



Robert Heinecken: *Related to Periodical #5, 2/3, 1972*, Polaroid, 32 by 22 inches; at Friedrich Petzel.

ROBERT HEINECKEN FRIEDRICH PETZEL

More than a decade before Douglas Crimp's 1977 "Pictures" exhibition identified the appropriationist strategies of a generation, Robert Heinecken (1931-2006) set aside his camera and turned to preexisting media imagery, particularly "the influx of printed promotional material," as he put it in a 1968 statement. Often to sharply satirical effect, he subjected these images to operations—recombination, recontextualization, excision—that deconstructed their medium and subverted their message. The human figure as shown in ads was his leitmotif, but when it came to turning consumerist propaganda on its head, Heinecken's ear for advertising's insidiously bland language was as sharp as his eye. His recent show—which included 55 pieces, created from 1964 to 1997, the year Alzheimer's arrested Heinecken's career—spanned a wide range of mediums, extending to figurative sculptural works consisting of dry bleach prints on foamcore.

One of his best-known works, *Are You Rea* (1964-68), is a suite of "photographic pictures" made by subjecting pages from glossy magazines to contact printing, a process in which a page is laid on photo paper and exposed to light, causing images from both sides to be recorded on the photograph. Thus superimposed, images and text on recto and verso comment on each other. In one, the head shot of a pouting model is made werewolflike by furry curls from the feather jacket on the reverse. Its caption reads, "The make-up that's Barely

There." In another, a woman leers at the camera through her legs; "ad man do it justice," urges the truncated text.

A small selection of altered magazines displayed in vitrines hinted at the lacerating visual poetry Heinecken achieved by excising bits of the pages. In another procedure, he overprinted magazine ads with discordant, often disturbing images from porn or the news, exercising more control over his double entendres. The 1972 Polaroid *Related to Periodical #5, 2/3* reproduces a cosmetics ad promising "That beautiful new face of yours . . . free," overlaid with a grainy halftone of a grinning Vietnamese soldier proudly displaying a pair of severed heads.

The stunning black-and-white film transparency *As Long As You're Up* (1965) takes possession of its source material without intervention. On the left side of a March 1965 *Esquire* spread, an appeal for foster parents implores "Let her love you . . ." beside a photo of a filthy, shoeless child standing in a slum. In an ad for Scotch on the facing page, a smartly dressed young writer somewhere in the Highlands, a typewriter in his lap, glances over his shoulder at the girl: "as long as you're up, get me a Grant's."

Sixteen works from a 1981 series titled "Lessons in Posing Subjects" combine Polaroid SX-70 snaps of middlebrow clothing catalogues with deadpan instructions for models and stylists on achieving appropriate affect. *Standard Pose #6 (Arms Folded)* offers dos and don'ts, contrasting subjects who appear relaxed and self-possessed with those appearing defensive, furtive and "overly auto-involved." The artist's earlier work is scathing, but

this kinder, gentler Heinecken, whose provocations are as sly and subtle as the mechanisms he critiques, may ultimately have greater staying power.

—Stephen Maine



Lucas Blalock: *Our Man Weschler, 2010*, chromogenic print, 32¼ by 23¼ inches; at Ramiken Crucible.

LUCAS BLALOCK RAMIKEN CRUCIBLE

The past five years have seen the emergence of a new generation of American photographers, who, though their aims and methods vary, have in common a freewheeling approach to their chosen discipline. Mixing and matching photographic techniques, tropes and genres and blurring the line between photography and other mediums, they are rapidly expanding what it means to take, or make, a photograph.

One of the youngest members of this group is Lucas Blalock (b. 1978), whose wonderfully mysterious pictures have been standouts in a number of recent group shows. Like many of his peers, Blalock operates at the intersection of documentary image and constructed photograph, illusionistic space and flat surface, analog and digital.

Blalock fully exploits the formal and evocative potential of these gray areas, using as his primary tools an old-fashioned 4x5 camera and a computer. Each piece starts with a picture shot on film—often a tabletop arrangement of low-end, mass-produced objects. The photos are then digitally altered in Photoshop, a program that Blalock wields with deliberate obviousness. The final results range from seemingly straightforward representations to near-abstractions in which