



Reuven Israel, *Veil/Vale*, 2021. Painted baltic birch and hardware, closed: 39.5 x 39.5 x 2.5 in, open: 51.5 x 51.5 x 2.5 in

Reuven Israel

W.A.L.L. (Wooden Arrangeable Linear Lamellations)

September 18 - October 30

Opening Saturday, September 18, 4pm - 8pm

Shulamit Nazarian is pleased to present *W.A.L.L. (Wooden Arrangeable Linear Lamellations)*, a solo exhibition of new sculptures by Israeli-born, Brooklyn-based artist Reuven Israel. This will be the artist's third solo exhibition with the gallery.

W.A.L.L. will be presented concurrently with a solo museum exhibition by the artist at the Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv. Titled *F.L.O.O.R. (Formulated, Liminal, Oblique, Openable, Rectangles)*, this exhibition will feature a new site-specific, room-sized installation. This exhibition will travel to the Museum of Modern Art of Bogotá.

Israel's practice both engages with and challenges the idea of sculpture as a static object. Experimenting with color, form, and kinetic ability, his works are embedded with the possibility of change and a refusal to maintain a fixed shape or scale. In *W.A.L.L.*, the artist presents three distinct parts of his practice: wall sculptures with

Shulamit Nazarian

Los Angeles

sliding elements, folding structures, and semi-circular forms. While they appear to be industrially fabricated, each sculpture is the result of a painstaking process of hand-cutting, gluing, laminating, and woodworking of Baltic birch plywood and medium density fiberboard or MDF. The final works play a game of visual deception as the handmade simulates the industrially fabricated and forms oscillate between pure abstraction and veiled forms of representation.

In Israel's geometric wall sculptures, the works expand, shift, and slide in various directions. As the components move, dark pigments contrast with subtle colors to reveal a surprising glow once hidden within the object's interior space. Reminiscent of sacred geometry, the sculptures imagine the possibility of infinite division and reformation. *The Unfolding Objects* series consists of birchwood hinged together to create a mass that unfolds from the wall, draping out into the space toward the floor or extending upwards to tower over the viewer. An optical illusion through color and patterning deepens the way the work occupies space, creating a figure and ground confusion and simulating movement and flux reminiscent of Op Art. Israel's semi-circular works, which appear to be separate objects assembled together, are actually realized from one solid piece of laminated MDF. Continuing a thread started from the artist's series, *Another Sunset*, in which Israel's sculptures evoked forms that slip above and behind the horizon, these new works suggest lunar cycles and draw inspiration from astronomical events.

While Israel's works might evoke spirituality, symbolism, sacred geometry, or science-fiction for some, at its core, Israel's practice opposes the impulse to be identified or named. Rather than embodying an ideology or persuasive conceptual meaning, the works aim to be autonomous objects that are self-referential to their making and construct. His series evolved from previous bodies of work, further distancing themselves from the genesis and expression of a particular ideology. The artist shares, "In my practice, I try to build a system that generates objects—like creating a vocabulary and language, and then operating in that language. I am trying to create a world while searching for meaning.... It sounds a bit mystical, but it's not. It's very practical." Through seemingly minimalist shapes and forms, Israel's works invite intrigue, opening up moments of possibility, dynamism, and wonder.

Reuven Israel (b. 1978, Jerusalem, Israel) received his MFA and BFA from Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem. He has had solo exhibitions at Tel Aviv Museum of Art; Braverman Gallery, Tel-Aviv; Fridman Gallery, New York; and Museo Civico Floriano Bodini, Gemonio, Italy, among others. Selected group exhibitions include *The Museum Imagined* at Danese Corey, New York; *The Museum Presents Itself 2* at Tel Aviv Museum of Art; *Domestic Ideals* at Lesley Heller Workspace, New York; *The Readymade Centennial* at Haifa Museum of Art; *Re: Visiting Rockefeller* at the Rockefeller Archaeological Museum, Jerusalem; and *Senses of the Mediterranean* at Hangar Bicocca, Milan. Reuven has received several awards, including the Israeli Ministry of Culture's Young Artist Award, the Tel Aviv Museum of Art's Legacy Heritage Fund Prize, and the America-Israel Cultural Foundation Scholarship. In April 2016, the artist completed a permanent public installation at Setter Square, Tel Aviv.