

This Time Painting | Dalia Levin

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Precisely because she has no difficulty painting, Vered Nachmani sought to conduct a dialogue with photography. The technical medium enables her to control the image and constantly remember it. At the same time, a process evolves, which is, in any event, in line with the artist's intentions: she uses her hand, which paints as if it were a scanner that moves along the given item section by section, transforming it into a painting. The painterly sequence disappears, and its parts can be viewed as an abstract painting. The painting as a whole is now made as a patchwork, segment by segment. In this sense, Nachmani waives the near-transparent layers of paint extended on top of each other, and settles for application of one color next to another. She regards the image as a grid, reinforcing this view through the use of corporeal motifs, such as fences or foliage. In addition, she cuts the picture into uniform surfaces. These gestures can be read metaphorically: although the visible world appears familiar, it becomes perceptible not through re-identification, but through the interrelations between insight, memory, and imagination. These qualities culminate in the triptych *Erotica* (2002): a bamboo grid fills almost the entire picture plane, and only through the narrow slits between the bamboo canes does the image unfold in full depth. Just as the self-motif becomes perceptible, it slips away again. This mode of painting alludes to early work by Édouard Vuillard, a painter whom Nachmani holds in high esteem. In her recent series, *Part I: The Subconscious Opens Like a Fan* (the line opening Yona Wallach's eponymous collection of poems), Nachmani

works for the first time with a wooden backdrop. While working, she discovered that she could use the wood texture to the same effect as she does paint: wood can replace the abstract application of paint, but in the presence of tangible motifs, it may also be regarded in a material manner. The protagonist, thematically speaking, is anchored in a lush tangle of flowers, emerging as a metaphor. It is not quite corporeal, but rather a shadow of a female figure. Step by step, the figure completes a kneeling movement—a gesture possibly signifying a change in her attitude towards life. As such, it may also imply a change in the painterly practice itself.