

MICHAL VITTELS

02.04 ----- 30.04.2022

STATIC MOVEMENT



MÉMOIRE
DE
L'AVENIR

SUMMARY

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Sitting in red skirt
 oil on canvas
 140 x 90 cm
 2015

PRESENTATION OF THE EXHIBITION

« As long as you are ignorant of what you should avoid or seek, or of what is necessary or superfluous, or of what is right or wrong, you will not be travelling, but merely wandering. There will be no benefit to you in this hurrying to and from; for you are travelling with your emotions and are followed by your afflictions. Would that they were indeed following you.»¹

Seneca - On the tranquility of the mind

From April 2 to 30, 2022 *Mémoire de l’Avenir* presents *Static Movement*, the first exhibition in France of the Israeli painter Michal Vittels.

For more than 40 years, this artist, born in 1948, and graduated in architecture at the Technion Haifa - Israel, has been deploying on her canvases what she calls figures. The term is important, because for Michal Vittels it is never a question of drawing a portrait or capturing the essence or character of a person.

Since the beginning of her career it is the human figure, and in particularly that of the woman, which has been her main and unique subject of examination.

Although she works, from time to time, from photographs, often she digs in her library of mental images. The postures serve her as a model, but never the faces. Her figures are alone and frontally placed, static, on generally neutral backgrounds that are not suggesting any particular place. They present attentive expressions; their gaze is carried inside or outwards. Confronted with the agitation of the world, her characters are articulated around personal perception and projections, caught in an inner/intimate journey.

Through them, in-fact the artist draws self-portraits. It is the arise of her emotions, which runs through her, that comes to inhabit her paintings. By the very still postures of her figures, the artist seeks to bring out what comes from the breathing of the spirit, the movement of the soul

*«To represent oneself, you must try to paint yourself as if you were someone else»
 Lucian Freud (1922-2011)*

This ambiguity of the portrait/self-portrait found in Michal Vittels’ painting is consistent in the history of art, as a work is always in one way or another an incarnation of its author through the artistic, physical or intellectual process it deployed.

The self-portrait is as much a reflection as it is a self-awareness, as Lucian Freud also used to say. Michal Vittels does not paint herself as she sees herself but as she senses herself. This mechanism is an inquiry of self and of her own singularity. However, painting bodies other than her own, also allows her to distance herself in a search for both the universality of human passions and an invitation for the viewer to project his or her own existence into the figures on her canvases.

In the Encounter of the face: one is Revisiting of Contemporary Portraiture, Marie Bonneau explains that for the philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas, to have access to the gaze of the other, is to have access to its inner self, to a proximity. The glance calls the other, almost demanding a response. The stare will «reveal the transcendence of the face, its altitude», being like exposed inward. Thanks to the way we look, the face becomes a language for Levinas, and it is not only a physical characteristics.²

In her paintings Michal Vittels makes use of both a stare and a face of another to embody herself. At the same time she also generates

a space around the figure, sometimes awkward, for the viewers, who are facing with an alter-ego or with the Other, while trying to comprehend what in fact is being replicated to him. The glance thus holds a capital place in the works of Michal Vittels because it is the medium of an inner dialogue and of a conversation that the artist seeks to initiate. In these figures the artist traces the contours of an immanence of the being made perceptible by its very presence, which emerges from the postures - lascivious, hieratic, lengthened-combined with the glancing eyes, sometimes piercing, vague, worrying. Paradoxically, in each of her figures, she reminds us of our known inner worlds, our dreams, our aspirations, our frustrations... as much as, of our relationship to the otherness, to the mystery that each being conceals within self, and that we are trying to pierce.

Marie-Cecile Berdaguer

¹Sénèque, *De la tranquillité de l'âme*, II, 11-13, dans SENEQUE, *Entretiens, Lettres à Lucilius*, éd. établie par P. VEYNE, Paris, éd. Robert Laffont, coll. « Bouquins », 1993, *ibid.*, lettre 104, 16-17, p. 1001.

