

Elizabeth Xi Bauer presents: *Land's End***Abraham Kritzman****Press release**

Elizabeth Xi Bauer is thrilled to announce *Land's End*, Abraham Kritzman's first solo exhibition at the gallery. Through the display of paintings and a multimedia site-specific installation, the artist expands his ongoing investigation around notions of landscape and architecture. The latter is an amalgamation of various parts that are being assembled on site for the first time, constituting an L-shaped structure. These forming elements are as distinct from one another as they could be – a reflection of Kritzman's many interests – showcasing an assortment of colours, shapes and textures that, through the skilled hands of the artist, give way to a solid whole.

When facing the installation, it is hard to guess which of its many aspects will first catch the spectator's attention. Perhaps the columns that seem to hold the parts together; these are made of dark wood slabs – a material that recurs in Kritzman's vocabulary – aligned vertically, forming a texturised yet somehow flat surface. There is a correlation of scale between the artist's height and these columns, and a nod to monuments and ancient buildings is inevitable; yet to draw a strict parallel between object and architecture would prove delicate: it is too big to be a model, too small for an actual construction. Rather than round or square, the columns are shaped like Tetris pieces, with indentations that perfectly accommodate the watercolours that emerge from its sides.

Cardinal Direction (2022) is a series of watercolour and coloured pencil compositions on thick archival cardboard. It takes six of these drawings, measuring approximately 90 x 60 cm each, to form a single panel that connects one column to the next. They consist of abstract works where hues of white, as background, predominates. There is a sense of continuity between one work and the next, as they were all created under the same palette of colours, but ultimately each stands for an autonomous composition. In fact, every element on this installation was designed to stand on its own: they are assembled here together, as friends sharing a holiday house, but will find themselves in different paths in the future.

Standing on top of these cardboard works, are gouache and pencil drawings made on paper (also called *Cardinal Direction*, 2022). If at first they seem to be individual compositions, as with everything else in this installation, looks are deceitful; upon closer scrutiny they reveal themselves to be diptychs made of twin rectangular shapes. Once more Kritzman appeals to the idea of construction, of finding meaning via adding parts together, as his artifice. Yet unlike the previous work, these drawings were conceived as a bipartisan unity; that is to say, there is de facto continuity between each pair of twins. Their imagery is made of dark, charcoal-like brushstrokes with subtle colour pencil details underneath.

Close to their top edge, each of the columns contain a ceramic work (*The Pipe and piper*, *John's Fan*, *take it all away with c*, and *Remo*, all 2022). Though they are unique compositions, they all share a roundish shape, a similar placement within the column and, most importantly, a delicate process behind their making. To do them, the artist first builds their egg-like shape with clay. After

that, with the clay still wet, he cuts the object in smaller parts leaving geometric edges, as if creating a puzzle. He then draws a mix of abstract and figurative shapes over them, by using cobalt dioxide. Then, at last, he fires the objects.

Perhaps the most emblematic work of this installation is a group of plaster sculptures that resemble torsos, due to their scale though they are essentially abstract. Sitting on top of the columns and titled *Chest Up* (2022), this series has a complex process behind its making, where the artist has limited control of its outcome. The starting point consists of casts made of clay, into which Kritzman pours plaster; after a while, the plaster sets and the clay naturally separates from it; the clay moulds are then discarded, the sculptures having been created through their negative spaces. These are instinctive works by nature, since the artist feels them more than he sees what he's making; this 'discovery' process is somehow evocative of archeology.

Except for the ceramic works, which are placed strictly in front of the installation, all the other elements can be equally appreciated from the back. Behind this big structure, on two of the gallery walls, lie paintings. *Pam's Second Table* (2022) is a large-scale composition that dialogues with *Cardinal Direction*: both because it's made through modules aligned together, and also because the colour white predominates. The notion of negative space, present in the making of *Chest Up*, appears here again: the artist first paints their wood surface with red hues of acrylic paint, then adds a layer of white paint. After that, he draws over the surface using a sharp object – that is, creating negative reliefs. The most figurative work on show is the painting *The Bed Fire Breather* (2022), created with a colourful dark palette that is characteristic of Kritzman's compositions. As the title indicates, it shows a purple human creature breathing fire through their mouth while lying down; through dialectical association, one cannot help but think that this Prometheus-like creature is the primordial inhabitant of the installation.

Curated by Maria do Carmo M. P. de Pontes

Abraham Kritzman was born in 1983 in Israel and lives and works between Tel Aviv and London. He graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2014. His practice spans painting, sculpture and printmaking. The artist also teaches and curates. His artworks exist in major foundations and institutions such as the Clore Duffield Foundation, London, and the Tel Aviv Museum of Art and Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art. The artist was awarded The Minister of Culture Prize for Emerging Artists and The Hermann Struck Prize for printmaking.

The exhibition runs from 9th December 2022 to 25th January 2023
Wednesday to Saturday, 12–6 PM or by appointment

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