

*'Patterns'***MATAN MITTWOCH**

12.12.2019 - 08.02.2020

Dvir Gallery is pleased to present 'Patterns', Matan Mittwoch's third solo exhibition with the gallery, the first in our Brussels' space.

In this new body of works, Matan Mittwoch continues his exploration of the technological tools that surround us and the control devices that they include. The artist aims at triggering a question concerning personalization and its limits in virtual domains, as well as its reflections on enforcement and freedom. By using rather common photographic processes, he manages to expose the tension between material and virtual, actual and fictional, genuine and staged reaching into the most basic questions humanity asks itself today regarding reality and interconnectivity.

(1 > 4 & 7-8-10) The photography series 'Patterns' examines self-representation and self-camouflage, doing so by re-photographing the profile images of users on dating websites who live in areas where the use of such platforms is forbidden or carries a heavy personal risk. Using encoded VPN technology (virtual private network), Mittwoch sets his IP address to a specified GPS location, coming into contact with other users who, from their side, apply a host of non-tracking plugins to camouflage their actual location and identity. The resulting images, now large-scale and abundant with visual data, conceal all the more the identity of the persona represented in them; it is as though the closer we get, the more the persona evades us. These profiles - born out of the need to participate in today's online platforms despite social stigma and interdiction - manifest an alternative mode of asserting oneself in this world of global media.

(6) The title of the work 'Let them be light' comes from one of the first verses of the book of Genesis, which became the basic expression of godly creation. By substituting « there » for « them », the artist shifts both the meaning and the tone of the inscrutable godly imperative into that of a neutral plea.

In this sculpture, a tinted glass panel leaning against the wall is affixing an electrical cable which powers an illuminated sign behind the glass, in daylight temperature, spelling the word « daylight » – a technical term used in physics to designate a range on the spectrum of light temperature, as well as the sum of light coming from the sun, either directly or refracted from any object on planet earth.

Matan Mittwoch examines the evolution of « daylight » from its origin in the story of creation to a technical term familiar to anyone using a hand-held digital device. It is a terminology that harbors an inherent tension: from sunlight to screen light, the same word used for digital screen configuration harks back to the primordial, mythological words of an almighty creator. 'Let them be light' explores the tension between « daylight » as an element that shapes the universe at the time of creation, dividing up time and space, and a screen control present on every mobile device, which every user can set.

(9) In 'Online', a single-channel video, the presence and the absence of light alters dramatically our perception of an image. Throughout the video, the dark frame only shows the erratic motions of a light blue line accompanied by a rattling sound. For a few moments light is switched on, revealing a stained, gray-tinted floor; the gleaming blue line, which gave the impression of an electrical discharge, an electroshock weapon or even a digitally-generated image, reveals itself to be a rope or a cable, a plastic-coated light-up jumping rope whose rattling movement was produced manually, in the studio.

Alternating between diametrically opposed lighting conditions - from zero illumination to full electrical lighting - the image too shifts between two widely-opposed sets of connotations, going from the violence of a high-voltage electric discharge (or the harshness of natural elements) to a child's play in the confines of a closed environment. Recorded live, the rope's rattling sound participates in the manipulation of our sense perceptions, keeping the viewer on edge and teetering between spectacular eruptions and the matter-of-factness of a recognizable object; between tension and its release.

(11 › 14) 'Off the Grid' consists of solar panels set in a frame behind a darkened glass. Filtering the rays of light coming in, the glass strips the panels of their original functionality, returning them to the state of a pristine aesthetic often associated with the geometry of grids, as in a work of abstract art from the previous century.

The title of the work is a reference to artist Agnes Martin, who was known for her austere and often monochromatic grid paintings. The sequential pattern of the panels follows 'On a Clear Day', a series of prints that Martin created in 1973, the first work she had made since leaving New York City in 1967 and going "off the grid," so to speak, settling in a series of locations in New Mexico where she lived in near-complete isolation for many years.

To Mittwoch, the solar panels represent a set of opposites. On the one hand, as a self-sufficient system, they allow individuals or a community to disconnect from the grid of society; on the other, they represent connection through the continuous flow of energy generated by sunlight.

*Matan Mittwoch's works have been shown in such institutions as Tel-Aviv Museum of Art, Tel-Aviv; CNEAI Art Center, Pantin; Momenta Biannual, Montreal; The Helena Rubinstein Pavilion For Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv; Petach Tikva Museum of Art, and most recently locally in SOCIÉTÉ, Brussels. His first solo exhibition in an art center in France will take place at L'Onde in Velizy under the title 'Facing Landmarks' on January 18, 2020.*