



Exquises Esquisses

Richard Prince

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La controverse, le scandale, les accusations de plagiat, on a beaucoup écrit sur Richard Prince, peintre, photographe, dandy destroy de soixante-treize printemps et figure indomptable de l'art contemporain depuis le mitan des années 80. Entretien publié exceptionnellement en anglais, une fois n'est pas coutume.



On a aussi ardemment admiré les cowboys, les nurses, les pin-up, les girlfriends délurées de bikers, les collages, et aussi les bouts de phrases si chers à ce lettré de haut vol, transi de romans pulp, de littérature française du XIX ème siècle, de Richard Brautigan, de l'œuvre noire de Jim Thompson et de Beat Generation entres autres choses exquises.



“Let’s reinvent the gods, all the myths of the ages...”

Exhumer des images, des oeuvres magnétiques underground voire méconnues, les détourner et s’évertuer à provoquer, à se jouer des mythes et des icônes, histoire de chatouiller l’inconscient et souligner les fêlures d’une certaine Amérique désaxée.



Epicurien, fondu de punk, du Velvet Underground, de Dylan et de Sonic Youth entre autres, collectionneur insatiable, curateur d’expositions, galeriste pointu (Fulton Ryder antre maléfique et secrète sise dans l’Upper East-Side à New-York, qui fait le bonheur des amateurs de livres rares et autres objets insolites : du tirage limité d’une photo d’Araki au permis de conduire de Ol’ Dirty Bastard, défunte figure de proue du Wu Tang Clan en passant par de rares fanzines commis par Raymond Pettibon), il est ce personnage public, séduisant et controversé que l’on retrouve souvent dans les pages du Purple Fashion Magazine d’Olivier Zahm.

Et pourtant, malgré la pléthore d’interviews, de déclarations et d’apparitions publiques, Richard Prince demeure un homme insaisissable qui dissimule autant qu’il exhibe...à l’instar du John Wayne balafre qui orne la couverture de son dernier ouvrage **John Duke** paru à 300 exemplaires il y a seulement quelques jours.

Pour toutes ces raisons mais pas seulement, il a accepté de baisser la garde, et de dévoiler quelques beaux morceaux de sa riche biographie (sans rapport avec l’entretien aussi ubuesque et drolatique que fascinant qu’il accorda à JG Ballard en 1985), de magnifiques éclats d’âme et quelques obsessions intimes...

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Le site de Richard Prince : <http://www.richardprince.com/>

Richard Prince sur twitter : <https://twitter.com/RichardPrince4>

Fulton Ryder sur twitter : https://twitter.com/fulton_ryder

Fulton Ryder sur facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Fulton-Ryder/403146813045618>

1. *"When things get too comfortable and things get too safe, I get the feeling like I'm smothering. It's like somebody's burying me in feathers."* (Harry Crews). Do you agree with that? Do you need to get out of your comfort zone to create? To embrace the abyss or darkness, or all of that is nonsense?

Comfort Zone. I like Harry Crews. A big fan. His essays in *Blood and Grits* are great. His bio, *A Childhood* ^[1], is maybe his best book. I'm not sure I have a comfort zone. Sometimes all I need is a room, a table, some paper and a pen. I try to keep it simple. And I try to do it all myself.

2. *"I think sometimes I need a break from reality"* said French novelist Michel Houellebecq explaining his intense love for Science Fiction. Is your art a way of escaping daily life and routine? Is art your very own Sci Fiction? Moreover, how do you relate to Houellebecq 's very controversial novels?

I liked "Atomised" (*Les Particules Élémentaires*). I think that was how they translated his first novel into English. It was sexy. I think a lot of art is about sex. As far as escaping daily life, I try to spend as much time in my studio. My studio is outer space. There's nothing that goes on in there that's routine. My studio is where I have sex.

3. Who did you want to be when you were 20?

Jim Morrison.



4. I read Rachel Kushner's amazing and intense novel "The Flamethrowers" (a vivid tribute to downtown New York and art of the mid-1970s.) in which you appear as John Dogg ; what's the story behind this pseudonym and the one you use now "Fulton Ryder"?

Using a pseudonym sets up a situation which I refer to as "optional aesthetics". It's just another way of being free and clear and out of control.

5. Did you particularly come to New-York with the idea that you'd work in Art? Why not Los-Angeles for instance? How different was NYC's art scene back then (70s) compared to years 2000? Any nostalgia?



NYC in the '70's was "Survival of the Fittest". And I don't remember being the fittest. But somehow, I survived. There were no expectations, no future and no promises. I owned half a stereo. I'm not sure if I ever even dreamed of getting a hold of the other half. But what I did have is a kind of fearlessness. Because no one was paying attention to what I was doing, I felt I didn't owe anything to anybody. I felt I could get away with murder.

