

James Cohan

Staff, *"The Superfluity of Things,"* James Cohan, New York, NY, September 6 - October 19, 2024



Sophie Treppendahl
Figure Study, 2024
Oil on canvas
32 x 32 in
81.3 x 81.3 cm

James Cohan is pleased to present *The Superfluity of Things*, a group exhibition that celebrates the enduring vitality of the still life tradition for contemporary artists. This exhibition presents an intergenerational cross-section of artists working within and against the genre to plum its expressive possibilities across a variety of media, including painting, photography, and sculpture. *The Superfluity of Things* will be on view at 52 Walker Street from September 6 through October 19, 2024. The gallery will host an opening reception on Friday, September 6, from 6-8 PM.

Throughout the history of art, depictions of the table and its contents have been used as a storytelling device to convey skillfully coded meaning and sociocultural significance to the viewer. Taking the genre of still-lives as its entry point, this exhibition expands upon art historical precedents to think about the table not only as a site and signifier of power, position, and social status but also a place of gathering, sharing, communal pleasure, and on occasion, discord.

One of the most enduring motifs throughout this exhibition is a series of varied approaches to vanitas painting; traditionally, still lives that contain allegorical collections of objects symbolic of the inevitability of death, the transience of life, and the vanity of earthly pursuits and pleasures. There is both a sense of horror and carnal delight infused in these highly detailed depictions of consumption and consumerism. In the hands of the contemporary artistic interpreters featured in this exhibition, these images often take a turn for the surreal and the humorous.

Other artists in the exhibition examine the ways in which the table functions as connective tissue within families, across generations, or among friends. In these sensitive and sometimes fantastical depictions of memory making, the table is the stage for drama, celebration, and imaginative possibility. There is an intimacy to these scenes, often staged in private or domestic settings, within which the viewer is afforded a precious but fleeting glimpse of the moments that bind us together.

In the creative consciousness, the studio as the crucible for generative thought and self-actualization looms large. For several artists in *The Superfluity of Things*, the drafting table or desk is fundamental and equally as meaningful a site for creative expression as any other. In several works in this exhibition, reference materials stack high, visualizing the many channels of thought that stream together to create an artwork.

The Superfluity of Things features a group of artists working across generations and techniques, including Leonard Baby, Plum Cloutman, Andie Dinkin, Simon Evans™, Spencer Finch, Hopie Hill, Poppy Jones, Nicholas Bono Kennedy, JJ Manford, Rachel Simon Marino, Kelly Sinnaph Mary, Therese Mulgrew, Emma Prempeh, Paul Roupheil, Stephanie H. Shih, Kyungmi Shin, Alison Elizabeth Taylor, Tecla Tofano, Sophie Treppendahl, Anna Valdez, Tom Wesselmann, and Rachel Whiteread.

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