

Victoria Miro

Tal R: *Untitled Flowers*

Exhibition 26 May–30 July 2022

Victoria Miro, 16 Wharf Road, London N1 7RW



Tal R
Untitled Flowers, 2022
Oil on canvas
172 x 147 cm
67 3/4 x 57 7/8 in
© Tal R
Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro

Victoria Miro is delighted to present *Untitled Flowers*, an exhibition of new paintings by Tal R. The paintings are complemented by a large-scale installation of drawings. On view in the waterside garden will be a number of recent bronze sculptures by the artist.

In his work Tal R often employs apparently simple compositional devices and motifs from everyday life to create complex, atmospheric worlds that, beginning with the recognisable and known, expand or collapse into spaces of enchantment or ambiguity, heady with atmosphere and colour. For the past few years he has made paintings and drawings of flowers in vases. Each work depicts a bunch of flowers picked by the artist from around his home in the Danish countryside, presented in a vase on a tabletop within a closely cropped interior space.

In this deceptively quotidian world there is a deliberate, non-hierarchical sense of things existing on the same plane. Throughout, perspectives are tilted to create an intimist space in which the seemingly everyday is served by the image's emphatic flatness. As

the artist explains, ‘You can’t say the table or the tablecloth is less important than the flowers. You have to say everything counts.’ Nonetheless, we notice how certain stems ascend buoyantly while others droop under heavy heads, how blooms become like characters within and between the works. There are definite emotional registers at play in addition to the rich chromatic ones we encounter at first sight.

Flowers in vases are, of course, a kind of contained beauty, nature tamed, and in this context they can be considered as *memento mori*, poetic reminders that our time is fleeting. The artist would always prefer to talk about his work in terms of what he defines as the ‘painter’s mathematics’ – how a stem goes into a vase or hits the water. And yet, as he says, ‘I think if you talked to a mathematician very late at night, he would say mathematics is very emotional. It’s actually a way of organising the world. I’m trying to organise things that have too many details.’

Sculpture has long been an integral part of Tal R’s practice, its presence – metaphorical and material – leading to an extended consideration of things we might label as ‘objects’ that, in the shared physical realm of the exhibition space, begin to exert themselves as ‘beings’. For the artist, the figurative sculptures on view in the gallery’s waterside garden are the most complete expression of this career-long impulse. ‘I’ve made many different kinds of sculptures,’ he says. ‘Looking back, they all tried to rise up and be figurative: a boy walking, somebody lying down, somebody standing up.’

As with his paintings, these are works that dwell in both contemporary and historical realms – indeed, viewed together, they tackle different aspects of the great classical tradition. A kneeling archer, or a striding figure such as *Adidas Boy*, in fact a sculpture of the artist’s teenage son wearing sportswear and sporting a mullet haircut, appear initially as archetypes. Also like his paintings, the sculptures on view are materially lush. Shaped in clay, cast in plaster and moulded in bronze, they draw the viewer into their tactile surfaces, inviting us to consider mysteries of origin and meaning that, far from being assuaged by recognition or familiarity, are enhanced by it.

About the artist

Born in Tel Aviv in 1967, Tal R lives and works in Copenhagen. Institutional exhibitions in 2022 include Tal R: *The Wrong Side*, an exhibition of sculptures and drawings, on view at Artipelag, Stockholm (15 January–1 May 2022); Work by the artist also features in the group exhibition *Human Conditions of Clay* at John Hansard Gallery, Southampton (19 March–17 May 2022). Recently, the artist has held solo presentations at Ordrupgaard, Copenhagen, Denmark (2021); Glyptoteket, Copenhagen, Denmark (2020–2021); Magasin II, Jaffa, Israel (2019); Hastings Contemporary, Hastings, UK (2019); MOCAD, Detroit (2019). His major survey *Academy of Tal R* opened at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark in 2017, touring to Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam. Previous solo exhibitions have been staged at institutions including ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Aarhus, Denmark (2013–2014); Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2013); Kunstverein in Hamburg (2011) and Camden Arts Centre, London (2008), amongst others. Tal R held a Professorship at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf from 2005–2014.

His work is held in public collections including: ARKEN, Ishøj, Denmark; ARoS Århus Denmark; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands; Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, USA; Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht, Netherlands; Bronx Museum of the Arts, Bronx, New York, USA; Goetz Collection, München, Germany; Hammer Contemporary Collection, Los Angeles, USA; Kiasma, Helsinki, Finland; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark; Magasin III, Stockholm, Sweden; Moderne Museet, Stockholm, Sweden; Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA.

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