

## Modernism, in spite of and above all

Newly inaugurated at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, a permanent display of Israeli art from the museum's collection raises the question of an unresolved encounter, while bringing up the need for a discourse. The curator, Dalit Matatyahu, opens a terrain for display and action where all artistic positions previously active in the train Art are equally represented, without preference to any above the other which outstands the matter.

The show is akin to an invitation, or yet a demonstration, of conflict resolution.

In 'conflict resolution', all sides must be present so as a decisive theme and clear position may emerge. Instead of a petty historiography of minor disputes and account settling, the show performs a recalibration of thought. It offers rudimentary benchmarks rather than a rigid umbrella imposed on the viewer. By the very possibility it affords of a negotiation between the agreed-upon and conflicted, or even that which escapes us, justice is rendered as to the various narratives of Israeli art.

Collective memory presents its own peculiar troubles. It calls on the viewers for an abundance of self-criticism on how an historical value or other is maintained on through successive generations, and how they may situate themselves within it.

The expressed refusal of taking an intractable position amount to a pureness of heart, to doors being opened wide. If just one artist of merit resurfaces on to the collective memory as a result, or an artistic guideline – this enabling approach will have proven itself.

That's the greater question of the show: Over and against the extant, here-and-now, the sorted-out and under social-institutional consensus, which the Givon Art Gallery, too, is part of, that which piles of texts had been written on, and which constitutes the passion of the art collector: Why does art feel as though it has long been revolving around its own shadow.

In view of the achievements made in the language of visual art and modernism, such that have already made their mark and solidified, is there nowhere left to venture other than a derivative populism outside the bounds of an art world consensus as it exists today. Yet to be considered, art's achievements, once made, are irreversible; their validity is solid and unchanging.

And why does the show seem to presage the end to an age of minute argumentation and time, true to a primary experience where all values are under a re-examination on the museum's platform. The very possibility granted to reading and regarding things anew is a clear necessity. A kind of refresh.

Givon Art Gallery (est. 1975) has specialized over the years in themed exhibitions and in forging social and political contexts, in tackling the qualities of visual art and the meaning of our own 'private' modernism – and here we claim a number of important achievements, even if these were mostly absent from a wider, international context: "Where Are the Children" (2002); "Critically Correct" (2004); "Hazeret" (2005, curated by Ory Dessau); "Critically Correct 2" (2007); "Critically Correct / Power Misused" (2012); ETH[N]ICS (2013); and recently "Counter Balance" (2021) and "Agenda" (2022) at the Givon Art Forum.

Society has its own ways of 'reading' art and consuming it, whether as viewers or through its monetary value. This phenomenon did little to change the gallery's position, which makes do with

the little credit and attention it receives, persisting on its way through any crisis that may erupt: political, economic or social.

The solo shows we have conducted this year at the gallery: Raffi Lavie, Gabi Klasmer, Igaël Tumarkin, Moshe Gershuni, Lior Tamim; and at the Givon Art Forum: Nurit David and Marik Lechner; even the recent shows by gallery artists exhibited and curated elsewhere – Pinchas Cohen Gan at the Museum on the Seam, Israel Kabala at the Petach Tikva Museum, Maya Attoun at Magasin III, and Yitzhak Golombek at the Maya Gallery – all point to the same direction.

It might be that an insistence on the gallery's point of departure is a necessary outcome of the fear of losing one's way in the current scene, in the multiplicity of art approaches, the immense concessions made in the art world on its inherent values, those that have been achieved and are now presented to us in flattened, mannerist forms – even in the museums, which are supposed to be free from any distortion.

This new exhibit recently opened at the museum touched me deeply, and its contribution consists in the basically free opening it provides.

The possibilities are open, the hand is there to note.

**N.G**