

Toward a Brief Manifesto on Photography

In order to formulate a binding stand with regard to the photographs in the exhibition, one must first acknowledge that the word "photography" today refers to a very broad spectrum of rather loosely connected practices. Any attempt to define photography as a differentiated, independent ontological category can no longer rely on the Barthean scheme of "that-has-been" or "that-has-been-there" with regard to the photograph; it must refer to photography itself as a "has-been-there" and also, perhaps, as "has-been." Hence, all the works in the exhibition—as reflexive, dynamic, and universal as they may be—outline not only feasibility, a state of mind, or a cross section, but mainly the possibility of Israeli photography in relation to adjacent disciplines and in relation to itself.

And if it "has-been" at all, then in most cases what has been here is not an act of photography or an instance of being photographed (these are all restricted to an anecdote and are bound to the here-and-now, to the there-and-then). The sole event that has been and may be again in the future, is the emergence of a photograph (sometimes as a tableau), and the way in which this event and the circumstances that preceded it were registered in matter; for when we dub the photograph a mere image, we are confusing one real world with another, one concrete universe with another. Ultimately, every photograph transpires in a three-dimensional world (or four-dimensional, if we consider the temporal dimension as substance), and is

made of real materials. It cannot be reduced to a state of semblance only. As a mere image, every photograph strives to lure the viewer into a rectangle, a frame, as an extra-spatial, extra-temporal pillory, as an experience whose apathy captures every viewer in the limbo of a vectorial world.

The most important question that ought to be asked about photography is not a question of inherence (What is the meaning? An infinite presence, according to aesthetic formalism, or an ideology-driven, use-dependent mobile state), but rather a question of specificity: What kind of physical space and what kind of social space do different photographs generate and sustain around themselves? An image space? A material space? Or a space of diffusion where these work together like two lobes of a single brain? Oscillating like a pendulum between appearance and disappearance, as concurrent presence within and without a picture, as both the part and its maker—the exhibition, through the works it brings together, strives to lay the groundwork for reading the use of abstraction tools in photography not necessarily as a reference to the real world, but mainly as concretizations of the pictorial possibilities contained within photography. Every image needs a real existence, and a real world cannot be transformed into a world of images only. It is here that the true significance of these photographs lies, for they embody the understanding that every image always and necessarily relies on its constituent materials.



מרכז אמנות עכשווית
The Center for Contemporary Art

The Light Show

Israeli Photography on Photography

September – November 2009

The Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv

The Rachel & Israel Pollak Gallery, the Arts & Technology School, Seminar Hakibbutzim College

Director: Sergio Edelsztein

Production: Diana Shoef

Production assistants: Efrat Kedem, Shai Yehezkeili

Archive manager: Rut Sela

Public relations: Maayan Amir

Technical assistant: Yariv Nulman

Graphic editing & design: Koby Barchad | Noa Shwartz

Editing & translation: Daria Kassovsky

Pre-press & printing: A.R. Ltd., Tel Aviv



The catalogue was made possible through the assistance of the Rabinovich Foundation for the Arts, Tel Aviv

The Center for Contemporary Art is supported by:

Tel Aviv Municipality – Culture and Arts Division

The Ministry of Culture and Sport – Visual Arts

Administration

The Evelyn Toll Family Foundation, USA

Ellen Flamm, USA

The William & Jane Schloss Family Foundation, USA

Uzi Zucker and Rivka Saker

The Light Show

Israeli Photography on Photography

Curator:

Yanai Toister

Deganit Berest

Roi Kuper

Aim Deüelle Lüski

Ruti Nemet

Moshe Ninio

Gilad Ophir

Efrat Shalem

Igaël Shemtov

ISBN 978-965-7463-06-2