

Now that's what I call a sunset!

Joseph I. Cohen

How would a painter shake the hand of a drawer if they met at a bookstore? Such a scene emerges from the ensemble of artworks in Baiting Hollow, a two-person exhibition in which contradiction reigns. The artists, Sylvia Atwood and Kate Salke, choose every option when it comes to considering form, paint, texture, and feel.

Here at Paper Nautilus, the wind does not blow in one direction. It blows in all directions at once. Follow the wind and find the fruits of the artists' labor, which have arrived just in time for summer, just past the green-trimmed door.

Paintings, drawings, and sculptures-with-painting-envy are exhibited in a grid on a white wall. These paintings wear the guise of sculpture on the weekends, like two kids in a trench coat pretending they are one:

A melon sliced open reveals a stone nestled within its cavity.

A shell of an octopus rests on top of a whimsical foam trinket.

A bowl of fruit holds a corroding archive, grinning.

These are the exhalations of the beavers of art history, who have built homes with their own teeth against the rocks that glisten in the sand at each end of the Long Island Sound.

The installation suggests a rectangle with works positioned at each corner, north, south east, west; while inside its domain, more pieces form the shape of a compass.

This grid is a trickster's grid, without a doubt. If Sylvia and Kate say yes to the rationality of the grid and its legacy as a form of social order, the two

artists disavow the grid in the way they employ it as a painterly tool, often warping it to emphasize its finitude, and prioritizing cylindrical forms rid of right angles. They kill their grid-father and instead of going to the funeral, they are off riding in a stolen pink Toyota, probably in Palm Springs.

Let's focus on that bowl of fruit painted with deep blues, reds, and yellows that sing a Fauvist tune. We have apples, oranges, limes, and the threat of temporal drift. We also have the history of genre painting and the echoes of people who paint still lives: those who look square in the face at that pesky non-entity called time, and watch it pass them by as they try hastily to preserve it, and themselves, as artwork and artists.

I suppose that a fruit bowl, in its ability to carry that which will rot, is akin to a casket. In this case, it is a casket made of foam and plaster that wouldn't stand a chance against a summer storm.

And when the sun reverses, calling before a different continent, a place where language as we know it is unfamiliar, the bowl becomes one with the rotting fruit. So hold it up like it's an hourglass and whisper vanitas.

You'll notice that time spins backward and outwards towards a constant rattling, a tip that you're standing on the precipice of something good.

Write out "ricochet" and tell me how it feels to be a spiral, without lying.

If geometry is a reckoning with the planes of the quotidian, then so be it! Today we will wear our triangles, draw circles on our palms, and sweat out the squares.

We will take our paintings heavy on the pigmentation, with extra impasto. We will hold our hands out to feel the geometric grounds hold still and bait hollow.
