

Liebe Vereinsmitglieder, verehrte Kunstliebhaber und Israelinteressierte,

wir starten mit unserem neuen Format "**YOUNG ARTISTS IN ISRAEL: Looking through the Social Prism**" und stellen Ihnen, in unregelmäßigen Abständen, junge israelische Künstler vor, die aktuell "en vogue" sind.

Wir freuen uns sehr, dass wir dafür die israelische Kunstszenekennerin Noa Milikowsky-Marienberg gewinnen konnten. Sie recherchiert und schreibt für uns die Künstlerkapitel. Haben Sie viel Spaß beim Lesen:

In the last three decades, Israeli artists and the art they make, are well integrated into the international sphere of art, as many artists exhibit in museums and galleries worldwide. This was not the case in the first decades of Israel's existence, when much of the art created, was seen, understood - and debated - within Israeli society. However, although Israeli art is part of the international art scene, a crucial part of it could be better understood within the context of Israeli society. The aim of this piece is to present four young contemporary Israeli artists by looking at examples of their work and pointing out particular meanings, which are interwoven into the Israeli tissue of life.

NEVET YITZHAK (b. 1971) places the Arab culture within the Jewish culture, and points to oriental aesthetic and its meanings in many works, such as in *Great Joy Tonight* a tribute to the orchestra of the Israeli Radio Broadcasting Service in Arabic (*Kol Yisrael b'aravit*) that was active in the years 1948-1993. In the work, Yitzhak manipulates a televised concert, by slowing the sounds and gestures, and as a result we become more aware of what we hear and see.

Another work, in the Israel's Museum collection (<http://www.imj.org.il/en>), is dedicated to the most famous singer of the Arab world, Um Kulthum. In a prominent video of the work, *Star Quality*, the diva hides her face in a long handkerchief. She is shown, but hidden, festive – but as if crying or mourning. The long handkerchief was Um Kulthum's attribute, and a handkerchief is also the attribute of St. Veronica, who used it to wipe the face of Christ. Thus, there is more than a hint of agony in the work. The video is only 14 seconds long and runs in a loop, and therefore we can never see the singer's face.

The cultural importance of the phenomena Yitzhak deals with is the absence of a clear line between Arab and Jewish cultures, even in times of war between Israel and its neighboring countries. The Israeli radio broadcasting orchestra in Arabic was popular in those countries at those years, while many Israelis listened to Um Kulthum, and watched Egyptian films, even before there was a peace settlement between Egypt and Israel. A big part of the Israeli society originated in the Arab countries, from which they emigrated in 1950's and 1960's. Therefore, they felt a cultural affinity with the Arab world.

However, within Israeli society, the oriental culture was deemed inferior to the European culture, made dominant by the Jews of European origin (Ashkenazim) who controlled and influenced the public cultural sphere. Yitzhak invokes not only the soothing feel of familiarity, but also suggests to the spectators that they are watching a part of themselves, which they had forgotten about, or even disregarded.