

TIBOR DE NAGY

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Press Release

John O'Reilly

Philip – René – Doe and other Paper Montages, 2016-2018

November 29, 2018 to January 13, 2019



John O'Reilly, *Boy*, paper montage with watercolor, 16 x 13 inches

Tibor de Nagy is pleased to present John O'Reilly *Philip - René - Doe, and other Paper Montages, 2016-2018*. This will be the artist's third solo show at the gallery and his first at the gallery's Rivington Street location.

John O'Reilly's *Paper Montages* are a body of work made from materials such as art historical images, children's drawings, found photographs, gay pornography, folios of art reproductions and his own cut and pasted paper. The artist is known primarily as a photographer who works in collage. For nearly fifty years, he has taken photographs, either with an old polaroid or an inexpensive 35mm camera and combined them

with appropriated material, working with scissors and glue, to create intricate and complex images. However, in this most recent body of work, the artist dispenses with the camera entirely, and works solely with his personal image archive, amassed from flea market finds and other rummaged material. The results appear more simplified; this process powerfully distills the ideas and themes that have preoccupied the artist throughout his long career.

The works in the current exhibition, like his previous work, often focus on the male body. In them, figures are manipulated and scale is disrupted. The artist presents odd conjunctions of body parts and inserts sexually explicit images, often creating alien mismatchings. What is new in this recent work is the incorporation of children's drawings. This new element creates a meditation on mortality and a connection to his childhood growing up gay in a strict Catholic household in New Jersey.

O'Reilly has always used his working method to collapse the boundaries of time and genre. By using the montage process, he integrates his disparate interests - religion, the crucifixion, pornography, art history and allows them to confront each other, on the same plane, and emphasize their commonality and emotional undercurrents. *Two Musicians*, for example, uses a reproduction of Dürer's *Descent of the Cross* and combines it with two separate images of male musicians, one a Thomas Eakins photograph of a nude flute player, allowing the bodies and other compositional components to dynamically interact. The work *Philip - René - Doe* is a combination of Velazquez's portrait of a young Prince Philip, an Edgar Degas drawing of his brother René, and Doe, an anonymous, beautiful youth pulled from the artist's collection of images. From these three appropriations he creates a cohesive *portrait* that defies any boundary of time or hierarchy in status.



Left: *Two Musicians*, 2013, paper montage, 15 x 12 inches

Right: *Philip-Rene-Doe*, 2016, paper montage, 15 x 13 inches

Among O'Reilly's most important influences are Joseph Cornell, Jean Genet, Henry James and C.P. Cavafy. However, it was the Greek poet Cavafy who pointed the way to dissolving the boundaries of time. In a recent interview O'Reilly says: "Cavafy goes back and forth chronologically. And I don't believe in time either. So I try to make the future, the present and the past all one time. I don't think of my works as being in a particular time. They move, they're things you walk into but you encounter all time in them."

John O'Reilly was born in 1930 and grew up in suburban New Jersey. He has spent most of his life living and working in Worcester, Massachusetts. He studied at Syracuse University and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. For twenty-seven years he worked part-time as an art therapist at a state hospital near his home. In 1995, he was included in the Whitney Biennial, curated by Klaus Kertess. He has received two solo retrospectives: one in 2002 at the Addison Gallery of American Art and the other in 2017 at the Worcester Art Museum. In 2008 his work was included in the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition "The Printed Picture," he was also included in "In the Studio: Photographs," curated by Peter Galassi at the Gagosian Gallery, New York in 2015. Last May, a forty-year survey of his work was presented at Zevetis Marcus gallery in Los Angeles.

Listings Information:

Tibor de Nagy Gallery is located at 15 Rivington Street on the Lower East Side
Tel: 212 262 5050. | Web: www.tibordenagy.com | Email: info@tibordenagy.com
Gallery Hours: Wednesday – Saturday 10am – 6pm, Sunday 12pm – 6pm

Social Media:

Join the conversation on social media by mentioning Tibor de Nagy and using the hashtags #JohnOReilly and #tibordenagy when posting. Facebook: Tibor de Nagy Gallery | Instagram: @tibordenagygallery | Twitter: @TiborDeNagy

Upcoming exhibitions:

Neil Welliver | January - February

Upcoming art fairs:

Art Basel Miami | December 6-9
Survey Section: Larry Rivers