

Girls and Horses

February 17 - March 23, 2024

Opening Reception: Saturday February 17 from 5:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Galleri Urbane is pleased to present 'Girls and Horses', a solo exhibition of works by Meghan Borah. This is the artist's fifth exhibition with the gallery.

The series 'Girls and Horses' broaches a specific trope—that of the female rider on horseback— and yet does so with Borah's customary lightness, delicateness, and ambiguity. Primarily, Borah offers simple, frontal depictions of a girl on an equine mount, an image drawn from a long practice of sketching. The composition's spatial qualities, however, resist categorization: in canvases such as *Girl and Horse with Pink Flowers* (2023) or *Girl and Horse with Fireflies* (2023), the woman's feet brush and seem to rest upon the edge of the canvas, and the horse's body becomes a kind of dress, a continuation of the rider.

"I like the idea of creating an in-between scene, where a space can function both as an environment and a backdrop for the figure," Borah says. "I'm interested in the point when a painted flower or animal becomes a decoration rather than an attempt to mimic the actual object."

Given the trope's rich art historical currency—its seemingly obvious decipherability —,the paintings in *Girls and Horses* beg questions: What does it mean to place a female-presenting figure on horseback? What does it mean to do so now, in the 2020s? And to do so while underscoring the image's ultimate instability and indeterminacy? (Nevermind that they are, of course, in dialogue and engaging actively with other painters, with "cave paintings and all these creators throughout art history," as Borah points out.)

While in previous works, Borah has explored horses as symbols of power and their function as pedestals, here her interest lies in the relationship between horse and rider. The pose is intimate—a straddling—and in its indeterminate intimacy, the viewer can insert myriad interpretations. Indeed, what is softly blurred lies at the heart of Borah's investigations. Her works dwell in liminality and evoke the porous boundaries between mount and rider, background and foreground, abstraction and figuration. In these paintings that offer a tapestry-like treatment (see *Girls and Horses during Spring*, 2023), faces remain resolutely expressionless, all the better to evoke, while shoes and garments contemporize the riders, pulling them into the present. Diptychs envisioned especially for the space will create an immersive experience. Evocatively, as always, Borah's ambiguous spaces and atmospheres invite the viewer to dream and decode.

Meghan Borah: Bio



Meghan Borah is a painter and educator based in Chicago. Borah received an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago from the Painting and Drawing department in 2017. She is currently represented by Galleri Urbane (Dallas) and Goldfinch Gallery (Chicago). Her work has been featured in Patron Magazine, Chicago Magazine, Time Out Chicago, New American Paintings and ArtSlant. She has been the recipient of numerous artist residencies programs including the Vermont Student Center in 2018. Borah's work was selected to showcase her work on Platform, produced by David Zwirner.