

Alan Sturm
Situations
April 20 - May 24, 2019

I first encountered Alan Sturm's work on the walls of The Living Museum, located on the grounds of Creedmoor Psychiatric Center in Queens, New York. The building is tucked away in the back corner of the Creedmoor campus, past several abandoned 19th century style buildings covered in foliage. Inside is a gothic 40,000 square foot labyrinth, full of art, and artists plugging away making new work. There is a strong sense of community and respect between the members, all whom have dealt with great tragedy in their lives.

I had not yet met Alan when I noticed his paintings tacked to the wall. The strange, sophisticated color palette and simple compositions—small acrylic paintings on scraps of raw canvas, frayed at the edges—drew my attention. The contrast between the modest designs and mature sensibility made the paintings stand out among the other work in the museum. I couldn't pinpoint my reaction to his work; was it the content, the colors, or the lines that made me want to see more and learn about the artist? Raised in Queens, Sturm had his share of drama and suffering that is not to be found in his art, and yet I couldn't help but wonder what this oeuvre was all about.

Sturm's works depict high heels, women's jewelry, and references to places such as Paris and Italy, locations he has never been. He uses text, writing names such as 'Mezi & Toni' and 'Gino Matto,' which means 'Gino Crazy' in Italian.

When our paths finally crossed, he told me he looks at women's magazines such as Vogue for source material. The text sometimes comes from brand names, but mostly he doesn't know what they mean or what language they are. He told me he chooses simple things to paint because they are straightforward to draw and it's easy to play around with color. "Jewelry is harder to paint than you think," he said. "It's like a pizza - there are very few ingredients but it actually takes a lot to make a good pizza!"

- Tisch Abelow

Alan Sturm (1952, Brooklyn) has been painting for six years. This is Sturm's first solo exhibition of artwork outside of The Living Museum. The exhibition opens with a reception on April 20th from 3-6 PM, and runs through May 24th. SITUATIONS is located at [127 Henry Street](#) in Manhattan, open Thursday - Sunday 12-6PM.

Tisch Abelow (b. 1985) is an artist currently living and working in NYC. She received her BA from Sarah Lawrence College (2007) and is currently a MA candidate at NYGSP. Her work has been included in group shows at numerous galleries such as Jack Hanley, New York, 247365, New York, and Interstate Projects, Brooklyn. She had two-person exhibitions with Peter Harkawik at Freddy, Baltimore (2014) and with Dakotah Savage at Essex Flowers, New York (2016). Abelow curated exhibitions at ART BLOG ART BLOG, New York (2011) and at The Hole, New York (2014). She recently showed with her brother, Joshua Abelow, and her grandmother, Paula Brunner Abelow, at Nina Johnson Gallery, Miami, Florida (2019). Abelow had her first solo exhibition at Michael Thibault Gallery, Los Angeles (2014) and currently has a solo show at Baba Yaga, Hudson, NY.