

HESSE FLATOW

Anklam, C. (2026, March 31). "Face to Face: March 2026." *Impulse Magazine*, online.

IMPULSE

Face to Face: March 2026
March 31, 2026 | Editorial Team

ALINA TENSER



Portrait of the artist, Alina Tenser, 2025. Photo by Willy Somma.

Plastic is the first thing we talk about in Alina Tenser's Maspeth studio. She tells me that the aquamarine blue and umber vinyl constituting her collapsible packing cube-like sculptures is marine-grade—a 30- and 40-gauge plastic that she needs to use an industrial sewing machine to serge—as I zip and unzip the toaster-sized cubes. The action is immediately nostalgic, partially because there's an inherent sense of play to these cubes, and partially because the strong scent of the vinyl reminds me of childhood experiences of plastic, like chewing on the flexible rubber of Polly Pocket clothes.

Tenser started to make these cubes a few years ago as cases for her concrete sculptures of letters of the alphabet. Ukrainian-born, she imagined them as containers that replicate the experience of compartmentalization inherent to speaking a second language, and she rendered them in a transparent vinyl associated with packing and the physical movement of immigration. Over time, they evolved into sleeves for her concrete sculptures of a single line that rotates at sharp angles, like a spiraling doodle made three-dimensional. This pattern, which repeats throughout her work, mimics Greek meanders—the running ancient Greek ornament that wraps around vases, jewelry, and the tops of buildings, symbolizing continuity, unity, and infinity. Tenser shows me pages of drawn meanders in her sketchbook and describes her interest in static objects that appear dynamic.

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Alina Tenser in *Circuit Meander*, 2026. Courtesy of September Gallery.

In the small courtyard behind her studio, which we reach through a dark hallway that suddenly becomes a bathroom and then a hallway again, we look at her latest meander, *Circuit Meander* (2026), a circle of steel mesh on casters held together with neon green zip ties. Currently on view at September Gallery in Kinderhook, New York, it stands in the center of the gallery, where visitors circulate the sculpture while it remains unmoved. A projection of her 2023 video *Walking in Circles with Sharp Corners* plays on the wall above. Holding the camera at hip height, Tenser films herself walking in a circle in the shallow metal pan of a large, welded square filled with water that continues to run.

Repetition is the central unit of Tenser's work, and her interest in the deceptively simple tension between rectilinear and circular forms appears again and again. Describing the relationship between *Circuit Meander* and *Walking in Circles* in a recent email, she emphasized repetition and rotation, and how "it is precisely the *act of repeating* a square path (in the video) and square shapes (in the sculpture) that creates a circle or circulation." In the video, she crops each shot so as to never reveal the whole of the form beneath her, our focus centering instead on her movement, the continuous loop of circling.