

Opens Thursday January 5 from 6–8 pm

Exhibition continues through February 11, 2017



L'Evasion 2015 pigment and rabbit skin glue on canvas
78 3/4 x 67 3/4 in 200 x 172.1 cm

Cheim & Read is pleased to present *Tal R: Keyhole*, an exhibition of recent paintings and drawings by the Copenhagen-based artist. The show will open on January 5, 2017, and continue through February 11. This is the third solo exhibition of Tal R's work at the gallery.

Several years ago, Tal R put out a request to his friends and acquaintances to send him photographs of storefront façades in the red light districts of their cities, or that they saw in their travels. He also took many photos himself. From these images he developed the group of artworks that comprise *Keyhole*, a title he chose for its implications of voyeurism and concealment.

The drawings, dating between 2014 and 2016, are done in crayon and gouache on paper that is frequently painted or patinated. They are not studies for the paintings despite their similarity in image and tone—whimsically rendered frontal views of sex shops, massage parlors, strip clubs, gay bars, erotic theaters, and brothels—but constitute a separate body of work. (There are drawings that correspond to the subjects of the paintings selected for the show, but they are purposefully not included here.)

The paintings, all completed in 2016, are executed in pigment suspended in rabbit skin glue, a medium that Tal R has been exploring over a number of years for its freshness, immediacy, and delicacy of touch. If the series' subject matter is clearly spelled out in the titles of drawings such as "Love Shop" and "Book XXX," or a painting like "Sex Palace," in many others—"House 44," "L'Evasion," "Naples," and "Snow" (the incongruous name for a sex shop on the beach in Tel Aviv)—there is no outward indication of the storefront's purpose.

The artist's methods of indirection are even more explicit in "Cabaret" and "Cabaret Closed," in which the theater's façade in the latter version is hidden behind a rollup security door painted in bands of dusky pink and yellow, turning the imagery virtually abstract—a graphic exercise of what the curator Marie Nipper calls his "constant probing of the borderline between the motif and its dissolution."

Tal R approaches his subject matter non-judgmentally, seeing the façades not as conduits for sexual gratification but as metaphors of painting, in which what is presented to the eye succeeds only if it activates the imagination, tantalizing viewers with what is in the "back room," as the artist calls it, the realm that will forever remain unseen and unknown.

"I should be unsure of what is in the back room," he says, "I should not be controlling the symbols." Put another way, he wants to entice viewers into a place of heightened anticipation, where their "ice cream melts faster than they can eat it."

Tal R was born in Tel Aviv in 1967 and currently lives and works in Copenhagen. Between 2005 and 2014, he held a Professorship at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. His most recent solo exhibitions include: Institut für Modern Kunst, Nürnberg (2016); Cheim & Read, New York (2012, 2015); Contemporary Fine Arts, Berlin (2015, 2016); Sommer Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv (2011, 2015); Städtische Galerie Wolfsburg, Germany (2013); Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2013); ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Århus, Denmark (2013); Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (2012) Museu Brasileiro da Escultura, São Paulo (2012), Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck (2012); Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht (2008); Camden Arts Centre, London (2008); Louisiana Museum for Moderne Kunst, Denmark (2007); and Kunsthalle Mannheim (2007).

Louise Bourgeois: Holograms will be on view concurrently.

Ron Gorchov will be on view February 16 to March 25, 2017.