



JOHN RANSOM PHILLIPS THEMES & PERSPECTIVES

313 E. 58 Street
New York, NY 10022

T: 347 997 0749
E: info@johnransomphillips.com

RECENT SERIES:

China Rising (2012)

Sleeping Presidents (2012)

Mathew Brady's Dream Book (2010)

Ransoming Mathew Brady (2009)

The Little Painter (2008)

Beyond Nature (2006)

Book of the Dead (2005)

Bed as Autobiography (2004)

My Father is his Buick (2003)

Heaven (2001)

Famous People's Body Parts (2000)

JOHN RANSOM PHILLIPS' approach to painting is not easily categorized, which is something that he prefers, having always sought to create his own path. Occupying both figurative and abstract dimensions, Phillips' work draws the viewer close, with its vivid colors and complex spaces, and then slowly reveals its many meanings.

"What is real to me," says Phillips, "is what is concrete and immediate. My consciousness reveals images and patterns of behavior; while my memories and dreams provide me with maps of my unconsciousness—they reveal that I have lived many times before this life, and will do so again. '*What I assume, you shall assume*' becomes the ground for going forth." Phillips' work, if studied chronologically, reveals the various stages in discovering oneself by way of 'ransoming' an old identity, as he puts it, in order to move on to a new one.

Jonathan Goodman, contributing editor at ArtCritical Magazine has said: '[Phillips]' sense of appropriation is powerfully imaginative—the artist aims to reenact the existence of someone from another life—much as Cindy Sherman does in her famous film stills...The relationship between author and mediator is deliberately complex, so that it is hard to say whether it is Phillips himself or his assumed persona that is the subject of the works before us."

John Ransom Phillips lives and works in New York City and Old Chatham, New York. His work has been exhibited at galleries in many of the major art centers around the world: New York, Los Angeles, Washington DC, Paris, Tokyo, Buenos Aires, São Paulo and Cairo. His paintings and watercolors are in major public and corporate collections including Bank of America, Toyota, PLM Corporation, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Phillips Collection in Washington DC, the Albany Institute of History and Art, and the Smart Museum of Art in Chicago.

www.johnransomphillips.com

313 E. 58 Street
New York, NY 10022

T: 347 997 0749
E: info@johnransomphillips.com

RECENT SERIES:

China Rising (2012)

Sleeping Presidents (2012)

Mathew Brady's Dream Book (2010)

Ransoming Mathew Brady (2009)

The Little Painter (2008)

Beyond Nature (2006)

Book of the Dead (2005)

Bed as Autobiography (2004)

My Father is his Buick (2003)

Heaven (2001)

Famous People's Body Parts (2000)

AMERICANA

Phillips' fascination with the United States centers on its evolving character, its complexities and its contradictions:

- *My Father is His Buick* (2003), the most personal of Phillips' series, investigates the painter's own father through his identification with his car, a 1957 Buick Riviera, which became an introduction for both father and son to America as a land of ironic self discovery.
- In *Ransoming Mathew Brady* (2009) the artist explores the strange career of the half-blind, fearful photographer who became perhaps best known for Civil War photographs that he didn't take. Alan Trachtenberg, Professor Emeritus of American Studies at Yale University, wrote: "This extraordinary cumulative work by John Ransom Phillips fits no existing genre...It is an essay on history, on vision and blindness, on violence, on color and space, on death and rebirth."
- *Mathew Brady's Dream Book* (2010) is an intrusion into the dreams of the people Brady turned into celebrities with his camera: Hawthorne, Henry James, Lincoln, Sitting Bull. As such, these paintings bear witness to other, larger worlds contained within all those iconic portraits that we've only half seen.
- *Sleeping Presidents* (2012) reveals the dream-lives of America's forty-four Commanders-In-Chief. Echoing Walt Whitman, Phillips says of these works, "I am dreaming all the dreams of Grant, Obama, Reagan, Washington and Clinton. And then I become them."



The Dialogue Between Mathew Brady and His Body
2005, oil on canvas, 2 panels, 50 x 100" overall



Millard Fillmore: Broken Efforts at Making Circle
2012, oil on canvas, 2 panels, 50 x 60" overall



Photographing You
2006, oil on canvas, 28 x 26"

313 E. 58 Street
New York, NY 10022

T: 347 997 0749
E: info@johnransomphillips.com

RECENT SERIES:

China Rising (2012)

Sleeping Presidents (2012)

Mathew Brady's Dream Book (2010)

Ransoming Mathew Brady (2009)

The Little Painter (2008)

Beyond Nature (2006)

Book of the Dead (2005)

Bed as Autobiography (2004)

My Father is his Buick (2003)

Heaven (2001)

Famous People's Body Parts (2000)

THE METAPHYSICAL

Many of Phillips' paintings are about breath and touch and eyesight. These repeated allusions reinforce one another in ways that make us understand how everything we experience has its reflection and its shadow. By joining life with death, these works enlarge our sense of what it means to be alive, emphasizing that in this life we must learn both how to love and how to die, again and again.

- *Book of the Dead* (2005) reaffirms the Egyptian tradition of preparing for the afterlife by celebrating earthly existence in all its fullness. Here the artist's medium, watercolor on thin sheets of papyrus, suggests the fragile wrappings of mummies and the brittle perseverance of ancient wisdom.
- *Bed As Autobiography* (2004) explores that ordinary place in which extraordinary things take place. Throughout our lives we return to the bed for our most human rites of passage: We give birth, we love, we dream, we create life, we ail, we die. Phillips' paintings suggest that our beds are perhaps the only place where we are fully and honestly ourselves.
- *Heaven* (2001) reminds us that the experience of bliss is the experience of feeling connected; and paradoxically, that heaven is only experienced when we are free. This series investigates themes of connection and rupture through a close observation of the force of the divine on the material: The "spiritualization of matter."



