



Richard Prince, 2005
Photo by the artist

< RICHARD PRINCE >

Born in 1949 in the Panama Canal Zone, Richard Prince grew up in the Boston suburb that his parents settled in five years later. In 1973, he moved to New York, where he immersed himself in the downtown music and art scenes. While working in the tear-sheet department of Time Life, he began to photograph the discarded advertising pages, carefully cropping out all copy until he was left with only formulaic images of consumer aspiration such as watches, fountain pens, interior decor, logos, and fashion models. He subsequently focused his camera on a series of stock figures so hopelessly clichéd that they can be described as one-word archetypes: cowboys, girlfriends, and entertainers. These appropriated images were displayed individually or sometimes grouped within a single frame in a format that the artist refers to as a “gang.” Simultaneously, Prince began to appropriate old jokes from the annals of borscht-belt humor, pairing them with renderings of unrelated, equally raunchy cartoons or spelling them out on otherwise empty, monochrome backgrounds.

As his career has progressed, Prince has brought an increasingly expressionistic sensibility to bear on his appropriated imagery and texts, producing resolutely painterly canvases. Although still present, the jokes are now muted by gestural fields of layered paint and, in some cases, are part of compositions containing snippets of scribbled drawings or collaged bank checks. A similar development can be marked in Prince’s sculptural works. His *Hoods*—painted muscle-car hoods, which either sit on pedestals or hang, relieflike, from the wall—initially sported a slick, commercial finish. Now, their surfaces are hand-painted, matte, and almost atmospheric in appearance. In 2003 the artist premiered his *Nurses*, a series of canvases derived from the pulpy cover designs of medical romance novels and rendered in dripping, lurid colors save for each nurse’s white uniform and surgical mask. Prince’s latest body of work focuses on the paintings of venerated Abstract Expressionist artist Willem de Kooning and blend elements from de Kooning’s famous *Women* paintings with figures cut from magazines—creating works

that are hybrids of both men and women, and photographs and paintings.

In recent years Prince has drawn inspiration from the small-town milieu of his current base in upstate New York, which he has documented in a series of original photographs that characterize the local vernacular: backyard basketball hoops, above-ground swimming pools, rusting vehicles, and the like. The move upstate allowed Prince to extend his practice of creating environmental installations, previous examples of which include the *Spiritual America* gallery in downtown Manhattan (1983–84) and the *First House* installation in Los Angeles (1993). In yet another act of appropriation Prince transformed a ranch-style residence in Rensselaerville into his *Second House* (2001–07), an installation designed specifically to showcase a suite of *Hoods* and related works. Camouflaged as a perpetual work in progress—the exterior clad in exposed insulation material, and the interior walls and ceilings stripped to the dry wall—the house easily resembled other dwellings in this depressed corner of Albany County. *Second House* was damaged when lightning struck the building and started a fire, and the artist is currently working on creating a new structure for the site. In addition, a private library of rare books and first editions and a fully operational body shop are part of Prince's network of projects upstate.

“My first photographs showed living rooms, . . . lots of living rooms and that was important. This was not my living room. And what was more interesting, this was really not anybody’s living room. That was the reason why I started to rephotograph the advertising images. There was no author of these images. It was set up. It was overdetermined and it did not have a name behind it.”



Untitled (living rooms), 1977. Four Ektacolor photographs, edition of 10, 20 x 24 inches (50.8 x 61 cm) each

< EARLY PHOTOGRAPHIC APPROPRIATION >

In 1977 Richard Prince was working for Time Life, clipping articles from magazines for staff writers. What would remain were the advertisements showing luxury goods, such as expensive watches, lighters, and fine leather products. As he collected and compared myriad examples of product ads, Prince began to notice certain repeated gestures, visual devices, and attitudes, which resulted from the fact that separate companies with comparable products employed remarkably similar advertising strategies. The discovery of these patterns gave him the formal basis for his art.

