

On My Person

Hagar Raban

The exhibition *On My Person* presents works by two artists: Yuly Rottenberg and Maayan Cohen. In both instances, these are their final projects as 2021 graduates of Hamidrasha School of Art in the Faculty of Arts at Beit Berl College. In the works of both there is a notable preoccupation with presence and concealment, proximity and distance, and both engage with the connection between the physical body and human essence, as well as the possibility of forging a personal identity through the artistic act.

Cohen's complex and enigmatic video work, *We'll Try*, addresses the development of an intimate relationship between artist and artistic product. She herself appears in it, alongside a male figure. At times, they are in a dark and unknown place, whose boundaries and shape are not visible, and in other sequences they are in an area known as the "Light

Fall” in the Amir building of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

The play with light and shadow in the video and its soundtrack also affect the gallery space where it is screened, and encounter the large-format paintings by Rottenberg. At first glance, it is difficult to classify the images that appear in them, which appear to lie somewhere between realistic nudes and completely abstract images in pastel shades. Rottenberg regards them all as self-portraits, since it is her body that appears in them. She bases her paintings on selfies produced with her smartphone camera, thus restricting herself to images taken from the distance of an extended human arm. It is a distance that prescribes a partial and disrupted image that raises questions about space, the body, and the relationship between the two.

The viewers’ presence in the gallery renders the dual relationship of the internal discussion between the works and their creators into a tripartite one. It seems that precisely in the face of seemingly non-

“interactive” media there is a clear invitation to engage in an intimate and intriguing relationship between the work and the viewers. In both instances, the artist’s physical body – which represents the essence of her identity – is included in the works without allowing us to approach and root around it. They present to us their entire inner world, but mediate it in ways that illustrate that the initial encounter with physical existence is fragmented and fickle. It is an encounter that produces both an invitation and a cautious reservation; an opening and a barrier at the same time.

Yuly Rottenberg

Bio

Yuly Rottenberg (b.1997, Tel Aviv, Israel) explores in her paintings the relationships with herself, with her face and body and with her role as a painter. Her series of self- portraits create a sense of intimacy built on top of an exposed and extroverted optical distortion. In choosing the specific shooting angles, tension is dictated between the demonstrative grotesque possibilities of the female body and its delicacy and refinement. The body image undergoes a process of alienation, and a question is asked about its sexuality.

Nudes covered, hidden in translucent synthetic fabrics, emerge in a glorious embarrassment between the folds of the canvas while attempting to trace a classical tradition of representing the female body. Inspired by Georgia O'Keefe's paintings of the mountains of New Mexico near her home, Rottenberg figures turn into landscape paintings, full of sensuality, femininity and loneliness.

Rottenberg received her BFA from Hamidrasha School of Art, Beit Berl College, obtaining the Igal Zak Excellence Scholarship.