



*Kitchen Table*, Gouache on paper collage, 13 1/4" x 9 3/4", 2023.

## **A Conversation:**

**Elizabeth Bisbing, Pamela Tucker, and Nancy Sandler Bass**

NYC, July 9, 2025

**Elisabeth Bisbing:** I call my show Near and Dear because while my work was inspired by homey spaces and landscapes in two countries, my focus was always close to me: personal interiors and gardens.

The home has been a motif for me for a long time. It's always been a part of what I did... even before I went to art school because though I was always an artist, I was a mother of three before I went for my undergraduate degree... and a mother of four before I got my MFA.

Also I grew up in a household with four siblings and it was filled with constant activity. Later as a mother myself, my home was full of commotion and the demands of motherhood. My work expresses the sensibility of the busy household that I experienced both as a child growing up, and later as a mother of my own family. My pieces have always been a way to organize and process my life experience.

**Pamela Tucker:** Your press release mentions qualities in your work of containment, intimacy and pressure. Why pressure?

**Elizabeth:** For one thing, many of the interiors have at least two, sometimes three walls visible, and usually the walls are not completely straight. The walls are architecturally unstable, creating a tension.

**Nancy Sandler Bass:** Still, the compositions come together in a cohesive, if what appears to be, unstable way.

**Pamela:** Once you were an adult with your own family, and in light of the very full life you were leading as a mother, I'm intrigued by the mention in your press release of the *horror vacui* concept (the fear of emptiness) that is present in your work. The symbols and intricate patterns you use to "escape" the vacuum, may also serve to work against evil forces. They are a protective magic.

**Elizabeth:** And a house by definition, is also protection. I'd like to make the viewer feel like they are in a nest. But it's also kind of funny. Here, in **Kitchen Table**, I picture myself with fish eyed glasses, and for emphasis, a fish in a painting on the wall behind me. My work has a whimsical quality.





*Afternoon Repose*, Gouache on paper collage, 12 1/2" x 11", 2025.

**Nancy:** Your pieces are incredibly intimate, but also exacting in the way you nail down the qualities of every book, the furnishings and each artwork.





*Sunflowers Still Life*, Derwent line maker 0.1 on Bristol paper, 14" x 17", 2024.

**Pamela:** Speaking of intimacy, some of your table scenes remind me of Greek icons where Christ is at one side of a table and there are empty chairs on the table's other sides. The waiting chairs were invitations to the faithful to join Christ for the meal. In your work, the chairs and couches, often complete with a cat, also seem like invitations to sit.

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**Pamela:** Would you say that the work you did in Italy is different from the work you did in New York?

**Elizabeth:** The interiors from Italy are a bit more open. But everything is just so wonderful there. The apartment where we stay during our Italian residencies is furnished with antiques, oil paintings, frescoes and sculpture. There's so much that is rich with history.

**Pamela:** The depictions of art in the Italian rooms are little beauties in themselves. You've abstracted the head sculpture in this painting **Afternoon Repose** into a perfect little cubist head! It's like a little Picasso.

**Nancy:** Elizabeth gets it ALL in. You don't omit anything. it's really magical that you can do this.

**Elizabeth:** It's kind of addictive once you start doing it.

**Nancy:** There's such a focus and intensity that I feel that your experience is so deep, looking at the space and how you articulate it. You're really diving into it. They're very, very personal.

**Elizabeth:** And they're not big spaces either.

**Nancy:** I love how you included your husband, your cat, the things you love in your pieces. In **Where is That Book**, I love that Richard looks like he's going to start moving. It looks like a still image from a movie. You're really capturing daily life.

**Elizabeth:** I'm trying.

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**Nancy:** For me, your botanical work, is all about the natural experience. Those pieces are buzzing with energy and connectivity with the world around you. The denseness of your work suggests a constant vibration.

They have a denseness of detail similar to the interiors. So for me, your active patterning is not so much about connecting to a childhood experience as much as it is about revealing the constant artistic impulse of your personality. There's energy to you and that energy is expressed in whatever subject you take on.

**Pamela:** They are definitely very active compositions with lots of complex curves, active line work.

**Elizabeth:** I always start the collages with a pencil drawing. And then I take the drawing for copies and I use the actual copy to cut out the shapes from the painted paper. I use gouache on paper. The color is not preplanned. I never do multiples, or prints. And I don't want to have prints made by print houses either. For me, a key part of my practice, is the making: cutting, drawing by hand. I don't understand how artists when they get really busy they have studios of



people who make or recreate the work. I'm very hands on. That's the part I want to do.

And people are now going to AI to make art. I think AI should be doing the non creative work. AI should be mopping the floor, doing house work. I want to make the art.

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*Where is that Book*, Gouache on paper collage, 12 1/2" x 11 1/4", 2023.

**Nancy:** In both your botanicals and interiors, in NY or Italy you always have a very clear vantage point about what's going on. There's an intimate, energetic, intelligent analysis that is casual, homey, and relaxed. The domestic setting may make some people underestimate the work. You are a person with a razor sharp eye, doing incisive works that have deep emotional meaning. You see everything.