

JAMES KELLY CONTEMPORARY - PRESS RELEASE
1601 Paseo de Peralta - Santa Fe, NM 87501 - 505.989.1601

John Sonsini

Los Vaqueros

Opening Reception: Friday, June 24th, 2011, 5:00-7:00 pm
Exhibition Dates: June 24 - August 6, 2011
Contact: James Jernigan: jernigan@jameskelly.com



John Sonsini, *Francisco*, 2011, oil on canvas, 45 x 36 inches

James Kelly Contemporary is pleased to announce *Los Vaqueros* a solo exhibition of new paintings by John Sonsini. This will be his first solo show with the gallery.

For *Los Vaqueros*, Sonsini continues his practice of painting Hispanic men he meets in and around midtown Los Angeles. This body of work draws from his prior oeuvre, the most notable of which are his portraits of day laborers, men who congregate daily throughout the city looking for work. In this latest body of work, the artist turns his attention to Vaqueros/Cowboys. Men dressed as cowboys are a familiar sight in Sonsini's predominantly Hispanic neighborhood; men who often worked and lived on ranches and farms in their native countries and, although now city dwellers, still associate their identity with that part of their personal history.

Whether in work attire or vaquero clothes, Sonsini's powerful portraits depict individuals who are often on the periphery of everyday society and rarely considered or noticed outside of

their communities. His canvases are as remarkable for their dazzling accumulation of thick textured brushwork and vivid color as they are for their stylized yet truthful depictions of Latin American men. The show will feature new paintings, predominantly large format life-size portraits as well as smaller scale works.

Although subverting the traditional practice of portraiture by depicting subjects who do not normally have the opportunity to be painted, in the words of critic, Michael Duncan, "Sonsini grants his models the prominence – perhaps the permanence – associated with the tradition of the portrait in oil".



John Sonsini, *Rodger & Francisco*, oil on canvas, 2011, 72 x 60 inches.

Sonsini received his BA from California State University, Northridge. His work has been exhibited widely and is in the permanent collection of many public institutions including, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Guggenheim, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; and the Birmingham Museum of Art, MI.

The artist will be in attendance for the opening at James Kelly Contemporary, on June 24th from 5-7 pm.

James Kelly Contemporary is located at 1601 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe, NM 87501. Gallery hours for the duration of this show are Tuesday through Friday from 10:00-5:00 p.m. - Saturday from 12:00-5:00 p.m. - Monday by appointment. Please call the gallery at 505.989.1601 - fax 505.989.5005 - email jernigan@jameskelly.com for more information.

- high-resolution images available upon request