

Biographies

Six Solo Exhibitions at Hagar Art Gallery, Jaffa

Tal Ben Zvi
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رضاءكم بحمده

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إنا أنسنة

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مربور عكا

انطقا لذة

الوصية في كثير

دن الاستلح

وعلاوات

الاستعلم

Hagar Art Gallery, Jaffa Forgetting What Cannot be Forgotten | Tal Ben Zvi

How could you stand life?

These days we can stand it because of video; Abu Kamal was right – we've become a video nation. Umm Hassan brought me a tape of El Ghabsiyeh, and some other woman brought a tape of another village – all people do is swap videotapes in whose images we find the strength to continue. We sit in front of the small screen and see small spots, distorted pictures and close-ups, and from these we invent the country we desire. We invent our life through pictures.

[...]

You lived in the temporary and died in the temporary; you put up with lives that couldn't be borne and hid yourselves by forgetting what couldn't be forgotten.

– Elias Khoury¹

This catalogue focuses on the **forgetting** and **erasure** that shape the consciousness and identity of the individual and the community, exploring their various manifestations in the solo exhibitions of artists **Tsibi Geva**, **Gaston Zvi Ickowicz**, **Khen Shish**, **David Adika**, **Hanna Farah**, and **Anisa Ashkar**. These artists² exhibited their work at the Hagar Art Gallery between 2001 and 2003, against the backdrop of the city of Jaffa seen through the gallery's living room/display space; a field of vision likewise structured by personal and collective forgetting and erasure that will be described below.³

Hagar Art Gallery in Jaffa's al-Ajami neighborhood is not only the real and metaphorical background and arena for the art works' presence; to a large extent it is also an expression of the boundaries of this discourse of presence in the fields of art and culture in Israel. Alongside the artists' visual biographies in this catalogue, Hagar Art Gallery featured solo exhibitions by artists **Ahlam Shibli**, **Sami Bukhari**, **Reida Adon**, **Ashraf Fawakhry**, **Ahlam Jomah**, **Jumana Emil Abboud**, and **Anisa Ashkar**, discussed at length in the catalogue *Hagar: Contemporary Palestinian Art*. Featuring the solo exhibitions of these artists along a continuous sequence was intended to allow for the works' reading in a bi-national and bi-lingual display space which spans contexts, interpretations, and perspectives of the field of Israeli art, alongside those of the Palestinian minority in Israel.⁴

Hagar Art Gallery was located in a three-room apartment on the fourth floor of a residential building, all of whose inhabitants are Palestinian citizens of Israel. The Gallery's main exhibition space was the living room bounded by

sliding glass doors. From there, eye contact was created between the interior of the apartment and the gallery's terrace, and therefrom the roof opened onto a broad view of Jaffa's al-Ajami neighborhood.⁵

Much has been written in Israeli culture about the erasure of the city of Jaffa which lies beyond the hyphen (Tel Aviv-Jaffa). This erasure is still taking place in contemporary Israeli art; one may even say that representations of Jaffa as an Arab city are scarce.⁶ This dissociation is enhanced by the location of exhibition spaces (museums and galleries) in the city's north (on Tel Aviv's side of the hyphen), where the modernist space and the closed white cube, alongside the intra-artistic contexts, reinforce their detachment from a concrete geographical space.

A key role in the **national culture** is preserved for the exclusivity of the Hebrew language discourse in Israeli art, from its beginnings to the present, as an adhesive that ties together Israeli localism, Israeli art, and the Hebrew language describing them.⁷ One of the classical texts of the study of nationality dealing with the central role of forgetting and erasure in the national culture is Ernest Renan's⁸ 1882 lecture "What is a Nation?", where he emphasizes that the state cannot function as a social adhesive or as an element that unites its citizens. Only history, or rather, forgetting can do that, he maintains. Apart from generating collective memory from the past, Renan holds that the creation of a nation requires collective forgetting of ethnic differences, internal struggles, fights and pogroms between various groups of the same nationality. The aspiration for a uniform culture, uniform memory, uniform amnesia, shared metaphors, a common pictorial-associative language – all these are crucial factors in the creation of a nation.

In Israeli national culture, the national forgetting described by Renan also includes the forgetting/erasure of Jaffa's Arabic identity, a long-lasting obliteration which is part of the overall erasure of the Palestinian cities during 1948. Manar Hassan⁹ indicates that as a result of this forgetting Palestinian society is imagined as a mainly rural culture that never underwent progressive processes of urbanization. According to Hassan:

Imagining the country as empty, on the one hand, and the blurring of the Palestinian city to the point of its concealment, on the other, were two sides of the coin for early Zionism. For recognizing the existence of the Palestinian

city implies recognizing that the country is not a "country without a people," but rather one where another nation is being formed and lives.¹⁰

Hassan further notes that the existence of the city was also obliterated from Palestinian historiography and from Palestinian collective national memory, and that the Palestinian past is structured as a rural past in memory practices, such as poetry, novels, art works, autobiographies, and national texts.¹¹

The status of the city, vis-à-vis the romanticization of the village in Palestinian collective memory, appears in Khury's *Bab el Shams*, the ninth novel by the writer who was born in Lebanon in 1948, and published his novel in 1998, on the 50th anniversary of the Nakba (Palestinian Catastrophe of 1948). Discussing the memory that has been banished from the map, he writes:

"[...] Sha'ab isn't a country, it's just a village."

You said you understood the meaning of the word country after the fall of Sha'ab. A country isn't oranges or olives, or the mosque of El Jazzar in Acre. A country is falling into the abyss, feeling that you are part of the whole, and dying because it has died. In those villages running down to the sea from northern Galilee to the west, no-one thought of what it would mean for everything to fall. The villages fell, and we ran from one to another as though we were on the sea jumping from one boat to another, the boats sinking, and us with them. [...] Why you said that Palestine no longer existed.

"Palestine was the cities – Haifa, Jaffa, Jerusalem and Acre. In them we could feel something called Palestine. The villages were like all villages. It was the cities that fell quickly, and we discovered that we didn't know where we were. The truth is that those who occupied Palestine made us discover the country as we lost it.¹²

Jaffa, the pre-1948 Palestinian city, was indeed lost, like its sisters Acre, Haifa, Ramla, Lod, and Jerusalem. Recent years, however, have seen significant documentation of the reality of Palestinian life before the Palestinian Nakba, by social, cultural, and political organizations, individuals who may be described as political activists, writers and other artists – Palestinian and Israeli – who exert themselves to give voice to that which was silenced and erased from the local landscape.¹³ The location of Hagar Art Gallery at the heart of a neighborhood whose Palestinian inhabitants struggle for recognition as a national minority, alongside an ongoing struggle for elementary urban human

rights, has also placed the aforementioned solo exhibitions in an essentially critical political sphere, one that distinctively deviates from the boundaries of the art field.

In her book *Training for Art*, Ariella Azoulay¹⁴ maintains that demonstrating presence in the public sphere is an objectional practice. Azoulay notes that this demonstration refuses to provide the art field with its *raison d'être*, namely the work of art, and that this is a different practice of signification in the public sphere, mainly geared towards "poking holes in the hegemonic story."¹⁵ This description is congruent with the presence of the Palestinian al-Ajami neighborhood in the display space/living room of the Hagar Art Gallery during the presentation of the solo exhibitions, a presence which transpires in a realistic and existential continuous presence. The city itself – the bustle of the everyday, the passersby, the neighbors, and the car and bus traffic throughout the day – is reflected in the works or seen by their side (in the Perspex and glass framing of the photographs, in the glass sliding door of the Gallery's living room, through the windows of the rooms, and on the terrace), yet it is not fixed and does not become an object. This presence undermines the hegemonic narrative that places Jaffa's erasure at its center; thus the city assumes a form of political resistance. The politicization of Jaffa's urban presence is yet another voice accompanying the exhibitions. At times this voice is clear and built into the depicted biography, at others it generates a type of interruption or resistance, and penetrates the field of vision in a discursive sphere which does not want and cannot contain it.

Alongside Jaffa's demonstration of presence, the solo exhibitions featured at Hagar Art Gallery also evinced a **demonstration of biographical presence** which enabled the politics of identity to materialize and operate in critical and political discursive realms that challenge the artistic establishment. The **politicization of biographical presence** is based on the figures of the artist and his/her family and friends who appear in the works realistically.

In some of the solo exhibitions the artist's figure appears in a group rather than by itself. In this respect, the artist's family and friends function as **witnesses**, attesting not only to his subjectivity, but also to his position in a broader communal familial system that stands by his side and affirms his existence. Shoshana Felman¹⁶ describes two major qualities pertaining to the notion of testimony: the witness's presence as one who had really seen the event, with his own eyes, and the understanding that to bear witness is "to

take responsibility [...] for the history or for the truth of an occurrence, for something which, by definition, goes beyond the personal, in having general (nonpersonal) validity and consequences." Both the witness's presence and the public significance stemming from the testimony are manifested in the way in which the artist is present – whether physically or metaphorically – as part of the familial and extended community, with the history accompanying it.

Thus, for example, **Anisa Ashkar** points at her sisters who sit in the audience during the performance *Barbur 24000*, personally presenting them to Aharon Barnea in the role of translator, and subsequently to the mostly Jewish audience. Through this act, which is essentially an Althusserian recognition, Ashkar performs a process of acquaintance/recognition, identification and mutual affirmation of both herself as a subject, her family, and the Palestinian history emerging from the text in the performance. A similar process also occurs in **Gaston Zvi Ickowicz's** family photographs in the exhibition *Buenos Aires*, where his friends and extended family affirm their existence, name, and presence in a concrete present – the shooting time – in the context of the familial past, the family's emigration from Argentina. By the same token, **David Adika's** *Portraits: Mother Tongue*, introduces a type of collective gathering (in the photograph) of the participating artists in the exhibition *Mother Tongue*, a gathering held in the living room of the Hagar Art Gallery, Jaffa, where they not only make each other's acquaintance for the first time through the reflection on the Perspex coating of the photographs, but also situate the mutual acquaintance within a larger community that shares a common identity factor – their parents' emigration from Arab countries.

The immigrant identity shared by the artists emerges indirectly in **Khen Shish's** exhibition *Birthday*, where, alongside dozens of drawings depicting lines, flowers and black eyes, texts appear ("Golda," "rather nice," "tigress") that situate the biographical in the history of a concrete social Mizrahi¹⁷ struggle. Convening the extended community in contexts of histories of struggle is also manifested in the series *Distorted* by artist **Hanna Farah** who positions his figure in the village of Bir'am. Farah indeed appears alone in the photographs, but his "remembering" figure standing under the stone arch in Bir'am, the martyr iconography, and the pile of stones/cairn all represent the memory community of the Palestinian village whose inhabitants were uprooted and expelled in 1948. **Tsibi Geva** in his exhibition *Lattice* summons his architect father for testimony as representative of the modernist memory community;

modernism which has influenced not only his works in the past and the lattice models he installed on the terrace of Hagar Art Gallery in Jaffa, but also, most quintessentially, his own perception of localism and the possibilities of seeing Palestinian Jaffa as revealed through these lattices.

In its most direct and literal sense, the feeling of “I am here” emerging from the works implies the artist’s insistence on his right to critical and communal biographical belonging, even if it contradicts the biographical narratives dominant in the art and culture field in which he operates. In the essay “Deferring Language as a Theme in the Work of Mizrahi Artists”¹⁸ I wrote that class, Mizrahi, Jewish, and Arab discursive formations are underrepresented in the Israeli art field, as opposed to those centered on biographical narratives relating to Zionist-nationalist historical stories. Many cultural scholars have described the erasure of these critical discursive types from Israeli culture.¹⁹ Erasure and eradication are part of the unifying national culture, part of the uniform memory and part of the uniform forgetting described by Renan, in effect implying a struggle for the mastery over images, their terms of production and mode of presentation, the evolving discourse about them and the language.²⁰ In this respect, the visual biography and its representation in the public sphere are an expression of a parallel, competing narrative, alternative to the national logic, at times even undermining it. The fact that contemporary Israeli art still operates largely within the exclusive Hebrew discourse and national logic, however, also defines the possibility of operating critically within and against these frames.²¹

Susan Buck-Morss describes the art world as one whose social functioning and structure guarantee the trivialization of many of today’s critical artistic practices, maintaining that:

*Even “political” art is depoliticized, becoming simply another genre of contemporary practice – which has every right to be, but not to matter.*²²

Against the neutralization of artistic protest within a globally commercialized, artworld, Buck-Morss notes that one of the strategies adopted by artists to keep critical practice alive is for the artist to use her or his own socio-ontological identity as the content of art, and to render aesthetic experience socially critical in this way.²³ While Buck-Morss describes the strategy mainly as the artists’ “disappearance,” escaping “temporarily from the conditions

of being-in-the-artworld, moving into the sheltering hybridity of border communities in a way that defines public art less as an avant-garde than as an underground,"²⁴ however, the visual biographies presented in this catalogue seem to strive for more than a temporary presence and the definition of a border community, underground as it may be. The show of presence in this case is a demand for permanent presence of the communal-social within a national-cultural sphere, on the surface, in broad daylight, as opposed to an underground position as margins of forgetting and erasure. In this respect, the politicization of communal presence, with the histories accompanying it, alongside the subjectivity of presence as presented in the work of art, enable recognition of the artist's biography, and at the same time disallow its erasure as part of the artistic discursive and scholarly dispositions of the period.

