

Objects, Intuitions, Concepts

88 Walker St ▪ Mar 7 - Apr 2, 2025



Harkawik is pleased to present *Objects, Intuitions, Concepts*, a two-person exhibition with Philadelphia-based painter Elizabeth Crawford (b. 1959) and New York-based painter Ted Mineo (b. 1981). The exhibition counterposes practices defined by rigorous, concentrated looking, by a surgically narrowed set of aesthetic concerns, and a playful consideration of the myriad social, cultural and economic values coded into the objects we encounter on a daily basis. In both cases, old master technique is put to the service of something alien and provocative. For Mineo, the “stuff” of the paintings—their material characteristics, seductive colors, and discomfiting biological protuberances—seems to exist in service of a century-old clash between the ideological purity of the modernist grid, and the formless contamination of base materialism. Crawford shows us the effects, but not the origins, of Dutch Golden Age still life, stripping away the displays of abundance, overt symbolism, and coded critiques common to the period. Instead, she

offers isolated encounters with, most commonly, a single object known to the practice of modern life, provoking deep philosophical questions, and reminding us of the power of looking closely at that which is taken for granted.

Elizabeth Crawford's paintings exist at the intersection of studied observation and subtle intervention. Many, like *Dropped Towel*, *Girl with Pearl Earring*, and *Unbuckled Jeans*, seem impossibly direct, as if they're daring the viewer to identify that which is missing, significant, or contrived. *Jeans* is a tinderbox of kinetic energy, a discarded pair of pants that is still defined by a set of legs in motion. *La Mer* is, intentionally or not, an ode to Winnicott's transitional object: a reminder of the fragile process by which we come to define ourselves in relation to the external world, a crucial step in the development of the ego. *Small Ladder* is playfully adjusted to a position that results in maximum legibility and maximum liability; its jaws only partly extended, it can be toppled with a gentle push. *Ladder*, along with *Brown Hoodie*, is one of a few objects freed of the ever-present glossy tabletop that divides ground from horizon elsewhere. In *The Journey*, *Anatomy Lesson*, and, crucially, the older *Untitled*, we see a more conscious manipulation of elements, bordering on the theatrical. Here two scrub brushes rest gently on a can of pears, their handles looking like splayed legs, and at once the "work" becomes the gesture itself, a powerful accomplishment for a picture that is also so exquisitely crafted and decidedly hands-on.

Mineo's latest paintings elaborate on a similarly rigid set of conceptual parameters. They are essentially stations: sites defined by movement and the interoperation of tailor-made components, lacking in warmth or milieu. Some of the most powerful moments here are easily overlooked, such as the central column of the diminutive *Spirit*, that seems to occupy negative and positive space at the same time, or *Folder's* set of controls that might snap into place with a swift and confident gesture, were one geometrically conceivable. Many recall non-places that can be observed throughout the New York City subway system: spaces carved out from larger, functional systems, filled with equipment of dubious and uncertain functionality, grimy, unknowable, endlessly occupied and empty all at once. They seem, at times, to laugh at themselves, aware of the absurdity of their many protrusions, dramatic shadows and whimsical adornments. Yet their overwhelming tenor is austere finality, the same sort of vacant formal prison that is the stuff of great horror films. Yes, we fear the man wielding the axe. More terrible however is the room with the flickering fluorescent tube, the lone figure smoking and pacing, the window that's been ajar for who knows how long, the tea kettle blaring without a hand to relieve it. The power with which Mineo is acutely familiar is that of the indisputable inevitability engendered by rigorous manipulation.