

GUY YANAI

YOUR WORLD NOT MINE

KÖNIG GALERIE | NAVE
5 JULY – 1 SEPTEMBER 2024

KÖNIG GALERIE is pleased to present YOUR WORLD NOT MINE, an exhibition of new works by Guy Yanai. His work features mundane motifs such as portraits, flowers, modernist interiors, idyllic landscapes, and stills from French films. The sources and synthesis underlying these pieces do not form a logical or thematic whole. Despite this thematic incoherence, the show forms an organic body of work, marked by clarity in form, power of will, and a spirit of resilience. As the artist himself says, "This show affirms once again the power of painting (both the noun and the verb) to transform our relation to life."

YOUR WORLD NOT MINE was produced between Marseille and Tel Aviv. Over the past eight months, the artist has continually traveled between these cities for personal and logistical reasons. In one text exchange with his wife, Yanai was complaining about all the forces that seemed to be against their marriage. Aurore, his French-born wife, replied: "Your world not mine." The moment was close to an epiphany. Suddenly, the work that the artist was making became clear. All of these works are about longing, jealousy, wanting, and a distant and almost exotic fascination with the culture that produced the annals of Western art history. It instantly became clear to him that, yes, that is not really his world.

Yanai continues in his trajectory of the past few years. Recurring sources such as the films of Eric Rohmer (of which Gene Hackman said, "I watched a Rohmer film, it was like watching paint dry"), the writings of Marcel Proust and Michel Houellebecq, and the oeuvre of artist Cy Twombly permeate the work and feel of the painting.

One of the central works in the show is REINETTE AND ERIC, PARIS, in which we see Rohmer and actress Joelle Miquel during the filming of "Four Adventures of Reinette and Mirabelle" (1987) in Paris. The film, which has influenced dozens of Yanai's paintings over the years, tells the story of two girls with different backgrounds and worldviews and their encounters via art. In the context of the exhibition, the parallels with the film's plot become particularly relevant and highlight the question of differences and the concepts of both belonging and feeling foreign.

The show also includes a series of small-scale still lifes. Yanai has long been fascinated by flowers and their transient beauty and vitality. This time, his flower paintings are complemented by the work A BLONDE WOMAN (AFTER PALMA VECCHIO). Yanai appropriates the image of the same-titled painting from the 16th century, making it his own with his specific painting style of strict, almost geometrical lines. The woman holds a bouquet of flowers as a poetic allusion to Flora, the goddess of spring. However, it can also allude to the name Flora, which was common for courtesans in sixteenth-century Italy, giving the painting a new sense of eroticism and pleasure.

Another significant work in the show is the painting AURORE. Usually, Yanai draws inspiration from the world around him – his surroundings, art history, books, and even the Internet. His private life remains a parallel universe to his painting world, with only a few references to personal experiences. For the first time, Yanai draws a portrait of his wife, Aurore. The work stands out with extraordinary intimacy, tenderness, and thoughtful lightness.

Guy Yanai's paintings capture frozen moments – glimpses of the past, empty rooms, and objects imbued with a sense of presence, stills from films that, taken out of context, become symbolic. The enigma of his work lies at the intersection of the pleasure of painting (both as a noun and a verb), melancholia, and a profound sense of longing and not belonging. The exhibition serves as both a declaration of love and a poignant confession about alienation and the struggle to transcend the invisible borders between the different worlds we all inhabit.

KÖNIG GALERIE

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