

Noa Ironic

No Rest for the Wickedness

05.02.26 — 21.03.26

Curator: Maya Frenkel Tene

In the "Rosy" project space, Noa Ironic presents a new series of works created during a visit to Israel after two years of living and studying in the United States. The works are the result of an intensive "painting retreat" in the studio of her friend, artist Isabella Volovnik - a stay within a "bubble," far from the political reality outside and the dissonance that has accompanied her life as an Israeli art student in the US. There, she has been required to navigate daily encounters with peers ranging from identification and pity to overt hostility.

This temporary detachment allowed Ironic to submerge into a protected space, to the point of "napping in the open maw of a crocodile," as depicted in one of the paintings. The atmosphere in the works suggests a sense of harmony and ease; the cynical and critical gaze toward masculinity that characterized her previous work gives way to a softer, more intimate gaze, seeking a sense of "rest and peace" within the domestic sphere.

The painterly language also undergoes a fundamental shift. While Ironic previously focused on depicting the state of mind of her characters through social realism, in this series she focuses on bodily gestures, style, and a painterly language leaning toward abstraction. Consequently, early modernist influences are evident in the new paintings, such as Cubism inspired by Picasso and Braque. In the work **Existential Crisis**, for example, the figure disintegrates into reflections that merge feminine and masculine qualities into a single entity.

During her studies in the US, Ironic sought to "unlearn" her academic knowledge in favor of a renewed observation of Middle Eastern art and culture from a geographical distance. Through an exploration of ancient art from the region - including, among others, Egyptian and Assyrian reliefs - she seeks to reclaim an ancient history and construct an imagined local artistic identity. Similar to the "Canaanite" movement in Israeli art history, but while attempting to shed the Western-Orientalist gaze, she asks: "What is Israeli painting?". This search, connected to her family's roots in Israel for generations, exists within the dissonance between the desire to focus on the self and the guilt that accompanies distancing oneself from a demanding local reality.

Noa Ironic (b. 1993, Eilat) lives and works in Tel Aviv and New York. She holds a BFA from Shenkar (2019) and an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) (2025). She is a recipient of the America Israel Cultural Foundation Award (2019) and the emerging artist award from Edmond de Rothschild Foundation Center, Tel Aviv (2021). She has presented a solo exhibition at Place X Gallery, Milan (2021), and participated in numerous group exhibitions worldwide, including Lost In Plot at Tchotchke Gallery, New York (2021), and the Charlottenborg Kunsthalle Spring Exhibition, Copenhagen (2020). Her works are included in private collections in Israel and abroad.