

תרבות וספרות

Closing One Eye

Eternal Rotting Beauty

Uzi Tzur, April 18th, 2014



Yonatan Ullman, 'Perfect Love', detail from 'Empire', Z I Z Gallery, 2014. curator: Yaniv Yehuda Eiger. photo: Tal Zanzury

When I first visited Yonatan Ullman's solo exhibition 'Empire' I was there alone.

I penetrated the space and wondered through its peculiar elements with the eerie feeling of being a burglar. Abandoned, this exhibition opened up to me as a foreign yet familiar anatomy - gorgeous, troubling and cryptic.

As if wondering into some low budget horror film, the floorboards creaked underneath my feet - this was the smashing sound of the sugar which Ullman coated the tiles with, and which piled up around the parameter of the room like poisonous palettes.

When I revisited the show a second time, parts of the floorboards had blackened, making apparent where people had paced and which areas of the show remained vacant.

From this partly blackened sugar coated floor columns in different height and width erect, some castrated leaving only the stem of their base. These create a three dimensional composition that leads and guides you between the different focuses of the exhibition - tombs, at once sealed and open caskets, containing fragments of reality, isolated and preserved, until they've become relics of pure imagination.

One column's base looks like rounded marble, atop that a translucent highly concentrated liquid sugary substance contain the core of a palm tree. It appears like an organism with thoughts, it projects its independants on its surroundings.

Next, a tall narrow column - its lower portion contain a neon-green liquid. Its top portion contain more of the highly condense liquid sugary substance. Like tree sap preserving memory from an ancient era, it preserves a hornet, stinging its own reflection in a shattered mirror, The light from the window brilliantly shines through all these liquids.

Then, a taller column - its' 'body' filled with condense powder sugar, its' 'head' contain a condense liquid sugary substance which preserves a watermelon pierced on a knife. Here, preserved and rotting, is the image and literal manifestation of the essence of Israeliness which conceals violence even in its most naive and nostalgic parts.

Just off from the center of the space, on top the stem of a column which rises from the sticky sugar coat, a bare thorny fleshy cactus lies. It appears like a castrated body part waiting to be cloned.

Across, A thick column - like a spinal cord, its 'body's' core contain bloody red juice concentrate. Its' 'head' contains liquid sugar substance which preserves a skinless beat, that appears like a rotting human brain.

Beneath it, another column stem - from its core a cut from a mellon's skin floats preserved inside sugary liquid substance - it calls to mind an alien's hand or ancient cave paintings of hand prints.

On the wall behind these columns hang a pair of identical analogue clocks. caramel and sap stopped their hand's motion and mummified them at different times of the day.

On the wall between the two windows a monitor projects a looped video. In the front of the frame two hornets dance a slow dance of death. Behind them, in the depth of the frame, a beautiful woman wearing a bikini lies on an inflatable mattress floating in the middle of shiny blue pool surrendering herself to an unseen sun. Something about the comparison between the dying wasps and woman is the key to the entire exhibition - intoxicating eternal rotting beauty



**Yonatan Ullman, 'Malevich's death bed', detail from 'Empire', Z I Z Gallery, 2014.
curator: Yaniv Yehuda Eiger. photo: Tal Zanzury**

