

Featured item from THE LIST: Suzy Spence at Sears Peyton

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Luxuriance is more than a painterly quality in the work of Suzy Spence. It is a symbolic form. Bravura paint handling conveys the very sense of sport that is her motif in images of the hunt. Riders throw themselves with panache into the chase without attendant loss of elegance or control. Their very sweat is decorous in an almost heraldic balance of vitality and poise. There is a corresponding dialectic in Spence's attitude towards her subject matter. Her catalogue essayist, Amy Rahn, deftly describes the feminist and class critique at the heart of her gender-bending approach while equally acknowledging her personal investment in riding, her participation in the culture that she observes. "The way these paintings slip—between genre and critique of genre, between a love of the sartorial poses of foxhunting and a critique of their masculine power, and between portraiture and figurative painting—give us a glimpse of something dark and rich that hammers the ground between critical thought and sensuous painting." The full throttle romance of "the drag" (the term for hunting with a substitute fox segues sexily into the fey innocence of Spence's idealized sorority of latter-day Artemises) speaks to an artist who hunts with the hounds and runs with the hares. DAVID COHEN

Suzy Spence: A Night Among The Horses, at Sears Peyton Gallery, January 11 to February 2, 2018, at 210 Eleventh Avenue, Suite 802. See THE LIST for further details

image: Carriage (II), 2017. Acrylic on panel, 24 x 24 inches