

Artforum

Prince, Richard: Artists on AbEx
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Richard Prince, *Untitled (de Kooning)*, 2009, ink-jet and acrylic on canvas, 77 3/8 x 61 3/4

RICHARD PRINCE

Right now I'm reading the Lee Krasner bio . . . I always thought she got the short end of the stick (the short shrift? . . . Is that kind of like a dress above the knee?) . . . (I just finished reading the Modigliani bio and realized the author wrote a bio of Romaine Brooks . . . one of my favorite painters . . . she called the book *Between Me and Life* . . . Romaine Brooks . . . she's huge . . . hooked into the whole Paris Natalie Barney Djuna Barnes trip scene.) The equivalent? I'm a big fan of Mercedes Matter (and Herbert too) . . . but mostly Mercedes . . . she slept with Hans Hofmann, Franz Kline, and Thelonious Monk . . . and I like Patsy Southgate (the one photo that's always reproduced in these bios of her is a real looker photo . . . beautiful . . . bleached out . . . small holes for the nose, great beatnik haircut, someone who looks like today and your reaction is . . . that's the holy . . . the rolling stone! . . . is that someone who was next to Keith Richards or in the tub in the movie *Performance*?) And then there's Elaine de Kooning (I just bought one of her paintings that looks like a 1944 Gorky . . . and then I'm reminded that Mercedes Matter slept with Gorky) and finally Ruth Kligman, the last lover of Pollock (she walked Warhol). She was also a lover of de Kooning. De Kooning . . . the guy who spread his arms and said that's all the space I need (and as long as there's that hole, that mouth) . . . that's what he liked. That's what he wanted. That opening, in the head under the nose just above the chin and with a red outline and some teeth and having the idea of "getting out" . . . It all started there. That opening. That pierce. That way in . . . When he tore the advertisement for Camel cigarettes . . . the one that framed a woman's mouth with an outline of a capitalized letter T . . . and he pasted it onto his painting . . . right onto the head of his "monster" woman . . . he started Pop art. And it's funny too because abstract expression wasn't supposed to come from anything outside the brain (especially if that "outside" was from an advertisement). Anyway it was Lee Krasner, Romaine Brooks, Natalie Barney, Djuna Barnes, Mercedes Matter, Patsy Southgate, Elaine de Kooning, and Ruth Kligman . .

Richard Prince is an artist based in upstate New York.