



DAVID REEB

BROKEN MIRROR

GALERIE MICHAEL HASENCLEVER

DAVID REEB

Broken Mirror

2021

GALERIE MICHAEL HASENCLEVER KG

Baaderstrasse 56c D-80469 München Telefon +49.89.99750071 Fax +49.89.99750069
www.hasencleverart.com gallery@hasencleverart.com

CONVERSATION 2014

Arnon Ben-David and David Reeb



David Reeb: Usually, people write about my work and give it all kinds of interpretations. I regard this conversation as an opportunity for me to say what I think, specifically with regard to politics. It is an opportunity that I wouldn't want to miss.

Arnon Ben-David: There was something in our talk in 1989 that may serve as an introduction to this conversation. You said there, in reference to the series "Deportees" (1988-89) that you choose the photographs not so much because of the political situation they reflect, but because they are central in our range of vision. This may also account for your choice of the political subject, which is such a central part of our field of vision that cannot be overlooked. It is something that constantly occupies our thoughts.

D.R.: Since I live in Israel, and the Israeli control of the Territories is very central to the lives of people here, something which becomes increasingly more acute instead of disappearing, and since all those things that we hoped would disappear have become even more central—it is hard not to present it in my work.

A.B.D.: It is quite striking that so many people in Israel who engage in culture and art succeed in operating at the margins of all this and, in fact, avoid mentioning it. As a society, as a type of organism, the natural inclination is to avoid painful subjects or issues which may infringe on the system's wholeness.

D.R.: I think the problem is trying to engage with these issues consistently; to do so sensitively, in an orderly manner, using metaphor, and not using a simplistic artistic language. Therefore it is hard to touch upon these subjects in a decisive way. As I see it, the situation calls for a different course of action. There are artists and cultural figures here who take critical positions. The problem is that one gets the sense that this is a very democratic country where anyone can say what he pleases; that the United States and Western Europe can only learn from us...

A.B.D.: "A light unto the nations"...

D.R.: Freedom of expression, tolerance, and openness to the other in Israeli society—all this is going on while half the people living here have no state, they have no real civil rights. Half of the subjects of the State of Israel have no vote; they have no real way of expressing their views, they are denied many freedoms, and we live with that on a daily basis. We exploit them economically, and all the while we continue to build a little more in the Occupied Territories, and move more people there.

A.B.D.: Note that you, too, use a language intended for an Israeli audience. It is a very elegant language. You speak about infringing on their rights, that they have no civil rights. In reality, however, not only do they have no civil rights, but the army systematically abuses them, in their homes, villages, and towns, with various methods with which we are all too familiar, and they also shoot and injure their children when they go out to protest. On top of that, the government has been systematically stealing the property and land of the Palestinian population for decades in collaboration with all the government ministries. The problem is that even the language that you and I

use is a-priori a "whitewashed" language, because we know it is intended for general consumption in Israel; like this interview, for instance.

D.R.: The main problem is that we think in terms of "us" and "them." When I say "we do this and they are in this and that situation," it's wrong. The problem may be solved only when people start saying "us," which includes both the Jews and the Arabs living in these territories. This is true for both the Israelis and the Palestinians. As I see it, some of "us" disregard the rights of another part of "us" and steal from another part of "us." Until this is solved, there is no point in talking about a society that greatly values freedom and culture. As long as this is the situation, art making remains a very limited act, and it must constantly be performed while indicating and stressing this situation. This is problematic, I think, if you work here.

A.B.D.: I agree. When I arrived in Israel in the 1980s, after a long time abroad, it made me create works which I call "grotesque," abstract or conceptual works which included all kinds of odd allusions to the situation.

D.R.: But there is no reason for artworks to be entirely consistent; there is no reason why they shouldn't contain contradictions. I think contradictions generate the tension in the work.

A.B.D.: In one of the interviews you did you said that you paint in different styles: a lot of abstract painting, painting from observation, painting after photographs, painting after video stills, and painting of texts or from books. You mentioned these as five distinct categories. I feel that in the sequence of our everyday activity there are always gaps between the various categories of art making.

D.R.: But there are also intersections between them. Abstract painting is not really all that abstract; it is also somehow representational and concrete and inevitably referential, whereas figurative painting, when you look at a detail or turn the picture upside down, you notice that its patterns resemble those of the abstract painting made by the same artist.

A.B.D.: True, but my emphasis in this question is not on the things which trickle from one field to another, but rather on the gaps. I am interested in the gap that occurs when you shift from a series of abstract paintings of a flower...

D.R.: Anemone...

A.B.D.: ... from abstract paintings of anemones ("Anemones," 2013) to painting from photographs of the rural area with that flower (Anemones #2, Anemones #3, 2013).pp. 142, 143 When we talked about two of the photographs from the rural area, I think they were from Nabi Saleh, you told me that they depicted the same flower as the one appearing in the abstract paintings.

D.R.: Yes.

A.B.D.: I am interested in this gap between a subject or a motif which emerges once as abstract and once as non-abstract; not in terms of the specific case, but in terms of the feeling. Aren't you sometimes intimidated by this gap, by the abyss you are facing when you finish an abstract painting and shift to painting after stills from a demonstration?

D.R.: First of all, the titles I usually give the works are not related to the major thing represented in them; rather, they are something on which I can pin the work. If I depict construction workers on a site, and next to the building, at street level, there is a bicycle; I may call the painting "Bicycle."

A.B.D.: These marginal associations which sometimes spawn the titles may, in fact, express the fear we all have about lack of meaning. What does it mean when we paint something so abstract and then we paint something associated with it?

