

Jenny Rogers

Jenny Rogers
Born in Lexington, Nebraska, 1977. Lives and works in New York.

Jenny Rogers's ephemeral representation of an underwater Spaghetti Western in *Trick Saddle* (2003–04) redirects traditional gender roles by dressing female synchronized swimmers in full cowboy regalia, and it inverts the constructs of the traditional film narrative by setting the scene underwater.

Shot on video and later transferred to 35mm film, the work was originally created as a site-specific installation that was projected alongside live performers at a drive-in theater, highlighting the theatricality and romanticism of the movie experience of the 1950s, from the Annie Oakley costumes to the Ennio Morricone soundtrack.

Placing women performers in cowboy costumes—complete with chaps and ten-gallon hats—suggests the ultimate futility of gender stereotypes by attempting to reassign sexuality through the redistribution of traditionally male props. These gender-bending cowboys embrace the role of the hero in their attempt to rebuke the cowboy myth.

Rogers utilizes a familiar filmic tool to formally manipulate the constructs of narrative film. Setting the action underwater forces the actors to move leisurely, and the traditional point of climax in the Western (the gun fight) is now captured in slow motion, stretching quick-draw jump cuts into prolonged segments of graceful underwater cowboy ballet.

Trick Saddle questions the idealized masculine norm and illustrates the futility of assigning male/female stereotypes by placing the performers outside the restraints of the narrative framework of the film itself. The decontextualization of the campy cowboy, performing in gunfights and barroom brawls, highlights the unfeasibility of the female cowboy being an interchangeable piece of that mythology.

Josh Altman

Selected Exhibitions:

- 2006 *BitMovie: The Women's International Film Festival*, Munich, Germany.
- 2004 *Feminale 12—International Women's Film Festival*, Cologne, Germany.
- FrameLine 28—The San Francisco International Lesbian & Gay Film Festival*, San Francisco, California.
- 2003 *Cinema Bizarre: Experimental Lesbian Film/Video Artists*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- Trick Saddle*, Performance Space 122, New York.