6. You own very rare archive of the Velvet Underground (one of my all time favorite band) – What does the band mean to you, what is your very own walk on the wild side? Did you get close to Lou Reed, John Cale, Nico or none of them?

The band was maybe my first introduction into something "avant-garde". I started listening to them when I was 18. I like that Lou Reed came out of a Doo-wop background. They introduced me to Warhol. I loved Moe Tucker. To this day, Sister Ray is still a 'kick out the jams' rock'n roll song. They were bright and shiny. Full of leather and S&M. They wrote songs about drugs. I've never met any of them. They were the perfect house band for Warhol's factory. What a marriage. They're still my favorite band.

7. "I'm not saying Sonic Youth was a conceptual-art project for me, but in a way it was an extension of Warhol. Instead of making criticism about popular culture, as a lot of artists do, I worked within it to do something..." Kim Gordon stunned and blew me away In ELLE's May Issue. Beside your gorgeous artwork for Sonic Youth's album 'Sonic Nurse' what does she represent for you as an artist, as an icon, as a woman, as a friend?

I met Kim in 1979...? Before Sonic Youth. She was hardboiled. Didn't suffer fools. Played it as it laid. She reminded me of essays written by Joan Didion. I was playing in the Glenn Branca band, (seemed like every downtown artist played in his band one time or another)... it was too structured for me and I left. Thurston Moore came on board and after he left, he hooked up with Kim and they formed Sonic Youth. They married rock'n roll to monster noise. It was the band I would of wanted to be in if I could of been. There were lots of scenes going

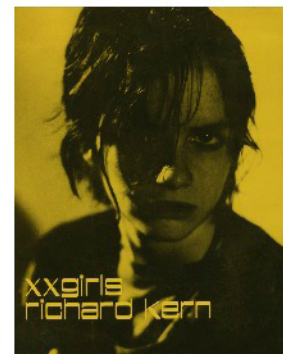


on around 1981 . I got caught up with the Picture Generation (not my fault) and lost touch with Kim. Kim had always wanted to play guitar. She wanted to spend more time playing in a band than playing in an art studio. That's what she wanted and that's what she did. She did it in a new way and helped create a new sound. She turned a lot of men and women on.

8. Like Richard Kern, do you maintain a teenager's taste for all things subversive and

transgressive? Do you find our time passionnate and daring or boring and tepid as hell?

Teenage Wasteland. Almost grown. Yea. That kind of anti-social behavior will probably never leave me. Growing up in America in the fifties... teenage shit just became part of your DNA. I've referred to a lot of my work as "extended adolescence". It's really about maintaining an imagination... I don't know... my daughter listens to some seriously boring, middle of the road music. I think you'd have to ask her about what's up to date.



9. Your latest artistic discovery (musical, art or design) ?

A bunch of things really. I have been working with "record sleeves", those plain paper wrappers that hold vinyl in the jacket. I have been collecting them and pasting them up on canvas. But the thing that I'm thinking about all the time right now is scale. How big, how small. That's probably boring to most people out there, but that's how it goes. I want to get the size of things exceptionally right.

10. When did you develop this interest for Italian designer and photographer, Carlo Mollino's haunting, alluring, both sensual and sad Polaroids that inspired James Gray's last film 'The Immigrant' ? What do they mean to you?



He did a lot of things. There it is again... “a lot”. Aside from the erotica and furniture, he also made a car. One car. And he could fly his own airplane. At least, I think he could fly. He even designed a pair of skis. His photographs of naked women are right up there with (Pierre) Molinier and (Miroslav) Tichy.

11. Does Japanese Photography appeal you? Any love or passion for the ‘Provoke Era’ with those magnificent rough, blurred, and out of focus shots breakin the rules of traditional photography. (Daido Moriyama, Masahisa Fukase, Eikoh Hosoe, or Shomei Tomatsu to name a few?)



Books are the real medium for Japanese photographers. There’s so much of it. It’s kind of like how many bands there are playing at any one time. It’s hard to know about it all, let alone keep up. I’ve concentrated mostly on Araki... I especially like his photos where he paints with India ink on the photograph. I like “unique” photographs.



12. – What does Paris mean to you artistically speaking? Any era, director, singer or writer you specially praised ?

I first went to Paris in 1968, when I was 18 years old. I was there for the student and worker protests. I saw first hand what was happening in the streets. Back then, I walked around the city with a camera my mother gave me. Some kind of Instamatic. Cheap. You loaded it with color slide film. That's when I first started to take photographs that I didn't consider my own. I was taking them like they were for a job. Like the picture needed to be shown at a board meeting. Anyway... I've recently become interested in what artists did when the Nazis took over the city. Should I stay or should I go.

