

[MENU](#)
[VOICE](#)
[1](#)
[+](#)
[+](#)
[+](#)
[+](#)
[+](#)

[100 LP](#)

[New Reading](#)

[ARTS](#)

[POPULAR](#)

[LATEST](#)

With a Song in the Heart, "Allegiance" Tries to Tackle America's Japanese Internment Camps of World War II

By David Spenser 3 days ago

"The Remnants" Is Juliana Francis Kelly's Sharp-Tongued Love Letter to the Theater

By Christopher Kampwirth 3 days ago

The Man Who Fell to Earth Flies Again in "Lazarus"—Or Does He?

By Marianne Feltz-Daneshy 3 days ago

[MORE VISUAL ARTS](#)

[MORE THEATER](#)

[MORE COMEDY](#)

[UPCOMING EVENTS](#)

[E! The Musical](#)
Fri, Dec. 8, 7:00pm
[TICKETS](#)

[The First Noel](#)
Fri, Dec. 8, 7:00pm
[TICKETS](#)

[STOMP \(NY\)](#)
Fri, Dec. 8, 8:00pm
[TICKETS](#)

[The Fantasticks](#)
Fri, Dec. 8, 8:00pm
[TICKETS](#)

[SLIDESHOWS](#)

[VIDEOS](#)

The Seen's Best Street Style Looks of Autumn 2015

16 days ago

The Dots Again XX Masquerade Comes to Wall Street

26 days ago

Zombies invade the Streets of New York!

2 months ago

[MORE SLIDESHOWS](#)

[IN CASE YOU MISSED IT](#)

Designer Larry Kooner's New Book Is a Love Letter to Women of Every Size, Shape, and Breed

16 days ago by Julie Seebough

Hilarious Hits at the 2015 New York Comedy Festival

26 days ago by All Lerman

["MUST SEE PLAY OF THE YEAR!"](#)

[ANDREA MCDARLE and KIP GILMAN](#)

TICKETS STARTING AT \$39.50

[BUY NOW](#)

[123](#)

[1](#)

HOW SHOULD WE APPROACH ARTIST RICHARD PHILLIPS'S SUBSTANTIVE "CONVERSATIONS"?

[A](#)

BY JARRETT EARNST

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2015

3 DAYS AGO

Albert Oehlen gets a Playmate: Richard Phillips's Conversation II (2015)

Courtesy Mathew NYC

"Repelled. I don't even want to get close enough to see if they are good paintings," a friend said when I asked him about Richard Phillips, and I know the feeling. I remember approaching his last show at Gagosian in 2012—oversize, "ultra-real" oil paintings of Lindsay Lohan—thinking: I don't care about this celebrity garbage! So I took Dionne Warwick's advice and walked on by.

I regret not checking to see if they were in fact good paintings, not because it was reticent of me (a right I continue to reserve), but because my reason for dismissing them was so conventional, representing the consensus attitude of New York's "serious people." And who wants to be one of them?

Now is an interesting time to reconsider Phillips, thanks to "Conversations," a show of experimental new paintings at Mathew NYC, an outpost of the Berlin gallery that has recently moved, like a graceful hermit crab, into the space formerly occupied by 47 Canal. This small exhibition is a kind of artistic midlife crisis for Phillips, which poses a novel question: If the usual material of your art—sports cars and starlets—already comprises mainstream stereotypes of a dude's rage against age, how does one set out? Phillips's answer is to return to the kind of angry abstraction he looked at during his first crisis of faith, when, while a graduate student at Yale in 1984, he commenced an eight-year hiatus from painting. Now Phillips "reconstitutes" (as he puts it) the most audacious anti-painting paintings he saw around that time: Christopher Wool's *Unruffled* (1988), made with a store-bought decorative roller; and Albert Oehlen's "computer paintings" series (1990–2008). Phillips has turned these sparse black-and-white images into vinyl stencils, masques for applying Technicolor paint to digitally printed pictures. In the case of *Conversation I and II* (both 2015) the Oehlen pixelation is laid down in a fluorescent off-rainbow gradient onto smoke-glazed photos of model Leanna Decker that the artist took for *Playboy*. In *Canyons I and II* (both 2015) the negative space of Wool's painting is smoothed onto prints of a serape.

All four paintings possess a terrific formal intelligence and an unusually high level of consideration; they would be interesting abstract paintings in their own right. From a distance they coalesce into buzzing, fully integrated images that separate on approach. The effects of color and light, matte and sheen, are themselves very satisfying. But Phillips doesn't let you off that easy. In *Canyons II*, for instance, as soon as you open yourself to the visual experience—savoring the lavender fondant-like paint carefully spread over the gradient of the woven blanket beneath it—you crash into a *Playboy* bunny logo at the lower left. The pleasure of looking is never allowed to become untethered from his highly contentious social context.

