

LUBOV

Noah Becker's



Shannon Cartier Lucy

Home is a crossword puzzle I can't solve

January 18—March 8

Lubov, New York, NY

BY MADELINE CASTEEL March, 2020

Shannon Cartier Lucy's version of home, as presented in her exhibition at Lubov, is one of domestic nihilism and dark humor. Although there is no clear chronology amongst the six oil paintings in the main gallery, the group as a whole functions like a film, progressing scene by scene, room by room. In *Our New Home* (2017) a glass bowl of goldfish sit atop a violet flame on a gas stove. The water has yet to boil and the fish are still swimming, but their fate is clearly sealed. Pencil marks delineating light switches and shelves recede on the green-gray walls beside the stove. The painting echoes Vija Celmin's *Hot Plate* (1964) wherein a banal appliance in the artist's muted studio glows hauntingly—but the stakes have been raised in Lucy's work as we brace ourselves for broken glass and sizzling goldfish.

A similar moment on the brink of death happens in a dimly lit bedroom in *Naptime* (2018). A woman rests patiently on her side on a blue and white striped bed. The entire room, including the figure, is draped in what appears

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to be dry-cleaning plastic. A golden dress, hangs near the closet, a royal blue fan by her side. In the foreground, a red flowered houseplant suffocates on a white dresser. The furnishings all glimmer with the sheen of their plastic coverings. The woman's cheeks are still flush.



Shannon Cartier Lucy, Naptime, 2018. Oil on canvas. 23 x 30 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Lubov, New York.

Tragedy is not unwelcome, but an expected visitor. The paintings are made meticulously in step with their psychological grip. In *My Signature Act* (2017) two hands play a piano. On top of one hand, a nail file is taped.

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On the other, a pencil. A full cup of coffee balances on one wrist. This painting, like the others in the exhibition, has a trembling accuracy. At first glance they appear delicate and careful but are slightly blurred by frenzied marks, like nearly perfect notes, applied in nervous rhythm.

There is a libidinal underpinning to all of the works presented, however the eroticism is complicated in *Ruffles and Bells* (2019). In a pink and white bedroom, we see the back of a young girl, naked, apart from a ribbon in her freshly combed hair, a white ruffled belt around her waist and two anklets, adorned with bells. She stands blatantly, facing an open window, where the apartments across the way might catch a glimpse of her. The viewer is made as voyeuristic as the potential neighbors. The girl is being watched on both sides.

The uncanniness of the depicted scenes is not unrealistic which makes them all the more disturbing. Reminiscent of Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Commerce Quay, 1080 Brussels*, anguish simmers methodically under the surface. It's the moment of uncertainty, before crisis strikes, which Lucy has her pulse on, and we are left waiting, at the edge of our seats. **WM**

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