Against this cultural-political forgetting and erasure stands the artist's demonstration of communal presence alongside the demonstration of presence of the city of Jaffa as a physical position introduced on a realistic scale in an exhibition space. This presence continued until the Gallery's closing in the summer of 2003, whereafter the exhibition space resumed its function as a family apartment, a transition that attests both to the temporary nature of the critical position and to its place within life itself.

1 Elias Khoury, *Gate of the Sun: Bab El Shams*, trans.: Humphrey Davies (London: Harvill Secker, 2005 [1998]), pp. 428-430.

2 Except for Hanna Farah and Anisa Ashkar. On the solo exhibitions featured at Hagar Art Gallery, see the Gallery's website: www.hagar-gallery.com

3 Forgetting denotes the weakness of memory, namely a passive act occurring primarily in a person's private inner realm, while erasure (or the Hebrew word *hashkacha* meaning "causing to forget") is the elimination from memory or consciousness, namely – an intentional active act occurring within culture, within large-scale social and political systems of power and knowledge.

4 This process continues the production of trilingual (Hebrew-Arabic-English) catalogues documenting the works of Israeli and Palestinian artists. See: Tal Ben Zvi, *A New Middle East: 11 Solo Exhibitions at the Heinrich Böll Foundation*, exh. cat. (Tel Aviv: Hagar, 2000); Tal Ben Zvi and Yael Lerer (eds.), *Self Portrait: Palestinian Women's Art* (Tel Aviv: Andalus, 2001); Tal Ben Zvi, *Brunette: 16 Solo Exhibitions at Heinrich Böll Foundation*, exh. cat. (Tel Aviv: Babel, 2003); Tal Ben Zvi, *Mother Tongue*, exh. cat. in *Eastern Appearance: A Present that Stirs in the Thickets of Its Arab Past*, Yigal Nizri (ed.) (Tel Aviv: Babel, 2004).

5 For a discussion of the history of the al-Ajami neighborhood in Jaffa, see: Dan Yahav, *Jaffa, Bride of the Sea, from a Major City to*

Slums: A Model of Spatial Inequality (Tel Aviv: Tammuz, 2004) [Hebrew]; Sharon Rotbard, *White City, Black City* (Tel Aviv: Babel, 2005) [Hebrew].

6 One of the only exhibitions which addressed the city of Jaffa was that of Sami Bukhari and Eyal Danon "A House in Jaffa" (2003) presented at the Architect's House in Jaffa, curator: Shelly Cohen (the 7th exhibition in the series "Local"). In the exhibition text Cohen noted that the ostensibly neutral "white gallery" became, for the duration of the show, the interior of a single house in Jaffa presenting a current Palestinian residential culture, and the meeting site (via video installation) with the family of one of the founders of Alrabbatta: The League for the Arabs of Jaffa.

7 Sara Chinski bases this affinity on the place of the local/original art work in the national culture: "The original work" has a super status in art's scholarly discourse since it reaffirms society's claim of validity regarding its "natural" ascription to the place, thus becoming an active, senior participant in legitimizing the territorial claims of the Zionist discourse. As for this Zionist discourse, she contends that the basic mistake running throughout the discussion of art is the belief that the Zionist ethos can be adopted as the major ethos that concerns the artworld, while distinguishing it from its repressive practices. See: Sara Chinski, "Silence of the Fish: The Local vs. the Universal in the Israeli Discourse of Art," *Theory and Criticism*, 4, 1993: 311-501 [Hebrew].

8 Ernest Renan, "What is a nation" (1882), trans.: Martin Thom, in Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 12.

9 Manar Hassan, "The Destruction of the City and the War on the Collective Memory: The Victorious and the Defeated," *Theory and Criticism*, 27, 2005: 197-207 [Hebrew].

10 *Ibid.*, pp. 198-199.

11 On the image of the village in Palestinian art, see: Tina Malhi Sherwell, "Imagining Palestine as the Motherland," in Ben Zvi & Lerer 2001 (n. 4), pp. 49-66.

12 Khoury 2005 (n. 1), p. 177.

13 For the discussion on the representation of the Nakba in the public sphere, see the website of Zochrot association: www.zochrot.org. Another project addressing the same theme is "Autobiography of a City" initiated by the Ayam NPO founded by Sami Bukhari and Eyal Danon. The project's first phase includes a website with documentation in various means (text, sound, video, still photographs) of contemporary and historical stories of the Palestinian citizens of Jaffa: www.jaffaproject.org.

14 Ariella Azoulay describes the demonstration of presence in connection with the protest movements that emerged after the Yom Kippur (1973) War, such as the Black Panthers, and clashes between Arab and Jewish students in the university campuses, mainly in Jerusalem and Haifa, as well as the Palestinian response in the Arab sector to the expropriation of land in the Galilee for the area's development. See: Ariella Azoulay, *TRAINING for ART: Critique of Museal Economy* (Tel Aviv: The Porter Institute of Poetics & Semiotics, Tel Aviv University and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1999), p. 163 [Hebrew].

15 *Ibid.*, p. 164.

16 Shoshana Felman, "The Return of the Voice: Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*," in Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), p. 204.

17 Mizrahi, literally Eastern in Hebrew, denotes Jews of North African and West Asian origin.

- 18 Tal Ben Zvi, "Deferring Language as a Theme in the Work of Mizrahi Artists," in *Eastern Appearance: A Present that Stirs in the Thickets of Its Arab Past*, ed.: Yigal Nizri (Tel Aviv: Babel, 2004), p. 173.
- 19 On the erasure of critical discourses within the national culture in Israel, see: Azmi Bishara, "On the Question of the Palestinian Minority in Israel," *Theory and Criticism*, 3, 1993, p. 7 [Hebrew]; English abstract, pp. 7-35 [Hebrew]; Ariella Azoulay, *TRAINING for ART: Critique of Museal Economy* (Tel Aviv: The Porter Institute of Poetics & Semiotics, Tel Aviv University and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1999); Ella Shohat, *Forbidden Reminiscences, a collection of essays* (Bimat Kedem Publishing, 2001) [Hebrew]; Sara Chinski, "Eyes Wide Shut: The Acquired Albino Syndrome of the Israeli Art Field," *Theory and Criticism* 20 (Spring 2002): 57-87 [Hebrew]; Hanan Hever, Yehouda Shenhav, and Pnina Motzafi-Haller (eds.), *Mizrahim in Israel: a Critical Observation into Israeli Ethnicity* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2002) [Hebrew].
- 20 One of the ways to map this struggle is by locating a possible arena for the existence of critical narratives, and quantifying their presence. Thus, for example, with regard to Palestinian artists, graduates of art school in Israel; a perusal of the index issues of the Israeli art magazine, *Studio*, from 1994-2004 (editor-in-chief: Sarah Breitberg-Semel) reveals that throughout the given period there were no theoretical or historical essays about Palestinian artists and their work, even though these are graduates of Israeli art schools and despite the fact that their work was presented in key galleries and museums in the Israeli art field. See *Studio*, index issues nos. 75, 86, 97, 107, 117, 127, 136, 146, 155.
- 21 This is exemplified by the range of "critical" images prevalent in contemporary Israeli art, including representations of youth movements, military camps, soldiers, weapons, the blue-and-white national flag, the country's borders and its map – as criticism of Israeli nationalism. The fact that these images are a repetition of an imagery based on a Hebrew-Israeli-Zionist lexicon elicits the question whether despite the work's critical nature they ultimately reaffirm (paradoxically) a national conceptual world which, consciously or unconsciously, plays a central role in the erasure of other narratives.
- 22 Susan Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror: Islamism and Critical Theory on the Left* (London and New York: Verso, 2003), p. 70.
- 23 *Ibid.*, *ibid.*
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. 72.

On Hanna Farah's **Distorted**

The series *Distorted* addresses the biography of the place as a distorted, aberrant, detached and displaced narrative; a narrative whose multiple fragments and numerous signifiers scattered across the surface cannot be reconstructed, mended, or stitched together by looking back. In retrospect Farah creates a biographical mosaic centered on the amnesia and destruction permeating the history of the geographic sphere depicted in the works; a mosaic that extends between the Palestinian village of Bir'am and the city of Tel Aviv-Jaffa where he resides at present.

Hanna Farah was born in al-Jish (1960). He added the name of the Kufer Bir'am to his signature as a second family name, like a code and a key to Palestinian familial and communal memory which consistently goes back to the village whose inhabitants were expelled in November 1948 and who have not been permitted to return to their homes.¹

In a single photograph² Farah positions himself under the arch of his grandfather's home – Haviv Yusef Farah; a two story building located on the western side of the village. The top floor, whose ceiling is now missing, was used in its various incarnations for dwelling and entertainment, and as a classroom. Today the room overlooks the extended family's complex which is covered with thick vegetation. The photograph features Farah with his head bent, his hands next to his body, possibly leaning against, possibly supporting the stones of the arch which are about to fall towards the lower, black section of the photograph. Farah's face is not turned toward the past,³ toward the wreckage and destruction. To the contrary, his figure seems to assimilate amidst the ruins of history, as one remembering that beyond them there is only exile, as described in Mahmoud Darwish's poem "We Were Without a Present"⁴: "Soon we shall have another present. / If you look behind you, there is only exile."

Farah's figure, bending its head before the ruins of history, continues to live and revive memory between the two times. It is not rooted in the future looking back, but rather located in the memory community rooted in what Ilan Magat describes as a "continuous present,"⁵ and what Idith Zertal describes as a semantic characteristic of the word 'survivor':

A survivor or survivant is one who has lived through and beyond; beyond the threshold, beyond the border of life, who went on living after an event which was meant to end his life [...] Survivorship, survival, being a remnant, are extreme

situations, whose rarity and improbability define them. [...] The survivor is always the "last one left," the "remnant," whose life is prescribed by the impossible task of existing on behalf of others (the dead) among the ordinary living, and of bearing the stamp of his mission of speaking out on behalf of the dead, representing them and attesting to their agony and destruction.⁶

Survivors, according to Zertal, bear a kind of lifelong guilt because of the very fact that they have survived, for having lived on in a place and time in which they were supposed to be dead, like all the others, hence the burden of memory and testimony in the name and in the memory of those who did not survive and who were not fortunate to come back from there.

The continuous present and the burden of memory are juxtaposed with the human attempt to contain the time that has passed since the formative event. Thus, for example, in a black-and-white photograph⁷ the artist is portrayed holding in his hands imaginary weights: a heap of black hair (from his own head) and a heap of white hair (from his beard). The hair, an indestructible material, remains after death, hence it is a faithful representative of memory, of the event, of the testimony. The exact time that has passed, however, is imperceptible. The subject needs proof, evidence stemming from the physical. Presentation of the locks attests to the body's deprivation of its strength. The difficulty in clinging to memory that results from the passing time is paralleled to the fragility of the naked body that cannot represent the image of the one fighting for the homeland.

The imprint of guilt on the physical frailty appears in a portrait photograph with distinctive Christian iconography. The photograph is twofold: the top part presents the artist's head placed on a platter against the backdrop of the interior of an industrial building, possibly abandoned possibly inhabited. The bottom part documents an overview of a rusty razor. The artist's first name, Hanna, is analogous to the name John in Christian Arab society.⁸ John the Baptist sacrificed himself in the name of his faith and the belief in the justness of his moral path; his head presented on a platter has become a symbol in Christian iconography for endurance and self-sacrifice. Unlike John's mythical martyr figure, Hanna is a human being, and thus his act of self-sacrifice does not materialize: he does not provide the evidence⁹ of his faith and willingness to die after harsh torments, as attested by his head which is still attached to his body, and by

the fact that the razor, implying the possibility of cutting, turns out to be rusty and broken.

