

Art Observed: 'Paris: Richard Prince 'American Prayer' at the BNF', by R.A. Proctor, June 26th, 2011



The artist, Richard Prince. All pictures by Caroline Claisse for Art Observed.

Art Observed was on site for the opening "American Prayer" featuring works by American artist [Richard Prince](#) at the [Bibliothèque Nationale de France](#) in Paris. A book enthusiast and collector of American pop culture and counter culture ephemera, on view are works by the artist relating to American literature books, a consistent source of inspiration and a material he often incorporates into his oeuvre. The exhibit includes two examples of his famous "Nurse" paintings from his personal collection presented to the public for the first time.



Vitrine 16: *Sex & Drug & Rock & Roll. Untitled (Jimi Hendrix)*, 1992-93 by Richard Prince, T-shirt and oil on canvas © Richard Prince, Courtesy Gagosian Gallery

More text and images after the jump...



The french artist Xavier Veilhan

An avid book collector for nearly forty years, Prince has compiled an incredible assemblage of works from what he terms the "BeatHippiePunk" era dating from the time of his birth in 1949 to 1984. The artist's thorough collection begins with classics from the "Beats" such as Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Burroughs and also includes works by Nabokov and J.D. Salinger. Other works on display include a manuscript of *The Godfather* by Mario Puzo; Jimi Hendrix's hand-written letters home to his father when he was in the army; Kerouac's letters to Malcom Cowley, the editor of *On the Road*; works by Truman Capote, Tom Wolfe, Ken Kesey, and Thomas Pynchon.



Fabrice Bousteau, Beaux Arts magazine

The title "American Prayer" is taken from a book of poems by Jim Morrison. Seven years after the singer's death "An American Prayer" became the title of a posthumous album of poetry recorded to music by the Doors. On display are 40 works from his *American / English* series, sculptures which refer to the first American and English editions of his favorite books and 24 *Untitled (original)s* reverts back to paperback's original cover art. Also exhibited is a selection of the artist's work from series such as *Publicities*, *Gangs*, *Cartoons*, and *Hoods* which pay homage to some of the most important works from twentieth century American literature.



The exhibition also includes a "Reading Room" whereby guests can examine a conceptual understanding of the relationship between art and text in the modern age. The room displays iPads and *livres ireel* next to precious books by James Joyce and Louis Ferdinand Celine in a seemingly art installation which plays with the viewer's understanding of art, text, and American subcultures.



The curator Robert Rubin and Richard Prince



Richard Prince and curators of the show



Bruno Racine, BnF president.



The House displays *American English* and *Untitled (Originals)*
© Richard Prince, Courtesy Gagosian Gallery





Series *American English*, © Richard Prince, Courtesy Gagosian Gallery





Untitled (Originals), © Richard Prince, Courtesy Gagosian Gallery





Vitrine 1: *Lolita and Lollipop* with a Playboy "Bunny" uniform from the Library.
 © Richard Prince, Courtesy Gagosian Gallery



© Richard Prince, Courtesy Gagosian Gallery



Untitled (publicity), © Richard Prince, courtesy Gagosian Gallery



Hoods, © Richard Prince, Courtesy Gagosian Gallery



Vitrine 5: *On the road*, © Richard Prince, Courtesy Gagosian Gallery



The Reading Room.



The Nurse Made Headlines, (2005) Ink jet and acrylic on canvas (193 x 119.4 cm)
© Richard Prince, Courtesy Gagosian Gallery



© Richard Prince, Courtesy Gagosian Gallery





© Richard Prince, Courtesy Gagosian Gallery



Untitled (Originals), © Richard Prince, Courtesy Gagosian Gallery



Christophe Jacquet (Toffe)



Related Links:

[Richard Prince: American Prayer \[Bibliotheque National de France\]](#)

[Richard Prince: An American in Paris \[The Independent\]](#)

[Richard Prince "American Prayer" at the Bibliotheque Nationale de France \[Gagosian Gallery\]](#)

-R.A. Proctor