NONFINITO
21.08.20 — 17.10.20
תערוכת אמני תוכנית הריזידנシー של ארטפורט
ARTPORT’S ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE GROUP EXHIBITION

اورית גרוס
CURATOR VARDIT GROSS

אלה ליטביץ
ELLA LITTWITZ

גיל ייפמן
GIL YEFMAN

דור זליקה לוי
DOR ZLEKHA LEVY

יעל פרנק
YAEL FRANK

מרב קמלה וחלייל בלבין
MERAV KAMEL and HALIL BALABIN

רות פטיר
RUTH PATIR
Artport, founded by the Ted Arison Family Foundation, is a non-profit art organization fostering and promoting contemporary Israeli art. Through conferences, exhibitions, workshops, professional training, and Israel’s leading visual arts residency, Artport advances artists and the connections between art and society.

The Ted Arison Family Foundation:
Jason Arison (Chairman), Shlomit De-Vries (CEO), Rachel Cohen (Deputy CEO and CFO), Yifat Shmuelevitz (VP of social investments)

Advisory Board: Dan Muggia, Ido Barel, Ilan De-Vries, Mira Lapidot, Sally Haftel Naveh

translated by Daria Kassovsky
החל בהתרגשות גדולה. לאחר מסע חיפושים ארוך נפתח הבניין החדש של ארטפורט 2019 קיץ לחדרי הסטודיו התמלאו באמני תוכנית הרזידנסי. הממ"ד הוסב לסדנת הדפס, שולחן הישיבות נסגר ומסתיים לעילול ההנוגע לשיחות שביתicastационיות. את התוכנית על ארטפורט - מקורי שנות לא ממושך חלום שלום עם网讯 fark וגורים אפרים פורטר, היו טריוויה וירגון לפגישות למאית אליאציאום.

הقلقים מטמעת ימינו העצירה של ארטפורט הצוגו חמיים של אמן תוכנית רנטיני. החברים המשיכו בפעילותה בין תוכנית חמשית "אמא בשלי לי מיץ גנבים". אחרי חמשת油价ים והם משקיעים בתוכנית משכן האמן הביאו וחדר אמול גלריית ארטפורט, כמו שאר העולם, נסגר למספר חודשים אך התוכנית המשיכהسيرון והקירות התמלאו בעבודות אמנות. רגע לפני התוכנית מתאימה ליום holster ולדברי לארו, לㄏיוון לפורטר, לחלומות למאית אליאציאום.

יול פרנק מציגה מוחח立ち ראש בראש ארטפורט הצוגו חמיים של אמן תוכנית חמשית "אמא בשלי לי מיץ גנבים". אחרי חמשת Öl Jazeera נסגר למספר חודשים אך התוכנית המשיכהسيرון והקירות התמלאו בעבודות אמנות. רגע לפני התוכנית מתאימה ליום holster ולדברי לארו, לㄏיוון לפורטר, לחלומות למאית אליאציאום.

יול פרנק מציגה מוחחたち בראש בראש ארטפורט הצוגו חמיים של אמן תוכנית חמשית "אמא בשלי לי מיץ גנבים". אחרי חמשת Öl Jazeera נסגר למספר חודשים אך התוכנית המשיכהسيرון והקירות התמלאו בעבודות אמנות. רגע לפני התוכנית מתאימה ליום holster ולדברי לארו, ל蚧יוון לפורטר, לחלומות למאית אליאציאום.
The summer of 2019 began with great excitement. After a long search, the new Artport building was opened and the studios were filled with the residency program artists. During this tumultuous year, Artport Gallery closed for several months, but the residency program continued operation. The pandemic that knocked on our door brought Artport’s essence into sharper focus—a place providing artists with quiet time and space to think and create, a space for ideas to flourish, for dreams to become reality.

NonFinito presents new works by the program’s artists created in recent months. It is still too early to understand how the epidemic has affected art, and it is impossible to tell where it will lead us in the future, but it is also impossible to ignore the oppressiveness that accompanies us these days and its implications on the ways in which we create and experience art. The speed with which our eye has become accustomed to the turquoise patches that adorn the faces on the street makes us doubt the sensitivity and adaptability of that eye. What else does it see? What does it no longer see? And what happens to that agitated eye when it resumes observing works of art?

Yael Frank exhibits a work outside the Artport building that can only be seen from the surrounding streets. A queen palm tree that has lost its will to stand upright, falls from the rooftop, ostensibly collapsing under the burden of the fantasy and meaning we have pinned on it.

