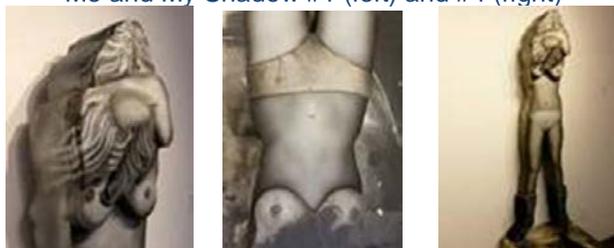


LARRY RIVERS 1970

Me and My Shadow, Shadow and Substance: Photographic Montage Constructions.



Me and My Shadow #1 (left) and #4 (right)



Details from #1

Me and My Shadow #4

Each of the 4 works are approx. 78.5 x 74 x 31.25 inches
Me and My Shadow - Shadow and Substance #1 and #4
1970



Mixed Media Photo-montage on canvas, mounted on wood, with plexi-glas.
81.5x73x32 inches
Exhibited: Marlboro Gallery Dec. 1970-Jan.1971 (see excerpt below)

These works were reviewed and published:

Reviewed: ARTNews Dec. 1970

#'s 1 and 4 were Illustrated: LARRY RIVERS Text by Sam Hunter
Arthur A Bartley Pub. 1989 edition pp.244, pl.220



Me and My Shadow #2
Me and My Shadow #3

Dec . 1970 ArtNEWS REVIEW

Me and My Shadow: Shadow and Substance – ARTNews critic David Shapiro

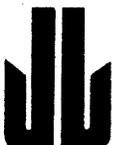


Founding member of The International Photography Art Dealers Association
Former member of the Antiquarian Bookmans Society

David Shapiro wittily opens his ARTNews Dec. 1970 Larry Rivers exhibition at Marlborough Galleries NY review in the following manner. *Larry Rivers has been like that ivy which unfortunately of fortunately has a position botanically somewhat between two other ivies and has caused so much dismay to botanists that they have called it, 'confusa'. Of course, they do not denounce it,(But) if Rivers only had a single stem....* (In other words, River's talent was broad) *As in the Shadow and Substance series, permitting creases and renderings on very subtle structures, like an expressive mathematics with physical ramifications. One is tempted to believe all this could not be done without a fourth hand; but it can, which is part of the painting (he is speaking of the photographs). It is a painting with edges, and yet it is so complex that the eye always has something to hold onto. Thus it is not for today's deaf mute who likes computer graphics....They are an affirmation of the outermost limits of one artist's sense of the statement, "The painter is dead and not dead." We need this Esthetic Engineer to handle the seven steps in epic painting where line and interspace become permutable. Amen."*

Larry Rivers forces us to think of the pleasures of representation. One would not want the excellence of Rivers' work to be lost because, as Aristotle said of Comey, it wasn't taken seriously enough....Rivers has enveloped the theme of unacceptability and related it to allied concept. One can speak of the "prophetic" qualities of Rivers' work, since he made one of the first attempts to popularize commercial images. (Representational painter, Larry Rivers, appeared on the scene when abstraction was 'king'.)

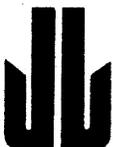
Modernism swept the art world, BECAUSE PHOTOGRAPHY 'PUSHED'



PAINTING to CHANGE. Photography could create magnificent portraits, magnificent landscapes, panoramic photographs, color photographs, CINEMA. The ground was being pushed out from beneath the painter. By the end of the 19th cen. and first decade of the 20th cen. what is loosely called Modernism evolved. With it, figuration slowly became 'simple', old fashion, stogy...Abstraction, geometrics, expressions of color alone were the 'new'. Larry Rivers found the way back to representation. In 'Me and My Shadow' he took simple 3x3", b/w polaroids of his then girlfriend and 'went to work'. He cut them up, rearranged them, rephotographed the new arrangement – and enlarged the new work onto canvas. The photographers had played with the image, distorted and enlarged – but not in a single composition, until these works made in 1970. Marlboro Gallery, a powerhouse gallery, gave Rivers the key spot in the calendar, showing a very large show of Rivers works done within the past 5 years, between 1967-1972. ARTNews produced a lengthy review of the exhibition, giving disproportionate coverage to these four works. The works didn't sell. Marlboro Gallery was not a photographic gallery – no one was in 1970. The works were quietly put away; an 'invention' *before its time*.

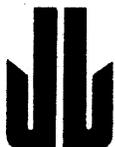
The following was written by David Joel, Director: Larry Rivers Foundation, former Studio Assistant of Larry Rivers.

"These works were born out of experiments with Polaroid photography. Larry took a 3x3 inch Polaroid and cut it up, removing areas, etc. From that process of cutting up the Polaroid (to focus on certain aspects of the image thus creating a new photographic image created mechanically and by hand), Larry decided that he wanted to see that sort of image life size with an added dimension that takes the photograph from 2D to 3D. So,



