



Pelham **Art** Center

155 Fifth Avenue Pelham, NY 10803 tel: 914.738.2525 fax: 914.738.2686 www.pelhamartcenter.org

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## ***11th Biennial Alexander Rutsch Award Winner Matthew Cole Solo Exhibition Opens May 15 at Pelham Art Center***

*On View May 15 - June 26, 2021*

*Opening Reception Saturday, May 15th - 1 to 4 pm*



Matthew Cole, *Quarantine* (2020). Acrylic on Canvas. 60 x 84 in.

**Pelham Art Center is pleased to announce Matthew Cole as the winner of the 11<sup>th</sup> Biennial Alexander Rutsch Award for Painting. A solo exhibition of paintings by Matthew Cole is on view May 15-June 26<sup>th</sup> at Pelham Art Center. The exhibition also includes a selection of original works by Alexander Rutsch.**

[Matthew Cole](#) is a New Jersey born artist who lives and works in New York City and Paris, France. He received his BFA from Temple University (Philadelphia, PA) in 2010, and has exhibited in galleries in New York City, Paris, Philadelphia, and Cortona, Italy. Cole completed a 2018 artist residency in Okayama, Japan, and was the 2020 Artist in Residence at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Tucson, AZ.



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Cole employs traditional painting and preliminary printmaking methods to interpret memories of actual and subconscious events - amalgamations of real life and fantasy, often stemming from profound personal experiences. The processes of layering and distorting are instrumental in conveying emotion in his work. The artist uses composite imagery to represent the fragmented nature of memory, narrated through personal as well as familiar references from art



history. Guest juror Larry Ossei-Mensah remarks, "Matthew Cole's work elicited an immediate emotional response when I first saw it. The way he utilizes space within the pictorial panel of his paintings are replete with mysterious moods and energetic gestures. There is more than meets the eye and that made me view his paintings from a fresh perspective after spending more time with his work."

Matthew Cole was selected for the 2021 Alexander Rutsch Award from among eight finalists and 730 total applicants nationwide. The judging panel for the 11th Biennial Rutsch Award was comprised of a Rutsch family member, Pelham Art Center affiliates, and three guest jurors: Krista Scenna, Independent Curator and Owner of Ground Floor Gallery; Shazzi Thomas, Director of The Painting Center; and Larry Ossei-Mensah, Curator and Co-Founder of ARTNOIR. Matthew Cole shares, "I'm elated to have been recognized by such a prestigious panel of judges, for the Alexander Rutsch Award. I'm incredibly grateful and honored. The previous year had been a wild one for everybody; I can't wait to share what I've made of it, along with some works that I made before and after the height of the pandemic."

The 2021 Alexander Rutsch Award finalists include: [Jessica Alazraki](#), [Marietta Patricia Leis](#), [Olivia Baldwin](#), [Sky Pape](#), [Justin Tyler Bryant](#), [Jesse Wright](#), and [Kyle Hackett](#). These exemplary artists represent a diverse range of perspective and artistic approach.

The Rutsch family states: "We are honored and thrilled to have the Alexander Rutsch Award continue and commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Pelham Art Center. This year's finalists are an incredible group of painters with an exciting range of vision. We look forward to sharing the 2021 winner, Matthew Cole's magnificent work with the community. Thank you to the guest jurors, for their time and expertise. We are grateful to the Pelham Art Center staff and supporters for continuing this Award and exhibition at this exceptionally challenging time."



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### Opening Receptions & Programs

**An in-gallery opening reception** takes place Saturday, May 15th 1:00-4:00pm at Pelham Art Center. The Rutsch family will present Matthew Cole with his \$7,500 award in the gallery. This event is free and open to the public.

**A virtual opening** and a **virtual artist studio tour** will be scheduled during the exhibition. Details coming soon on [Pelham Art Center's website](#).

Pelham Art Center gallery hours are Monday-Friday 10am-5pm, Saturday 10am-4pm. Safety protocols observed and masks are required.

