



Philip Pearlstein, *Models on Folk Art Sofa with Hobby Horse*, 2013, oil on canvas, 48" x 60". Betty Cunningham.

frank realism. The Pittsburgh-born artist continues to paint in this now signature style, using hired models as the central prop in studio still lifes (see "You Become Better with Age," page 84).

Included in this lively show were ten large oil paintings of naked women, along with five related watercolors, several of which were detailed studies for the painted works. In *Models on Folk Art Sofa with Hobby Horse* (2013), two females are placed on a wooden settee; their legs are crossed and draped somewhat awkwardly across or under a vintage rocking horse. The light hits their thighs and cheekbones as naturalistic shadows rest on their skin. Here, as in most of the works, meticulously rendered feet arch and point and become the most animated body parts. Despite the temptation to read into the sanguine, implacable veneer of the models' faces, the women remain somehow anonymous.

Pearlstein eschews narratives and, in so doing, forces us to focus on the arrangement—and in turn the act of painting itself. *Model on Air Mattress with Mickey Mouse Blanket* (2012) is striking for its virtuoso mix of painted textures: a woman lies with eyes closed wearing an open silk robe on a terry-cloth beach towel. These painted fabrics combined with the shiny blue transparent bubble of the plastic air mattress all conspire to make the surface of her faithfully depicted skin as well as the harmoniously draped dreadlocks seem flawless in tone and design. —*Doug McClelland*

Philip Pearlstein

Betty Cunningham

Philip Pearlstein is, of course, best known as a painter who began working from live models beginning in 1962, when figurative painting—or anything so unabashedly representational—was unfashionable and arguably heretical. It was a gesture-dominated art world. His nudes, especially, were notable for their

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A painting of a woman lying on a chair, holding a sword, with a man's hand on her shoulder. The woman has dark hair and is looking down. The man's hand is on her right shoulder. The background is a patterned rug.

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