



Elena Sisto



Elena Sisto. *Flies*. 2013-2015. Oil on linen. 34 x 72 inches

and paint cans, art postcards, leaning canvases and even a small black dog are all part of it.

Busby II, for instance, shows Sisto's arms clasping brushes and the aforementioned canine to her midsection. Traditionally a passive subject, the female torso is repurposed here as a marker of creativity.

Other close-ups toy with the amount of information necessary for the viewer to register an image and digest what's being depicted. Sometimes Sisto's brushstrokes seem to momentarily veer toward pure abstraction before resolving, say, into an afghan thrown over the back of a couch.

Both in style and substance, Sisto plays with that instant of hesitation between unfamiliarity and recognition, looking and understanding. Her work reminds us that coherence is always in danger of collapsing into chaos.

Usually, the term *ham-handed* is considered an insult, but in the case of Elena Sisto's paintings, it takes on new, comical meaning. Her works depict oversize hands, full and rounded, with pink, fleshy digits holding brushes. But the images are far from clumsy, as Sisto pokes fun at herself while engaging the history of painting. Studio life is her focus,

Coates, Jennifer. "Elena Sisto." *Time Out New York* 13 Apr. 2016: 50.