Prince took the radical step of rephotographing existing photographic images from ads in magazines and calling them his own. With a click of the shutter the images became his—a deceptively casual gesture that changed the rules of art, making it possible to appropriate someone else’s creation as your own. In subsequent years, Prince repeated this action using other products and fashion models. He excised out all identifying text or logos, cropped and enlarged images, and rephotographed black-and-white photos in

color and vice versa. He compared the various options to making an 8-track recording.

Prince’s first photographic appropriation, *Untitled (living rooms)*, comprises a quartet of advertising images from the *New York Times Magazine* showing elaborately appointed living rooms. Taken from an advertising campaign by a well-known furniture manufacturer, the photos are all similarly proportioned and perfectly suited to the proportions of Prince’s 35mm slides. Their compressed, horizontal format emphasizes similar arrangements of plush sofas, well-styled coffee tables, designer carpets, and decorative accoutrements. Though stylistically different—colonial, contemporary, country chic, and urban modern—the images all describe an upper-class lifestyle.

Prince’s counterfeit photos reveal that products are sold by means of visual codes that appeal to cultural stereotypes, prejudices, desires, and fears. This is the truth he probes in *Untitled (living rooms)* and the entire ensuing series of rephotographed works from 1977 to 1984.

VIEW + DISCUSS

Show: *Untitled (living rooms)*, 1977
Four Ektacolor photographs, edition of 10
20 x 24 inches (50.8 x 61 cm) each

- ▶ What do you notice?
- ▶ Make a list of similarities and differences between these images. Discuss your findings. Which list turns out to be longer?
- ▶ What techniques are used to attract your attention?
- ▶ What points of view, lifestyles, and values are represented in these photos?
- ▶ Prince separated these photos of living rooms from their accompanying advertising copy. Write the copy that you think originally accompanied these images. What tone would you use? What descriptive words and phrases should be included?

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

- One of the reasons Prince was attracted to these images of living rooms was because they did not have advertising text superimposed on them. In subsequent works he was careful to crop all of the text out of his photos. Removing the text from advertisements allows us to see them in alternate ways. Try this for yourself. Cut two pieces of heavy paper into 2-inch-wide right angles. By moving these papers over a magazine ad, you will be able to crop out the text. Discuss how the meaning and impact changes when you do this?
- Prince called attention to patterns in advertising images—how the same arrangement, gesture, or pose could be found in various ads even for different companies and products. Thumb through magazines and look for patterns. Begin to clip and file these ads together. When you have collected a few, pin them up and begin to discuss what you have noticed and your theories on why these strategies are repeated.
- In 1977, when Prince took these photos, digital cameras were not available. With a digital camera you can easily try your own rephotographing experiments. Begin by gathering a wide array of magazines spanning various subjects from fashion to fly-fishing. Find an advertising photo that appeals to you and will fill your camera's viewfinder. Frame the image so that no text appears and then rephotograph it. Once your photo is downloaded into a computer you can apply some of Prince's other alterations such as cropping and changing the color balance or focus. Print the photo and compare and contrast the two images. Describe how the process of rephotographing has altered the impact and message. To whom does the new image belong? The advertiser, the magazine, the photographer who originally took it, or you? Explain.
- Choose another product: pens, watches, cars, shoes, jewelry, etc. Then go through magazines and tear out ads for that product. When you have a sizeable collection, pin them up and see if you can find any patterns that tell you more about the way in which these objects are marketed.

“The pictures I went after, ‘stole,’ were too good to be true. They were about wishful thinking, public pictures that happen to appear in the advertising sections of mass-market magazines, pictures not associated with an author. . . . It was their look I was interested in. I wanted to re-present the closest thing to the real thing”

Untitled (cowboy), 1989. Ektacolor photograph, edition of 2, 50 x 70 inches (127 x 177.8 cm)



< COWBOYS >

In the early 1980s Richard Prince began to exhibit examples from his *Cowboys* in which he rephotographed Marlboro cigarette ads, cropping out all text and framing them like fine art. In doing so he had identified a rich symbol in American culture that embodied adventure, self-reliance, and rugged individuality.

