



## Rachel Kainy | Free Immersion

19.9.19–9.11.19 | Curator: Maya Frenkel Tene

Rachel Kainy's continuous preoccupation with the essence of human experience, is ever-present in her current show. Her paintings are inhabited with stories of Greek Mythology and the Bible, as well as future disasters that appear as Surrealist scenes, held in a dialogue with canonical works of art. Figures of women, men and children surface from within translucent layers of paint and spark a wide range of human emotion – pain, anxiety, abandonment, parenthood, intimate relations, love, beauty and faith.

In her works, Kainy investigates the relationship between technique and content. She deconstructs painting into its bare structural and formal elements while maintaining a constant dialogue between narrative and the material of her work. Some of the works in this exhibition begin with the physical submerging paper in water, allowing the different colors to free float and slowly settle on top of the paper. The movement of color in the water predetermines the initial form of the image. Fluidity, overflow, and "muddy" areas are often associated with unwanted "accidents" in aquarelle painting. Yet, in this series, Kainy purposefully summons conditions of loss of control over the medium, allowing water to spring, flow through, drain, and form natural edges, flooding the image from within. The conflict between the amorphous blob of paint and the artist's attempt to extract a figurative image from it speaks to her need to introduce order into chaos and imbue it with meaning, even if a momentary and a fleeting one. Other than being a point of departure for her work, the process of submerging the paper in water offers a symbolic meaning: it alludes to the act of *Immersion - Tevilah*, Baptism whose purpose is to cleanse and purify the body through the water that engulfs it, and allowing for unification of outside and inside, between the water that envelops the body and then water that form it from within.

The concept of "Abject", coined by the philosopher and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva outlines a primal space that contains opposites: human and animalistic, natural and cultural, profane and sacred. Bodily fluids and secretions represent that which has been rejected from the body, removed from it, and looked at as abhorring and



threatening. Historically, religion treated the abject as synonymous with profanity, requiring purification rituals to rid oneself of it. With the emergence of Feminist art, abject became central to many art practices. Abject art investigates body parts that so far were considered taboo, cultural and religious symbols, trauma and cult. The relationship between abject and femininity gave birth to a form of subversive esthetics that empowered female characteristic, so far suppressed under patriarchal culture. Kainy's work is in dialogue with abject art through its preoccupation with the physicality of the female body, with pregnancy and birth, and in the way in which water and color drain in as puddles of bodily fluids and secretions. In the work *Dance*, (referencing Matisse's well-known painting) a group of women partake in a party in the woods, in what seem like an uninhibited, pagan ceremony. The work *Flood* references the myth of the destruction of the world and its reconstruction again out of rocks and soil that morph into skeleton and flesh. In the series *Reliefs*, Kainy recreates early paintings as three-dimensional objects. It is through creasing or wrinkling - an act usually associated with the failure of the work of art - that Kainy gives body and volume to her painting and turning it into a relief.

During the exhibition, the artist will be present in the gallery on selective dates and will invite the visitors to share with her their personal story, that she will commemorate through painting in real time. This interactive performance asks to shift the viewer's gaze from a spectator to an active participant in the artist's process.

The artist will be present in the gallery on the following dates: Friday 20/9, 11- 2pm, Saturday, 5/10, 11 - 1 pm, Saturday, 26/10 11 - 1 pm, Friday, 1/11, 11 - 2 pm.