

30 March – 25 May 2019

Praz-Delavallade is pleased to present *The Conformist*, second solo exhibition of the artist with the gallery, following a first success in Los Angeles. Yanai's practice is fueled by fables, stories and hymns – each painting is a reflection of the pragmatic side of our life. In his isolated moments, one may find a smiling child, a big splash, a lonely banana, a bristling cactus, a modernist lamp, a singing bird or a tiny boat gliding on placid waters below a clear sky. These individual vignettes bleed into one another and could continue forever, suspended in time and forming a timeless ensemble. Many of Yanai's subjects are intentionally recognizable and commonplace, rendered in a pixelated appearance.

The Conformist as a title was decided on by Yanai for a multitude of reasons. The first resulted out of a minor argument with his French girlfriend who called him a conformist. At first, not understanding what was meant by this, the artist started thinking. He remembered the novel with the same name by the celebrated Italian author Alberto Moravia, which he had read at a young age and then the film that the recently deceased Bernardo Bertolucci made based on the novel. Here, hidden in this small put down during a petty domestic argument, lay an entire artistic lineage! Yanai realized that this lineage and the inner conflict of the conformist deeply resonated with his practice.

Moravia's *The Conformist* is about the life of a member of the Italian secret police during the fascist Mussolini regime who seems to have everything under control. Beneath this composed surface lies a conscience in turmoil. The man is divided between an obsessive need to conform to the rules, and his inner ethical conscience and deeds.

What better story to illustrate the rise in populist governments in Europe and the US today and the necessity to conform in order to be a "good" citizen of one's country? Furthermore, the title of the exhibition becomes a reflection on today's art world and the lifestyle of contemporary artists: while Jean Genet slept in tents with Palestinians in Jordan for two years, most artists today travel and sleep in comfortable hotels with breakfast buffets!

The three main large works of the exhibition are each the same size and yet represent completely different cognitive experiences. *The Dining Room* is from the artist's own home, a domestic space that is intimately known. *Standard West Hollywood* represents the interior of the hotel where Yanai stayed during his previous exhibition with Praz-Delavallade Los Angeles. The third painting is of the village of Camembert in the Normandy region of France, a place where the artist has never been. Yanai tries and hopefully fails to reconcile these different places, each one bound to its own very differing story.

The Conformist does not have a direct connection to the imagery of the novel or film. Guy Yanai is nevertheless inspired by the emotional and psychological situation of the protagonist as a starting point to explore his own relationship with art, painting, politics, love, and daily life.

Guy Yanai (b. 1977, Haifa IL) lives and works in Tel Aviv, Israel. He attended Parsons School of Design and the New York Studio School before receiving his BFA from Hampshire College, Amherst MA. His work has been included in numerous exhibitions nationally and internationally at institutions and museums including The Painting Center, New York City, US; the Velan Center for Contemporary Art, Turin, IT; the Ashdod Museum of Art, Ashdod, IL; and the Haifa Museum of Art, Haifa, IL.

#GuyYanai
#PrazDelavallade

Instagram: @prazdelavallade
Facebook: /prazdelavallade