D.R.: I can elaborate on the anemone pieces, the figurative ones. What I liked, on the one hand, was this image of the young man throwing stones, whom the

authorities regard as a kind of small-scale terrorist, and he too feels that he is engaging in an act of resistance which is, at least, meaningful. On the other hand, the young man sees the flowers and thinks: "I must pick them, I must pick them and bring them to my mother, to my girlfriend..."

A.B.D.: So the flowers become a type of hook on which you "hang" the title of the work?

D.R.: Yes. But this work deals with other things too. Even in abstract painting, in some cases, such as the anemones, they present an opportunity, they animate the landscape; still, the most significant aspect is the landscape.

A.B.D.: Forgive my insistence, but I'm trying to clarify a point. In the past, there were cameras with such lenses, that when you manipulated a lever, it would shift from one lens size to another, as if you switched lenses. It is somewhat like what happens when you shift from painting after stills from a demonstration in the village of the flower-holding youth to an abstract painting of the flower, made after the same flower, more or less. This switch is like changing lenses in a camera. It's something that happens in the brain.

D.R.: It's liberating. It helps me work when I don't do the same thing for too long.¹

A.B.D.: You once said in an interview that you don't interfere with the still photographs or process them. You don't combine excerpts from two different photographs. Rather, you use the photograph, or a part of it, as is.

D.R.: That's usually the case. There is the drama of the everyday, there is interest in every thing, and that interest is inherent to the thing itself. If I try to introduce order, I find it artificial. The photograph is a gift in the sense that it is a documentation of what happened. Obviously there is no such thing as objective photography etc., but a photograph is much more objective than memory or any representation via drawing or narrative. It is very detailed, and I have an opportunity to use this material to construct a scene. Even if the scene consists only of a few rocks, it is always interesting. I try not to build a hierarchy of importance within this.

A.B.D.: You respect the way photography works.

D.R.: Yes.

A.B.D.: I like the fact that you respect the tools with which you work, especially in the case of photography; that you don't interfere with photography's ability to create its own hierarchy. You operate in the sense of choosing where to shoot and sometimes what to shoot, but you don't interfere with the way in which the lens sees the things at which you point the camera.

D.R.: I think that reality is always much more interesting than its representation. Representation cannot compete with reality. Even a Rembrandt self-portrait, which is marvelous, is not as interesting as the face itself.

A.B.D.: In another interview you said that time is, essentially, the subjective time of the viewer who tries to follow the action or operation of the painting itself.

D.R.: Time in a painting, as far as I am concerned, refers primarily to the subjective time of the viewer who follows the actions that make up the painting.

A.B.D.: I would like to ask about the gap or discrepancy derived from the viewer's different sense of time, not necessarily the gap between reality and the work (modes of representation).

D.R.: Ideally, I would like the viewer to reconstruct, to some extent, the sequence of actions I performed while painting. If, for instance, I began with a line in the middle, and continued left. I make a thousand movements while painting, and when I perform them, my body operates in a certain manner, and I think of what I do in a certain sequence. This is a mental activity common to most people who engage in painting, and I guess they all share these thoughts.

A.B.D.: So you expect the viewer to trace your actions?

D.R.: I expect the viewer to follow the actions I performed while working on the painting. This is ideally what I would like to happen, therefore I also need to work systematically, and that is one of the reasons why I prefer paintings on which I work only once, without many corrections and layers.

A.B.D.: That is exactly what I meant. I am somewhat familiar with your work process. I know that you tend to return to the same painting again and again, and paint a different version of practically the same painting on it. Sometimes you cover your initial contact with the canvas by means of these repetitions. I remember there were a few times when we worked together, and I would stop you from returning and correcting the painting, do you remember that?

D.R.: Yes. I know that additional work has its advantages, too, but then the painting loses the visible succession of actions, which is important to me.

A.B.D.: Do you regard the preservation of the sequence of actions performed in the painting as a means to convey the subject better, to communicate what you are painting?

D.R.: Each painting resembles all the others in that it features the traces of a sequence of actions. I think it is impossible to arrive at a perfect representation of something, so there is no point in trying.

A.B.D.: What I meant was that you connect between your actions in the painting and what the viewer undergoes, emotionally too. His ability to identify all sorts of things is associated with the fact that you introduce him to a sequence of actions rather than an accurate depiction of an object in reality.

D.R.: Yes, I am more interested in that.

A.B.D.: This links to what we mentioned in our previous conversation about your work on the surface. In fact you entrench yourself very intensely. Perhaps entrench is not quite the right word. You constantly operate within the surface of the painting. You don't even make too big of an effort to describe, to create an illusion of three-dimensionality; rather, you sometimes create it in an almost humorous manner. You are so conscious of the way in which the illusion of three-dimensionality is created in the painting, that you sometimes absent yourself from the surface of the painting and create visual hints of depth.

D.R.: I also find that, if you make a more or less accurate representation in a part of the picture, it reflects on its other parts as well.

