

**IVA KAFRI CONTINUITY**  
Solo show | Curator: Leah Abir  
**12.1-11.2.2017**

"Each line is now the actual experience of its own innate history" –Cy Twombly

"[Her] art is beyond one's grasp even as it takes shape in the mind: too big, too small, too simple, too complex." (Raphael NAdjari on Iva Kafri's work)<sup>1</sup>

Iva Kafri's new exhibition at RawArt Gallery follows two recent solo shows by the artist, in which she presented large-scale painting installations, using gestures of painting and collage to form complex spatial compositions – the 2014 "Multiplane(s)" Rapoport Prize exhibition at Tel Aviv Museum, curated by Anat Danon Sivan, and her 2013 exhibition at RawArt Gallery curated by Nogah Davidson. In "Continuity," her current show, Kafri presents paintings she had created over the last three years, parallel to the aforementioned painting installations. They are composed out of wallpaper stickers, masking tape, acrylic paint, pictures the artist took and drawings, printed on transparencies, spray and paper on plexiglas. "Continuity" focuses on Kafri's continuous studio work, displaying paintings that encapsulate her insights regarding space and movement, stemming from her three-dimensional practice.

Kafri's paintings may resemble at times an elaborate obstacle course: the transparent surface is a plastic representation of the ancient metaphor of the painting as a window to the world; the wallpaper stickers are a material manifestation of the danger of decoration, which the avant-garde abstract were faced with. However, although the works are easy to place within the stylistic, universal, even musical, discourse of abstract painting, one should take into account the spatial and mental proposal Kafri's paintings put before us. As David Joselit argues, "gestural abstraction... carries with it a quality of the human that is not merely subsumed by spectacle, but that can move alongside and even confront it"<sup>2</sup>. The issues that emerge from her paintings are characteristic of contemporary painting. They are questions of speed, saturation and scale, as Joselit observes, directly confronting the accelerated changes taking place in contemporary visual culture. In this sense, the paintings could also be read in the context of the information age or internet era, and of the ideological transformations occurring all around us in relation to visual knowledge, its organization and distribution<sup>3</sup>.

Most of the paintings in the exhibition are diptychs – artworks consisting of two panels that are placed side by side, but never merge<sup>4</sup>. This painting format holds various tensions and conflicting forces, which Kafri uses and plays with in her paintings: repetition and difference, division and connection, disruption and continuity, signification and narrative, opening and closing, plurality and selection, as well as verticality and horizontality. The diptych, of which the split screen is a contemporary manifestation, is an emblem of dispersed attention. But at the same time, by allowing parallel and simultaneous occurrences, it intensifies a certain instant in time and space, constantly demanding us, the spectators, to focus and make choices. The diptych in Kafri's work functions as an element of disruption and airiness, and it allows for the insertion of snippets of reality into the painting's surface. Most importantly, it registers continuity by means of its essential split. In front of each of the paintings, we are faced with a complex whole that draws us to alternately focus on its different parts.

Similar to this viewing process, Kafri's lengthy painting process is composed of critical moments of observation, selection and action. One after the other, the painterly gestures, the collagistic cutting and pasting, and the insertion of printed images accumulate. They form relations, and assemble constellations. In her paintings, the artist employs gestures of organization and association, side by side with more organic gestures of corporal movement. Her works offer us different paths to walk in and various spaces to delve in.

Born in 1981, **Iva Kafri** lives and works in Tel Aviv. She is a graduate of the MFA program of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Beaux Arts de Paris. Kafri has had solo exhibitions at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art and at RawArt Gallery in Tel Aviv. Her work has also been exhibited in various group exhibitions worldwide, in venues such as the Petach Tikva Museum of Art, the 1st Herzliya Biennial of Contemporary Art, La Générale en Manufacture in Sèvres, Vault and Tape Modern in Berlin, and Tilton Gallery in New York. Kafri was awarded the prestigious Rappaport Prize for Young Artists from the Tel Aviv Museum in 2013. Her work is presented these days in the Tel Aviv Museum collection exhibition.

<sup>1</sup> Raphael Nadjari, "Iva Kafri: The Poetry of the Multiplane," in Iva Kafri: Multiplane(s), exh. cat., The Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 2014, p. 62

<sup>2</sup> Susanne von Falkenhausen, "Different Strokes," a conversation with David Joselit, frieze.com, 11 Nov 2015 [accessed 1/1/17].

<sup>3</sup> In the concluding sentence in Joselit's catalog essay from 2016, the writer notes: "Painting embodies dislocation, the affect of networks." See: David Joselit, "Reassembling Painting," in Manuela Ammer, Achim Hochdorfer and David Joselit (eds.), *Painting 2.0: Expression in the Information Age*, Vienna: Mumok - Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien; Munich: Delmonico Books, Prestel, p.180.

<sup>4</sup> The diptych is an ancient format, most identified with Christian votive paintings, such as foldable icons for personal use. But the diptych can also be found in modern and contemporary art: Andy Warhol's Marilyn Monroe diptych, Francis Bacon's two-sided works (the first of which he painted in 1967), or Bil Viola's video diptychs starting in the 1990s.