

**LAURA LETINSKY**

Canadian, born Winnipeg, MB, 1962

*Untitled #49*, 2002

Inkjet print, 15 x 19 3/4 inches

Purchase funds contributed by Lynn Hauser and Neil Ross, 2014.1k

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*Untitled #49* tempers the time-honored tradition of representations of still life. From Roman mosaics and seventeenth-century Dutch paintings to the art of the eighteenth-century French painter Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, whose work Letinsky invokes explicitly, artists have presented laid tables such as Letinsky's, capturing the passage of time by halting it.

Letinsky's stunning depiction of an array of comestibles and their containers playfully calls out the fiction of still life and sets the formulaic genre on edge. The image revolves around a surface that functions as a table, precariously supporting an empty coffee cup and a bowl holding a bulging pyramid of overripe peaches. Lipstick on the emptied cup signals a past moment, as do smears and pits and wet, orange residue on the plastic cutting board. The image portends moments to come: an imminent tumble and rot. As potent as the forms are the formal elements: a milky palette and the passage of light across the scene. The wrinkled tablecloth and the powdery color are nearly the stuff of painting. The fact that this dense moment is a photograph forces us to confront the passage of time in a new way, shaking up our expectations of how images capture and compress change over time. In a saturated photographic print that is the result of a lengthy exposure time, Letinsky calls on the conventions of painted still life to push the fiction forward, to ripen it.

—Claudia Swan

Associate Professor of Art History, Northwestern University, 1998–2020  
The Inaugural Mark S. Weil Professor of Early Modern Art, Washington University in Saint Louis