

The Old North

Ishai Shapira Kalter

The French Institute is pleased to announce the opening of, 'The Old North', a new solo exhibition by the artist Ishai Shapira Kalter. In the exhibition, Kalter will present the curatorial object, "Reason Subverts Purity," which continues his exploration, by challenging and tying together accepted definitions that differentiate, between the role of artist, curator or collector.

Entire chapters in the history of art have been written in the last few centuries about the lives of a handful of works of art while hundreds of works created during the lives of artists have remained undocumented. The obvious conclusion from this is that the human ability to perceive chapters in time and represent them as part of a significant history is limited. Every 'important' artist creates works of different and changing value - be it artistic, aesthetic, moral, economic, intellectual, historical, etc. Be it Some works of art that found themselves in an important collection, or on which a large number of articles were written and that burned them into humanity consciousness. In contrast, a 'minor' work by the same well-known artist that was found in a sketchbook, in many cases remains unknown. Therefore, even the works of recognized artists have a hierarchy that reflects diverse categories of judgment of taste that change from time to time on an imaginary scale designed to be a measure distinguishing between 'important and immeasurable' to something that has no importance at all. For instance, there are works of art that their destiny is considered to have a high status as they have been exhibited and collected by important museums since the artist has lived. These works of art will enjoy conditions of preservation and public recognition and therefore it is likely that their impact on future generations of art practitioners and in exceptional cases even on the general public will be immense. The lives of these works of art will be longer than the life expectancy of the one who created them. These works of art produce for entire civilizations a broad common denominator - both horizontal and vertical.

The works of art at the bottom of the scale go through a twist, and their story is not rooted in conventions. They live in the secondary art market and absorb the sweat stains of the world. As the world warms up they turn yellow. As the humidity increases they fade, condense, disintegrate, stain, or decompose. They crumble as they pass from the hand of one merchant to the hands of another merchant. These works of art become a decoration in a study or living room, are inherited and their story is devoid of statehood. They are in fact a tiny poetic story of an object. Their presence is a testament to life in a home, basement, attic or dusty box. Their lives are like pages flying in the wind. These are works that, even at the time of their creation, were not considered major by the artist themselves, even if the artist was influential. Such works of art are understood as 'inferior' and therefore have become miserable remnants, signs of casual action, thought, gesture or memory of an encounter - a sign of a life that was and is no more.

"The Old North", an exhibition by Ishai Shapira Kalter at the French Institute, is ostensibly a group exhibition of the best Israeli (Jewish) painters who worked and died in the 20th century. Their works depicting female figures or portraiture of bodies in transition that are now placed as raw material in the work of Kalter, who in recent months has purchased them on auctions at the secondary market of Tel Aviv, in estates found in the Old North neighborhood or were found in stale cellars on Ben Yehuda Street. These drawings were released and captured into a single Curatorial Object - 'Reason Subverts Purity' - which continues Kalter's preoccupation of tying the accepted definitions that differentiate between the role of the artist, the curator or the collector. Over the past few years, Kalter's practice has used the curatorial medium as an artistic medium while deepening questions of areas of responsibility, organization and community.