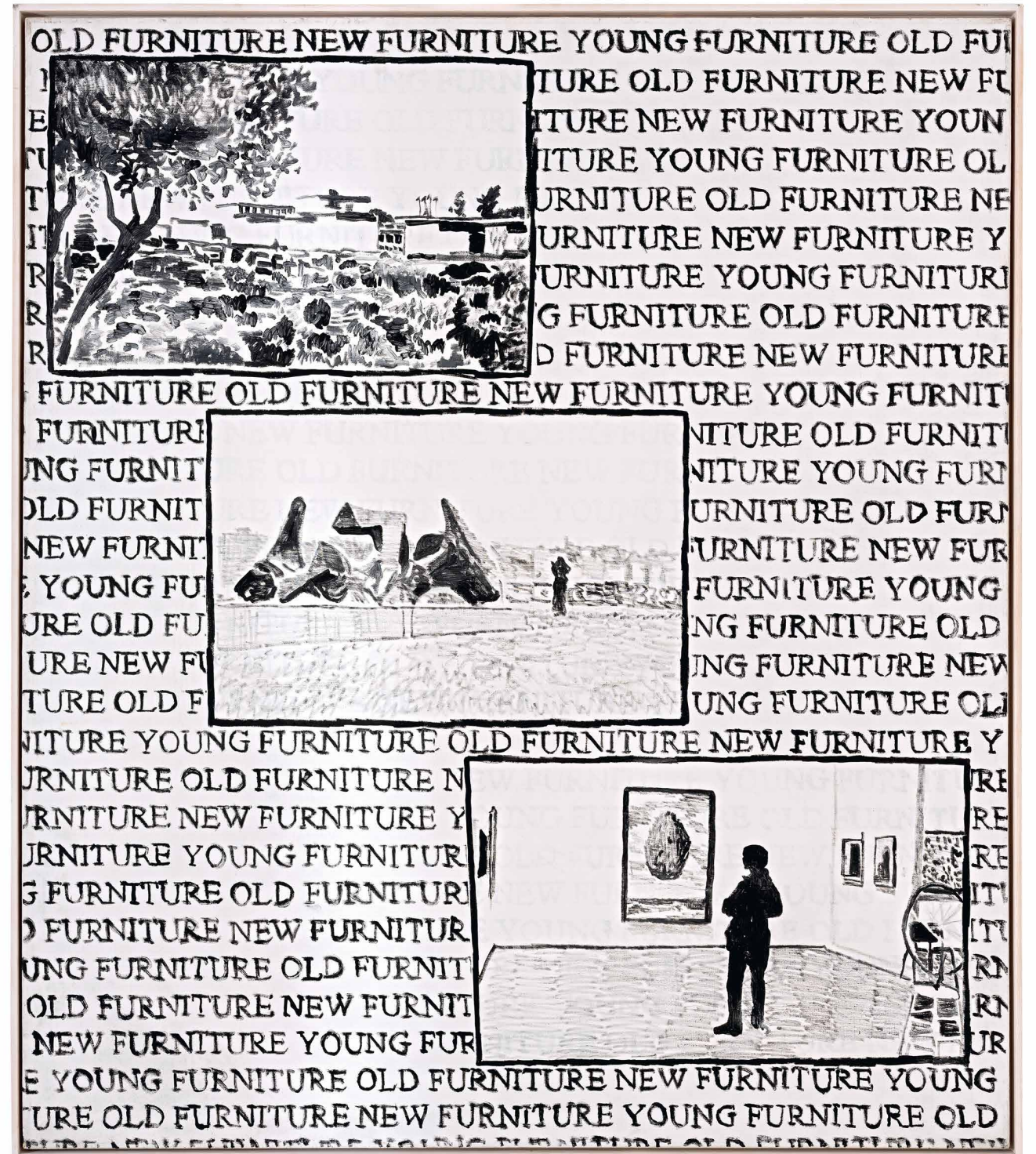
A.B.D.: That's true.

D.R.: Ultimately, what is represented in the painting is perhaps more real this way than when everything is represented as in a photograph. Because in reality, when we observe a landscape, we don't see it all at once; we don't look at it all at once. Our attention moves along it.

A.B.D.: True. To wrap things up, I want to go back to the viewer's sense of time. In fact, this leads me to the conclusion that the act of painting creates a link between this very specific type of time in the painting and the work, and the time in which we live, the sequence of everyday occurrences.

