

Liav Mizrahi

Black Bile

Kav 16- Community Gallery for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv

2011

Black Bile, Liav Mizrahi's Solo show presents a new body of works including paintings, objects and ready made, which consolidates into a unified coherent narrative.

The ancient term "Black Bile" relates to the phlegm theory (red bile-blood, white bile-mucus, yellow bile-bile and black bile), according to which a man suffering excess of one bile will be sentenced to physical instability and illness. Redundancy of Black bile will manifest itself in a melancholic and depressive temperament and was connected in later centuries to mental illness and insanity.

Under aesthetical codes and formalistic abundance, Mizrahi's works create at the gallery space a loaded contemplative conscious-psychological atmosphere on one hand, and a reserved and hesitant on the other. His lexicon imagery and work techniques present an introspective and sensitive line of thought enabling psychological and emotional aspects to rise from the image, form and material. In works such as ready made xeroxed notices of lost cats, that he took from his neighborhood, and paintings in which images of a 'village's fool' and a 'martyr' are depicted, Mizrahi avoids the discussion on the "disabled"/"unusual" person in society, but seeks, to drive attention to existential fears and hidden anxiety from which potential violence, danger and evilness echoes.

Mizrahi's works reveal an obstinate, almost uncontrolled struggle, between the need to reveal and the desire to hide in a metaphorical and symbolical level and also in his working techniques. This intermediate stage arouses at the same time curiosity and confusion, creating an attraction-rejection relation between the viewer and the artist. The works Untitled (The village's fool) created from cloth, paper and thermal material layers, piling one on top of the other till they create the image as well as the inscription "sorry I forgot myself", erased from blackened paper of the work answering to the same name, are expressions of this contradictory, provoking and enigmatic tendency. It seems

like a materialistic struggle between consciousness and unconsciousness, vision and blindness, occurs.

A "Sisyphean" laboring process characterizes Mizrahi's works. He recruits the artistic action applied at the works as it was a part of his iconographic repertoire – becoming an analogy of his complicated complex stage. In the work Sorry I forgot myself, the artistic action of the paper burning with a candle flame repeats itself again and again till it wounds the surface of the work, darkening it till this becomes a none uniformed abstract surface. This work technique reveals signs of distress, trouble and obsession.

The cone motive, familiar from Mizrahi's previous works, is presented at the show when blackened, underlining its violence potential through the dark spiky presence. The cone motive appears once in the form of a whip made of small thorny cones functioning as a potential accessory to move the curtain in the work Untitled (Curtain), while in the work Untitled (table-mirror) *they become a series of serrated cones placed in meticulous lines on top of a mirror, separating the viewer from his reflection.* This symbolic assemblage composed from a school chair and table and a mirror arouse associations on punishment, control, narcissism and self-hatred. In the work Untitled (cave) the cones became a sharpened system of stalagmites and stalactites closing the interior of a fantastic apocalyptic cave landscape depriving entrance and exit.

Mizrahi present at the show different working techniques and succeeds in refining a different visual language in each work. For once it is an expressive painting with a graphic appearance reminding medieval wood cut prints (like in the work Untitled (martyr), and another time its an abstract and associative painting (like in the work Sorry I forgot myself), stretching his artistic limits but remaining loyal to an ichnographic consolidated way of thinking.

*Black Bile* is a personal exhibition looking inwards into the artist soul, examining the relation between psychology and art through a system of art history sign and symbols. The spirit of art labor hovers above all, presenting the art process as a secure stage guarding the artist's sanity in places it is possible to get lost.