Beginning in the 1950s Marlboro ads featured cowboys riding through the wide-open terrain of the Wild West. The cowboy was instantly recognizable in denim, leather chaps, boots, spurs, and Stetson hat. Almost exclusively white, he is portrayed as handsome, weathered, and fit. Both a role model and sex symbol, the cowboy appeals to men and women alike. By the mid-1960s the Marlboro Man, as this figure became known, was so recognizable and brand-identified that Philip Morris was able to drop all direct references to cigarettes in its ads in favor of subtly inviting smokers to come, and be part of, the epic Western landscape of “Marlboro Country.”

According to Prince, “I started taking pictures of the cowboys. You don’t see them out in public anymore—you can’t ride down a highway

and see them on a billboard. But at Time Life, I was working with seven or eight magazines, and Marlboro had ads in almost all of them. Every week, I’d see one and be like, ‘Oh, that’s mine. Thank you.’ It’s sort of like beachcombing.”

Prince’s *Cowboy* series makes the most of the lush, high-budget, art-directed aesthetic of the advertising campaign. After eliminating the text and enlarging the image, the artist did little to these already gorgeous pictures. They stand on their own as relics of an imagined, individualistic culture.

While Prince never moralizes, the *Cowboy* photos origins in ads designed to lure everyone and anyone to a life of addiction is ever present. These cowboys may have been intended to emanate an image of health and virility, but that delusion was later shattered when two Marlboro models dying of lung cancer very publicly decried Philip Morris for promoting cigarette consumption.

VIEW + DISCUSS

Show: *Untitled (cowboy)*, 1989
Ektacolor photograph, edition of 2
50 x 70 inches (127 x 177.8 cm)

- ▶ What words come to mind when you view this image?
- ▶ Discuss the qualities associated with this photograph that might be attractive to a consumer.
- ▶ In its original form Prince's image was part of a magazine ad that also included a slogan and picture of a pack of Marlboro cigarettes. How does the impact of the image change after it is taken from magazine page, cropped, enlarged, framed, and placed on the gallery or museum wall? Discuss.



- ▶ This Marlboro advertising campaign was one of the most successful in history. What attributes do you think contributed to this success? What qualities associated with cowboys would be attractive to an advertiser? How has Prince changed the message?
- ▶ The photos we find in print ads are intended to help us not only identify the product but also identify with the target audience who will buy and use it. Who do you think would be the intended audience for this ad? How can you tell?

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

- Cigarette advertisers try to glamorize their product with positive associations—including promises that smoking will make you cool, attractive to the opposite sex, or successful—but the truth is that smoking will just make you sick.

You can make your own “true ad.” Just look through magazines for an ad that you can transform by making it truthful. Then redraw your own ad to show the true effects of smoking.

Visit www.costkids.org/trueads/trueadframeset.htm to view true ads submitted by other kids.

- Americans are bombarded with images from ads. The average person sees at least between 400 and 600 ads per day.

Look through several magazines and find an ad that appeals to you. Record your responses to the following questions suggested by the Center for Media Literacy:

- ▶ Who created this message?
- ▶ What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
- ▶ How might different people understand this message differently than me?
- ▶ What values, lifestyles, and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
- ▶ Why is this message being sent?

Share the ad you chose and your responses with your classmates. Looking carefully at media messages will help to make you a more informed consumer.

“The jokes came out of drawing the cartoons. I wanted to draw and I liked the way certain cartoons were drawn. So I decided to redraw the ones I liked. This was 1985. I was living in Los Angeles. I drew a lot of Whitney Darrow cartoons. He was actually a friend of Jackson Pollock. . . . I picked out about a dozen jokes . . . ones that were familiar, the ones that get retold, and wrote them out, by hand on small pieces of paper. Paper and pencil. Pencil on paper.”

Tell Me Everything, 1987. Acrylic and silkscreen on canvas, 56 x 48 inches (142.2 x 121.9 cm). Skarstedt Collection, New York



< JOKES AND CARTOONS >

Can a joke be a painting? Can a painting be a joke? In 1984 Richard Prince began redrawing one-line gag cartoons from the *New Yorker* magazine on small pieces of paper. These works dared anyone to take them seriously as art, and were the antithesis of the expressionistic painting and sculpture that was being produced at the time.

