

David Goss is a painter.

Transparent dots

When Eitan and Eléonore asked me to say something about the Hebrew Nakba map, I realized it was linked to the transformation I had experienced in my own work, in which I deal thematically with the medium of painting and its inherent meanings. I wanted to paint without color, to relate only to the medium of painting, to what lies underneath pigmentation. It may be seen as a political fantasy, a way of ignoring color, but as you can see, even in its absence color is still there. I wanted to make color - or to be precise its absence - into the main theme of my painting. I relate to the substance of painting as a kind of political metaphor, because in South Africa, where I was born and spent my childhood under apartheid, skin color was everything. It defined people's political, economic and social essence.

For a year now I have been painting with a substance called Gum Arabic. If you wet your fingers a bit you'll feel its stickiness. It's made out of the sap of a thorn tree that grows in Sudan and parts of West Africa. It was given that name because the majority of gum merchants were Arab. It's used mostly for cooking, pastries and sweets. It's the principal ingredient of water colors. It hardens and becomes quite transparent, but not completely as you can see in the paintings.

When I saw the Hebrew Nakba map, I noticed many transparent dots that disappeared, that were erased historically, and that blur and overlap. I chose to refer to a specific place on the map: the relics of a tomb in the village of Lubyá that Israel conquered in 1948. I have an indirect personal link to it, just like many other South African Jews. As a child I used to drop coins into the blue box of the JNF, which planted a forest on the ruins there, and named it the South Africa forest. Recently there was a trip of Jews from there asking forgiveness for that act, and together with this painting I feel I can close a circle now.

Translation: Ran Greenstein