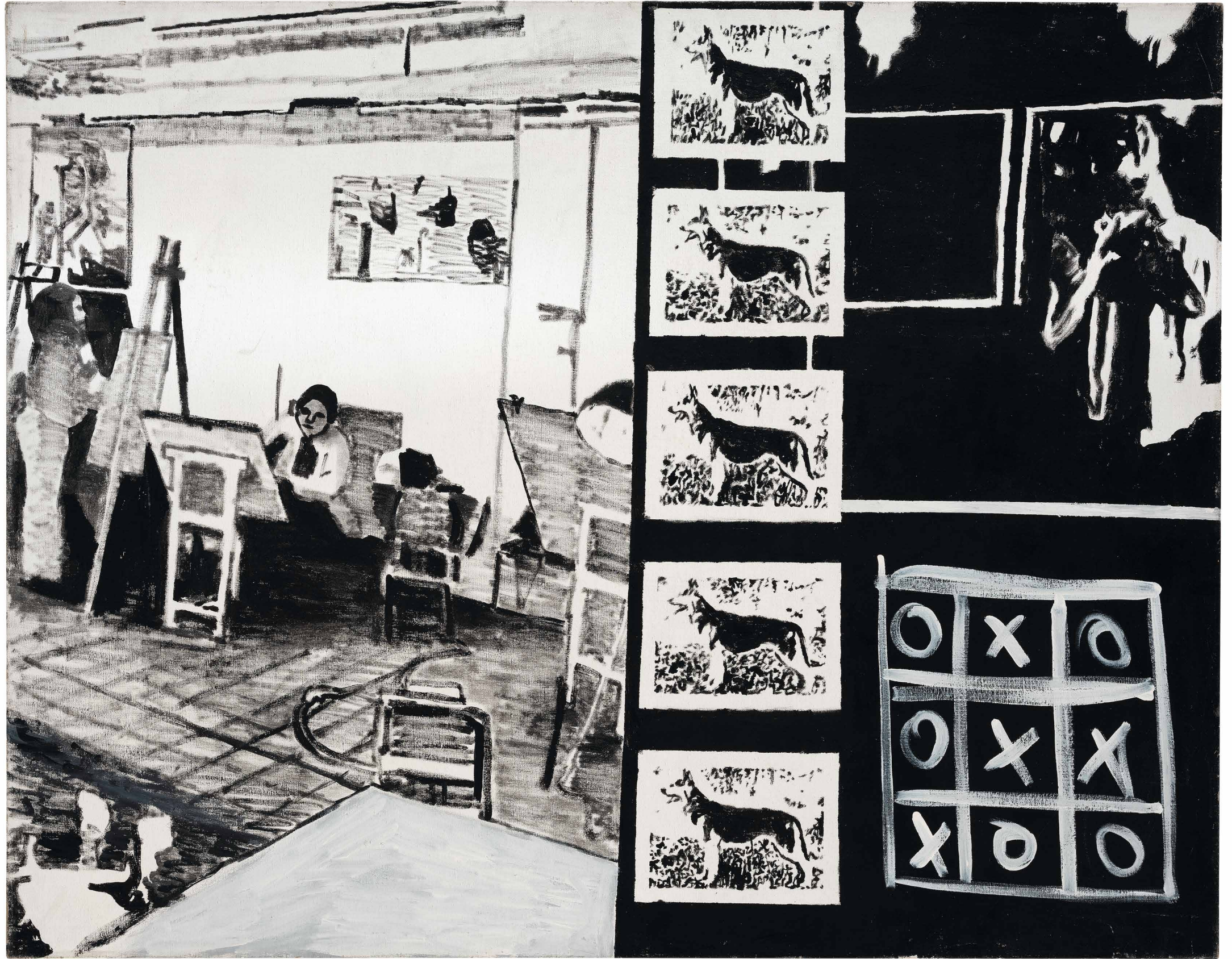


1 Broken Mirror
Oil on canvas, 1999
Signed and dated on the reverse
160,5 x 140,5 cm



2 Young Furniture

Acrylic on canvas, 1997
Signed and dated on the reverse
160 x 140 cm



3 Life Class

Acrylic on canvas, 1995
Signed and dated on the reverse
122 x 155 cm



4 Six Paintings

Acrylic on canvas, 2000
Signed and dated on the reverse
160 x 140 cm



5 Landscape

Acrylic on canvas, 1996
Signed and dated on the reverse
140 x 110 cm

On June 7, soon after our troops reached the Wall, people from throughout the city rushed there, and it was difficult for the soldiers to convince them to wait until a cease-fire went into effect. When we decided to allow the first pilgrimage in nineteen years on the following Wednesday, the holiday of Shavuot, we expected hundreds of thousands of people to take part. The pent-up feelings of a generation would express themselves in the chance to touch the stones of the Wall once more, to pray at this holiest of Holy Places. But then how would these hundreds of thousands reach the Wall through the dangerous narrow alleyways? The only answer was to do away with the slum hovels of the Moghrabi Quarter. I received the go-ahead from Herzog, Narkiss, and Dayan and called a meeting of Ya'akov Yanai, Yigael Yadin, the architect Arie Sharon, and several others. My overpowering feeling was: do it now; it may be impossible to do it later and it *must* be done. To make the decision formal, I turned to my own Municipality group, and they approved the move as well. Then the archeologists and other experts went to the Wall and drew a map of exactly what should be torn down and what should not and we found proper accommodations for the families that were living in those hovels. On the night of Saturday, June 10, the work of clearing the Moghrabi Quarter began. In two days it was done- finished, clean. Once the Wall was made accessible, an endless stream of people surged toward it. After the Moghrabi area had been cleared, the next obvious need was a road from West Jerusalem