While the testimony serves as proof for whole-hearted faith, so the cairn attests to the memory of the site of death or pilgrimage. A black-and-white photograph presents a cement-covered tub, one used to mix cement on building sites, with a pile of stones in it. A rope tied to the bath conveys the impression that it may be dragged; thus the massive pile of stones, historically used as a memorial, is revealed in the photograph as both stationary and mobile.

In other photographs, similar to the cairn, the soil is not idealized as the home-land, but rather presented as a surface for the traces of the human everyday: tire tracks, a cylinder key, and a dead pigeon. Another photograph features a fence, twigs, a dry branch hanging in the air, possibly clinging to, possibly caught in thorny barbed wire, and none of them, like the portable tub of stones, strikes roots in the ground.

The objects' transience and detachment is immanent to the identity of the refugee emerging from the works. In the context of the Bir'am memory community, Magat describes a simultaneous struggle: one against the State and its institutions – a battle conducted by the National Committee for the Rights of the Internally Displaced Palestinians aimed at returning to the village's lands; the other – the daily struggle against the natural tendency to settle and strike roots.¹⁰

The only stable wall in the photograph is presented against the backdrop of a monumental Zionist Israeli building – a semi-ruined building of the former Sick Fund (Kupat Holim) branch in Ramat Aviv. On a tile-covered wall demarcating the building, Hanna Farah – the artist, builder, and architect – engraved an X. It was etched on one of the tiles and appears in the center of the photograph as a type of biographical code indicating Farah's body of professional knowledge and the experience resulting from it, for only a professional knows that in order to remove a flawed tile from a sequence of good ones you have to etch an X at its center, thus releasing the pressure and making it possible to remove the specific tile without damaging the others. The fine power relations, the minor nature of the act, and the human effort to preserve the existing tile wall – all these are set against the aesthetics of destruction of the grand modernist building, a Zionist Israeli building which forms the sole evidence of the power relations in the depicted sphere.

The position of the biographical agent represented by Farah's figure juxtaposes the Nakba (Palestinian Catastrophe of 1948) as a mythical notion with the human scale, which in the works is based on the body itself. The body standing under the arch of ruined stones, measuring its height as it were, the head placed on the platter, the tub whose size is that of an average person, the head and beard hair, and the engraving bearing the professional's signature – all these are faced with fateful questions about evidence, testimony and memory, forgetting and self-sacrifice, questions that have shaped the artist's personal and collective biography.

1 In November 1948 the IDF commanders ordered the inhabitants of the village of Bir'am (a Christian Maronite village with a population of 1050) to evacuate their homes for a fortnight "until the situation permits their return," and move to the village Al-jish located some four kilometers east. For five years they were not allowed to return to their homes. In 1953 the Air Force bombed Bir'am and the place was declared a national park. For an elaboration see: Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004).

2 Photograph: Orit Revivo.

3 Farah's figure confronting the ruins of history brings to mind the Angel of History described by Walter Benjamin: "... This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet." Unlike the Angel of History, however, Farah's figure is wingless. The great storm does not carry him on the route of progress toward the future, and his face is not turned toward the past, toward the wreckage and destruction from which he draws away; paradoxically he bends his head, appearing as though he is in fact supporting the stones

and preventing them from falling. See: Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History" in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans.: Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 257.

4 Mahmoud Darwish, *Unfortunately, It Was Paradise: Selected Poems*, trans. and ed.: Munir Akash and Carolyn Forché with Sinan Antoon and Amira El-Zein (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2003), p. 101.

5 Ilan Magat describes the village of Bir'am today as a site of "continuous present" reinforcing the reluctance, the inability to distinguish between the two times that penetrate each other's bounds inseparably. "Bir'am is partly a monument, partly a remnant, partly a museum without walls." See: Ilan Magat, *Bir'am: A Conscripted Community of Memory and the Maintenance of Voice* (Givat Haviva: The Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence, 2000), p. 9. [Hebrew].

6 Idith Zertal, *Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 52-53.

7 Reference. Photograph: Hilla Lulu Lin.

8 Herod ordered John beheaded because he had rebuked him for taking his brother's wife, Herodia, while his brother was still alive. He then presented John's decapitated head to Salome, Queen Herodia's daughter, as a token of appreciation for dancing for his guests. Matthew 14: 1-2.

9 Eitan Burstein notes that the link between martyr and testimony is a semantic-theological affinity both Christian and Muslim. The Greek word *martyrus* denotes witness. The martyr's willingness to die after harsh torments attests to his faith. Similarly, the Arabic word *shadeh* denotes testimony, declaration, and martyrdom. See: Dr. Eitan Burstein, *Dictionary of Christianity* (Tel Aviv: Ithab, 2005), p. 371 [Hebrew].

10 The battle against forgetting emerging from this description is not sustained by memorials and commemorative museums, but rather by means of mundane, communal, familial rituals. The displaced community, Bir'am's original residents, has not assimilated into the village of al-Jish; its members preserved their uniqueness as refugees. Ever since, they make pilgrimages to Bir'am, conducting weddings in the church and burials in the cemetery, as well as Easter and Christmas sermons in the church with participation of most of the community members who arrive from all over the country. Since 1987 they also hold annual summer camps for their children on site. See: Magat 2000.

On Tsibi Geva's Lattice

The exhibition *Lattice* was presented at Hagar Art Gallery, located in a rooftop flat in an apartment building in Jaffa's al-Ajami neighborhood, during July-August 2002. The Gallery's rooms featured window grilles that reflect a modernist formal lexicon of Israeli lattices. The terrace was enwrapped by a sequence of lattices through which the Jaffa landscape was seen. The iron grilles were designed by Tsibi Geva and executed especially for the exhibition.

The lattice models presented at Hagar Art Gallery were later incorporated into Geva's book, *Master Plan*.¹ The biographical context is illustrated in the only textual paragraph in the book, dealing with the artist's father:

My father, Ya'acov (Cuba) Geber, was born in 1907 in Warsaw, Poland. He immigrated to Palestine in 1930. As a member of Kibbutz Ein Shemer, he was head of construction from the early 1930s. As part of his activity he planned public buildings, residential neighborhoods, industrial factories, schools and cultural centers, mainly on kibbutzim and in the cooperative settlement movement. From 1947, he worked as an architect in the Technical Department of Hakibbutz Ha'artzi (the National Kibbutz Movement). In 1952 he went to study Architecture in Vienna. Upon his return to Israel, he worked as the architect of the Menashe Regional Council, and later on founded a planning office for architecture and engineering in Hadera. Spanning a tremendous variety of planning and building types, his architectural work is scattered throughout the country. Passed away in 1993.

The biographical text about Geva's father is based on the total dependence on mediation, namely on circumstantial, textual and visual evidence that represent the past. Geva notes dates laconically: born in 1907, immigrated in 1930, went to study in 1952. As opposed to these details about the father, there is no mention of Tsibi's own biography in the book.

Tsibi Geva was born in 1951. In other words: about a year after his birth, the father was sent to Vienna for three years. Thus, Geva's early childhood was spent in the father's absence, and subsequently in the shadow of the master plan (father-plan in Hebrew), namely the European Modern heritage. This heritage is represented in the book through the visual materials that served the father, such as the models of concrete grilles appearing in the Hagoder catalogue,² as well as photographs describing the buildings planned by the father: classrooms, children's houses, cultural centers, etc. In his

review of the book, Noam Yuran³ notes that people are rarely seen in the building photographs.

A single house in an empty landscape [...]. Their perfect order is a reflection of the wilderness. The photograph freezes them in order to prevent someone from disrupting their order. The order is a guarantee against an unclear danger. These are photographs of the land's construction, but the land in them is something threatening that must be domesticated, something that threatens to erupt at any minute.

Yuran indicates a danger inherent in the local landscape which serves as a surface for the construction of the land; a danger that attests to the erasure of the local Palestinian past and present, and to their regeneration as an authentic Israeli sphere and as a source for Zionist, native-born (sabra) Israeli identity.⁴

In "Lattice," as in previous works,⁵ Geva fixes the lattices in the al-Ajami neighborhood; to wit: he installs them in direct relation to the Palestinian present. On the Gallery's rooftop terrace the lattices reframe the forgotten local historical narrative – Jaffa's Palestinian history.⁶ In this respect the lattice grid differs fundamentally from the concrete separation wall currently being built, for through it the very same space against which the grille protects may be seen.

The lattices presented in the Gallery are grids, structures and compositions quoting the classical models of modernism, from Piet Mondrian (*Composition no. 6*) to minimalism à la Sol LeWitt, Carl Andre, Frank Stella, Barnett Newman, and others. The other patterns are modernist abstractions of eastern ornaments, and "popular" versions including both improvisation on those classical formulae⁷ and their distortion. Each model presented on the terrace cuts, interprets and maps out the landscape differently. Despite the multiplicity of lattices, "seeing al-Ajami through Mondrian" is interpreting and rearranging reality through the grid, which is largely a modernist reading grid.

Geva points at structural blindness, so that the gaps within the grid may be described as blind spots in the field of vision. Louis Althusser calls this built-in blindness "oversight." Ariella Azoulay⁸ maintains that in the theory of reading developed by Althusser he proposes to regard the blind spots in the text as effects resulting from the structure of the field of vision:

*Reading the blind spots as symptoms enables one [...] to account for what is seen, what is not seen, and the conditions that made the partiality of vision and blindness possible. According to this symptomatic reading, a given text or interpretation express the field of vision which the discourse in a particular discipline allows, arranges, and delineates.*⁹

In this respect, Geva's lattice grid indicates the field of vision itself as an object in the space, exposing the cultural agent's inability to "see" al-Ajami today beyond the lattices and beyond the legacy of modernist discourse built into them.

In his book *Master Plan*, Geva collects, preserves, and unfolds the modernist legacy he inherited from his father at length. Table after table, model after model, and structure after structure, he seems to be seeking logic in the modernist sequence before him. In the middle of the book the reading sequence is interrupted by a single press photograph (by Danny Merav, *Hadashot*, 10 Feb. 1993) portraying a Rafiah citizen lying bleeding on the ground. Surveying the photograph, the eye wanders between the puddle of blood and the lozenge patterns on the wall behind the lying figure, emphasizing the modernist instinct to seek structural and aesthetic interest and logic in every reality in the depicted space. This critical emphasis echoes a criticism of the eye's shifting from the bleeding reality, transforming it into a reference point, a conscious transition point of *before* and *after* in the depicted modernist space.

In contrast to the erasure of the human element in the architecture photographs incorporated into *Master Plan*, Jaffa is seen in its full humanity in the video piece, a collaboration of Tsibi Geva, Boaz Arad, and Miki Kratsman.¹⁰ The video documents the al-Ajami neighborhood and Yefet Street through the patterns of the grid from the early hours of the morning until after sunset. The visual information conveyed by the video piece undermines the power relations between interior and exterior – between the Gallery's rooms and the Palestinian Jaffa all around, in fact deconstructing that "danger" lying beyond the lattice. The bustle of the everyday, the passersby, the neighbors, and the car and bus traffic invade the terrace-turned-jail and the Gallery's inner rooms where the grilles hung on the walls create empty cages of sorts, dissolving the paranoia embodied in them.

The filming from different focal points and viewpoints, which change throughout the day, and through the patterns of the grid on the terrace, introduces the viewer to a multiplicity of information based on real time details

and moments. Ultimately, the reality of Palestinian existence as reflected by the Gallery's terrace resembles a biographical memory: comprehended, mediated, and reconstructed, but at the same time – based on the personal experience and real mundane existence in the depicted space.

1 *Tsibi Geva: Master Plan*, exh. cat., eds. Tsibi Geva and Michael Gordon (Haifa: Haifa Museum of Art, 2003).

2 Commercial catalogue of Hagoder Concrete Works, Haifa Bay, which manufactured concrete grilles for the construction industry.

