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Walking in Baqa al-Gharbiyye -Misr

Marion Fux (Kibbutz Metzger) - an exhibition of paintings at the Givat-Haim-Ihud Art Gallery

Head Curator: Hanush Morag

Exhibition Curator: Ruti Hinski-Amitai.

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In the area of Emeq Hefer-Menashe, a fine artistic discourse has been emerging in recent years, through local galleries and creative art projects, encouraged by regional councils, local communities, and mainly thanks to art entrepreneurs who strive to establish local artistic activity. Just recently, I wrote about the project "Under the Lamps" that took place in Givat Haviva. This time, we move slightly southward to Kibbutz Givat-Haim-Ihud, in order to review Marion Fux's exhibition. Givat-Haim Art Gallery is one of those kibbutz art galleries that attract art-loving audiences and are gaining a reputation for interesting and high-quality art exhibitions.

The curator created a very clean, tidy, and aesthetic exhibition, thus creating a rustic atmosphere, rural-impressionistic lyrics of walking along the kibbutz fence on sunny days with a view to the territories and the fields and those occupying them. It is a drama-free walk, as is the case in many of the communities in Israel, meant to increase fitness and health, and derive pleasure from the scenery. In order to enhance the sense of calm, the artist also adds her two dogs to her walks. At first glance, this tranquility invites those entering the exhibition to join the artist on a safe walk, with no fear and negative pasts. The fence as a "leading motif" in her work isn't a frightening, spikey, threatening fence. This is not a wall! It is a fence that describes a friendly "fabric of life". A missing presence, perhaps indicating the artist's wish as that nothing has ever happened. However, we cannot forget that in November 2002, a terrorist infiltrated Kibbutz Metzger through the artist's walking fence and murdered five people, two of them children. The artist is well aware of Metzger's violent history and the tension existing on both sides of the fence and along it. Indeed, the exhibition is a silent invitation to the storm and fire, taking place under the sky and over the fields, a silence that carries the potential of uncertainty and violence. This dissonance challenges those who visit the exhibition.

Marion Fux was born in Chile. She came to Kibbutz Metzger as a young woman and has lived there since. The curator wrote: "As an artist who works and reacts to where she lives, it isn't surprising that the main series of paintings in the exhibition focuses on the fence surrounding the kibbutz and separating it from its neighboring communities of Baqa al-Gharbiyye and Misr. The painted series is based on pictures that the artist took on her walks around the fences, several years after the attack on the kibbutz. As a result, an electronic fence was added.

The new fence, meant to enhance the kibbutz members' sense of security, functions along the old fence as a foreign element in the landscape, separating one place from the other, and one land from the next."

Marion Fux is a political artist in her own way. She shows compassion and identifies with her Arab neighbors, while trying to observe the fence from their point of view. The works are devoid of violence, yet on the other hand, they feature dusty blurriness and ambiguity. A state of mind that seems to indicate an uncertain reality. The two dogs accompanying the artist on her walks along the fence, and more clearly in the video documenting her walk, are "the main

actors" in Marion Fux's absurd play. The dog, "man's best friend," also exemplifies the sniffing, investigative dog, a search dog trying to locate looming danger. In the video featured repeatedly on loop (filmed and edited by the artist), the voice of the muezzin accompanies Merrion Fux's walk along the fence. A documentation of reality...

The works are painted classically, oil paints on canvas, figurative symbolism implying the regions from which the artist comes. At the same time, they are of a unique local flavor familiar only to those who experience Israeli light and reality.

A series of small works, bordering on the abstract, featuring the smoke of coal fires, smoke penetrating the lives of entire populations (despite definitions) and undermining the population's health, as well as the ecological balance, add further question marks to the fabric of life along the fence, with the addition of sounds, colors, and smells. This exhibition documents reality through a compassionate, human-loving eye.

Yuval Danieli.