6 Clean 2

Acrylic on canvas, 1999
Signed and dated on the reverse
160 x 140 cm



7 Contact - Colorful light on the way to the Garbage Dump 3

Acrylic on canvas, 2003
Signed and dated on the reverse
150 x 100 cm



8 Map (Green Line)

Acrylic on canvas, 1989
Signed and dated on the reverse
120 x 100 cm



9 Bus

Acrylic on canvas, 2003
Signed and dated on the reverse
155 x 130 cm



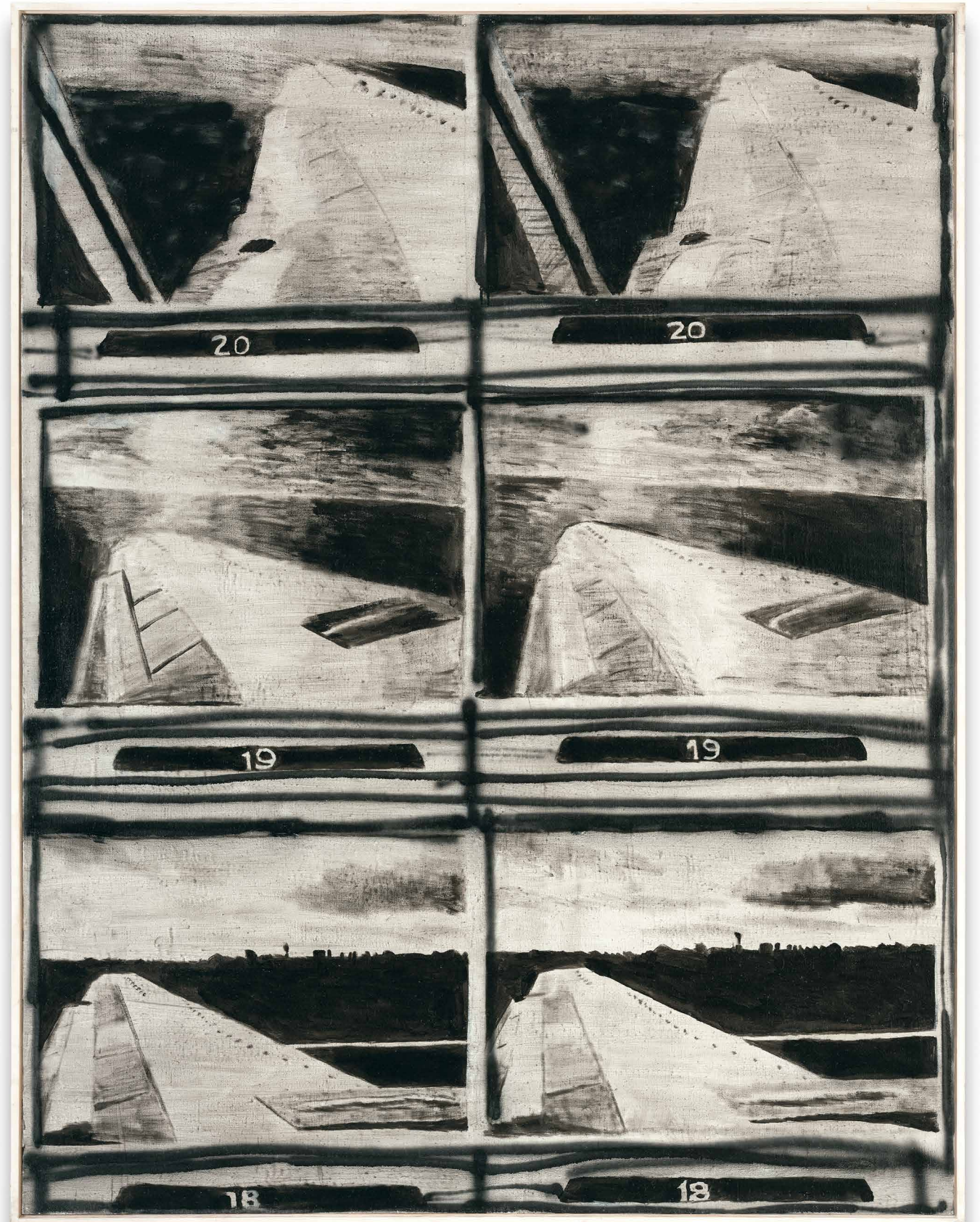
10 Deserted House

Acrylic on canvas, 2005
Signed and dated on the reverse
100 x 150 cm



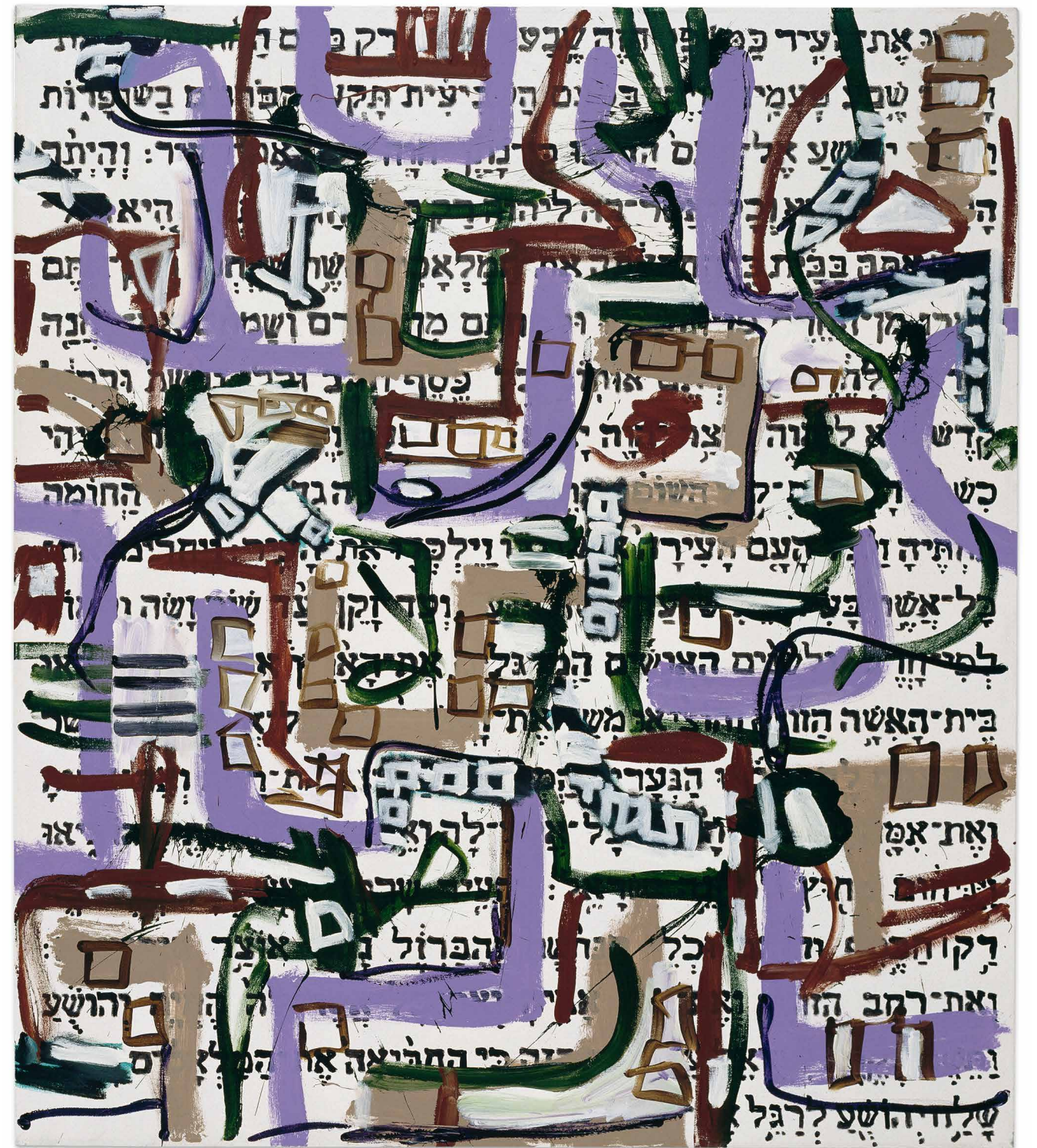
11 Wallpaper

Acrylic on canvas, 2005
Signed and dated on the reverse
100 x 150 cm



12 Belfast

Acrylic on canvas, 1998
Signed and dated on the reverse
179 x 140 cm



13 Joshua 6

Acrylic on canvas, 2007
Signed and dated on the reverse
140 x 160 cm

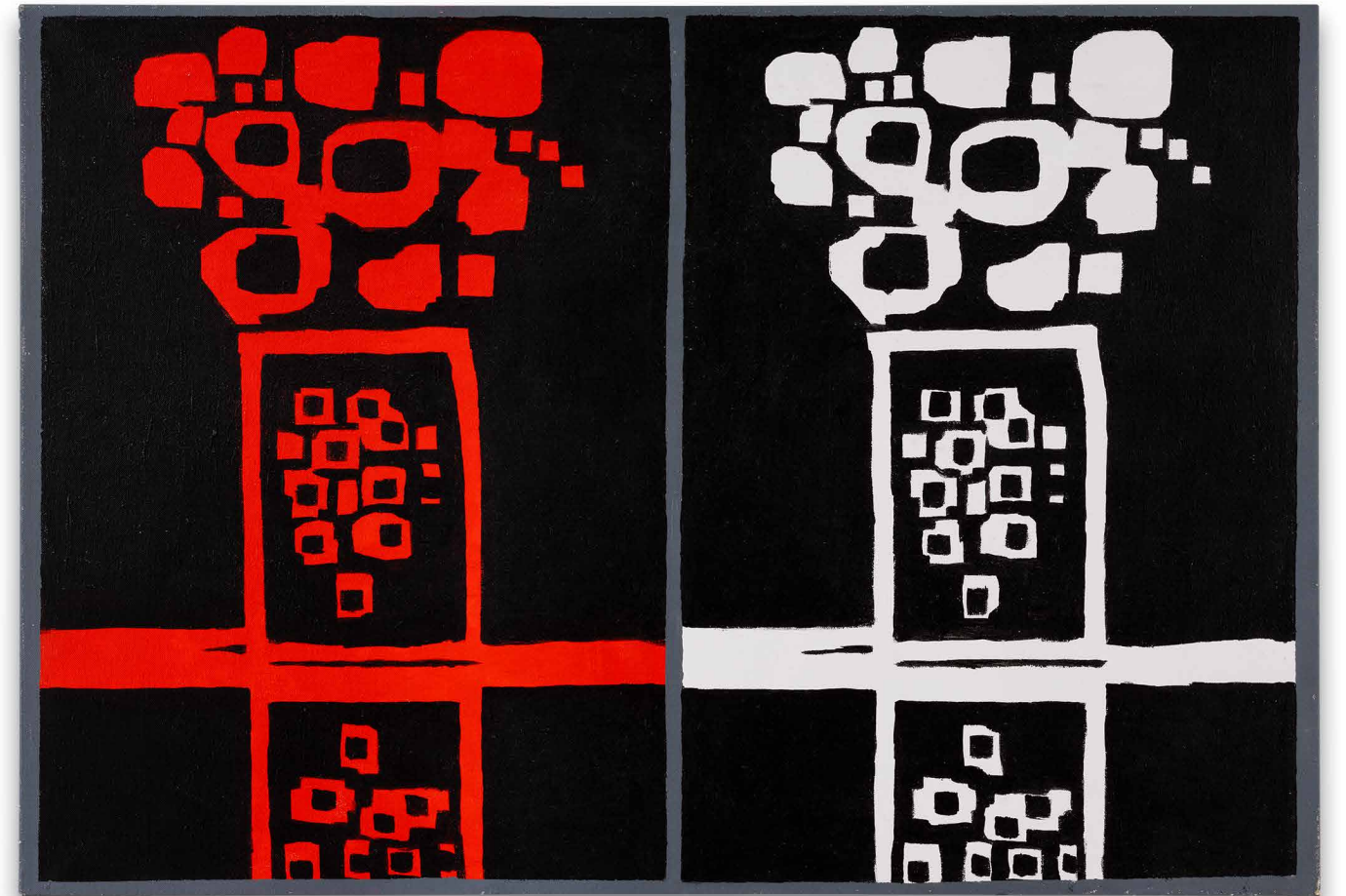


14 Studio Still Life, Paint Cans
Acrylic on canvas, 1997
Signed and dated on the reverse
180 x 140 cm



15 Landscape

Acrylic on canvas, 2000
Signed and dated on the reverse
160 x 140 cm



16 **2 Vases**

Acrylic on canvas, 2004
Signed and dated on the reverse
85 x 120 cm

REEB

Biographical Notes

Born in Rehovot, Israel in 1952

