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View painting by artist Richard Prince at UM

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NEWS RELEASE

Aug. 24, 2009

Contact: Brandon Reintjes, curator of art, Montana Museum of Art & Culture, 406-243-2019, brandon.reintjes@mso.umt.edu.

VIEW PAINTING BY ARTIST RICHARD PRINCE AT UM

MISSOULA —

“Country Nurse,” a 2003 painting by renowned artist Richard Prince, will be available for public viewing at The University of Montana through Wednesday, Nov. 25.

The 79½-inch-by-52¼-inch inkjet print and acrylic on canvas, on loan to the Montana Museum of Art & Culture from an anonymous lender, is in UM’s Main Hall President’s Office lobby. The lobby is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, except during University holidays.

Since 2003, Prince has depicted a series of 42 nurses drawn from covers of 1950s and 1960s pulp romance novels. To create these works, he digitally scans and enlarges the book covers, then transfers the images to canvas using an inkjet printer before applying passages of paint to accentuate or obliterate elements of the covers.

In Prince’s work, reproduction becomes the means to isolate and deconstruct meaning and significance. He uses appropriated imagery in both photographic works and paintings to call attention to the images that are exaggerated popular culture conventions. Concerned with media and the division between high and low culture, Prince uses irony as a tool to reveal

overused and worn themes that still resonate with the public. He has said that if widely reproduced pictures are often lies, he wants to “turn the lie back on itself.”

Eroticized archetypes, the nurses in Prince’s series are gagged and muted by their surgical masks. His figures are stripped of identity and voice, reducing them to generic stereotypes.

The mask reinforces the notion of women as mysterious – both innocent and alluring.

“Country Nurse” was taken directly from the cover of Maud McCurdy Welch’s book of the same name. In the painting, Prince has selectively obscured most of the image of the original book cover, including the doctor who stands next to her, the original blue cover, the title and the brief, which stated, “The story of Cathy, who found the transition from country to city a step in the right direction.”

Prince’s 1976 solo exhibition in New York City presented photographs he had taken of existing popular culture and advertising photographs. Dubbed “rephotography,” these works placed Prince at the center of fierce debate concerning copyright, authorship and authenticity.

For more information, call MMAC at 406-243-2019 or go to the museum’s Web site at <http://www.umt.edu/montanamuseum>.

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NOTE TO MEDIA: Digital images of Prince’s “Country Nurse” and the original book cover are available. Please call Becky Garner at 406-243-2019 or e-mail rebecca.garner@mso.umt.edu.

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