

BOOKS AND VISUAL ARTS

Photo exhibition by Evergon more chic than cheeky

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Hold that pose - if you can. With Evergon's human still-lives, forever is just for the moment - and a moment is forever. Indeed, pose - or perhaps it's poise - has long been Evergon's artistic obsession. In his latest show, as in nearly all the others, this well-known Montreal photographer takes us to a place somewhere between suspension of disbelief and suspended animation.

Called *Fairies and Cowboys*, this multi-media exhibit, even more chic than it is cheeky, is pure theatre of the absurdly self-conscious. For greater dramatic effect, Evergon has shattered the traditional picture-plane of photography, at once showing his camp cast of semi-nude boys and assorted decorations into the dark depths and right out the "window."

The one "traditional" photo in the show, a large black-and-white, depicts a man languidly slipping out of his pants - readying himself for his role in Evergon's mid-summer night's fever-dream. In fact, this bawdy-pristine installation is an allegory about art and delusion. Meanwhile, we suspect that the straw hat perched firmly on this space-cowboy's head is an integral anatomical part.

That this rough rider is not solo, roaming the galleries at high noon, is intimated by another element in Evergon's installation - eight pairs of genuine cowboy boots drawn into a wide circle - a daunting leather "fortress." The underwear draped on each pair, like triumphal festoons on a Roman temple, suggests that the footwear was only recently vacated, with the owners only temporarily absent.

In fact, it seems that at least some of the mystery men have taken the plunge into the simmering core of the

show, a holographic series that just won't let the viewer walk away. Fastened to a scaffolding of black pipes, this pagan altarpiece seems all too cruelly held in place.

Though in fact physically flat, the holograms suggest depth, with the cast of cherubic boys seemingly immersed in a vat of oil streaked with tomato sauce. Only by moving around - doing a kind of last tango -

in front of the glowing panels can the viewer glimpse all that's cooking, including one or two unfortunate ornamental fowl. In many respects, Evergon's art, with its pickled costume-drama, is an update on kitschy Victoriana.

From the central panel, the holographic hand of a youth appears to swing out and proffer a bit of fruit as we stroll by. This may be a new take on Eden and the Fall, but the cherub's gossamer wings suggest it's all in good fun - a taste of forbidden fruit, especially if it's art, can't do any real damage.

Fairies and Cowboys is entertaining, and certainly gets the viewer moving. Unfortunately, the coyness ends up being merely coy, and the elaborate tricks are catchy, but ultimately predictable.

✦ *Evergon's Fairies and Cowboys is on view at Galerie Trois Points, 372 Ste. Catherine St. W., Room 520, until April 18. Phone: 866-8008.*



The one "traditional" photo.