3 Noam Yuran, "Do the Stains have Body," *Haaretz*, Books supplement, 14 Jan. 2004, p. 10 [Hebrew].

4 Sarah Breitberg-Semel describes this modernist heritage as a return to the father's home: "Geva returns to his father's home, to the source, in more than one sense. The heartbreaking thing in this book [...] is the way in which a form recounts its abstract and utilitarian history. Geva alludes to it as a biographical story, ostensibly confessing its origins, and then the form turns to the architect-father, the builder of the kibbutz, as a possible source for Geva's own deconstructed house sections. It is a modern autobiography. Geva takes us from structures to other structures, from forms to other forms; he constructs the lattice jail of our life and his life from stately modernism, from benevolent forms, from forgotten modesty.

See: Sarah Breitberg-Semel, "Tsibi Geva 'Master Plan'," *Studio Art Magazine* 149, 2003, p. 17 [Hebrew].

5 Geva has incorporated Arabic expressions and words written in Hebrew script in his works, such as the names of Arab villages and cities: Umm el-Fahem, Wadi 'Ara, Ar'ara, Yaffa, Juarah; the words of the song "Biladi, Biladi," and Arab

calligraphy, since the early 1980s.

6 For an elaboration on Jaffa's Palestinian history, see: Dan Yahav, *Jaffa, Bride of the Sea, from a Major City to Slums: A Model of Spatial Inequality* (Tel Aviv: Tammuz, 2004) [Hebrew]; Sharon Rotbard, *White City, Black City* (Tel Aviv: Babel, 2005) [Hebrew].

7 Geva's lattices remained on the terrace of Hagar Art Gallery until its closing at the end of 2003. In her exhibition, *Barbur Aswad*, which concluded the Gallery's activities, artist Anisa Ashkar created an installation on the terrace in which she incorporated Geva's lattices. Under the lattices she made geometric arabesque patterns from tar, and in between the columns next to the iron lattices she inscribed in Arabic the text "Umha bint el-Khert advising her daughter on her wedding night – the will as a reminder and warning, marriage as a necessity" from the book *A Collection of the Arabs' Speeches in the Golden Age*. For an elaborate discussion, see: Tal Ben Zvi, *Hagar – Contemporary Palestinian Art* (Jaffa: Hagar, 2006).

8 Ariella Azoulay, *Training for ART: Critique of Museal Economy* (Tel Aviv: The Porter Institute of Poetics & Semiotics, Tel Aviv University and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1999), p. 26 [Hebrew].

9 *Ibid.*, *ibid.*

10 The video piece was taken at the Hagar Art Gallery, Jaffa and was presented in the exhibition *Tsibi Geva: Master Plan* at the Haifa Museum of Art, March–June 2003.

On Gaston Zvi Ickowicz's **Buenos Aires**

In his exhibition *Buenos Aires*, photographer Gaston Zvi Ickowicz (born in Buenos Aires, Argentina) provides a detailed portrayal of a memory community. The extended family photograph, which documents family members and friends, creates a community whose members identify and know each other. Even though most of the photographed subjects emigrated from Argentina to Israel and elsewhere, the presence of the Argentinean past and present is not conspicuous in the photograph, but the recurring presence of the figures and their physical contact during the shooting define a small, intimate reference group whose closeness is repeatedly reaffirmed by the photograph. Susan Sontag¹ described this affirmation as an immanent part of a family's photograph album in the 20th century:

Photography came along to memorialize, to restate symbolically, the imperiled continuity and vanishing extendedness of family life. Those ghostly traces, photographs, supply the token presence of the dispersed relatives. A family's photograph album is generally about the extended family – and, often, is all that remains of it.

The only family photograph showing all the members of the extended family hangs in the Gallery entrance. A black-and-white photograph from 1950 features Ickowicz's family in Baia Blanca, Argentina. In subsequent photographs the family disintegrates, and parts of the family are shown separately.

According to Sontag, "a photograph is both a pseudo-presence and a token of absence." This transience is reinforced in a series of works describing a reunion of the Jewish family members living in Argentina and Israel. Taken in Beer Sheva, the works show the father's family in systematic, orderly photographs of couple. Their wish to be photographed in pairs, as opposed to a broad group family photograph, attests to a splitting of the family photograph into its constituent elements. In this respect, the couple photograph is a first-hand evidence of their intimacy and closeness originating in a familial identity that bridges the geographical distance extending across entire continents.

In a small room in the gallery a video piece (created in collaboration with Joel Kantor) was featured simultaneously, documenting the artist scanning and processing pictures of Jews taken in Europe between the two world wars. The photographs of these people who perished in the Holocaust were

submitted to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum by survivors from their families who wanted to perpetuate the memory of their loved ones in a "Page of Testimony" in Yad Vashem's Hall of Names archive.

Pictures from the pre-war period run on a computer screen in the film (13 min), depicting ordinary everyday life which exposes nothing of the impending tragedy. The Page of Testimony photographs "buried" in the archive pass on video without soundtrack or text to narrate their past. The picture processing by means of a graphic application that includes history of the layered image and work on coloration and contrast, expresses the desire to enliven that which has faded, disintegrated, and fallen into oblivion.

"Historiography is as much the product of the passion of forgetting as it is the product of the passion of remembering," writes Shoshana Felman.² The photographs from the Pages of Testimony seen throughout the video distinctively engage with oblivion. Except for the figure's name, they are isolated from the familial, communal, social and cultural sphere in which they were created.

The photographer juxtaposes forgetfulness and the mythical power of collective Jewish memory with current, mundane photographs of the family presenting intimacy. The photograph of the family in the Diaspora refuses to obey the definition of Jewish identity where a hierarchy between life in Israel and life in the Diaspora is created. Furthermore, the title of the exhibition, *Buenos Aires*, attests to a previous local identity which is still a central component in the biography of the photographer-biographer.³

The local Israeli identity is present in several photographs depicting the artist's friends and family. In contemporary Israeli photography the landscape usually remains unidentified, undeciphered, unmarked and intangible; nevertheless it is generally familiar to us as the landscape of picnics and the homeland. In Ickowicz's works, on the other hand, the name of the photographic location is a part of the work. The titles of the works attest that the landscape photographs have been taken in the JNF Tzor'a Forest and the picnic photographs – in the JNF Lahav Forest near Beer Sheva.

The term JNF (Jewish National Fund a.k.a. KKL) functions as a code for understanding the Eretz-Israeli landscape.⁴ The Tzor'a Forest was planted by the JNF on the land and ruins of the Palestinian village Sar'a, whereas the Lahav Forest was planted in the Negev in an area where the Bedouin tribes resided before 1948.⁵

A landscape photograph taken in Tzor'a Forest features three friends of the photographer against the backdrop of the Sorek Valley and Judean mountains. Another photograph taken in the Lahav Forest shows the family members – three of them by each picnic table – with a forest path before them, and a pine forest behind. Ickowicz obeys the convention of landscape photography with the landscape in the back and the figures at the forefront looking toward the camera.

A single photograph in the series marks a turning point in Ickowicz's relation to the depicted landscape. It features the photographer himself seated on a picnic table bench next to his mother, his head on her knees, his face hidden, and her hand wraps him softly. Unlike the other photographs, however, the photographer does not look at the camera, implying that he is turning his face away, as it were, from staging the family photograph and from the Israeli landscape with all the violence, silencing and forgetfulness embodied in it.⁶

Ickowicz's location against the backdrop of the Israeli landscape likewise seems to express an ambivalent position: he stands on the verge of the Zionist wood, yet refuses to assimilate with it. In some sense, one may account for this human-political position through the central role played by the concept of *exile* in the definition of his identity. This exile is present despite the geographical distance separating one place from the other; it lies in the consciousness that makes the moral sensitivity and cultural-political stance stemming from it possible.

1 Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 1977), p. 9.

2 Shoshana Felman, "The Return of the Voice: Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*," in Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), p. 214.

3 In this sense, the family photographs are a part of a diasporal Jewish culture described by Sara Chinski in her essay "Eyes Wide Shut." In her portrayal of diasporic culture Chinski

follows Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin who maintains that the concept of the "negation of exile" dictates the negation of memory of entire traditions which are perceived in the Israeli context as diasporal. In the context of the Israeli art field, Chinski notes that the worst critical sanction one could impose on national art works was their classification as "diasporic." As opposed to the canonical national model, Chinski sets out to introduce another model of "simultaneous historiographies" and of diasporic art that challenges centralized territorial national values, art that is not

constituted around an exclusive territory, but rather transpires simultaneously in various centers as a culture that follows a spatial logic of decentralized localism.

See: Sara Chinski, "Eyes Wide Shut: The Acquired Albino Syndrome of the Israeli Art Field," *Theory and Criticism* 20 (Spring 2002): 61 [Hebrew].

Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "Exile within Sovereignty: Toward a Critique of the 'Negation of Exile' in Israeli Culture" (Part II), *Theory and Criticism* 5 (1994), 130 [Hebrew].

4 Benny Morris notes that the Jewish National Fund (JNF) played a major role in taking possession of the land of Arab villages. He maintains that on 12 December 1948 the government issued Emergency Regulations concerning the property of absentees which granted the Ministry of Agriculture control or possession over the 'abandoned' land. In keeping with the Absentee Property Law, between September 1948 and January 1949 thirty-two new settlements, among them

Kibbutz Tzor'a, built on the ruins of the Palestinian village Sar'a, were established. See: Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), pp. 364, 366, 376.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 376.

6 In the process of silencing local history and rendering it forgotten, the settlement names played a major role. Ilan Pappé notes that in 1949 the JNF founded a Name Committee whose role was to Hebraize the names of Palestinian villages on whose ruins new settlements were established in order to re-create the map of the ancient Land of Israel by systematic de-Arabization of the landscape, the names, the geography, and most of all – the history of the villages that were eradicated. For an elaborate discussion, see: Ilan Pappé, "The Green Lungs and the Blue Box," *Mita'am* 4, Magazine of Literature and Radical Thought (2005), ed. Yitzhak Laor, published by Hashkama Association, pp. 89-102 [Hebrew].

On Khen Shish's **Birthday**

Khen Shish's exhibition *Birthday* opened on her birthday. Shish, whose works have dealt extensively with the position of the biographical agent and with various aspects of Mizrahi identity,¹ chose to place the personal biographical dimension in the current exhibition in the genealogy of the Israeli art field as an imaginary family biography.

In the gallery space Shish installed scores of drawings executed on stickers, paper scraps, oak tag, and canvas, so that torn eyes, scratches, black hearts, stems, petals, flowers, and more eyes, burst forth from each of the Gallery's drawing-filled rooms. All were executed in swift, ostensibly slipshod, linear drawing that introduced a unique, personal handwriting typified by obsession and intensity.

In many press reviews about the exhibition, the critics noted a link between Shish's work and artistic precedents.² Gilad Meltzer³, for example, described Shish's affinity with the canon of Israeli painting:

The exhibition emphasized Shish's profound affinity with the canon of the older generation in Israeli painting, skillfully maneuvering between slovenly eruption and accurate restraint: Shish's depictions of near-upright, slightly drooping stalks recall Raffi Lavie's quivering line and Yoav Efrati's evasive drawing. The greatest surprise for me was the black flower paintings which resemble Gershuni, but without the morbid historical baggage.

Yoav Shmueli⁴ also discussed Shish's handwriting in the context of the Israeli canon:

It is an unresolved work – on the one hand, the traces of her handwriting leave no room for doubt: she is clearly talented [...]; on the other, her somewhat parasitical choreographed dance steps with the painterly language of Raffi Lavie, Moshe Gershuni, and Aviva Uri – and, in contrast, the more interesting and surprising steps with that of Jean Michel Basquiat, under her seemingly confident orchestration, are confusing and challenging.

In the sequence of artistic associations between Beuys, Gershuni, Aviva Uri, Raffi Lavie, and Basquiat, Shish seems to elude her critics. At the same time, the artist's two works, presented side by side, seem to conceal a code for deciphering the association between the canon and her works.

The first work follows a 1970s reproduction by Moshe Gershuni. Gershuni originally decorated Goya's reproduction⁵ with red margins, and on the figure of the 17th century woman portrayed in it he inscribed the words "Golda Meir" in red. Shish uses Gershuni's photographic reproduction as published in the Israeli art magazine *Studio*. She leaves it as is, but chooses to gouge out the queen's eyes.

