

RICHARD PRINCE

01 February – 16 March 2013
4 New Burlington Place, London W1

In February and March 2013, Sadie Coles presents an exhibition of new paintings by Richard Prince, his first exhibition in London since his 'Continuation' retrospective at the Serpentine Gallery in 2008. These fourteen expansive canvases hybridise the forms of various recent series. Each canvas features an over-painted ink-jet print of a single female figure or giantess – a hybrid of Prince's *Rasta* paintings, *De Kooning* paintings, and a separate series of works inspired by Picasso. The women teeter between the appearance of neoclassical marbles and fragments of soft porn. Through Prince's interventions in acrylic, the torsos metamorphose into gigantic sculptural bodies, with wrestling mask heads and elongated, angular limbs painted in grisaille tones.



In line with much of Prince's art, these paintings grapple with the idea of influence, reusing and deconstructing his own and other artists' iconography in order to challenge the avant-garde gospel of 'originality'. In the late 2000s, Prince began a cycle of paintings which similarly corrupted Willem de Kooning's 'Women' series – conflating the originals with pornographic ink-jet prints and sections of expressive, 'painterly' brushwork. In this latest series, the figures' masked faces, box-like appendages and clubbed extremities often jar absurdly with their agile poses. In defiance of painting's fervent movement away from photographic styles of representation throughout the twentieth century, Prince cheekily injects photography back into the picture. These works profess their sources – their debt to Cubism and Abstract Expressionism – at the same time as they express a close sympathy with (and perhaps a nostalgia for) the grand painterly statements of Modernism.

Prince plays out – even satirises – the way the female nude is mapped and multiplied in art, from classical sculpture to Renaissance Venuses to the distorted and reconfigured forms of Cubism and Expressionism, as well as in other sources such as pornography and medical text books. Of the anatomy books he raids, Prince remarks: "they're very generic. They don't belong to anyone". These new works highlight the generic ways in which the female nude continues to be visualised (each figure is pointedly faceless, and one has censorious anonymising black lines across her breasts and eyes). All the while, Prince's paintings assert the undying relevance of art which deals with the body and its portrayal. He has stated: "How do you paint the nude, the figure today? The answer is don't try to get away from the past but instead take from it everything you have ever seen and experienced and loved and paint today and then tomorrow and then paint the day after that."

Prince emerged in the 1970s as one of the leading exponents of appropriation art in New York. Throughout his career, he has employed various media to cite and subtly parody the visual and verbal clichés of American popular culture – whether in the 'Cowboys' series in which he 're-photographed' the mythic cowboy imagery of Marlboro adverts, or the celebrated series of 'Nurse' paintings based on the covers of pulp fiction novels which these nudes can be seen to relate to. Prince exposes, and subtly critiques, the underlying ideological and cultural assumptions, holding up a mirror to American society.

Richard Prince (b. 1949, Panama Canal Zone) had his first solo museum show in 1983 at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, and has since had numerous solo exhibitions internationally, Prince/Picasso, Museo Picasso Málaga, Spain, 2012; Richard Prince. American Prayer, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, 2011; Continuation at the Serpentine Gallery, London, 2008, and Richard Prince: Spiritual America at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, in 2008.

For further information please contact James Cahill on +44 [0] 20 7493 8611 or james@sadiecoles.com
Opening hours Tuesday – Saturday 11 – 6pm