²Marie Bonneau. *La rencontre du visage : une revisite du portrait contemporain*. Art et histoire de l'art. 2013. ffumas-00958370f

Artist website
michalvittels.com

Curation

Margalit Berriet

President founder of Mémoire de l'Avenir

Marie-Cécile Berdaguer

Responsible of the exhibitions - Mémoire de l'Avenir

Artist website

michalvittels.com

Partner of the exhibition

The exhibition is supported by the Cultural Service of the Israeli Embassy in France

Associated Partners

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BIOGRAPHY OF MICHAL VITTELS

Michal Vittels was born in 1948, about three weeks after Israel's independence declaration. Her mother's parents came from Ukraine in 1923. Her father escaped to Israel from Germany in 1938, at the age of 16. His family was murdered during the Holocaust.

The artist parents joined Moshav (Village) Bethlehem of Galilee, where they made a living from agriculture.

The artist describes her childhood as joyful and free, but also with private, political and economical tensions.

Painting and drawing were always her preferences, but the realization that it was her true vocation came late, after 5 years of Architecture school and two children, and also a strong feeling that something very crucial is missing in her life.

She began to take painting lessons and slowly plunged body and soul into it. For about 10 years she trained herself in a self-taught manner, drawing nude model, learning art history, and also taking lessons in Haifa University.

« *During those 10 years I didn't open a book other than history of art or albums of painters. The thirst to learn was immense, as if a dam had opened.*

After those 10 years, I felt I was ready to start painting on my own, without any external stimulus. I started to paint huge pictures on plywood and industrial paints. Still figures, but sort of monsters, intentionally distorted.

I presented these paintings at my first exhibition in 1988. Since then I have gone through different periods, influences and styles, searching for my own voice.

Over the years I have been influenced by many painters from all periods, from Rembrandt, Picasso, Cézanne to Francis Bacon, Hockney, Ori Reisman and many others.

Today I feel a kind of closing of the circle, a certain return to the first period, without models but occasionally with photographs I make or find.

I never draw a particular person. I feel like I have an inner stock of images that are trying to reveal themselves and I usually start the painting in my head, in my imagination, instead of making a sketch.

I hope that I have developed my own pictorial universe today, which of course has been marked by all the experiences I have gained, all the influences of my friends (that's how I feel) painters, and something else I add to all of this.»

Michal Vittels

It should also be noted that Michal Vittels is the great niece of the French sculptor Hanna Orloff who was part of the avant-garde circle of Montparnasse, the international artists' movement in Paris. She exhibited with Henri Matisse, Georges Rouault and Kees Van Dongen, among others. Portraiture was one of her favourite genres, and one that did not fail to influence others. This illustrious great aunt was for the artist a model of life and artistic style.

Michal Vittels has presented her work in numerous exhibitions, including 10 solo shows in Israel.

