

## Pinkness and Melancholy / Ruti Direktor

Since he first began exhibiting, Nadav Weissman brought with him to the art scene a world of his own, bordered and entangled within it, compressed within its own personal mythology. It is a world inhabited by heroes and heroines with certain characteristics and behavior patterns, whose occupations can be placed between play, violence and sex, all of which are forever portrayed both as what they are and as metaphors for other matters.

The characters comprising Weissman's artistic world have a smooth pinkish body and an enormous head, it's unclear whether they are adults or children, and their physical proportions are those of fetuses. They are embodied similarly in each area he deals with – painting, sculpture and lately also animation. They are nude but supposedly unaware of their sexuality, even when their genitals are accentuated. Since they are engaged in playing or surrounded by a nursery atmosphere, their nudity can convey a sense of a moment before tasting the fruit of the Knowledge Tree. Nudity prior to sexual experience. It is hard to decide what to call them – men or boys? Women or girls? They exist in an intermediary space between childhood and adulthood, preserving on one hand a children's behavior – playing, sitting on the floor – and on the other hand adopting adult manners – the women wear jewelry and walk on high heels, the men are equipped with guns. Meaning not just any manners, but typical gender stereotypes. Thus, in a strange manner, the characters are sexual and devoid of sexuality at the same time.

Occasionally they seem like children dressed up as adults, and at times the opposite – adults disguised as children. One way or the other, the characters always transmit a dense tension of kids – youths on the threshold of adolescence. The world stalks in wait, the game is a fable, the nursery and play ground are the entry hall for life itself. What about the moral? Probably no less than life itself – and art itself.

For example, Weissman named his last exhibition *Riding Lesson*. There were a considerable number of – sculpted and painted – horses in the show, and the protagonist of the animation film rode a horse, but also played a piano. The film is only a minute and half long but it feels like an existential journey; a man torn between creation and bodily obstacles – his nails grow unnaturally fast and disturb his piano playing – and his "masculine" characteristics as a horseback ride with gun in hand. The riding lesson transpire to be a lesson in life, and the atmosphere dominating most of Weissman's works seems like one of an ongoing tale of male initiation.

All of his works exist on the gap between a lighthearted appearance – the pinkish body, the colorfulness of the polyester-made characters - and a great, gradually accumulating unease. The nursery might appear on arena extra-territorial to life, colorful and fresh, childish and playful, but the child-like presence is deceitful. The childhood Weissman pinpoints is definitely not as nostalgic and agreeable as we might want to think; but a tense in-between period, characteristically bittersweet. In his nursery the children play with

bones instead of cubes, horses' heads are hung to serve as ornaments, melancholy and morbidity take over the pink. A great disquiet and eeriness flood Nadav Weissman's artistic space. Inasmuch as childhood is not a paradise to fondly cling to, so too art, which doesn't give itself away according to expectations: the many characters in images, in myriad colors, refuse to be deciphered to a story with a plot. The viewer is forced to live with them in perpetual limbo, neither here nor there, neither childhood nor adulthood, in constant waiting though.