

# TEMPLON



Press release  
19 January 2023

WILL COTTON  
TRIGGER  
24 May - 22 July 2023



*Trigger, 2023, Oil on canvas, 96 x 72 in.*

Twenty years after his very first exhibition in Paris, New York painter Will Cotton, known for his depictions of sweets and cakes, is back on the walls of Galerie Templon with a subtle and quirky exhibition: Trigger.

In this new show, Will Cotton continues to reflect on pop culture and American myths. His 2020 series *The Taming of the Cowboy*, about the hyper-sexualisation of childhood and gender representations, featured ultra-masculine cowboys battling with pink unicorns. Will Cotton now introduces the cowgirl, an archetypal feminist figure, as voluptuous as she is provocative. With humour, she takes the opposite direction to the artist's usual female characters, pushing the gender boundaries further and blurring the relationship between the sexes as well as LGBT struggles and the notion of queerness.

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The title of the exhibition is inspired by a notion that has become a political concept in the US: the trigger. It refers to the safe spaces created by the liberal left on American campuses in recent years. Trigger warnings are intended to prevent situations that could lead to post-traumatic stress disorder. However, in an America torn apart by the controversial issue of carrying weapons, the artist wonders if it is possible to dissociate it from the trigger of the firearms defended tooth and nail by the conservative right.

Will Cotton thus invents a world that mirrors our schizophrenic societies. His grandiose landscapes, with their cascading sweets and candy floss, are home to ambiguous scenes, playful but potentially disturbing or even explosive. A commentary on the opulence of an idealized America, Cotton's art is also a means of questioning the power of painting itself. The fluidity between great painting, timeless myths, advertising imagery and pop icons acts as a metaphor for the contradictions of our time.

Born in 1965, Will Cotton studied at the New York Academy of Art and fine arts school in Rouen. As well as Galerie Templon in Paris, he is represented by the Mary Boone Gallery in New York and Jablonka Galerie in Cologne. His work has been exhibited worldwide, including at the San Francisco Museum of Art (2000), Seattle Art Museum (2002), Kunsthalle de Bielefeld in Germany (2004), CAPC in Bordeaux (2005), Chelsea Art Museum in New York (2006), Triennale Bovisa in Milan (2007), Musée Marmottan in Giverny (2008), Cornell University Museum (2014) and Orlando Museum of Art in Florida (2017). He is also known for his artistic experiments in a wide variety of fields, from patisserie (with Ladurée) to music (a project with singer Katie Perry, 2010) and fashion (the What to Wear in Candyland project, Hudson Yard, New York, 2019).