



AUBREY LEVINTHAL

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APRIL 18 - JUNE 1, 2019



I am attempting to make paintings which read as approachable and simple at first, but reveal some darker humor, gravity, complexity upon looking.

—Aubrey Levinthal



Aubrey Levinthal lives and works in Philadelphia, the city where she was born, grew up, and received her art education. Her paintings—a mix of still life and figuration—depict the common, day-to-day experiences that together make up one’s everyday life. Her subjects range from the local neighborhood, a frequented café, a corner bodega, her painting studio, interiors of her home, her immediate family, and private moments in her life, such as taking a bath, eating breakfast, or going to therapy. Painted with oil on panel of varying sizes—the smallest 12” x 12”; the largest 60” x 48”—Levinthal’s compositions illustrate her unique ability to convey feelings of intimacy that resonate with the viewer. The themes in her paintings are not new to her; they are a recurring focus that continues to intrigue and pull her in due to the rich narratives they evoke. Brief moments, whether ephemeral or banal, are applauded

and elevated in her work, for she understands that the commonplace has its own beauty. No matter how inconsequential they may appear, they are embraced and given significance in her paintings.

Levinthal incorporates flowers, plants, food, and eating in most of her paintings as vehicles to either advance the design and composition, or as a metaphoric expression. Exuberance and pleasure are conveyed in the copious floral bouquets in *M & C* (2018) and *Lady at a Bodega* (2018), which contrast with the single limp stem and decayed banana peel in *Triangle Tavern* (2018) and *Snow Day (April)* (2018), respectively. These latter two paintings evoke a markedly more sorrowful mood as a result of her pictorial symbolism. Levinthal embraces complexity in her interior scenes with the introduction of mirrors and reflections, challenging the viewer

to unravel what is real and what is not, as seen in *Natrona St.* (2018) and *Double Mirrors* (2018). The largest paintings in the exhibit—*Forty-Third St. Pho Café* (2019), *Tired Table* (2019), and *Family Vacation* (2019)—center around food and eating. She artfully transforms the objects in these scenes into engaging shapes, colors and form, highlighting her proficiency at combining abstraction with representation. The technical process to make these paintings shows the artist’s ease with paint: she layers color, scrapes areas away, executes fine crisscross brush marks, and creates illusion within the overall compositions.

Substance, quality, and steady achievement reveal an artist who is rapidly maturing with each new body of work, and the art world is taking note.

—Nancy Margolis Gallery, 2019

M & C

2018, oil on panel, 24 x 26 inches



August Night

2018, oil on panel, 30 x 24 inches



Breakfast at 13th St.

2018, oil on panel, 36 x 48 inches



Natrona St.

2018, oil on panel, 24.25 x 24 inches



Double Mirrors

2018, oil on panel, 30 x 24 inches



43rd St. Pho Café

2019, oil on panel, 48 x 60 inches



Family Vacation

2019, oil on panel, 47.25 x 48 inches



Tired Table

2019, oil on panel, 48 x 48 inches



Night Fridge (Milk)