Shish tore Gershuni's reproduction out of a special issue of *Studio* (#143, 2003) dedicated entirely to the artist, Israel Prize Laureate for painting, and his refusal to accept the prize in the presence of Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon. In this respect, Gershuni's criticism of the government and establishment at the time of the award reception is a continuation of Goya's criticism when he depicted the Spanish royal court as corrupt; at the same time, it is also a continuation of Gershuni's criticism of Golda Meir after the Yom Kippur War (1973). This chain of criticism, however, seems to remain within the bounds of the Israeli hegemonic discourse; this may account for the fact that Shish tears, sterilizes, and perforates the hegemonic critical gaze, leaving it empty and hollow.

Gershuni's reproduction was published in *Studio* on a two-page spread, juxtaposed with another work, also from the 1970s: a white page on which he inscribed the sentence "The paper looks white from the outside but inside it is black." Discussing this piece Ellen Ginton⁶ notes that Gershuni's logic of displacement, from the outside in, is one that conjures up the (politically as well as sexually) repressed. The otherness signified in the work remains under the surface, and is represented only through language in a dichotomous inside-outside, black-white binary system. Shish tears this work out of a magazine, perforates a heart shape in the page, and installs the work on a flickering television monitor placed on the gallery floor, letting the dots flashing on screen bathe and illuminate the heart at the bottom of the page.

But instead of the invisible blackness which transpires as a mere lyrical option in the original spread, Shish introduces the "black" face most quintessentially charged with otherness, blackness, and Orientalism. A black stain appears on the page, a black face of sorts entirely rubbed out; underneath it, in red letters dripping like blood, she writes "rather nice," adding at the bottom, in black: "Golda Pardons" with an arrow pointing at an object resembling either scissors or a phallic image whose testicles are hollowed like the queen's eyes in Gershuni's reproduction.

The phrase "rather nice" immediately connotes the Israeli Black Panthers. Shish's words are like a self statement in feminine form referring to Golda Meir's claim against the Black Panthers at the beginning of the Mizrahi struggle, that they are "not nice." In response to Gilad Meltzer's description of her works as "Gershuni, but without the morbid historical baggage," Shish inundates the works with a historical narrative of repression, charging the historical narrative with the feminine semantics, thus transforming the male Black Panther into a tigress. The scissors or empty testicles indicate castration of a masculine sphere, a realm of canonical language, the paternal language embodied by the dynasty of Israeli art reviewed at length above.

From the pair of works, by Gershuni/Goya and by Shish, installed at the entrance to the gallery, the gaze splits into several rooms and scores of piercing black eyes, black hearts, and countless scribbles and lines generating a chaos of sorts with inner logic. Dalia Marcovitz⁷ analyzed this logic in her review of the exhibition, with reference to Franz Fanon's writing:

In the dialectic created between the white and the black, the black gaze undermines itself. It attempts to swallow the white as a model for imitation. At the same time it digests its inferior reflection as assimilated in the white world. The norms of observation dictated by the world seem not to apply to Shish's eyes. The submissive, servile gaze which strives to assume the appearance of the other is replaced by dozens of piercing eyes [...]. When Shish strives to free the gaze of authority, the "gaze" that has transformed into the domesticating, sublimating "self gaze." The eyes in the exhibition respond to this call. Manically and powerfully they roam around the space, directing a black gaze at Israeli society.

In another critical essay, Ruti Direktor⁸ addresses the critical option of contemporary art as manifested in Shish's exhibition and in Eli Petel's exhibition "Neo Soul" concurrently exhibited at Dvir Gallery:⁹

Both Eli Petel and Khen Shish seem to take suicidal artistic measures – Petel in his choice of bizarre photographic themes and the ostensibly non-artistic mode of painting; Shish in her brush with the banal and kitschy and in the romanticizing of drawing as a continuation of the body and the self. Both their appearances rub shoulders with the non-high, less-artistic, less-sophisticated. Both indirectly touch upon Israeliness.

In the concluding paragraph of her review, Direktor asks whether Mizrahi identity may be regarded as a metaphor for progressing in a side path of art, one typified by relinquishing a standard appearance. In a sense, Shish's erupting, excessive linear drawing is not a side path of Israeli art, but rather its re-definition. Shish in fact creates a stamp of approval, at once adoptive and defiant. The sole line repeated on each page indeed operates within the glorification of the line as part of the tradition of modern drawing;¹⁰ the latter, however, is confronted with both a chaotic multiplicity and with eruptions of words and sentences: 'Golda Meir,' 'Golda Pardons,' 'rather nice,' 'tigress,' 'honey,' 'Lag Ba'Omer, may you burn,' 'space,' etc. – each individually and all together take the viewer far from the modernist world into an individual, at once cultural and political, semiotic sphere.

1 For an elaboration on Khen Shish's works in the exhibition *Mother Tongue*, see: Tal Ben Zvi, "Deferring Language as a Theme in the Work of Mizrahi Artists," in *Eastern Appearance: A Present that Stirs in the Thickets of Its Arab Past*, ed.: Yigal Nizri (Tel Aviv: Babel, 2004), pp. 184–154.

2 The link between the artist's personal handwriting and canonical artistic sources was first indicated by Naomi Aviv in the text accompanying the exhibition.

3 *Yedioth Aharonoth*, Arutzim supplement, 4 July 2003 [Hebrew].

4 Yoav Shmueli, "Untitled 03," *Time Out*, 3–10 July 2003 [Hebrew].

5 Detail from Francisco Goya's portrayal of the royal family: a portrait of the Spanish Queen, Maria Louisa.

6 Ellen Ginton, *Perspectives on Israeli Art of the Seventies – "The Eyes of the Nation": Visual Art in a Country Without Boundaries*, exh. cat., trans: Vivianne Barsky (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 1998), p. 296.

7 Dalia Marcovitz, "Khen Shish: Birthday," *Studio 149* (December 2003 – January 2004): 165–166 [Hebrew].

8 Ruti Direktor, *Ha'ir*, 3 July 2003, p. 78 [Hebrew].

9 Both Eli Petel and Khen Shish participated in the exhibition *Mother Tongue*. For a discussion of their works, see the exhibition catalogue (n. 1).

10 On the awesome reverence for the line in the history of art, see: Aviva Uri, "The Line," in *Aviva Uri*, exh. cat., eds. Galia Bar-Or and Jean-Francois Chevrier (Ein Harod: Mishkan Le'Omanut Museum of Art, 2002), pp. 217–221 [Hebrew].

On David Adika's Portraits: Mother Tongue

The exhibition *Mother Tongue*¹ was presented in May 2002 at the Mishkan Le'Omanut, Museum of Art, Ein Harod – a group exhibition which addressed Mizrahi identity and included works by twenty-two artists,² most of them native Israelis, who share a significant element in the definition of their identity – the emigration of one of their parents from an Arab-Muslim country.

Toward the opening of the exhibition, David Adika, one of the participants, invited the group of participating artists to his studio, and made separate personal portrait shots. He exhibited the portrait series under the title *Portraits: Mother Tongue* at the Hagar Art Gallery, concurrent to the exhibition in Ein Harod.

In the essay "Deferring Language as a Theme in the Work of Mizrahi Artists"³ published in the catalogue of the exhibition *Mother Tongue*, I indicated that this was the first time in Israeli art that the faces of artists participating in a group exhibition are exposed not for public relations, but as an additional body of knowledge which is an integral part of its contents. In the art field, exposure of the artist's face is limited to works adhering to the self-portrait tradition – whether painted or photographed; thus the viewer is usually unfamiliar with the appearance of the artists whose work he views at exhibitions.

In Adika's exhibition, recognition of the artist's face is charged with the sense of cultural recognition,⁴ namely legitimacy in the politics of identity as represented by the figure. The artists in Adika's exhibition share a common biographical fate: immigration of their family to Israel from Arab countries. Beyond this point of departure, however, their life stories, biographies, appearances, and artistic practices generate diversity in which the differences are greater than the similarities.

In her essay in the same exhibition catalogue Vered Maimon⁵ also emphasizes the individuality of the photographed artists, and the fact that Adika chose not to use the typological model whereby each individual is photographed identically, with maximum care for uniformity. Rather, Maimon goes on to note:

Adika chose to offer the photographed subjects a space of possibility [...], containing a possibility of reciprocity as a type of partnership which is not derived from the issue of the look and its returned gaze, but rather from the feeling that the photographer and his photographed subjects belong in various ways to

the same social and cultural sphere. To wit, the shooting takes place as part of a concrete social and historical reality, but the way in which each photographed subject is present in this reality is different.

Maimon indeed describes the reciprocity generated during the shooting in the studio as a type of partnership, not the partnership of a collective, however, but rather that of a community that makes for association based on differences rather than on their repression. These differences are discernible in the changing, non-uniform composition of the photographs: drawing nearer and away from the photographed figure and reflecting a relationship between photographer and photographed who share an imagined collectivity for a given, measured time.

The artists are photographed against a white backdrop with an open shutter to produce a short depth of field. The focus is on the forefront, usually around the subjects' eyes, so that the photograph highlights the gaze, preventing the perception of the photographed as a passive subject. The photographs were printed in warm hues, so that the subjects' faces appear tanner than they really are. The warm coloration is further enhanced by the transparent Perspex covering the photographs, which makes the portraits look glossy.

Adika chose to situate the works in the living room of the Jaffa apartment/Gallery, a location that stresses the sense of hospitality and entertainment which is further heightened by the way in which the works are installed: hung densely, they convey the impression that each portrait makes eye contact with adjacent portraits, and together they seem to create a collective web of gazes.

Like parlor social acquaintance, the portraits' juxtaposition generates a range of meanings dependent on the degree of acquaintance with the photographed artists, their location in the art field, and the private and public history attached to their name and figure. Thus, for example, the figure of the photographer himself, David Adika, is installed in the Gallery entrance, as the host of this social gathering; hung side by side on the living room's central wall are the portraits of Yigal Nizri and Pinchas Cohen Gan, artists who share a similar position in their critical and theoretic writing about Mizrahi identity; Khen Shish, Eli Petel, Adi Nes, Dafna Shalom, Tal Shoshan, Neta Harari Navon, Eliahu Aric Bokobza, Baruch Shacham, Zamir Shetz, and Tal Shohat are presented one next to and against the other,

ostensibly observing one another, thus affirming the web of acquaintances being woven in the living room.

Presentation of the artists' portraits concurrent with the presentation of their work but detached from them, calls for an extra-artistic reference which perceives the artists' subject status as an expression of social relationship and cultural positioning not necessarily resulting from intra-artistic hierarchies and interpretations, but rather one that draws its power from the biographical story and the actual Mizrahi experience, as described by Yigal Nizri:⁶

Tal Ben Zvi, the exhibition curator, intersperses the art works she selected within an interpretive web of contexts. Instead of weighing the "Mizrahi-ness" of the visual representations ("Mizrahi art"), Ben Zvi sets out to inscribe the traces of Mizrahi consciousness embedded in them, a consciousness which she usually presents as taking a stand on biography ("Mizrahi artists"). The artistic discourse in Israel often introduces the "East" as its theme (in a quintessential colonialist mode), but to a far lesser extent – the actual Mizrahi experience.

In retrospect, however, vis-à-vis the Israeli art field's rejection of the exhibition and the disqualification of the "Mizrahi subjectivity embedded"⁷ in the works, the artists' collective realistic presence is a heightened presence of the subject, making an appearance, as it were; furthermore, it is a show of force that primarily draws its strength from the history and artistic persona of each individual artist, and only then – from the presence in unison, which enables drawing away from and rejecting the conditions of the period's artistic discourse. All this takes place on the real boundary of the Israeli art field, at an art gallery in Jaffa's al-Ajami neighborhood, in a residential apartment, and in the domestic living room.

1 The exhibition *Mother Tongue* was the third side of the *Mother Tongue* project, which also included a film festival and a conference at the Tel Aviv Cinematheque (13–25 May 2002). The conference and film festival were edited by Sigal Eshed.

