

Artist Statement:

During the course of my research I came across a quote by Mitch Horowitz which said, "Americans like organizing things, and the supernatural was no exception." Gabriel Furman, like any other American had views on the marvelous and supernatural. He was a firm believer in the authenticity of the moon hoax by Locke which refers to several articles published in 1835 in the New York Sun about the discovery of "winged bat like humanoids" on the moon.

Gabriel Furman was also a believer of Captain Kidd's Gold deposit in the Hudson. As I was reading through Furman's journals I noticed many articles on the pirate captain whose treasure was scattered across long island. Gabriel Furman wrote on May 1829, "The people still continue digging for Capt. Kidd's money in and about Brooklyn. On the hills it is no uncommon thing to see several large round holes, where they have been searching for the desired treasure. There was an instance lately of digging for money in a cellar in Gold Street in the city of New York." These ideas may seem strange or even impossible to us but, as written in a biographical sketch of Gabriel Furman published by the Faust club of Brooklyn, "the marvelous and supernatural on many subjects and things appeared to him as positive as mathematical facts"

With all of these ideas and beliefs he was often misunderstood. In A History of the City of Brooklyn by Henry R Stiles, He describes Furman with an "overweening love of study for it's own sake benumbed his sense of duty and responsibility to his family." According to Stiles, Furman was selfish for leaving his family to follow his passion but, how responsible are we for our families? As I thought on that question, I was reminded of a play, by Tennessee Williams titled The Glass Menagerie, where Tom, the protagonist, leaves his mother and sister to follow his dream. I believe that, like Tom, Gabriel Furman had to sacrifice his family to follow his love of study.

When I began my project I knew right away that I wanted it to be a creative project. I wanted to show Furman's different ideas and beliefs in a way that reflected who he was. I divided the canvas into four different sections to symbolize Furman's different roles as a: lawyer, Historian, politician, Writer, the list goes on. I went with a darker color scheme and two dimensional silhouettes to reflect his tragic end and give it almost an unrealistic feel.

The top right shows Furman's New York compared to the current NYC skyline that is seen from Brooklyn heights, Furman's home town. I wanted to compare the two to show the eventual growth that began in his life time. The bottom right symbolizes Captain Kidd's treasure submerged in the Hudson. I also researched the fish that inhabit the Hudson and added it to the painting to give it more of an underwater feel. But, I don't recommend anyone go fishing for them now. The bottom left shows Gabriel Furman in his study. Since there are no pictures of Gabriel Furman I've decided to use his writing to represent him. I feel like Gabriel Furman, in a sense, has become his words, and will forever live on.