

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

Bell, Tiffany. "Richard Prince." 1990.

## RICHARD PRINCE

Jay Gorney Modern Art  
Barbara Gladstone

recall Minimal paintings or Conceptual pieces. A group of small paintings with multiple, overlapping images are reminiscent of David Salle's work. Most of the cartoons show women discovering men in compromising positions with other women. The accompanying texts do not correspond to the image. We are presented, then, with two jokes or perhaps three: in the cartoon, in the text, and in the painting itself, a play on the styles of so-called high art.

Similarly, the car hoods refer to an obsession in American culture—the automobile—in a format that recalls Minimal or color-field paintings. They also relate to recent Neo-Pop art, in that a Pop image or object is repetitively displayed as an icon on the wall. Are these then jokes too?

Some have indicated that part of Prince's intention is to provide a self-portrait from which the self is displaced, suggesting a persona defined by the cultural environment he addresses. Prince claims his work is therefore not judgmental but descriptive of the fictions, informed by desire, that are perpetrated by our media-dominated world. If so, then we would have to believe that his jokes (presented in such a way that their humor is suspended) do not represent a point of view but simply juxtapose cultural obsessions—in these works cars, sex, and art—that characterize a shared persona. It's an interesting project even if it's not always convincing.

—Tiffany Bell

While they represent different formal strategies, Richard Prince's latest bodies of work—silk-screened jokes, at Jay Gorney, and fiberglass car hoods, at Gladstone—are closely linked conceptually.

Prince first showed his jokes as groups of penciled drawings copied from *The New Yorker* and other magazines, simply lifted from their original contexts. Here the jokes were more obviously exhibited as art. Some

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"I understand your husband drowned and left

you two million dollars. Can you imagine, two million dollars, and he couldn't even read or write."

"Yeah, she said, and he couldn't swim either."

Richard Prince, *Can't Read, Can't Write, Can't Swim*, 1989, acrylic and silk screen on canvas, 96 by 75 inches. Jay Gorney Modern Art.