

# FIRST BATTLE LIVED ACCIDENT

Guy Yanai

3.4 — 16.5.2014

FIRST BATTLE LIVED ACCIDENT is comprised from a seemingly incoherent body of works, manifesting the irreconcilable nature of painting. This new group of paintings is a concentrate from Yanai's work of the past three years, hence the exhibition's title is derived from the first word of each title of his previous four solo shows.

The show is comprised of eleven paintings. First there are two very large interiors: *Pink Studio*, obviously referencing Matisse's *Pink Studio* from exactly one hundred years ago, and *Pink iPad on Sofa*, a painting of the artist's current home. Another large-scaled painting named *Sardinian Pool* depicts a pool in southern Sardinia. Five medium-sized works derived from previous imagery from Yanai's older paintings, and plants. Three of these works have two or three images in a single painting. *Sicily* is taken from a plant in the old city of Syracuse that was photographed by Yanai two years ago, and *University* is derived purely from strangers' photographs. The other three works – *Plant, Banana and A Painting*; *Syracuse Plant and a Picture*, and *Pink House Haus Valvoline* – combine more than one "image" on the picture plane. The three latter works combine previous paintings by Yanai that are "collaged" on the linen, but instead of actual collage they are painstakingly painted. Two additional small works are themes that have been used recently in Yanai's work: *Another Splash But With A Splash II* depicts a pool that closely resembles David Hockney's *A Bigger Splash*, and *Kibbutz Shefayim Guest and Rest House II* is a depiction of a Kibbutz Guest House. The final, smallest painting in the exhibition is a portrait of a banana.

It is precisely in these unconnected subjects and sizes that the show's thematic soundness of the exhibition rests.

These works differ from the previous years' work in that they are not squares and in that they mainly have one coat of paint. Yanai maintains a devout studio practice, painting daily, and it is precisely this routine that conditions the extraordinary quality that we see in his work. The paint being applied in horizontal "stripes" that simultaneously convey painting in its purest element, the element of time in a frozen image, a way for the viewer to undo the work, and to deconstruct the color in the works to single strokes of paint. This meticulous working methodology enables the paintings to walk a very

tight rope between figuration and abstraction. The feeling is that if one mark of paint is removed, then the painting falls apart; this inherent tension in the work sometimes contradicts the image of the work thus adding more cognitive layers while experiencing the work.

Guy Yanai has carved out a special niche amongst the Israeli art scene, where mainly installation, performance and new media art has proliferated. Today's art operates within a field of disenchantment and cynicism, which is true of painting in particular. Yanai's painting too corresponds to an age of commodified goods and consumerism, whether via its material objects or ubiquitous images, but there is simplicity and a naiveté to his love of painting, a love that is perhaps the driving force behind his prolific output. His work derives, then, not from the dark pits but from the fountain; not from desperation but from faith.

### **About Guy Yanai**

Born 1977 in Haifa, Israel, Guy Yanai currently lives and works in Tel Aviv. He attended Parsons School of Design and the New York Studio School, and received a BFA from Hampshire College, Amherst, MA.

Yanai has had exhibitions at the Jerusalem Studio School Gallery, Gallery 33, Tel Aviv; A.L.I.C.E. Gallery, Brussels; Alon Segev Gallery, Tel Aviv; Rothschild 69 project, Tel Aviv; Hangar Bicocca, Milan; The Spaceship on Hayarkon 70, Tel Aviv; and Sommer Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Battle Therapy Living Room* at the Velan Center for Contemporary Art, Turin; *Lived & Laughed & Loved & Left* at La Montagne Gallery, Boston, and *Accident Nothing* at Aran Cravey Gallery, Los Angeles. Recent group exhibition venues include Charlotte Fogh Gallery, Aarhus, DeBuck Gallery, NYC, and Alon Segev Gallery, Tel Aviv, among others.

He held special collaborations with designer Scott Sternberg for the fashion label Band of Outsiders' 2014 Resort Collection and with WPKL on limited edition skateboards.

Future solo exhibitions are planned in Berlin for late spring 2014 and in a two month residency at the prestigious Villa Lena in Italy.