

Rachel Kainy : A Call to Order

06.03.25 — 19.04.25

Curator: Maya Frenkel Tene

In the current exhibition, Rachel Kainy presents several new series, some of which build on previous bodies of work, while others explore fresh ideas and techniques. While her primary medium is watercolor, her practice also integrates material research and experimentation. Over the past year, Kainy has introduced natural earth pigments, traditionally used in ceramic restoration, into her paintings.

One of the series presented in this exhibition depicts gatherings of people in various situations. The exploration of this theme began during the protests against the judicial overhaul, driven by a sense of urgency and a looming fear of civil strife, and intensified after October 7, when the protests shifted their focus. Through paintings of figures in motion—sometimes resembling dance, sometimes struggle—Kainy observes how individuals align and act within a group, a crowd, or a community. In this way she seeks to create a new, harmonious order within the pictorial space, as imagined microcosm that reflects the world beyond.

In the series **Missing Houses**, Kainy has created minimalist, almost transparent compositions, where the dominant element is the paper. The absence is present through white geometric shapes, enclosed by earth pigment. These paintings embody a paradox - the expressive brushstrokes and the use of earth pigment mixed with water create a muddy layer, typically viewed as a failure in classical aquarelle painting. Here, however, it serves as a tool for representing destruction.

The piece **Bouquet** from the **Stacks series** features a dense composition evoking a crown or circular bouquet, drawing on themes from mysticism, astrology, and biblical stories. The twelve zodiac signs are paired with symbols of the twelve tribes of Israel, suggesting a representation of time and place that transcends the immediate present. Another work in this series, inspired by the jazz classic 'Take Five', reinterprets the imagery through variations, much like the improvisational nature of jazz, where a basic melody is reshaped and reinterpreted in multiple forms.

In the project room (Rosy), a series of works created nearly a decade ago is presented in its entirety for the first time. These paintings document Palestinian embroidery found cut near Kainy's home in the Ein Kerem neighborhood. The patterns are rendered in oil pastels, meticulously recreating the act of embroidery, while the fabric itself is painted in black ink, capturing not only the intricate designs but also the missing spaces and unraveled threads. This process seeks to repair or breathe new life into the embroidered fabric as an image.

Rachel Kainy (b. 1981) lives and works in Jerusalem, best known for her aquarelles as her main practice since her studies. She graduated with honors from Hamidrash School of Art with a B.Ed.F.A, 2008. Her work has been featured in many exhibitions, among them at The Israel Museum, The Artists Studio in Tel Aviv and in The Jerusalem Artists House. Her works are included in private and public collections among others Israel Museum, and Haaretz Art Collection, Tel Aviv. She is the recipient of a 2024 Grant from the Plumas Art Foundationthe 'Haaretz' Art Collection.