

LESLIE LEWIS SIGLER

Revival



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Leslie Lewis Sigler paints objects that are sometimes hundreds of years old, ones that might have been discarded or relegated to the backs of antique shops or thrown into boxes for garage sales. She breathes new life into these forgotten wares, giving them center stage in the still lifes she creates that are more like portraits, with simple backgrounds that let the items shine. Flesh tones are often evident in the silverware, platters and vessels she paints, a captured reflection of the artist that injects a sense of humanity into static articles.

“To me, the objects are connecting me to other people and their history,” says Sigler, who has been painting antiques since she was gifted a set of family heirlooms four years ago. “I really

love to inspire memory and connect people to each other and to their pasts and families through these objects. I want to spark memory and conversation. It’s a way to connect that’s not digital.”

Her upcoming collection of 30 works at George Billis Gallery in New York City is titled *Revival* and features series called *Relatives* and *Matriarch*, pieces spotlighting individual antique objects she buys and borrows from friends. When she’s portraying objects in others’ possession, she takes myriad photos to capture the objects in various lights. Sigler says she purposely makes the shadow and background very minimal to create the portrait feel, and she’ll sometimes paint objects both in their original forms and after she’s polished and

1
The Cultivator, oil on canvas,
18 x 14"

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Leslie Lewis Sigler photographed
in her studio by Cara Robbins.

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Silver Spoon #57, The Iconoclast,
oil on panel, 12 x 5"

4
Silver Spoon #84, The Vixen,
oil on panel, 12 x 5"

5
Silver Platter #2, The Forefather,
oil on panel, 16 x 16"

cleaned them.

Encountering locations such as butler's pantries full of beautifully polished silver makes her feel as if she has hit the jackpot. She once met a couple who had a collection featuring a single pattern, consisting of pieces from different places, with each spoon bearing a unique monogram. She works in series because she says her intent is to portray her subjects as a family or species of objects, and paintings with titles such as *The Iconoclast* and *The Vixen* give viewers intriguing starting-off points for interpretation. Her collector Gwen Baker, also from Sigler's current location of Santa Barbara, California, says the artist's painterly touch gives the objects new energy.

"Leslie's exploration of light falling on everyday objects never fails to intrigue," says Baker. "An aged espresso pot runs into a world of color, as light plays over the metal surface, resulting in an opalescent rainbow."

Sigler's oil on canvas *The Cultivator* is part of her *Matriarch* series of vessel portraits, an unpolished water jug that, like other works in the series, represents a member of a functional family.

"Isolated, the objects in this series represent the beloved mother figures, and the reflection mimics our own," Sigler says. "A mother figure would raise children and cultivate things, and this had a very honorable pose to me, with the chin being raised."

Another unpolished piece is the platter in oil on panel *The Forefather*, which contains beautiful golds, reds and blues. Viewers can make out the artist photographing the object, which was saved by the family who owns it after their house burned down from a wildfire, in the work. Sigler says she names the platter pieces as if they were things you'd build upon, like founders, not only because of their actual function, but also because it relates to the theme of family and people who are influential.

The artist says she hopes her pure intent and reverence while creating this body of work is evident to viewers.

"Everyone, no matter whether they know it or not, has a meaningful object," Sigler says. "It sparks imagination, and I feel like this is sincere. I'm really interested in this history that connects us through different generations. Objects are so fleeting these days, and these old silver things used to be so important. My paintings draw light on them and honor them." ●



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