OVERVIEW OF THE ARTWORKS



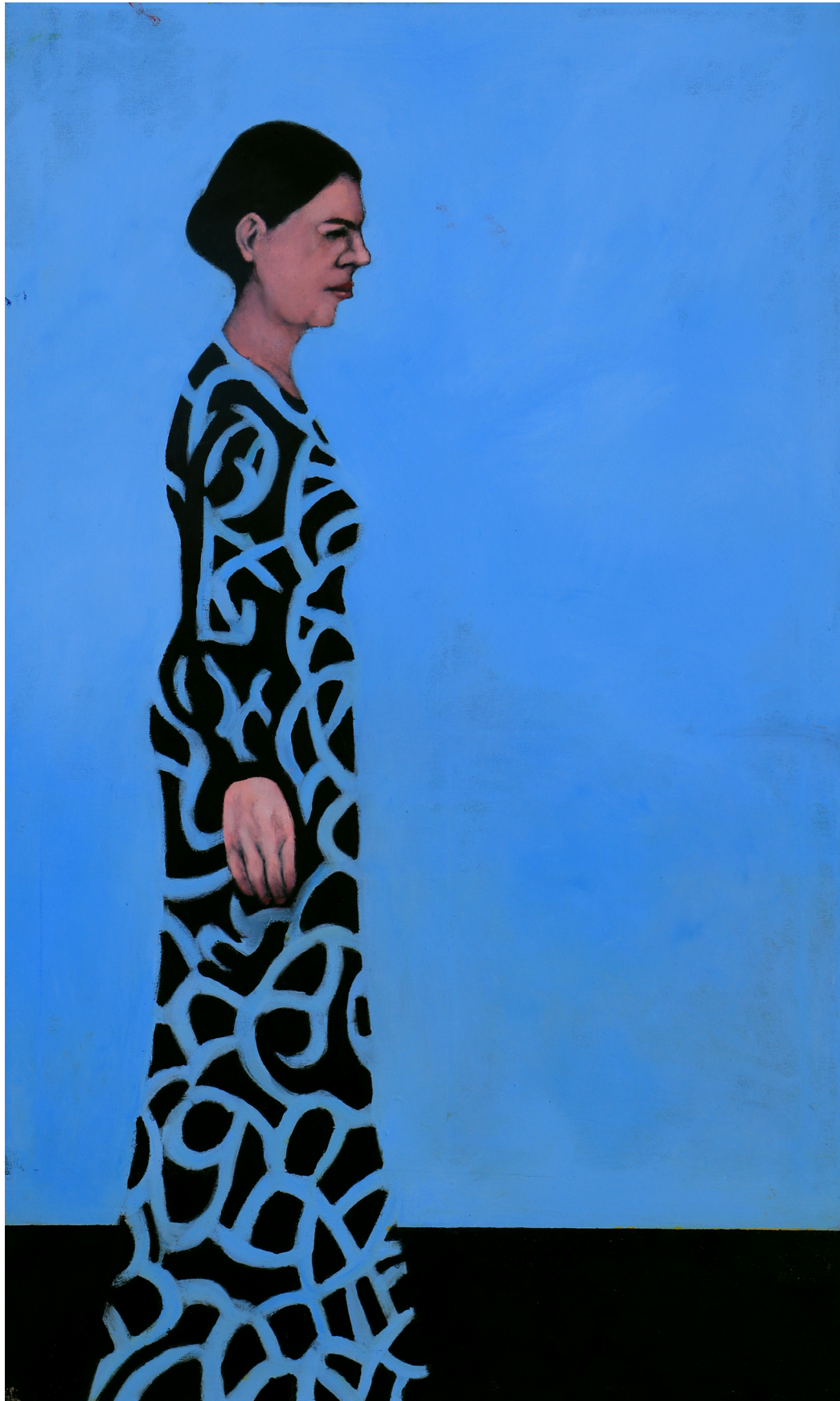
Purple dress
oil on canvas
120 x 70 cm
2021



