

Night Journey: Light Motive Yaniv Shapira, Painting is a Home, 2018

“When my son
A day-old pup says:
‘Mom’
I open the darkness
And look with my own eyes To see what he means”
— Anadad Eldan³¹

Nachmani’s cycle of works titled *Light Motive* (2010–2015) explores the random, the accidental, and the transient. Its two protagonists are Yonathan – the artist’s son – and artificial illumination at night. “About three years ago, when my son began to walk, he suddenly discovered his own shadow and began to cry,” she explains. “The encounter with the shadow – the panic, the fear and the conversation that ensued – turned my gaze downward, to the road, the sidewalk, the ground. Suddenly I discovered a whole new world of sights, of reality projected onto a surface.”

The turning of the gaze on the elusive world of shadows and on sources of light opened up a new chapter in the artist’s work, which now revolved around being a mother, and observing her surroundings through her son’s point of view, too. In these works, the preoccupation is not with the light of the sun – a well established element in painting – but with artificial light, of the sort that Yonathan tries to make by lighting a sparkler that can “drive away” the darkness.

It also echoes a well-known childhood song that would traditionally be sung at Hanukkah (the Jewish Festival of Lights) celebrations on the kibbutz: “We are carrying torches/ on dark nights./ The paths glow beneath our feet/ and whoever has a heart/ that thirsts for light/ will raise his eyes and heart to us/ to the light – and come along!”³²

As in the past, here, too, the process involved dozens of snapshots – in this case, taken during night excursions to the playground. With her camera, Nachmani observed and recorded the elusive sights that flickered in and out of existence, and subsequently explored suitable options in terms of appropriate painting size, materials, and support. These were studied through dozens of small-scale works. “I was looking for a medium that would reproduce the effect of tempera on paper. I began painting with tempera on plywood, and subsequently added layers of oil paint to certain parts of the painting.”

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Anadad Eldan, *Tied with Plenty of Roots* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2014), p. 62 (in Hebrew).

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Lyrics: Aaron Zeev, melody: Mordechai Zeira.