

Uri Tzaig: Homeless
MATRIX/BERKELEY 168 169

University Art Museum/
Pacific Film Archive
mid April - late June 1996

Untitled, 1996



Uri Tzaig is one of a group of young Israeli artists who work in a variety of media, and whose work touches on contemporary, social, and political issues. His recent art and writing have been based on traveling, as he creates site-specific works that respond empathetically to a particular place. Some works have explored the possibility for personal rapport between Israelis and Palestinians; another piece, made in Berlin, considered the contemporary relationship between Germans and Jews. More important than his concern for socio-political dynamics, however, is Tzaig's sensitivity to poetic nuances of cultural difference. Through his travels Tzaig has acquired a personal archive of sights, sounds, and aromas that create an ever shifting palimpsest of experience.

In his evocative short story, "We're Gonna Fold Your Face," written to accompany this exhibition, Tzaig writes:

One summery afternoon, having roamed for a long while on the lawns of the Berkeley campus, I was walking calmly home. My thoughts were drifting from one end of the world to the other, as though the streets somehow contained all the places in the world where I'd ever walked, as well as those where I hadn't. The smells of the neighbors' cooking, which had served me more than once as a kind of landmark along my excursions, measured my proximity to the house, as though encouraging my mind in its wandering through the sights of my childhood in Israel, or later in the streets of Berlin, or Amsterdam, or Paris.

Tzaig began work on his current MATRIX installation by spending three months during the summer of 1995 living in Berkeley and collecting information, materials, and observations.

"While I was staying in Berkeley in the summer of 1995," Tzaig writes, "I found that 'the homeless' is the basic motive through which I read the city and map it. More precisely, I found that 'the homeless' is the basic unit (architecturally speaking) that builds the city: 'the homeless' as a site that changes its place continually. It is not a social nor an anthropological view. It is a view that searches for a new structure which reflects our movement within the city. Movement that turns to all directions. Randomness, lack of a sense of direction, the possibility of endless movement, not being able to identify the history of things but realizing only the real sense of the present, those are the motives that I'm translating into materials and forms in my exhibition."

Tzaig's MATRIX exhibition incorporates a beguiling array of disparate objects and images: a grainy black and white photograph of a forest floor, a calendar with Chinese characters in place of the days of the week, karate mats, a carpet of solar reflectors, a public telephone, orthopedic balls, a huge pillow, and a newspaper recounting a circular tale of violence, yearning and rapport. Informally placed throughout the gallery, these allusive images and objects create an environment that simultaneously inspires inward reflection while offering real connections to the world outside the museum.

Also, in conjunction with the exhibition is a series of dance "observatories" by Lisa Nelson with Ray Chung, Judith Katz, and Scott Smith in which the performers interact with the works in the gallery space. The fluid, inter-active nature of these performances echoes Tzaig's open-ended approach; in his work, Tzaig does not attempt to create individual masterpieces but rather to use a variety of means—juxtaposing objects and images, writing texts, and even incorporating the works of other artists—to evoke sensations that are as nebulous yet inter-connected as those of our daily lives.

Uri Tzaig was born in Kiryat Gat, Israel, in 1965. He graduated from the School of Visual Theater in Jerusalem, where he majored in theater direction, theater design, and playwriting. Tzaig currently lives and works in Israel.

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Checklist for the exhibition:
Homeless
1996
mixed media installation
Lent by the artist

Selected group exhibitions:

Judah Magnes Museum, "Shelters," Berkeley, CA '91; Sarah Conforti Gallery, Jaffe, Israel '92; Tel Aviv Museum of Art, "Sculptures from the Museum's Collection," Tel Aviv, Israel '92; Israel Museum, "Those at Home, Those in the Yard," Jerusalem, 1993; Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Gent, "This is the show and the show is many things/Extra Muros," Gent, Belgium '94; David McClain Gallery, Houston '94; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, "Migrateura," Paris '94; Richard Foncke Gallery, "Accrochage," Gent '95; Israeli Pavilion, Venice Biennale '95.

Selected solo exhibitions:

Artists' House Gallery, "Monologue," Jerusalem '90; Bugrashov Gallery, "Tel Aviv, Summer 1992," Tel Aviv '93; Kunsterhaus Bethanien, "The Earrings of Eva Braun," Berlin '94; Refusalon, San Francisco '96.

Selected publications:

"Kiryat Gat, Summer 1992," in Studio '92; "Village. 7 Objects," in Theory and Criticism '93; *The Story Teller* published by Kunsterhuas Bethanien, Berlin, '94; *The Universal Square* published in conjunction with the Venice Biennale '95; *Back Yard*, Am Oved Publishing House '95.

Artist's gallery talk

Wednesday, April 10, 1996

noon

Gallery 3

Dance performances

Lisa Nelson with Ray Chung,

Judith Katz, and Scott Smith

"Enter Anywhere"

a dance observatory

Wednesday - Sunday, May 15-19,

1996

2:00 pm- 5:00 pm

Gallery 3

"Enter 7:30 pm"

Thursday, May 16

7:30 pm

Gallery 3