



KENISE BARNES FINE ART

Press Release – Larchmont, NY

New exhibition: **June 19 – August 1, 2020**

Larchmont gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday 10:00 – 5:30 and by appointment

THE PHILOSOPHY OF TEA - NEW PAINTINGS BY MELANIE PARKE

“There are few hours in life more agreeable than the hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea.”

— Henry James, *Portrait of a Lady*

Melanie Parke lives in rural Michigan surrounded by beauty: nature's beauty and the beauty she herself creates. Parke's paintings reveal her to be a curator of objects and a collector of memories. Her paintings aptly communicate a belief that objects such as a teacup, a vase of flowers or a small memento not only decorate our home, but are infused with emotion and memories of place, rituals and friendships. In her paintings a pot of tea may be set on a table waiting to be poured or the reminder of an afternoon with friends; its presence implying the passing of time, pleasure, longing or comfort. Birds sometimes populate Parke's paintings, their lively presence suggesting curiosity and blurring the domestic interiors with the outside world. Often, a pastoral meadow or sliver of blue lake is visible through an open window, inviting the viewer's eye to wander beyond the still life tableau. The elements in Parke's layered compositions variously deconstruct and recompose themselves calling to mind the art historical tradition of pattern painters such as Bonnard and Vuillard. Parke, too, subverts the notion of surface and ground, subject and object, and notions of ornamentation and exacting representation. Parke also explores the idea of never-ending transparencies and materialism, looking through walls and hard surfaces to reach the other side of a thing and to keep looking. Beyond formal ideas and the composition, each painting in this exhibition speaks of the palpable pleasure of painting itself. Parke paints in broad gestures, her textured, open brushwork giving way to small moments; brushstrokes and daubs of color seem to alight on the surfaces of patterned vases, picture frames and tablecloths. Painting is evidently a pleasure-seeking process for the artist, and she conveys her delight to the viewer with beauty, skill and generosity.

This is the artist's second solo show with the gallery, which has also presented her work in eight group exhibitions. Parke earned a BFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL. Parke has been the recipient of numerous residencies, including a two-time visiting artist at The American Academy in Rome (Italy). Her work has been exhibited widely throughout the United States and featured in numerous blogs and newspapers including *The Huffington Post* and *Hyperallergic*. Melanie Parke is a native of Indiana and lives in Michigan with her husband, who is also an artist.

Please contact our staff with inquiries or to arrange a preview of the exhibition.

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