

# IN LOOKING AWRY AT THE WORLD

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On the work of **Micha Patiniott**

*Backyard Rock (2007)*,<sup>1</sup> a big grey mountain with ghost-like feathers. When looking more closely at the painting, I notice a faint stem of grass peering out the ground in front of the mountain. Suddenly, my head gets sucked into the painting. I realize it's actually a small rock where two feathers have accidentally gathered. It's literally a mental close-up I physically felt. From staring at a harmless landscape of a distant mountain, I find myself belly on the ground with my face in the grass looking at this little wonder.

As I go on, I recognize such a shift of meaning in most of the other paintings. They all depict a familiar scene close to Patiniott's environment and yet they all seem to contain a bizarre sense of reality. A plant that is falling on the ground but for a split second holds itself in balance by standing on one of its leaves,<sup>2</sup> a big sailboat in the middle of a romantic scenery but with

This last painting concentrates for me Patiniott's gaze. In looking awry, he shows us a more complete version of our reality. He joins both the visual and the mental in his images and loads the domestic with personal meaning. By adding emotions to seemingly random subjects, he makes them important and therefore pushes them to another level. In all of his paintings Micha Patiniott frames these sublime moments of everyday life and turns them into symbols of concentrated meaning.

When I look back at the paintings in his studio with all these thoughts in my head, I see a selection of monoliths where I first saw a series of landscapes and objects painted with a quick brush in light colors. They all seem somewhat out of focus with a big gaping hole somewhere. I think this hole enables me as a viewer to be sucked into the painting and fill it with my own meanings. The hole is the mountain, the curved sails and masts, the oblique gaze, the dark exotic shirt. They take all our attention and mostly all the space of the painting and yet, I stand looking at it with the distinct feeling I have been misled and a deeper meaning lies elsewhere. Maybe this is what gives them a human quality and makes them into strange but intimate friends. Like allies in life one has constructed for oneself.

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<sup>1</sup> Backyard Rock — 2007, oil on linen, 160 x 120 cm



<sup>2</sup> House Plant — 2007, oil on linen, 50 x 40 cm

its sails and masts all curved,<sup>3</sup> a hanging shirt with a print of an exotic landscape, a self-portrait with his head bent down looking at the viewer in oblique.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Ditch — 2007, oil on linen, 160 x 120 cm



<sup>4</sup> Loud Shirt — 2007, oil on canvas, 90 x 70 cm