1975-78 Studies at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem

1986-83 Taught at the Yavneh Art Workshop, Yavneh, Israel

1986-99 Taught at the Kalisher School of Art, Tel Aviv

1990 Taught at the University of Haifa

2003-07 Taught at the Art Department, Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem

Selected One-Person Exhibitions

1979 Printers Gallery, Jerusalem

1982 Dvir Gallery, Tel Aviv

1983 Tel Aviv Museum of Art

1984 Dvir Gallery, Tel Aviv

1985 Sarah Gilat Gallery, Jerusalem

1986 Rega Gallery, Tel Aviv

1987 Gimel Gallery, Jerusalem

1988 Gimel Gallery, Jerusalem

Artifact Gallery, Tel Aviv

1989 Dvir Gallery, Tel Aviv

1990 Artifact Gallery, Tel Aviv

The Artist's Studios, Tel Aviv

Gimel Gallery, Jerusalem

1991 Dvir Gallery, Tel Aviv

Gimel Gallery, Jerusalem

1992 The Artists' Studios, Tel Aviv

1993 Bograshov Gallery, Tel Aviv

Stadtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf

1994 Tel Aviv Museum of Art (cat.)

1995 Dvir Gallery, Tel Aviv

1996 Mary Faouzi Gallery, Jaffa

1997 Rachel and Israel Pollak Gallery, Tel Aviv

1998 Ormeau Baths Gallery, Belfast

Heidelberg Kunstverein (with Eliezer Sonnenschein

Hamumche Gallery, Tel Aviv (with Michal Goldman) (cat.)

