

## paintings

### // city spots series

"Nature makes me sick, I have to see tall buildings around me, and I prefer those of Manhattan."

Woody Allen

New York is a perfect example of a metropolis in all its glory. This city that Woody Allen admires is the same complex city that inspired Adam Sher in his "City Spots" series. The artist addresses this complexity by interpreting the city as a system of signs, an allegory of modern life.

Adam Sher's "City Spots" series was inspired by everyday life in New York City, where he once lived. This series of paintings inspects the influence of characteristic urban elements on the artist. The aesthetic urban experience produced is the artist's attempt to represent objective reality as well as his search for a dialogue with his environment.

His striving to relate to concrete life and reality clearly conveys Sher's deep love of the city. His paintings do not describe an ideal reality, but rather confirm the norms of our most distinct life patterns and, in doing so, connect with the mundane. He examines art in the context of real life and popular culture, paying close attention to the unattractive scenery that no one ever stops to look at.

Sher aspires to both a compositional structuring of reality and autonomy of form. He attempts to fix life in geometric patterns, to develop and convey an understanding of the living world through formalism. In the tradition of Baudelaire, whose art encompasses both the eternal and fleeting elements of the city, Sher is drawn to the modern urban landscape.

Sher is attracted to certain city spots, aware of relationships between objects and their urban context. He uses the urban landscape as an alibi to fulfill his interest in form. Sher doesn't distance himself much from the photographed original. He doesn't change the composition, but gives it a rich material texture and builds a tangible environment that involves and compels viewers to feel it with their eyes. Sher doesn't paint the human factor per se, but rather focuses on the human effect of consumption. Consumption is the fuel, an element necessary for the existence and life of the city. We live to consume.

Sher's work continues the tradition of pop art by elevating the everyday and mundane. His art formalizes the language of consumer society, specifically media and advertisement, the culture of the masses. Advertisement is relevant only in the here and now. In time it loses its meaning and turns into a graphic symbol of pure formality with no message. By depicting the pure aesthetic of

adam sher | painter

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consumer culture, Sher inspires a new spiritual reading of the urban landscape.

Sher's "Grocery Store" series presents store displays. The product packaging he depicts exists only in a society of plenty where basic human needs are taken for granted. The packages arranged neatly on store shelves represent for him the promise of an "ideal" society, consumer heaven. Sher plays the part of a sober consumer in post-modern time; by creating a dialogue with the artificial object, he expresses an awareness of the materialism inherent in the world around him. The viewer is drawn into a dialogue with the image, which is now free of its commercial context, and so is called upon to question the relationship between human beings and consumer culture.

Marshall McLuhan, in his essay "The Medium is the Message" (1967), claims that the means of communication, i.e. the medium, have a bigger influence on society than the substance of the transferred information. Inspired by McLuhan's emphasis on medium over content, Sher increases the abstraction and formalism in his work. While his early work is meticulously realistic, paying close attention to detail and employing precise brush strokes, his later works probe the borders between realism and abstract. The brush strokes become cruder, and some of the details disappear.

Sher's paintings are at home in the home, fulfilling their conceptual/functional purpose: the connection of the indoor and the outdoor, the creation of an urban aesthetic. The work connects the viewer to Sher's ideology of an "urban ecology," which centers on the undisturbed development of a city as a natural creative force. Sher replaces traditional aesthetics with a new urban evolutionary aesthetic. Standing in front of his paintings, the viewer can feel the connection between the materialism of the objects and the nature of painting itself.

**// galit semel, curator**

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עזר 88 (ה'תשס"ח) 05 'מחל' 83 היגור  
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 (ה'תשס"ח) 05 'מחל' 83 היגור  
 2004, שנת על, ל' ב'  
 180 X 140 ס"מ

אדם עזר

סדרת "city spots" נוצרה בתקופה בה שר חי בניו יורק והוקסם מחיי היומיום שלה. במבט בוחן הוא מתבונן בנוף הלא-אטרקטיבי שאיש אינו עוצר להתבונן בו, ובונה סביבה מוחשית שמערבת את הצופים וגורמת להם "למשש" את הציור בעיניהם. כך, מודגשים היומיומי, חנויות המכולת, מקררי הקרח, שיירי פרסום שהזמן נתן בהם את אותותיו וייצוגם עולה כמעשה אמנות. אף שהסצינה היא ניו-יורקית, המתואר בעבודות אלה אינו מסגיר את שייכותם ומיקומם, והוא יכול להתרחש בכל עיר בעולם.

\* מתוך: "city spots" גלית סמל, אוצרת



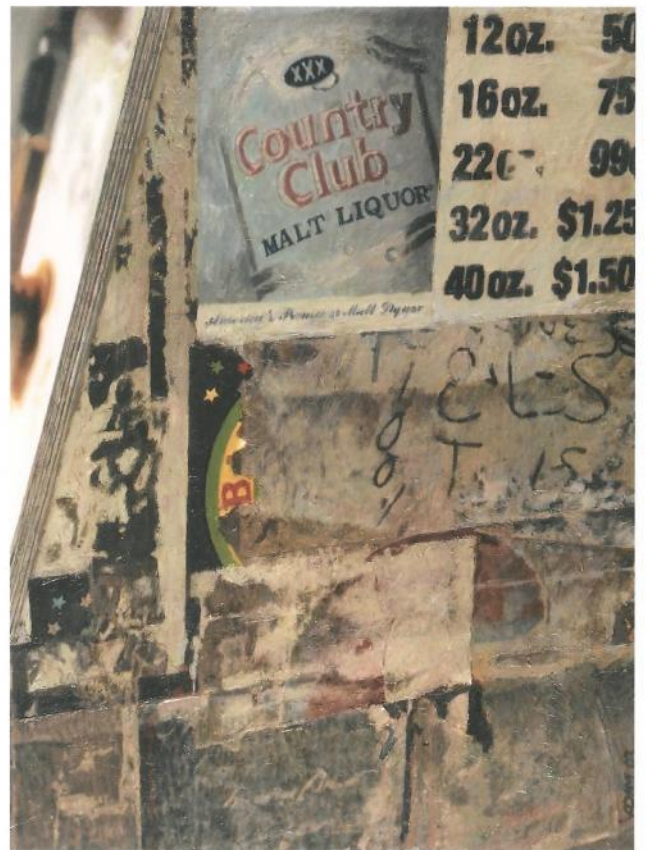
adam sher | driving school (106 st. and columbus ave.) | 2003 | acrylic on canvas | 120x160 cm



adam sher | grocery store (86 st. and columbus ave.) | 2003 | acrylic on canvas | 160x120 cm



adam sher | icebox (105 st. and amsterdam ave.) | 2003 | acrylic on canvas | 120x90 cm



adam sher | icebox (106 st. and columbus ave.) #02 | 2003 | acrylic on canvas | 120x90 cm



adam sher | candles store (106 st. and amsterdam ave.) | 2003 | acrylic on canvas | 160x120 cm



adam sher | grocery store (106 st. and amsterdam ave.) | 2003 | acrylic on canvas | 160x120 cm