2 The artists whose portraits were presented in the gallery are: **Eli Petel** – his mother was born in Israel, her parents – in Hebron, his father was born in Iraq; **Eliahu Aric Bokobza** – was born in Paris, his parents were born in Tunis; **Alice Klingman** – her parents were born

in Morocco; **Baruch Shacham** – his parents were born in Egypt; **David Adika** – his mother was born in Israel, her parents – in Kurdistan, his father was born in Syria; **Zamir Shetz** – his mother was born in Yemen, his father – in Israel, his father's parents – in Latvia; **Khen Shish** – her parents were born in Tunis; **Tal Shohat** – her mother was born in Libya, her father – in Persia; **Tal Shoshan** – her mother was born in Israel, her mother's parents – in Turkey, her father was born in Morocco; **Yigal Nizri** – his mother was born in Israel, her parents – in Morocco, his father was born in Morocco; **Neta Harari Navon** – her mother was born in Poland, her father – in Israel, her father's parents in Yemen; **Adi Nes** – his parents were born in Iran; **Rami Maymon** – his parents were born in Tripoli; **Pinchas Cohen Gan** – was born in Morocco.

3 Tal Ben Zvi, "Deferring Language as a Theme in the Work of Mizrahi Artists," in *Eastern Appearance: A Present that Stirs in the Thickets of Its Arab Past*, ed.: Yigal Nizri, trans.: Rachel Leah Jones (Tel Aviv: Babel, 2004), pp. 168-169.

4 The word 'recognition' denotes affirmation, acceptance of one's status.

5 Vered Maimon, "Face is Politics: On David Adika's Portrait Photographs," in Nizri 2004 (n. 3), p. 196 [Hebrew].

6 Yigal Nizri, "Foreword: From Noun to Name," in Nizri 2004 (n. 3), pp. 24-26 [Hebrew].

7 Nizri discusses the Israeli art field's objection to the exhibition, saying: "The association between "artist" and "Mizrahi" (which inevitably involved an association between "curator" and "Ashkenazi") interfered with the transparency which art critics strive to assume. This may be why *Mother Tongue* disappeared from the cultural agenda without a word in the press, professional reviews or public reverberation, as if it had never taken place. The Mizrahi artists are presented as needy, as part of a field that does not recognize the legitimacy of their action and the sentiment motivating them. The fact that these are recognized artists whose works have previously appeared in other contexts only reinforces the wonder. The very testimony of the objects that have nourished accumulations of 'Israeli art' has been disqualified, while the theme is the Mizrahi subjectivity embedded in them." For an elaborate discussion see: Nizri 2004, *ibid*.

On Anisa Ashkar's **Barbur 24000**

The performance *Barbur 24000* (2004) was presented at the Midrasha School of Art, Beit Berl College. The title was inspired by the artist's neighborhood in Acre: the Arab neighborhood "Barbur" which acquired its Hebrew name (meaning swan) from the construction of a ceramic factory by the same name in it, a severe hazard to the environment and inhabitants alike. 24000 is Acre's zip code. In the exhibition space Ashkar installed thirteen models of white canvas tents.¹ The bottom part of each bore the title of the exhibition in Hebrew, Arabic and English, in black print, with the swan symbol next to it.

As the performance begins, Ashkar is seen with an inscription in Arabic on her face, wearing a white dress made of terrycloth. She is accompanied by Aharon Barnea, commentator on Arab affairs and Israel's Channel 2-TV anchorman on the Sabbath eve news edition – in the capacity of translator. Dressed in suit and tie, Barnea leans against the wall, listening to Ashkar's words in Arabic, trying to translate them into Hebrew for the audience comprised mainly of Jewish Israelis.

The white wall bears an Arabic text in white print, specifying the ten stages of Taharah (purification) in Islamic Law (*Wudhu* – Ablution). At the beginning of the performance Ashkar is seen erasing the white writing on the wall with a white eraser and vigorous bodily movements. When she is done, she turns to a pile of 1-liter milk bags at her feet, emptying them one by one into a bowl, and then starts rubbing herself with the milk, and simultaneously with the act of bathing, reads out the purification instructions:

Ashkar in Arabic: He should wash his hands up to the wrists thrice.

Barnea translates into Hebrew.

Ashkar in Arabic: Rinses her mouth thrice, cleans his teeth.

Barnea translates into Hebrew.

Ashkar in Arabic: Wash his entire face thrice.

Barnea translates into Hebrew.

Ashkar in Arabic: I can't see, white on white, white again, everyone's white, anyone who can, only white, white rules.

Barnea translates into Hebrew.

Ashkar in Arabic: Wash his arms up to the elbows thrice (right arm first) [...]

Barnea translates into Hebrew.

Ashkar in Arabic: In the days of Cleopatra and Nefertiti, they used to bathe in milk.

Barnea translates into Hebrew.

Ashkar in Arabic: *Anyone seeing me pour out milk, tells me, why, isn't it a shame? Instead of just spilling it, they told me, why not send the milk to Gaza, they need milk. I told them: by the time the milk gets to Gaza, it'll be sour [...]*

Barnea translates into Hebrew.

Ashkar in Arabic: *My mother couldn't come to the performance because there's alcohol here, they can't because they went on pilgrimage to Mecca, there's a prohibition on alcohol. I told them it was all right, it's fine by me. But my sisters came; here they are (she points out her sisters in the audience).*

Barnea translates into Hebrew.

Ashkar in Arabic: *They say that white cleanses. What does it cleanse, I don't know.*

Barnea translates into Hebrew.

Ashkar in Arabic: *When Mom and Dad went to Mecca for the Hajj,² in the last days of the Hajj, during the stoning on Mount Arafat, which was very remote [...] they erected a tent close to the place so they could get there faster and have a rest.*

Barnea translates into Hebrew.

Ashkar in Arabic: *And then people said they got lost or died.*

Barnea translates into Hebrew.

Ashkar in Arabic: *People who came with them to the Hajj from Acre started crying. When we called to see how they were, they didn't tell us, they were scared, they thought what can we tell them, a family, 11 children, what can we tell them, that their parents got lost? On one side of the mountain, the friends from Acre, on the other side – my parents. (Now my parents are very happy, they are going to make a private pilgrimage, Umrah³). On the last day, the friends from Acre lost all hope –*

Ashkar turns directly to Barnea in Arabic: *Do you know them?*

Barnea in Arabic and then in Hebrew: *Perhaps, some of them.*

Ashkar in Arabic: *I told him: You are about to see madness, I told him to stick with me.*

Barnea in Hebrew: *She told me to stick with her, that I was going to see the madness, but to stick with her. As long as you are pouring milk on yourself – what do I care?*

A female audience member in Hebrew: *Careful that she doesn't spill milk on you.*

Barnea in Hebrew: *Don't worry, I warned her in advance.*

Ashkar in Arabic: *I heard you, I'm a good girl.*

Barnea translates into Hebrew.

Ashkar in Arabic: *Tell them what the woman at the door asked you.*

Barnea in Arabic: *Say what she said, don't you remember? You forgot?*

Ashkar in Arabic: *I didn't forget.*

Barnea in Hebrew: *The woman asked if you were my daughter.*

Ashkar in Arabic: *And what did you reply?*

Barnea in Arabic: *Well, what did I say?*

Ashkar in Arabic: *I wish.*

Barnea in Hebrew: *I wish.*

Barnea in Hebrew: *Enough (Enough pouring milk).*

Ashkar in Arabic: *The white has taken me over.*

In *Purity and Danger*, Mary Douglas⁴ maintains that the private body and the social body reflect one another in the symbolical realm, and therefore rituals pertaining to the body often represent social contradictions. Hence, the care for the purification of the body reflects a sense of threat – both external and internal – to the social structure. Ashkar, who bathes in milk throughout the performance, radicalizes this threat through her vigorous body movements and the authoritative tone with which she recounts the biographical text in Arabic.

The audience, Jewish for the most part, clearly trusts Barnea's translation as supervised by Ashkar and her sisters in the audience.⁵ In this respect, Barnea's presence is a paradox: on the one hand, he is alert to Ashkar's utterances while she generates the content and rhythm of the text; on the other hand, his figure, which knows both Arabic and Hebrew, ostensibly supervises the contents and meanings attached to the biographical text. In the exhibition space, only those who understand both Arabic and Hebrew can supervise the evolving text, and in this sense, both Ashkar and her family, who represent a part of the Palestinian minority in Israel, and Barnea, the commentator on Arab affairs, the main speaker of the hegemonic Israeli-Zionist discourse, are fragments of a single reality.

Ashkar emphasizes her acquaintance with Barnea twice, when she turns to him directly. The first time she asks him if he knows her parents' friends from Acre, and the second time she asks him to tell her what the woman at the door said. "Did you forget?" he replies, "The woman asked if you were my daughter." Thus the biographical narrative which puts the story of the family making a pilgrimage to Mecca to perform the rite of Hajj at its core, ostensibly ends with the appropriation of Ashkar as a daughter.

Ashkar, however, is not taken by the magic of the imaginary family, and throughout the performance, vis-à-vis the biographical text, she maintains

the binary relations between Hebrew and Arabic, strictly refraining from speaking Hebrew, thus in fact repeating the rejection of the bilingual array that has become rooted in her place of residence, as presented in her performance *Barbur Aswad*. In *Barbur Aswad* Ashkar attached the Arabic word "aswad" (black) to the pastoral Hebrew name "barbur" (swan). She mixed the milk with black ink, rendering the blackness a quintessential stereotypical marker of ethnic and cultural differences.

Whereas in *Barbur Aswad* blackness is indicated as the major concern through the black ink and Ashkar's black clothing, in *Barbur 24000*, white is the essence. Ashkar is dressed in white, erasing the white writing from the white wall, and is surrounded by white tents. In the course of the performance she bathes in white liquid and drips white liquid, constantly repeating the adjective white (*abyad* in Arabic): white on white,⁶ white rules, etc., ending the performance with the sentence: "White has taken me over."

Homi K. Bhabha maintains that:⁷

"whiteness" is a screen for projecting the political phantoms of the past on the unfulfilled surfaces of the present; but at the same time it resembles what house painters call a primer, a base color that regulates all others, a norm that spectacularly or stealthily underlies powerful social values.

The primer in this case is the Israeli-Zionist – Jewish-Ashkenazi – whiteness which is the source of power and authority of Israeli culture as a whole, and of the art field in which Ashkar operates in particular. Ashkar locates herself in a space which is "white on white," exposing whiteness as an "unsettled, disturbed form of authority."⁸ She does so through Barnea's main source of authority – his mastery of the Palestinian Arabic language.

Throughout the performance Ashkar speaks in her mother tongue. Barnea, in contrast, utters most of the text in Hebrew in first person feminine and in Arabic with an Israeli accent, and only rarely does he deviate from his role as translator and speak in Arabic.⁹

The biographical text, which is based mainly on intra-cultural Islamic Palestinian contexts, emphasizes, for a change, the accent of the Jewish speaker and his foreignness in the biographical textual system which Ashkar unfolds. Ashkar's position of strength, however, is temporary and fragmented. It occurs only in one of two continuous sentences, when she speaks in her

own language, disintegrating and becoming enfeebled time and again during its translation. The simultaneous translation only accentuates the repeated friction and the dependence on the mediation between Ashkar and the target audience, the Jewish Israeli audience watching the performance. The resulting effect is of an interrupted biographical text, distorted and mediated, whose incoherence reinforces the inner relations of power and occupation from which Ashkar operates, writes and presents the story of her life.

1 Thirteen is the number of members in Ashkar's immediate family; the tents resemble those used by the pilgrims to Mecca for the Hajj, also alluding to the tents of the Palestinian refugees.

2 Hajj, or the Major Pilgrimage to Mecca, is one of the five pillars of Islam; an obligatory duty that each Muslim must perform at least once in his/her lifetime. The Hajj rituals include circumambulating the Kaa'bah (*Tawaḥ*) seven times and kissing the Black Stone, as well as standing in Arafah for a sermon, usually given by the qadi of Mecca, from a platform located on Mount Arafat (some 25 km east of Mecca). Pilgrims must wear simple white garments. See: Nehemia Levtzion, Daphna Ephrat, Daniella Talmon-Heller (eds.), *Islam: Introduction to the History of the Religion*, vol. 1 (The Open University of Israel, 1998), p. 58 [Hebrew].

3 Many of the pilgrims to Mecca revisit the place and repeat some of the rituals. The repeated pilgrimage is called Umrah, or Little Hajj, and is not obligatory.

4 Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 2000 [1966]), pp. 151-152.

5 Exactly a year before her performance *Barbur 24000* (2004), Ashkar performed *Barbur Aswad* (2003), exclusively in Arabic, at the Midrasha School of Art, Beit Berl College.

