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Art

Pop Touched Me: The Art of Rob Pruitt
Rob Pruitte
Theresa J. Slowik
978-0-8109-5432-8
(February 28, 2010)

In the first book to present a detailed visual narrative of contemporary artist Rob Pruitt's works and installations, friends and critics are invited in for a kind of conversation. *Pop Touched Me* is composed mostly of 200 color reproductions and numerous quotes from artists, critics, friends, and celebrities, which set a conversational tone rather than a critical discourse. The selected images of Pruitt's work, which often is a mischievous critique of art world structures, are rooted in a pop sensibility. The book's clear and progressive graphic design works with the images and quotations to stimulate questions and ideas as readers turn the pages. This is a book for artists.

Pop Touched Me touches on Pruitt's early collaboration with Jack Early, working under the moniker Pruitt-Early. These shows, "Artworks for Teenage Boys" and "Artworks for Teenage Girls" in 1991, investigated broad conceptions of American adolescence. The controversial 1992 exhibition, "Red, Black, Green, Red, White and Blue," at the Leo Castelli Gallery, addressed popular conceptions of race and its relation to corporate America. Numerous independent conceptual projects are also represented, including sensationally staged events like the notorious "Cocaine Buffet" in 1998, as well as simpler projects that promote possibilities for creativity in everyday life, like the series "101 Art Ideas You Can Do Yourself" in 1999 and in 2001. Finally, the book journeys through hundreds of images from the 2008 "iPruitt" installation. In this installation, Pruitt plastered walls with enlarged photographs taken with his mobile phone, immersing the viewer in a gridded visual journal collage of the artist's experience from the previous year.

Pruitt's glittering paintings of sensitively crafted panda bears and brushwork bamboo in addition to his sculptural assemblies of blue jeans in his functioning flea markets saturate the reader with a variety of images. The presentation of both the details and the considerable scale of these ambitious projects help to demonstrate Pruitt's penetrating humor, exuberance, and visual flamboyance.

This is not a reference book—Jeffery Deitch's brief but illuminating essay provides some of the only context for Pruitt's work. *Pop Touched Me* is perhaps best used as a visual supplement to a study of the 1990s' art culture of shock and pop resurgence. Deitch writes, "Many artists today have very boring biographies: an MFA from a prestigious art school and then a series of solo and group exhibitions at well-regarded galleries, with no story other than a list of exhibitions. Rob Pruitt, in contrast, has a remarkable story that encompasses a great network of ongoing friendships and twenty years of contemporary art history. Rob is not just making art; he is living it."