

DOCUMENT

Laura Letinsky

The indignation of counting spiders

June 24–August 13, 2022

DOCUMENT is pleased to present *The indignation of counting spiders*, an exhibition of photographs and ceramic works by Chicago-based artist Laura Letinsky. This is the artist's third solo show with the gallery. The exhibition includes unreleased photographs from Letinsky's on-going series, *Coming to the Commons*, *Italy*, and *To Say It Isn't So*, along with debuting ceramic works from her new series *Preparing for Flowers*.

Letinsky's photographic compositions are rooted in the historical exploration of seventeenth century still life painting. These domestic interiors feature subject matter akin to that of a classical Dutch still life wherein the fruit was honestly devoured and the wine readily consumed, leaving the viewer with only a peach pit on a stained tablecloth or a wine glass emptied to interpret. Through photographing objects and spaces that have been touched, devoured, or discarded, Letinsky explores the intimate tensions and banality of contemporary domestic life.

Preparing for Flowers, the title for the series of new ceramic works on view are influenced by Kintsugi, the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery. In the artist's humble interpretation of this tradition, she pushes the materials, porcelain and ceramic glaze to almost its breaking point, then resuscitates them, mending the works with colorful epoxy. Letinsky intentionally unmask the repairs as evidence of care and continued desire. The repairs in their celebratory colors echo the tradition of Kintsugi, pushing away from the obsolescence of quick consumer culture.

Similarly to the subject matter of Letinsky's photography, these ceramic works retain a story. Each sculpture has been handled, worn thin, and then diligently arranged. Using these works as an invitation to experiment, the artist explores color similarly to the way she plays with the light in her photographs, stating; "It's sort of like picture making with analog materials in that I don't know what they will look like until after they are fired. Alchemical. Magic." However, unlike the photographs on view, Letinsky relinquishes herself from any theoretical or conceptual framing, allowing the ceramics to act as more of a compulsion, a pleasure, a set of questions playing out through the materials and the process.

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Laura Letinsky holds a BFA from the University of Manitoba (1986) and an MFA from Yale University's School of Art (1991). She is a professor in the Department of Visual Art at the University of Chicago. Notable exhibitions include the Mumbai Photography Festival, Mumbai, India; MIT, Cambridge, MA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; The Photographers Gallery, London; The Denver Art Museum, CO; Getty Museum, Los Angeles; Museum of Modern Art, New York; and The Renaissance Society, Chicago. She is represented by Yancey Richardson Gallery, New York. Awards include the Canada Council International Residency, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, The Anonymous Was a Woman Award, and the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship. Publications include *Time's Assignation*, Radius Books, 2017, *Feast for the Eyes*, Aperture Foundation, 2017, *Sticky Sweet*, New Hampshire University, 2016, *Ill Form and Void Full*, Radius Books, 2014, *Feast*, Smart Museum of Art, UC Press, 2013, *After All*, Damiani, 2010, *Hardly More Than Ever*, Renaissance Society, 2004, *Blink*, Phaidon Press, 2002, and *Venus Inferred*, University of Chicago Press, 2000.