2019, oil on panel, 30 x 24 inches



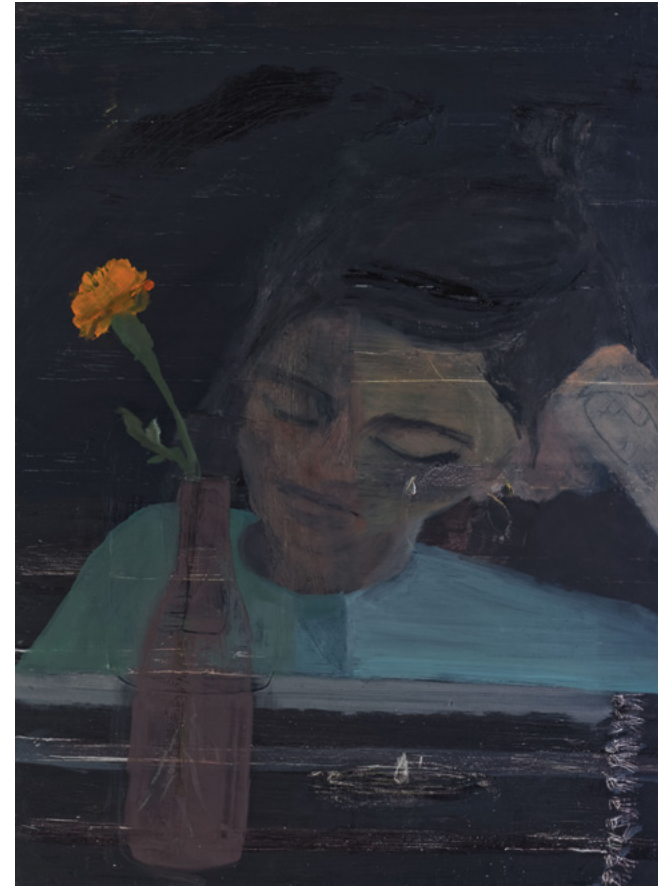
Young Therapist

2019, oil on panel, 48 x 45 inches



Triangle Tavern

2018, oil on panel, 16 x 12 inches



Nursing (Boot)

2018, oil on panel, 24 x 18 inches



Worry Man

2018, oil on panel, 36.5 x 36 inches



Waiting

2018, oil on panel, 30 x 24 inches



July Interior

2018, oil on panel, 16 x 16 inches



Lady at a Bodega

2018, oil on panel, 24 x 24 inches



Dark Roses

2018, oil on panel, 13.5 x 13.5 inches



Purple Grapes

2018, oil on panel, 12 x 12 inches



Hospital View

2018, oil on panel, 26 x 24 inches



Sea Flowers

2018, oil on panel, 13.5 x 11 inches



Reflection as Painter

2019, oil on panel, 48 x 35.5 inches



Snow Day (April)

2018, oil on panel, 48 x 36 inches





In his definition of *heterotopia* (of which *utopia* and *dystopia* are types) Michel Foucault writes about the mirror as an agent of transformative realization of self in place – simultaneously illuminating and falsifying our own image: “I see myself where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface... [f]rom the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there.”

Mirrors are a frequent theme in Aubrey Levinthal's work, both literal and implied. Her self-reflexive paintings often feature figures that resemble herself and her family – a brunette woman, a bearded man, and a young child – and self-portraits in the studio with brush at hand are an homage to a classical tradition that is very much alive in her technique. The work creates a narrative thread that explores a specific kind of contemporary domestic life that mirrors her own. These reflections present a complex, brooding image of young motherhood, at times a bright floral haze, at others a dimly lit miasma.

Nursing (Boot) is at once an aggressive and tender depiction of motherhood, a feminist reimagining of Madonna and child. The body of the infant, almost indistinguishable, melts into its mother's body, while the mother confronts the viewer with a direct, withering gaze

and the sole of her boot. In *Breakfast at 13th St.*, a scene at a nuclear family breakfast table, mother and father appear completely consumed in deep, dark, thought while a baby stares intently out from the background. Seemingly unnoticed, a bouquet of flowers morphs into a surrealistic globular lozenge, bubbling out of a vase, suggesting the existence of an alternate reality within the grim intensity of this one. Echoes of influences like Nicole Eisenman and Berthe Morisot reverberate through Levinthal's uncanny mealtime scenes, where figures congregate with brooding expressions, rendered in thin, feathery strokes and washes.

Where Levinthal's paintings are often celebrations of sumptuous offerings – food, flowers, ornately patterned wallpaper and textile – this current body of work casts these joyful trappings in a distinctly ominous and foreboding light, operating instead as *memento mori*. The bouquets are dark and wilting, flowers bent at the stem. Tables are littered with Chinese takeout containers and various fruit rinds, and the refrigerator is only occupied by condiments and milk. A scene from a flesh-toned office where a fashionable young

therapist charges her Apple device while in session is a bright pink foil to the other largely greyed-out paintings, and features the same confrontational boots, now submissive in their spot on the analyst's couch. In *Double Mirrors*, a woman stands in a bathroom with baroque wallpaper while the faucet runs, considering reflections of her shoulder and half of her face cut up between two mirrors above the sink. These moments of decorative indulgence are counterpoints for the figures within, who are at once intense and absent, slipping between presence and invisibility.

With this work, Levinthal offers the viewer a world within her own that is simultaneously real and surreal. Familiar visual themes that appear throughout the work – face, flower, earbud, boot – are a refrain, arresting in the same way that one might recognize their own body within a dream. Like the mirror, the paintings both reflect and dissociate, opening an illusory space where narrative becomes fractured and plays out in a suspended reality.

