

DEREK ELLER GALLERY



Pink Pussy Cat, 2026, Flashe, acrylic, oil, CMYK silkscreen, 59 x 44 inches

MELISSA BROWN

Window Shopping

February 20 – March 21, 2026

Opening Reception: Friday, February 20, 6–8 pm

Derek Eller Gallery is pleased to present *Window Shopping*, a solo exhibition of new mixed-media paintings by Melissa Brown. Utilizing a combination of screen-printed photographs hybridized with passages painted in impasto or airbrush, Brown mines the rich topography of New York City store windows. With historical precedents like Rauschenberg, Johns, and Warhol who famously engaged with Bonwit Teller's windows, Brown explores the quirky displays and otherworldly reflections contained within these sites of commerce and longing. She explains:

I'm more of a daydreamer than a shopper, but to make these paintings I walked around the city, window shopping. When I was stopped in my tracks

by an archetypal merchandise fantasy, like two muses wrapped in flowing, sequined, organza huddled below the caption 'It's a material world' in the fabric district on 39th street, I dropped a pin. I returned later to paint a study from life. While standing at an easel and painting each pinned mini-theater of commerce, I was mostly ignored by passers-by, but I did chat with shop owners, hearing tales of inter-generational family management and rent-raises that delivered a terminal blow. The West Village street maze is home to several immortal New York City shop-icons. On West 4th street, for example, The Music Inn and Pink Pussy Cat stand next to each other as side-by-side playhouses of human seduction: music and sex. One is crowded with bespoke wooden instruments piled on top of clowns, books, statues, beads, sun-faded ads, the other inhabited by a cast of un-canny valley-metallic mannequins sexily sporting lingerie. Together they stand as two 21st century, bawdy updates of 19th century Parisian arcade displays.

Window shopping in New York City is like passing crystal balls on a conveyor belt. A pane of glass that reflects the engulfing city is also a portal to a vision of ownership. Artful, shiny retail arrangements suggest how your life might improve if you owned a particular post-apocalyptic loungewear set. A window-dresser's vision is transmitted to pedestrian imagination via alluring still-lives inside dioramas. This fleeting form of visual marketing rooted in synchronous encounters is already a thing of the past. Desire for purchase is now ignited through ads that track behavior un-avoidably inserted before your eyes. Retail is no longer a chance meeting. In

this exhibition, I'm depicting that auspicious moment of persuasion when the art of display strikes a core human desire that can only be satisfied by the material world.

Melissa Brown (b.1974) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Recent solo and two person exhibitions include *Flower Games*, at Cellar Contemporary in Trento, Italy; *Two Pair* and *Windows and Bars* at Derek Eller Gallery in New York City; *West Coast Paintings* at Anat Ebgi in Los Angeles; *Thrift Store Find* at Andrew Rafacz Gallery in Chicago; *Fountain*, Melissa Brown and Jamie Bull at Dodd Gallery at the University of Georgia; and *Going AWOL* at the Biggins Gallery, Auburn University. For over ten years she has organized poker tournaments where the wager is art at galleries, art fairs, and most recently, a tournament and exhibition titled *Rules of the Game* at the Center for Book Arts in New York City. She has participated in group exhibitions at The Pit, Los Angeles, CA; Canada, New York, NY; Magenta Plains, New York, NY; Everyday Mooonday, Seoul, Korea; Parker Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Venus Over Manhattan, New York, NY; Mass MOCA; Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York, NY; Klaus Von Nichtssagend, New York, NY; Musée International Des Arts Modestes, France; and Deitch Projects, Los Angeles, CA. In 2024-25, she was awarded a Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program residency and residencies at Yaddo and Headlands in 2026. In 2012, she was awarded the Joan Mitchell Painter's Grant and a residency at the Joan Mitchell Center in 2019. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the New York Department of Education and the Fidelity Corporate Collection. She is a professor in Studio Art at Lehman College, CUNY. This will be her fifth solo exhibition with the Gallery.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 38 Walker Street between Broadway and Church Street. Hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 10am to 6pm, and by appointment. For further information please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit www.derekeller.com.