

STEPHEN WIRTZ GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEBORAH OROPALLO

Replica

Exhibition dates: January 22-February 28, 2004

Opening reception for the artist Thursday, February 5, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Stephen Wirtz Gallery announces *Replica*, an exhibition of a new series of digitally based paintings by noted Bay Area artist Deborah Oropallo.

In *Replica* Oropallo continues to push the boundaries of the definition of painting by presenting innovative photographic-based and digitally rendered canvases. These works depict magnified and strategically arranged imagery of children's toys. Chosen for their ironic references to important concerns of contemporary life, these items are altered with paint and other materials by the artist before being photographed and digitally collaged. She selectively applies layers of acrylic over the boldly colorful digital pigment print that is produced on canvas. Making serious and potent references to issues of domestic life and current topics of media attention, these works also allude to the situation of painting in the digital age.

In his essay in the accompanying catalogue, Glen Helfand writes:

Nothing in these paintings is as simple as it first appears, a concept that goes back to the lessons in the tall tales we read as children. So when Oropallo works with toy tree stump blocks, the image evokes the rather realistic idea that the enchanted forest has been clear cut. A gaggle of green flocked sheep is a Grimm's-like fairy tale, yet it's also a verdant reference to genetic tinkering... The artist's masterful use of scale model ranch homes powerfully express the idea that white-washed neighborhood refuges can easily give way to firebombed suburban blight.

As pictured, the objects that serve as subject matter for *Replica* have a photorealistic effect and give the illusion of real volume and spatial placement. At the same time Oropallo wields the composition to demonstrate her adept strengths in abstraction. Widely regarded for her work utilizing mechanical painting means such as silkscreen and iris printing to produce abstract paintings from repeated use of a recognizable object, Oropallo continues in this exploration by utilizing image making opportunities in this new body of work.

DEBORAH OROPALLO (b.1954, Hackensack, NJ) received her MFA and BFA from the University of California, Berkeley. Works are included in numerous museum collections including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. *How To*, a recent traveling career of the artist's work, was organized by the San Jose Museum of Art and recently completed its tour at the Palm Springs Desert Museum.

Stephen Wirtz Gallery is located at 49 Geary St., 3rd Fl., San Francisco, CA 94108, (415) 433-6879, Gallery hours are Tuesday-Friday, 9:30-5:30, Saturday 10:30-5:30.

For additional information please contact Julie Casemore, Tel.: (415) 433-6879, julie@wirtzgalleries.com.

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