

Buhe, Elizabeth. "Veronika Pausova." Art in America, October, 2017.

# Art in America

## Veronika Pausova

NEW YORK,

at Simone Subal by [Elizabeth Buhe](#)



Veronika Pausova: *Neighbour*, 2017, oil on canvas, 36 by 30 inches; at Simone Subal.

Trafficking in pattern and precision, Veronika Pausova's paintings display arrangements of figurative motifs on flat, frontal planes. In the handsome if modest showing of the Toronto-based Czech artist's work at Simone Subal, eight oils on canvas (all 2017) occupied a light-flooded front gallery to propitious effect: ambient light redoubled the images' considerable pictorial luminosity, while the downtown building's viscera, notably the black pipes running at right angles overhead and protruding from the walls, accentuated the like forms that gave compositional structure to works such as *Running Faucets* and *Hike to Sunken Dot*. The setting helped highlight Pausova's near-architectural intuition for the placement of forms within and in relation to her framing edges.

In *Tinted Rigs*, alien-looking flowers in shocking blues and golden yellows atop a terra-cotta ground acquiesce to the support's limits, drooping in arcs as if held captive within the frame. Yet while Pausova's forms often seem to steer and contort themselves to remain inside their representational fields, their adherence to boundaries is to some extent discretionary. Mid-canvas in this work, a sphere-topped stem nests inside an hourglass-shaped vase, but its thorns exceed the vessel's edge, confounding notions of inside and outside, in front of and behind. A lone fish likewise breaches its heavily outlined, gunmetal-gray receptacle in *Be Frictionless Latecomer*. Here and elsewhere Pausova leaves unresolved the extent to which these spaces are continuous or distinct, penetrable or not.

## Simone Subal Gallery

Any aleatory gestures Pausova enlisted in the making of a painting—throwing paint or turpentine on a raw canvas, pressing cloth to wet paint with varying degrees of force—have been superseded by her fastidious attention to detail. Like Renaissance cabinet pictures, her works repay close looking. In some, bent human fingers appear to poke through invisible holes in the paintings from undisclosed spaces behind them, calling forth the history of trompe l'oeil. With titles like *Door Handle*, *Drawing the Curtain*, and *Neighbour*, the works nod toward notions of disclosure and visibility, accessibility and concealment.

Pausova's practice of reworking the same forms and compositional structures yields a kind of family resemblance among the works that encourages us to look for and even invent associations between them. That spherical bud in *Tinted Rigs*, for example, cropped up in various guises throughout the paintings on view: as the body of a spider slithering up the side of a drinking glass, for instance, or as an assortment of tethered orbs within a system of transparent pipes. Pausova has likened her use of such formal building blocks to the childlike pursuit of imagining, in which mundane objects shift swiftly and fluidly from one state or use to another. Whatever stories these repeated elements might conjure, they draw upon a decidedly otherworldly realm, which is not to say they are any less welcome in ours.