"Richard sees painting as a perfect vehicle to deliver just the right kind of cultural damage he wants to inflict," Matvey Levenstein, a painter who was Phillips's classmate back at Yale, told me. And indeed, in conversation Phillips comes across more as a cultural anthropologist than the cynical playboy many take him to be. Talking with him, I envisioned his art as a dye injected into the cultural bloodstream, making visible the systems it's passing through. From this vantage, television shows like *Gooseb Girl*, MAC cosmetics ads, and art-theory-minded magazines like *Texte zur Kunst* are all equally valid places for his paintings to find themselves. And that they circulate with such ease from one body part to the next, from "serious art" to "pop culture" and back again, just shows how unified the contemporary media's corpus really is. We may not like this fact illustrated in this way, but liking or not liking is not the point. This is how Phillips perfectly aligns with the present generation of young post-internet artists, where trying to figure out what's celebratory or critical is somehow asking the wrong question. It also renders irrelevant—or, at the very least, not much fun—the debate about whether the paintings are ultimately good or bad. In their way, they don't let you get close enough to decide.

Richard Phillips: "Conversations"
Mathew NYC
47 Canal Street
929-229-9156, mathew-nyc.com
Through December 29

Contact: [Jarrett Earnest](#) Follow: [Village Voice Arts & Culture](#)

Get the Theater Newsletter

Richard Phillips

"How Should We Approach Approach Rhichard Phillips's Substantive 'Conversations'?" by Jarrett Earnest, www.villagevoice.com, December 8, 2015

[illegible]

Richard Phillips
"Richard Phillips on His First-Ever Show on the Lower East Side, And Taking on the Fallout From Playboy Marfa" by Nate Freeman, www.artnews.com, November 23, 2015

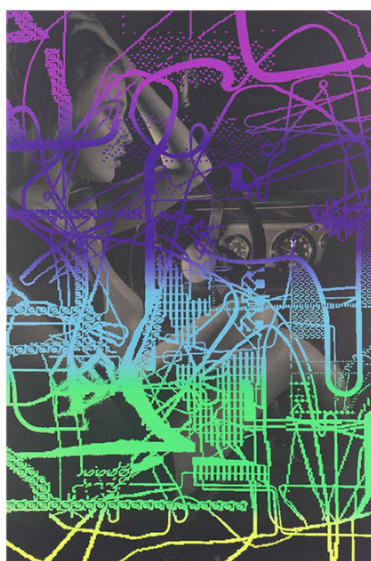
13 Things to Do in New York's Art World Before November 20

By [Paul Laster](#) • 11/16/15 3:24pm

TRENDING NOW



CULTURE
The Counterintuitive
Wisdom of Carly Simon



Richard Phillips, *Conversation II*, 2015. (Photo: Courtesy the artist and Mathew New York)

Opening: "Richard Phillips: Conversations" at Mathew NYC

For his first solo show in New York since 2012, Gagosian Gallery superstar Richard Phillips departs from his signature hyper-realist paintings of actresses and models in this downtown show featuring four new canvases that deal with different issues of appropriation. In *Conversation I* and *Conversation II*, Mr. Phillips superimposes patterns from artist Albert Oehlen's series *Computer Paintings* and bands of color over photographs of nude women that he had photographed in racecars for a project in *Playboy* magazine. Meanwhile, in *Canyons and Canyons II*, the artist colorfully mixes patterns from a 1988 Christopher Wool painting and a Mexican serape blanket before ironically slapping on the famous Playboy logo.

Mathew NYC, 47 Canal Street, New York, 6-9 p.m.



Richard Phillips

"13 Things to Do in New York's Art World Before November 20"
by Paul Laster, www.observer.com, November 16, 2015

MUSE

FASHION
 CONTENTS
 PORTRAITS
 TRAVEL

WATCH ARCHIVE EN IT SEARCH

CONVERSATIONS BY RICHARD PHILLIPS

Mathew Gallery, New York
 20 November – 27 December, 2015

FASHION
 CONTENTS
 PORTRAITS
 TRAVEL



left: Richard Phillips 2015, Canyons
 right: Richard Phillips 2015, Canyons II

Mathew NYC presents "Conversations", a new exhibition by Richard Phillips. The artist departs from the hyperrealist paintings for which he is famous, and opts for a process of reconstitution, drawing patterns from works realized by Albert Oehlen and Christopher Wool into a staging of apparently conflicting visual registers. In *Conversation I* and *II*, Phillips overlays photographs produced in collaboration with Playboy magazine, with patterns from Albert Oehlen's *Computer Paintings* series. The patterns, that originally appeared in black and white, are here infused with a vibrant color palette.

In *Canyons I* and *Canyons II*, Christopher Wool's *Untitled* pattern painting is inverted, its negative laid overtop a print of a serape blanket. The Playboy magazine logo is placed in the bottom left corner, providing a third layer to the paintings' surface.

As juxtapositions free of value judgment, the works represent the results of varying trajectories in the production of the visual, displaying – through their elements non-translatibility – a strategic engagement with the connoisseurship of contemporary painting.

SHARE

CONTENTS

Richard Phillips

"Conversations by Richard Phillips", www.musemagazine.it,
 2015