

ArtReview

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Moshe Ninio *Lapse*

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In the exhibition *Lapse*, as throughout Moshe Ninio's whole body of work, the photographic mechanism of containment – via framing, marking and representation – is pushed into the realm of the uncontainable, the unframeable. This push generates an oscillation between the process of becoming and the state of being an image. The exhibition centres on two bodies of work by the Tel Aviv-born artist, *Glass* (2010–11) and *Morgen* (2015–16). *Glass* is a sequence of framed photographs that render successive versions of one image: as a pair of colour prints (*Glass I*), as a single colour print (*Glass II*) and as a single black-and-white print (*Glass III*). The image depicts an empty glass booth in front of a white wall. It is like a model of its own means of display: the frame of the booth's opening optically corresponds to each photograph's real frame, the represented glass pane of the booth to the real glass pane, and the represented wall to the real wall upon which the prints are hung.

Yet in addition to its mute, anonymous visibility, *Glass*'s image of the empty booth,

as all photographic images, is an index of historical time and place. The booth is not just any booth, but the one Adolf Eichmann sat in during his trial in Jerusalem in 1961. Therefore the image of *Glass* is itself *evidence* of a historical legal procedure that triggered the question of witnessing and representing. In this sense, the movement of *Glass*'s sequence between colour and black-and-white prints reflects a movement of photographic images between the space of art and the archive, between subjective expression and objective information.

Morgen is a video installation of two adjacent screens installed on the wall, leaning forward. Reedited from YouTube, the footage shows Israeli singer Esther Ofarim singing the German hit *Morgen ist alles vorüber* in her 1964 debut performance on German tv. Ninio's reedit zooms in on the agitated movements of Ofarim's facial features, dissociating them from her voice. His focus unhitches imagery from sound to the point where the video

becomes an act of rupture, undermining the original meaning of the footage.

During Ofarim's performance, the camera pulls back and the studio's stage design, an abstract pattern, is slowly revealed behind her. Ninio extracted a segment of this and printed it on a constellation of metal sheets that lean against the gallery wall, further separating background and figure. The artist titled the grouping *Décor: morgen_appendix*. Magnifying the separateness of each of the video's elements, the isolated patterning resists the containment of the frame (in this case, the framing of the camera, and that of the video screen). Here, working in pointedly symbolic terms, Ninio literally stages a scene during which something in the background abandons its decorative role, in order to reappear in real space as an uncontainable witness of something like a traumatic event, though precisely what is left open-ended. The pattern has 'seen' an act it could not contain – or be contained by – and therefore had to escape. Ory Dessau



Glass II, 2010–11, photograph, inkjet print in MDF frame, 110 × 77 cm.
Courtesy Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme, Paris