Ishai Shapira Kalter (b. 1986) lives and works in Tel Aviv - Yafo. In the last decade the artist lived in South America, Jerusalem, London, Tel Aviv, Yafo, New York, Baku and Paris. Since 2017 He runs the nomadic exhibition space 'Ventilator'. He received his MFA from Hunter College, New York, NY (2017) where he studied under the guidance of Prof. Thierry de Duve. Kalter received his BFA from Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, IL (2013), in the framework of which he also attended The Slade School of Fine Arts, London, UK (2011). His first exhibitions and projects were hosted by venues such as Institut Français, Tel Aviv, IL (2021); CCA - The Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv, IL (2020); RawArt Gallery, Tel Aviv, IL (2019, 2017, 2015); Art-O-Rama, Marseille, FR (2019); The Lobby, Tel-Aviv, IL (2019); Art Basel, Basel, CH (2019); Placement Produit, Paris, FR (2019); POPPOSITIONS Off-Fair, Brussels, BE (2018); India Art Fair, New Delhi, IN (2018); Art Market Budapest, Budapest, HU (2017); Veinti4/Siete Galería, San José, CR (2017); YARAT Studios, Baku, AZ (2016); West Space, Melbourne, AU (2015); Hayarkon 19, Tel Aviv, IL (2015); The Helena Rubinstein Pavilion for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv, IL (2014); MoBY Bat Yam Museums, Bat Yam, IL (2013) among others. Kalter received several fellowships, grants and scholarships and participated in residencies including Cité Internationale des Arts, The Jean and Albert Nerken Scholarship Fund, Asylum Arts Research Grant, The Rabinovich Foundation Grant, the Israel Lottery Council for Culture and Arts Grant and others. His works and writings were published on Spike Art Magazine, Point Contemporain, Columbia Uni. Journal for Literature and Art, Artviewer, Tzvetnik, HaAretz and more. Ishai Shapira Kalter was an Adjunct Faculty at The Art History Department in The Tel Aviv University, works as a freelance lecturer at The Tel Aviv Museum of Art and works as an educator at the varied programs in Liebling Haus. His practice will be shown in 2021 with The Tel Aviv Museum of Art and in Dortmunder Kunsthalle, Dortmund, DE.

Reason Subverts Purity

1935-2021. Curatorial Object, 155x190 cm

Ishai Shapira Kalter

1. Yitzhak Frenkel (1899-1991), Unknown title, 1964. Marker on paper, 45x32 cm
2. Yehezkel Streichman (1906-1993), Unknown title, 1935. Charcoal on wrapping paper, 51x37 cm
3. Samuel Ovadiahu (1892-1963), Unknown title, Unknown year. Marker on cardboard, 51x36 cm
4. Avigdor Stematsky (1908-1989), Unknown title, Unknown year. Pencil on paper, 43x32 cm
5. Batiya Lishansky (1899-1992), Unknown title, 1973. Pencil on paper, 33x21 cm
6. Jacques Mory-Katmor (1938-2001), Unknown title, 1964. Inkl on paper, 32.5x21 cm
7. Abba Fenichel (1906-1986), Unknown title, Unknown year. Charcoal on paper, 35x42.8 cm
8. Bella Brisel (1929-1982), Éprouvé au solaris original, Unknown year. Oil on paper, 50x38.5 cm
9. Batiya Lishansky (1899-1992), Unknown title, 1962. Pencil on paper, 34.5x24.5 cm
10. Batiya Lishansky (1899-1992), Unknown title, 1975. Pencil on paper, 34.5x24.5 cm
11. Arieh Lubin (1897-1980), Unknown title, Unknown year. Pencil on paper, 23x30 cm
12. David Handler (1904-1964), Unknown title, Unknown year. Ink and aquarelle on paper, 25x35 cm
13. Moshe Sternschuss, (1903-1992), Unknown title, Unknown year. Pencil, marker and pen on paper, 21x25 cm
14. Aharon Kahana (1905-1967), Unknown title, 1958. Charcoal, pencil and aquarelle on paper, 19x13.5 cm
15. Sultana Souroujon (1900-1962), Unknown title, Unknown year. Crayon on paper, 18x13 cm
16. Jacob Steinhardt (1887-1968), Unknown title, Unknown year. Pencil on paper, 19x13 cm
17. Michael Argov (1920-1982), Unknown title, Unknown year. Ink on paper, 17x12.5 cm
18. Aharon Giladi (1907-1993), Unknown title, Unknown year. Pen on paper, 12x13.5 cm
19. Zvi Meirovich (1911-1974), Unknown title, Unknown year. Pen on paper, 14.2x10.2 cm
20. Zygmunt Schretter (1896-1977), Unknown title, Unknown year. Pencil and pen on paper, 18.3x13.6

