

RICHARD PRINCE

November 11, 2013—
January 18, 2014

NAHMAD CONTEMPORARY

980 Madison Avenue, 3rd Floor
New York, NY



Richard Prince, *My Name*, Diptych, 1987, Acrylic and silkscreen on canvas

NEW YORK – Nahmad Contemporary is pleased to present **Richard Prince: Monochromatic Jokes**, opening at 980 Madison Avenue, New York City, running **November 11th, 2013** through **January 18, 2014**.

The exhibition features a selection of paintings from the artist's iconic series, spanning a period of 1987 to 1994. Incorporating jokes reflective of the "borscht belt" humor prevalent in the 1950s, Prince's paintings tap into social preoccupations of the national subconscious. Prior to Prince's use of the jokes, many had infiltrated popular culture, gradually losing their original authors to become adopted by a largely oral tradition.

In his canonical text, *The Death of the Author*, Roland Barthes states: "The text is a tissue of citations, resulting from the thousand sources of culture [...] The writer can only imitate a gesture forever anterior, never original [...] If he wants to express himself, at least he should know that the internal 'thing' he claims to 'translate' is itself only a readymade dictionary." Understood in this context, by transcribing jokes onto canvases Prince sheds light on the dynamics of language, appropriation, authorship and the enigmatic presence of a distinctive voice.

Prince's work of the late 1980s-early 1990s shifted the pop art paradigm of the baby boom era, to alternate subcultures and a new American dream. These themes can now be seen as poignant examples of the central preoccupations of Prince's artistic output.

For the first time in over fifteen years, the most outstanding examples from Prince's Jokes series will be put on display – many of which will not have been previously shown in the United States.

About Richard Prince

Richard Prince was born in 1949 in the Panama Canal Zone and lives and works in upstate New York. Mining images from mass media, advertising and entertainment since the late seventies, Prince has redefined the concepts of authorship, ownership and aura. Applying his understanding of the complex transactions of representation to the creation of art, he evolved a unique signature filled with echoes of other signatures yet that is unquestionably his own. He evolved a unique signature filled with echoes of other signatures that remain unquestionably idiosyncratic.

An avid collector and chronicler, Prince brings American subcultures to the forefront and explores their role in the construction of diverse American identities. Amongst other things, he has probed the depths of racism, sexism and psychosis through the guise of humor and the mythical status of cowboys, bikers, muscle cars and celebrities. Most recently, he has examined the push-pull allure of pulp fiction and soft porn, producing unlikely icons such as the highly coveted *Nurse* paintings. A fully illustrated catalogue with accompanying texts will be published for the event.

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