

# Lindsay Lohan Seeks Redemption at the Venice Biennale

by Ben Davis

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**Lindsay Lohan** is heading to the **Venice Biennale**, too.

No, not the real Lindsay Lohan. The actual starlet will be serving out the term of a four-month house arrest in the other Venice — Venice, California — complete with an electronic surveillance anklet. [According to the celebrity gossip site TMZ](#), Lohan says she views the stint as "time to relax, focus on her recovery and figure out her new game plan for her life and career." And part of her new game plan, it seems, is to turn her mind to art (also to a role as **John Gotti Jr.**'s wife in "Gotti: Three Generations" — but we digress).

Despite her enforced confinement, Lohan is nevertheless set to play a starring role at the art world's most prestigious festival, courtesy of painter **Richard Phillips**, who has recently ventured for the first time into the world of video art by shooting a film with La Lohan. The 90-second collaboration between the troubled actress and the superstar artist — succinctly titled "Lindsay Lohan" — will be playing on a giant screen floating in the waters of Venice for the biennial preview as part of

"Commercial Break," a mobile art-video project curated by **Neville Wakefield** and sponsored by **Dasha Zhukova's Garage Center for Contemporary Culture** and the iPad fashion magazine **Post**.

"Lindsay Lohan," which was apparently shot last month in Malibu by Phillips with the help of **Taylor Steele** — a filmmaker known for his mastery of the surfing film genre, with movies like "Castles in the Sky" and "Sipping Jetstreams: An Adventure in Life" — recasts Lohan as a kind of art-movie Zelig, flickering between wordless images of her posing portentously as **Brigitte Bardot** in **Jean-Luc Godard's** classic "Contempt" or as **Liv Ullmann** in **Ingmar Bergman's** "Persona." (For whatever reason, artists seem to love casting Lohan as firm sirens of the past. Remember [photographer Bert Stern's photo shoot of the actress as Marilyn Monroe?](#))

Will Lohan's high-profile new collaboration with Phillips, and the highbrow glamor it suggests, erase the memories of drunk driving and shoplifting arrests? Lohan has reason to think art might be her salvation: She got [plenty of attention for a collaboration with fashion/art photog Tyler Shields](#), a diabolically in-bad-taste series of photos for which she posed as a sexy murder-rape victim. Meanwhile, on the other side of this particular looking glass, [Phillips recently had a hit](#) at London's **White Cube** with his "Most Wanted" series of realist portraits of **Robert Pattinson**, **Taylor Swift**, and other future stars of "I Love the '00s!" He has a talent for talking about such work as if it had some kind of probing critical meaning.

"Lindsay has an incredible emotional and physical presence on screen that holds an existential vulnerability, while harnessing the power of the transcendental — the moment in transition," Phillips says of the star of "Herbie: Fully Loaded" in a press release put out by his gallery, **Gagosian**, about the new film project. "She is able to connect with us past all of our memory and projection, expressing our own inner eminence."

Whether anyone but Lohan's most devoted fans (and, yes, based on the YouTube comments for "Lindsay Lohan," there are still a few of these still out there) is going to buy the idea of that Phillips's video is about "the power of the transcendental" is open to doubt. In reality, "Lindsay Lohan" is a great demonstration of the vogue for using celebrities as found objects in contemporary art — courtesy actors like **James Franco** (who [also happens to be making an appearance in Venice](#)) and artists like

**Francesco Vizzoli** — which I once called, in [an essay for Slate](#), the "celebreadymade": a slightly queasy mutant form of pop art, made up of the mixed imperatives of Hollywood talent slumming for cheap credibility and artists willing to pimp their intellectual cachet for the sweet taste of a popular audience.