

CLAUDIA STONE GALLERY

Alfred Leslie

(b. 1927, New York City)

Mademoiselle de Maupin, 2012-2013

Mademoiselle de Maupin is based on the novel by the same name written by Théophile Gautier in 1835. Gautier was solicited to write a historical romance based on the life of French opera star Mlle Maupin, who was a first-rate swordswoman and often went about disguised as a man. Originally, the story was to be about the historical la Maupin, who set fire to a convent for the love of another woman, but later retired to a convent herself, shortly before dying in her thirties. Gautier instead turned the plot into a simple love triangle between a man, d'Albert, and his mistress, Rosette, who both fall in love with Madelaine de Maupin, who is disguised as a man named Théodore. The message behind Gautier's version of the infamous legend is the fundamental pessimism about the human identity, and the importance of art for art's sake through its dictum that "everything useful is ugly."

Leslie's *Mademoiselle de Maupin* and his 2012 series *The Lives of some Women*, "barely fit inside the definitional boundary line of photography, but challenge almost everything else we hold sacred about the medium. "

"Perhaps the best way to explain what Leslie has done is to say that he is probing the intersection of painting and computer-based art, and then using the photographic print as his output. The works on view were made by "drawing" or "painting" on a tablet computer; [...] There is no ink or oil paint here (no camera either), no digital scanning of physical works made by himself or others, no appropriation or collage; it is all direct input of gestural motion, captured by a stylus as colored pixels, then further modified and manipulated via software.

What is truly fascinating about these images is the way Leslie moves back and forth between the realistic and the representational, making hybrid portraits that have alternating moments of rich detail and unexpected paint program flatness [...] (which raises the mind bending question - is it possible to make a photo-realistic photograph)?

This isn't a love affair with New Aesthetics machine generated imagery and artifacts, but instead a ground breaking combination of old and new. In many ways, these works have nothing to do with issues inherent to photography, at least as we know it today. They force us to consider what photography might evolve to mean (and include) if "painting" and "computer art" are permanently swirled into the mix, and what might emerge if these tools are then pushed to their limits by artists who defy categorization. [...] We're way out on the bleeding edge here, which is why we ought to pay attention."

-DLK Collection blog, June 12, 2012-

For more information about the artist, please contact us at info@claudiastonegallery.com.