



A FEW MINUTES WITH RICHMOND BURTON

The nutshell version of **Richmond Burton's** story is the stuff of art world legend: young artist hits all the right notes, receives mass acclaim, then heads into quiet, yet extremely productive exile. Let's all breathe a collective sigh of relief for a new viewing of his work in Bridgehampton, NY at the gorgeous **Silas Marder Gallery** through August 10th. On view is a range of recent work, produced in numerous locales: his old studio home in East Hampton, to Santa Monica, to Brooklyn and most currently Woodstock, where the artist has lived for the last 2

years. Burton's story is so utterly unique, that it's difficult to properly introduce. Thankfully he's a gifted Q&A participant:

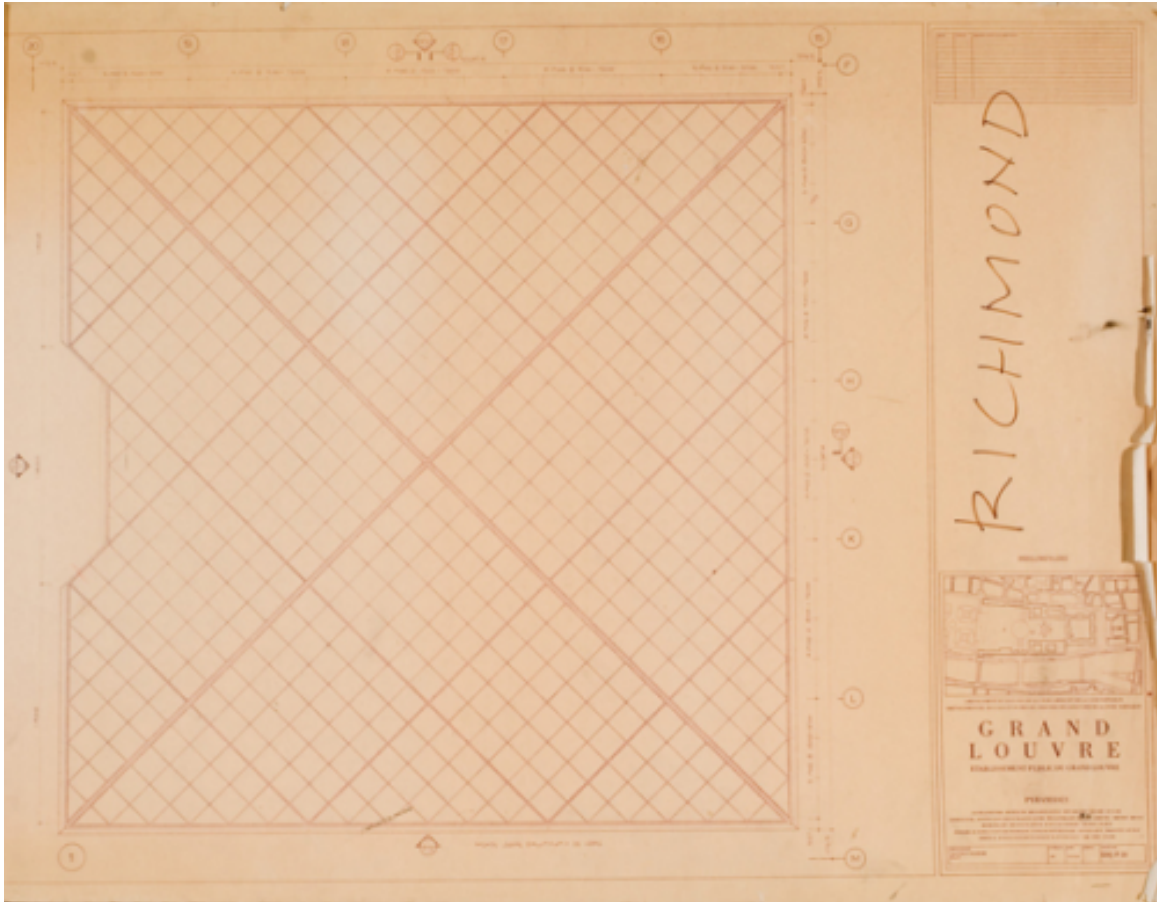
Johnny Misheff: Your resume is formidable to say the least. You've been an architect, a highly regarded artist and even an entrepreneur. What would your life story in a few sentences look like?

