

About the Artist

John Ransom Phillips lives and works in New York, with formative periods spent in Belgium, Egypt, Italy, and Judea. A California native, he earned his BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and his PhD from the University of Chicago, where he later taught the history of culture. He has also held teaching positions at the University of California, Berkeley, and Reed College in Portland. Over decades of painting, writing, and performance, Phillips has developed a practice grounded in spiritual inquiry and self-reflection. Working across painting, film, theatre, and prose, he explores how the past lives within us — how the emotional and imaginative residues of history shape our identities and desires today. Phillips's work does not merely engage history; it reanimates it. Drawing on figures from Pinturicchio and Civil War photographer Mathew Brady to Jiang Qing, wife of Chairman Mao, he paints and writes their interior worlds — their dreams, vulnerabilities, and private longings. Through these imagined encounters, he examines the continuity between historical memory and lived emotion, revealing how history is not fixed but felt, relived, and transformed through art. Guided by his own sense of spiritual lineage and connection to past lives, Phillips uses his work to map the invisible currents between image, memory, and human longing. He is the author of nine books, including *Ransoming Mathew Brady*, *Bed as Autobiography*, and *Sleeping Presidents* (2021). His paintings have been exhibited internationally, most recently in *Lives of Artists* at the Boca Raton Museum of Art and with BlackBook Presents, New York. His theatre works *include Eve & Adam, Fatherless Sons, and Mrs. President*.

About the Curator

Lina Zikas is an independent curator and art historian based in Washington, D.C. and New York City, specializing in contemporary artistic practice across multiple mediums. She holds a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in Art History and has devoted over two decades to studying John Ransom Phillips's multidisciplinary work, developing rare expertise in his integration of painting, writing, and performance. Ms. Zikas is currently authoring the catalogue raisonné of John Ransom Phillips' oeuvre—a comprehensive scholarly documentation of the artist's complete body of work spanning four decades. Her curatorial projects reflect a deep commitment to contextualizing contemporary art within broader historical and cultural narratives. Notable exhibitions include *Lives of Artists* by John Ransom Phillips for Blackbook Presents in New York City. She also co-curated the permanent exhibition of the Plaster Cast Collection from the Metropolitan Museum of Art at George Mason University and co-authored publication *Engines of Education: Essays on the George Mason University Plaster Cast Collection* (2021). Ms. Zikas is known for her scholarly rigor, collaborative approach, and ability to foster critical dialogue that makes complex artistic ideas accessible to diverse audiences.