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Deborah Brown: Restless exuberance

By Sharon Butler



Deborah Brown's virtuoso paintings feature rich color and tangled, looping brushstrokes that slip and slide. They embody restless exuberance. An insatiable and prolific painter, Brown over the last few years has turned her attention to art history: Classical and Baroque sculpture and 18th century paintings--particularly the court portraits of Velazquez and Goya. If the portraits that inspired this body of work exude quiet authority, Brown's characters--their gooey faces captured in mid-expression by way of a raised eyebrow, a curled lip, a sideways glance, or a scaffold-like hat that threatens to collapse--seem giddy and unstable.

[Image at top: Deborah Brown, *Grandee*, 2014, oil on canvas, 24 x 16 inches.]

Deborah Brown, *Parlour Games 2*, 2014, oil on masonite, 24 x 18 inches.

One of the things I admire about Brown is her fearlessness. She works wet-on-wet with extraordinary confidence as her subject matter evolves. During a recent studio visit, she shared new paintings, which introduce elements from Modernist paintings and sculpture, tribal artifacts, and even children's figurines like trolls and E.T. In a sense, each of Brown's new paintings functions like a curated group show, bringing work together from disparate parts of the museum, precipitating curious conversations and unexpected alliances.





Deborah Brown, *Duel*, 2016, oil on canvas 48 x 60 inches.



Deborah Brown, *D'jeuner sur L'Herbe* 2016, oil on canvas, 48 x 60 inches.

Widely known as the founder of Storefront Ten Eyck, Brown is represented by Lesley Heller, but an installation of her small portraits, some inspired by characters from Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, will be on view in the project room at A3/Shabelewska this month.

"Deborah Brown: Parlour Games," A3/Shabelewska, Bushwick, Brooklyn, NY. Through May 8, 2016.

Also on view in the main gallery: "Richmond Burton: I AM Paintings (the return)"



Richmond Burton, *I AM (LUCIFER)*, 2001, oil on linen, 48 x 108 inches.

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