



Cohen, Alina. "17 Contemporary Artists Reimagining the Still Life," *Artsy*, August 7, 2020.

Holly Coulis

Lives and works in Athens, Georgia



The things we own—the clothes we wear, the objects on our tables, the furniture in our homes—tell stories about who we are, what we value, and where we come from. Artists who make still lifes create suggestive worlds, placing clues about their lives and their often invented, absent characters into their compositions.

The 17 contemporary artists below explore the material world through abstract painting, performance, craft, and digital media. As they capture objects ranging from bodega sandwiches to artist monographs, they document what it's like to live, consume, and simply make art today.

For Holly Coulis, the appeal of painting still lifes is in stillness itself. "In other genres (even abstraction), there is paused movement," she said. "A still life was still before it was painted, and after. Until someone or something comes to rearrange or to disturb it." Such compositions feel "intimate and personal" to her. Looking at Coulis's still lifes, a viewer is gazing at an unseen

character's private things. Solidly colored lemons, vases, cigarettes, knives, and cats dance around Coulis's canvases, cheerfully bumping against one another. The artist outlines her forms many times in varied, bold hues, giving them radiant, vibrational auras. Pop art, Cubism, and abstraction inform the flat color, geometry, "off perspective," and playfulness in Coulis's paintings.

Coulis said that right now in her studio, she's thinking about how to shift the lines in her paintings and "find a way to make them move more." She's also experimenting with making her paintings more abstract, pushing them to the very edge of what she calls "still life-ness."