

Outsider's perspective on Oklahoma informs art exhibit

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"Will Rogers," a 2015 acrylic on paper by Zefrey Throwell. [PHOTO PROVIDED]

New York City Gallery Garis & Hahn will bring to Oklahoma City a special pop-up exhibition called "This Land Is Your Land," featuring new work by Zefrey Throwell.

An opening reception will be from 7 to 11 p.m. Friday at 415 NW 7, coinciding with the monthly H&8th festival. The exhibit will run through Oct. 4.

According to a news release, "This Land Is Your Land" will feature new paintings, prints and a limited-edition poster series by New York-based artist Throwell, who

was inspired by an outsider's perspective of Oklahoma.

The exhibition was organized by Mary Garis, a native Oklahoman and co-founder of Garis & Hahn, which has presented Throwell in two solo projects in the New York venue.

According to the release, Garis was inspired to coordinate this Oklahoma pop-up after she noticed her home state was referenced by Throwell in some of his previous work. She suggested he more fully examine his fascination with the state. The subsequent series of work, an ultimate homage to a place not yet visited, was drawn from Throwell's observed impressions of Oklahoma filtered through various media heavily referenced throughout the show.

According to the release, the prints and original paintings in "This Land Is Your Land" present a "duality of true and artificial Oklahoman perspective: Woody Guthrie, from Oklahoma, is referenced in the show's title and in a portrait, as is native son Will Rogers, with John Wayne inserted to underline the Western genre that has defined the state in film."

"301 MPH," a diva of a twister overlain with Prince lyrics, and "14.41 Inches (May 2015)," referencing the amount of rainfall that recently ravaged the area, emphasize the physicality of the territory.

"The impression of a wholesome, rugged lifestyle that informs most depictions of the state has lingered in the artist's mind since first seeing 'Oklahoma!,' the two-time Academy Award-winning musical written by New Yorkers Rodgers and Hammerstein," the release continues.

"Intrigued by the fetishization that city dwellers have for places of vast nothingness, Throwell has set out to delve into the media melange that informs this point of view. A natural fit for the artist, who often makes use of appropriation and pop-culture narratives in his paintings, the resulting inquiry into the romanticized ideal of Oklahoma became an examination of the ultimate American persona — Cowboy, Indian and the Girl Scout cookie combined.