

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 2, 2012

Inman Gallery is pleased to present
the exhibition:

Gilad Efrat: Negev

November 3, 2012 –
January 5, 2013

Opening Reception:
Saturday November 3rd
6 – 8 pm

preceded by a conversation between
Gilad Efrat and Michael Jones McKean
Saturday November 3rd
5:30 pm

Gallery hours:
Tues. – Sat., 11 – 6
and by appointment



Gilad Efrat, *Tamarisk (Negev)*, 2012; oil on linen; 43 1/2 x 43 1/2 in

Inman Gallery is pleased to announce ***Gilad Efrat: Negev***, an exhibition of new paintings by the Tel-Aviv-based artist. The exhibition opens Saturday, November 3 with a reception from 6 to 8 pm. Preceding the reception at 5:30 pm, Inman Gallery will present a conversation between artists and 2004-06 Core Fellows Gilad Efrat and Michael Jones McKean about the show. *Gilad Efrat: Negev* is Efrat's third exhibition with gallery since 2004. It will be on view until January 5, 2013.

Gilad Efrat's *Negev* features twelve new paintings. Nine of these works picture the Negev desert. Comprising over half of Israel's land area, the dry, rocky, and desolate Negev is, as the artist describes, the nation's backyard, the place where the state keeps everything it doesn't want near its more populous centers: trash, prisons, military, and energy installations. The Negev is also home to rich biblical lore, as well as nomadic Bedouin tribes who have historically not conformed to Israel's administration of the territory. Efrat was born in Beer Sheba, the Negev's largest city, and he has depicted the region before, most notably painting aerial views of archeological sites (2001-02) and another artist's photo negatives of the Ansaar detention camp (2004-05).

In this current series of paintings, Efrat works, for the first time, from photographs that he shot himself on travels through the Negev. The medium to large-scale oil on linen paintings depict views of Bedouin settlements, broad desert panoramas, and close encounters with tamarisk, a species of bush-tree that offers protection from the desert sun and wind. Without ignoring the religious and political narratives specific to the Negev, Efrat has focused his camera lens and the resulting paintings on the seemingly timeless qualities of this developing landscape. In each painting he attempts to convey the unusual physical and specifically optical experience of exploring the expansive Negev.

Very flat and far from dramatic yet not bereft of incident, the Negev landscape typically appears both empty and irregular. As Efrat describes, when gazing at this nothingness one's vision is set adrift;

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unanchored by perspective, elements if not entire views become abstract. As in *Negev III*, 2012, a sand colored field littered with black shrubs and shadows, the sight of immense spatial depth can resolve to the eye as a floating two-dimensional plane. For several pictures, Efrat zooms attention in, seduced by sensual and intricate desert textures. In other works he zooms out, offering a more remote surveillance. In both instances, he asks the viewer to construct meaning from fragments and disparate signs in tightly cropped frames. Like Efrat's initial photographic surveying, the viewer's ability to comprehend, to map, or to remember the painted subjects entails finding a personal relation to seemingly inhuman spaces, scales, and details.



Gilad Efrat, *Negev III*, 2012; oil on linen; 55 x 55 inches

Efrat creates each painting using a subtractive technique that he executes with near mechanical precision. To begin he covers a canvas with one or more background colors. The artist then coats these tones with a dark top layer of oil paint. Working in a grid with reference to his source photography, he meticulously removes the dark layer square-by-square using tools such as rags and Q-tips. This processing of the image by hand produces a soft focus haze, with the final picture looking somewhere between an indexical document and a mental recollection. The paintings on view here are some of the most materially dense Efrat has produced, and the relationship between image and surface, information and abstraction is increasingly blurred.

Accompanying the views of the Negev are three similarly rendered paintings of the craggy surface of the moon. Pulled from images produced by the scientific community, these scenes equally relate an existential space that feels at once alien but familiar,

distant but intimate, and contemporary but ancient. Each picture captures a frontier of ideological intrigue, a site of colonization and control, while foremost revealing a wilderness that goes beyond man, beyond history, and seemingly beyond time.

Gilad Efrat (born Beer Sheba, Israel, 1969) currently lives and works in Tel Aviv, Israel. Efrat earned a B.F.A. from the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem, Israel (1995) and an M.F.A. from the Hebrew University and Bezalel Academy, Jerusalem, Israel (2003). From 2004-2006 he was a Core Artist-in Residence at the Glassell School, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas. Efrat has exhibited his work internationally for the last fifteen years, including an early career retrospective, *Ape Scape*, at the Museum of Art, Ein Harod, Israel (2010) and solo exhibitions at Oredaria Gallery of Contemporary Art, Rome, Italy (2008 and 2004) and Inman Gallery, Houston Texas (2012, 2008, 2004). His recent group exhibitions include: *The Flash of Nature*, Salone Degli Incanti, Trieste, Italy (2012); *Southern Spirit*, The Negev Museum for Art, Beer Sheva, Israel (2011); and *No New Thing Under the Sun*, Royal Academy of Art, London, United Kingdom (2010). Efrat's paintings are in the public collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel; and the Tel-Aviv Museum, Israel, among others. He is currently a Senior Lecturer at Shenkar College of Engineering and Design, Ramat Gan, Israel.

For more information, please contact the gallery at 713.526.7800 or info@inmangallery.com