

There is A Lion Across The River

Artist: Orit Ishay
Curator: Cristina Stoenescu
17th July – 25th August, 2018

Opening Exhibition

Tuesday, 17th July, 2018
19.00h - 22.00h

Anca Poterașu Gallery
58 Plantelor Street, Bucharest

Orit Ishay arrives in Bucharest at the end of June and almost immediately dives into exploring the streets of the city, especially the ones configured around the 58 Plantelor Street where her residency takes place, in an old inn-like building. Before leaving Tel-Aviv she begins a theoretical investigation into the area and finds out that Mihai Eminescu, also named "the national poet", died at the address of Plantelor no.9... Of all the writers, he seems to unite complex symbols of national identity and ethos. A friend loans her a book of Eminescu poems with Romanian-Hebrew translations that she carries at hand as she looks for an angle, a detail, a space within a space of the real and of the symbolic.

The artist thinks of a map of her exploring which will not in true form explain her approach, in fact more interested in the interactions between people and places, the influences prevalent in the formation of identity and nationalism. During her stay in Bucharest, she walks out in the morning and sometimes in the evening, spending some of her time with people she meets in a few coffee shops and tea houses. They read together poems, *Dacă Ramuri...*, *La fereastra despre mare* and the people she meets become interested in her own views of the poet, they join in, bring objects for her to photograph, tell her about life-memories and their connections with Eminescu. Sometimes, they warn about the various interpretations of the writer's nationalist views, bringing up the poet's newspaper articles and other biographical details. Orit reads about his love stories, interprets his death because of heartbreak and leaves it at that ...This is not really about Eminescu. She asks the people she meets to imagine an object associated with the poems they choose, to find a visual connection to the poetic text to their every-day surroundings. In the exhibition space photographs of objects drape a whole wall alongside images of the pages from the poetry book.

Many other days are spent with images, lines and perspectives, a walk at the Botanical garden where the concrete is left behind for a herbarium heterotopia - it fits perfectly for a collage. Fragments of worlds make place into a Lacanian Universe of another Real, planes intersect and abstract images inform of the surroundings in shifting perspectives. Photographical images transform into active visual fragments, peeling off the outer layers of the urban landscape least we discover more of its underlying network that binds and also disrupts social frictions, communities, built-in gates of access or intricate labyrinths.

Orit Ishay brings previous prints of her work into the exhibition space, uncannily connecting elements from different spaces: the ceiling fresco of the gallery mirrors, darkly, another wall where a school for girls became the Musrara School of Photography and New Media. We see fragments of Israel, we see fragments of Bucharest from different years from her past visits and exhibitions at MNAC. The artist films a video in the gallery space in addition to a new series of still photographs that she developed during her residency stay this month, colours are desaturated from photographical images to a point where the image looks like a digital scan of an object, of a bird detail from a stove, of a symbol carved into a decoration of the building. Through this apparently barren defragmentation, a stone lion meets them across a river unseen.

Orit Ishay (b. 1961) examines reality through images taken from her surroundings, whether direct photographs or processed images, either by working alone or collaborating with communities. Living and working in Tel Aviv, she is an active artist in stills and video photography, and photography lecturer. She has received numerous awards and scholarships for her work and has exhibited in museums and galleries around the world, among which the following - **Selected solo shows:** Dana Gallery, Kibbutz Yah Mordechai, Israel (2018); special project at Christine König Galerie, Vienna (2017); Prague City Gallery House of Photography (2017); Ben Gurion University of the Negev (2015); MoBY - Museum of Contemporary Art, Bat Yam (2012); TheHeder Contemporary Art Gallery, Tel Aviv (2009); Anna Akhmatova Museum, St. Petersburg (2007); Galicia Jewish Museum, Krakow (2006). **Selected Group Shows:** Osmosis AudioVisual Media Festival, Taiwan (2019); Beit Uri and Rami Nehostan Ashdot Yaacov Museum (2018); The Artist House Jerusalem (2018); The New Gallery in Musrara, Jerusalem (2017); Yad Tabenkin Historical Museum, Israel (2017); Arad Contemporary Art Center, Israel (2016); JCC New York, USA (2016); Historical Museum Beit Hankin Kfar Yehoshua, Israel (2016); The Kupferman collection Museum Israel (2016); The Jancko Dada Museum Haifa, Israel (2016); Petach Tikva Museum of Art, Israel (2015); House of the World Culture, Berlin (2015); Coreana Museum of Art, Seoul (2015); Herman Struck Museum, Haifa (2014); The Israel Museum Jerusalem (2014); Folkwangmuseum, Essen, Germany (2014); MNAC, National Museum for Contemporary Art, Bucharest (2013 and 2012); EPOS International Art Film Festival, Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2013); International Photography Biennial, Amsterdam (2012); Ashdod Art Museum, Israel (2012); TMCA Total Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul (2012); *Sand Uproar*, AUP Archive project by Hans Ulrich Obrist & Guy Tortosa with e-flux & the Serpentine Gallery - London at the DAADGalerie Berlin (2012); Pyramida Center for Contemporary Art (2008); Genia Schreiber University Art Gallery, Tel Aviv (2007); Magaza Museum, Macedonia (2006).

Orit Ishay's works are included in various museum and private collections among which we mention MUMOK Museum of Modern Art, Vienna; MOCAK Museum of Contemporary Art Krakow; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; America-Israel Cultural Foundation, Tel Aviv; CCA Tel Aviv Video Archive; The Video Archive of the Israeli Center for Digital Art, Holon.

Orit Ishay was awarded the artistic residency at Plantel 58 PhotoFocus as a result of the open-call launched by ARAC in collaboration with our gallery this year. The residency project is co-financed by the National Cultural Fund Administration (AFCN). The project does not necessarily represent the position of AFCN. The AFCN is not responsible for the content of the project or the manner in which the results of the project may be used. These are entirely the responsibility of the funding recipient.