

Carrie Mae Smith

Four Plates and Four Forks
February 18 - March 18, 2023

Opening Reception: Saturday, February 18th 2-5pm

Lowell Ryan Projects is pleased to present a solo exhibition titled, *Four Plates and Four Forks*, by Upstate New York-based artist Carrie Mae Smith. Composed of recent small-scale paintings of various cutlery, china, cuts of meat, pastries, and domestic interior scenes softly rendered in oil paint, these works continue Smith's exploration of domestic utilitarian objects, particularly with an interest in culinary articles and their social and historical implications. This will be Carrie Mae Smith's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles and with the gallery.

Shape, light, color, and composition are meticulously explored in these luminous works, which are rendered in shades of blue, cream, gold, pinks, and saturated reds. These quiet paintings highlight the formal simplicity of a teacup and saucer, the abstract beauty of an uncooked lamb chop, and the exquisite sweetness of a lush square of cream sandwiched between layers of puff pastry. The daughter of a butcher, Smith supported her artistic practice early on working as a private chef. Quiet moments alone in the kitchen precipitated the contemplation of ingredients, serving ware, and culinary implements, as well as the meaning that can be associated with them. Fine china and silver have long been symbols of status, family, tradition, and history, while expensive cuts of meat and delicate pastries are not foods of the working class. As Smith's focus has primarily shifted to her artistic practice, she continues however to contemplate the subtle meanings of these items in her work.

While savoring the act of painting, Smith's process also references the gesture of serving. The act of serving a meal or a cup of tea now applies to family, friends, and loved ones, but through her paintings extends to the viewer as well. In the title work of the exhibition, *Four Forks and Four Plates*, 2022 a stack of four gold and teal-rimmed plates rest on a beige surface. Two forks are on top of the stack and two forks rest next to the plates as if waiting to be set out on the table in preparation for dinner, or possibly dessert. The soft cast of daylight reflects from the tongs of the forks and extends an almost lavender-hued shadow off the side of the china. The softness of Smith's brushwork alludes to the effortless nature of setting down the plates and knives on the table, almost as if a second-nature movement. While the skill of Smith's brushwork and the process of setting a table are not instinctive acts, but instead the result of years of practice, attention to detail and refinement, Carrie Mae Smith's works allow the viewer to surrender to her process and relish in the moment of reflection and anticipation.

Carrie Mae Smith (b. 1974, Derby, CT) lives and works in Upstate New York. Smith's paintings are often depictions of items from a particular museum, acquired from local estate sales, or ingredients that she herself will cook. Influenced by her life in the Northeastern United States, including having worked as a private chef on Martha's Vineyard, Smith's works serve as symbols of class, labor, friendship, tradition, love, and

utility. She holds an MFA in Visual Arts from the University of Delaware (2013). Smith has received numerous awards and grants including the Clowes Fellowship Full Scholarship, Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT; Barbara Deming Memorial Fund, Inc. Artist Grant; and the Ruth and Harold Chenven Foundation, Artist Grant. She has exhibited her work internationally and nationally, with recent solo exhibitions at the Locust Grove Estate, Poughkeepsie, NY, and The Berman Museum, Collegeville, PA. Carrie Mae Smith currently lives and works in the Catskills in Upstate New York, where she serves on the faculty at SUNY Oneonta.

For more information please contact: info@lowellryanprojects.com