



## **RUSSELL YOUNG (b. 1959)**

### **Mountain**

#### **American Landscape Series**

indigo pigment screen print on felt in 6 panels

74 x 119 in.

2015

33698

Russell Young is an internationally acclaimed pop artist best known for his compelling larger than life screen print images from history and popular culture.

Russell Young was born in 1959 “into the cold, wet, isolation of Northern England”. The first months of his life were spent passed between foster care and a nunnery until he was adopted by Ken and Lesley Young at 4 months old. The new family migrated across the north and Young has described feeling like “an outside in this dark world.” As a northern youth, he was born into the ripe age of the Sex Pistols, Joy Division and New Order. Young hated school and by the age of 14 often truanted.

He began taking photographs and landed at Chester Art College where he studied photography, film, and graphic design under Jack Straw. He moved onto Exeter Art College and to London where he struggled to find a job. After months on the streets Young was taken on by photographer Christos Raftopoulos as an assistant. Raftopoulos encouraged Young to take on his own projects and he started photographing the live club shows of Bauhaus, R.E.M. and the Smiths. The photos were a hit and he quickly picked up work for magazines and eventually began photographing sessions for record companies.

In 1986, Young shot the sleeve for George Michael’s album ‘Faith’. This led to many more commissions from musicians and celebrities such as Morrissey, Bjork, Springsteen, Dylan, REM, New Order, The Smiths, Diana Ross and Paul Newman. From this he moved on to directing music videos in the heyday of MTV.

In 1992, when his career as a photographer and music video director was flourishing, Young moved to Hollywood, America. Whilst doing his day job Young began to paint seriously. He moved to New York with his wife and became increasingly frustrated by the limits of the photograph and the commercial world he was in. He rented a studio in Brooklyn and began his series ‘Pig Portraits’. These works “attacked the nature of photography, portraiture and prickly nature of celebrity itself.” He has said the idea to create “anti-celebrity” portraits was probably a reaction to his former career. However, they turned out to be even more beautiful and iconic.

His work remained private until 2003 when he had his first solo show in Los Angeles. The series ‘Pig Portraits’ sold out and Young, with his family, moved back to California where he focused on his life as a painter and an artist. Young’s art work and reputation have gone from strength to strength since then. He continues to challenge and reinvent himself.

Russell Young describes his work as a sort of soundtrack to his life, loves, experiences and influences. His method of working is to search, destroy and create. The images he uses have been collected from newspaper cuttings, e-bay, long correspondence with police departments throughout the world and even given by celebrities themselves. He likes to get his hands dirty in the process of his art, "I like the paint, dirt, blood, sweat, tears and mess of hand-pulling paintings in enamel. Screen-printing has a magic that is instant and unique," he says.

Russell Young has risen to become one of the most collected and sought after artists of our time. His work has been shown in London, Paris, Berlin, Tokyo, Singapore, New York, Miami and Los Angeles. His silkscreen paintings have acquired a huge and illustrious fan base - Abby Rosen, the Getty's, Elizabeth Taylor, David Hockney, Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, David Bowie and President Barack Obama all have examples of Russell's works in their collections.

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