

Robin F. Williams

Sons of the Pioneers

February 13 - March 15, 2014

Opening Reception: Thursday, Feb. 13, 6-8pm



P·P·O·W is pleased to present Robin F. **Williams'** **second** solo exhibition at the gallery entitled *Sons of the Pioneers*. Through a series of paintings Williams challenges the roles of American masculinity and traditional portraiture by replacing the idyllic female, or *odalisque*, with romanticized scenes of men in various states of idleness. The narratives depicted circle around an inverted version of manifest destiny wherein men abandon their conquests and choose stillness, allowing the next frontier to be an inward quest. Through various painting techniques and a neon palette, Williams drapes each figure with mixed identities that mask traditional signifiers of purpose and patriarchy in order to construct a new and sympathetic masculine mythology.

Williams presents each portrait from her position **as the "other,"** using the tondo as a strategy to reinforce the voyeuristic, peeping nature of the artist's **gaze**. In the works *Hunter*, *Astronaut*, *Onlooker* and *Sun Hat Sunset*, she adorns each male with ornamental hats and accessories, allowing them to reflect sensibilities not typically associated with the male portrait. In these works, Williams repeats patterns and foliage so to weave her subjects together while consciously shifting her treatment of the paint to simultaneously create a sense of individualism for each character. Using external props, some self made and others her own clothing, Williams is able to further reflect the subject's sense of a shared identity, complicating the concept of otherness.

Sons of the Pioneers continues **Williams'** exploration of psychological portraiture and marks a departure from her depiction of children, which was the focus of her previous exhibitions. It is evident in these works that Williams' painting techniques have continued to develop alongside her expanded subject matter. Within these works Williams draws resemblance from the innovative mark making of post-impressionist Georges-Pierre Seurat, to the paintings of Mary Cassat that re-cast the role of women over a century ago, to the psychedelic pallet of nineties graphic designer Lisa Frank.

Robin F. Williams was born in Ohio in 1984 and currently lives and works in Brooklyn. She received her BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. She has been included in numerous exhibition in New York and California. Williams has been honored as the Josephine Mercy Heathcote Fellow at The MacDowell Colony and the 2010 Brooklyn Academy "Playbill Artist."

Ben Gocker "**Scaredy Cat City**" March 20 – April 19, 2014