—Samantha Mitchell, 2019

AUBREY LEVINTHAL

Born: 1986, Philadelphia, PA

Lives and works: Philadelphia, PA

EDUCATION

- 2011 M.F.A., Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA
- 2008 B.A., The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
- 2007 Studio Arts Center International, Spring Semester, Florence, Italy

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2019 Nancy Margolis Gallery, New York, NY
- 2018 VOLTA NY, Nancy Margolis Gallery, New York, NY
- 2017 Nancy Margolis Gallery, New York, NY
Refrigerator Paintings, The Painting Center, New York, NY
- 2016 *Spaghetti for Breakfast*, Gross McCleaf Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2019 *About Face: Portraits in Paint and Clay*, The Painting Center, New York, NY
- 2018 *Real to Not Real*, University of Southeastern Louisiana, Hammond, LA
Dynamic Intimacy, Kean University, Union, NJ
Looks, Gross McCleaf Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
Art at Kings Oaks 2018, Kings Oaks, Newtown, PA
I Dare! / Dare I? Nancy Margolis Gallery, New York, NY
- 2017 *Cake Hole*, Mrs. Gallery, Maspeth, NY
Blurring the Lines, Rowan University High Street Gallery, Glassboro, NJ
Frame Work, Ortega Y Gasset, Brooklyn, NY
Room with a View, Curating Contemporary, CuratingContemporary.com
Got Dressed in the Dark, Divided Gallery, Dayton, OH
Gallery Artists Group Exhibition, Nancy Margolis Gallery, New York, NY
We Create: Rowan University Faculty, Long Beach Island Foundation for the Arts, Loveladies, NJ

- 2016 *April Flowers*, Queens College Art Center, Queens, NY
Drishiti, 1285 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY
Look Both Ways, Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia, PA
- 2015 *Figuration Inside/Out*, Nancy Margolis Gallery, New York, NY
Ortega 100, Ortega Y Gasset, Brooklyn, NY
Star Gazer/Ancient Light, Trestle Projects, Brooklyn, NY
Privacy Made Public, New Hope Arts Center, New Hope, PA
Sow Your Rows, Gross McCleaf Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
- 2014 *Image Makers*, Novella Gallery, New York, NY
Lilies, Figs & Folly: Contemporary Still Life, curated by Bill Scott, Cerulean Arts, Philadelphia, PA
The Metaphysics of Presence, Q Art, Santa Ana, CA
A Fine Arrangement, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Museum, Philadelphia, PA
Between Matter and Experience, University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA
The Intimate Gaze, Gross McCleaf Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
Women and Biography, Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia, PA
- 2013 *Aubrey Levinthal and Lauren Garvey, Finding What Was Not*, Gross McCleaf Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
22nd Annual National Juried Exhibition, Bowery Gallery, Chelsea, NY
Sampler: Curated by Bill Scott, Cerulean Arts, Philadelphia, PA
Five to Watch, Avery Galleries, Bryn Mawr, PA
Coming Into View, Gross McCleaf Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
- 2012 *New Moderns*, Gross McCleaf Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
Annual National Juried Exhibition, Prince Street Gallery, Chelsea, NY
71st Annual Juried Exhibition, Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia, PA
- 2011 *Small Works Show*, Rosenfeld Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
Betsey Meyer Memorial: PAINT!, Main Line Art Center, Bryn Mawr, PA
Intimations, Hopkins House Gallery of Contemporary Art, Collingswood, NJ

215/610: *Regional Emerging Artists*, Delaware County Community College, Media, PA
Thesis Exhibition, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA
2010 *Sample 3*, Rebekah Templeton Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

