

## A World Which Lost Its Ability to Die\*

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Yonatan Ullman, 'Shalom' detail from 'Empire', Z I Z gallery, 2014. curator: Yaniv Yehuda Eiger. Photo: Tal Zanzury

Once, only select items were entitled to preserve for future generations. These items were filed in monastery basements, given as dowries, temples were built around them and a living was made from the visitors. These items didn't always stand the test of time. Jesus blackened, much to the astonishment of young children, as the wood rot. The paper, made of cow's skin, or cotton, or wood aspired to become dirty. War, looting, migrations, bombings, fires, storms were able to erase even the most insistent survivors. The game always resulted in the same definitive, annihilating manner - whatever was lost was gone forever. And now? Now it appears even eternity has become a perishable concept - like the letters which were written on living matter became brown and rot, the right to die has become something to fight for. Now everything is covered by sugar.

It happened ,of course, as all things do, out of good intentions. All of a sudden the hierarchy of who deserves eternity and who deserves to become extinct didn't seem all that fair. And things, that is, all things began to revolt. Their yelling was heard in every corner - it rattled from scaffolds, honked from vehicles, buzzed from appliances, cracked open from plants, with weeping that could not be reconciled. Nothing wanted to die anymore, and who could blame them?

Rather than explain that they had no choice, the sugar did something much more sinister - it made them believe. it coated them with sweetness. The liquid burst through their nostrils, wrapped around their hair, infiltrated their cells, silenced the cacophony as if it were wrapped in vacuum. It wasn't meant to be violent, however, it just so happened that it was.



**Yonatan Ullman, 'Matter of Time', detail from 'Empire', Z I Z gallery, 2014. curator: Yaniv Yehuda Eiger. Photo: Tal Zanzury**

Perhaps the sugar was slightly alarmed by its own dead. It only intended to answer life's demand - after all it was them who pleaded never to cease, never to change, never to become something else. It, that is the sugar, had no choice. And indeed the things and the world continued to demand the same thing, and the sugar continued to expand - documenting their every corner, curating them, showcasing them. It touched everything all at once, and it was a splendid feeling impossible to put in to words. Even if you could, there was no one around to hear it.

And, since all complaints were silenced, the sugar could continue to expand without disturbance, as if no voice in the world would ever ask about its doing. Sometimes it even felt lonely. As if it were the world's last viewer.



**Yonatan Ullman, 'Empire' (installation shot), Z I Z gallery, 2014. Curator: Yaniv Yehuda Eiger. Photo: Tal Zanzury**

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- **the title is inspired by a talk given by Oded Valkenstein in honor of Nir Baram's book 'World's Shadow', a book about the globalizations and hyper-capitalism of our era. This was the term used to describe the world Baram depicts in his book.**