Richmond Burton: I grew up in Talladega Alabama and always felt like a resident alien. Luckily there were folks around whom I could share with and they helped me get started on my path as a creative person. There was no other way. My grandmother was an artist and actor in the local community center. She made pottery and had her own kiln. I have ceramics that I made with her going back to when I was 3. I was on my way.

Somehow I had the idea to go to Rice, and I got in. There I studied architecture and art, but just as important was my part time work for Dominique de Menil, who sponsored the Rice Museum. Through her I had direct access to the art world. I didn't know at the time that I was working for one of the world's most important cultural figures. It took me a while to realize that.

JM: Can you share a little about your time working with IM Pei on the Louvre project?

RB: When I graduated from Rice I moved to New York to work for I.M. Pei and partners, architects. It was a huge corporate environment and after we completed work on Dallas Symphony Hall, I introduced myself to the person in charge of the Pyramid design for the Louvre and began working for them. This was another formative experience. Intensive work – sometimes around the clock – followed as we watched the public opinion vehemently against the pyramid change to a favorable one when our drawings and models were presented. I realized controversy is a necessary and inevitable stage of introducing anything new into the world, and the importance of our advocacy as people behind new ideas. Mr. Pei is a very effective speaker and his passion is undeniable.



Louvre Drawings

Another person I met who inspired me and influenced me was Steve Jobs, whose penthouse apartment was being designed in the office. He was dynamic, confident, totally focused. This was in 1985-6, when he was forming Apple. He advised us to buy stock. I wish I could have, but I was making \$18,000 a year from Pei and no overtime.

Instead of overtime, we had comp time, so on my days off, I painted. I painted nights and weekends. I was determined to be an artist. When I left Pei after 2 years, I was thrilled. A friend introduced me to Susan Sontag, who needed help after her apartment nearly burned. We had a great time and got along well. Susan became my mentor.



Susan Sontag and Richmond Burton in East Hampton | Photo Credit- Annie Lebowitz

JM: From a design perspective, what is the world lacking? Or, if you prefer, more specifically, what is America lacking? Anything?

RB: Susan [Sontag] summed it up when she said: “most people are afraid of their feelings.” What I find lacking is an awareness of inner feelings. This profoundly affects me as an artist. My art is all about feelings, as I think Susan’s work [was]. I see how people react. It usually takes them a long time, many years, to come around to my work.

JM: You’re showing new work in Bridgehampton at Silas Marder Gallery through mid August. I know it’s been a while since you’ve shown work publicly. How did you approach this?

RB: I’ve come to accept that anything meaningful takes time for people to accept. It takes time for people to understand my work. So I no longer rush to have shows. I wait. At my opening [at Marder] I compared it to wine. It takes time. The show is mostly of work made 4-5 years ago, and this is working well. My show last year in Saint Louis was similar. Enough years had passed to allow people to catch up to the

work - or begin to. They are responding well. I'm having a great experience. Earlier, when I showed brand new work, no one seemed to care, or few did until years after the show. I embrace controversy but I was going broke.

