

Bespoke Gallery
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PIA DEHNE

Country Life

Thursday, April 24th - Saturday, May 31st, 2008

Bespoke Gallery is pleased to present *Country Life*, Pia Dehne's first solo exhibit with the gallery. A reception for the artist will be held on Thursday, April 24th from 6 to 8 p.m.

In *Country Life*, Dehne presents several large-scale oil paintings and mixed media pieces which were recreated from images found in modern American hunting magazines. Dehne's interests as a painter lie in re-using and transforming images from pre-existing materials from a particular time, ideological moment or movement, into new forms, frequently abstracted and rendered into emotive and evocative forms. Many of the images Dehne chose for this series address the obsession in our culture with advanced weaponry and militaristic costumry.

Dehne states "Nature uses these notions of camouflage and mimicry to defend itself. Humans, however, use these tactics for other means, and often times in aggressive and destructive ways...Creating illusions, tromp d'oeil, gender switching are all forms that play a part in my art."

In two of Dehne's paintings, hunters outfitted entirely in camouflaged gear seem more like soldiers than hunters. Their menacing bows pointing in the direction of the viewer edify the perception of their detachment from their natural surroundings. Yet in Dehne's rendering of these hyper-aggressive subjects they become virtually undetectable in their surroundings, and, in their deconstructed abstraction, transformed into organic, natural forms of pure color.

Dehne has frequently explored mimicry, human nature and camouflage in her work. She recently recreated the cover of the record album *Country Life* by Roxy Music, originally released in 1974. This work addresses the disappearance of forbidden images and socially sanctioned camouflage in past and current cultural environments. The original European version of the album cover featured nearly-nude female figures against a backdrop of bushes. The near-nudity was considered too risqué for the American audience and, consequently, the female figures were edited out of the album cover leaving only the background bushes. In Dehne's depiction of the album cover, she photographed contemporary New York women and superimposed them on the backdrop of bushes in the same style as the original album. The idea of the invisible and the forbidden, and everchanging socially accepted standards of perception all converge.

Born in Düsseldorf, Germany, Dehne received her Master of Fine Arts from Düsseldorf Art Academy under Professor Markus Lüpertz. Dehne later lived in Berlin and in 1999 moved to New York, where she currently lives. The artist's solo exhibitions include, among others: *Bed Bad Beyond*, Haswellediger & Co. Gallery, NY, 2005; *Naked City*, Deitch Projects, NY, 2004 and *I'm so Happy I could die*, Laura Mars Group, Berlin, Germany, 2002. Dehne's participation in selected group exhibitions includes: *The Other Side*, curated by Billy Miller, The 58 Gallery, Jersey City, NJ, 2008; *Die ersten internationalen Elvis Tage*, curated by U. Wulff & W. Morgan, Ideal Glass Gallery, NY, 2008; *Skin*, Autoversion LTD, NY, 2008 and *I like to watch*, The Canal Chapter, curated by C. Lee & C. McCormick, NY, 2007.