PUBLICATIONS / PRESS

2018 Sarah Jordan, "Strokes of Genius," *Philadelphia Magazine*, November
Antrese Wood, "Artist Interview," *Savvy Painter Podcast*, June
Ann Binlot, "Volta Director Amanda Coulson: 'A Fair Of Solo Booths Is Easier to Take In,'" *Forbes*, March
2017 Ella Coon, "In the Night Kitchen: Aubrey Levinthal's 'Refrigerator Paintings' Chill and Excite the Imagination," *ARTNEWS*, February
"Aubrey Levinthal at Nancy Margolis Gallery," *Gorky's Granddaughter*, digital video interview, September
Xico Greenwald, "Raiding the Fridge for Inspiration," *New York Sun*, January
2016 "Harper's: Readings," *Harper's Magazine*, reproduced image, July
Sharon Butler, "Installation View: Drishti, A Concentrated Gaze," *Two Coats of Paint*, June
Alan Pocaró, "Aubrey Levinthal," *Bluestem Magazine*, Eastern Illinois University Press, 2016 edition
Ian Wilson, "Interview with Aubrey Levinthal," *DerHouse.com*, May
Shannon Eblen, "Painting Human Nature," *Courier Post*, March
Edith Newhall, "Thrilling Exhibits by Joan Tanner, Aubrey Levinthal," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January
2015 Alex Cohen, "Privacy Made Public," New Hope Arts Center, exhibition catalogue
New American Paintings, Issue No. 116 (Northeast Feb/March)
2014 Edith Newhall, "Many Hands Make Light Work," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December
"A Fine Arrangement: The Art of Still Life," *PAFA Preview Magazine*, Fall 2014 edition
Tom Csazar, "Visual Specialties: Three Shows, Three Parts of the Culture," *Title Magazine*, July
2013 Luka Weidner, "Three Artists Converge at Gross McCleaf Gallery," *Paperclips215.com*, October
Andrew Mangravite, "Emotion vs. Control," *BroadStreetReview.com*, October
Daniel Galas, "Aubrey Levinthal: Studio Visit," *Painters-Table.com*, April

"5 to Watch," Avery Galleries, exhibition catalogue
"Ten Questions: Aubrey Levinthal," *Moore College Galleries Blog*, January
2012 "Alex Kanevsky: Artist, Curator, Juror: 71st Annual Juried Exhibition," Woodmere Art Museum, exhibition catalogue
"Letter from the President," *PAFA Preview Magazine*, Spring/Summer edition
2011 Victoria Donohue, "At MLAC, Emerging Artists of Obvious Energy," *Philadelphia Inquirer*

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Woodmere Art Museum

AWARDS

2017 Ballinglen Arts Foundation Residency, County Mayo Ireland
2016 Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant
2013 Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant
2009-2011 Merit Scholarship, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts
Academy Scholarship, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

WRITING

2018 "Bill Scott: Reinventing His Rose," Catalogue essay, Hollis Taggart Galleries, March
2016 "Interview with Michael Gallagher," *Title Magazine*, May
2015 "A Modest Place of Origin, Matt Colaizzo," Napoleon Gallery Exhibition Essay, June
"Interview with Rebekah Callaghan," *Title Magazine*, March
2014 "Nicole Eisenman at the ICA," *Title Magazine*, November
"Stories and Dreams: Jessie Drew Bear at the Woodmere Art Museum," *Title Magazine*, June

TEACHING / VISITING

Visiting Artist, Spalding University, Louisville, KY, March 2019
Panel Discussion with Linda Brenner, Martina Johnson-Allen, Clintel Steed, and Robert Winokur,
moderated by Stuart Shils, Art at Kings Oaks, October 2018
Visiting Artist, University of Cincinnati, March 2018
Visiting Critic, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts
Summer Intensive Studio Program, July 2018
Assistant Professor, Rowan University, Glassboro, NJ
Drawing and Painting Department, Fall 2013 to 2018
Instructor, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA
PT 100: Beginning Figure Painting, Fall 2016
PT 110: Beginning Still Life Painting, Fall 2015; Spring 2016
Panel Discussion, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, March 2015
Panel Discussion, Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia, PA, April 2014
Adjunct, Pennsylvania State University Abington Campus, Abington, PA
Art 220/422: Intermediate/Advanced Figure Drawing, Fall 2013; Fall 2014
Art 050: Beginning Oil Painting, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Summer 2015
Visiting Artist, University of Virginia, VA, October 2013
Visiting Artist, Millersville University, Millersville, PA, February 2013
Lecturer, Burlington County College, Pemberton, NJ
Art 101: Introduction to Art, Fall 2013
Monitor, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA
Stuart Shils Master Class Workshop, Fall 2012; Spring & Fall 2010
Graduate Assistant, Professor Michael Moore, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA
Post-Baccalaureate Seminar, Fall 2010

CURATING

Guest Curator, *New Radicals*, Cerulean Arts, Philadelphia, PA, December 2018
Juror, *154th Annual Small Oils Show*, Philadelphia Sketch Club, 2017
Curatorial Board Member, University City Arts League, Philadelphia, PA, 2016-17 exhibition year
Co-Curator, *Baked Goods*, University City Arts League, Philadelphia, PA, October 2016
Curator, *Fresh as Form*, Curating Contemporary, Online Exhibition Publication, 2013
Curator, *Painting the Periphery*, Millersville University Sykes Gallery, Millersville, PA, 2012



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