

The Accommodations of Desire

A solo show of works by Alexander Nolan



Alexander Nolan, *A Monk and a Lady Share a Bottle of Wine*, 2020
oil on canvas, 127 x 76.2 cm, 50 x 30 in

12 August – 24 September 2021

Crean & Company

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Crean & Company is delighted to announce its forthcoming solo viewing room of works by American painter Alexander Nolan. *The Accommodations of Desire* (12 August – 24 September 2021) presents a new body of 31 works by the New York-based artist, whose paintings conjure a colourful world of fantastical realism, often inspired by scenes of life in his city.

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A black-humoured blend of the satirical, the surreal and the salacious, Nolan's paintings straddle the language of dream and absurdity. Each vignette-like canvas is populated by an imaginative and memorable cast of characters: a world of candlelit dinners with skeletons, sweetly serenading devils, and violin concertos attended by cats and dogs. His work is a contemporary reminder of painting as a deeply narrative medium, echoing the art of comic strips and cartoon illustrations exemplified by *The New Yorker*.



As reflected in these works – which span oils, acrylics, pastels watercolours and inks on paper – Nolan's influences are broad. A graduate of art history who later trained as an artist at the MFA New York Studio School, his work is an echo of numerous styles and movements, such as the genre paintings of Old Masters and twentieth-century surrealism. Nolan combines these traditions with the influence of contemporary popular culture – from the commercial palettes of *The Simpsons* to the darkly comic storytelling of *Tom & Jerry*.

In scenes that portray the hustle and bustle of life on *42nd Street*, or *77th and Madison*, there is a lively and now nostalgic quality to Nolan's works – many of which were painted over the course of the lockdown. 'It was quite a year, 2020,' says Nolan. 'I was truly inspired by the time. I've never made such a body of work that relates to the present time as a collective'. Examples such as *Stocking Up On Toilet Paper* poke fun at the pandemonium of 2020, while others such as *On Nancy's Couch* evoke the absurd tedium of self-isolation.

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As Nolan's first solo show with Crean & Company, this exhibition is testament to the enduring power of his imagination as an artist. 'I enjoy walking through my mind as if it were a forest,' Nolan says. 'I pick out here and there something of interest that I feel like expressing and exploring more deeply through the act of drawing. There is something mesmerising about the appearance of things - drawing the world around me stimulates the world within me'.



Images in order:

A Monk and a Lady Share a Bottle of Wine, 2020, oil on canvas, 127 x 76.2 cm, 50 x 30 in

String Trio, 2021, oil on canvas, 35.6 x 55.9 cm, 14 x 22 in

Painting a Thumbnail, 2020, ink on paper, 76.2 x 55.9 cm, 30 x 22 in

42nd Street, 2021, watercolour on paper, 27.9 x 38.1 cm, 11 x 15 in

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Notes to editors

Exhibition: Alexander Nolan - *The Accommodations of Desire*

Dates: 12 August – 24 September 2021

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About Crean & Company

Launched in December 2020, Crean & Company is an online gallery founded by collector Nick Crean. A timely online celebration of artists, makers and collectors, the gallery acts as a digitally curated space with viewing rooms full of curiosity, colour and conversation. Its line-up of contemporary international artists includes Kate Braine, Avital Burg, Julie Held, Thomas Merrett and Rupert Shrive.

About Alexander Nolan

Alexander Nolan (b. 1980, Milwaukee) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. He trained at the MFA New York Studio School after initially studying art history, the influence of which is evident in his work: from the genre painting of the Old Masters to the expressionism and absurdism of the twentieth century, his work presents an eclectic hybrid of different artistic styles.

Nolan's paintings have been exhibited in New York and Belgium. Though stimulated by the visual world, his work is deeply personal, painted from his imagination: 'There is something mesmerising about the appearance of things... Drawing the world around me stimulates the world within me'. His paintings explore the relationship between humour and solemnity, and the perpetual dichotomy between the infinite and the finite.