

MONYA ROWE GALLERY

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For Immediate Release

ANGELA DUFRESNE

MONYA ROWE GALLERY

Modern Times 1

504 West 22nd Street

April 30 – June 13, 2009

Opening reception: Saturday, May 2, 6-8 PM

CRG GALLERY

Modern Times 2

535 West 22nd Street

May 7 – July 2, 2009

Opening reception: Thursday, May 7, 6-8 PM

Monya Rowe Gallery is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new paintings by **Angela Dufresne** titled *Modern Times 1*. The artist will have simultaneous solo exhibitions at **Monya Rowe Gallery** and **CRG Gallery**, both in New York. This is Dufresne's third solo exhibition at Monya Rowe Gallery and her first solo exhibition at CRG Gallery.

The title, *Modern Times (1 and 2)*, refers to the Bob Dylan album *Modern Times* (2006) and Charlie Chaplin's 1936 film of the same name. The film and the album comment on the desperate, emotional and fiscal conditions many people face during a depression period. Amid the unflattering and dehumanizing displays of modern society each poignantly demonstrates a sense of importance on the self, creativity and memory through comedic relief that inadvertently illuminates and reminds one of our meager existence. Self-effacing contemplations of an artist with all his poetic powers intact, even if those weapons are claimed to be shelved...

There's an evenin' haze settlin' over the town
Starlight by the edge of the creek
The buyin' power of the proletariat's gone down
Money's gettin' shallow and weak
The place I love best is a sweet memory
It's a new path that we trod
They say low wages are a reality
If we want to compete abroad

My cruel weapons have been put on the shelf
Come sit down on my knee
You are dearer to me than myself
As you yourself can see
I'm listenin' to the steel rails hum
Got both eyes tight shut
Just sitting here trying to keep the hunger from
Creeping it's way into my gut

- Bob Dylan, *Workingman's Blues #2* from the album *Modern Times*

...cont. over

Both, Chaplin and Dylan, apply a loose narrative concept to improvise about the reality of living in our society; fluid tales that access a range of emotions and trigger a multitude of associative responses that expand ones capacity to observe and understand the world. Dufresne, who approaches painting similarly, uses her painterly “weapons” to act as the conductor between two reference points - found images (mostly cinematic or architectural) and friends - to unleash her own expansive responses that are irreverent, politically biting, self-mockingly melodramatic, even hilarious. For example, In *Anat on the Boat in “Some Like it Hot”* (2009) Dufresne replaces Marilyn Monroe with her friend, Anat. It is important to note that it is not appropriation - that would be too contextual - it’s *possession*. Dufresne does not simply *insert an image*; she reclaims the film and the protagonist as her *own*. Dufresne likens this process to the Method theory of acting: that is, using emotional memory to develop a wide emotional range so that onstage actions and reactions appear believable. The act of painting and hallucinatory naturalism conflates the space between reality and theatrics, a process that could be described playfully as “Method Painting”.

Dufresne’s paintings embrace her references autonomy while constructing a new experience, a new beast, infiltrated by her and transformed into a new visceral experience. Another influence on Dufresne’s work is Parkour, where buildings, functional or abandoned, are infiltrated by physical acrobatics of the Parkour artists and become a theater where new emotional and political connotations emerge. The buildings are instilled with a new beauty, grace and life through the applied Gestus of someone like David Belle (founder of the Parkour “sport”); an example of a small personal action having greater consequences than expected. In much the same way, Dufresne *uses or applies* architecture, film or music as a playground for rewriting, even reclaiming, history. A kind of personalized revisionism with a sense of humor.

The paintings also hark to ideas of montage. The Soviet Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948) declared, "montage is an idea that arises from the collision of independent shots." Here however the colliding principles are happening simultaneously on the canvas. There is a direct connection to the original reference but it has been emotionally repossessed and formally reconfigured to suit new purposes. As Dufresne exclaims, “There is no distinction between ones direct experience in society and their literary, cinematic aesthetic experiences, or historic or political life. In truth, perhaps someday like [Giorgio] Morandi I can observe plain objects understanding their inherent relationships, their intrinsic gravity, but for now I still take passage to such truths I care to mine attached to existing narratives from cinema, painting or literature, assisted as it were.”

It’s like this Bertolt Brecht (1898- 1956) quote: "Mixing one's wines may be a mistake, but old and new wisdom mix admirably."

Angela Dufresne received a MFA from *Tyler School of Art*, Philadelphia, PA and a BFA from *Kansas City Art Institute*, Kansas City, KS. Dufresne recently exhibited a solo exhibition at *Kinkead Contemporary* in Los Angeles, CA. Her work has also been the subject of a solo exhibition at *The Hammer Museum*, Los Angeles, and included in group exhibitions at *The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum*, Aldrich, CT, *P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center*, NY, *The Rose Art Museum of Brandeis University*, MA, among many others. Her work is currently on view in *“Form and Story: Narration in Recent Painting”* at *University of Richmond Museums*, Richmond, VA through May 22, 2009. Dufresne lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Saturday 11 - 6 PM
Upcoming: Amy Longenecker-Brown: June 18 – July 31

For more information or images please contact the gallery at 212 255 5065 or info@monyarowegallery.com

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