



TAYLOE PIGGOTT GALLERY

For Immediate Release: September 1, 2020

TAYLOE PIGGOTT GALLERY ANNOUNCES *FULL CRY* AN EXHIBITION WITH ARTIST SUZY SPENCE

Exhibition Dates: 10 September – 5 November 2020

Taylor Piggott Gallery is pleased to present *Full Cry* an exhibition with artist Suzy Spence. Spence conveys a wealth of emotion in her equestrian-themed paintings. Touching on society portraiture, political imagery, equestrian sporting paintings, and contemporary fashion photography, there is an air of female defiance and haughty sensitivities that feel alive and ghostly all at once. A sea of fresh female faces stare directly into the eyes of the viewer, intimating intense individuality and a sense of another time and place, while also of the immediate now. Inky streaks of deep black build intimate portraits of unknown women: powerful, raw, and dressed to the nines, with the playful symbology of whips and tall boots. These females are armed with sultry stares of near military strength. "I've gotten to the point where I have full command of my medium," says the painter. "I have full command of my subject."

Sitting placidly with top hat and cigarette in hand, the subject of *Unbuttoned* absently attends to a loyal horse eating from her hand. She appears to be enjoying a restful moment following a strenuous ride as well as the refreshing air on her décolletage. She is the master of her universe as her vibrant green eyes affix on something out of the frame. Her ankle crossed at her knee speaks to her agency and power with nothing lady-like about it, though her milieu is very patrician in affect. Spence's brush strokes appear to be effortless or nonchalant in a way that lends an impishness to the characterization and the portrayal generally.

Spence came of age in a wildly turbulent and exciting time to be a painter. The nineties marked a distinct transition from work that was socially motivated and conceptual to an art world that championed painting and painters. The current art world dominated by the art fair was still in its infancy. In the nineties, Spence worked as a curatorial assistant under Marcia Tucker at the New Museum, and in 1996, she was given her first exhibition at Colin de Land's American Fine Art Co., an institution of change in its own right.

Supported early on by de Land and his wife, art dealer Pat Hearn, Spence was immersed in a world that questioned art as a commodity with a striking cast of characters who relished in art, fashion, and blending the two interchangeably. She fit in beautifully with work that rings with the theater of camp and costume and that is deeply informed by her background in fashion. Spence's intimate knowledge of the garb of the foxhunt comes from her participation in "drags", a foxhunt only in name which uses the scent of foxes instead of the living creatures. The camp comes out of her interest in feminism and its heroines, and her will to subvert the traditionally male-dominated images of landed gentry that famously appear in British boardroom art.

Spence grew up splitting time between New York City and Maine. She is the daughter of painter Marcia Strelau, who took her daughter along with her to sketch the Maine landscapes. Spence identifies stylistically with the vernacular of Maine artists like Marsden Hartley, Fairfield Porter, Alex Katz, and Lois Dodd. She completed a residency at Skowhegan, received her BFA from Parsons School of Design and her MFA at the School of Visual Arts.

Suzy Spence's work has been covered by The New York Times, Frieze Magazine, Esquire Magazine, Paper Magazine, The New Yorker, and The Independent. She has received fellowships and awards from the New York Foundation for the Arts, Vermont Studio Center, and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture.

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Suzy Spence, *Unbuttoned*, 2020, Flashe and acrylic on paper mounted on panel, 12 x 9 inches



Suzy Spence, *Widow I*, 2017, Flashe on paper, 50 x 39 inches



Suzy Spence, *Two Riders on a Couch*, 2018, Flashe on panel, 20 x 16 inches