

## **RICHARD PRINCE: F A S H I O N**

March 3 – April 18, 2015

NEW YORK – Nahmad Contemporary is pleased to present *Richard Prince: Fashion* at the 980 Madison Avenue gallery in New York, on view from March 3<sup>rd</sup> through April 18<sup>th</sup>. The exhibition marks the artist's second solo presentation at the gallery, and brings together all nine photographs that comprise the entirety of this iconic photographic series dating from 1982-84 for the first time.

In the late 1970s, Prince worked in the tear sheet department at *Time Life*, where his job entailed clipping editorials for staff writers. The remaining advertisements were filled with, in the artist's words, "authorless" images, in which patterns and visual codes of desires, fears and stereotypes exploited by the Madison Avenue ad agencies emerged. In 1977, Prince began to amass these images within specific categories and re-photograph them. This deceptively simple action bore profound consequences in redefining the rules of art, which remain highly relevant and influential to this day.

At a time when VHS technology, allowing viewers to record existing TV shows and movies, was first being disseminated and hip hop artists were experimenting with the sampling technique, Prince appropriated the highly manipulated, artificial advertising images of the public domain to create a subtly modified but radically transformed simulation of the original, uniquely his own. In a blink of a shutter, the artist throws into question ideas of authorship, originality and authenticity. Prince acted as his own art department, modifying images from disparate ads by cropping, enlarging, excising any identifiable logos or text, playing with the focus and angle, and photographing black-and-white images in color and vice versa. His artistic interventions render these utterly familiar images uncanny, even subversive.

The works in the exhibition – intensely close-up, almost clinical re-photographs of glamorous headshots of seductive models – reflect a generic paradigm, though culled from a plurality of advertisements. Each is embedded with an aura of beauty, luxury and power that permeates capitalist culture. While the *Fashion* photographs consider themes of visual pleasure, each subject's vision is obstructed in some manner, calling attention to the viewer's own blind complicity in the accepted conventions of gender roles and consumer society.

Also on view is *Untitled (gang)*, a grid of all nine *Fashion* images within a single work. The "gang" format, a technical term used by photo labs for printing multiple images on one print, is a tool Prince began to utilize in 1984 to archive related images in order to further investigate character types.

In his 1983 text, *The Expressive Fallacy*, art historian and critic, Hal Foster, states that Prince's intention is to "catch seduction in the act, to savour his own fascination with such images even as they manipulate him via insinuated desire [...] In this spectacular society the self is reflected everywhere and nowhere – but is nonetheless strictly positioned by sexuality, class and race." In Prince's photographic piracy, images are inextricably linked to cultural, social and political structures. By transferring the commercial to the realm of fine art, he challenges the distinction between truth and fiction, inviting us to rethink the pedestrian notions of reality.

Richard Prince was born in 1949 in the Panama Canal Zone. He currently lives and works in upstate New York. The artist has been the subject of numerous solo exhibition at prestigious institutions throughout the world, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel; Serpentine Gallery, London; and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.