

# SKARSTEDT

## *Double Take*

7<sup>th</sup> March – 26<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Official opening Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017, 6 – 8 pm

*'The great thing about an appropriation is that even though the transformation reads as fiction, everybody knows that the source of the appropriation was at some point non-fiction, (magazine, movie, etc.), and it's these sources, or elements of non-fiction, that gives the picture, no matter how questionable, its believable edge'* – Richard Prince.

**Double Take: A re-framing, re-staging and re-presentation of appropriation in photography from the 1960s to the present day.**

**Featuring:** Anne Collier, Roe Ethridge, Robert Heinecken, Barbara Kruger, Louise Lawler, Richard Prince, Collier Schorr, Steven Shearer, Hank Willis Thomas.

Skarstedt, London is delighted to announce its exhibition, *Double Take* (7<sup>th</sup> March to 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2017) which looks at the theme of appropriation and how it has been explored by different generations of artists using photography. Investigating the power of pictures in shaping ideas of identity, gender, race, desire and sexuality, *Double Take* features works by leading artists from the 1960s to the present day.

The exhibition takes as its starting point Robert Heinecken's seminal series of photograms *Are You Rea*, 1964 – 68, as well as works by leading 'Pictures Generation' artists, including Richard Prince, Barbara Kruger and Louise Lawler, who came of age during the media-driven consumer culture of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Alongside these artists, the exhibition also showcases works by a younger generation, including Anne Collier, Roe Ethridge, Steven Shearer and Hank Willis Thomas whose interests reflect those of their predecessors, whilst also presenting their own unique take on appropriation.

Whether taking images of existing artworks in the case of Louise Lawler, or challenging the verisimilar qualities of images propagated in the mass media in Richard Prince's case, each of the artists featured in *Double Take* use photography as a tool to re-frame and re-contextualise, attributing new meaning to the way we see the world and our place in it.



In Robert Heinecken's (1931 – 2006) influential *Are You Rea* series, as for many of the artists featured in the exhibition, magazines are a principal source material. Taken from more than 2000 magazine pages over a period of four years, this unique set of photograms, or 'camera-less' photographs, are direct contact prints of images culled from publications such as *Life*, *Time* and *Woman's Day*. The superimposition of both sides of the page draws attention to the linguistic and visual strategies adopted by the commercial media. The title derived from the question 'Are you Real?' in one of the women's magazines is used by Heinecken to highlight the subliminal messages propagated through mass visual imagery.

The merger of language and text is also central to Barbara Kruger's (b. 1945) large-scale black and white photographs, overlaid with provocative captions in bold Futura type. Presented in the artist's signature red enamel frame, works such as *Untitled* (Now You See Us Now You Don't), 1987 draw upon Kruger's background as a magazine designer, to adopt the same visual tools as mass media in order to examine the cultural constructions of power, identity and sexuality.

The role of corporate America and the media in fixing and reinforcing cultural stereotypes is also at the heart of Hank Willis Thomas' (b. 1976) works from the *B®anded* (2006) and *Unbranded* series. Particularly

interested in the literal and figural objectification of the African American male body, for the *B@anded* series Willis Thomas appropriates advertising copy and superimposes a Nike swoosh onto the bodies of black men, recalling the branding of slaves by their owners. Taking magazine ads, Willis Thomas digitally strips the images of logos and text, thus revealing the strategies of advertisers as well as the stereotypes to which they are appealing.

In her merger of still-life photography with appropriation of found objects such as books, magazines and records, largely from the 1960s, 70s and 80s, Anne Collier (b.1970) explores her interest in popular culture and the influence of mass-circulated imagery in shaping our personal stories, whilst also addressing the question of photography's role in fixing ideas of gender and desire. Photographing always in the studio with a large-format plate camera, Collier's images are characterised by their aesthetic clarity and dimensional flatness, informed by commercial and technical photography. Inspired by the 'Pictures Generation' artists for whom sexual politics was part of the social landscape of the time, Collier investigates the conventions of nude photography and the act of seeing in her re-photography of camera magazine covers from the 1970s featuring highly sexualized images of women posing as photographers.

Just as Barbara Kruger's red frames are part of her strategy to enable her works to enter the marketplace as commodified objects – "*That's what the frames were about: how to commodify them. It was the most effective packaging device. Signed, sealed, delivered*" - Louise Lawler's (b. 1947) photographs of iconic artworks within an interior setting highlight the importance of framing in the consumption and value of art. Centering on the conceptual framing of a work, an idea first explored by Marcel Duchamp in his series of *Readymades*, Lawler engages with this theme to explore ideas of commodification and consumerism in contemporary culture. Deliberately selecting recognisable works, many of which are of appropriated subject matter, Lawler raises the questions of originality and authorship inherent to appropriation. In *Nude*, 2002-2003, an installation image of Gerhard Richter's *Emma (Nude on a Staircase)*, 1966 inspired by Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending the Staircase No.1*, 1911, Lawler not only engages with the notion of the original, she also subverts traditional value hierarchies by photographing the Richter on its side, set back and at an angle, giving foreground dominance to the blank white wall and non-descript floor. Her framing of the scene, be it an auction house, museum or private home, gives the viewer a 'behind the scenes glimpse' of the role assigned to images and objects in projecting belief and value systems.



