

Completeness in Difference – An Art Dialogue between Eugene Lemay and Yigal Ozeri at Andreas Binder Gallery in Munich

By SHAI BAITEI, Contributor. Aug. 18, 2017

Friendship and collaboration between artists often result in creations that exceed what each artist might have been able to achieve without the closeness and intellectual exchange. Artists who work with among other artists knowingly and willingly expose themselves to peer and creative pressures, serving as motivation. Such friendships and collaborations are a true and sustainable source of inspiration, rooted in a joint dedication to creative art-making.

Whatever is in an artist's mind, his or her soul, often can't be fully captured in language. In contrast, it is possible for them to express even complex concepts and feelings visually. And if artists have dialogue, the other can act as conduit for exploring deeply rooted ideas that are waiting to be given shape visually. It is not surprising, then, that many compare the artistic process to giving birth.

Moreover, friendship's intimacy comes with openness and honesty, also – and especially – in times of emotional vulnerability. A friend's support can be of fundamental importance for the exploration of an artist's subconscious. As a consequence art materializes either simultaneously or subsequently with a new and better understanding of the self.

The conversations between the artist friends Eugene Lemay and Yigal Ozeri, however different they might be, resulted in impressive collaborative results before. Their artist studios are adjacent, located at the large arts center and artist community Mana Contemporary in Jersey City. It is at Mana where both are exposed to a great number of impressions, expressions, as well as a variety of discourses. It is in such an environment where dialogue, influence, and thoughts, become a springboard and help push boundaries of one's artistic practice.

Art fans can thank Andreas Binder for having the vision to juxtapose the works of Lemay and Ozeri at his Munich gallery where they are currently on view. This is an great opportunity to survey their latest works – their 'state of the art' if you will – side by side in Europe.

On one side is the stunning art of Yigal Ozeri, a memorable personality: a character, in the best sense, also in looks and curated outfit. He looks the part – a creative and an artist. The art world is in agreement that Ozeri is among the leading photorealist painters, enjoying great respect and admiration internationally. The quality of his works is beyond doubt, his technique is unrivaled, and his portraits are as exquisite as they are sought after.



YIGAL OZERI, Medusa, 2017, oil on canvas, 54 x 54 inch | 137 x 137 cm

Creatively, Yigal Ozeri is a director first, a location scout, a stylist, and photographer. It is in the second phase of creation that he puts the brush to canvas (or, mastering a particular challenge, to paper). His eye and sensitivity confirm that he is immersed in a world where beauty and its (re)creation is

most precious. Looking at his portraits one may ask what actually constitutes beauty. Which role and rank does beauty have - and should have - in contemporary art? Without confidence and energy he creates and presents beauty in its essence. We are lucky that he does so.



left: YIGAL OZERI, Medusa, 2017, oil on canvas, 54 x 54 inch | 137 x 137 cm / right: YIGAL OZERI, untitled (Cristal), 2017, oil on canvas, 30 x 40 inch | 76 x 102,5 cm

On the other side, in contrast, and surprisingly complementary fashion, we have the art of Eugene Lemay. His aesthetic expression finds a completely different language. Viewing his art we realize that beauty is found on the inside, in the humanity, honesty, and vulnerability, with which Lemay processes his personal experiences and memories of war and loss. And it is the fact that he shares his vulnerability with us that makes his works of art truly special.



EUGENE LEMAY, untitled, 2017, oil on canvas, 72 x 48 inch | 183 x 122 cm

Over the years Lemay's art has oscillated between abstract and figurative forms. While always meaningful it was at times, seemingly, free of political, geographic, and historic references. Its unifying and universal theme was our common humanity. In his latest body of work on view in Munich, Lemay

returned to figurative art, achieving an equally fresh and captivating visual expression that challenges us to have the art resonate with us.



left: EUGENE LEMAY, untitled, 2017, oil on canvas, 72 x 48 inch | 183 x 122 cm / right: EUGENE LEMAY, untitled, 2017, oil on canvas, 72 x 48 inch | 183 x 122 cm

Two years after the groundbreaking show “Monochrome” Lemay and Ozeri returned to Germany now with “Dual Tones.” Brought together in one space at Andreas Binder Gallery their paintings offer a clear and yet completely different visual language and expression of beauty’s complexity, its radiance of the interior and the exterior. They pay a novel attention to color and the human form, can be seen and experienced there until September 10. It is color, indeed, that becomes the vehicle connecting the serene, visible beauty of Ozeri’s portraits to the seemingly chaotic, metaphorical beauty of Lemay’s works.

Ozeri’s attention is dedicated to each detail, microscopically so, and achieves an idealized beauty and a brightness of light that exceeds its natural occurrence. Lemay probes the depth of his psyche, only to emerge with the crystallization of painterly beauty. It is his foremost achievement to give visually compelling expression to an experience that is without shape, form, not color.

The striking aspect of “Dual Tone” is that both Ozeri and Lemay come to the same conclusions, artistically speaking, even though they take totally different approaches, using starkly different visual language. One investigates the representation of the ‘self’ while the other is introspective. Differences disappear through their dissimilarities. Diverging ideas of the inner

and external beauty are merging. In other words, they are the two sides of the same coin.

Reflecting on the works of art by Yigal Ozeri and Eugene Lemay on view at Andreas Binder Gallery we come away thinking that they are impressive in their own right but once brought together in one space their juxtaposition expands their impact. Considering the friendship of the two artists one may think of Carl von Clausewitz and paraphrase him by saying that their paintings are a continuation of their artistic dialogue by other means.