

Double Distance: Salvage and Presencing

With artists: Abed Abdi, Gershon Knispel, Nardeen Srouji

This exhibition bridges two moments of "salvage"—one physical and archival, the other visual and conceptual, to explore art as a site of active memory rather than a passive record of the past.

Documenting a monument is often understood as an act of preservation—a way to freeze time. However, the works in this exhibition suggest that the image is not a mirror of history, but a site of ongoing "presencing". By bringing together the recovered model of the 1977 Land Day Monument and Nardeen Srouji's contemporary installation *360*, we encounter an essential insight: the monument is not the history itself, but a version of its presence that has to be perpetually rescued from the "wadi" of forgetfulness.

The first space unfolds a narrative of "salvage excavation." In 2007, a discovery of Al-Ittihad triggered a search for the original model of the Land Day Monument, co-created by Abed Abdi and Gershon Knispel. This was not a search in an air-conditioned archive, but a physical struggle against the elements. Discarded for twenty years in a wadi of pine groves in the Carmel mountain, Haifa, the model—along with its iron plow—lay buried under thorns, pine needles, and earth. The act of retrieving it was an archaeological intervention in the present. This "salvage" transformed the object from a discarded fragment into a traveling monument that has marked Land Day for nearly two decades. A newspaper clipping from 1977 served as map, but the "truth" of the work required a physical exhumation.

The second space enters the realm of conceptual "presencing" through Nardeen Srouji's *360*. If the Sakhnin model was rescued from a physical wadi, Srouji's work rescues the Orange Sculpture in the al-Manshiyya neighborhood of Jaffa from the invisibility of the everyday. The sculpture itself is a collision of layers: the sandstone of Old Jaffa, the Jaffa Orange, and the concrete cube of Tel Aviv. Srouji documents this site through a 360-degree panoramic photograph printed on a two-meter-high circular curtain.

While Srouji seeks to document the monument, she simultaneously undermines the authority of the

record. She compels the viewer into motion, leading them around the work so that the full 360-degree panorama unfolds, exposing the intertwined socio-economic and geo-political layers of contemporary life from every angle. The Etzel Museum, and al-Manshiyya neighbourhood of Jaffa, yet the circularity of the form—sewn shut and raised slightly from the floor—creates a peripheral structure that blocks entry. It is a "Double Distance": the sculpture is a version of history's presencing, and Srouji's work is a "presencing of that presencing." We are confronted with the realization that the more we attempt to capture the "entire" environment, the more we are barred from its center.

Together, these two spaces reveal that memory is a recursive act. The "salvage excavation" in the Carmel mountain and the 360-degree curtain in Jaffa both navigate the gap between the original event, its copy, and its memory. They remind us that history is not a static destination we can reach through documentation, but a dynamic structure whose meaning changes and evolves with each act of presencing whether through the iron plow or the panoramic lens, the artist acts as an excavator of memory, ensuring that the image remains—not as a ghost—but as a living, vibrating presene.



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