

MONYA ROWE GALLERY

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For Immediate Release

ANGELA DUFRESNE

Parlors and Pastorals

MONYA ROWE GALLERY

504 West 22nd Street, 2nd Floor
September 6 – November 10, 2012
Opening reception: Thursday, September 6, 6 - 8 PM

CRG GALLERY

548 West 22nd Street
September 6 – October 6, 2012
Opening reception: Thursday, September 6, 6 - 8 PM

In *The Playhouse*, a 1921 short film, Buster Keaton buys a ticket outside an opera house and goes in. But the distinctions between exterior and interior quickly dissolve as do the basic boundaries of the self. Because Keaton isn't only a ticket buyer. He's also the conductor, musicians, actors, stagehand, and the audience, including an elderly woman and her husband, a child and nanny. The physical borders of the film's world are even more unstable. A painted canvas wall of bricks crashes to the floor. Actors jump through a tear in a backdrop of two-dimensional waves. In a moment of crisis, Keaton takes a sledgehammer to a glass tank of water, unleashing an impossibly huge flood. Backstage center stage, audience—the spaces all slosh together.

These multiplying selves and collapsing borders in *The Playhouse* function as an inspiration and a template of sorts for Angela Dufresne's new paintings, which evoke similar states of multiple exposure and spatial convergence. In previous work, Dufresne has inserted herself and people from her own life into cinematic and pop imagery, creating what she calls "bastard portraits." In "Parlors and Pastorals," she continues and expands this type of fusion, drawing on sculpture, painting, as well as her own earlier work. The referents, or triggers, are wide ranging—Watteau's *fêtes galantes*, Jacques Demy's *Bay of Angels*, Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *The Barefoot Contessa*, among others.



In most instances, the paintings have been executed *alla prima*. Through these single, sustained sessions, Dufresne animates familiar subjects in unexpected ways, generating "cover" versions of her own as well as a sense of emotional urgency.

What begins as a riff expands, through layered association, to a dense, lushly symphonic scale. In "Lady David-Rosemary Angeles in a Golden Swamp," the artist inverts the gender of Bernini's biblical David, combining portraits of her mother and herself, and isolates the torquing figure against a backdrop inspired by an Albert Bierstadt landscape as well as trees from the Hudson Valley. An exploration of Tiépolo's "The Banquet of Cleopatra" turns into "Banquette Concerto with Head"; the balustrade in the background of the original Baroque painting becomes a rope bridge, the table centerpiece a severed head, an exploratory mark Condoleezza Rice.

Dufresne's investigations emerge not from fandom or homage but the impulse to inhabit known material and discover unexpected points of connection. In merging contradictory or improbable elements—Buster Keaton at a film screening of John Singleton Copley's "Watson and the Shark," for instance—Dufresne erases the lines between pop vernacular and fine art, spectator and performer, memory and imagination.

- Liz Brown

Angela Dufresne received a MFA from *Tyler School of Art*, PA and a BFA from *Kansas City Art Institute*, KS. This is her fourth solo exhibition at Monya Rowe Gallery. Dufresne's work has recently been exhibited at *American Academy of Arts and Letters*, NY; *Ogunquit Museum of American Art*, ME; *Macalester College Art Gallery*, MN; *Wayne State University*, MI, among others. Her work has also been the subject of a solo exhibition at *The Hammer Museum*, CA, and included in group exhibitions at *The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum*, CT, *P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center*, NY, and *The Rose Art Museum of Brandeis University*, MA. Dufresne lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Liz Brown's reviews and essays have appeared in *Bookforum*, *Frieze Magazine*, *London Review of Books*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Paris Review Daily*, and other publications.

Image: **Angela Dufresne**, *Hanna Schygulla Again Because There Can't Be Too Much of Her*, 2012, oil on canvas, 10 by 12 inches
Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Saturday 11 - 6 PM

Upcoming: **SAIC** Recent MFA Painting Graduates, Curated by Philip Vanderhyden, November 16 – December 20
Jacoby Satterwhite, January 5 – February 16, 2013

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