

Givon Art Gallery

Avner Ben Gal

”Take the long bone home”

23.3.2018 – 28.4.2018

The paintings of Avner Ben Gal come about as the accumulation of a total and comprehensive vision. They bring the picture of a world both in its terminal phase and its state of origin, a world where the human, animalistic, mechanical and vegetal aren't quite differentiated, where the categories of flora, fauna and inanimate beings are not, as yet, clearly distinguished. So are the states of matter: In the world that unravels in his paintings, all things are simultaneously solid, liquid, gas, and plasma.

Man is not at the center of this world, nor does he possess the ability to act in it or to make sense of it, rationally. It is a world where man exists as one entity among others, where he isn't but a movement of coming into being and non-determination.

“The space in my works,” says Ben Gal, “has lost its definition due to some man-made or natural catastrophe. There's self-destructiveness in it, but no self-pity. I work out of a sense of urgency, of immediacy. There's no complacency there, no calm and composure. One can look for symbolism in it, but I, personally, don't go there.”

The paintings of Ben Gal are like generators of extremes. The spatial and body formations they generate are constantly disintegrating, always in the process of blending into an indistinguishable mash where suddenly – and temporarily – an explicit image might appear, detailed and narrative. The inner tension between a world that remains illegible and one given to cinematic-like manifestations produces an irresolute equation between the abstract and the photographic. Philip Kaiser, the curator of Ben Gal's 2008 solo show at the Museum of Contemporary Art, in Basel, has characterized his paintings not as following from photography, but, rather, as paintings that contain a photographic pre-knowledge.