1997–present)	Notorious B.I.G. (aka Biggie Smalls) murdered	Guggenheim Museum opens in Bilbao
<i>Titanic</i> (James Cameron)	Lead character of sitcom <i>Ellen</i> 'comes out'	Wynton Marsalis's <i>Blood on the Fields</i> is first jazz composition to win Pulitzer prize for music	Getty Center opens in Los Angeles

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1998	<p>Al-Qaeda detonates truck bombs outside US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.</p> <p>Clinton-Lewinsky scandal leads to impeachment of President.</p> <p>FDA approves Viagra for treatment of erectile dysfunction.</p> <p>Microsoft antitrust case begins.</p> <p>Vice-President Al Gore signs Kyoto Protocol on climate change, though it remains unratified by the Senate.</p> <p>DNA tests suggest that Thomas Jefferson fathered a child with slave Sally Hemings.</p>	<p>Rey Chow, <i>Ethics After Idealism</i></p> <p>Jared Diamond, <i>Guns, Germs and Steel</i></p> <p>Julian Dibbell, 'A Rape in Cyberspace'</p> <p>Philip Gourevitch, <i>We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda</i></p> <p>Avital Ronell, <i>Finitude's Score</i></p>	<p>Bret Easton Ellis, <i>Glamorama</i></p> <p>Yusef Komunyakaa, <i>Thieves of Paradise</i></p> <p>Richard Powers, <i>Gain</i></p> <p>Philp Roth, <i>I Married a Communist</i></p> <p>First issue of <i>Timothy McSweeney's Quarterly Concern</i></p>
1999	<p>World population tops six billion.</p> <p>NATO begins air strikes against Serbia to prevent 'ethnic cleansing' in Kosovo.</p> <p>Protests at WTO talks in Seattle.</p> <p>Two pupils at Columbine High School go on shooting spree, killing fifteen.</p> <p>Six-year-old Elian Gonzalez rescued from waters off Florida.</p>	<p>N. Katherine Hayles, <i>How We Became Posthuman</i></p> <p>Martha Nussbaum, <i>Sex and Social Justice</i></p> <p>John Rawls, <i>The Law of Peoples</i></p> <p>Gayatri Spivak, <i>A Critique of Postcolonial Reason</i></p> <p>Margaret Wertheim, <i>The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace</i></p>	<p>Ha Jin, <i>Waiting</i></p> <p>Cormac McCarthy, <i>Cities of the Plain</i> (completing the Border Trilogy)</p> <p>Neal Stephenson, <i>Cryptonomicon</i></p> <p>Ralph Ellison's unfinished novel <i>Juneteenth</i> published posthumously</p> <p>Jhumpa Lahiri, <i>Interpreter of Maladies</i></p>

Film	Television	Music	Art
<i>Bulworth</i> (Warren Beatty)	<i>Sex and the City</i> (1998–2004)	Dixie Chicks, <i>Wide Open Spaces</i>	Vanessa Beecroft, <i>VB35</i> , Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum New York
<i>Happiness</i> (Todd Solondz)	<i>Sports Night</i> (1998–2000)	Jay-Z, <i>Hard Knock Life</i>	Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, <i>Palace of Projects</i>
<i>Pleasantville</i> (Gary Ross)	<i>Total Request Live</i> (1998–2008)	Lauryn Hill, <i>The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill</i>	Shirin Neshat, <i>Turbulent</i>
<i>Saving Private Ryan</i> (Steven Spielberg)	<i>Will and Grace</i> (1998–2006)	Britney Spears, ‘. . . Baby One More Time’	Sarah Sze, <i>Second Means of Egress</i> , Berlin Biennial
<i>The Truman Show</i> (Peter Weir)	Final episode of <i>Seinfeld</i> (May)	Tortoise, <i>TNT</i>	Zhang Huan, <i>Pilgrimage – Wind and Water</i> (PS 1, New York)
<i>American Beauty</i> (Sam Mendes)	<i>Family Guy</i> (1999–present)	Eminem, <i>Slim Shady LP</i>	Doug Aitken, <i>Electric Earth</i>
<i>The Blair Witch Project</i> (Daniel Myrick, Eduardo Sánchez)	<i>Futurama</i> (1999–2003)	The Flaming Lips, <i>The Soft Bulletin</i>	Mark Dion, <i>Two Banks</i> (Tate Thames Dig)
<i>Fight Club</i> (David Fincher)	<i>Sopranos</i> (1999–2007)	Shania Twain, ‘Man! I Feel Like a Woman’	‘The American Century’, Whitney Museum
<i>The Matrix</i> (Andy and Larry Wachowski)	<i>The West Wing</i> (1999–2006)	Smog, <i>Knock Knock</i>	Controversy accompanies opening of British show
<i>Three Kings</i> (David O. Russell)	<i>Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?</i> (US version, 1999–present)	Napster published on internet	‘Sensation’, Brooklyn Museum of Art
			Daniel Liebeskind’s Jewish Museum completed in Berlin

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