

## CONTEMPORARY FINE ARTS

# TAL R

## JEW CHERRY, CLOWN AND CONGO

27 APRIL – 1 JUNE 2019

OPENING: FRIDAY, 26 APRIL, 6 – 8 PM

Homes have clocks. Not the ones on the walls – but in the way floorboards creak, sunlight dapples, garbage trucks rumble. The paintings in **Tal R's Jew Cherry, Clown and Congo**, his **thirteenth exhibition** with CFA opening on the gallery's bel etage on the occasion of Berlin Gallery Weekend take three rooms in his home as their stage. More specifically, three pieces of furniture: the living room shelf with its diamond pattern, the pastel-striped furniture of the playroom, the round kitchen table. These are the three places in Tal's apartment that he can trust when he paints. Where line and light and a familiar sense of time allow him to return to his subject matter – objects, the reclining figure – which he has continued to play with since he began painting everyday things over twenty years ago.

The rooms are charged now, as nostalgia seeps in, because Tal is leaving this house after twelve years. The paintings begin with the fool's errand of trying to hold on to something: that fickle drive particular to imminent loss. Color blocks and stacked shapes in a rosy maroon and an almost-midnight blue build a stage for trios of toys or a reclining woman, dressed in a similarly vivid color palate. Tal has been long attuned to the way a composition with an above- and a below-ground can construct a space that is both physical and mental. The backyard, the studio, Copenhagen, Detroit, have each served as settings that materialize the shapelessness of identity. As the rooms and the memories etched into them are reimagined in paint, they are also reinvented. That funny contradiction: rendered in paint, the rooms and their familiar clutter are not captured, giving way instead to something else. Ultimately this is about the way art makes space, a means of comprehending and assimilating the world.

Tal is interested in the multiple meanings an object holds – personal, collective – the permutations in meaning when objects are placed together. Since the late 90s, Tal has used *Kolbojnik*, the Hebrew word for leftovers, to describe his practice of accumulating and arranging objects, bits and pieces, in his life and on the canvas. In 2008, he moved studios and let the multitude go. Now, he holds the objects lightly, pays attention to the intuitive process of what he is drawn to.

A physalis – the little plant with an orange berry encased by a papery calyx – is also called a Jew Cherry. Born in Tel Aviv and based in Copenhagen for most of his life, a blurred identity that he often engages in his work, Tal was struck by the nickname. Strolling between flower shops in Copenhagen, he found the plant referred to as Jew Money, Chinese Lantern, Golden Berry, Inca Cherry, among other nicknames. Sifting through the objects in his studio, guided by a kind of instinct, Tal places a Jew Cherry branch beside a toy clown and a figure from Congo. He asks us, now what does this mean? Maybe nothing. Or maybe a way to give a feeling a form, emotion a color, or the sense of something slipping through your fingers, that you're going to miss it but you've got to let it go, a shape.

Born in Tel Aviv in 1967, Tal R lives and works in Copenhagen. One of the most influential artists of his generation, he held a Professorship at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf from 2005 to 2014. His first dedicated sculpture exhibition will open at Copenhagen's Glyptotek in 2020. Solo exhibitions have been staged at institutional venues including Louisiana Museum of Modern Art travelling to Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen Rotterdam (2017); ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Aarhus, Denmark (2013 - 2014); Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (2013); Museu Brasileiro da Escultura, São Paulo (2012), and Der Kunstverein, Hamburg (2011).

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