

## An Intimate Glimpse of Richard Prince

Posted on May 31, 2016

By Marieke Treilhard

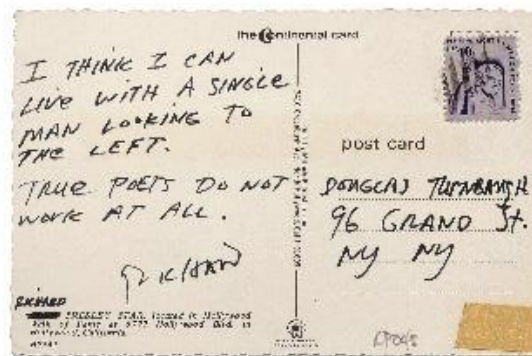
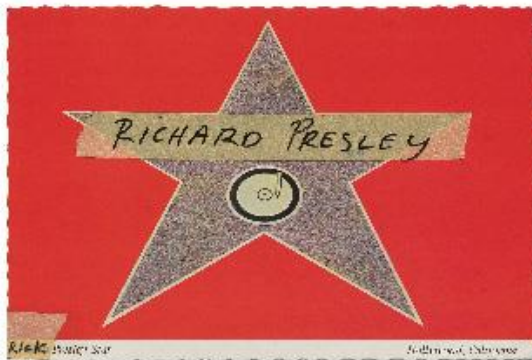


ARTIST RICHARD PRINCE IS NO STRANGER to controversy. An early pioneer of appropriation art, Prince spent the 1970s and '80s undermining the necessity of authorship in art, re-photographing existing images and modifying them only minimally to make them his own. A constant target of copyright infringement and intellectual property law allegations, his creative strategy was, and still is, reliant on the subtle manipulation of content excised from popular culture, the media, commercial advertising, and the like. With an uncanny ability to transform the context and meaning of an image with a simple gesture or a minimal material intervention, Prince established himself as an expert in confiscation and concision.

On view at Edward Cella Art and Architecture in Los Angeles from June 11 to July 16 is an intriguing exhibition that provides a rare and personal glimpse into Prince's years as an emerging artist. *Richard Prince: The Douglas Blair Turnbaugh Collection (1977–1988)* showcases an archive of never-before-seen works, personal correspondence, and ephemera amassed by his long-time friend and patron, Douglas Blair Turnbaugh. The two met as neighbors in New York City in the late '70s while Prince was pulling tear sheets at Time Inc. to make ends meet. This night



job spent removing pages from magazines is where he honed his obsessive penchant for reinterpreting advertisements. The most famous were to appear early on in the *Cowboy* series, begun in 1980 and based on the Marlboro Man cigarette campaign—a visual media myth, launched by Marlboro in 1955, that would inculcate a powerful and enduring cultural fiction of masculinity and Americana.



Turnbaugh, a New York–based writer and producer, shared Prince’s affinity for the sybaritic excesses of popular visual culture and penchant for the erotic and abject in art. They sustained a prolonged flirtation—and mutual admiration—evident in the two hundred–plus pieces of personally inscribed material in Turnbaugh’s collection. Notable highlights include candid personal letters from Prince to Turnbaugh expressing early apprehensions and insecurities over evolving work and first exhibitions. The collection also includes artist proofs from the iconic *Entertainers* series, photographic portraits and self- portraits, a leather jacket customized for Turnbaugh by the artist, and a book of playfully ribald drawings and sketches.

In short, the show provides us with a fascinating personal glimpse into this hugely influential artist’s impressible beginnings.