

FINANCIAL TIMES

Walter Robinson's bedsheet works arrive at Vito Schnabel Gallery

by Christina Ohly Evans
August 6, 2017



Champagne Run (2017), *The Drifting Sands* (1986), *As Tough As They Come* (2017), *Bunny* (1986); Images: Walter Robinson, courtesy the artist and Vito Schnabel Gallery; photos by Argenis Apolinario

Founded in 2015 and housed in the St Moritz space formerly occupied by legendary gallerist Bruno Bischofberger, the Vito Schnabel Gallery has quickly built a reputation as one of the world's go-to spaces for cutting-edge contemporary art. Following exhibitions and public installations by Urs Fischer and Sterling Ruby, its latest show (until Saturday September 2) focuses on the work of US-born Walter Robinson, featuring a series of bedsheets painted with the covers of paperback romance novels (a recurring theme for the artist), as well as several of his Romance paintings from 1986.

Walter Robinson: *The Americans* is full of the charming, slightly kitschy works (from \$35,000) that made him a key figure in the Pictures Generation - alongside Cindy Sherman, Richard Prince, and Julian Schnabel. Playful adventures in materiality and pattern, the works are also explorations of human appetites - both sexual and culinary, according to Robinson, who was editor-in-chief of *Artnet* magazine from 1996 to 2012. Bedsheets, he says, are a "universal accessory to elemental manifestations of desire" and a metaphor for "the continuous field of consciousness".

Among the 2017 pieces on show are *Champagne Run*, in which two classical blonde beauties have been painted over a Star Wars bedsheet; *The Executioner Blood Vendetta*, on which rows of camels trot beneath a depiction of a pulp-fiction protagonist firing a gun; and the vibrant and violent *As Tough As They Come*. The earlier acrylic-on-bedsheet works include *Bunny*, a disturbing depiction of a child's toy, and *The Drifting Sands*.

"I've been a fan of Walter's work for almost 10 years and have always felt that the Romance paintings on bedsheets were extremely powerful and beautiful," says Schnabel. "Many eyes were opened to his work after Jeffrey Deitch's show last autumn, and by the Whitney Museum's exhibition *Fast Forward: Painting from the 1980s*." Many more eyes should be opened by this St Moritz show.