

HEZI COHEN GALLERY

Alona Harpaz | I'm Not Here For Your Dream

Curator: Ofra Harnam

Translation: Lisa Motro

06.09-14.10.2018

Hezi Cohen Gallery is pleased to invite you to Alona Harpaz's first solo show at the gallery. Harpaz resides and creates in Berlin and has participated in solo and group shows in Israel and internationally.

In her exhibition "I'm Not Here For Your Dream" Harpaz displays recent works. Through these works Harpaz examines the role of painting as an act of gratification and seduction as well as an aesthetic experience through which the viewer wishes to be an accomplice in the moment of a fantastic victory.

Mythological Olympic gymnast Nadia Comaneci's portrait opens the exhibition reconstructed from an image of an old photograph. Comaneci stands clutching a doll in her likeness. The doll was part of a network designed to market Comaneci as a commodity. Comaneci, an emblem of courage, spirit and motivation was greatly admired-yet her story reveals an economic and political narrative of exploitation. The symbols and myths through which manipulation materializes are some of the issues Harpaz explores.

In this exhibition images of nature reappear in Harpaz's work and serve as a symbol for a system which is appropriated by industrial urbanism. Nature operates as a functional prop which is subordinate to a decorative and pleasing applicability; for example, paintings of flower pots and arrangements in seductive and vivacious colors which are disengaged from their natural surroundings. Harpaz constructs her compositions employing flat backgrounds and abstract landscape. She executes her figures with acrylic paint, spray paint, industrial colors and bold neon hues which portray a sense of something lively, dynamic and animated.

The intense color scheme does not always correlate with the subject of the painting, which is devised around a wondrous yet estranged aura. The bold color, as in nature, signals a warning of venom or bad taste.

Harpaz's female figures are constructed in a flat fashion conforming to a magazine template or as representations of every woman.

In a large painting a cat woman situated in the center of the composition gazes at the viewer while a large monkey sits on her lap. The woman's eyes are blocked with spray paint and simultaneously convey impermeability and mystery. In another work a woman exhibits superhuman powers while she grasps a hot pink alligator in her hand. In another a woman is portrayed riding on a motorcycle embellished with flowers as she commands a recurring image of monkeys, this time as a clan or tribe which she is leading. The monkeys now teamed up with the female image seem to charge them with new vigor. The female forms remain Pop-like yet lose their melancholy tone. They become active, engaged, riding holding steady, emerging like remnants of a post-apocalyptic world, leaving behind the promise of fulfilling the viewer's collective fantasy.