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Etti Abergel
de-decodage

Opening: 12.09.2019, 18-21h
Exhibition: 13.09.-17.11.2019

Galerie Mezzanin is delighted to announce the second solo exhibition of the Israeli artist Etti Abergel.

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“de-decodage” is a special chapter for me, joining the autobiographical chapters that I have been developing throughout my years of work. My oeuvre is a kind of diary, an unwritten book comprised of continuing installations, each in a new space of context and language. The current exhibition addresses a subjective narrative from a distance, in a process of artistic defamiliarization at a physical, geographic, and mental distance. The urge to decode acts as a vector motivating the weaving of the plot, exposing and unraveling conflict.

The exhibition is an expansion of the saga of my internal wanderings and borders of place, between belonging and foreignness, closeness and distance, emotional entanglement and neutrality, sculpture and folk crafts, text and drawing. Extremely personal narratives encounter global ones, meeting in an exhibition which creates an intermediate space, a crack between themes out of which a deeper layer bursts through to engage in issues of identity. This is a soul journey merging questions of immigration and adaptation, memory and fiction, body and history. The dimension of space constitutes the central axis in the placement of the installation.

Each chapter I construct refers to the specific space in which I implant the sensual space of the artwork. The tension between what arises from a different place, from the studio in Jerusalem to the gallery space in Geneva, creates strain: it is precisely this tension that embodies the possibility of deep exposure independent of any viewer or culture. It constitutes a personal art action vis à vis the collective global spirit of the art world.

The everyday objects selected during my wanderings through marketplaces in Jerusalem and in Geneva have been treated and are now revealed as archaeological relics of memory. They are decoded as memory leads, missing poetic elements often taken out of context, displaced and installed as signs in the space, as readymades, artifacts, sculptures, hybrid objects integrating strata of personal memory deciphered from the mass of material. The elements restructure the development of the installation in the space to make present a centralized, internal and subjective experience.

Twenty days of set-up became a feverish journey of connections between sections of meaning, fragments, and objects made in an unconscious stream in Israel and in Geneva. The impact of the observation of so many immigrants in the city filtered down to deep layers of memories from childhood and adolescence overshadowed by the experience of my family's immigration from Morocco to Israel in the 1950s. Listening to the mixture of languages in Geneva, observing the behaviors and the presence of locals and foreigners, my broken French mixed with English led my flow of associations through wild shifts between parody and elegy, between fragility to passionate creation. I engaged in an expedition to search for a language expressing the complexity of the narrative sections that have not been decoded and the creation of order and structure.

“de-decodage” semantically captures the paradoxical essence of the exhibition. It exposes tensions between deconstruction and construction, dismantling and binding together, emotional expression and the consciousness of a nihilist. From among the layers, an allegorical, “low” presence peeks through. Its name is derived from the mélange of languages and cultural influences to which I was exposed: Israeli, Jewish, Moroccan, Spanish, and French. My statement of “de-de” -- like “Dada” -- expresses my subversive stance between East and West, straddling art and life.

Etti Abergel

Etti Abergel (born 1960, Israel), lives and works in Jerusalem. She teaches at the Shenkar College of Engineering and Design and at the Kerem Institute. Abergel has exhibited at numerous solo and group exhibitions in Israel (Negev Museum, Beer Sheva Museum of Art, Tel Aviv Museum of Art), New York and at Galerie Mezzanin in Vienna (Stay Inside 2013, Animism 2014), as well as creating on-site installations at the Venice Biennale; the Biennale at l'Aquila, Italy; and Contemporanea Trieste. Among her awards are the Mendel and Eva Pundik Foundation Prize for an Israeli Artist for 2018, Bezalel Fine Arts Department Excellence Award; the Isracard Prize from the Tel Aviv Museum of Art; the Israel Minister of Education and Culture Prize for 2006; and the Janet and George Jaffin Award for Excellence in the Visual Arts from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation.