

GOWEN CONTEMPORARY

GENEVA, Switzerland

Yifat BEZALEL (Tel Aviv, Israel, 1975)

Motherless

DRAWING NOW, Paris

11-14 April 2013

Gowen Contemporary is delighted to present the Israeli artist Yifat Bezelel's first solo show in France. Entitled *Motherless* and especially conceived for DRAWING NOW, the project includes several works on paper.

Yifat Bezelel's work is essentially composed of pencil and ink drawings on paper or wood, installations, sculptures and videos. Of a remarkable quality, Bezelel's drawings reveal a deep understanding and mastering of chiaroscuro and cross-hatching as expressive tools. The work departs from classical drawing and classical motives, but the multiple layers of superimposed images that it comprises, engenders an abstract and complex image of nature. The disconnected and repeated images create an unreal and illegible space resulting in a sense of vertigo confounding the viewer's perception. Bezelel approaches the process of drawing by translating intimate feelings into physical images while her chief concern with issues of space, fullness and emptiness becomes tangible. She manipulates the tension between the paper's white expanse and the delicate rendering of her characters, thus dramatising the fragile sense of self. Fragility and uncertainty are further manifested in Bezelel's manner of displaying her works, pinned simply to the wall or unravelled on the floor, whereas paper chains, stickers and silver touches seem to suggest connections between different worlds. In her work Bezelel challenges the traditional divisions between interior and exterior, before and after, strong and fragile, valuable and worthless.

Beyond biographical readings, Bezelel's work tackles the larger questions and notions of time, space, existence, art making, temporality and the philosophical categories of nature and culture. Her research covers political, religious and philosophical aspects.

Children's book had a great influence on the work of Bezelel. The artist remembers being fascinated as a child by stories where heroines died or fell into deep or magical sleep and after a lengthy period of time awoke or were resurrected. Alice in Wonderland particularly attracted Bezelel's attention and became a recurring theme that the artist has developed in a series of drawings since 2002, featuring reworkings of Tenniel's Alice, disconnected from the stories and placed in alternative landscapes. Her Interest in Alice is focused on the fall down the rabbit hole leading to a parallel world, a place of limbo where 'nothing' has an almost tangible form. Geographical maps, especially of unknown lands, also populate Bezelel's drawings.

"I have often asked myself what keeps attracting me to those places of death, limboes and 'other worlds' and my tentative answer would be that I grew up and still live in a place where death is always present" (Bezelel, 2011).

Another point of reference for the artist has been the philosophy of Jean Jaques Rousseau whose, *"meditations on nature and wandering have illuminated the path of my own quest and filled me with a sense of belonging"* (Y.Bezelel, 2010).

Motherless represents a seminal body of work in Bezelel's development. New subjects and media appear here for the first time, such as self portraits and oil paint on paper. Turned into a nonsensical flow, characters and objects are represented into spaces within spaces, echoing and re-echoing the serialization of the orphaned figures. The «mise en abîme» creates the illusion that the real space is on the verge of collapsing and characters struggle to come back to life through the power of repetition.

Motherless, in line with the most recent exhibitions of the artist, is another moment of deep inspiration, understanding and fusion with the world. The representation of moments of emptiness, between life and death, inhabited by an elusive feeling of existence, refers to moments of transition and hesitation of history, laden with promises or threats. Thus, the quest for Mother / Nature reflects the pursuit of a sense of belonging, identity and meaning and the urgency of finding a beacon in an era with looming threats underneath its apparent normality.

Yifat Bezelel was born in 1975 in Tel Aviv and studied at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem. She currently lives and works in Tel-Aviv.

Bezelel has extensively exhibited in Israel and, since 2011, in Europe. Recent exhibitions include *Alice in Wonderland* at the Tate Liverpool, travelling to the the MART Rovereto and the Kunsthalle Hamburg (group exhibition 2011-2012) ; VIDA Museum Borgholm, Sweden (solo, 2012); MACRO Museo di Arte Contemporanea di Roma, Rome (2013).

Upcoming group exhibitions include: *Personal Structures*, Palazzo Bembo, Biennale di Venezia, Venice (2013).

Yifat Bezelel is represented by Gowen Contemporary since 2010.

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