

Amit Cabessa / Strong in Spirit

Curator: Ofra Harnam

14.06 – 01.09.2018

In his new solo show *Strong in Spirit* the artist *Amit Cabessa* exhibits an animated music video and a series of new paintings created in the past year. The paintings are vibrant and expressive, shifting between figurative and saturated imagery, to abstract and compressed compositions.

The exhibition is an additional stepping stone in *Cabessa's* journey to discover his personal boundaries as a painter; going further away from the honey trap that is adhering to the painterly ideal. Following a period in which he searched for the fundamentals of drawing – creating open and relaxed compositions – *Cabessa* lets go of the mind and reverts back to matter.

In a series of paintings positioning a big, solid, and stable object in the center of the piece, *Cabessa's* picturesque handwriting produces road marks done by strong and uncompromising brush strokes. However, the clear and intense marks from which *Cabessa* constructs the image are drawn in thin matchstick-like lines, which seem to be struggling to maintain a collapsing formation. *Cabessa* creates a facade for a broken and dismantled structure.

Cabessa utilizes the triangle as a reoccurring motif in an additional group of works. His gradual detachment from the family imagery and shift to the abstract, led *Cabessa* to examine the triangle as an object loaded with conflicting messages. Its purpose changes from piece to piece - sometimes it is a singular shape signifying something stable or stagnant; when standing on its tip it impels towards movement. In a large scale work the triangles are scattered like arrows or knives, thus becoming a weapon of assault.

The Sabra theme in *Cabessa's* work appears as a signifier of the painterly profession, a sort of a bridge linking to the eminent personas of local art's past. It appears as though *Cabessa* treats the painterly tradition he belongs to with respect, though his attitude is dual. The plant reappears in the paintings as a rundown emblem of a professional guild. The Sabra is a rootless object dispersed around the painting, frequently drawn in a violent, bleak, intensive Black – detached from the environment like a primal or mystically charged object, and at times, portrayed in humorous and playful displays when the cacti emerges from a color stain and becomes a decorative element. *Cabessa* embraces the cliché and reconstructs it as a mold. The motivation for this reconstruction is not driven by the desire to expose a local political narrative - at the essence of the action lies the desire to avoid the distraction of searching for a new subject for his paintings, thus concentrate on the essence of the act of painting in itself.

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What seems to be a subconscious burst of color, material and intensity in *Cabessa's* process is in fact a careful examination and regulation of the pictorial motivation. It seems like the moment *Cabessa* reaches the place where realization of the insight of his work happens, he pauses, audits, deconstructs, and rebuilds. *Cabessa* will do everything to not be a believer.

- Text: Ofra Harnam
- To English: Dana Grodberg

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54 Wolfson St. Tel-Aviv 6604216 T. +972.3.639.87.88
hezicohengallery.com info@hezicohengallery.com