

Robert Peterson

Jerald Melberg

Charlotte, North Carolina

Robert Peterson's pastel drawings show the hand of an accomplished draftsman. In these realist still lifes of fruit, vegetables, and eggs, every detail has been painstakingly rendered, from the rough

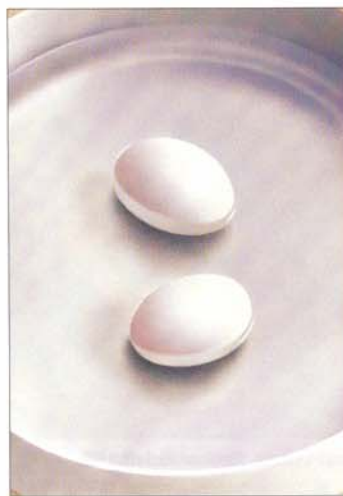
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skin of an orange to the sheen on a black plum to the crinkles in a paper bag. Although his edges, lines, and textures are fully defined, Peterson's objects are strikingly soft and smooth, as though carved out of wood and sanded to perfection.

Symmetry guides Peterson's compositions. In *Eggs in Water* (2003), he arranged two eggs in the center of a white bowl of water. In *Red Pepper Standing* (2004), the vegetable is fully frontal and centered. Peterson's subjects glow under a dispersed light that bathes them in a softness that plays against their defined edges and textures. In *Red and Green Apples with a Glass Bowl*, a pile of neatly arranged fruit appears through glass whose transparency is thoroughly convincing.

Peterson's meditative objects, set against empty, cream-colored grounds, retain the emotional neutrality of a botan-



Robert Peterson, *Eggs in Water*, 2003, pastel on paper, 41 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 29". Jerald Melberg.

ical study, while their flawless surfaces imply that they are idealized visions of the real. But his subtle shadows and reflections imply that he is capturing each arrangement at a particular moment in time.

The images offered a kind of insight into Peterson's world, a place of utter calmness, simplicity, and order—or at least a yearning for it.

—Linda Luise Brown