Photo exhibition by Evergon more chic than cheeky

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H old that pose - if you can. With Evergon's human still-lifes, 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 multimedia exhibit, even more chic than it is cheeky, is pure theater of the absurdly self-conscious. For greater dramatic effect, Evergon has shattered the traditional picture-plane of photography at once showing his temporary 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 mill-burner night's fever-dream. In fact, this bawdy-primitive 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 entertained 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 frescoes on a Roman temple, suggests that the footwear was only recently venerated, 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. Fused 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 feet. In many respects, Evergon's art, with its pickled costume-drama, is an update on kitschy Victorianism.

From the central panel, the holographic head 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 cherubs' rococo 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 coziness ends up being merely coy, and the elaborate tricks are catchy, but ultimately predictable.

* Evergon's Fairies and Cowboys is on view at Gallerie Trois Points, 312 St. Catherine St. W., Room 526, until April 13. Phone: 866-0050. The one "traditional" photo.