

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY
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Tue–Sat 10:00am–6:00pm



RICHARD PRINCE: *Original*

Thursday, April 9–Saturday, June 20, 2015

Opening reception: Thursday, April 9th, from 6:00 to 8:00pm

I don't see any difference now between what I collect and what I make.
—Richard Prince

Gagosian New York is pleased to present Richard Prince's *Untitled (original)* series.

An avid yet assiduous collector, Prince has amassed an unrivaled library, which was the subject of the major exhibition “Richard Prince: American Prayer” at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in 2011. The core of Prince's collection comprises rare and iconic books, manuscripts, letters, and contemporary art from the beat, hippie, pulp, and punk eras. It begins in 1949, the year of his birth and the same year that George's Orwell's *1984*—the first rare book he ever bought at auction—was published. Prince often blurs the line between his art and his collecting: nurse paperbacks were the impetus for the *Nurse* paintings (2002–08), while the composite variations on de Kooning's *Women* began with collaging and painting over reproductions in an exhibition catalogue.

Many of Prince's *Untitled (original)* works (2000–) pair vintage adult novels with the original artworks for their covers: each “diptych” shows the transformation from painting or drawing to printed jacket. His meticulous assembling of these related artifacts is evidence of a passionate bibliophilia. Among the illustrated subjects are a cowboy's hat and holster draped over a makeshift grave for the novel *Massacre Trail*; a female nurse twirling a flower in front of a towering wave (*Surfing Nurse*); and a woman smoking in an untidy apartment (*Reefer Girl*). In a Hollywood twist, an illustration of the late actor Charles Bronson as a cowboy is accompanied by his autographed photographic portrait and three canceled checks. Some of the original works are signed by the artists, alluding to the fact that Prince has gone one step beyond his own strategy of appropriation, turning authorship on its head by dissolving the boundary between creator and collector.

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Mining images from mass media, advertising and entertainment, Prince has continuously redefined authorship and ownership as they relate to contemporary art. As an employee at Time-Life Inc. during the 1970s and early 1980s, he was captivated by the contrived glamour of magazine ads for jewelry, furniture, and fashion. He began to re-photograph these images of what he described as "social science fiction," cropping them, removing text, and grouping them by subject. Such appropriative processes have remained at the heart of his all-consuming work. In deadpan paintings, photographs, and sculptures, Prince has probed the depths of racism, sexism, and psychosis in mainstream humor; the mythical status of cowboys, bikers, customized cars, and celebrities; and the push-pull allure of pulp fiction, soft porn and, most recently, social media.

Richard Prince was born in 1949 in the Panama Canal Zone, and lives and works in New York. Public collections include Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Art Institute of Chicago; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; Tate Britain, London; Kunstmuseum Basel; and François Pinault Foundation, Venice. Selected solo museum exhibitions include Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1992); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (1993); Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam (1993); Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel (2001–02, traveled to Kunsthalle Zurich; and Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg); "Richard Prince: Spiritual America," Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (2007, traveled to Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, through 2008); "Richard Prince: Continuation," Serpentine Gallery, London (2008); "Richard Prince: American Prayer," an exhibition of American literature and ephemera from the artist's collection, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris (2011); and "Richard Prince: It's a Free Concert," Kunsthau Bregenz (2014).

For further information please contact the gallery at newyork@gagosian.com or at +1.212.744.2313. All images are subject to copyright. Gallery approval must be granted prior to reproduction.

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Image: *Untitled (original)* (detail), 2010, original illustration and paperback book, 45 × 40 inches (114.3 × 101.6 cm)

Gagosian Gallery was established in 1980 by Larry Gagosian.

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