

Critics' Pick      New York

## **Eetu Sihvonen and Elizabeth Tibbetts**

Gaa Gallery

4 Cortlandt Alley

October 27, 2023 - December 9, 2023

By Alexandre Stipanovich

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Eetu Sihvonen, *Red Sky in the Morn*, 2023, burnt pine wood, linseed oil, video (4K, color, sound, 4 minutes 45 seconds). From "Within the Well."

"Within the Well" presents visions and vistas depicting fantastical realms and beings, evoking journeys of endless transformation and sublime terror. This two-person exhibition showcases esoteric wall-based reliefs and sculptures—one of which, *Red Sky in the Morn*, 2023, contains a video element—by Finnish artist Eetu Sihvonen alongside large spectral oil paintings by American artist Elizabeth Tibbetts.

Sihvonen's resin-and-wood sculptures resemble talismans that one might find in a medieval witch's

home. Notably, many of the artist's works feature a two-legged egg, a direct reference to Pieter Bruegel the Elder's 1567 painting, *The Land of Cockaigne*—a visual parable of human gluttony—in which the ovum, symbolizing a kind of wasted potential, is depicted in the foreground, half eaten and running for its life. In the context of alchemy, however, the egg symbolizes the vessel in which transmutation takes place. It also serves as a metaphor for our curiosity as we navigate existence and, sometimes, stumble into its myriad traps.

Tibbetts's canvases, such as *Lock and Key*, 2023, are inhabited by luminescent biomorphic characters in numinous landscapes—the creatures are seemingly drawn to some kind of force emanating from portals within the compositions. Are these entities deities, fairies, or demons? When juxtaposed with Sihvonen's sculptures, Tibbetts's pictures create a world of boundless possibilities, breaking open the confining, Kabbalistic labyrinth in which our little egg finds itself. From realms of hermetic, arcane, and cryptic meaning (Sihvonen), to those of rejuvenation, fluid connection, and opportunity (Tibbetts), the artists bridge the gap between endless wonder