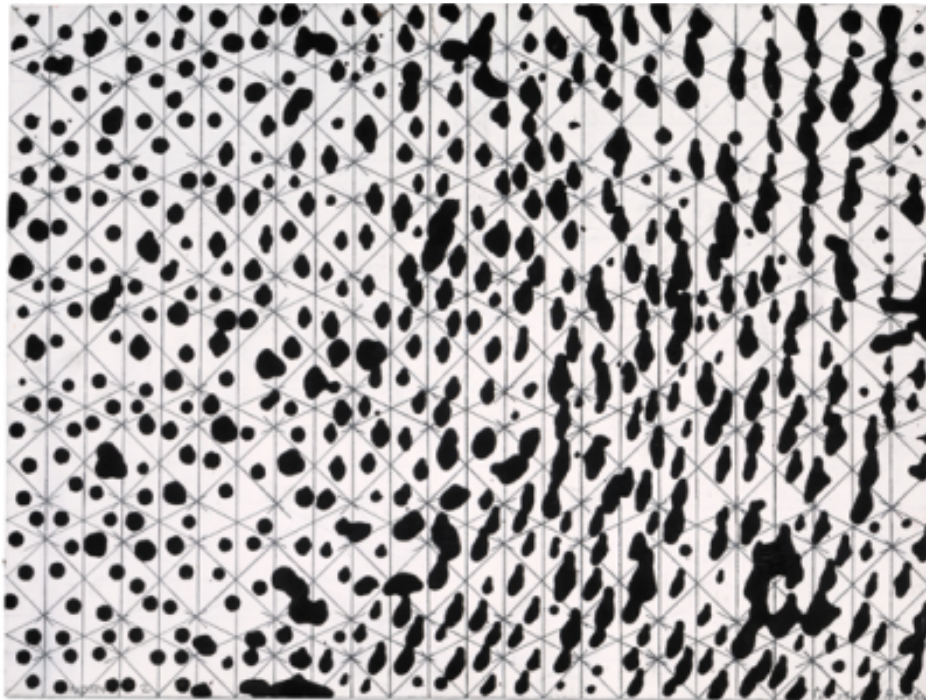
To summarize: I encourage having the confidence to go out there alone. Introduce yourself to the people who you want to be like. Have mentors. And be in touch with your feelings. Don't rush yourself. There's time. And try to be patient in allowing people to catch up to you and appreciate what you have to offer. And surround yourself with other creative people who support what you're doing.



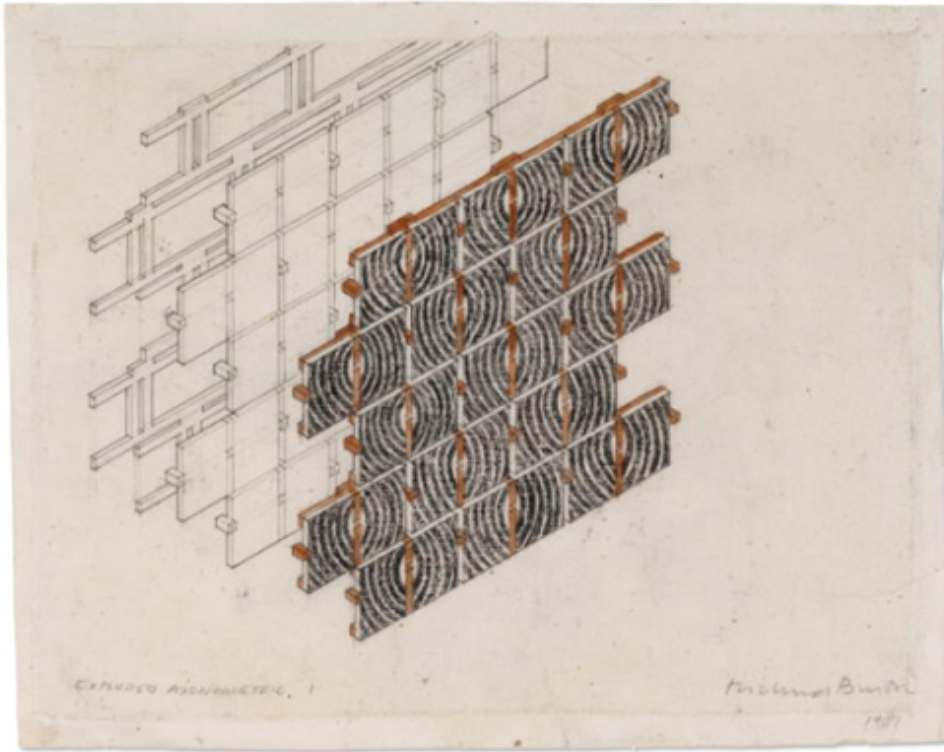
THE UNITED STATES OF KISS MY ASS Oil on linen, 19.25 x 26" 1994



Untitled -title soon- Oil on Linen 48 x 60 inches 2013



Notes Ink on Paper 18 x 24 1994



Exploded Axonometric 2 Oil on Canvas on Paper 11 x 13 (Framed – 19 x 21) 1989



EQUATION Oil on linen, 22 x 33 2003