

Johanna Fateman, *Alexandra Noel*, The New Yorker, September 30, 2022,

ART

ALEXANDRA NOEL

By Johanna Fateman

September 30, 2022

This Los Angeles-based artist's exacting, very small paintings (no panel is taller than nine inches) evoke the infinite expanses of the mind's eye. Noel's imagery—cylinders, bubbles, alien architecture, bodies of water, a Starlight mint, a screaming baby—is at once specific and cryptic, as if she were attempting to catalogue the detritus of dreams. The composition of the characteristically smooth-surfaced “Knife Beam” pairs gleaming cutlery with a laser-like stripe and a glossy black capsule; “Titanic Radish with Butter” shows the vegetable sinking into the sea, suggesting a strange, stranded biomorphic monument. In a statement that accompanies the exhibition, Noel pushes against those who would pigeonhole her paintings as surreal or symbolic, writing that, instead, “they are hieroglyphs not of physical things but afterimages of afterimages of afterimages,” which does capture their elusive mood. (*Derosia*; Sept. 8–Oct. 29.)