According to Prince, “Artists were casting sculptures in bronze, making huge paintings, talking about prices and clothes and cars and spending vast amounts of money. So I wrote jokes on little pieces of paper and sold them for \$10 each. One dealer bought two and asked for a 10% discount. So I decided that every six months I would double the prices. All this was possible because no one was looking at my work. That’s a fairly good position sometimes. You can get away with a lot of things.”

Like advertising images, cartoons reflect cultural tastes, desires, and prejudices. Prince’s first

appropriated jokes and cartoons are rather straightforward hand-drawn copies of cartoons by Whitney Darrow Jr., but he soon began interjecting an autobiographical tone by mixing, matching, and appropriating new captions. He replaced the cartoons’ original captions with classic one-liners from popular stand-up comics: “What a kid I was. I remember practicing the violin in front of a roaring fire. My old man walked in. He was furious. We didn’t have a fireplace”; “I never had a penny to my name so I changed my name”; and so on.

Jokes have provided Prince with another way to extend his practice of transforming familiar elements of pop culture so that we see them in a new light. In his work, jokes become more than a lighthearted exchange and also reveal attitudes and tensions that are usually buried beneath the surface of social interactions.

VIEW + DISCUSS

Show: *Tell Me Everything*, 1987
Silkscreen and acrylic on canvas
56 x 48 inches (142.2 x 121.9 cm)
Skarstedt Collection, New York

- ▶ What is your response to this work? How is it similar to works of art you are already familiar with? In what ways is it different from them?
- ▶ Describe the artistic choices that Prince made in creating this work. Do these choices meet your personal criteria for a successful work of art or not? Explain.
- ▶ Prince said that he “wrote jokes on little pieces of paper and sold them for \$10 each.” Some people might agree that this is an artistic act, others might not. Debate this issue in your classroom.
- ▶ According to the artist, “All this was possible because no one was looking at my work. That’s a fairly good position sometimes. You can get away with a lot of things.” What might he have meant by this statement? Why can it sometimes be a good thing if people are not paying attention to your creative efforts?

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

- Over the years Prince’s repertoire of jokes has grown to over 100, including:

“What a kid I was. I remember practicing the violin in front of a roaring fire. My old man walked in. He was furious. We didn’t have a fireplace.”

“I never had a penny to my name so I changed my name.”

And the one he used for the painting *Tell Me Everything*:

“I went to see a psychiatrist. He said, ‘Tell me everything.’ I did, and now he’s doing my act.”

Although we may laugh at a joke, it is sometimes difficult to describe exactly what is causing that reaction. Choose one of the jokes above and describe the unexpected connection responsible for the humorous response. Try writing a joke and judge your success by your classmates’ reactions to it.

- A popular feature of the *New Yorker* magazine is the Cartoon Caption Contest. Each week a new cartoon is presented and readers send in their suggestions for the best caption. The on-line version of the contest is available at:

www.newyorker.com/captioncontest

As a class, view the weekly cartoon and create a humorous caption for the image. Share the captions with your classmates and vote for the best entry.