13. Your very own French library in three books? Cocteau, I guess and who else?

I recently had a chance to bid on one of Marquis de Sade's manuscripts. But the French government stepped in and decided that it belonged to "French culture". Kind of strange when you think that French culture locked him up in prison and branded him criminal. Two more? You know Picasso wrote plays? I'd like one of his plays and I'd love to have anything by Apollinaire. I recently bought a first edition of Rimbaud. Talk about a teenager...

14. – Any will to launch you very own art magazine, one day or it would be a huge waste of time? What's your forthcoming project?

Launch a magazine? Too collaborative. Besides, with all the social media out there, the last thing that's needed is another magazine. I think I'll just let Purple (Olivier Zahm's Magazine) keep publishing. As far as projects? I'm curating a show of Stu Sutcliffe's works and Walter Dahn's paintings. Sutcliffe, (one of the fifth Beatles) [opened at Harper's Books in East Hampton](#) ^[2] and Dahn opened September 12 at Venus Over Manhattan.

15. – A line from Jack Kerouac to describe you? I could pick a line from Tristessa which is probably my favorite work, what's yours ?

Kerouac... I love it when I hear Kerouac's voice on record. It's so unusual. Very feminine. There's an unpublished inscription in an edition of Big Sur that I own. It says something like, "To Henry Miller, sometimes when I dream in evergreen, I wish I was you".

16. And finally, Richard, Your Playlist "Love Streams: Love Is Dead" (John Cassavetes' unforgettable quote). Pick ten songs that blew your mind (old, new, whatever).

10 Songs... there's so many... right off the top of my head...



Bob Dylan – Tangled Up In Blue



Velvet Undergoud – White Light/White Heat



Cream – Tales Of Brave Ulysses



Bob Dylan – Like A Rolling Stone



Tommy James and the Shondells - Mony Mony



George Jones – She Thinks I Still Care



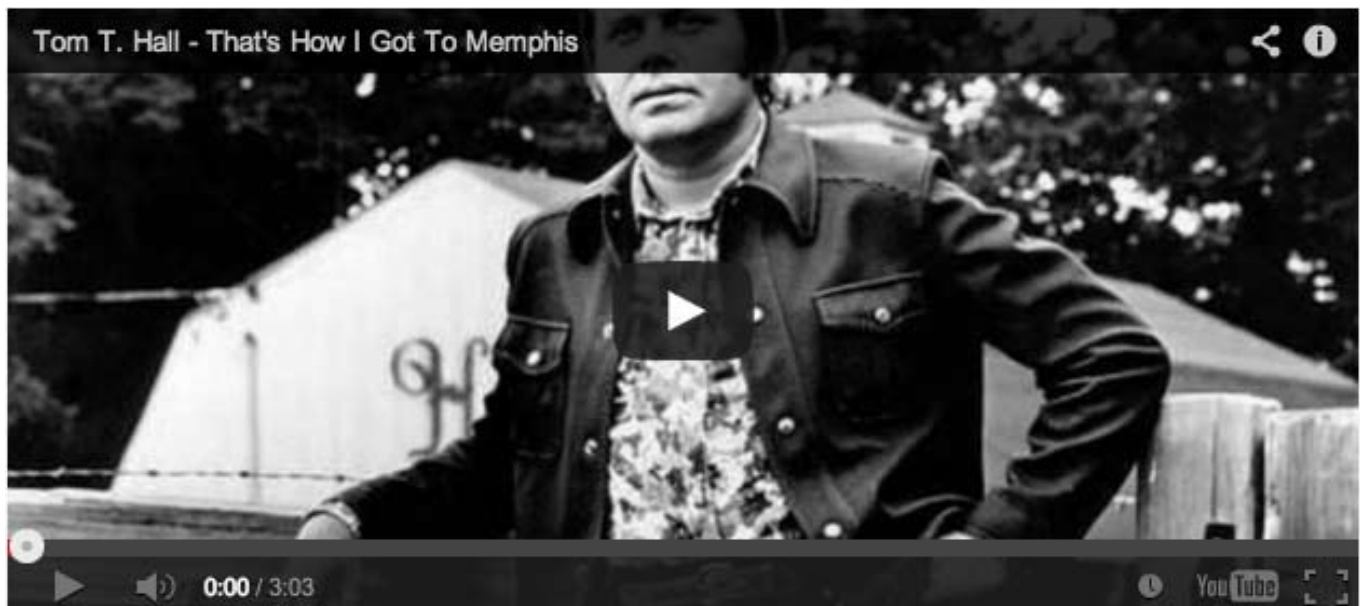
Bill Evans – My Foolish Heart



Wilco – Reservations



Tom T. Hall – That's How I Got To Memphis



The Band – It Makes No Difference

