

# LAUREL GITLEN

MATTHEW WATSON

ESTHER II  
May 6–10, 2025, New York

Estonian House  
243 E 34th St, New York

May 6–9, 11 am – 6 pm  
May 10, 11 am – 5 pm

# LAUREL GITLEN

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ESTHER II

May 6–10, 2025

The first painting traces an encounter in the home and studio of two artists—shaped by invitation, hospitality, and the threshold between domestic and working space. Its subject emerged from an incidental arrangement of glassware atop their refrigerator: objects valued not for symbolism, but for their precarious, luminous, provisional presence.

The painting opens a relational field shaped by the slow logic of domestic accumulation. The vessels act as affective carriers—transmitting the felt experience of proximity and care. Less still-life than compositional event, they index improvisation, attention, and entanglement within artistic and economic networks. As a relay, the painting carries forward its conditions of making—studio visit, photographic framing, painterly translation—into a future moment of viewing.

The second painting returns to a 2016 image taken during a visit to a gallerist's home in Brescia. This visit centered on a potential commission that, though partially realized, ultimately fell away. The work is based not on the intended subject, but a peripheral scene: a Sottsass *Murmansk Centerpiece* atop *The Structures Tremble*, flanked by a marble fireplace and architectural trim.

Re-engaging this image is a reparative gesture—reactivating a chain of affective, institutional, and material conditions that were paused rather than concluded. The painting metabolizes a suspended charge, finding productivity in the incomplete. As in other works, the subject is neither fully present nor absent. The Sottsass forms—both ornamental and infrastructural—act not as symbols but as agents within a network of design, patronage, and staging. The work resists closure, reactivating what was once peripheral into a renewed, altered connection.

In both paintings, minor gestures become sites of significance. One traces a quiet domestic encounter; the other, a peripheral moment in a deferred commission. Each turns to the overlooked and unresolved as carriers of meaning, privileging shifts in attention over grand narratives. The aim is not resolution, but the continuity of relation—unfinished, affective, and still taking form.

–Matthew Watson, May 2025

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Matthew Watson creates paintings that explore the social, economic, and psychological relations binding objects, places, and people. Focusing on commissioned portraiture and works that engage with specific exhibition contexts, he situates his subjects within broader networks of exchange and examines the production of meaning and value in works of art. He received his BA from Williams College in 2004 and his MFA from Columbia University School of the Arts in 2012. He is currently a Critic in Painting and Printmaking at the Yale School of Art and has lectured at Columbia University, Williams College, and the School of Visual Arts. His exhibitions in New York include solo and group shows at Joe Sheftel Gallery, Metro Pictures, Laurel Gitlen Gallery, and Davidson Contemporary. International exhibitions include the Kyiv Biennial: School of Kyiv; One Torino, curated by Maurizio Cattelan; Federico Vavassori Gallery in Milan; and CACBM Gallery in Paris. His awards include the Andrew Fisher Fellowship Fund and the Frederick M. Peyser Prize in Painting. He is based in Brooklyn, NY.

# LAUREL GITLEN



Matthew Watson

*Artists' Residence, Grand Street, Visited in 2025, 2025*

oil on copper in artist's frame

14 x 17.5 inches, 15 x 18.5 inches framed

35.5 x 44.5 cm, 38.1 x 47 cm

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# LAUREL GITLEN



Matthew Watson

*Gallerist's Residence, Brescia, Visited in 2016, 2025*

oil on copper in artist's frame

10 x 8 inches, 14 x 14 inches framed

35.4 cm x 20.3 cm, 35.5 x 35.5 cm framed





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*Gallerist's Residence, Brescia, Visited in 2016, 2025*

oil on copper in artist's frame

10 x 8 inches, 14 x 14 inches framed

35.4 cm x 20.3 cm, 35.5 x 35.5 cm framed