

ROBERT LONGO

PERFECT GODS

Robert Longo was born in 1953 in Brooklyn and grew up in Long Island, New York. He graduated high school in 1970, the same year as the Kent State University Massacre in Ohio, which started as a student protest against the US invasion of Cambodia and led to nationwide uprisings, spurring Longo to become involved in political organizing. One press photo in particular became symbolic of the social unrest, winning a Pulitzer Prize. The dead student pictured was a former classmate of Longo's, forever influencing his relationship to media images.

Longo works and reworks his charcoal into thick-textured surfaces, giving his velvety drawings deep, blackened expanses and sharply contrasting whites; his forms are at once representational and softly elusive. Having been fascinated with popular culture as a child, Longo centers his practice on transposing images and the resulting transformation of meaning, linking him with the [Pictures Generation](#). "An artist should know art history," he says. "Shock value only lasts so long." His recent works have included series depicting women in burkas, ocean waves, nuclear explosions, views of Sigmund Freud's apartment, and zoo animals in cages.