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Night Nest Eggs (New Mexico, Carol Ann Brown)

For artist Carol Anthony, life and work blend into a creative path of beauty that is rooted in nature and simplicity. In *Carol Anthony: Paintings, Prints & Constructions, 1975-2015* (Radius Books, \$65) more than a hundred pages are devoted to images of her oil crayon paintings that exude her poetic and romantic sensibilities. The book details the artist's history through personal and professional ephemera and a comprehensive chronology that traces her development from childhood artist to sculptor, illustrator, and painter, examining the influence of her treasured relationships with her commercial artist father and now-deceased twin sister and fellow artist Elaine, as well as her dogs, music, and solitary lifestyle. Museum curator Laura Addison contributes a narrative essay which discusses Anthony's work from the early figurative linen maché sculptures she began making at the Rhode Island School of Design to the landscape and still life paintings imbedded in supports such as a window casing or a cookie sheet to provide a three-dimensional quality, as well as her recent works. In 1991, Carol Anthony moved to Santa Fe, but continued to show nationally, distinguishing herself as a painter of simple, elegant subjects, such as a pear or a heart, imbuing them with an emotional resonance that elevates them beyond the quotidian. These works illustrate the artist's ability to appreciate the richness of her surroundings, including the handcrafted home, studio, and cloister that she built with friends on her rural property. Anthony has had numerous shows, given generously back to the community, and as Ali MacGraw says in her foreword to the book, Anthony maintains a "flawless vision of what matters."

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CRITICAL REFLECTION

CAROL ANTHONY: THESE BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS

MCLARRY FINE ART
225 CANYON ROAD, SANTA FE

MY FIRST IMPRESSION WALKING INTO MCLARRY FINE ART WAS THAT

Carol Anthony is an artist who likes to draw. Most of the artworks in the show are executed in oil crayon, and they have an illustrative quality that feels both classic and contemporary. Her techniques for creating the illusion of mass and three-dimensionality are consistent throughout. Whether rendering an envelope or a cloud, a bed or a hamburger, each of her subjects is approached with the same “seriousness.” Though she revisits certain subjects often, her range of subject matter is broad in scope. She models everything with the traditional approach of working with lights and darks. Her light source and color palette is similar no matter the scale, and her subjects often fill the frame, sometimes even spilling off the sides, giving the impression that their volume is too grand to be contained by the format she has imposed upon them.

In an artwork titled *Lob*, a ball comes into the frame from above and looms in the dark. The top of the ball is cropped off the page, too massive to be caught in its entirety. Up close it is clearly the color green of a tennis ball, but from a distance it also looks like a picture of the moon. Of course, the sphere of a ball can easily be taken, if pictured in the air, for a celestial object. But how is a pillow like the moon? The subject of *Moon Pillow* is a pillow. Rendered luminous against an ambiguous dark background, it could be situated either indoors or out. And in the right light, in Anthony’s light, the pillow is bright and white and full.

If comparing one thing to another is the stuff of poetry then Anthony’s artworks are poems. They are odes such as those that were written by Pablo Neruda and collected in his book *Odes to Common Things*. Neruda wrote a poem about socks. Anthony drew a picture of socks. Actually, she drew more than one. She made a series: *Santa’s Tired Socks Hanging with Care*; *Santa’s Sock Dec. ’03*; *Tired Santa’s Anklet*. Her artworks, like Neruda’s poems, reflect her affection for things encountered in ordinary life, and sometimes as well for the rituals found there, such as hanging red socks on a line in December.

Looking around the exhibition, you get the idea that Anthony’s favorite things are pears. Often the titles of her pear pictures reflect the year or time of day the artwork was created: *Pear at Night 2015*; *Pear, ’08*; *Nighttime Pear ’15*; *Night Pear*. These titles document the moment of production. Looking at all of her pictures you get the sense that these moments are important. These moments she documents are as much the subject of her work as are the things she depicts.

Works like *Pear at Night* and *Night Pear* conjure up images of the artist drawing in the small hours of the night. If someone you knew looked at pears for hours on end, during the day and in the night, you might think it strange. But an artist has license to look. No, an artist has to look. And it’s in these moments—looking at common objects for longer than is common—when an ordinary object like a pear becomes a *Pear Poem*.

A moment, like an hour or a day, like any measure of time, is an abstract thing that cannot be perceived with the physical senses. Unless you are looking at a timepiece, you can’t see a minute fly by. Neither are you able to touch it. But if you are an artist you can try to hold it somehow by recording what you sees. It seems this would be the purpose of titling a landscape *A Beautiful Moment*.

How can something as abstract as a measure of time be beautiful? What is a beautiful moment? Perhaps it is that experience of having a “crazy, crazy love” for those things you see before you. In Anthony’s *A Beautiful Moment* those things are a tree, a field, and a cloud-filled sky. In other of her artworks those things are socks, pears, a ball, or a pillow.

—ESTER BARKAI

Carol Anthony, *Beach Road*, oil crayon, 6” x 9”, nd