My Conception: Coming Into the Picture
2001, oil on canvas, 70 x 50"



Asian Love Saiho-Ji
2004, oil on canvas, 60 x 50"



Raining In Chichen-Itza
2004, oil on canvas, 60 x 40"

313 E. 58 Street
New York, NY 10022

T: 347 997 0749
E: info@johnransomphillips.com

RECENT SERIES:

China Rising (2012)

Sleeping Presidents (2012)

Mathew Brady's Dream Book (2010)

Ransoming Mathew Brady (2009)

The Little Painter (2008)

Beyond Nature (2006)

Book of the Dead (2005)

Bed as Autobiography (2004)

My Father is his Buick (2003)

Heaven (2001)

Famous People's Body Parts (2000)

NATURE

These works explore how the world around us takes on different configurations as we appropriate different ways of seeing and thinking.

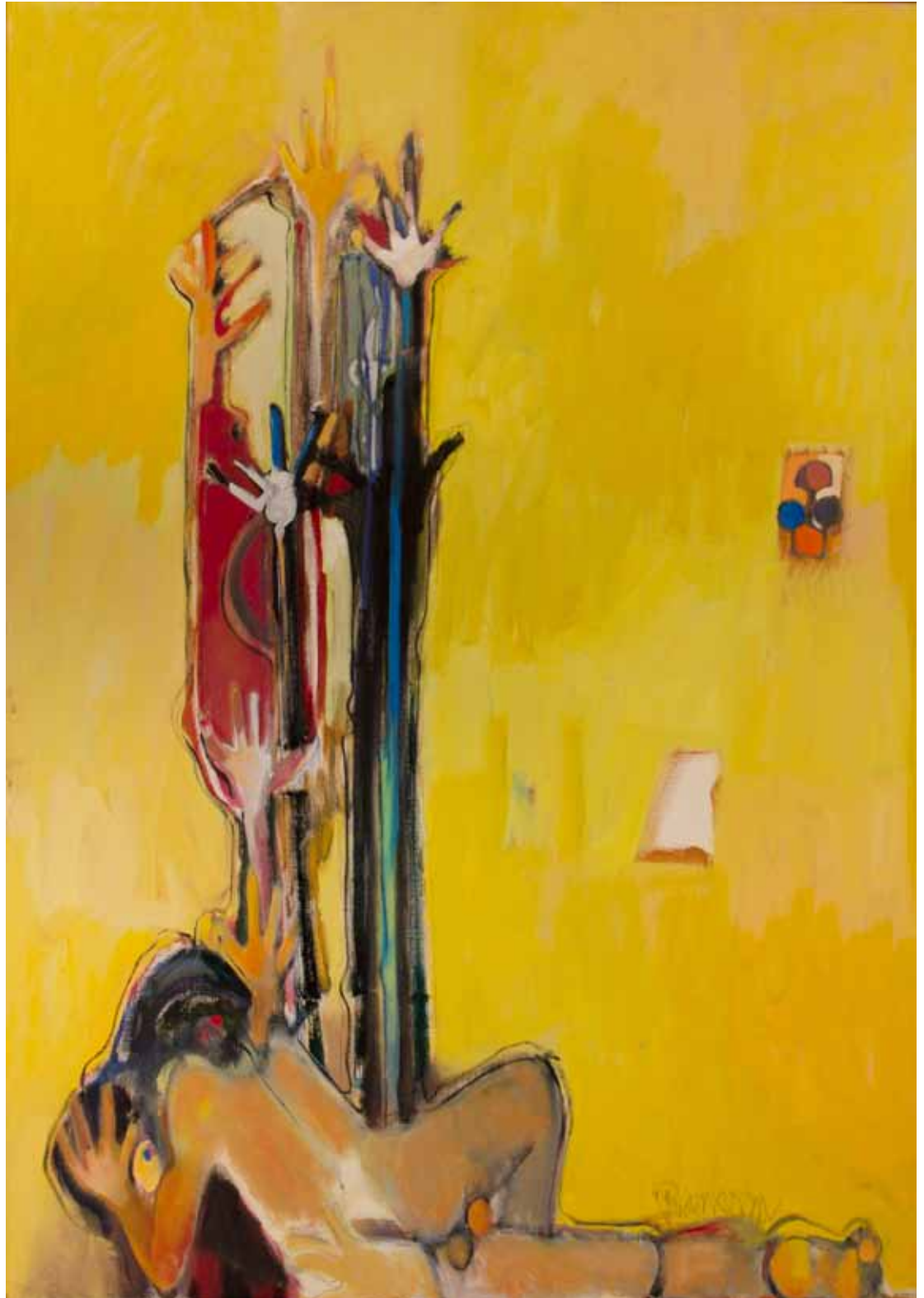
- *Beyond Nature* (2006) tracks the life of a young Judaeen girl who communicates with animals. Here color and light beckon us into landscapes that blur the commonly accepted boundaries between human, plant and animal.
- *Famous People's Body Parts* (2000) encapsulates people's essential qualities by isolating their most salient physical features. In this way, Phillips achieves a fuller revelation of his subject's character, as the part that he depicts inevitably becomes larger than its whole. Marilyn Monroe's lips, for example, became more mythic than her mouth.
- *The Little Painter* (2008) centers on the 15th Century Italian artist Pinturicchio and his delight in the natural world. These paintings make up a collective portrait of an artist's mind as he went about creating a conceptual universe for himself, a landscape that he believed would guarantee him success.



Night Touching Bottom,
2009, oil on canvas, 60 x 50"



Pinturicchio: Urban Angels
2008, oil on canvas, 50 x 70"



Naomi: Slow Dying
2008, oil on canvas, 74 x 52"