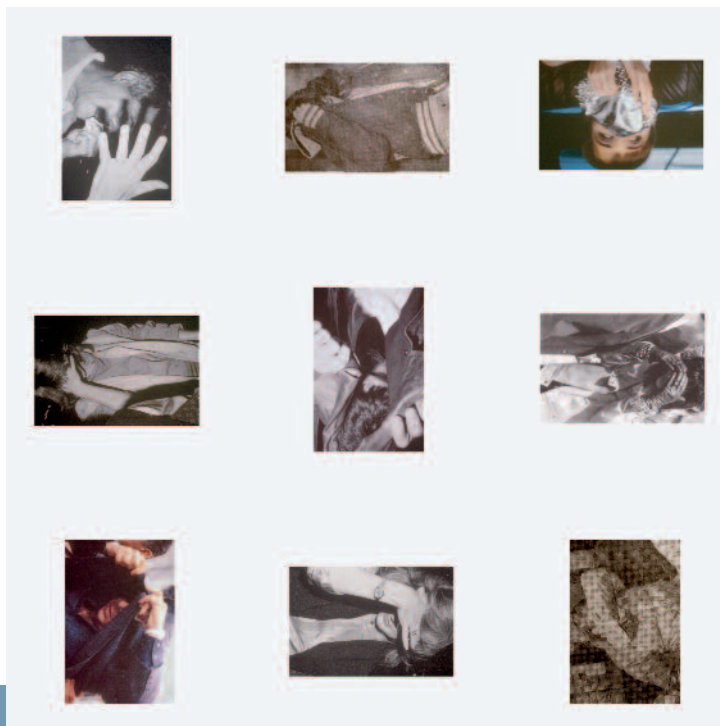
- Prince has used preexisting jokes in several ways—from simple printed text to elaborate fragments of words and images culled from various sources. Create your own joke drawing or painting, derived from one or several sources. When done, discuss your choices.
- Prince has said that the cartoons of Whitney Darrow Jr. (1909–1999) were an inspiration for his joke paintings. Darrow was a well-known cartoonist and illustrator who produced more than 1,500 cartoons for the *New Yorker* magazine between 1933 and 1982. More than 100 of his drawings can be viewed at:

www.cartoonbank.com

What is your response to Darrow’s work? Discuss why Prince might have found these cartoons inspiring.

“Criminals and celebrities were perfect for a ‘gang’ photo. It was so perfect. You could even turn the photographs upside down and sideways. It was definitely a mix. Making that ‘gang’ was like deejaying. . . . Spinning the records. Dancing the picture.”

Criminals and Celebrities, 1986 (detail). Ektacolor photograph, edition of 2, 86 x 48 inches (218.4 x 121.9 cm)



< GANGS AND PUBLICITIES >

Richard Prince has always gravitated toward repetition, groupings, and categories, and consistently produces his work in series. This sensibility has led him to cluster images that display certain similarities, in concept, composition, gesture, and/or subject—creating his own, very personal, collections. In 1984 he introduced into his work a new compositional format that demonstrated his interest in classifying the world as he sees it. Derived from a photo-lab technique of “ganging,” or grouping, nine to twelve 35mm slides into a single internegative, which can be greatly enlarged when printed, Prince’s *Gangs* are veritable archives of related images.

Formally, each *Gang* is a grid of individual photographs, the spaces between which are defined by the congruence of their slide mounts—clean white frames that physically and conceptually connect the content. This predetermined format proved to be an

important step for Prince. It propelled him to expand his subject matter beyond the slick, luxury-good-laden lifestyle pedaled by advertising industry to a much wider array of topics culled from mass culture.

While pursuing his passion for the published—which he has collected from used-book stores and flea markets as well as eBay and garbage dumpsters—Prince also encountered the world of celebrity memorabilia. He collects and arranges autographed 8 x 10 glossy publicity stills and frames them according to genre and type. Some are inscribed with authentic signatures, while others are clearly written in his own hand. As today’s stars are no longer just movie actors, but also fashion models, socialites, musicians, and athletes, the range of subjects is ever expanding and reminds us how vulnerable we are to the cult of celebrity in all of its shallowness.

VIEW + DISCUSS

Show: *Criminals and Celebrities*, 1986
Ektacolor photograph, edition of 2
86 x 48 inches (218.4 x 121.9 cm)

- ▶ Look carefully at *Criminals and Celebrities*. Describe what you see.
- ▶ Which images do you think are celebrities? Which do you think are criminals? What visual clues lead you to your conclusions?
- ▶ Prince rotates the images so that none of them have traditional orientations. Why might he have chosen to do this? Do you think it adds or detracts from the impact of the work? Explain.
- ▶ The artist said, “Criminals and celebrities were perfect for a ‘gang’ photo. It was so perfect.” What qualities do you think he was referring to? What about these subjects might have appealed to Prince and led him to call them “perfect”?
- ▶ Prince likens his “gangs” to the practice of music sampling where segments are taken from original sound recordings and inserted in new recordings. Explain how he might be using this reference.

