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THE WORLD'S
TOP ART
COLLECTORS

SANTA MONICA

Sandy Sallin

KOPLIN

Sandy Sallin draws and paints lush and radiant flowers. They are utterly private, obsessive investigations, outside fashion, politics, or protest. Yet in view of recent trends, where the banal and deliberately bad take on lofty importance, she is downright subversive in her enjoyment of what is stunning in nature.

Sallin's art is about beauty, classical beauty—refined, ethereal, idealistic. It calls up seemingly outdated feelings of pleasure and sublimity. In lesser hands these works could sink into sentimentality. Instead, Sallin's rigorous attention to the precise images she uses in making her art, her well-honed sense of form and structure, and her ability to capture meaning place this work far from the kind of pleasure people associate with a Sunday afternoon in the park.

Like 17th-century Dutch painters, she has chosen her subject astutely. Vermeer placed his subjects near an open window, choosing materials for their complexity and response to light. So too has Sallin taken on the world of these translucent, fragile blossoms and depicted them within a cool, clear light. In the graphite drawings in particular, the white light unifies the surface. In the full-blown, lustier paintings, such as *Ivory Tulips*, color adds an emotional edge, further animating the surface but also propelling the subjects away from a pitch-black fathom of background space. The flowers are drawn with the artist's usual exquisite sense of detail. Sallin even finds something scary about the blossoms' open and closed forms, which have an ominous feeling as a group. In this case beauty and menace go hand in hand.

In the most current work, a suite of intimate paintings, "White Roses, #1,2,3,4,5," Sallin achieves keen, slightly offbeat color as the flowers gain density. These are exceedingly satisfying works that have very little in common with illustration. Here we find a crisp immediacy, a confidence and ease, as the artist looks inward to use the flowers as vehicles of self-expression.

—Pamela Hammond



Sandy Sallin, *Ivory Tulips*, 1992, oil on canvas mounted on panel, 32 by 26 inches. Koplin.