

Produce(d) Paintings

Stephen D'Onofrio

February 20 - March 27, 2021

Public Open House: Saturday, February 20. 11am-5pm.

Philadelphia artist Stephen D'Onofrio presents *Produce(d) Paintings*, his third solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition includes recently completed paintings that revisit D'Onofrio's ongoing interest in centuries-old, European still life paintings and hone in on those that portray detailed studies of fruits and vegetables. The artist approaches this sub-genre from his characteristic viewpoint, offering a contemporary take on these classically depicted scenes.

The produce painting serves as an historic exemplar of still life painting that is as old as the medium itself. From Greco-Roman wall paintings to Renaissance and Modern canvases, these representations of food have held a multiplicity of functions and meanings over time. In the European works that provoke D'Onofrio, the subject matter offered the opportunity for artists to affirm their technical prowess, rendering each object in elaborate detail. D'Onofrio remains fascinated by the genre's ability to stay relevant over the centuries to the present day where it is endlessly reproduced for textiles, commercial design, and cheap mass-produced home decor. An homage to and reflection of this contemporary condition, his canvases distill the scenes into hyper-formal versions of themselves completed in a strikingly flattened fashion.

D'Onofrio's straight-forward renditions, simple as they may initially appear, are not without an impressive showcase of skill. The crisp lines and intricate patterns are completed by hand despite having all traces of the artist's hand removed in a nod to the mass-produced consumer product. In *Peaches and Pairs* (2020), each stacked fruit is represented in a range of manners, from single-color silhouettes to contour-shaping gradients and even abstract gestural marks, each requiring its own technical finesse. As if made to order, *Apples and Apricots* (2020) presents an identical composition of stacked fruit in a decorative bowl. In both paintings, the comically piled pyramid of fruit is set against a stark black background, D'Onofrio's simplified version of the dark backdrops that give the European still lifes their austere and moody auras.

The exhibition also features new additions to D'Onofrio's oeuvre. In his bust paintings, the classic sculptural bust gets a humorous update with modern clothing and color-blocked facial features; in the pattern paintings, the omni-present tropes of contemporary design are utilized in a repetitive arrangement of symbols. Together with the produce paintings, these works in the exhibition prove that these oft-depicted subject matters remain ripe for inspiration and boundless reinterpretation.

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Stephen D'Onofrio (b. 1991) is a contemporary visual artist focused in painting. His work is characterized by an interest in the home decor market, the mass commodification of art, and the generic visual language that accompanies commercial design. He received his BFA and MFA from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago in 2013 and 2016, respectively. In 2018, D'Onofrio was a finalist for the prestigious Hopper Prize. He has exhibited in numerous venues across the country, including galleries in Dallas, Boston, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Philadelphia. His work can be found in numerous private and public collections including Fidelity Investments, Estée Lauder, and UT Southwestern Medical Center. D'Onofrio has lived and worked in Philadelphia since being awarded an artist residency in the city at Jasper Studios in 2017. His work is represented in the United States by Galleri Urbane.