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

- Prince’s *Criminals and Celebrities* was created in 1986. Create an updated version of this work using images found on the Internet or in magazines. What subjects do you think should be included and why? Once completed, share your work with your classmates and discuss your image choices and juxtapositions.
- Flip through magazines looking for photographs to create your own “gang,” a group of nine images that have something in common. Use a digital camera to photograph the images you have chosen. (Remember to turn off the flash.) An easy way to simulate Prince’s approach is to import your photos into a PowerPoint presentation and print them out as “handouts” choosing the “9 per page” option.
- In the 1980s, when Prince was creating his first *Gangs*, he searched through magazines looking for images that had formal or thematic similarities. Today the Internet provides search engines that will instantly bring images related by theme to your fingertips. Using a search engine such as Google, choose a theme—for instance, “hands”—and do an image search from which you can create your own “gang.” When finished, discuss your choices. How does creating a gang of photos differ from presenting a single image?
- Prince’s *Publicities* are frequently grouped according to formal relationships—for example, people with teased, blonde hair (Darryl Hannah, Debbie Harry, Jonathan Rhys Myers, Kiefer Sutherland, and Kim Wilde) or men with eye patches (Martin Kippenberger and Kurt Russell). Choose your own unifying criteria to create a “publicity.” Share your work with your classmates and discuss whether it was easy or difficult for them to determine the common characteristic.

“Great size. Great subtext. Great reality. Great thing that actually got painted out there, out there in real life. I mean I didn’t have to make this [expletive deleted] up. It was there. Teenagers knew it. It got ‘teen-aged.’ Primed. Flaked. Stripped. Bondo-ed. Lacquered. Nine coats. Sprayed. Numbered. Advertised on. Raced. [expletive deleted] Steve McQueened.”

Point Courage, 1989. Fiberglass, wood, oil, and enamel,
60 1/2 x 56 1/4 x 4 inches (153.7 x 142.9 x 10.2 cm).
Collection of Melva Bucksbaum and Raymond Learsy, Connecticut



< HOODS >

Another of Richard Prince’s series, the *Hood* sculptures, focuses on America’s love affair with the automobile, particularly with the muscle cars of the 1960s. It conjures dreams fueled by a desire for escape, speed, and the lure of the open road—a passion that the artist shares.

Prince began painting on actual muscle-car hoods, treating them as three-dimensional “canvases.” The *Hoods* can be wall-mounted painted reliefs or freestanding sculptures whose entire front ends are encased boxlike as floor pedestals. Advertised in the back of hot-rod magazines, the hoods are available by mail order. All the classic models, which were originally made of steel, are offered as part of fiberglass “reproduction” lines, which cater to a nostalgia for 1960s design—Barracudas, Challengers, Road Runners, Chargers, etc.

For Prince, ready-made car hoods fit perfectly into his appropriative strategies. Initially he

farmed out the finishing work—bonding, sanding, and spray painting—to body shops, which would apply standard, slick auto finishes in a variety of off-the-shelf colors. Over time, however, he personalized the process and introduced his own hand into the transformation of catalogue-ready car parts into art, mastering the use of Bondo as an aesthetic element. With the finish no longer commercially applied, the surfaces appear layered and atmospheric like majestic monochrome paintings.

VIEW + DISCUSS

Show: *Point Courage*, 1989

Fiberglass, wood, oil, and enamel

60 1/2 x 56 1/4 x 4 inches (153.7 x 142.9 x 10.2 cm)

Collection of Melva Bucksbaum and Raymond Leary, Connecticut

- ▶ Although some viewers would instantly recognize this form as being a car hood, many others would not. What do you think Prince found interesting about car hoods? Describe how knowing that this is work is painted on the hood of a car alters your reaction to it.
- ▶ Prince chose the title *Point Courage*. Can you find a way to relate this work to its title? If you were to rename it, what title would you choose? Why?
- ▶ In what ways are Prince's *Hoods* different from the other series of works that he has created (i.e., the *Cowboys* or *Jokes*)? Are there ways in which these series are related to each other?
- ▶ Would you categorize this work as a painting, a sculpture, or something else? Invent a word to describe this new category of art, which has both sculptural and painterly components.

