

The Graphic Mind of Ryan McGinness

In the studio with the rebel art star and his latest muse: the female nude. From initial sketches to fluorescent silkscreen painting, behold his creative process

By KATHERINE CLARKE

MAY 26, 2011



Photograph by Jennifer Livingston

Ryan McGinness at his Chinatown, New York, studio, carrying a screen of one of his female forms.

"I believe the search is more important than the Holy Grail," says New Yorkbased artist Ryan McGinness, whose vivid paintings and works on paper are collected by major institutions, like the Museum of Modern Art and the Cincinnati Art Museum. McGinness is best known for his hypercolor silkscreen canvases that break down symbols taken from urban signage and advertising into their most graphic forms. For his "Women" series, the 39-year-old has turned his focus to the most classic of painterly subjects: the female figure.

Beyond the Female Nude

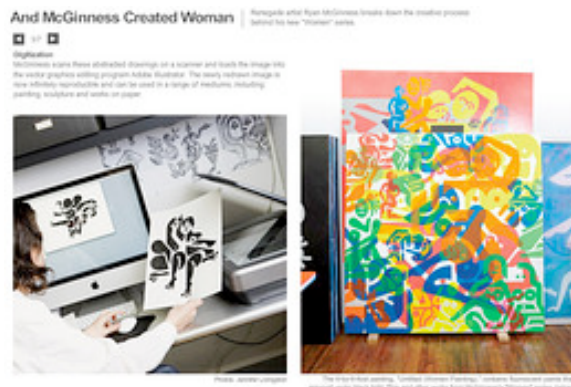
The fluorescent works of Ryan McGinness



Ryan McGinness Studios, Inc.

"The Lazy Logic of Ignava Ratio," 2009

The series is a departure for McGinness, who started out in Virginia Beach, Virginia, drawing logos on T-shirts for his skateboarder friends. While his work is now collected by the industry's boldface names, including Charles Saatchi and Jeffrey Deitch (his former dealer), he has never lost his renegade spirit. In 2003, he put on a show titled "Sponsorship" at his friend Shepard Fairey's gallery, where he asked corporate sponsors to give money in exchange for seeing their logo hung on the wall.



On opening night, sponsors handed out gifts and a mob scene ensued, causing police to shut down the exhibit. Clearly not one to shy away from subversive acts, he exposed his "Women" series at Art Basel Miami in December, hanging four fluorescent paintings at a gentleman's club with live dancers daubed in neon paint. This new work, as well as a remounting of "Sponsorship," will be on view this month at various Los Angeles spots. "The women are sexy, but the drawings are sexier," says the artist. "Beautiful, stark and perfectly composed according to my eye." McGinness takes us through his creative process, from initial sketch to 6-by-6-foot painting.