

GENE'S

Images by Tanya Brodsky

November 22nd, 2025 to January 3rd, 2026

The last time I was in Tanya's studio, she read the following quote from Guy Debord's 1967 canonical work, *Society of the Spectacle*, to me: "The spectacle is capital accumulated to the point that it becomes images." Nearly 60 years later, with social media having wrapped its tentacles around every part of the world, it's safe to say images now dominate our daily lives. We have come to define ourselves through manufactured goods, which weave seamlessly between tactile and symbolic forms. Images can be many things — a snapshot of lucky rabbit's foot keychains on eBay, an attempt to graph movement over time, a now-discontinued high-end brand of door hardware, or a relentless flow of manipulated language and objects.

Display structures can also morph objects into images by isolating them from everyday life. A museological specimen becomes an image in the same way a Temu ad does: We can see it, but we cannot feel it. And Temu's primary tagline, "Shop like a billionaire," perfectly encapsulates the rapidly developing commodity-driven lifestyles of this contemporary laissez-faire society.

For this exhibition, Tanya recruited her father — a retired Soviet engineer, who has a habit of getting into lengthy technical discussions with Temu vendors with the help of Google Translate — to build a pre-digital electronic controller for a sculpture. However, after weeks of mental gymnastics, physical labor, cross-country FaceTime sessions, and cryptic notes about currents and cycle times, Tanya realized his analog option was no match for the \$20 version she managed to find on Amazon. Mr. Brodsky's humanized accumulation of components and his use of making as a means for correspondence presents a subtle subversion of global capitalism on a personal level. I found this nostalgic brand of idealism to be remarkably romantic and inspiring; however, in today's fast-paced world, it unfortunately has become rather impractical.

And at this point, it is necessary to ask: What is the role of automation in saving time, which has become money, which we can use to buy time? What gestures are we trying to conserve? How do any of us "normal people" save money or time in the greediest period since perhaps the Gilded Age? You can ask artificial intelligence to research or write almost anything for you, but you almost always end up having to spend extra time re-researching or rewriting the whole thing. In her studio, Tanya brought up ghosts in machines, who aren't even that good at being machines, or ghosting, in general.

In an e-mail, Tanya told me that her jaw makes the same clicking sound as a door. She said, "Both are hinged, both can slam shut. Slamming your finger in a door is kind of like a bite." This made me laugh, because it's funny, but also because it's oddly profound. She has referred to door hinges as joints multiple times. This language triggered me, making me deeply consider the effects that rheumatoid arthritis, which I was diagnosed with when I was 17, and the subsequent chronic conditions I've developed over time, have had on me for the past 23 years. And of course, it reminded me of the genuine experiences and authentic connections that Debord argued have escaped modern life, insulated as we are by layers of spectacle.

Tanya talks about penetrating buildings: First, a little with a key; then, more with our entire bodies. She refers to buildings as having "good or bad bones." This also resonates with me because, again, I have had poor bones my entire adult life; sadly, I have not thought enough about the foundational sturdiness of the structures I have occupied since, like, maybe ever, because I have often been so preoccupied with the fragility of my own body. This connection between the body and buildings was both so powerful and poignant for me — these statements have stuck with me ever since Tanya first shared them. These days, whenever I penetrate a place — whether it be my home, my gallery, a library, a restaurant, or a sports arena — I now consider the bones of the building as much as my own. Thank you, Tanya.

- Keith J. Varadi, November 2025

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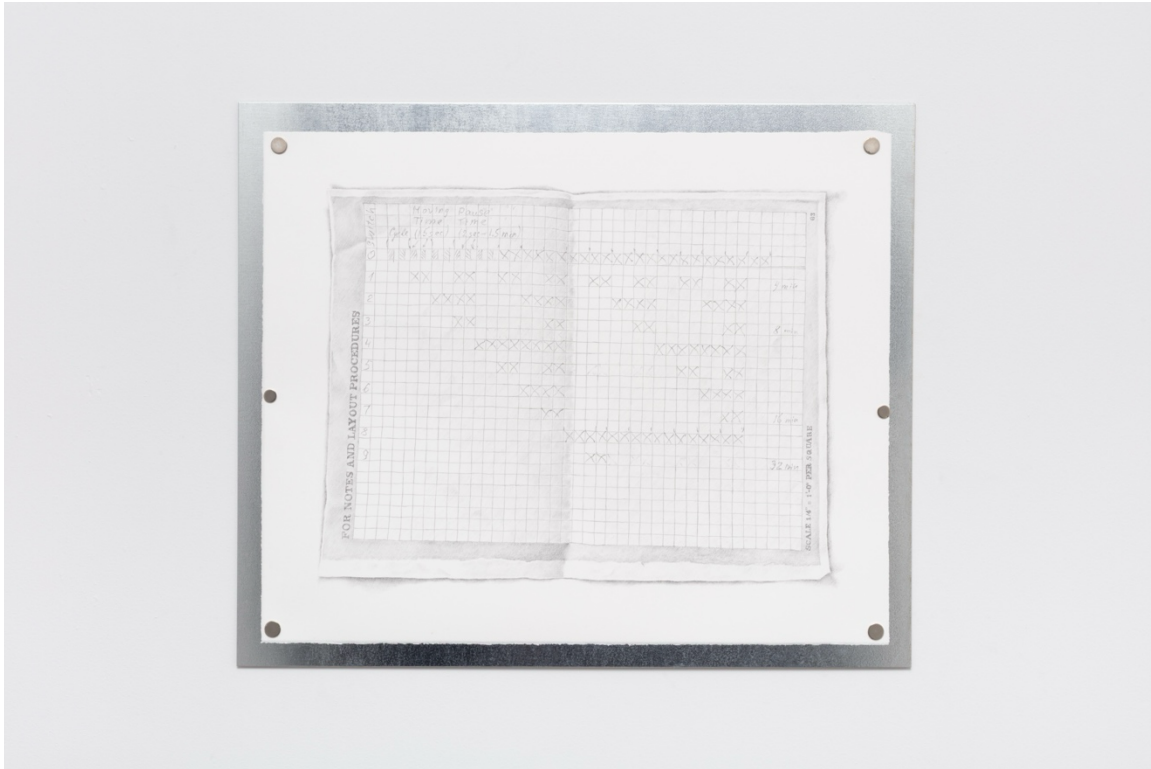


So Lucky; Rabbit's foot keychains and defunct keys to the gallery; Dimensions variable; 2025

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GENE'S



Time X; Graphite on Arches paper with galvanized steel display structure and magnets;
22 x 18 inches, 2025

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Thomasson; Steel and surgical steel dental crowns; 31 x 14 x 14 inches; 2025

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GENE'S



Natural History; Graphite on Arches paper with galvanized steel display structure and magnets;
22 x 30 inches; 2025

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GENE'S



Freeways; Graphite on Arches paper with galvanized steel display structure and magnets;
22 x 30 inches; 2025

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GENE'S



Images; Images by Baldwin doorknobs, steel, wood, ink, lacquer, and motor;
9 x 10.75 x 24 inches, 2025

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