



# The Playmate as Fine Art

*Seven famous contemporary artists interpret Playboy's provocative Centerfold*

It was a different world back in 1967, when Hugh Hefner and PLAYBOY Art Director Arthur Paul sought out 11 of the world's best-known artists and sculptors to transform the Playmate into fine art. The Centerfold had not yet assumed its place in the American consciousness, and artists were not as likely then as they are today to use elements of popular culture for inspiration. That has changed, of course. Today the Playmate is a part of American iconography: We see references to her image in many parts of our culture. It seemed appropriate, then, to revisit the Playmate with a new generation of artists and to see how they might respond to this American archetype. With that in mind, we asked seven artists to interpret the Centerfold on their own terms. No conditions were set, nor specific Playmates mandated. On these eight pages, we see the creative responses of our artists.



## Will Cotton

◆ Will Cotton was born in Melrose, Massachusetts and raised in New Paltz, New York. His education includes studies at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rouen, France, the New York Academy of Art and Cooper Union in New York, where he earned a fine art degree. Mary Boone Gallery in New York has repre-

sented him since 1999. His paintings have been shown at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Seattle Art Museum, the Kunsthalle Bielefeld in Germany, the Hudson River Museum in New York, the Triennale di Milano, the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris and the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes

in Havana. Cotton's work is in the collections of the Seattle Art Museum and the Columbus Museum of Art in Ohio. "The model for this painting is Miss Ruby Valentine, a burlesque dancer from New York," says the artist. "She's reclining on a cotton candy cloud, wearing a crown of sweets."

▲ Will Cotton, *Cotton Candy Queen*, 2012, oil on linen, 24 x 34 inches.