

Elizabeth Betzen - artist statement 2020

Through my interdisciplinary practice, I make paintings and sculptures that recreate domestic objects and spaces. The works have a rickety quality that seem to imply they could fall apart at any moment, whether through thick expressive strokes in the painted image or precarious joints in the sculpted object. These works serve as documentation to an innate desire to hold onto what one has, an urge to preserve what will inevitably be lost while recognizing that this process is futile. Made in this haphazard fashion, there's an almost humor to art object as a means to immortality.

Knowing that the endeavor is futile the question then becomes,
"How does one grapple with mortality, *in style?*"

Using encaustic as a direct reference to Fayum burial portraits, and acid-filled cardboard obtained through dumpster diving, the work becomes a type of nonarchival death mask to my personal domesticity. The paintings have an ambiguous quality that leans into the inability to fully capture reality, a weakness all images possess. The sculptures are uncanny in their inability to fully replace what they represent, they are inadequate idols trying to stand in for items lost.

My motivation in making work has always been a desire to capture what I hold dear. Simultaneously, I am deeply interested in the moments where works of art fail to preserve reality, and also those moments when it can give us something more. There's a melancholy to my life art cannot fully remove, but it can be a balm to the experience.