

# STEPHEN WIRTZ GALLERY

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Contact: Julie Casemore, (415) 433-6879, [julie@wirtzgallery.com](mailto:julie@wirtzgallery.com)

## DEBORAH OROPALLO

*Feign*

Exhibition dates: February 7-March 15, 2008

Opening reception for the artist Tuesday, February 7, 2008, 5:30-7:30 PM

Stephen Wirtz Gallery announces *Feign*, an exhibition of photo-based, pigment works on canvas by Deborah Oropallo. Oropallo's new work examines issues of power, gender, and seduction as conveyed by adornment and gesture in fetish, fantasy and thematic costumes marketed on the internet and in historical European portrait painting.

Oropallo's digital methodology for making paintings is realized in two visually distinct presentations in this series. Each involves the use of digital photographs featuring provocatively costumed female models from Internet sites. In one group of paintings, Oropallo uses the computer as a painting tool, pushing the pixels like paint, and fracturing the image into smears and slices that resemble expressive brushstrokes. The deconstructed image is then mechanically produced as a large-scale painting on canvas. The works comment on seduction and sexual stereotype, and target the ability of painting to convey power and desire through a discrete arrangement of signs.

Alternately, Oropallo digitally layers the contemporary images with reproductions of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century portrait paintings that depict men in elaborate dress. The resulting hybrids that are produced on canvas combine the attributes of power and aristocracy in traditional portraiture with the sexually aggressive posturing of the models in costume. The interplay of the combined images creates a dramatic optical illusion.

According to Oropallo, "the adornment of both the women and the men solicit questions of long held beliefs about liberation, desire, bondage, hierarchy, sex and power. The merged images elevate maids, widows, nurses and brides above the rank and file and makes them the new royalty."

DEBORAH OROPALLO (b. Hackensack, NJ) received her MA and MFA 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. Oropallo presented a solo exhibition of the series *Guise* at the deYoung Museum last year. *How To*, a traveling career retrospective of the artist's work, was organized by the San Jose Museum of Art in 2001.

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

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