

GUY YANAI | ACCIDENT NOTHING
December 12, 2013 – February 15, 2014

Text by Hila Cohen-Scheiderman

Aran Cravey Gallery is pleased to present Accident Nothing, the inaugural exhibition of the gallery's new Hollywood location and its first solo show with Israel based artist, Guy Yanai. Accident Nothing, featuring 18 new paintings by the artist, provides insight into a new tendency in his work to reflect states of mind that are unfurled, raw and defenseless—states of apprehension comparable to the lucidity and sobriety one experiences at the aftermath of an accident.

Best described as a painter's painter, Guy Yanai has carved out a special niche amongst the Israeli art scene, where mainly installation, performance and new media art has proliferated. Today's art operates within a field of disenchantment and cynicism, which is true of painting in particular. Yanai's painting too corresponds to an age of commodified goods and consumerism, whether via its material objects or ubiquitous images, but there is a simplicity and a naiveté to his love of painting. A love that is perhaps the driving force behind his prolific output. His work derives, then, not from the dark pits but from the fountain; not from desperation but from faith. Yanai maintains a devout studio practice, painting daily, and it is precisely this routine that conditions the extraordinary quality that we see in his work. Painting occurs not just on the canvas but also as a way of seeing, and where loss of control is far more prevalent than control. This sudden grasp of life's fragility and arbitrariness points to a further realization, namely that painting itself is no less arbitrary. And what's more, not only does Yanai paint his 'nothings' daily, but he does so with the compulsive fervor of a religious ritual, at once the most ardent believer and the greatest of heretics. "Why is it that nothing hurts so much?" he asks.

The paintings reflect this existential state of solitude. The figures and details, whether concretized or abstract, figure alone at the center of paintings, neither proud nor seductive, neither willowy nor collapsed under pressure. They are simply there, carrying the weight of the painting. The color palette, in the shades of sunrises and sunsets, is both soothing and bold, suggesting neither day nor night, an everywhere as much as a nowhere. These are voids – a void that dominates the smaller paintings in particular, whose format is still square. The term 'abstract' suggests itself here, but 'nothing' would be more fitting. Their forms, though alluding to the subjects they draw on, do not betray them fully.

In their immediacy and abruptness, accidents lend themselves to destructive significations that concern both the body and the mind. A crash shatters. Seen in the context of painting, the artist's fateful hand may burst barriers and break through solidified working patterns; It may reinvent and renovate. Accident Nothing speaks directly from the heart of the unconscious, it is the irresponsible, liberating deed, a breaking away from one's familiar comfort zone. It is also prosaic and defiant, turning

the painting around like an overturned car, adding further layers of meaning, validity and interpretation.

In conjunction with the show, the gallery has produced an artist's book by the same name, ACCIDENT NOTHING. The book includes 11 drawings created for the occasion, as well as studio shots of the process, installation shots, a critical essay by Hila Cohen-Scheiderman, an in depth interview by Noam Segal, and all the plates from the show. The book is beautifully designed by Nadav Shalev.