

# TEMPLON



Press release

WILL COTTON

The Taming of the Cowboy

28 May – 25 July 2020

Opening: Thursday 28 May, 5.30 to 8. 30 pm



*Flying Cowboy, 2020*

Ten years after his last exhibition at Galerie Templon, the New York painter Will Cotton, famous for his depictions of all kinds of sweets, is unveiling a provocative and quirky exhibition at the gallery's Brussels space: *The Taming of the Cowboy*.

In a nod to his country's political schizophrenia in the midst of the electoral campaign, Will Cotton offers a new take on the myth of the cowboy, symbolizing the conquest of the West. His large, ostensibly classical oil paintings portray a surprising encounter between triumphant cowboys and their fantastical steeds: pink unicorns.

The figure of the cowboy evokes a strong sense of American masculinity, associated with freedom, manifest destiny and a culture of violence. In contrast, the unicorn -- particularly when pink -- reminds us of a more contemporary mythology that has in recent years taken possession of the little girls' section of toy and clothing departments everywhere. Questioning the notion of gender, the exhibition explores the relationship between the sexes along with the hyper-sexualisation of childhood, the notion of queer,

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and the LGBT movement, whose global mascot has recently become the rainbow unicorn.

The show features a group of oil paintings as well as new drawings in oil, sanguine and pencil inspired by his trips to Wyoming in the USA and Camargue in France. A variation on the cowboy-unicorn duo, these works on paper offer a humorous deconstruction of the question of representation.

In the world of Will Cotton, beautiful compositions and landscapes made of cascading sweet treats or mountains of meringue are not only an ode to the opulence of an idealised America or a lost paradise. They also mark a desire to question painting. His technically masterful style of painting explores the fluidity between different identities and cultural as well as artistic categories: popular icons versus classical painting, timeless myths versus advertising images.

Born in 1965, Will Cotton studied at the New York Academy of Art and fine arts school in Rouen. As well as Galerie Templon in Paris, he exhibited at the Mary Boone Gallery in New York and Jablonka Galerie in Cologne. His work has been exhibited worldwide, including at the San Francisco Museum of Art (2000), Seattle Art Museum (2002), Kunsthalle de Bielefeld in Germany (2004), CAPC in Bordeaux (2005), Chelsea Art Museum in New York (2006), Triennale Bovisa in Milan (2007), Musée Marmottan in Giverny (2008), Cornell University Museum (2014) and Orlando Museum of Art in Florida (2017). He is also known for his artistic experiments in a wide variety of fields, from patisserie (with La Durée) to music (project with singer Katie Perry, 2010) and fashion (*What to Wear in Candyland* project, Hudson Yard, New York, 2019).