

CRITICS' PICKS

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View of "Call and Response," 2012.

TEL AVIV

Oren Eliav

BRAVERMAN GALLERY

33 Eilat St.

December 22, 2012–February 14, 2013

"Call and Response" culminates artist Oren Eliav's long-standing inquiry into the function of vision in painting and its relation to the rules of perspective. Although Eliav's large-scale canvases in this exhibition seem preoccupied explicitly with Christian imagery and theology, his paintings also point to tensions of identity in the

contemporary Western world and its historical narratives. Eliav's paintings are based on photographs of ecclesiastical architecture, and each plays with the viewer's spatial and conceptual viewpoint, presenting a different location within a church that Eliav re-created and distorted.

Floor, 2012, depicts spiral patterns appearing on what seems to be the floor of a nave; the canvas is hung vertically, thus causing the repetitive, colorful geometric shapes in the composition to appear suspended in the painting while attracting the viewer's eye to the gallery's ceiling. The optical-conceptual disruption continues on the opposite wall, in *Ceiling*, 2011. This painting is hung horizontally and focuses on an architectural arrangement of congested reliefs and portraits, an organized chaos of details and light.

The distorted perspective of these two paintings calls attention not only to the process of looking but also to the space within which we are looking—here, the art institution. The interplay of the actual and pictorial space, as well as the presentation of the dislocated Christian architecture on the empty, white walls of the gallery and the deconstruction of the experience of looking, inevitably conflates the church with the secular sacred space of observance.

— Rotem Rozental