

# ARTFORUM

## Richard Patterson

GOSS-MICHAEL FOUNDATION

2500 Cedar Springs Road

February 20–May 31

Richard Patterson's art offers a tangled composite of painterly stratagems and snarky sexual gags. Whether painting the Spice Girls naked near a lothario-looking cat-man or rendering himself dressed only in his underwear, Patterson enjoys blending a puckish and motley range of imagery. The overt "subjects" of his art are culled from photographs that are often painfully nostalgic—like the haircut and clothes one had in high school. In an early painting titled *Posh and Thomson*, 1997, Patterson presents Posh Spice and a sloppily depicted cartoon tiger's head. Despite a seemingly detached insouciance, the pictorial friction Patterson envisions is intriguing in its garishly conflicted messages, which simultaneously support and undermine the cultural images he adopts.

Along with a series of curious model-size studies, the most striking work in the show is the most complicated. *Black Narcissus/Elwood, L-word: Culture Station (Zipper)1B*, 2007, is a wooden structure of exhibition spaces that resembles a life-size puzzle. Patterson offers a range of items within these distinct spaces: a vintage motorcycle, a self-deprecating and half-naked self-portrait in his studio (with dangling paintbrush as phallus), and several pictures of smudged paint deposited on aluminum panels. Emphasizing the artist's role as purveyor of cultural material, Patterson populates each nook with fetishized objects. The disparate range of representations displayed makes the piece feel like a trophy case or product display in an upscale store. Here Patterson enumerates and commingles all the elements of his oeuvre in a showcase of desire, irony, mockery, and wit.

— Matthew Bourbon



Richard Patterson, *Reclining Nude*, 1998, oil on canvas, 58 x 44".

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