2000 Haus Am Lutzowplatz, Berlin (cat.)

Galerie Oliver Ahlers, Göttingen

2001 Alon Segev Gallery, Tel Aviv (cat.)

2002 The Israeli Center for Digital Art, Holon, Israel

2003 „Control“ The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (with Miki Kratsman) (dvd)

2004 Sommer Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv

2005 Haifa Museum of Art (cat.)

2006 Hasenclever Gallery, Munich

The Artists' House, Tel Aviv

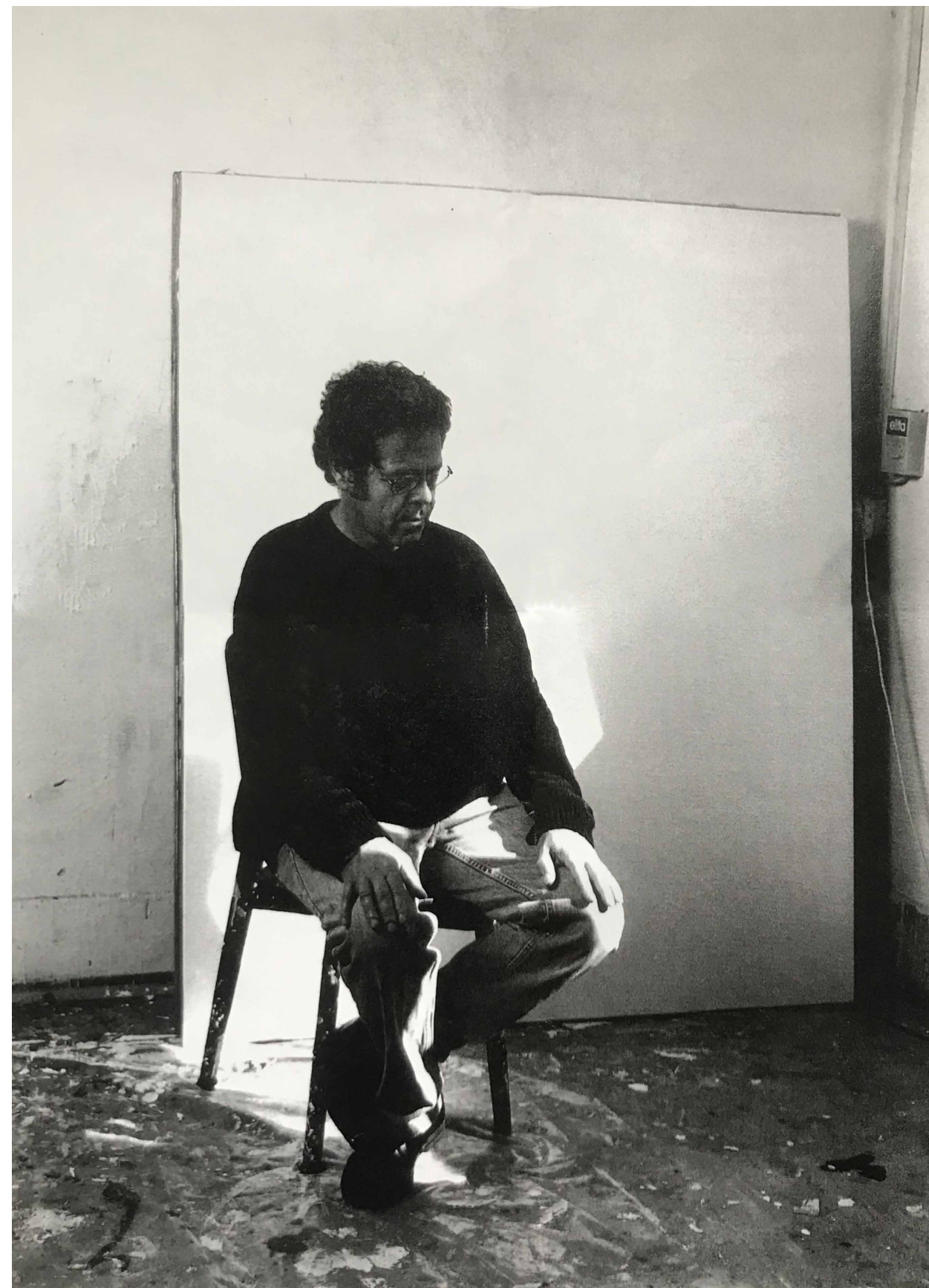


Foto: Eitan Hillel

- 2007 Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art
The Artists' House, Tel Aviv (cat.)
Tegen 2, Stockholm
Barbur Gallery, Jerusalem
Hasenclever Gallery, Munich
- 2008 The Artists' House, Tel Aviv
Givon Gallery, Tel Aviv
- 2011 The Artists' House, Tel Aviv
- 2014 „300 60 48“, Tel Aviv Museum, Curator Ellen Ginton
- 2017 „Bonfires“, Umm El Fahem Art Gallery, Curator Itamar Levi
- 2018 „Disturbances“, Hamidrasha Gallery, Curator Avi Lubin

