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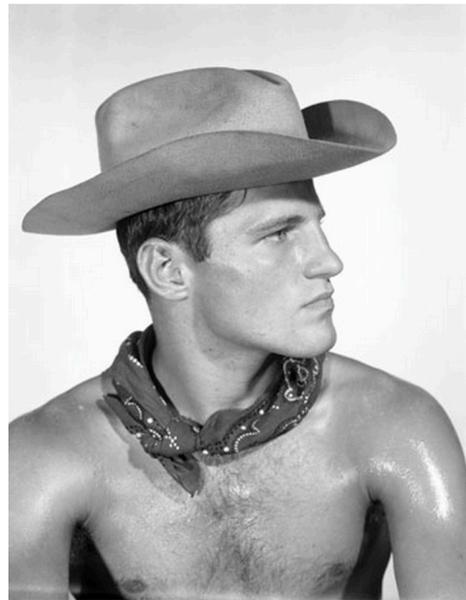
MANHATTAN LOS ANGELES

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ARTNEWS

City Slicker: Cowboy Fanatic Dylan Brant Curates Show at Venus Over Manhattan

On a recent afternoon, Dylan Brant, stepson of media mogul and art collector Peter Brant, whom he refers to as “Dad,” was in the office at Venus Over Manhattan, Adam Lindemann’s gallery on the Upper East Side. Brant was preparing for a show he curated that opens next month at the gallery. Organized with Vivian Brodie, it’s called “Rawhide” and looks at masculine identity and cowboy imagery in art from the late 19th century to the present. He was fiddling with a genuine Stetson hat, which he had meant to give to Lindemann as a gift, but it was too big for Lindemann’s head. As he tried it on himself, Brant discovered it was too big for his, too. Lindemann stood behind his desk, gathered some papers, and shouted, “Rawwwhide!” in a voice faithful to the credits sequence of the old Eric Fleming TV show, then walked out of the room.



Bob Mizer, *Untitled (Larry Lamb, Catalog #UH1-FH)*, Los Angeles, 1963.

COURTESY VENUS OVER MANHATTAN AND BOB MIZER FOUNDATION, INC.

Brant was wearing a tight purple sweater and fingerless gloves, and is skinny enough that his jeans, which probably should have been clingy, sagged on his body. However boyish his appearance—he referred to himself as a “25-year-old kid”—he is given to more business-like tendencies in conversation, despite a certain penchant for cursing. When he asked me what I knew about his cowboy show and I responded only that he was curating it, he said, in the serious tone of a car salesman discussing an automobile’s new

features, "So let's change that." He had recruited an old friend from college, Audrey Turner, whom he described as an expert in 19th-century cowboy-related art, to assist him, and they were both seated at a table, going over a checklist for the show. Brant had briefly placed the Stetson on the table, like a talisman.

"This actually is in the collection of Richard Prince," he said, looking at a photograph of a cowboy with a cigarette between his lips, Leonard McCombe's *Portrait of Texas Cowboy Clarence Hailey Long*. The image appeared on the cover of *Life* magazine in 1949. "Richard Prince, when he showed me this work," Brant continued, "told me that he believes that this issue of *Life* had the images that inspired the Marlboro ads, which ultimately, of course, he appropriated to create maybe one of his most iconic series, although the guy is still so goddamn prolific, I don't even know if that's appropriate to say." (Work from Prince's "Cowboy" series from the late 1980s is also in the show. It doesn't hurt for an up-and-coming curator to have grown up with one of the world's more recognizable patrons of contemporary art.)

"What's so interesting with the Marlboro ad and Prince," Turner chimed in, "is that people always say, 'All that guy did was photo copy an ad,' you know, he took everything and doubled it out and made it his own, but that's exactly what Marlboro did. Marlboro took this iconic image that was already full of all this symbolism and just reproduced it."

Brant said he had originally pitched Lindemann on an idea for a show about bathrooms, to which Lindemann, as Brant remembers it, replied, "No, man, that's fucking stupid. Why would I want to do a show about bathrooms?" Brant settled on the idea of cowboys because "I still am absolutely obsessed with Cady Noland," who has made frequent use of symbolism from the American West, and is also included in the show. (At the suggestion of cowboys, according to Brant, Lindemann replied, "Oh, fuck, cowboys," enthusiastically.)

The show more or less opens in 1893, when Frederick Jackson Turner declared in a speech in Chicago that the American frontier was the foundation of the country's democracy. Brant includes work from that

era (like Henry Shrady's bronze sculpture of a buffalo from 1901) through the rise of the Western in Hollywood (a candid photo, by Dennis Hopper, of John Wayne and Dean Martin on the set of the 1965 film *The Sons of Katie Elder*) and up to the present, which focuses on more "homoerotic stuff," in Brant's words.

"I think Dylan's been preparing for this his whole life," Turner said, going on to describe him as a "country lovin', belt-buckle wearin' Eastern boy."

To this, Brant responded matter-of-factly, "I love cowboys."