

LINK



Barak Ravitz, 'Downfall', photo: Uzi Tzur

With One Eye Closed | The Wisdom produces Beauty

A visit to Barak Ravitz's new exhibition 'Curtain Call' at Dvir Gallery

Uzi Zur

May 10, 2023

The first thought that occurred to me when I stood in the middle of Barak Ravitz's exhibition was that it was reason that gave birth to all this beauty, reason intertwined with his fertile imagination, and the ability to summarize the idea of the work in a concentrated, decisive, and finished manner – yet still shrouded in mystery. To some extent, the exhibition is an incubator, an energetic environment where the initial idea still circulates in space, around and between the various works. It is an ascetic and lean work, but at the same time it also contains remnants of Rococo wealth, and as the name of the exhibition "Curtain Call" suggests, it also has a theatrical element, which is expressed extrovertly in the "Sunset" series.

It is a pair of identical color photographs of St. Mark's Square in Venice, one on a foggy day from the direction of the Grand Canal and the other in the evening from the square facing the canal. The photographs are placed on tiny shelves on top of an active spongy layer, attached to it by a glass panel, and it is wildly lively and effervescent at the edges of Venice and through the lace act of Venetian architecture that brings together East and West in its palaces, which are like drops of sand on the edge of waters threatening to drown. Ravitz's Venice is like a stage set of its own, losing it's own mind and the Venetian image seem to be as if they are overflowing from the inside, flooded to the point of suffocation, sweetening the excess of hundreds that have passed through it, of generations of tourists who flock to it, drowning it even before the waters of the lagoon closed in on it. Ravitz's connection between photography and sculpture is genius in its poetic simplicity.



Barak Ravitz, *Twice Asgood*, 2023, photo: Uzi Zur

As a connecting link between "Downfall" on the west wall and the central piece, "Twice Kitov" (Twice Asgood) which stands on the floor, a pair of cardboard boxes, one after the other that contained beans from the *Kitov* company - "clean from worms and insects", "under the supervision of the Badaz/Jerusalem/the ultra-orthodox community", says the writing on the old cardboard box. Ravitz flattened and tore the boxes and poured into the contents, according to the descriptions of their tearing, a thickened binding cast from dark, heavy, and sculptural bronze. Thus, the trivial and the carnal (secretly flirting with sanctity through the prohibition) are converted into the representative dignity of an amulet or ritual object. But then we find out that the bronze is in fact MDF painted with an iron color, and we are exposed to the irony embedded in the work – an ironic layer that indicates a little of Ravitz's hesitant way of thinking, who repeatedly creates from doubt.

The main piece in the exhibition is made of rows of elongated neon lights that divide the ceiling, from which hang rows of bright roller blinds pulled down at different lengths like abstract sails, and from each curtain hangs a white roller chain like strings of synthetic pearls. Very long chains that reach slightly above the concrete floor, some of them dangle by themselves and some of them are threaded through the handles of glass or ceramic mugs that are embedded, embedded, like ears in primary blocks of raw concrete. There are four blocks, three standing and one lying down, each one has a pair of handles, grips, and the manner of contact, connection, of each chain with the block grips is different, a small poetic change. Between the concrete bodies and the concrete floor are separated wooden panels and white Formica, three round panels of different sizes for standing and one elliptical for lying down, and in each of them a negative grip handle is sawn.



Barak Ravitz, *Curtain Call*, detail, photo: Uzi Zur

Another element of the work is only revealed when you look from the side and up, when you see that on each of the curtains Ravitz has printed a perfect image of a neon light when viewed from the side when it is directed upwards, as a reflection image of an inverted, enigmatic and luminous mirror of the light source, an exciting mirage in its sharp, precise, lyrical beauty. When the real light is turned off, the false light component is revealed in all its beauty and quiet power. Then there is also the addition of the knowledge that the concrete bodies, which are like a kind of pupae that hide a secret that will be hatched from them, are actually just plaster casts painted in a concrete tone, and thus Ravitz's act of illusion reaches a pulsating perfection. Ravitz's exhibition continues to some extent the previous exhibition in the space of the Dvir gallery, "Jacob's Ladder" by Chaim Steinbach, in the way it examines the space, challenges it, uses it for its needs, and in the way converts mundane materials into a metaphysical layer through connection and diversion, Parable and simile fused into one essence of great intelligence and beauty.