



Works from Richard Prince's *Super Group* series, 2017.

Richard Prince's 'Super Group' at Galerie Max Hetzler

THE AMERICAN ARTIST Richard Prince is no stranger to controversy. His appropriation of imagery has caused him to be involved in a series of copyright cases over the years, not least the current one looming large for his 2014 series "New Portraits," where other people's Instagram photos are printed on huge canvases. But for his first exhibition with Galerie Max Hetzler, which will be mounted across their two galleries in Berlin's Charlottenberg district from September 16 through October 28, it is Prince's own historical visual repertoire that he references and reproduces.

Playfully titled "Super Group," the exhibition refers to bands comprising musicians who have already assumed superstar status through their former acts — a fitting wink at the past lives of people and images. Fifty paintings are on view, from 2013–2017, many of which are covered with both real and scanned record sleeves. These are closely tiled to recall music halls of fame, where one record follows another, and have been attached to the stretched canvas surfaces using staples and glue.

Most of the works are named after the show's title, and in a slightly older piece, "Super Group" (2015), raw canvas remains visible beneath the vinyl's holes, accompanied by a spattering of chaotic paint marks that recall the dynamic approach of Abstract Expressionists such as Jackson Pollock. Slate grey, turquoise blue, mustard yellow and raspberry red are some of the colors that jostle for attention, overpowered by the great swathes of papal purple washed into the top right-hand corner. Overlaid are the names of groups including The Doors, The Cramps, Public Enemy and The Wailers, scrawled in white oil stick. As such, Prince continues to explore his ongoing fascination with American culture and the search for iconic stardom that it encourages.

Collage is used on a number of large-scale portrait works, which are just under two meters in height, combining photographs, posters, magazine covers and even bras with ink jet, acrylic and oil stick. "Black Bra (Super Group)" (2017) sees endlessly repeated record covers depicting the fastening and unfastening of the straps of a black bra,

modulated with variations of white and black paint and the application of a real white bra. The artist's own flirtation with musical fame is humorously referenced, having been a member of a two-person rock band called Black Bra (one strap for each member?).

Indeed, it is Prince's self-appropriation that underscores many of the works on show, in particular the cartoonish figures from his "Hippy Drawings" of the early 2000s. Many of these are printed on canvas, before being cut out and collaged upon the surface. In another titular work dated 2017, numerous figures stand staring, against a rich black background. They are portrayed in bright, garish colors including tangerine, scarlet red and canary yellow, and while some have scrawled monster faces or childlike googly eyes with tongues sticking out, others are rendered with a single, uninterrupted white outline. Having built his career upon questions of authorship and copyright, here Prince ventures back through his own oeuvre to become simultaneously the copier and the copied.

—LOUISA ELDERTON