

Iva Kafri

**ADAMA**

Solo Show

Curator: Maya Bamberger

June 18 – July 25, 2020

ADAMA, Iva Kafri's third solo show at the gallery, comprises large-scale paintings in acrylic, pigments, charcoal, and collage, on canvas, aluminum or perspex. In the days leading up to the exhibition, Kafri created installation-paintings between the works.

The paintings' point of departure is always the internal essence that seeks to come into the open. It converges with the choice of materials, and so begins a process of balancing and discourse between the formalistic direction steered by line, smear, and shape, and by the refinement of internal need. Random accidents and images from the real world coalesce within this dialogue. The extended work process allows the conflict between the elements to develop on the surface with a complexity into which breath, movement, and allusions to the painted body must also enter.

There have been attempts to position Kafri's paintings in relation to the abstract movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but they refuse to conform. In a critical moment, the painting urged the painter to break through the borders of the canvas and to the space beyond. Its expansion to many planes of color and form in the space - as in Solo Exhibition at RawArt, in 2013, or Multiplane(S), presented at the Tel Aviv Museum the following year – has allowed for infinite perspectives that frame it, time and again, as different paintings in the eyes of viewers.

Alongside the site-specific installations, Kafri continues to make two-dimensional works on various surfaces in her studio. The current set of works, which had come together in three pulses, interrupted and continued intermittently in accordance with life's circumstances, began with the discovery of aluminum as a surface that always reflects the gaze. Concurrently, Kafri is returning to the traditional canvas, for the first time as a mature artist. The soft and absorbent fabric facilitates, in parallel with Kafri's characteristic initial gesture, a layered buildup that pierces the depths.

Motifs such as eyes, tribal masks, and tangled foliage recur again and again in the paintings. At the core of the exhibition, the paintings are bounded by a circle, containing a pose that traces an image of a figurine Kafri has photographed at the Musée du Quai Branly, in Paris. The 40-centimeter-high pre-Columbian terracotta figurine is approximately 2300 years old. It depicts a woman with a child lying in her arms. As the exhibition's opening approached, Kafri began to explore the origins of the figurine, a photograph of which had been hanging in her studio and discovered that it was being used in funereal rituals (and that it had come from a village called Villa Corona, in Mexico).

The completed painting on canvas, faced with the one forming in the space, necessitates a resolution, or a multiplicity of resolutions, to be made by the artist before the moment of presentation. Although the viewer is denied the option of taking a concrete stand regarding the framing of the painting, they are presented with an opening – beyond the initial confusion that stems from confronting an abstract painting, immediately followed by iconographic recognition – to track the performative gestures made by the artist and join the conversation between what is painted, the body, and the entity facing them. Kafri's painting always reveals the course of its realization; reveals and activates.

Iva Kafri (b. 1981) lives and works in Tel Aviv. She is a graduate of the MFA program at the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Paris, where she has earned an ENSBA, as a student of Jean-Marc Bustamante and Dominique Gauthier. Kafri has had solo exhibitions at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art and RawArt Gallery in Tel Aviv. Her works have been exhibited in numerous group exhibitions in venues both in Israel and abroad, including the Petach Tikva Museum of Art, Haifa Museum of Art, the 1<sup>st</sup> Herzliya Biennial of Contemporary Art, La Générale en Manufacture in Sèvres, France, Vault and Tape Modern in Berlin, and Tilton Gallery in New York. Kafri was awarded the prestigious Rappaport Prize for Young Artist by the Tel Aviv Museum in 2013.