



## Curatorial Text by Arnon Ben-Dror

The decision to carry out this project, at this time, is not an easy one. In the end, it stems from a deep conviction in the significance of art – especially art that brings people together and fosters a dialogue between different voices – precisely in such a tragic and contentious moment as we now find ourselves. The practice of Ari Benjamin Meyers – born in 1972 in New York and based in Berlin – is ultimately based on two foundations: music and people. Meyers began his career as a composer and conductor, but quickly sought ways to circumvent the typical musical experience provided in traditional concert venues, where a clear separation is maintained between audience and performers and where music is consumed much like an object – that is, as a well-packaged product, mediated by professional musicians to a relatively passive crowd. Contemporary art spaces provided him with the freedom to break down familiar performative conventions, work with non-professionals, and explore what really fascinates him about music: the unique ways in which it weaves relationships between people.

This is also what lies at the heart of this current project, **The Name of This Band Is The Art (Tel Aviv-Yafo)**, where Meyers forms a temporary rock band made up of art school graduates, called “The Art,” and turns CCA Tel Aviv-Yafo’s Ground Floor Gallery into its rehearsal room for an entire month. Din Bar (guitar), Rachel Levian (vocals), Rony Shefer (drums) and Gaya Wajzman (bass), who joined the band via auditions held with the artist last summer in Tel Aviv, will be present in the exhibition space, in different constellations, throughout the Center’s opening hours. The exhibition will follow their working process on a set of ten songs – based on ten scores composed by Meyers and assembled in a songbook – leading up to the band’s one and only concert on the closing night of the exhibition, after which the band will break up. At the concert, a fanzine designed by Alexandre Cruz “Sesper” (who also designed the poster for the project), documenting the band’s process as well as the exhibition’s different collateral events, will also be presented.

Earlier versions of this work have been staged at RaebervonStenglin Gallery in Zurich (2016) and at the Biennale de Lyon (2017), but this new version is very different. Much has changed since October 7, and the project had to change as well. Certain conceptual themes previously explored more playfully – such as rock culture clichés and the mythos around “art school bands,” the tension between the real and the staged, or the power relations between artist and band members – became secondary and made room for a more direct engagement with the ability of music, and rock bands in particular, to bring people together and allow for self-expression, release, protest, action, and maybe even some healing. Meyers invited ten local artists, musicians and writers, both Jewish and Palestinian, to contribute texts contemplating this catastrophic moment and the place of music and art within it: Asaf Eden (Ryskinder), Wisam Gibran, Ido Gordon, Shai-Lee Horodi, Sharon Kantor, Maya Landsmann, Saher Miari, Zohar Shafir (Nico Teen), Nissan Shor, and Muhammad Toukhy. Their texts, appearing in the songbook, will serve as the basis for the songs’ lyrics to be written by the band members. Another addition to the project is an exhibition-within-the-exhibition, staged on CCA’s First Floor Gallery, which brings together artworks made by the band members in the last few months. Finally, a public program led by the project’s collaborators, featuring talks, workshops and other events, will accompany the exhibition. This iteration of the project is, indeed, a process, a work in progress, an ongoing rehearsal.

In the current context, turning the spotlight on the impermanent form of the rehearsal rather than a fully polished performance or a perfect recording (the project is not recorded) has particular pertinence. In a culture where music is perceived first and foremost in its configuration as a finished, carefully packaged product (an album, a concert, a song on Spotify), the rehearsal is still a potential, a promise, a site of contingency where the “being-in-common” is constantly being negotiated. In his influential book **Noise: The Political Economy of Music**, Jacques Attali argues that the inert social quality of music makes it a “prophetic” art form that can help us imagine “new social relations.” It is precisely in this sense that Meyers thinks of this project in terms of “rehearsing the future.” When our present is seemingly so bleak and hopeless, such rehearsals feel more necessary and urgent than ever.