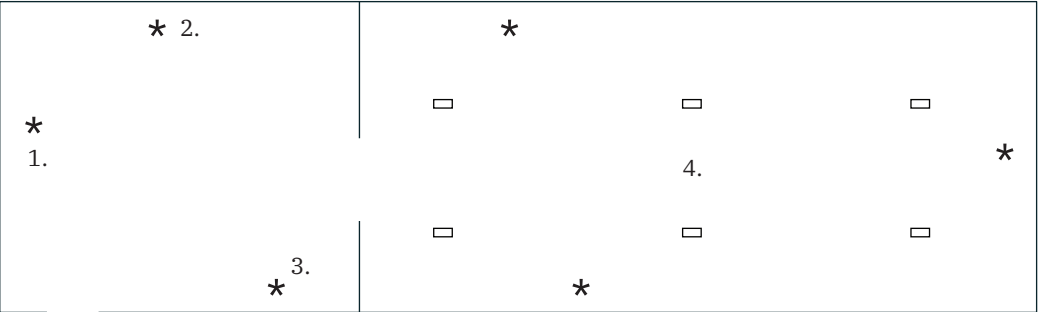


Nelly Agassi (b.1973, Israel) is a Chicago-based multi-disciplinary artist whose practice encompasses performance, installation, video, animation, textile, and works on paper. Her site-specific works explore the intersection of personal and architectural narratives, revealing fragments of spatial biography through the lens of her own lived experience. Working primarily with materials, body, and space, Agassi creates intimate dialogues between public spaces and their inherent histories. Agassi received her MFA from Chelsea College and BFA from Central St. Martins, London. Her work has been shown internationally at prestigious institutions including Tate Modern, The Israel Museum, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, La Triennale di Milano, and Zacheta Warsaw. In Chicago, her work has been exhibited at The Graham Foundation, Chicago Cultural Center, The Arts Club of Chicago, Hyde Park Art Center, and Poor Farm. Her work was recently acquired by The Art Institute of Chicago. Other notable presentations include the ORD T5 commission project at O’Hare International Terminal, WHOISPOLA Warsaw, Viennacontemporary art fair, and Fujiyoshida textile week (all in 2023). Agassi is currently an SAIC Residential Research Fellow at the Art Institute of Chicago Research Center. She is represented by Dvir Gallery and WHOISPOLA.

KIM?



- 1. *Leaning Board (Brocēni)*
2025
Glazed tiles, plywood
- 2. *Home Away From Home*
2025
(Craftswoman: Ginta Zīverte)
Flax
- 3. *Atmoda*
2025
Neon
- 4. *Under Construction*
2025
(Finger knitter: Krista Purpura)
Installation with sound, ventilation tube,
acrylic yarn, paper

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Sound Installation:
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NELLY AGASSI
AFTERMATH

5.4.–8.6.2025
KURATORE:
TĪNA PĒTERSONE

SUPPORTED BY:



KIM? CONTEMPORARY ART CENTRE
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NELLY AGASSI
AFTERMATH

“We live in a time when the past seems more unpredictable than the future,” wrote the British historian Eric Hobsbawm – a sentiment that feels ever more prescient as headlines offer reinterpretations of history with increasing frequency. History has never been a fixed entity –it has always been rewritten, reexamined and reinterpreted. Yet today, these processes have reached an unprecedented intensity: historical understanding is entangled in ideological battles, muddled by the oversaturation of digital media, and increasingly weaponised as a tool in political discourse. When narratives compete, overlap and shift in form, how can we orient ourselves among the versions of history they propose?

This exhibition unfolds in a time of deep instability – amid wars, shifts in power, and ideological rupture. Its central motif is rooted in the notion of “aftermath” as a layered, nonlinear and continuously evolving process. The word “aftermath” first appeared in 15th-century Middle English, when farmers used it to describe grass that regrew after mowing. Over time, it acquired a broader metaphorical meaning – referring to the consequences of an event, especially in the wake of disaster, war or major societal upheaval. Thus, the term encompasses both devastation and the potential for renewal – a cyclical process in which the past never truly disappears but transforms and returns in altered form. This notion of cyclical return forms the conceptual axis of Nelly Agassi’s first solo exhibition in the Baltic region.