A boy with red flower
oil on canvas
130 x 80 cm
2021



Sitting man in blue
oil on canvas
120 x 70 cm
2021



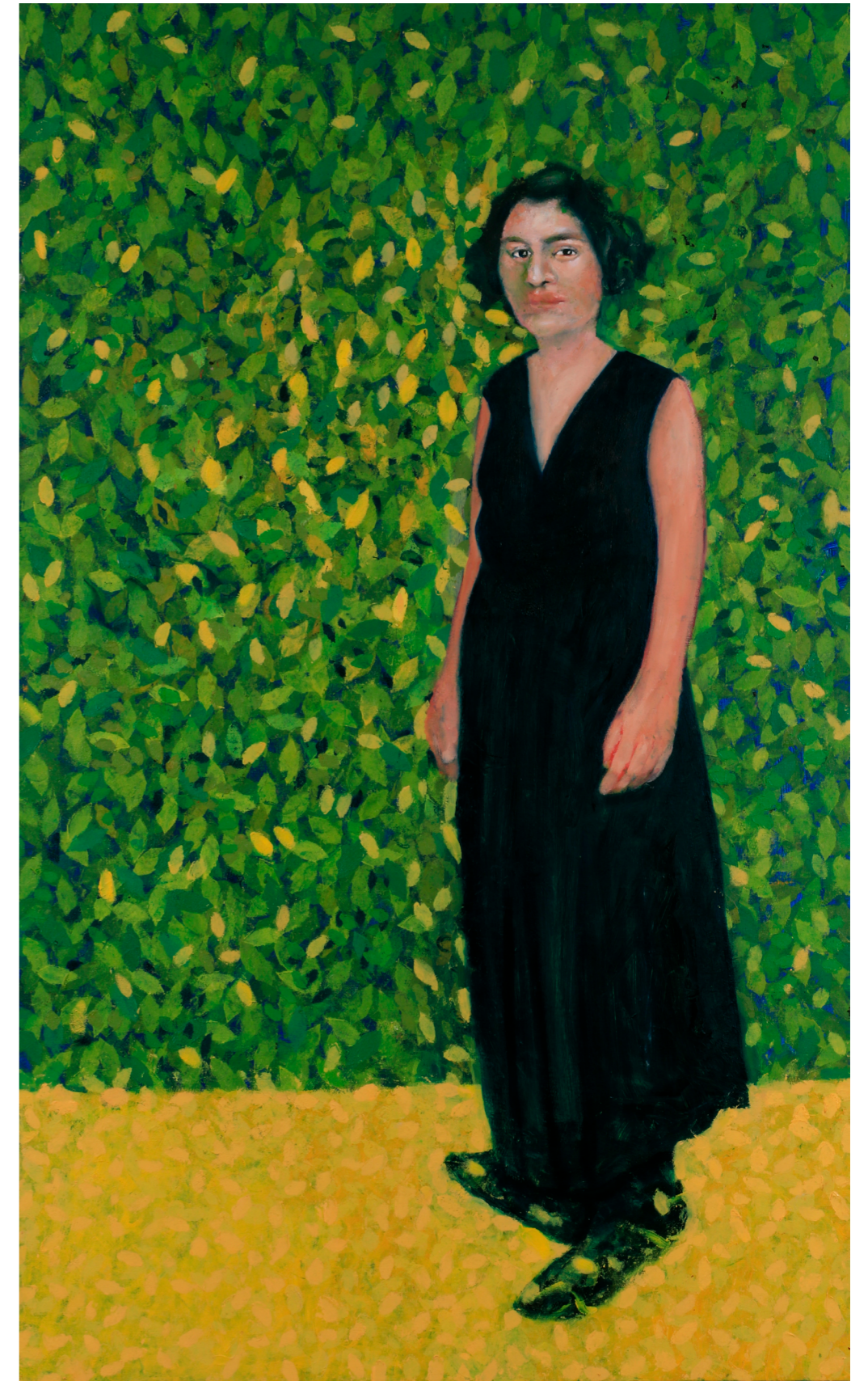
Woman Totem
oil on canvas
130 x 80 cm
2020



Standing in green dress
oil on canvas
120 x 70 cm
2014



Standing in the view
oil on canvas
130 x 80 cm
2019



Standing in the view 2
oil on canvas
130 x 80 cm
2019



Red dress 1
oil on canvas
130 x 70 cm
2022



man in black and red,
oil on canvas
140 x 90 cm
2015

SATELLITE EVENT

PERFORMANCE

Friday April 1st : 7:30PM



Isabelle Gozard

AN INVISIBLE ENEMY

based on a short story of Leslie Kaplan
By Isabelle Gozard

During the first confinement, Leslie Kaplan wrote a collection of short stories, *L'aplatissement de la terre* (Éditions P.O.L), and the film-maker Guy Girard adapted one of them, *Un ennemi invisible*, in which Isabelle Gozard starred.

Un ennemi invisible tells the story of this rupture. The character in this short story (written to be performed) struggles internally with the hostility of the world; too many people, too many connections, too much information blurs her understanding. The madness of this woman is in dialogue with the madness of our time and its paradoxes. Her intimate and chaotic speech goes up the lines of our fears and our obsessions: she says so as not to give up.

(about 20 minutes)

CONTACT

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