

Raclin Murphy Museum of Art

Seizing Beauty-Photographs by Paulette Tavormina

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 [Gina Costa](#)

SEIZING BEAUTY: PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAULETTE TAVORMINA

through November 27, 2016

Seizing Beauty is the first museum exhibition of works by Paulette Tavormina, a New York creative photographer celebrated for her reinterpretation still life paintings of the Old Masters. The representation of commonplace objects had its origins in ancient Greek and Roman painting. But it was in the Low Countries, at the end of the sixteenth century, that still life emerged as a genre and professional specialization.

To explore aesthetic goals to match her technical skills, Tavormina made an extended visit to Sicily, seeking out her ancestral roots and living relations. She returned to New York City, and began working at Sotheby's, the international fine arts auction house. She photographed works of art for auction catalogues, advertising, and scholarly study. Her work provided an extraordinary opportunity to observe and study European still life painting first hand. She learned its subtlety, complexity, and life enhancing power. Soon, in her own apartment studio, Tavormina experimented with photographic images inspired by the Old Masters. She recreated still-life arrangements inspired by artists such as Garzoni, and Merian, as well as Francesco de Zurbarán, Willem Claesz. Heda, and many others. Tavormina gathers her subjects, and arranges her compositions, exactly as her forebears. Her photographs reveal a practical knowledge of composition, color, form and illumination, comparable to their own. Aside from her

fine art work, Tavormina has continued to produce lush images for cookbooks, and historicizing photographs to illustrate such magazines as *National Geographic*, and *The New York Times*.

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