these 4 sculptures originated as Polaroid's that Larry took of his then girlfriend, Diana (Diana was his girlfriend/muse for much of the 70s). He then cut the Polaroid's up and had the new image enlarged to life-size photographs (printed on canvas). It's my understanding that Larry then made sketches for each of these life size photographs that reconfigured them for sculptures. And then based on his preliminary sketches, he cut out the enlargements mounted the standing figures on foam board and started doing some painting over parts of them, more reconfiguring, etc., eventually turning them into "Me and My Shadow: Shadow and Substance". What's it about? A lot of things... With Larry it's always about asking questions, dialogue and the work is almost always laced with dichotomy. So, it's the way photography flattens realism and the way sculpture might contradict and interpret the mechanical ironing of the photographic image. It's about realism reconfigured to be both representational and abstract. The works are in conversation with art, other artists' work, (they reference and dialogue well with his friend Escobar Marisol's art)... they dialogue with each other and within themselves (as each sculpture is really created by two sculptures that speak to each other). Among a myriad of questions, Rivers is asking us to question our point of view. A sculpture that lies on the floor and is also upright... which one is "Me" and which one is "My Shadow"? Are there more details in our shadows than a silhouette might suggest, adding more depth to the subtitle "Shadow and Substance"? Anyway, Larry wanted his work to raise questions, he wanted people to engage in dialogue and with that (dialogue and inquiry) as his core motivator throughout his entire creative life - from the dialogue created in a jam session with his fellow Jazz musicians, to works like "Me and My Shadow" (also referencing that famous 1927 song by the same title, sung by Al Jolson (the Jazz Singer)) – Rivers opens up a variety of potential dialogues for anyone interested enough to ask."

'Peck's Bad Boy of Art', Larry Rivers, introduced photography into art, not as simple photographs as exhibited in the early 1950's by Rauschenberg or an





891 PARK AVENUE NEW YORK NY 10075
Tel./FAX 212 288-6234 - janetlehr@janetlehrinc.com

Weekends and Summers:
VERED GALLERY 68 PARK PLACE PASSAGE
EAST HAMPTON NY 11937
Tel. 631 324-3303 Fax 631 324 4455
www.janetlehrinc.com

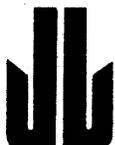
element a larger work as Robert Rauschenberg did in the 1960's, – These works by Larry Rivers 'demanded' attention, presented as they were by a significant *painter*, well recognizes for his boundless explorations, and particularly for his drive to turn, to return art to focus on the figure. *Me and My Shadow: Shadow and Substance*, Rivers unapologetically presented a clearly total approach to a photographic work as Fine Art, entirely apart from anything attempted before – or since.

Brief early biography:

Rivers is considered by many scholars to be the "Godfather" and "Grandfather" of Pop Art. He was one of the first artists to merge non-objective, non-narrative art with narrative and objective abstraction.

Rivers took up painting in 1945 and studied at the Hans Hofmann School from 1947–48. He earned a BA in art education from New York University in 1951. He was a pop artist of the New York School, reproducing everyday objects of American popular culture as art. He was one of eleven New York artists featured in the opening exhibition at the Terrain Gallery in 1955. During the early 1960s Rivers lived in the Hotel Chelsea, notable for its artistic residents such as Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, Leonard Cohen, Arthur C. Clarke, Dylan Thomas, Sid Vicious and multiple people associated with Andy Warhol's Factory and where he brought several of his French nouveau réalistes friends like Yves Klein who wrote there in April 1961 his *Manifeste de l'hôtel Chelsea*, Arman, Martial Raysse, Jean Tinguely, Niki de Saint-Phalle, Christo, Daniel Spoerri or Alain Jacquet, several of whom left, like him, some pieces of art in the lobby of the hotel ; for payment of their rooms. In 1965 Rivers had his first comprehensive retrospective in five important American museums.

His final work for that exhibition was the 32 foot long, 14 foot high, *The History of*



Founding member of The International Photography Art Dealers Association
Former member of the Antiquarian Bookmans Society



891 PARK AVENUE NEW YORK NY 10075
Tel./FAX 212 288-6234 - janetlehr@janetlehrinc.com

Weekends and Summers:
VERED GALLERY 68 PARK PLACE PASSAGE
EAST HAMPTON NY 11937
Tel. 631 324-3303 Fax 631 324 4455
www.janetlehrinc.com

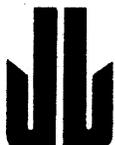
the Russian Revolution, which was later on extended permanent display at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC. During 1967 he was in London collaborating with the American painter Howard Kanovitz. In 1968, Rivers traveled to Africa for a second time with Pierre Dominique Gaisseau to finish their documentary *Africa and I*, which was a part of the groundbreaking NBC series "Experiments in Television". During this trip they narrowly escaped execution as suspected mercenaries.

Beginning in 1970, Rivers worked closely with Diana Molinari (girlfriend and model for the above works) and Michel Auder with whom he worked on many video tape projects, including the infamous *Tits*. (See Me and My Shadow 4, on the left side of the 'shadow form', is a man's face, 'trapped', like a deer in the headlights, in the lens of the polaroid Rivers was using to photograph Diana Molinari, quite possibly, it is the face of Michel Auder, frequent visitor to Larry Rivers studio.

Rivers was 'all about pushing boundaries', he was exploring 'fresh meat', not to be willful; there were absolutely no barriers to restrict him. He created these works as described by his studio assistant and presently the director of the Larry Rivers Foundation, David Joel, from 3x3 inch black & white polaroids. They were the delicious new 'tool' on the block! Lucas Samaris' experiments with polaroid dates to 1976, a full six years later. Larry Rivers was an artist of enormous, exciting, creative dimension – Like these work, Rivers was 'larger than life'.

"One of the best artists in the history of American art"-

Barbara Rose, Art Historian ArtForum Nov 2002



Founding member of The International Photography Art Dealers Association
Former member of the Antiquarian Bookmans Society