

NEW YORK OBSERVER

Man Up: Macho Men Take Upper East Side Galleries — Too Much Testosterone?

By Andrew Russett 11/27/12

UP ON 79TH STREET, Skarstedt is showing 10 large paintings by Richard Prince, a Goldstein contemporary whose early work fits the Pictures mold. Mr. Prince recently published a bizarre, though sort of funny, rant on his blog about me, apparently responding to something I wrote two years ago about how he's been running on empty his sexy "Nurse" paintings of the early 2000s. Though his recent rubber band pieces and copyright-tweaking antics have been fun, it's still true.

Thankfully, the series at Skarstedt, "The White Paintings," dates from around the first half of the 1990s. The works are appealing confections that combine tasteless jokes (these came after his first joke paintings) and silk screens of cartoons (and other images) into hazy collages. The jokes are predictably middlebrow numbers on gender, religion and modern life. Intermixing them with the visuals—drawings of well-appointed apartments and martini glasses, a photo of a woman who appears to be a stripper—produces an easy upper-management charm in place of the undisguised condescension Mr. Prince usually employs when mining certain cultural forms. This is not redeeming art, but it is perfectly pitched to the indulgences of its target class, and is as satisfying, albeit unsavory, as a night spent dropping good money around town.



Richard Prince, 'The Soft Parade,' 1994. (Courtesy the artist and Skarstedt)