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

- Prince has taken a commercially available, manufactured object and transformed it into a work of art. Search around for a discarded manufactured object that you would like to transform into an artwork. What object did you choose? Why? Describe the process of its transformation. Where would be the best place to display the work you have created? Why? How does the placement of the work affect its impact?
- Prince was born in 1949 and came of age in the 1960s, during the era of the Beach Boys, whose hit singles—including “409,” an ode to a Chevy 409, and “Shut Down,” a celebration of drag racing—helped give the muscle car the cult status it still has today. Research this historical period by listening to its music. Do you think America’s romance with the automobile has continued, increased, or waned? Explain your response.
- What aspects of current popular culture do you think you will ultimately remember as formative influences? Explain your choices.

“Again, I was just using what was around me. I noticed certain repetitive elements in the neighborhood up here—basketball hoops, tire planters, tree-houses. But I’m not sure if I would refer to myself as a photographer. I’m certainly not a real one. I make a lot of mistakes. I use indoor film outdoors. I don’t spend time in the darkroom. I’m still playing with the camera.”

Untitled (upstate), 1995–99. Ektacolor photograph, edition of 2, 60 x 40 inches (152.4 x 101.6 cm)



◀ UPSTATE PHOTOGRAPHS ▶

In 1996 Richard Prince moved to upstate New York and began a new series of creative investigations. After almost two decades of making work derived from images and phrases that already exist in popular culture, he took his camera outside and photographed the banal details of his everyday environment. Although this could be viewed as a radical departure, to Prince there is no essential difference between making photos of other photos and making photos of the world at large. He is always paying attention to what is around him with intense scrutiny.

On one level the *Upstate* photos chronicle a landscape of economic decline in an unremarkable semirural area. Pictures of

above-ground swimming pools and melancholy images of abandoned-looking basketball hoops perched on the edge of overgrown fields suggest a region cut off from the cultural mainstream. However, Prince finds quiet moments of beauty in these overlooked and undervalued features of the landscape.

VIEW + DISCUSS

Show: *Untitled (upstate)*, 1995–99
Ektacolor photograph, edition of 2
60 x 40 inches (152.4 x 101.6 cm)

- ▶ Describe this work as fully as you can. For some this may be a familiar image. For others it may be one they have not encountered. Have you visited a place like this? When? What are your associations with it? Explain.
- ▶ As you look at this photograph, make a list of adjectives that you would use to describe the locale. Look at the list of words you have compiled. Can you think of a place in your community that has a similar “feel”? Describe this location.
- ▶ Prince has photographed this subject to make it both everyday and unusual. Describe both aspects of this work. How can one photo be both ordinary and mysterious at the same time?
- ▶ It is difficult to know whether Prince is attracted to, interested in, or critical of his subjects. Prince has stated, “My work is not judgmental; it’s like a window I see through. Not censoring anything is something artists continue to do—at least some do, at least I do.” What do you think? What does it mean for an artist to be “a window”?

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

- Many artists have found inspiration in their immediate environment. Camille Pissarro (1830–1903) repeatedly painted scenes of his home in Pointoise, a small town near Paris. Georgia O’Keeffe (1887–1986) fell in love with the landscape near Abiquiu, New Mexico, whose varicolored cliffs inspired some of her most famous landscapes, and Charles Burchfield (1893–1967) used the industrial vistas around Buffalo, New York, as an ongoing theme. Research the work of these artists and then bring a camera with you on a walk around your community. Take pictures of things that you find of interest. When you return home look over your photos. What themes, ideas, or subjects are repeated in your series?
- According to Prince, “After twenty-five years, I was tired of the New York City lifestyle. I found it boring and repetitive—you know, going to another dinner. Living in New York feels like you’re always inside—inside buildings, inside subways. I needed a new experience, so I went to the opposite extreme. We have a small farmhouse in the Catskills at the end of a dead-end dirt road. Here I’m outside. There’s no traffic. I don’t have to walk down a set of stairs to get onto a sidewalk full of people. I walk out the door and step onto the grass. At first I found it all very exotic. I started taking my own photographs. I drive around in my truck and take my camera with me.”
- Many people have strong preferences for living in cities or in the country. Express yours. Do your classmates agree or disagree about the pro and cons of city and country life?