Merav Kamel and Halil Balabin exhibit a new body of work, spanning wooden sculptures of surrealistic figures, which oscillate between a religious ritual, the onset of a revolution, and an ordinary art class intertwined. These are presented as part of a monumental painting installation, consisting of dozens of works that connect and mesh into one endless scene, challenging the viewer and his/her point of view.

Gil Yefman returns to the liberation of the Buchenwald concentration camp, at the moment when the residents of nearby Weimar were confronted with the atrocities that took place in the camp. He juxtaposes felt tattoos, which reconstruct the tattoos removed from prisoners’ bodies, with a mirror in which our image is reflected through the faces of the stunned residents.

Ella Littwitz refers to Dani Karavan’s iconic wall relief hanging at the Knesset—the abode of Israeli democracy. She replaces the limestone with cast basalt, a stone created by subterranean volcanic eruptions.

Dor Zlekha Levy transforms the safe space into a meditative music box, installing a robotic sound sculpture that tries to breathe on its own. Vis-à-vis the external, ever growing sense of suffocation, he focuses on the act of breathing, with which we deal endlessly these days, even though it is ostensibly the most basic act of life.

In her new work, Ruth Patir observes the non-event in the waiting room of the fertility clinic at the Beilinson Medical Center, where 3000-year old Canaanite terracotta fertility goddesses patiently await care. Brought back to life by the artist, these figurines, which originate in the Israel Museum’s archeology collection, now face the reality of August 2020.

Vardit Gross
Turning their inside out and outside in, Merav Kamel and Halil Balabin’s works generate a thick mixture of images and emotions, using pastels, wood carvings, and paper cutouts. A hand inserted into an eye; branches growing out of a nose; a fork seeking its way between body parts and snakes, all wriggling together toward the adjacent drawing sheet; a teacher seated facing his students, hotdogs hanging from his mouth, staring at a limbless woman and a horse with a human head. A religious ritual, the onset of a revolution, or a mere art class all come together. Absurdity mixes with reality, the margins grow ever more radical.

The multiplicity of perspectives disrupts vision. In the absence of a focal point, a vanishing point, or a single moment on which to concentrate, multiplicity becomes a value in itself, and the highly nuanced paintings and sculptures fuse into a continuous flood of viewpoints. The artists, viewers, and characters in the works all try to maintain their place, to figure out how to observe with someone else, without necessarily poking your fingers into his eyes.

Via an intuitive yet committed practice, Kamel and Balabin engage in precise subtraction, engraving paintings in the large papers that cannot be corrected with a brushstroke, removing body parts from the woodblocks that won’t be reinstated. Having been identified previously with painstaking sewing and fabric work, they now shift to a completely different kind of laboriousness, one that observes the material, slowly exposing it and the story it holds for them, layer by layer. Their surrender to the material is a yielding to the general chaos, to the loss of control over the world, which has gradually intensified in the past year, and the sense of liberation it brings with it into the works.
In April 1945, shortly after the liberation of the Buchenwald concentration camp, the Allies ordered the residents of nearby Weimar to come and see what had happened right under their noses. So that they wouldn’t be able to hide under the guise of ignorance, they were exposed to the inconceivable horrors that took place in the camp—including tattooed skin stripped from the bodies of inmates, body parts, and remnants of scientific experiments on living humans.

It is impossible to make sense of the atrocities committed at Buchenwald, and this irrationality creeps into Gil Yefman’s works. Trying to comprehend the incomprehensible, to introduce order and humor where they cannot necessarily be tolerated, he transforms the aforesaid tattoos, preserved in formaldehyde, into conceptual tattoos. Using a felting needle to insert the dyed wool into the felt, he copies the image, conjuring up the original artwork that set the sequence in motion. He releases the characters Bad RenRo (a Hitler-like alter-ego assumed by artist Dov Or-Ner, which is an anagram of his name in Hebrew) and Penelope (played by Yefman) from the exhibition “Kibbutz Buchenwald” at Tel Aviv Museum of Art, and follows them as they spread a mysterious epidemic among the audience visiting the hall of art. Using a sandblasting technique, he redirects the stunned gazes of the Weimar residents watching the camp in the photograph to the mirror in which we are reflected. Who is throwing dust in our eyes today? What do we refuse to see?

