



Department of Literature, Language and the Arts

Participating artists:

**Nir Adoni**, born in Rishon-Letsion, 1980, lives and works in Tel Aviv.

**Keren Anavy**, born in Givataim, 1974, lives in Kfar Daniel, Works in Tel Aviv.

**Durar Bacri**, Born in Acre, 1982, lives and works in Tel Aviv.

**Tal Ben Bassat**, born in Rishon-Letsion, 1959, lives and works in Tel Aviv.

**Eitan Buganim**, born in Dimona, 1974, lives and works in Tel Aviv.

**Yosef Joseph Dadoune**, born in Nice, France, 1976, lives and works in Ofakim.

**Peleg Dishon**, born in Shluhot, 1979, lives and works in Tel Aviv.

**Liat Livni**, born in Ramat Gan, 1979, lives and works in Tel Aviv.

**Eyal Sasson**, born in Tel Aviv, 1968, lives and works in Modi'in.

**Tamir Sher**, born in kfar Masarik, 1966, lives and works in Tel Aviv.

## Site Specific

Carmit Blumensohn

The first version of the exhibition, *Site Specific*, was shown at "Gallery 10" at Bet Michal, Rehovot, in February 2011. The exhibition currently being shown at the Open University is the product of a deepening and broadening of the original exhibition.

"...globalism and place are intertwined in a symbiosis of contradictions. Each is born from the other and gives birth to the other".<sup>1</sup>

It would seem that there is nothing more complex than that entity which, at first glance, appears simple, almost taken for granted – place. The exhibition presents a series of signifiers, geographically identifiable places superimposed on an unfamiliar or even enigmatic landscape, but which shows some affinity with local scenery. This raises questions to do with belonging and detachment, identification and denial, approaching and moving away, the global and the local.

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1 Gideon Ofrat, catalogue, *omanutisrael.com: Globalism and the question of Israeli art* (Tel Aviv, Zman Le'Omanut, 2003).

By definition, the local is restricted and limited. The global refers to the general, to the comprehensive and all-encompassing. The art displayed in the exhibition is spread along the axis that connects these extremes. It incorporates other dimensions encrypted within it and that instill it with meanings that go beyond our initial sensory experience. Even those works that are the most distant from an existence that is identifiably and specifically Israeli are nonetheless anchored in the local. Because we are made from the materials of everyday Israeli reality, our experiences are saturated in it, and it seeps into the works of art displayed here.

In his book *On Israeli and Jewish Place*, Zali Gurevitch describes the concept of "place" as charged and caught in perpetual dilemmas: "Place is never neutral, it is saturated and loaded with history and politics, with life stories: how much more so the Israeli place... The place in which we live is an existent fact, a living world, and yet it is irredeemably unfathomable...".<sup>2</sup>

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2 Zali Gurevitch, *On Israeli and Jewish Place*. Am Oved, Tel Aviv, 2007.

Concern with space and the landscape is multi-faceted: real and imagined, local and distant, critical and yet imbued with yearning. The different elements of the landscape are a charged emotional sphere that lays out a range of opportunities. It is as if the works in this exhibition are aware of the constant struggles between the visible and the concealed; between connection, belonging and identifying with the place alongside a remoteness, a lack of connection and identification, and a detachment from everything that signified by familiar and well-known boundaries.

Some of the artists deal with place with a wistful and yearning gaze, a gaze that repeatedly seeks out something that does not exist, something incomprehensible; the provinces of fantasy and dreams that lead the gaze far beyond that which the eye can see, the familiar, the identifiable and the signified. The certainty latent in the sense of belonging to a particular place is the opposite of the feeling of detachment, though each concept constructs the other.

The works in the exhibition demonstrate a twofold attitude toward space. From close up, the recognizable places trick our memory and its reliability. They are located on the axis between strangeness and identification, between remoteness and proximity, between belonging and distance. This variety of perspectives produces a curiosity regarding the past and the present, the existent and the non-existent, the present and the absent, the concrete and the fantastical, the compacted and the unraveled.

Few of the works portray human figures, but the presence of man is felt through the signs of human culture that chart the place, such as fences, buildings, pylons and electricity wires. These signs are planted in the landscape in such a way that emphasizes their strangeness, that testifies to human intervention and man-made disruption. The exhibition diverts the viewer's gaze from familiar images and symbols to non-concreteslices of reality in Israeli locality. It exposes a fresh gaze, from different perspectives, on Israeli locality, a gaze that offers a broad, global, non-focused and open outlook.