This educator's guide for *Richard Prince: Spiritual America* is adapted from "Nowhere Man," Nancy Spector's essay in the exhibition catalogue *Richard Prince* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2007). Spector is Chief Curator at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

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Brooks, Rosetta, Jeff Rian, and Luc Sante. *Richard Prince*. London: Phaidon Press, 2003.

Phillips, Lisa. *Richard Prince*. New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1992.

WEB SITES

www.guggenheim.org/artscurriculum

The educator's guide is available with downloadable images on the Guggenheim's Web site.

www.nymag.com/nymetro/arts/art/11815

Interview with the artist.

www.indexmagazine.com/interviews/richard_prince.shtml

Interview with the artist.

RESOURCES

MEDIA LITERACY

www.medialit.org

Center for Media Literacy provides materials for educators related to developing media literacy skills.

www.ithaca.edu/looksharp

Project Look Sharp provides materials, training, and support to help teachers prepare students for life in today's media saturated world. Project Look Sharp promotes the effective integration of media literacy and critical thinking into classroom curricula. Project Look Sharp is an initiative of Ithaca College, working in collaboration with local school districts, New York State BOCES, the Alliance for Media Literate America, and other national media literacy organizations.

www.costkids.org/targetingkids/magazineads.htm

An antismoking Web site by kids with special attention to advertisements that encourage kids to smoke.

www.about-face.org

Web site contains "gallery of winners" and "gallery of offenders," demonstrating examples of both positive and negative advertising focusing on tobacco as well as other products.

www.childrensmidiaproject.org

Children's Media Project is an arts and education organization focusing on media and technology. It has developed a textbook *Smoke Screens: From Tobacco Outrage to Media Activism*, designed to educate middle school students about the dangers of smoking.

CARTOONS AND JOKES

Darrow, Whitney, Jr. *Give Up?* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966.

www.cartoonbank.com

More than 100 cartoons by Whitney Darrow Jr. can be viewed at this Web site.

www.newyorker.com/captioncontest

Web site for the New Yorker Cartoon Caption Contest presents cartoons in need of captions. You can submit a caption or vote for your favorite.

APPROPRIATION The concept of taking possession of existing material, imagery or techniques from everyday life, popular culture, or past traditions, often without permission, and reusing it in a context that differs from its original one. Frequently appropriation techniques are used in order to reveal meaning not previously seen in the original. Richard Prince was part of a generation of artists associated with postmodernism who emerged in the late 1970s and 80s and used this strategy to undermine the privileged position of the author and modernism's obsession with the "original."

CONCEPTUAL ART is based on the notion that the essence of art is an idea, or concept, and may exist distinct from and even in the absence of an object as its representation. Conceptual art emerged in the 1960s when both art institutions and the preciousness of the unique aesthetic object were being challenged by artists and critics.

CONTEXT The environment in which something exists. For example: When you look at a painting in the nave of a church, with stained glass windows and prayer candles and parishioners kneeling in the pews, it is quite unlike viewing that painting in a museum, where it is surrounded by informative wall texts, strolling visitors, a café, and a gift shop. Go a step further and imagine the same painting on a postcard. When you see this painting reproduced on a T-shirt or mouse pad, it has traveled far from its original context.

DECONTEXTUALIZATION To remove something from the arena or environment in which it usually exists.

POPULAR CULTURE The common set of tastes and customs shared by large segments within a population; also called "pop culture."

POSTMODERNISM Postmodernist theory—articulated in architecture, literature, and other fields—questioned and dismantled the grand narrative of Western culture and had a profound impact on the visual arts by the end of the 1970s. Postmodernism includes appropriation and other aesthetic approaches that emerged at that time as critiques of modernism's principles of innovation, artistic authenticity, and individual expression.

REPHOTOGRAPHY Prince's method of photographing existing photographs to create his own original artwork.