Yefman’s works baffle their viewers, causing laughter and shivers at the same time. They call upon them to observe, to try to understand, a-priori giving up the possibility of succeeding. Playing on the thin line between imagination and fiction, history and future, the ethical and the aesthetic, they leave no choice but to let go, to succumb to the paradox, perhaps even learn to live with it.

In April 1945, shortly after the liberation of the Buchenwald concentration camp, the Allies ordered the residents of nearby Weimar to come and see what had happened right under their noses. So that they wouldn’t be able to hide under the guise of ignorance, they were exposed to the inconceivable horrors that took place in the camp—including tattooed skin stripped from the bodies of inmates, body parts, and remnants of scientific experiments on living humans.

It is impossible to make sense of the atrocities committed at Buchenwald, and this irrationality creeps into Gil Yefman’s works. Trying to comprehend the incomprehensible, to introduce order and humor where they cannot necessarily be tolerated, he transforms the aforesaid tattoos, preserved in formaldehyde, into conceptual tattoos. Using a felting needle to insert the dyed wool into the felt, he copies the image, conjuring up the original artwork that set the sequence in motion. He releases the characters Bad RenRo (a Hitler-like alter-ego assumed by artist Dov Or-Ner, which is an anagram of his name in Hebrew) and Penelope (played by Yefman) from the exhibition “Kibbutz Buchenwald” at Tel Aviv Museum of Art, and follows them as they spread a mysterious epidemic among the audience visiting the hall of art. Using a sandblasting technique, he redirects the stunned gazes of the Weimar residents watching the camp in the photograph to the mirror in which we are reflected. Who is throwing dust in our eyes today? What do we refuse to see?

Yefman’s works baffle their viewers, causing laughter and shivers at the same time. They call upon them to observe, to try to understand, a-priori giving up the possibility of succeeding. Playing on the thin line between imagination and fiction, history and future, the ethical and the aesthetic, they leave no choice but to let go, to succumb to the paradox, perhaps even learn to live with it.
A palm tree is the perfect, nearly hackneyed fantasy—from a coconut on a desert island to a poster in a teenage girl’s room, from artificial palm-shaped islands in Dubai to palms planted on traffic islands throughout Israel, extending across the Tel Aviv promenade, providing an imaginary, tropical touch to the Mediterranean shores. A tree with little shade, whose lifespan is around eighty years, like a human life, it stands upright until it no longer can, or until the palm weevil, a mysterious aphid, eats it from within, leaving our public space battered and strewn with the corpses of trees.

A tree stands outside the window of Yael Frank’s grandfather, an engineer by profession, who was never able to explain to his granddaughter how the thin trunk holds the entire weight at its crown. The circumstances of life made it stand, and those same circumstances also made it fall. The artificial palm repeatedly falling from the Artport roof continues Frank’s engagement with esoteric readymades, focusing on the absurdity of what we take for granted, and delving deeper into the symbolism of the palm tree and its ongoing rupture. It is both funny and painful. Like a kid tickled so much that he appears to be laughing, while in fact he is crying, the palm on the Artport roof feels the burning tickle-pain in its lower abdomen, ultimately making it bend and collapse.

Frank sees the pain of objects—the humility of the tree collapsing under the burden and the fantasies which will remain unfulfilled; the suffering of the Pilates ball crushed under the gymnast’s legs; the dwindling tonus of supporting columns; the urge felt by IKEA cabinets to release their bones and extract their necks. She sees the pain, and pushes it a little further, until it becomes amusing, and then a little more, until it stops being funny.
Ella Littwitz is an archaeologist of the present. With the attention to detail and curiosity reserved to those who explore the past, she turns stone after stone in her immediate environment, examining their physical, individual, and national significance. Whether trail markers or boundary stones, a house wall, self-made adobe bricks, or the chiseled limestone comprising Dani Karavan’s wall piece at the Israeli Parliament—the stones in Littwitz’s work are never just stones.

In Yesterday, Littwitz alludes to Karavan’s iconic wall relief Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, installed on the southern wall of the Knesset, behind the speakers and orators; a witness to laws being debated and agreements signed; to democracy being celebrated but also attacked. Via a geometric array of local landscapes—wadis, mounds, valleys, and domes—Karavan perpetuates Israeli scenery using limestone, light and shade. Created in 1966, this relief also commemorates a moment in the timeline of the optimistic young nation upon inauguration of the official Knesset building and the hopes pinned on it.