**Pop-Up Exhibition - Kenise Barnes Fine Art:** To view more works by Alexander Rutsch in person, visit the Rutsch Pop-Up exhibition of paintings and bronze sculpture at Kenise Barnes Fine Art in Larchmont, NY. Dates: March 4-7 and March 11-14, 11:00am to 5:00pm daily. Contact: Daphne Anderson Deeds, email: daphneadeeds@gmail.com.

### About the Alexander Rutsch Award

The Alexander Rutsch Award is a juried competition open to U.S.-based artists aged 19 and older. The winner is awarded a cash prize, a solo exhibition and printed catalog at Pelham Art Center. Pelham Art Center is proud to sponsor this competition and award honoring the memory and artistic achievement of artist Alexander Rutsch (1916 – 1997). Rutsch actively supported Pelham Art Center for more than 25 years. After his death, friends, family and supporters established a generous fund to support a biennial, open, juried competition in painting. To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Pelham Art Center, the 2021 Rutsch Award prize was increased to a total of \$10,000 in artist stipends, with the winning artist receiving the \$7,500 prize. The landmark stipend sum is also a response to the financial hardship affecting many artists at an exceptionally challenging time.

**The previous winners** of the Alexander Rutsch Award include:

2019: [Sarah McKenzie](#)  
2017: [Sammy Chong](#)  
2015: [Lindy Chambers](#)  
2013: [Siobhan McBride](#)  
2011: [Nina Rizzo](#)  
2009: [Tracy Miller](#)  
2007: [Liang Guo](#)  
2005: [Dorothy Robinson](#)  
2003: [Mitchell Marco](#)  
2001: [Frank Trankina](#)



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### About Alexander Rutsch

Alexander Rutsch was born in Vienna, Austria. After studying voice in Austria, he became an opera singer like his parents, but after WWII, Rutsch's love for visual expression propelled him to change careers. He was a painter, sculptor, philosopher, musician, singer, and poet. His life as a romantic is reflected in his work, as he sought to perfect his soul and humanity. "I paint my dreams," said Rutsch. "My dreams are color and life. They soar in my head like millions of symphonies. I can never stop building dreams."

In 1952, after studying under Josef Dorowsky, Josef Hoffmann, and Herbert Boeckl at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, Alexander Rutsch received a scholarship to study in France, where he made contacts and began collaborations with his contemporaries Picasso and Dali, among others. In 1954, he exhibited his work at the Salon Artistique International de Sceaux and won first prize for abstract painting, the first of many awards during his prolific career.

During the 13 years he lived in Paris, Rutsch exhibited in many prominent galleries there and throughout Europe. In 1958, the City of Paris awarded him with the prestigious Arts, Science and Letters Silver Medal. In 1966, Jean Desvilles presented his prize winning film "Le Monde de Rutsch" at the Cannes Film Festival and the Venice Biennial. In 1968, Rutsch moved to Pelham, New York, where he continued to work in his studio and exhibit in galleries and museums worldwide.

Rutsch's work, as seen through his mastery of various art forms – sculpture, painting, print-making, and drawing – has been described as "vibrating showers of lines, bold geometries, wounded anatomically rambling scrap-wood skeletons, enigmatic totem figures, and congregations of fetishized, domesticated, and recycled rubbish heaps [that] conspire to a fantasy of Expressionism, Cubism, Dada, Fauvism, Cobra, and Primitivism."

The Alexander Rutsch Award and Exhibition program continues Rutsch's belief that art transcends all of our humanity. Rutsch saw art as "the stone in the water sending ripples throughout the universe." His extraordinary work, rich in the celebration of life and our shared human experiences, is included in many public and private collections throughout the U.S. and Europe. Pelham Art Center is proud to sponsor a competition and award to honor the memory and artistic achievement of Alexander Rutsch. Visit [www.alexanderrutsch.com](http://www.alexanderrutsch.com) to learn more.

*Pelham Art Center is a non-profit educational and cultural institution committed to providing public access to see, study and experience the arts, foster lifelong arts appreciation and thereby strengthen the community. The Art Center was founded in 1970 and now serves more than 16,000 people each year. These events and programs are made possible, in part, by ArtsWestchester with funds from Westchester County Government. Pelham Art Center also receives funding from: New York State Council on the Arts, A State Agency; Westchester Community Foundation; Pelham Community Members and Annual Fund Donors.*

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