

Art Flippers Attempt to Unload Suicide Girls' Version of Richard Prince Work

Ben Davis, Thursday, August 13, 2015

There's a new twist in the strange saga of Richard Prince and the Suicide Girls.

To recap: Last year, the blue chip appropriation artist launched a new series of works, shown at Gagosian gallery and Frieze New York, featuring blown-up versions of sexy pics sourced from Instagram, printed on canvas and priced (according to a rumor relayed by one of his unwilling subjects, "Doe Deere") at \$90,000 a pop. Among these, some were taken, sans permission, from the feed of the well-known alt pin-up community, Suicide Girls.

The Suicide Girls then retaliated—and became Internet heroes—by selling their own versions of Prince's canvasses for \$90.

The gesture was taken as a witty act of table-turning, and a critique of the art market to boot: Using Prince's own logic of appropriation to undercut his market by 99.99 percent. They reportedly sold 250 prints in the first day.

Now, the tale has a new twist: It seems that would-be art "flippers" are already trying to unload the reappropriated appropriations at a profit.

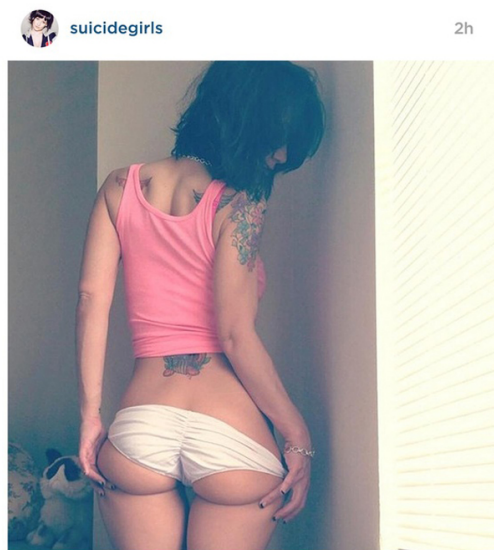
For its summer show, smart Tribeca gallery Postmasters launched "#WCW: @womancrushwednesday." The show is open for a few more days and worth seeing, with works by Molly Crabapple, Steve Mumford, Federico Solmi, Chris Verene, and a host of other worthies, all focusing on images of women. The works in the show are mostly priced for a few thousand dollars.

But it was the group show's inclusion of one of the Suicide Girls prints that drew most attention.

"My son bought it for himself and since it was a perfect fit I borrowed it from him," dealer Magda Sawon told artnet News. "It is not for sale. I was hoping to drive some sales their way." (The Suicide Girls had been selling the Prince-appropriated prints via their website to benefit the Electronic Frontier Foundation, though the sale ended a few days into the run of "#WCW.")

Shortly after the show got some favorable press on AnimalNY mentioning the print, Sawon says, she started receiving feelers from owners of the Suicide Girls reappropriations, looking to unload them at a markup.

Lamentably, the exact terms would-be flippers were angling for shall remain unclear, as the art dealer told them to scram: "It was two separate people and since I was not sympathetic to the offer the convo did not get any further," Sawon said, declining to give further details.



Based on people you follow
92019
suicidegirls @brandiesuicide reminds us why we love Instagram so much #suicidegirls
richardprince1234 Stacking. In plain sight. The story of Big Eyes. 🙄
suicidegirls true art

The Suicide Girl print on view at Postmasters. Photo: Courtesy Postmasters.

<p>\$90,000 SOLD BY FAT CAT ARTISTS AND MILLIONAIRE GALLERY OWNERS</p> <p>suicidegirls 20h Based on people you follow 24991 likes bigtimoz123 I like her tongue kashimmi @kalyssoskitz basically she's obviously my punnfect sister from another mister 🙄 richardprince1234 Private Lives, mind if I sneeze on</p> <p>size: 67x55 materials: ink jet on canvas profits go to rich gallery owner and millionaire "artist"</p>	<p>\$90 SOLD BY SUICIDEGIRLS</p> <p>suicidegirls 20h Based on people you follow 24991 likes bigtimoz123 I like her tongue kashimmi @kalyssoskitz basically she's obviously my punnfect sister from another mister 🙄 richardprince1234 Private Lives, mind if I sneeze on suicidegirls true art</p> <p>size: 67x55 materials: ink jet on canvas sold by the actual people who created the image and profits go to charity</p>
---	---

Screen capture from the Suicide Girls website, offering \$90 version of Richard Prince's Instagram painting.

Photo: Courtesy Suicide Girls.

It seems that what some saw as a cheeky way to stick a thumb in the eyes of "a rich gallery owner and millionaire 'artist'" (per the Suicide Girls posting), an entirely different group of people saw as a great short-term investment opportunity.

Sawon, for her part, is pretty unequivocal on what she thinks it all means: "The art market is a disgrace to humanity."



Installation view of Suicide Girl canvas in "#WomanCrushWednesday" at Postmasters, with works by Monica Cook and Holly Zausner
Photo: Ben Davis