



משכן לאמנות עין חרוד
Museum of Art Ein Harod

I. S. Kalter: *Dim View Corridor*

This is I. S. Kalter's first solo museum exhibition, featuring a new series of paintings as well as a collection of *curatorial objects* from recent years. I. S. Kalter, who since 2017 has also been running the nomadic exhibition space Ventilator, coined the term *curatorial object* in order to describe his curatorial practice as an artistic medium.

The work *Reason Subverts Purity* (1935–2021) resembles an archaic institutional bulletin board. This curatorial object, which was first exhibited as a single object in I. S. Kalter's exhibition at the French Institute in Tel Aviv, is ostensibly a group exhibition of the best Israeli (Jewish) painters who worked and died in the twentieth century. Their drawings, depicting female figures or portraying bodies in transition, are placed as raw material in this work by I. S. Kalter. In the course of 2020–21, the artist used the exhibition's budget to purchase these drawings at auctions at the secondary market of Tel Aviv, in estates found in the Old North neighborhood or in stale cellars on Ben Yehuda Street. These works of art formerly decorated offices, studies, or living rooms; they were sometimes inherited and their story is devoid of any institutional significance. Their presence is a testament to life in a home, basement, attic, or dusty box. These sheets of paper flew in the winds of the twentieth century and absorbed the sweat stains of the world. When it warms up, they turn yellow; when humidity increases, they fade, condense, disintegrate, stain, or decompose. They crumble as they are passed between merchants. Their makers did not see them as major works when they produced them, even if they themselves were regarded as major artists. These works of art were perceived as “inferior,” and as such have become pitiful remnants, the products of a casual action, thought, tribute to, or memory of an encounter; a vestige of a life that used to be and is no more. All were collated by I. S. Kalter into a single curatorial object, which continues his preoccupation with conventional definitions that distinguish between the roles of the artist, the curator, and the collector, by subverting them or binding them together.

The series *Living Paintings (No One Will See)* (2021–2) comprises eighteen small-scale abstract and murky oil paintings in a uniform size of 40x50 centimeters. I. S. Kalter painted them on canvases of the sort sold to amateur painters, in painting styles that were fashionable in the West after World War II. He framed them in lacquered wood typical of vintage furniture. Set in a

diminutive horizontal landscape format, they do not depict any concrete landscape, but rather a local climate – i.e. the swirls of a gloomy soul, the energy of a yellow sun, desiccated vegetation in a severe heat wave, war, or destruction. The surfaces are made up of many thin layers of oil paint, both in a technique of wet-on-dry and of wet-on-wet. It is an indexical series which, at the time it was painted, lay beyond the boundaries of language and its rules. It is an attempt to capture the existential essence of being. Most of it was painted when the artist was in the throes of prolonged bouts of panic and depression, which he has suffered from every summer since taking part in the Battle of Ghanduriyah in the Second Lebanon War.