

Blinds

These works were made over the last couple of months. After years of painting on canvas, this thing suddenly happened: painting the blind. More precisely, you could call it applying paint to the blind. I don't think of it as painting on the blind, but as a painted blind (a form of manual labor, which simultaneously renews and effaces).

I think of concepts of continuity and change in art. For me, the ability to change, to be mobile, is critical. Matisse, in his book *Jazz*, wrote that Chinese poets used to change their names every couple of years. It was their way of shedding their egos, of moving on, of refusing to be subjugated to the tyranny of an internal or external image, or of a certain touch, hand or style. The painterly experience you accumulate over time results – in addition to the acquisition of additional skills and knowledge – in a certain kind of vulnerability that is anticipated in advance; even pain has a form, and this form precedes the emotion, undermining it and depleting it. The question is how not to die in the course of this journey, how to shed these anticipated moments of vulnerability that carry with them the stamp of what was once “authentic.”

In 1985, I left Israel to study in New York, and lived there for two years. Two of the exhibitions I

saw there left a particularly deep impression on me: Rauschenberg's black-and-white paintings at the Gagosian Gallery (works from the years 1949–1952) and an exhibition of works created by Gerhard Richter during the 1960s and 1970s. I especially remember his gray monochromes, which I had never seen before. I once heard that Richter said: “When I did these works, I was dead.” When he was asked on another occasion if he doesn't see these gray monochromes as a repetition of the monochromatic paintings created earlier by Ad Reinhardt, Yves Klein, Robert Ryman and others, he answered: “I hope the reasons that led me to make these paintings will cause them to be different.” I liked the way in which Richter did not presume to interpret the object; rather, he took recourse – based on some form of faith – in the (perhaps unconscious) reasons and circumstances that unleashed this process, which will end with the shutting of the painting's eyes (or perhaps with blindness).

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