At the heart of Agassi’s practice lies the idea of a “biography of site” – an approach that treats a site’s context as both a source of inquiry and a material in itself. During a week-long visit to Riga last November, Agassi visited local museums and wandered through the city, collecting visual impressions and engaging with traces of historical presence. These impressions reappear in her installations as fragments, gestures and materials imbued with symbolic charge. *Aftermath* becomes both a meditation on what has been and an inquiry into a future (or a history?) still taking shape – still possible.

Soviet art theorist Boris Groys wrote that art inevitably operates within structures of power, yet it also holds the capacity to expose and reconstruct those very mechanisms. It is precisely within this tension – between what is and what could be – that Agassi’s spatial commentaries emerge. Agassi’s practice acknowledges that what is absent is often more potent than what remains. The exhibition’s most visible motif – “safety orange” – evokes both something being fixed or failing. Orange ventilation pipes snake through the space like industrial veins, revealing the infrastructure that sustains it. Our bodies, too, are networks of living systems – lungs, blood vessels, intestines. But what happens when the systems we rely on – political, ecological, personal – begin to falter?

If infrastructure embodies power, then materials store memory. White 15x15 cm Soviet-era tiles, once ubiquitous in canteen kitchens and private bathrooms, still resurface in abandoned warehouses and untouched interiors

– including in fragments on the walls of Kim?. Yet in this exhibition, the tiles no longer cover surfaces – they merely lean against them, refusing permanence. Their placement recalls the “leaning boards” of Hollywood’s so-called Golden Age: platforms used by actors between takes to rest without damaging their costumes. This is neither action nor inertia – it is a posture of waiting, poised in a state of transition.

Throughout the exhibition, handmade objects stand in deliberate contrast to the aesthetics of industrial production. Neon yellow, the colour most visible to the human eye, appears in sculptural knitwork, drawing attention to a form of craft historically excluded from the canon of fine art. In this context, the exhibition echoes art critic Lucy Lippard’s idea of the “dema-terialisation of the art object” – here, textiles function as “anti-monuments”, resisting permanence and embracing what is fragile, intimate and born of touch.

Even the Namejs ring, traditionally a symbol of Latvian identity, takes on new materiality: the miniature silver braid is replaced by a monumental coil of linen thread, reimagining the emblem of diasporic belonging as a fluid, turbulence-exposed element.

French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs proposed that objects serve as mnemonic devices –vessels for collective memory. The exhibition’s interplay of infrastructure, textiles and political symbolism invites us to reconsider the remnants of material history – not as dusty relics, but as active forces shaping contemporary life. British philosopher Mark Fisher once wrote that “in conditions of digital memory, even the possibility of loss has itself been lost.” In a time when history is endlessly recalled, can we ever truly leave it behind?

Zygmunt Bauman, a Polish-born British sociologist, described our present condition as one of “liquid modernity” – a world where the solid structures of the past (nations, ideologies, identities) are slowly dissolving into a sea of uncertainty. Today, as global foundations tremble, the response to this instability is a rising yearning for clarity, boundaries and rigid frameworks. This longing manifests as a return to the “ordered past”: a resurgence of conservative rhetoric, ultra-nationalist revival, the appeal of authoritarian figures, and the vocal resurrection of “traditional values.” But these are not solutions – they are symptoms. Not firm ground on which to stand, but an attempt to halt what is already in motion. We do not live in a world that is becoming certain again – we live in a world where certainty is performed, often loudly, theatrically, and with authoritarian flair.

How, then, to understand a world still shifting before our eyes? Agassi does not seek to reconstruct what has been lost; she rejects nostalgia. Instead, the question she poses is clear: what follows destruction – restoration, reinvention or survival?

Curator: Tīna Pētersone