

Noa Ironic: Much Respect

06.01.22 — 12.02.22

Curator: Maya Frenkel Tene

The works of Noa Ironic reflect a long standing investigation into representations of masculinity. In recent years she has been focusing mainly on images of jockeys and horses, which she depicted clashing in bright colors yet embarrassing situations of control loss. Despite the physical and cultural distance from horse racing sports, Noa was fascinated both aesthetically and metaphorically with how this type of sport represents on the one hand the machismo culture, and on the other, a clumsy, heavy handed and pathetic masculinity.

In this exhibition Noa returns from her flaneuring in the heart of British aristocracy to the everyday local reality, and through saturated colors, humor and pictorial language reminiscent of caricature painting, she describes men in her life and in ours. Childhood friends with whom she grew up in Eilat, vendors in south Tel Aviv 24 hour convenient stores, men who compliment her on her looks ending in insults, night swingers waiting outside clubs to be let in. Her works defy images of the Israeli male militancy, the pioneers, the successful tech industry workers. Instead it is asking to celebrate the non-apologetic Israeli culture of bartering with one another, the legitimate flip flops-instead-of-shoes everywhere, the unapologetic machismo, of the kind that would fight over a parking spot. For them, for "her people", Noa seeks to create works of art they can identify with, and in which they can situate themselves, or their neighborhood friends, alongside a possible unfulfilled wish they share, with some of us - to one day get out of the car and finally yell on that guy that just cut us in traffic... In this, the exhibition asks to break through the barriers of elitism and inaccessibility that stems from the contemporary art field, due to which many of them choose not to come to art venues. "Much Respect" is what one says in a family festivity, perhaps now, one may say it in an exhibition.

The pictorial practice and the direct and grotesque style raise questions about the position of the paintings and the artist's point of view on her subjects: is this an attempt to offer a voice to the unrepresented in the local art scene, or, is this a critical stance, one might say a patronizing one, of an artist who was able to "crossed the border" into the very heart of the art scene? Is this a feminist critique of a woman who absorbed too many sexist remarks and suffered the male gaze on her one too many time, or, perhaps is it that her paintings speak to a magnetic sexual attraction to them? Do the figures in the paintings speak of stereotypical caricatures or do they reflect an honest interest in the layered and complex fabric of the Israeli society? The viewers are invited to decide for themselves.

Noa Ironic (b. 1993) lives and works in Tel Aviv. A graduate of Shenkar Multidisciplinary Art School (B.F.A., 2019). Winner of participation award in Edmond de Rothschild Design Center, Tel Aviv (2021). Her work was featured at Spring exhibition, Kunstal Charottenborg, Copenhagen, Denmark (2020), Freshpaint art fair Special Edition 2020, and a one-person show in Place X, Milan (2021). Winner of America Israel Cultural Foundation Award for Outstanding Graduate Exhibition (2019-2020). Her work is included in private and public collections in Israel and abroad, this is her first exhibition with the gallery.