

ARTILLERY

ALEXANDRA NOEL; ALAN TURNER

By Annabel Osberg



Up an elegant staircase in the Los Feliz mansion that is Parker Gallery, Alexandra Noel's paintings delineate rural scenes appearing very different than the verdant residential realm visible outside diamond-paned windows in the small chamber they currently occupy. Noel titled her show "Theatre Road" after a highway expanse in western Pennsylvania around which her parents grew up. Her paintings here are little, rarely much larger than a smartphone or tablet, and arranged on walls in a linear, serial manner. Some are firmly depictive, others more abstract. More pocket-size than easel-size, these pictures almost appear cramped to fit too-small panels; but their minuteness imparts an unsettling feeling that cascades as you peruse one painting after another. Recalling printed snapshots or digital photos viewed on smartphone screens, their diminutive scale brings to mind ways in which expansive scenes and intricate pasts are boxed into small, one-size-fits-all frameworks. Titles often allude to time or seasons. Noel's representational scenes tend towards straightforward depictions of highways, people, or animals; but their apparent simplicity gives way to tense mystery: in *Towards the end of a short life* (pictured above, all works 2018), a brown dumpster-like contraption appears as a trap, but what for? What of the glowing-eyed cow and deer in *And your sweet face came before me?* Via improbable juxtaposition alongside such paintings, brightly hued panels appearing as geometric abstractions compound the mystique of Noel's representational scenes. Downstairs, Alan Turner's captivating show exhibits a similar, slightly sinister bizarreness; among his "Paintings, 1979-2009," a pitcher pours a hair braid; and disembodied limbs form strange mishmashes.

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