

Nude Brooke Shields photo becomes art

Who owns the rights to a photographed image?

After a three-year battle with Teri Shields, Garry Gross has won the right to publish his controversial nude photographs of Shields' daughter, Brooke, taken when the model was 10 years old. The professional photographer had taken the pictures in 1975 with the mother's consent for publication in a Playboy Press book entitled "Sugar and Spice." But Teri Shields subsequently fought Gross' attempt to produce the photo as a poster.

Gross sold the rights to the nude photographs to Art Trend Creations Inc. last spring, but the posters were never distributed. Gross finally bought the rights back, said his lawyer Richard Golub, "because he's a smart businessman." Golub said that distribution of the nude posters is "imminent."

Enter Richard Prince, who photographed one of the many Shields' nudes from one of Gross' own advertising brochures. Prince's concept is that an artist can appropriate an image and make it his own. "The fact that I've been stealing photographs ... well, I thought I might as well steal the most expensive one," he said.

Prince, one of New York's post-modern photographers, has received considerable critical acclaim for photographing advertisements and fashion images and presenting the reproductions as his photographs.

The photo in question shows Shields frontally nude, her prepubescent body oiled to reflect light, but her face and hair styled as though for an adult woman.

Prince was attracted by the "strange he/she adolescent quality. You know what it is, but you have no idea what you're looking at. In addition to the fact that she grew up to be our Lady Di."

ART NEWS Hunter Drohojowska



Brooke Shields



Salvador Dali

Last November, as a reaction to Gross' victory in court, Prince exhibited an image entitled "By Richard Prince, a Photograph of Brooke Shields, by Garry Gross" at New York's Spiritual America Gallery.

When Prince heard of Gross' plans to publish a poster, he announced that he will be offering a photograph of the Gross poster in a limited edition of 100.

Gross was unavailable for comment, but since he already waged a battle for the return of his own photographs, he is not likely to appreciate Prince's artistic endeavors.

Mindi Gutman, vice president of Dyansen Galleries (associated with Art Trend Creations Inc.), said they relinquished the rights to Gross' photo because "we just decided that the direction the company is going in, the posters wouldn't fit in." The Dyansen Gallery now represents the sculpture of art deco artist Erte. Asked if Teri Shields' being an avid collector of Erte sculpture had anything to do with the gallery's decision to bow out of the deal, Gutman said, "Absolutely not."

Salvador Dali, the artist most associated with the high-profile

commercial market, is the subject of a novel sales strategy on the part of Upstairs galleries. Anyone buying \$3,000 or more of art by Dali will receive a print of either his "Birth of Venus" or "Celestial Elephant," each of which the galleries say is worth \$2,000. Both Dali's prints and original paintings, including "The Melting Clock," will be exhibited at the three locations of the Upstairs galleries: tomorrow from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Glendale Galleria; Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Del Amo Fashion Square; and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa. For further details call 652-6382.

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art, having completed its own expansion last month and recognizing the explosion of museum construction in Southern California, has organized a six-part series of films and lectures on the subject of "Museum Architecture in a Post-Modernist Age." It begins tonight at 7:30 p.m. with a new film "Beyond Utopia: Changing Attitudes in American Architecture," from Michael Blackwood Productions. Upcoming speakers include such post-modern authorities as Dr. Reyner Banham, professor of art history at UC Santa Cruz and author of many texts on L.A. architecture; Robert Hale, an architect with Frank O. Gehry and Associates; Steven Izenour, an architect with Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown; and Charles Moore, of the Urban Innovations Group. A round-table discussion concludes the series on Feb. 9. More information is available at (805) 963-4364.

An artist has lodged a small complaint with this column about the Museum of Contemporary Art's "The First Show." Although the exhibition was not intended as a survey, she did notice that of the 146 works, covering a 40-year period, only seven (4.7 percent) were by women. The five artists are Eva Hesse, Karen Carson, Lita Albuquerque, Maria Nordman and Louise Nevelson, who had three works shown.