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 1982 The Drawing Center, New York
„Here and Now: Israeli Art – Painting and Sculpture, Drawing, Photography, Video“, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (cat.)
- 1984 „Two Years: 1983-1984 – Qualities Accumulated“, Tel Aviv Museum of Art (cat.)
- 1985 „Israeli and Palestinian Artists Against the Occupation and for Free Speech“, East Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Nazareth, Haifa (cat.)
„Rega 1“ Ika Braun Gallery, The Artists' Studios, Jerusalem
- 1986 „The Want of Matter: A Quality in Israeli Art“, Tel Aviv Museum of Art (cat.)
„Rega 2“, Rega Gallery, Tel Aviv
- 1987 „Down with the Occupation“, traveling poster exhibition in Israel, USA, Germany, etc.
- 1988 „Nine Israeli Painters“, Kunsthaus, Zurich; Orangerie Herrenhausen, Hannover, Germany (cat.)
- 1988-93 „It's Possible“, traveling Israeli-Palestinian exhibition in the US, Japan, and Germany
- 1990 Asian-European Art Biennale, Ankara
- 1991 „Israeli Art Around 1990“, Stadtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf; Artist's House, Moscow; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (cat.)
- 1992 „Postscripts: End-Representations in Contemporary Art“, The Genia Schreiber University Art Gallery, Tel Aviv University (cat.)
„Olive Green“, Bograshov Gallery, Tel Aviv (cat.)
Mary Faouzi Gallery, Jaffa, Israel
„12 Israeli and Palestinian Artists“, Jerusalem and Strasbourg
- 1994 „Subtropical: Between Figuration and Abstraction“, Tel Aviv Museum of Art (cat.)
- 1995 „Currents of Being“, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston
- 1996 „Ketav: Flesh and Word in Israeli Art“, Ackland Art Museum, University of North Carolina, USA
Documenta X, Kassel (cat.)
The 7th Kwangju Biennale (cat.)
- 1998 „Sharing Jerusalem“, Al-Wasiti Gallery, East Jerusalem
- 1999 „Not to be Looked: Unseen Sites in Israel Today“, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (cat.)
- 2000 „La Repubblica dell'arte – Israel“, Centro Arte Contemporanea, Palazzo delle Papesse, Siena
„Acts of Resistance“, Koldo Mitxelena Cultural Center, San Sebastian, Spain (cat.)
The 7th Havana Biennial
- 2001 „Tele(visions)“, Kunsthalle, Vienna (cat.)
- 2002 „Focus on Painting“, Haifa Museum of Art (cat.)
„Power“, Casino Luxembourg – Contemporary Art Forum, Luxembourg City (cat.)

- 2003 „35 Israeli and Palestinian Artists Against the Occupation and For a Better Tomorrow“, Hagar Art Gallery, Tel Aviv; Paris; Seville; The Artists' House, Jerusalem; Al-Wasiti Gallery, East Jerusalem
„Ruins Revisited: The Image of the Ruin in Israel 1803-2003“, Time for Art – Israeli Art Center, Tel Aviv (cat.)
- 2004 „Fragments: Mosaics and Reality in Israeli Art“, Time for Art – Israeli Art Center, Tel Aviv (cat.)
„Our Landscape: Notes on Landscape Painting in Israel“, The Art Gallery, University of Haifa (cat.)
Gordon Gallery, Tel Aviv
„Shame“, The Israeli Center for Digital Art, Holon, Israel (cat.)
„Still Landscape- Old New“, Haifa Museum of Art
- 2005 „The New Hebrews: A Century of Art in Israel“, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin (cat.)
„Artists Against the Wall“, New York-Tel Aviv-Ramallah (cat.)
Ramla Municipal Gallery, Ramla, Israel
- 2006 Ramla Municipal Gallery, Ramla, Israel
Dvir Gallery, Tel Aviv
Rachel and Israel Pollak Gallery, Tel Aviv
„Israel: Art and Life, 1906-2006“, Palazzo Reale, Milan; traveling exhibition in Italy and Europe (cat.)
„Videozone 3: The 3rd International Video-Art Biennial in Israel“, The Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv (cat.)
„In Focus: Living History“, Tate Modern, London
„Six Days Plus Forty Years“. Petach-Tikva Museum, Israel (cat.)
- 2007 Ramla Municipal Gallery, Ramla, Israel
- 2008 „War as a Way of Life“. 18th Street Art Center, Santa Monica, CA
„Videozone 4: The 4th International Video-Art Biennial in Israel“, The Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv (cat.)
- 2009 „Evil To The Core“, The Israeli Center for Digital Art, Holon, Israel
- 2010 (With Michal Goldman) „Similar and Different“, Oranim Art Institute, The Gallery of Israeli Art, Tiv'ón
„The Theater Of Peace“, NGBK, Berlin
„Videozone 5: The 5th International Video-Art Biennial in Israel“, The Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv (cat.)
- 2011 Tegen 2, Stockholm
Petah Tikva Museum of Art
- 2012 Berlin Biennial („Breaking the news“)
„The Bustan in Silwan“, Silwan, East Jerusalem
- 2014 „The Benevolent Tree“, Umm El Fahem Art Gallery, Curator Daniel Kahana
Sapir College Gallery, Sderot, Curator Liav Mizrachi
- 2017 „Ingathering“, 10th Anniversary of the Rappaport Prize, Curators Anat Danon Sivan and Noa Rosenberg
„Bad Taste“, Minus 1 Gallery, Tel Aviv, Curator Efrat Livni
„Ingathering“, 10th Anniversary of the Rappaport Prize, Curators Anat Danon Sivan and Noa Rosenberg
- 2021 „Life Still Life Land“ Museum on the Seam, Jerusalem, Curator Rafi Etgar
„The Haifa Way: 70th Anniversary of Haifa Museum of Art“, Haifa Museum of Art

