

the black sky in the upper part of the work. The moon is always present.

It's as if Cicero has taken the sometimes overt violence of his expressionist paintings and turned that feeling into suspense, even dread, in the context of a mystery, a story. There is a suspension of emotion, as if one were waiting for a turn of events.

Yet, Cicero has been lightening up by making little Italian romances in the form of flower paintings and watercolors. "Lightening up" is a relative term here, since his flowers are spiky and animated, giving the impression they might come to life the way last year's fad gift, the dancing flowers, came to life when exposed to sounds. Cicero's flowers—usually in vases, often seen against watery nighttime cityscapes—are very much mediated by humans and full of meaning for humans. The artist says he was inspired in *Moonlight Flower* by the legend of the arethusa, an orchid that cures werewolves and only blooms by the light of the moon, as featured in the movie "The Werewolf of London."

All of the new work reveals aspects of Carmen Cicero, probably even to himself, and that is one of the highlights of viewing this exhibition.

Cynthia Nadelman