

Delia Brown, "What, Are You Jealous?"

D'Amelio Terras, through Nov 4
(see Chelsea).

Anyone who tells you that Los Angeles is just a continuous series of glamorous poolside parties at hotel bungalows is absolutely correct—at least, if you believe painter Delia Brown. For her first solo show, the L.A.-based artist documents a deliciously superficial lifestyle that she herself has lived, photographed and re-created in paintings on paper and in drawings.

A former member of an all-girl rap group who later went to art school, Brown staged a Hollywood style party for her M.F.A. graduate exhibition at UCLA. After hiring beautiful young things and dressing them up in outlandish hip-hop outfits, Brown had them congregate in a luxury hotel suite decorated with her self-portraits. That performance became the source for "Suite Life," one of the two series of paintings and watercolors on view here, which features colorful, richly illustrated images of people lounging, drinking champagne or staring out at you, as if trying to lure you into their world of decadence.

"What, Are You Jealous?" is a more recent series that continues the merging of traditional genre painting with the opulent sets of rap videos and fashion shoots. In particular, Brown's untitled painting of two topless girls—who practically glitter in the California sun, thanks to a surfeit of gold jewelry and water beading on their skin



Delia Brown, *What, Are You Jealous?*
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—is an incredibly well-crafted, photo-realist work that seems to have sprung from a resort layout in this month's *Condé Nast Traveler*.

It's interesting that Brown reaches beyond simple photographic documentation of her lavishly staged tableaux vivants to take them into the realm of painting. Any number of artists might have been content with the photographs. But these gorgeously rendered, well-executed paintings are more in line with the Metropolitan Museum than they are with MTV. Brown's style is reminiscent of Vige Lebrun's and Philip Pearlstein's; but clearly, her work is part of the same curious figural strain pursued by John Currin and by her fellow UCLA alum, Kurt Kauper.

—Sarah Gavlak

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