

WYNN NEWHOUSE AWARDS

Martin Cohen

Statement

Disability:

I have been struggling with mental illness since my early twenties. I've been hospitalized several times over the years, with diagnoses ranging from schizophrenia to bipolar disorder. My current diagnosis is schizoaffective disorder.

Despite the shock of my first episode while I was a student at SUNY Purchase, my work has expanded. I have always been a mood-oriented artist. My illness has informed my work and made me more willing to experiment. It has also been therapeutic because it allows me to express my suffering artistically.

I believe that I work most passionately when my illness is at its worst. I listen to jazz, rock, or classical music while "acting out" on paper and canvas instead of in real life. My mood swings and hallucinations can be synergistic with my art. I feel that in combination they can enhance my creativity and my work.

