

Boaz Noy: Side Walks

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Curator: Maya Frenkel Tene

Passerby/ Pedestrian - a person traveling by foot (as opposed to a driver)
 Hebrew Academy

The word combination 'Passerby' defines an entity in transit, yet at the same time it alludes to a physical and mental state of moving through an urban landscape. The pace of walking - an aimless flânerie with no specific destination or a quick and purposeful pace - affects one's ability to record the sights and events of the city. In Boaz Noy's paintings, the passerby / flâneur is the painter himself. Yet, he is neither the classic flâneur of Benjamin*, who has all the time in the world as he aimlessly strolls the city, nor is he a city-mouse, rushing to get things done. The pace of his walk is intense and somewhat frantic and he is on a constant pursuit of a "decisive event" that will instigate his painterly mechanism. The city is like a reclining model, always available and constantly moving, but even more importantly, it offers itself as a container to the painter's emotional and mental state. Like the flâneur, whose dispersed gaze uncovers what lies beneath the surface, in his paintings, Boaz seeks to unearth what is hidden from view, to create an image that does not necessarily represent something in the world. Therefore, his paintings are situated on the border between figuration and abstraction and between Realism and Expressionism. On the one hand, the reality around him serves as his inspiration and an engine for work, and on the other, he seeks to withdraw from it as much as possible toward the 'medium', that is painting itself, in order to examine questions relating to color, mass and composition, yet at the same time, not allowing painting to become completely self-referential.

The paintings are born at a decisive moment, through a mundane day-to-day drama, out of an excitement whose origin is in a specific time and place - a unique, one-time experience that births the painting and at the same time is embedded into it as a clear, sharp memory. The urgency of the painterly gesture stems from the need to reconstruct a fleeting subjective experience, to recreate it onto the canvas in its full vitality. Hence, in the painting **December is coming to Wadi Nisnas** - the essence of the painting seem to lie in what is not included in the "frame", like children coming back from school during lunch hour, cars driving slowly up narrow alleys, food courts offering their goods to passerby patrons, and a general excitement that can be felt in the city in the days right before the holidays. The light, the temperature, the atmosphere and the sounds, are all transformed into blots of color, marks, lines, erasure-marks and gaps peering through the thick layers of paint. Loading the surface on one hand, relinquishing and erasing it on the other. An organized and concise chaos. The pulse and urgency emanating from the paintings become a form of a statement - the beauty is at our feet, on the sidewalk, the sublime resides in the plentitude and the pictorial gestures are at the core of the painting - at times gentle and soft, and at others deliberately raw.

The paintings in the exhibition are rich with elements of local urbanism - balconies, rooftops, pillars, electric cables, solar water tanks, Ficus trees, curbstones and traffic signs. Investigating them does not necessarily relate to their colorful or compositional nature, but rather, through these concerns, Boaz seeks to understand the very nature of the eclectic collage and cultural chaos within which we exist. It is in the mixing of "luxurious" and wretched that he finds interest and beauty.

*"The flâneur" appears among others in Walter Benjamin's series of essays on the Passages of Paris, The Flâneur, Part I, translated to Hebrew by David Singer, 1992



Boaz Noy (b. 1972) lives and works in Haifa. Graduated from Bezalel Academy For Art & Design, Architecture Dept. (2003) and from The Student Exchange Program at Ecole La-Villette, Paris (2001-2002). Recipient of "Artist in the Community" Award, Ministry of Culture (2012-2014). Founder And Co-Director of Gate 3 Gallery, a Social-Commercial-Art Project, Down Town Haifa (2014-2019). Boaz Noy's works have been exhibited internationally and in Israel, among others are "And what shall we do with painting in the 21st century?" Haifa Museum of Art, Curator: Ruth Direktor; "Haifa-Jerusalem-Tel Aviv", Haifa Museum, Curator: Ruth Direktor; "Keeping at Distance: On Intimacy in Contemporary Painting", Petch-Tikva Museum of Art, Curator: Liza Gershuni; "Gripping" two-person exhibition with Yoav Fisch; The fourth Mediterranean Biennial, 2021, curators Belu-Simion Fainaru and Avital Bar-Shay, and more. His works are included in public and private collection in Israel and internationally.