Referring directly to Karavan’s composition, Littwitz replaces the limestone with cast black basalt. Formed by the cooling of lava, the basalt is the result of powerful subterranean forces which erupt onto the surface from amid the cracks that occur between tectonic plates. The basalt on the wall was disciplined and reorganized—shredded, melted, and cast in molds—but the memory of the sizzling material is still discernible therein.
Either you are pregnant, myriad strangers caress your belly in the elevator and in crowded waiting rooms. Or you are not pregnant, looking into egg freezing options, fertilized or unfertilized, sperm donation or maybe co-parenting. Or you inject hormones, take folic acid, calculate the days in the month, being monitored endlessly. Or you have a little baby and people on the street yell at you—Why bottle? Breastfeed! Or they reprimand you for breastfeeding on a bench in the park and exposing a swollen, sore breast, taking possession of what remains the last common property in a privatized, divided country. Or you are definitely not. Explaining to your aunt during a family dinner, refusing to be interviewed for yet another article on voluntary childlessness, unable to understand why people insist on defining you by what you did not do.

Not that it was ever any different. Long before the State of Israel funded fertility treatments and encouraged childbirth, thousands of Canaanite fertility figurines filled the homes in this region. Today they populate the archeology collections at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem—large, abundant breasts, receptacles for milk and children. Little goddesses to pray to and for. Femininity which is a cult that preceded only slightly the cult of femininity.

It was not easy to be a woman in the 7th century BCE. It is not easy to be a woman today either. The fertility figurines sit and wait their turn at the hospital’s gynecology clinic in Petach Tikva, pondering over issues of personal will and consent, over models of beauty and power, wondering how to make a difference. Wondering whether it is possible to request a redefinition, or better yet—whether it is possible to experience, if only momentarily, how it would feel to go about in the world without a definition at all.
In recent months, millions of people have signed up for meditation apps, a sharp increase compared to previous years. In late April 2020, hundreds of thousands gathered online to join in a global mass meditation to heal the world. An entire world, under lockdown, wanted to breathe. This basic act of life—breathing—was never given so much attention. We have become constantly aware of the number of patients on ventilators, as well as the different types of respirators and filters. We seek breathable materials, while outdoors the sense of suffocation is growing ever stronger. The phrase “I can’t breathe,” uttered 20 times over 8:46 minutes, has become the driving force of a protest movement and a mantra inscribed on billboards.

Dor Zlekha Levy’s work attempts to breathe on its own. The most natural act becomes a calculated, mechanical effort. The small, arched body rises and falls, draws in and lets go. Fragmented sounds are emitted from its echo chamber, alternately filling the small, elongated exhibition space in which it is featured. The sound leaks out of the intimate space into the spacious gallery, as if wondering whether to go outside into the world, which desperately needs air to breathe, or stay indoors, in the safety of the secure space.

In his works, Zlekha Levy shifts images from social and political spheres to personal and sentimental realms, generating moments of yearning. In INHALE, too, he creates air pockets and interstices of thought that allow longing to resonate and be realized, almost physically, in sound and movement. In the small, restricted space, in view of the choking body, it may still be possible to halt momentarily, to submit, to find a place in which to catch one’s breath.

Dor Zlekha Levy

In recent months, millions of people have signed up for meditation apps, a sharp increase compared to previous years. In late April 2020, hundreds of thousands gathered online to join in a global mass meditation to heal the world. An entire world, under lockdown, wanted to breathe. This basic act of life—breathing—was never given so much attention. We have become constantly aware of the number of patients on ventilators, as well as the different types of respirators and filters. We seek breathable materials, while outdoors the sense of suffocation is growing ever stronger. The phrase “I can’t breathe,” uttered 20 times over 8:46 minutes, has become the driving force of a protest movement and a mantra inscribed on billboards.

Dor Zlekha Levy’s work attempts to breathe on its own. The most natural act becomes a calculated, mechanical effort. The small, arched body rises and falls, draws in and lets go. Fragmented sounds are emitted from its echo chamber, alternately filling the small, elongated exhibition space in which it is featured. The sound leaks out of the intimate space into the spacious gallery, as if wondering whether to go outside into the world, which desperately needs air to breathe, or stay indoors, in the safety of the secure space.

In his works, Zlekha Levy shifts images from social and political spheres to personal and sentimental realms, generating moments of yearning. In INHALE, too, he creates air pockets and interstices of thought that allow longing to resonate and be realized, almost physically, in sound and movement. In the small, restricted space, in view of the choking body, it may still be possible to halt momentarily, to submit, to find a place in which to catch one’s breath.