

# Flower Paintings

Alexander Russi  
Alexandria Tarver

PRESS RELEASE



Nov, 4th - Dec, 10th 2023

Opening Reception: Sat. Nov. 4th, 2023 4:30 - 7:30pm

The following statement was composed by the artists.

Standard Space is pleased to present Flower Paintings, a two-person exhibition featuring recent work by New York-based artists Alexander Russi and Alexandria Tarver. Flowers are a dominant subject in each of the artists' oeuvre. Their individual approaches, however, are distinct. Brought together, the effect of this shared dialogue is revelatory of the narratives contained within Russi and Tarver's respective practices, as well as offering glimpses and keys to understanding a history of painting through contemporary renderings of a subject that has often been interpreted across genres.

Alexander Russi sources most of his imagery from the backyard garden adjacent to his Brooklyn studio. While maintaining this space, he observes natural cycles and documents changing forms with an awareness of their ephemerality. The compositions of his paintings reflect the growth and morphing of the garden, and reveal an exploration within this intimate landscape. The entanglement of dense and verdant plant forms exists within the larger urban environment surrounding the garden, and creates a complex network which is decidedly mirrored in the paintings' wet-on-wet interaction of color, light, and gesture. Russi's direct approach to observing his local environment and capturing the flora and fixtures surrounding his studio belies an intelligence of formal interplay grounded in ideas of labor and site specificity.

Alexandria Tarver's approach is not so direct, as the quietude of the paintings suggests. Her most recent extended series, *nights*, recontextualizes the traditional floral motif into a space between memory, idealization, and presence. Beginning with an image of an arrangement encountered in life, Tarver renders the composition in pencil drawings. Transferring the vision drawn, on paper, onto a panel, in oil, she deftly employs techniques from various historical movements including post-impressionism, New England mid-century representationalism,

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and gestural abstraction. In the paintings, flowers and markings are situated as acting figures within the particular, ever-variable, and intensely observed color field of the night sky as viewed from the concrete grounds of the city. Built in layers, the vibrant blue of twilight oscillates against the flesh-tones of the central flower form - this blue sometimes deepening, sometimes shifting into an evening haze, sometimes sinking into purple-black depth, a depth halted by the ever-present electric glow of the skyline. She began painting these flowers after the passing of her father in 2014.

The essential force propelling the work by Tarver and Russi is the repetition of disciplined observation and painterly documentation. The resultant works exhibited here essentially use the floral subject to catalog the passage of, and experience of being in, time.

And what better tools are there by which to judge time, and our relation to it, than the presence of a flower — and the making of a painting?

Standard Space would like to thank Max Marshall at [Deli Gallery](#) for making Alexandria Tarver's works available.

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