At the end of the performance the Department teachers refused to discuss the piece, asking Ashkar to translate her words to Hebrew. Ashkar refused. In her performance at Hagar Art Gallery in Jaffa, the translation of the text appeared on a leaflet outside the gallery. For an elaborate discussion, see: Tal Ben Zvi, *Hagar – Contemporary Palestinian Art*, exh. cat. (Jaffa: Hagar, 2006), and the Hagar Art Gallery website at <http://www.hagar-gallery.com/palestin.html>.

6 In the context of feminist writing, "white on white" is read as a white ink, namely as writing with maternal milk. In "Coming to Writing" (1976) Helene Cixous identifies the streams of mother's milk flowing from the breasts as white ink which enables writing against the current, a non-linear writing that celebrates its linguistic otherness. See: Helene Cixous, *Coming to Writing and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991).

7 Homi K. Bhabha, "The White Stuff (political aspect of whiteness)," *Artforum International* 36, n. 9 (May 1998): 23.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

9 In this context of translation within the postcolonial sphere, Hamid Naficy indicates that the nonsynchronicity between speaker and voice can be counterhegemonic. See: Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001), p. 24.

Under the Light of Slumber, Or, Hassan Beck's Private Parking | Zahiya Kundos

She asked you how you were and you didn't recognize her. I was with you in the first grade, she said. And to prove it to you, because she could sense your suspiciousness, she added that you both studied with a teacher called Khadra. Only then did you trust her, after all – one couldn't make up such proof. She knew you well. Khadra, the teacher, who was the second grade homeroom teacher, always had red cheeks and shining eyes. I don't know why you remember her always dressed in green. Tahani, did teacher Khadra have a green dress?

Throw away your gum! Stand in a line and throw out your gum immediately! You missed the instruction and went on chewing. You're lucky, chewing gum without being noticed, look! It was a greatly mistaken observation, but you were proud of your uniqueness, and began showing everyone how no one else could chew like you do. I don't know how you managed; after all you were usually very shy.

You can't recall her between the fifth and the tenth grades, and now you're full of guilt when she has made such an effort to freshen your memory. She became your friend following the teacher's decision to place all the good students in one class, so that he would prove to the town that he could successfully lead a whole class to pass their finals within three years of his appointment. You hated school. Tahani loved it. You wanted to run away. She regarded it as a refuge from town. Her father was from Haifa and her mother from Sebastia, and that's why she disappeared for years after her father died. Now she is here. She told you that her mother didn't have the milk to breastfeed her, and her first food was rice. You loved rice. She hates it. She was happy in the beginning. You waited for the end.

In the sixth grade, when you gave up some of your dominant shyness, you became part of a group. "The Snobs Group", you were called. You wanted to be set apart (that's all). And you started playing around. You both started playing around. There was another girl with the two of you. She was the best-known girl in school, who married before Tahani did, and obviously before you. She was the emblem of freedom. And became the emblem of conservatism once she got what she wanted. Two years ago you visited her, and she deposited the books in your hands. You couldn't refuse, because she insisted. Now you no longer remember where you placed them, you probably didn't throw them away because they were holy books. Tahani loved you both. You loved her,

and she appreciated her during the final exam in maths. Tahani had already complained of this custom that your mutual friend had, but she forgot about the whole thing because she is white, and the stains don't sully her.

It was a period that you wished would end. Tahani dreamt that it would go on. She wanted what she wanted. Tahani's home was the best-known among the pupils who took finals, because her mother cooked the tastiest Majadra. Tahani, tell your mother to put in a lot of onions, will you. "W'alla yahimak ya khalti". Her house was adjacent to the new library that had just been built. You didn't want to go there because you were sure that you wouldn't understand the book-loan policy and photocopying regulations. You went there to look for books that the biology teacher asked for, you felt like an outsider and ran out to the street. As usual, you were afraid of anything new and ran away from it. Tahani called you, you didn't hear her voice. The next day you found an envelope on your desk. I made two copies, for both of us – she understood you so naturally.

Both Tahani and you were outside the games that she played. You didn't get her lusts. You were in another place. You tried to hide your breasts. Wide sheets (as you did when you were reborn. I brought her to you because I knew that you wouldn't find peace anywhere but in starting over again).

And the days passed.

You came to her with a long lasting love and with good wishes because she is still in that same peace of mind that she had when you went your different ways. You found her in a small room, with an existentialist peace-of-mind group. She radiated beauty, she radiated in the name of women. When she told you what you had missed, you felt that she was the speaker for the International Women's Association for Happiness. You laughed with a voice that you didn't know you had. And you found out that you weren't there with her, in her love, in her marriage, during the construction of her house, on her wedding night, in her discoveries and in her abandoning of the wide sheets, and her longing to tell you about it.

You haven't changed, your questions are difficult. He is my beloved as you are my beloved. I met him during a visit to my aunt in Sebastiya... you haven't yet joined me for a visit there... It's a tranquil place, quiet beyond expectation. The army doesn't go in because there are no fighters there. All the fighters have left to Nablus, leaving the place well protected. This is the third year since

we have begun our attempts to receive an I.D. card, I hold my breath until he returns, I live the terror of being apart from him. A year ago, his supervisor at work told us of a lawyer who handles such matters. We worked our ass off and lived sparingly in order to save for the advance payment. My troubles haven't ended yet, hold off with the cursing... I want to be a mother, but as you can see... Did you notice the young man who was at my house? He is my brother-in-law, I mean, my husband... his brother... that's right. My dear, he came to us one month ago to spend a few days. The same promises all the time... A few days, a few weeks, and he will go back... What can I tell you... The man had a fall a day before he was meant to leave, and the doctors told him not to leave his bed for a month! A whole month! I mean a month without a husband, without love, without taking off my clothes, a month... I swear I'm not complaining, but as luck would have it this was just the month in which at long last we have a date for fertility treatment... It took me two months to get time off from work... Well, and what's the most important thing in order to have a child?!

You're probably asking yourself why he doesn't leave, after all it's been more than a month since he had his fall? Wait till the end... do you promise not to laugh? Well my darling, over there, in Sebastiya, they don't have a toilet with a seat! And now we are waiting for someone to install a proper toilet there, because he can only go sitting down... In other words sister, my life is in deep shit, as they say. And you fell over laughing...

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Aber Elr'ol | Sami Buchari

In the age in which the night adorned itself with stars and in the long nights the moon dominated, a strange beast lay in the orchards and terrorized the whole of Jaffa. The beast had two heads: the head of a wolf, and the head of a sheep. These two entities lived peacefully in one body, and when the wolf tore its prey apart, the sheep would quietly feed on moist grass. But with time, the wolf began to develop a great appetite for human children. Since then, the tension between human and beast gradually intensified.

Since their children were in great danger, the people of Jaffa gathered to seek a solution. The crowd sat on the waterfront, throwing out ideas as plentiful as the rocks, and in that time many rocks grew out of the sea, as many as the stars. One suggested that an infant should be tied to a citrus tree, its crying would awaken the beast's instinct, pulling it towards the sound, and then the people, equipped with hoes and clubs, would beat it until it drowned in its blood. Many people objected to this idea. Especially those who were parents. It was too risky, and no one knew what the beast was capable of.

Of all the ideas, only one remained: it was decided that a deep hole should be dug in every orchard. The hole would be covered with branches, and each night the people, equipped with hoes and torches, would scour the orchard in groups in an attempt to push the animal towards the hole and make it fall in.

Everybody joined in. The nights were long and exhausting. The search and careful scouring of the orchards yielded no result. The beast could not be found, and children kept disappearing. The frustration grew among the citizens. Some even voiced a thought that perhaps the animal did not really exist.

Suspicion was thus redirected at the human element, and people started blaming each other for the children's kidnapping. Suspicion and distrust spread like a contagious disease. The community divided into sectors, and within the sectors themselves there grew more and more fights between individuals. Since then, every human being sees only the beast in the Other. Since then, every man is a wolf to his fellow men.

Abu Abdalla told me that the beast did in fact exist. In the same year in which the holes were dug, after a few months, it had fallen into one of them. In an orchard called Biarat Elshiek Sha'aban, on that night, the /beast's voice shook the stars. The fear was so great, that people shut themselves in their homes. Only towards the third day, when the voice grew silent, did the people go out to see the place in which the beast was found. Inside the hole the beast

lay, with the wolf chewing what remained of the sheep's head. Its last meal brought about the animal's death.

The hole was sealed off, and the place was called Aber Elr'ol (Monster's Grave). The other holes became wells. Over the years the wells disappeared, as did the orchards and most of the citizens. Only fear remained...

Stories, stories.

Fear has got legs to stand on. It is like a dog in the hands of the shepherd. It keeps the herd from dispersing. It is the unifying factor. Every smart person that will wave the wand of fear, will find himself the leader of a whole nation, and the more he will blow this fear up and intensify it, the more he will perpetuate his position. It seems that the fear balloon has endless patience. If it were only to explode, everyone would discover that it was only air, and that for this air they paid with precious flesh and blood.

In the meantime, the balloon keeps inflating, detaching the mob from reality. The public enjoys the flight. It gives in and becomes addicted to it. It surrounds itself with artifacts, sinking into an artificial and materialistic world, an ostensibly consoling universe. Far from any self-criticism, it lives in denial of past and present injustices. Language, law and morals stretch out like chewing gum and are adapted according to need. But what exactly is the need of the public?

When a soldier at a checkpoint stops a Palestinian student, takes him into a room, strips him of his clothes, makes him lie down on the cold floor with handcuffs and kneads him with the gun handle, it is surely not because he is at risk from this man in his underwear. Fear of dealing with fear is the major threat.

Israelis have been taught to regard the Palestinian as a cursed, bloodthirsty beast. The x-ray eyes see only that beast beyond the human shell, and there are no Palestinian human beings. There are just dangerous beast that understand nothing but force, and therefore should be shut off behind a high wall.

I see no hope for the Hebrew man – the Hebrew man who is blinded by fear.

Even in the intellectual circle there is that barrier. There is no real confrontation, no listening to the Other's story, and if there is – it comes from a patronizing, defensive place.

When the pacifist cries: "Occupation corrupts!" – he is silenced by the aesthetic, telling him that the sound he makes is disagreeable, and that

the slogan is soooo overused. When will he understand that what really is exhausted is the value scale on which he stands, observing from high up? When will he understand that democracy is only fed by essences, and that like a prostitute who doesn't select her clients, it must provide for all its citizens?

There is no room for sacred cows, for sanctity is a very personal matter. And if there is any sanctity at all, it should be sanctity that is close to the individual rather than to some Chosen People.

Let us not delude ourselves. There are at least two peoples here, and the only thing they have in common is man.

On the way, On the Wadi Ara road, I looked for a radio station that would make the time go by faster. I chanced on the "Voice of the People" on 93FM. The program was about road accidents. The radio announcer sounded restless as he sought an answer to a question that bothered him:

"How many Jews died this week in road accidents?"

Which was immediately followed by another question:

"How many Jews murdered other Jews this week on the road?"

With him sat, for a change, an expert on Jewish matters, who provided him with the answer. Very quickly, the word *accident* turned into *slaughter*, which turned to *murder*. If I had gone on listening, I would probably have heard the word pogrom as well, and from there it could quite possibly have gone on to a discussion of a *Road Judaization Project*.

Several years ago, the slogan "Bibi is good for the Jews" was proudly flaunted on billboards. If democracy had a voice, it would have replied: "Ya Habibi!..."

Once there was a thought to combat racism through billboards. All the racist swearwords frequently used by the average Israeli were heaped on the white sheet. I remember that every time I came across such a sign, I would stop and desperately look for the missing swearword. The swearword that in everyday life is constantly written on the wall.

Reality should be read rather than invented. I can call a cat – a tiger, in the course of time I can come to believe that it is, indeed, a tiger, I would even begin to fear it, and in the reverse case – I can become a meal for that "cat".

Words create stories, and these – have the power to shape reality.

The music teacher, Fuad, invited a group of musicians from the Philharmonic Orchestra in order to play for the younger classes of an Arab school in Jaffa. The presenter, a tall young man, introduces the musicians and

then the various wind instruments, and every instrument "presents" itself, and awakens the children's curiosity. Before each piece of music, which is played with great professionalism, the announcer provides an introduction with words, gestures or pictures that he hangs on a whiteboard. All this is carried out with considerable charm, and the music sweeps the children with it and uplifts them. "Now," he says, "We shall tiptoe back to the Land of Israel. As you know, many years ago people came here from many different places all over the world. They worked very hard in order to dry the swamps that used to be here..."

