

# The Playful Side of the West

Artist Gina Teichert steps out of the box for her solo show at the Cowboy Arts and Gear Museum.



*Rank*, oil on canvas, 14 x 11"



*Green*, oil on canvas, 14 x 11"

Gina Teichert feels that it's important for artists to not always take their artwork *too* seriously, which is why she's chosen to use humor and playfulness in a new collection for her solo show *Cowboyology*. Hosted at the Cowboy Arts and Gear Museum in Elko, Nevada, and coinciding with the annual *National Cowboy Poetry Gathering*, Teichert will also serve as an artist in residence—offering free demonstrations, speaking appearances and more.

"*Cowboyology* is the most fun I've had in the studio in a long time," the artist admits of the new work. "I think the art world can be a little too authentic at times, so bringing humor into the mix has been really refreshing. Cowboying can be a serious job, but most of the cowboys I know enjoy standing around shooting the shit more than talking shop about

hard realities of the cattle business."

Having grown up on a cattle ranch in rural Elko County, Teichert knows a thing or two about the cowboy way of life. She even performed at the *Cowboy Poetry Gathering* as a student, "following in the footsteps of her grandfather who was a cowboy poet and trick horse performer..." says museum representatives.

Teichert continues, "I'm also a writer, so I've always enjoyed word play and the origin stories behind idioms and clichés. For this show, I wanted to create a body of work that really ties into the spirit of the *Cowboy Poetry* festival while expanding on some of the more graphic art or Pop Art themes I've already been exploring. In the past year I've really grown to realize that your art practice can encompass all of you—that writing and art don't have to be

silored into two separate zones in life..."

A fine example of Teichert's comedic skills is present in a series of two dozen, 14-by-11-inch paintings that will fit on the main wall of the museum. "*Cowboyology* (the series name) takes cowboy archetypes, poetry, folklore and tall tales and puts them in a Pop Art blender," Teichert explains. "It was tempting to overpaint the figures in this series, but as I worked on thumbnail sketches, I found the simplicity and anonymity of a nearly faceless character full of space for interpretation and play. The dudes could be somebody you've worked with before, a friend, a family member... Keeping them a little ambiguous just felt right for these—especially with a piece of text that pretty much spells it out.

"*Rank*, for example, takes a word often used to describe bucking horses and applies



*Ballad of Boot Hill*, oil on canvas, 20 x 30"

it to the craziest coworker you've ever had," Teichert says of the series piece only showing some facial hair, dark eyes and a cowboy hat. "Crazy handy but also crazy as hell. Spit cups floating around a beat-up '90s Ford with a

leveling kit. Energy drinks at any hour of the day. A full-decibel playlist that reminds you that you really are the greatest generation. You know the guy."

Additional works like *Ballad of Boot Hill*

depicts Teichert's heroine from a different series of the same name. "It follows a young woman around a spaghetti Western-flavored fable without revealing out her exact motives," says the artist. "When I was shooting the model for this painting, we were joking that maybe she was the gunslinger's widow or daughter out on the revenge path...who knows for sure, but I personally wouldn't mess with her. She's a bad bitch."

The opening reception for the show is held Friday, February 2, from 6 to 8 p.m., with public demos held on Friday and Saturday. The artist will also debut her oil painting and subsequent poster design for *The Outside Circle* event during the *Cowboy Poetry Gathering*. The show will hang from January 8 through February 4. 🐾



Inside Gina Teichert's Northern California studio. Work is in progress for *Cowboyology* at the Cowboy Arts and Gear Museum in Elko, Nevada. The figure with the sage green background is a work in progress for the *Outside Circle* poster.

## Cowboyology

Through February 4

Cowboy Arts and Gear Museum,

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[www.cowboyartsandgearmuseum.org](http://www.cowboyartsandgearmuseum.org)