



DANIELLE FRETWELL
TABLESCAPES

PRIVATE VIEW: THURSDAY 9 OCTOBER 2025, 6 – 8PM
EXHIBITION DATES: 10 OCTOBER – 8 NOVEMBER, 2025

27 WARREN STREET
W1T 5NB LONDON

Alice Amati is pleased to present American artist Danielle Fretwell's (b.1996) second solo exhibition with the gallery. Tablescapes will be accompanied by a publication on the artist's work including a newly commissioned essay by J. Cabelle Ahn.

"With an apple, I will astonish Paris," Paul Cézanne once declared. The Frenchman's bravado wasn't just bluster; it hinged on his conviction that the most ordinary objects could, if represented in a visionary manner, prompt questions about the very basis of reality. Everyone knows what an apple looks like—until, suddenly, an artist invites them to see one in an entirely new way.

Danielle Fretwell's richly symbolic still lifes likewise center on objects that should be as obvious as an apple. Apricots tumble down a white tablecloth, plums roll across a table set with vintage silver, and cherries in a claret bowl saturate the senses. It's tempting to read these arrangements through the well-worn semiotics of vanitas—the crab as armor or temptation, the apricot as both Trinity and carnal desire, the cherry as spring, childhood, and resurrection.

But that interpretive reflex is also a trap. The work invites this exercise of legibility only to expose its contradictions. Roland Barthes reminds us that a drawing of a tree is really a "tree-being-looked-at." Fretwell's paintings press the point. What you see is never simply what is seen.

Cézanne used the humble tablescene to chart a new way of looking—what philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty described as a "lived perspective" that sought to counter both the long-dominant single-point perspective of painting and encroaching photographic vision of 19th-century France. Similarly, Fretwell probes layers of deception in both optics and technique. "The core of my work lies in my interest in truth, both in painting and in society," she says, noting that the pictures also address "anxiety about how we perceive information, and how it is disseminated amongst each other.

Her concern with distribution permeates all levels of her process. Like still-life painters of the past, Fretwell sources her own props—vintage silver trays, modernist bowls, produce of all kinds—casting herself as both curator and dispatcher of objects. More precisely, she curates the things themselves but dispatches them as images. The role is historically apt: early still lifes drew on local markets, trade networks, and collectors' cabinets, making the genre an ideal format to advertise and circulate commodities. "I think about the histories these objects carry that are unknown but regenerated through me, and eventually I release them back into circulation," she says. "I feel the intersection with local economies happens as I become part of the network of exchange and circulation."

— J. Cabelle Ahn



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Danielle Fretwell (b.1996) is an American artist currently living and working in New Hampshire, USA. Fretwell received her BFA from Endicott College in 2018, and her MFA from Boston University in 2021. Recent exhibitions include: 'Support Structures', Sargent's Daughters, New York (2025); 'Enosis', Von Goetz, London (2025); 'Un Oeuf Is Un Oeuf', TJ Boulting, London (2024); 'Shallow Invitations', Alice Amati, London (2024); 'Mi Basta uno Scorcio', Rubedo Arts, Milan (2024); 'Infinite Loop', Alice Amati, London, (2023); 'Human Nature', Gallery 263, Cambridge, MA, (2022); 'Objectivity', Gallery 263, Cambridge, MA, (2021); 'No Matter How Delicate', Heftler Visiting Artist Gallery, Beverly, MA, (2021); 'Characters, All', Tiger Strikes Astroid, Brooklyn, (2021); 'IYKYK: Are You Ready For The Future?', Pianocraft Gallery, Boston MA, (2021); 'BU MFA Painting 2021 Thesis Show', Stone Gallery, Boston, MA, (2021); 'Air Dry', Commonwealth Gallery at Boston University, Boston, MA, (2021).

In Spring 2025 Fretwell was an artist in residence at Long Meadow Art Residency, MA. In 2023, she was awarded the MyMA Artist Grant, and was previously an artist in residence at The Studios at MASS MoCA in North Adams, MA (2021). She has been reviewed in Whitewall, Artsy, The Wall Street Journal, Observer, Vogue Italia, Fetch Magazine, and FAD, amongst others.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Alice Amati is a contemporary art gallery established in Fitzrovia in June 2023. The gallery is committed to fostering artists at the early stages of their career by often providing the opportunity for their first solo show in the city and a supportive context for artistic explorations and career development. Concerned with encouraging transnational dialogues around topical questions within society and art, Alice Amati brings together British and International artists through a challenging, experimental and rigorous exhibitions programme. Joining a cohort of young and established galleries in the burgeoning artistic scene of Fitzrovia, Alice Amati operates as a platform for new voices in the contemporary global artistic scene with a strong commitment to research, collaboration and diverse practices.

For more information, sales enquiries, interview and image requests please contact: info@aliceamati.com