



in New York in the 1960s. Indeed conceptual art asserted a bold visual and verbal opposition to the expressionist art movement that preceded it and drew from Kant's critique of judgement. Hence the chicken and egg situation: the artistic approach of this bygone art movement was subsequently appropriated by the art establishment, which now requires a work of art to be intelligible - a requirement that may in some great part explains the emotional sterility of much of today's art. On top of which one should add a generational gap: on the one side, those who worship the past and on the other, those willing to turn their backs to both past and present and redirect their entire gaze towards the future.

Today, the unavoidable bureaucracy that artists must engage in is reflected in their visual literacy. We are required to produce slick project plans and 3D simulations, and to justify ourselves through texts and explanations as if our artistic practice could be broken down into a logical equation. This is what the loss of intuition looks like: a PDF file. Art turns into a series of explanatory acts that feel like apologetic formulas directed at institutions and influential figures. The latter are entitled to engage in a filtering process without hardly ever stepping into a studio or an exhibition space, without even facing real-life works of art prior to their display against the white walls of museums. This leaves no room for the experience of intimacy and mystery, which thus vanish from the discourse. Albeit so crucial, the artwork's absence of meaning dries out. This is even truer in regard to contemporary artworks which still lack a proper context framed by oral or written history: their interpretative validity is limited to the first or third person. But is interpretation even necessary, and to what extent?

The art I am writing about here, the one with a principled stance, requires contemplation, reflection and time. It asks to linger, to seek relations, to ripen materially and conceptually, to fade, to get old, to withdraw and even disappear. Its essence is to become a common denominator to its community, operating through the gaze and the senses, unintelligibility and meaninglessness, on a time continuum greater than any sum of individual existences.

For example, when one visits a European bourgeois home and looks at an 18th-century painting that has been hanging on the wall for the past two hundred years, one can imagine this artwork as a vantage point shared by both the living and the dead - like a vortex. The experience is spiritual at its core and does not require much artistic explanation: the very choice of preserving a work of art in the family home, generation after generation, is what gives this painting its profound essence.

After all, what is the likelihood for any worldly object not to be eventually thrown away? What are the chances of a work of art to survive decades or even just a few years? Why would anyone other than the artist invest energy in looking at a particular work of art, let alone in its discovery and its preservation? Who even claimed that the viewer of a particular work lives here today? Maybe he/she will only cross paths with the artwork in the future? Maybe this would be preferable. Where does this sense of urgency and expectation, this longing for intelligibility come from? Unlike other fields, art holds the right to ambiguity and lack of clarity. When depleted by its own creator, art gives rise to an inorganic opposition between the visual and the literal; an opposition that has gained far too much exposure in our times, in tandem with the growth of criticism.

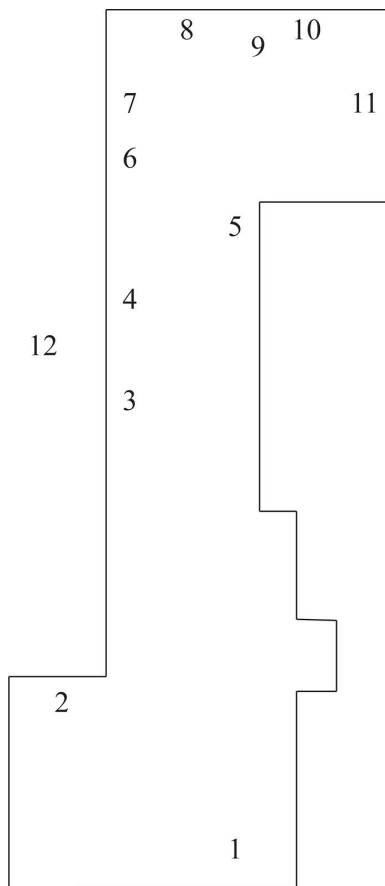
This principled stand is "dazed in that it belongs to artists who are evangelists of the quiet consciousness embarking on the troubled waters of the subconscious." It asks for no discourse, nor viewer, nor museum display. It might as well survive for decades in the invisibility of a home, for its motivation is first and foremost intimate. It testifies to a kind of time devoid of any profitability, utilized to the fullest in the artwork's sensual making-process; a time invested in prolonged observation. This is also where the artwork's validity reaches its limits, and with it comes a paradox. By being hierarchically superior to humans, the artwork will always stand above language, criticism, explanations and justifications, above intelligibility and everything else except Nature. And yet even if it were to disappear altogether, and despite its elevated state, the artwork's claim will still remain the same: to take a small part in this world. Forever.

- Ishai Shapira Kalter

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\* The exhibition's title: *Solitude Cell for the Anonymous Smoker* is borrowed from Meir Agassi's book, *The Jar from Tennessee: a Selection of Essays on Artists, Art and Contemplation 1983-1997*, published by Am Oved, 2008

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1. Lee Nevo, *The Volunteer*, Ceiling fan, Stuffed crow, Metal cable, variable dimensions, 2011
2. Noa Glazer, *Spitting Box*, Pine wood, Spit, 4.8x23x16.5 cm, 2019
3. Lee Nevo, *Sonata No. 14*, Mouse trap, Alarm clock, Motor battery, Wires, Aluminum foil, Three pizza boxes, 5x33x33 cm, 2019
4. Amir Givon, *Untitled*, Markers on wrapping paper, 160x160 cm, 2004
5. Amit Levinger, *Untitled*, Markers, spray and oil sticks on chrome paper, 70x75 cm, 2019
6. Meir Agassi, *Self Portrait Behind*, Mixed media on paper, Variable dimensions, 1981 (Courtesy of Ruth and Nelly Agassi and Mishkan Museum of Art, Ein Harod)
7. Meir Agassi, *Self Portrait with a Hat*, Mixed media on paper, Variable dimensions, 1982 (Courtesy of Ruth and Nelly Agassi and Mishkan Museum of Art, Ein Harod)
8. Shir Moran, *Predator*, Acrylic, oil pastels and markers on Jeans, 2019 (Courtesy of Alon Segen Gallery)
9. Amit Levinger, *LaPanim*, Single channel video, 06:35, 2004
10. Guillaume Dustan, *Pop Life*, Single channel video, 19:27 min, 2000 (Courtesy of Guillaume Dustan and Treize, Paris)
11. Elad Laron, *Indian Toast*, Oil on canvas, 200x257 cm, 2012
12. Maxim Turbo, *Performance*, 2019