

ARTILLERY



HOLLY COULIS

by Annabel Osberg ·

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Imagine yourself gazing meditatively at a set table in a light-filled kitchen. If you stare long enough, utensils and fruits seem to detach from reality and take on peculiar identities of their own. Lost in reverie, you begin to wonder about the secret lives of these objects: How might they appear when no one is around? Such notions are evoked by Holly Coulis' paintings transforming domestic settings into mysterious realms. With flattened spaces, sharp contours, and accentuated geometry, these abstracted still lifes appear as magical diagrams of counters and tables. The impeccable exactitude of her compositions balances her subjects' playful verve. Seeming as though they might somehow move on their own, inanimate objects emit auras and embody individual personalities that may or may not reflect their absent owners. The titular substance of *Orange Soup* (all works 2019) swoops mystically downward from ladle to two bowls; a similar situation occurs in *Red Pears, Summertime*. Odd things happen when objects touch and overlap; colors change and suggestions of human forms emerge. In *Pineapple and Coffees* (pictured above), steam emanating from coffee cups rises like two gloves, while avocados and a table's edge form a tiki-like face. Such strangely familiar scenarios keep you gazing, leading you to wonder what could happen next if these paintings were real. It's difficult

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for a painter to extract novelty from everyday items and well-worn genres, but Coulis does just that.

Philip Martin Gallery

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