

STEPHEN WIRTZ GALLERY

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DEBORAH OROPALLO

Wild Wild West.Show

Exhibition dates: September 10-October 31, 2009

Opening reception for the artist Thursday, September 10, 5:30-7:30 PM

Stephen Wirtz Gallery announces *Wild Wild West.Show*, an exhibition of new, digitally constructed paintings on aluminum by Deborah Oropallo.

Oropallo's new figurative works present the stereotype of the rodeo cowgirl as victorious heroine, a signifier of feminine power replete with accessories and attributes. Reveling in the visual language of fashion, Oropallo presents the elaborate costumes of rodeo culture with flair, majesty and power. Cowgirls in sexy regalia strut, pose, and gesture against a dreamlike background of bucking broncos, presiding over a highly charged fantasy realm born of the American West.

Adopting the iconic symbolism of uniforms, Oropallo uses images of sartorial adornments—the equivalent of Napoleon's epaulettes and sword in historical portraiture—to construct imaginary representations of female figures. Fringe, spangles, lassos, and six-shooters—central elements of rodeo pomp and pageantry—are digitally arranged and layered to startling effect, suggesting ghostly and feminized versions of the Marlborough Man that play on collective notions of American West pop mythology.

Oropallo has always preferred a systematic approach to painting. These works, created entirely from images borrowed from internet sources, follow from Oropallo's ongoing use of photo-based and digital methodologies to create her work. Although the language of deliberation is painting, the computer rather than the brush is the conduit. The title itself, *Wild Wild West.Show*, is an act of wordplay, evoking an old-fashioned pop West spectacle but incorporating the language of the digital age. This clever reference acknowledges the geographic placement of the high-tech renaissance, with a sly nod to the artist's use of the web as an infinite source for raw material on the nature of culture, commodity, fantasy and desire.

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., 3rd Fl., San Francisco, CA 94108, (415) 433-6879, Gallery hours are Tuesday-Friday, 9:30-5:30, Saturday 10:30-5:30.