One of the foremost artists associated with the theme of appropriation, Richard Prince's (b. 1949) tightly cropped photographs of virile cowboys and glamorous models in advertisements taken from fashion and lifestyle magazines, draw our attention to the power of these mass-circulated images in manipulating desires and aspirations. Removed from their original context and enlarged, the visible grain of these re-photographed images highlights the gap between the stylised fictions marketed for public consumption and the notion of photography as a faithful recorder of truth.

In Prince's *Girlfriend* images, taken from adverts placed in biker magazines and Steven Shearer's (b. 1968) collaged archive works comprising hundreds of anonymous images mined from the internet, the borrowing and re-contextualisation of vernacular imagery and 'low' art subverts the traditional art historical hierarchies and calls into questions the notion of authorship. Whilst the girlfriend adverts appropriated by Prince and the rock star wannabes in Shearer's *Guyz*, 2005 may belong to a different demographic to the slick and polished fashion brigade, what both artists highlight is each group's hunger for images of itself.

Also addressing questions of authorship and desire, Collier Schorr's (b. 1963) portraits from the series *8 Women*, introduce a female gaze into the debate about female representation. With a background in fashion photography, Schorr takes her own commissioned fashion images and merges them in dialogue with other works. In *Dorothea*, Schorr makes visible the object quality of the image and the layering of different media. A photograph of a portrait in a printed book, the deliberate framing of the image to show the centrefold, as well as the model's truncated name and agency draws attention both to the texture of the printed materials and to the fact that we are not looking at a presentation of a real body, but rather an image of it.

Inspired by photo histories of female performance, Schorr's elegant portraits question who the women are that desire to be looked at as well as the power that exists in acknowledging this position.

Working as both editor and photographer, Roe Ethridge (b. 1969) borrows images already in circulation on the internet or in news media, as well as paraphrasing from his own commercial imagery, at times already published in other contexts. Subverting the original intention of the photographic image, Ethridge's re-sequencing and re-combination of images subtly questions the notion of photographic 'truth' and leads the viewer to ask what is staged and what is spontaneous. In the new collaged works titled *Pic 'n' clips* which borrow their name from a drawer of coupons cut and collected by Ethridge's mother, he has taken images from computer desktop archives of the same name built over the past 12 years. The works are printed in transparent layers, and embellished with rich hues and flattened American Spirit cigarette packs, the label of which makes subtle reference to Richard Prince's appropriation of the all-American hero figure of the cowboy from the Marlboro ads, as well as to the history of photography and the idea of America's power and might in Alfred Stieglitz's iconic 'Spiritual America'.



With the democratisation of the image through social media and the internet in today's digital age, *Double Take* explores the theme of appropriation and the role of photography across generations in shaping and re-examining ideas of authorship, originality, identity and culture. Through each artist's engagement with the formal and conceptual properties of the medium, they challenge the notion that photography presents a faithful representation of reality and incite us to look more closely at how images are manipulated, styled and filtered to create fictions that we, the public are too-often ready to accept.

#### **Notes to editors**

#### **Exhibition: *Double Take***

**Location:** Skarstedt, 8 Bennet St., St James's, London, SW1A 1RP

**Telephone:** +44 (0) 207 499 5200

**Dates:** 7<sup>th</sup> March – 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2017

**Hours:** Tuesday to Friday 10am - 6pm; Saturday 10 am - 5 pm. Monday by appointment.

Admission is free

**[www.skarstedt.com](http://www.skarstedt.com)**

Please join the conversation with Skarstedt on Instagram (@SkarstedtGallery) via the hashtags:

#DoubleTake #AppropriationPhotography

#### **For media and image enquiries please contact:**

Helena Zedig or Cecilia Vilela at Pickles PR:

E: [helena@picklespr.com](mailto:helena@picklespr.com) T: +44 (0) 7803 596587

E: [cecilia@picklespr.com](mailto:cecilia@picklespr.com) T: +44 (0)7449 872 799

#### **Image credits**

1. Robert Heinecken, *Are You Rea* (detail), 1964 -1968.
2. Richard Prince, *Untitled (Fashion)*, 1982-84.
3. Roe Ethridge, *Pic 'n Clip 9*, 2017.