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**DONELLE WOOLFORD: DICK JOKES**

February 21 - March 29, 2014

Preview: Friday, February 21, 6-8pm

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Donelle Woolford's cathartic new paintings, performance, and publication chronicle the dubious place of honor afforded the male sex organ in art and politics, and the vernacular tradition of penis humor in American popular culture.

Woolford's joke paintings chronicle the picaresque adventures of a character named Richard—aka "Dick." Who comes to mind when you see these letters:

Richard Pr

Richard Pryor or Richard Prince? Whichever one emerged from your subconscious, it placed you (and them) in one demographic to the exclusion of another. Richard Pryor was black. Richard Prince is white. Richard Pryor told jokes, Richard Prince painted jokes. Richard Pryor invented a racially explicit brand of comedy that, once begun, could not turn back, no matter how destructive. Richard Prince instigated the act of appropriation, a gesture that, once made, could not turn back, no matter how productive. Woolford's Joke Paintings investigate this destruction/production dichotomy.

Formally the paintings continue her interest in artworks that "look like" known artists and styles, and the new works are indeed a thin gruel of Richard Prince, Albert Oehlen, and Christopher Wool. The paintings are placeholders, facsimiles, props. Even though the works embody painterly process and revision—evidence of the artist thinking out loud—in Woolford's case all of the telltale signs have been figured out beforehand so that her skilled assistants can execute them by hand. Just as the humor of a joke is in the telling, the deadpan effect of Woolford's paintings is in their execution.

Running concurrently to the exhibition and realized in cooperation with the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, as part of the 2014 Biennial, Dick's Last Stand is a 40-minute reenactment of the standup routine that Richard Pryor performed in 1977 for the last episode of his short-lived television show. The routine is a subversive work of social commentary that, by Pryor's design, was censored from the final NBC broadcast. Consequently, Pryor's standup has only ever been experienced by the 75+ people who were in the live studio audience that night. *Dick's Last Stand* marks its return to the live stage, where its allegories on conformity, representation, subterfuge, and race are as painfully funny as ever.

Tour dates and venues for Dick's Last Stand are:

1/30	LA Art Book Fair, Los Angeles, 6:30pm
2/2	Mandrake, Los Angeles, 9:00pm
2/6	Wattis Institute, San Francisco, 8:00pm
2/8	Solespace, Oakland, 8:00pm

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2/14 MOCAD, Detroit, 8:00pm  
2/18 Dorchester Projects, Chicago, 8:00pm  
3/8 JACK, Brooklyn, 10:30pm  
4/1 The Kitchen, New York, 8:00pm  
5/20 Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis, 8:00pm  
5/21 Duffy's Pub, Lincoln, 8:00pm  
5/22 White Flag Projects, St. Louis, 8:00pm  
5/24 Contemporary Art Center, Peoria, 8:00pm

The paintings and performance are accompanied by Dick Jokes, an extraordinary volume of phallic humor compiled from throughout the United States over the past fifty years and available from McNally Jackson, Thingsthatfall.com, and the gallery.

For further information on the exhibition, the comedy tour Dick's Last Stand, or for images, please contact Nichole Caruso: nichole@wallspacegallery.com.

Donelle Woolford (b. 1977/1980/1954 in Detroit, U.S.A.) lives and works in New York City, Brooklyn, The Bronx, Philadelphia, London, and Vienna. She has participated in the exhibitions *Double Agent* at the ICA London; *The 8th Sharjah Biennial*, United Arab Emirates; and the *5th Marrakech Biennial*. Her performances have been staged at The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the PRELUDE theatre festival, New York; The Lewis Center for the Arts, Princeton; The Suburban, Chicago; White Flag Projects, Saint Louis; and the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven. She is a fictional character written by Joe Scanlan and performed by various actors in the scenery of the art world. Most recently she has been played by Abigail Ramsay and Jennifer Kidwell as part of the exhibition *I Am Another World* at the Akademie der Bildende Kunst, Vienna; and by Jennifer Kidwell solo in *Dick's Last Stand*.