
Ephraim Rubenstein

*Tibor de Nagy Gallery
41 West 57th Street
Through April 25*

Ephraim Rubenstein paints scenes of abundance and loss, innocence and experience, in a realistic style that is easy and unconflicted. In one painting in this show, an overgrown, abandoned farmhouse guarded by untamed trees is lodged in the midst of highly cultivated Virginia farmland. In "In Memory of Primo Levi," an empty chair, empty beakers and an abandoned copy of "Periodic Tables" produce a sense of a boundless scientific, literary and alchemical operation cut short before completion.

"Self-Portrait With Maddie" shows the artist in dungarees with his little girl in diapers perched on his right arm. Both are looking at us. She is chubby cheeked, with curly hair and a child's glance that seems both dopey and all-knowing. Although he is highly conscious and she isn't, she seems on some level more fully rooted and present than he. On a thin ledge behind them, a sea shell that looks like an inquisitive mythical creature faces an impassive miniature tree. Two of the child's toy dinosaur skeletons by his feet suggest ancientness and play. Mr. Rubenstein has lots of ideas about the differences between him and Maddie, and he paints them with affection and wit.