



Mon Petit Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle My Own Little National Museum of Natural History

Tessy Cohen Pfeffer \ Curated by Nir Harmat

This exhibition presents recent work by artist Tessy Cohen Pfeffer inspired by a visit she took to the Natural History Museum in Paris almost fifteen years ago. The Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle was founded in 1793 and originated out of the Jardin des Plantes, the royal garden of medicinal herbs that was founded 150 years earlier by King Louis XIII. Pfeffer Cohen revisits her memories and experience of the museum in a series of large-scale works of oil on canvas, colorful and abstract paintings full of details and textures.

In these paintings Tessy deconstructs objects and moments from the museum and redescribes them in her own visual language. Within the abstraction we catch glimpses of rocks, elephants, dinosaurs and more. Through painting Tessy investigates evolution and our biological foundations – she separates their story into pieces and lays them down again in a deconstruction of history, biology, time, and the act of drawing itself.

Art needs time and perspective. The retroactive gaze lets images settle and develop in our personal and collective conscious. It is a reference to the past that exists in the present. By describing a distant yet living memory Cohen Pfeffer participates in artistic research. She examines the relationships between shape, template, technique, and function, and the different variations they bring to a finished work. The way she paints is congruous to what she is trying to describe, the mechanism of her drawings in themselves echo evolution.

In the space between a painting's concepts and its execution lies the sentiment that activates the work. This is the sincerity that is at the core of artistic expression. Cohen Pfeffer's paintings have both a narrative and emotional aspect, and in their union we find a rich expression of shape, weight, and memory constantly withholding and unveiling to us. Through dissection and interpretation of her paintings the viewer becomes a participant in Tessy's artistic process of deconstruction and reconstruction of experience.

Nir Harmat, translation by Leeron Tur-Kaspa