

## Phillips X Presents *Roy Lichtenstein: Diana & Ajax*

On View from 12 August – 6 September in Southampton,  
Featuring Artworks Commissioned by Gianni Versace



**Roy Lichtenstein**  
*Interior with Diana and Interior with Ajax, 1997*

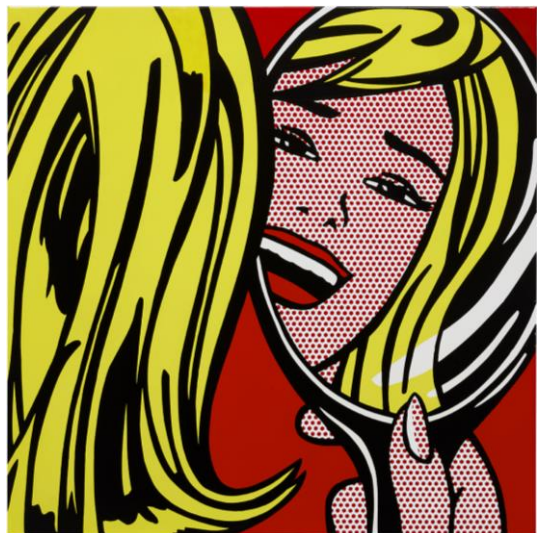
NEW YORK – 8 AUGUST 2022 – Phillips X is pleased to present, *Roy Lichtenstein: Diana and Ajax*, an intimate view of two Greco-Roman inspired works commissioned by Gianni Versace from the artists' *Interiors* series. The pair was intended to hang in the studio of Versace's Milan home. However, the finished paintings, *Interior with Diana* and *Interior with Ajax*, remained in Lichtenstein's studio at the time of the fashion designer's death in July of 1997. It was not until that December, when Donatella Versace was contacted by the artist's studio and made aware of the paintings' existence. She then had them displayed in the Versace New York townhouse. Alongside these two masterworks, will be a selection of other important works by the artist including *Girl in Mirror*, 1964 and *Shipyard Girl*, 1965, on view at Phillips Southampton, 1 Hampton Road, 12 August - 6 September 2022.

Displaying the works in Southampton is especially fitting as Lichtenstein had a home and studio there, where he continued to experiment with different styles and mediums from 1970 until his death in 1997. The artist not only lived and worked in Southampton, but was continuously inspired by the local community throughout his career.

Both *Interior with Diana* and *Interior with Ajax*, featuring Lichtenstein's iconic Bandy dots, take significant influence from Greco-Roman iconography which coincidentally often appeared in both Lichtenstein's and Versace's creative visions. Though there is no specific known source for either Ajax or Diana used by the artist, the subjects are instantly recognizable. Lichtenstein has captured their essence, and thus the viewer feels they automatically know the imagery in these works. The repetitive use of the blue Bandy dots, a key characteristic of the artists oeuvre,

draws together the detailed elements of these striking interior scenes into a harmonious vignette. This combination of new and old elements presents the canvases as incredible, unified works by one of America's leading modern masters for his friend, Gianni Versace.

Diana, the virginal Roman goddess of the moon and hunt, was a subject Lichtenstein depicted on several occasions in his later years. Often pulling imagery from his own archive of works, Lichtenstein incorporated his early studies of Diana's profile into this interior, as if he had been waiting for this moment to showcase her on a finished canvas. In the front frame of *Interior with Diana*, this key Greek pattern is reminiscent of the Versace logo: Medusa encircled by a ring of the same Greek design – a play on the iconography of ancient Greece and Gianni Versace himself.



**Roy Lichtenstein**  
*Girl in Mirror*

Ajax, Greek hero from the Trojan War, stands in the very forefront of his canvas. He is instantly recognized from his classicized profile, bare chest, and Greek war helmet. A master of mixing the high and the low arts, Lichtenstein juxtaposes simple modern furnishings in the same picture plane as Ajax. Furthermore, above Ajax's head, he has included a small still-life within a still-life. The framed painting of fruit recalls the highly graphic and iconic print ads that Lichtenstein was so known for in his early career.

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**Exhibition viewing:** 12 August – 6 September

**Location:** 1 Hampton Rd, Southampton, NY 11968

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