

UPCOMING SHOW

Up to 24 works on show
Oct. 9-Nov. 11, 2008

Visions West Galleries
 1715 Wazee St.
 Denver, CO 80202
 (303) 292-0909

SHOW LOCATION DENVER, CO



DUKE BEARDSLEY

West of now

Those who collect Duke Beardsley's paintings know you need a big wall to display them. Beardsley will unveil a 6-by-8-foot oil, the largest he has produced to date, during his upcoming solo show at Visions West Galleries in Denver, Colorado.

"The biggest change so far is an increase in scale. I'm working larger, which I've never done," says Beardsley. "Some challenges are composing and painting, then selecting an audience, but I'm having a lot of fun with it and exploring with this scale. It's neat what the size does to the cowboy. It lends itself toward expressionistic."

While Beardsley enjoys painting landscapes, he's best known for his bold color palette and iconic figure of the American cowboy. In this show he hopes to present a few landscapes, but most of the work will focus on working cowboys. The show also marks his debut of a series of large paintings in a gallery.

"I'm excited to see what happens. These are very graphic and there's contrast between negative space and the icon of the cowboy, so your eye almost starts to vibrate," Beardsley explains, "I'm less inhibited working on this big scale."

Beardsley's use of negative space plays a major role in his new body of work. An artist of the New West, Beardsley paints a traditional subject from a contemporary artistic point of view using a Pop Art palette and expressionistic brushwork. Beardsley's new paintings reflect his ongoing evolution to explore how true to detail and the specifics of the cowboy icon he can stay while pushing the boundaries of color and composition.

"It's interesting to see what happens when you lop off the cowboy in the



Colorado Horsepower, oil on canvas, 36 x 36"

middle of his face," says Beardsley. "You'll see I'm getting bolder. I'm not afraid to mess something up. When I do something small and careful, I put pressure on myself to get it right. I'm allowing myself to have happy accidents with these bigger paintings. It's creating something I didn't expect."

An ideal example of Beardsley's experimentation with large-scale works is titled *Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider)*, which has three companion pieces. This piece is based on the Blue Rider school

style, and Beardsley uses the color blue here because it's significant to a lot of cultures that view it as spiritual.

"When I started this piece, I thought this is a very restful piece, it's more static," Beardsley notes. "It's washed in a moody, pale blue and black, dripped on in places, with a thick titanium white in negative space. There's something engaging about the scale that I've never experienced before. These pieces are more about solace."

Beardsley's paintings reflect his dual

The Gallery Says . . .

"Duke Beardsley's work asks a double response from the viewer: there is the subject depicted and the manner in which it is depicted. Duke hits a psychological mood and tone in much of his work that departs drastically from the overly romanticized saccharine sweet tradition of Western art. His subjects float frozen in a field of color, almost translucently hanging there, graceful and beautiful, sometimes cropped and ellipsed. The paintings are more about discovery than recognition."

—Nicole R. Todd, Visions West Galleries



Way Out That A'Way, acrylic and pencil on paper board, 10 x 15"



Verdes, oil on canvas, 12 x 36"



Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider), oil on canvas, 72 x 84"



Beardsley in his Colorado studio painting *Der Blaue Reiter*.



Junior, oil on canvas, 36 x 52"

upbringing: contemporary with traditional. He was raised in a ranching family in Denver and experienced a suburban lifestyle. He was exposed to riding and roping early on, and in high school and college he worked ranches. Beardsley attributes this insight to his ability to accurately portray everyday ranch life.

"The fact that I can ride pretty much anything and I can throw a rope, I think that wins you over. When I prove I can carry my own weight, they let you in on some wonderful things," he says. "Plus there's sustainable ranching here, I draw from all of that."

Beardsley's unusual compositions, light to dark contrast, large looming figures, and contemporary colors create a wow factor.

"Oftentimes my unusual composition, cropping the rider or the horse, is unique

and my color approach makes me stand out," he says. "It's not every day someone paints a traditional cowboy with these colors. I'm not harkening back to the old days. People look at these and say 'I love the way you draw horses and the colors are great. That's different, it's exciting.'"

Beardsley's work appeals to collectors of both contemporary and Western art.

"Half of my buyers are Western art fans who find themselves drawn to these paintings, and half are drawn to the colors but would never collect something with a cowboy hat on it," he concludes.

As a result, Beardsley is experiencing a surge in his career during the past year. Two of his paintings were purchased by the Denver Art Museum last year, and this year he was chosen to paint the Colorado's Governor Art Award, which

will be bestowed to Loveland for its dedication to arts and agriculture.

"It's a huge honor and I'm thrilled to do it," says Beardsley. 🐾

For a direct link to the exhibiting gallery go to



www.westernartcollector.com

Price Range Indicator

Our at-a-glance Price Range Indicator shows what you can expect to pay for this artist's work.

	Small	Medium	Large
2001	\$500-\$700	\$1,000-\$2,000	\$2,500-\$6,000
2008	\$900-\$1,500	\$2,000-\$4,000	\$7,000-\$20,000