The swamp allegory is not that different from "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth...". Nor is it different from the story of the Saraya building in Jaffa, which is perceived as a story of heroism. After all, the Jewish National Military Organization bombed it in order to get rid of a group of terrorists. Only there are those who argue differently. Nawal Hamdan, may she rest in peace, to her last day never forgot the intensity of the explosion. Clinging to her mother's legs, shivering with fright. Jehashan recalls how he pulled the bodies of children from the ruins. The building housed an orphanage. Abu Subkhy was also there. He too came to help, but passed out when he saw amidst the children's dead bodies one girl with amputated legs and hip bones poking out of the living flesh. Abu Abdalla Alkubtan says that it happened on a Sunday. The Christian children were in church, and that's what saved them.

In Menashiya Muslims, Christians and Jews lived close together.

Ayshe, who was born in Shabazy, tells of a neighbor called Rachel, who placed a note with the Ten Commandments in her mother's hand. This note was to bring her good luck after several miscarriages. After that, Ayshe's mother had five children, four boys and one girl, and the note is passed on from generation to generation.

Menashiya, the mixed neighborhood, was swept away and buried under the Charles Clore grass carpet.

What makes these testimonies inferior to any other?

This narrative has no room, since it interferes with the heroic story of the victor, that very story which is supposed to be perceived as indisputable reality; the story that puts the Israeli's life in order, prevents him from feeling anxiety, and ensures his peace of mind; the story that presents him in a humane and cultural light.

But what about the Palestinian from the time of the swamps, who is now struggling to survive within Israeliness, where is he in that story?

Oops... for a moment there I allowed myself to become visible and to gain an existence.

For a split second I forgot that I was facing the blind Hebrew person.

That Hebrew person who does not see me.

That Hebrew person who sees the Arab in me, but not the Palestinian.

That Hebrew person who only sees the human animal in me.

CVs

Tal Ben Zvi

1966 Born in Israel; lives in Tel Aviv. **1998–2001** Curator of Heinrich Böll Foundation, Tel Aviv.

2001–2003 Curator of Hagar Art Gallery, Jaffa.

A lecturer at Camera Obscura School of Visual Art, Tel Aviv, and the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem. Holds a Masters degree from Tel Aviv University (her thesis was titled: "Between Nation and Gender: The Representation of the Female Body in Palestinian Art"). Currently completing her doctoral thesis at Tel Aviv University on "Nakba Representations in Contemporary Palestinian Art."

Publications: **2006** Tal Ben Zvi (ed.), **Biographies: Six Solo Exhibitions at Hagar Art Gallery** (Jaffa: Hagar Association). **2005** Tal Ben Zvi (ed.), **Khilwe: Samira Wahbi** (Jaffa: Hagar Association). **2004** Tal Ben Zvi, "Mother Tongue", exh. cat., in Yigal Nizri (ed.), *Eastern Appearance / Mother Tongue: A Present that Stirs in the Thickets of Its Arab Past* (Tel Aviv: Babel). **2003** Tal Ben Zvi and Moran Shoub (eds.), **Brunette: Sixteen Solo Exhibitions at Heinrich Böll Foundation**, Tel Aviv (Tel Aviv: Babel). **2001** Tal Ben Zvi and Yael Lerer (eds.), **Self-Portrait: Palestinian Women's Arts** (Tel Aviv: Andalus). **2000** Tal Ben Zvi (ed.), **New Middle East: Eleven Exhibitions, 1998-1999, at Heinrich Böll Foundation**, Tel Aviv (Jaffa: Hagar Association). **1999** Tal Ben Zvi, "But I, and I Alone, Will Tell My Story: An Interview with Nizar Hassan," *Plastica* 3, pp. 75-81 [Hebrew]; Tal Ben Zvi, "The IDF (Galei Zahal) Broadcasting from the Field," *Studio* 100 (Jan.-Feb.), p. 26 [Hebrew]. **1998** Tal Ben Zvi, "The Right of Return," *Plastica* 2, pp. 102-112 [Hebrew]; Tal Ben Zvi, "Palestin(a): Palestinian Women's Art," *Maariv*, Jewish New Year Supplement, p. 35 [Hebrew].

David Adika

1970 Born in Jerusalem; lives and works in Tel Aviv. **1997** BFA, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem. **2004** MFA, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem.

Selected Solo Exhibitions: **2005** In-Out, Ashdod Art Museum, Monart Center, Ashdod. **2004** Multi-Function, graduation show, Bezalel Gallery, Tel Aviv; Will it Shine, Kav 16 Gallery, Tel Aviv. **2003** Mahogany, Herzliya Museum of Art, Herzliya. **2002** Mother Tongue: Portraits, Hagar Gallery, Jaffa. **2001** Lifestyle, Borochov Gallery, Tel Aviv.

Selected Group Exhibitions: **2005** Recipients, Prizes in Art and Design from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, **2004**, Tel Aviv Museum of Art; Yona at Bezalel: Issues in Contemporary Curating, Bezalel Gallery, Tel Aviv; Reunion, By Art Projects Gallery, Tel Aviv; Alphabet – Israelisk Samtidskonst, Kristinehamns Konstmuseum, Sweden. **2003** Tel Aviv – Glasgow – Tel Aviv, Bezalel Gallery, Tel Aviv, in conjunction with GSA (Glasgow School of Arts). **2002** Mother Tongue, Mishkan Le'Omanut, Museum of Art, Ein Harod. **1998** To the East: Orientalism in the Arts in Israel, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

Gaston Zvi Ickowicz

1974 Born in Argentina; lives and works in Jaffa. **2000** Photography studies, Musrara School of Photography, Digital Media & New Music, Jerusalem.

Selected Solo Exhibitions: **2005** *Chapters from Settlement*, Haifa Museum of Art. **2003** *Buenos Aires*, Hagar Art Gallery, Jaffa. **2001** *The Four Homes of Mercy*, Musrara School of Photography Gallery, Jerusalem. **2000** *The Four Homes of Mercy*, Bethlehem Art Gallery.

Selected Group Exhibitions: **2005** *Puntos Cardinales*, PS122 Gallery, New York; **Land, Peoples and Identities**, Al-Kahf Gallery, Bethlehem; **NAZAR, Noorderlicht Photo Festival**, traveling exhibition in the US; **Playground**, The New Gallery, Teddy Stadium, Jerusalem. **2004** *Noorderlicht Photo Festival*, Holland; **Field of Depth**, Latin Collector Gallery, New York; **Photobridge: St. Petersburg – Israel**, traveling collaborative exhibition, St. Petersburg, The Moscow House of Photography, Russia; Museum of Photography, Tel Hai. **2003** *International Meetings of Photography* exhibition in Plovdiv, Bulgaria; **Art Gallery**, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem. **2002** *PhotoEspaña 2002*, 60 young photographers, Madrid.

Anisa Ashkar

1979 Born in Acre; lives and works in Acre. **1998–2000** Studied art, The Western Galilee College. **2001** BFA, Hamidrasha School of Art, Beit Berl College, Kalmaniya.

Solo Exhibitions: **2004** *Me and Klee Paint*, Beit Berl College, Kalmaniya; **Ummi**, Seraya, Arab-Jewish Theater, Jaffa; **The Frogwoman**, Bamat Meizag, Performance Art Platform, Tel Aviv; **Untitled (Barbur 24000)**, Acre Theater. **2003** *Barbur Aswad*, Hagar Art Gallery, Jaffa.

Group Exhibitions: **2005** *Kodra*, Salonica, Greece; **X Territory**, The Municipal Gallery, Rehovot; **Play-Ground**, Beit Hagefen, The Arab-Jewish Center, Haifa. **2004** *Light & Shade*, Beit Hagefen, The Arab-Jewish Center Haifa; **Connected Vessels / El-Awani EL-Mustatricha**, The Acco Festival of Alternative Theater, Acre; **Last Dance**, as part of "Omanut Haaretz" Festival, Reading Power Station Compound, Tel Aviv.

Hanna Farah

Kufer Bir'am; **1960** Born in Al-jish; a builder and an architect.

Selected Group Exhibitions: **2005** *Play-Ground*, Beit Hagefen, The Arab-Jewish Center, Haifa. **2004** *Utopia*, Beit Hagefen, The Arab-Jewish Center, Haifa. **2003** *Officespace: Art on Site 2*, 16 HaArba'ah Street, Tel Aviv; **Israeli Object: A Matter of Time**, Jerusalem Artists' House; The Israel National Museum of Science, Planning & Technology, Haifa; **Platform Against the War**, Jaffa Cultural Center; **Black/White**, Beit Hagefen, The Arab-Jewish Center, Haifa; **The Situation Now, 40 authors' and artists' perspectives on the current events in Israel**, book (Kinneret Publishing House); **Young Graduates / Veteran Graduates**, The New Gallery, The Neri Bloomfield Wizo Academy of Design & Education, Haifa. **2001** *Improvisation*, Askola Design Gallery, Tel Aviv. **2000** *Israeli Design*, Tel Aviv Exhibition Grounds.

Curatorship: **2005** *Shame*, Tamra Art Gallery, Tamra. **2004** *Shame*, interdisciplinary project, The Israeli Center for Digital Art, Holon.

Khen Shish

1970 Born in Safed; lives and works in Tel Aviv. **1995** BFA, The Art Institute, Oranim College, Tivon; **1999** MFA, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem. **2001** The Seminar of Theory and Criticism, Camera Obscura School of Art, Tel Aviv.

Selected Solo Exhibitions: **2005** *La Vie En Rose*, Alon Segev Gallery, Tel Aviv. **2003** *Birthday*, Hagar Art Gallery, Jaffa. **2000** *Giotto la Mattina*, Department of Photography Gallery, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem. **1999** *Goat, Sesam*, Antea Gallery, Jerusalem. **1998** *Part Time Witch*, The Artists House, Jerusalem.

Selected Group Exhibitions: **2004** *Intensive Care*, Alon Segev Gallery, Tel Aviv. **2003** *Young Israeli Art*, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv; *The Promise, the Land*, O.K. Center of Contemporary Art, Linz, Austria. **2002** *Body Case*, RAM Foundation Gallery, Rotterdam, Holland; *Mother Tongue*, Mishkan Le'Omanut, Museum of Art, Ein Harod. **1999** *Biennale degli Artisti Giovani*, Rome; *Multi-Exposure*, Hamumche Gallery, Tel Aviv; *Look Mamma Look*, Art Focus, Bezalel Gallery, Jerusalem; *Sister*, The Artists House, Jerusalem.

Tsibi Geva

1951 Born in Kibbutz Ein Shemer; lives and works in Tel Aviv. **1976–1980** Hamidrasha – School of Art, Ramat Hasharon. **1985–1987** New York Studio School, New York.

Selected Solo Exhibitions: **2005** *After*, Annina Nosei Gallery, New York. **2003** *Master Plan*, Haifa Museum of Art, Haifa; *Local Birds*, Kav 16 Gallery, Tel Aviv; *What does the Bird Care?*, Goren Art Gallery, The Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel. **2002** *Lattice*, Hagar Art Gallery, Jaffa; *Background*, Cabri Art Gallery, Kibbutz Cabri; The Art Gallery, Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot; *Days of Awe*, Tmuna Theater, Tel Aviv. **2001** *Days of Awe*, Annina Nosei Gallery, New York; *Rage*, Achshav Gallery, Berlin. **2000** *Works*, Kibbutz Rosh Hanikra Gallery. **1999** *Keffiyeh*, a site-specific project, Espacio Aglutinador, Havana, Cuba; *Summer*, The Art Gallery, Kibbutz Beerli. **1998** *Tsibi Geva: December 1982 – December 1998*, Hakibbutz Art Gallery, Tel Aviv; *Keffiyeh and Balata Paintings*, Ambrosino Gallery, Miami, Florida. **1997** *Works*, Julie M. Gallery, Tel Aviv. **1995** *Tsibi Geva*, Annina Nosei Gallery, New York; *The Big Northern Window of a Classroom*, Julie M. Gallery, Tel Aviv. **1994** *Tsibi Geva: Works 1988–1994*, Mishkan Le'Omanut, Museum of Art, Ein Harod, Israel; *Blinds*, Julie M. Gallery, Tel Aviv.

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