

גבעון גלריה לאמנות
Givon Art Gallery

Nurit David
28.6-10.8.19

'The Figurative Ones' Summer 2019

In a semblance of free gliding between styles, U-turns, cutting of connections, turning her back, betrayal, Nurit David's path, as can be witnessed in her works, is bound in a tangle of endless debt, obligation and obeisance of head and body – to real and imagined parents, to families remembered and painted, to teachers she had and to those she adopted, to various structures of language, syntax and grammar, to landscape and architectural vistas that stuck in her mind, to local and foreign gods.

In all this modesty there is no lack of envy, covetousness and bulimic appetite to swallow-up entire cultures and world-views without neglecting the minutest details. As early as her first series 'The Chinese Works' (not in the exhibition) she saw herself as the axis of a system of expanding fields, turning like a roundabout:

...But I'm the only one to own the word 'Weather',
How can we say fields in a grand manner
I mean, even grander than the word 'Industry' when compared to 'Handiwork'
I want to express myself in these words, these vast surfaces
You know, in my body there is space enough for all this abstraction
Arranged in large cultivated squares that turn
To a gesture of my hand
This side elevated, the other tilted, I supervise the wheat crops...
(1980)

In this exhibition, in which the first ten years and the last seven years are missing, you can see her zigzagging between west and east: in a moment she is crucified with Christ in the mountains of Jerusalem, yet in another, she arrives at enlightenment, frolicking with Zen monks, in a painting in which a monk in the guise of Moshe Gershuni is knitting a scarf with the caption "Who died? Stand-up!" Christ heard and did arise. As for Moshe Gershuni, we are still waiting...

In this exhibition David also marries twice: Once, as a Bunraku theatre puppet, in a wedding dress made of the Bauhaus buildings of Dizengoff square, carried towards her bridegroom by three puppeteers. And then in the image of the painter, as a shy, somewhat bent, little girl, in a shabby outfit, marrying Antoine Watteau's Gilles, who is

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luxuriously attired in white satin, which eventually makes the girl the bridegroom. The Pierrot is later transformed into the grown-up figure of the painter, falling diagonally along a stairwell, her legs bound in a bouquet of orchids, in a painting titled "O Rose Thou Art Sick" after William Blake's poem. Whereas the shy, bent little girl, who, as it turns out, does have pretensions, sets out to rule the ocean and its creatures with a simple wooden ruler in the painting 'The Little Shepherdess'.

The earliest work in the exhibition 'The Photograph I', shows the image of footprints that was central in the series 'ABA' (1984-1989) and here reappears in a different form in two paintings entitled "Invisible". The size of the footprints is fixed, while the landscape underneath, in which they are walking, climbing down the mountains, is expanding and contracting, inspired by the first lines of Georg Büchner's "Lenz": "The 20th, Lenz walked through the mountains...Everything seemed so small, so near, so wet, he would have liked to set the earth to dry on the oven, he could not grasp why it took so much time to clamber down a slope to reach a distant point..."

The wanderer in Izumi Kyōka's "One Day in Spring" that was the inspiration for the painting 'Building a Summer House II', also experiences the landscape in dynamic, changing terms: "...but the mountains were the same as before – pure black, like the wings of huge hawks piled on top of each other, the foothills stretching down from the peaks, one here and another there, encroaching on the fields of rice seedlings, squeezing the narrow valleys between them. Far up one of these valleys, where it dead-ended in darkness, he saw a simple thatched roof and a window that looked like a mountain's open eye..."

In the painting, as in the story, two weavers are part of the spreading landscape. The sound of their shuttles accompanies the wanderer while walking in the yellow rapeseed fields and thus, the landscape, woven afresh in the looms, is created again in his consciousness: "To his dazzled eyes, it was as if the two weavers at their looms had been vaguely copied onto a piece of white paper, and that the remaining space around them had been painted yellow..."

Truly, only Art is capable of taking you to a far-away place, while you remain planted in your spot. It fits like a glove the wretched and megalomaniac soul, inflated then emptied again.

English translation editor: Jenifer Bar Lev