

## UPCOMING SHOW

Up to 18 works

Jan. 23-Feb. 4, 2017

Altamira Fine Art  
7038 E. Main Street  
Scottsdale, AZ 85251  
(480) 949-1256

SHOW LOCATION SCOTTSDALE, AZ

# DUKE BEARDSLEY



## Ranch life

Stand close enough to one of Duke Beardsley's cowboy paintings and it starts playing tricks with your eyes. His pieces are large and you don't have to stand that close to be absorbed by the paint, transcended onto his plains of color and repetition. Beardsley paints fields of figures, as if on a grid, and each one is uniquely painted, meaning that each one has subtle differences. Those differences, as minute as they are, give you a sense of movement, of galloping horses and cowboys with swaying feet and bouncing heads.

Beardsley says the movement was never intended, at least not originally, but it became obvious to him as his work developed. He brings up the work of Eadweard Muybridge, who did early and extensive photographic studies of movement. "Muybridge hit me right between the eyes," he says. "I suddenly realized there was something there that I wasn't intending, but that's one of the benefits of keeping your eyes and your heart open."

His new show opens January 23 at the

Scottsdale, Arizona, gallery Altamira Fine Art, which is on the forefront of contemporary Western art. The gallery shows work by Ed Mell, R. Tom Gilleon, Theodore Waddell and Billy Schenck, as well as other artists who are pushing Western imagery into profoundly new directions. Beardsley, whose work is more reminiscent of Andy Warhol than Charlie Russell, is in good company, but he cautions viewers to not break everything up into "traditional" and "contemporary" categories.

"Western art can take all kinds of abuse and it won't break. Artists are out there right now figuring out a way to push and stretch the genre. I think about myself, I still have the scar marks from IVs from Remington and Russell, but their West is not my West. That's not to say I don't love traditional Western art, because I love it," he says. "A lot of my own work is informed in the same way as theirs was. It's rooted in my childhood on ranches and around horses. I was working ranches since I was big enough to go out and do it.

Today I'm still a horseback rider as often as I can be, which is a lot. I love working cattle or being out in the open country. I keep coming back to this in a very authentic way. So it's my hope that we can have both—traditional and contemporary."

For his new show, Beardsley is presenting as many as 18 pieces, including a series titled *Ranch* made up of five pieces—*Ranch 1* through *Ranch 5*—that each show a figure on horseback in a field of his iconic riders, each rendered with their subtle deviations amid rows of movement. Beardsley has painted images like this before, but with these his main rider is slightly transparent, which came to be by accident. "The looks of these riders are very new and fresh for me, and came about by happenstance. Sometimes I'll forget a step of the painting or forget to take it as far as it should go," the Colorado artist says. "I was working on two or three of these at a time and my art assistant told me to stand back and look at what I was doing. The transparency ended up really telling a lot of stories all at once. There are lots of ways to look at the West, and that's what I'm doing here. Who's coming through? What can we see? What can't we see? The transparent images allow us more questions to ponder."

The pieces, which are being sold separately, are each 60 by 48 inches, average for Beardsley, who often paints on massive canvases. "I've never been what you might call dainty, so I love moving and getting up on chairs or ladders to paint. I'm assaulting brushes on the canvas," he says. "I'm not a delicate painter. I find freedom and power in that, and the energy is pretty incredible." 🐾

For a direct link to the exhibiting gallery go to

[www.westernartcollector.com](http://www.westernartcollector.com)



Ranch 2, oil on canvas, 60 x 48"



Ranch 3, oil on canvas, 60 x 48"

Opposite page: *Ranch 1*, oil on canvas, 60 x 48"

