

LUBOV

The New York Times

3 Art Gallery Shows to See Right Now

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Shannon Cartier Lucy

Through Nov. 14. Lubov, 5 East Broadway, Ste. 402, Manhattan; 347-496-5833; lubov.nyc.

When the Nashville-born artist Shannon Cartier Lucy, who had earlier success with a conceptual practice, re-emerged last year after a decade-long absence from the art world, it was with a crisp, realistic style. This show is her second at Lubov, a small gallery in a worn walk-up in Chinatown whose office space remnants make it seem as though the previous tenants absconded in the middle of the night. The setting adds to the through-the-looking-glass quality of Lucy's paintings.

Luminous scenes of unease — a girl eating with uncomfortably overlarge flatware; a nurse inspecting a dose of huckleberries, her face veiled behind a scrim; a self-portrait of the artist after falling face first, somehow still seated in a dining chair — suggest traumas reanimated into new shapes. A vague dread is softened by a delicate palette, like a warm bath drawn at a séance. Obliqueness is presented as a matter of course, as in “A New Pack,” four pairs of white cotton briefs spread with obsessive precision across a threadbare rug. Emily Dickinson's “After great pain, a formal feeling comes” would be an appropriate accompaniment (“The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs —”).

A claustrophobic air fills the frames, as in “Loblolly Pine,” a pine cone suspended in a drinking glass, the mouth of which is sealed by someone's palm, equal parts suffocation and divination. All the pictures here occur in a domestic setting, and their action knocks against the oppressiveness of their interior walls. The clarity of Lucy's imagery is troubled by an emotional murkiness that may read as evasive or hard to parse, but no more so than the daily business of living, and making sense of it.

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