

Celebrating Israel's 70th Anniversary:

Michal ROVNER

and

Tal SHOCHAT

Since the blossoming of Israeli art over one-hundred years ago, creativity has remained a central cultural focus and has helped to shape Israeli national identity. In 2018, the State of Israel celebrates seventy years since its founding as a homeland for the Jewish people, by the United Nations following World War II. To mark this momentous occasion, the Nevada Museum of Art presents work by two female Israeli artists—Michal Rovner and Tal Shochat—who create work that is simultaneously grounded in the history of photography, while delivering a fresh and independent viewpoint on the intersection of art and environment.

In spring 2015, the Nevada Museum of Art organized a trip to Israel. Thirty travelers joined together with curators and community leaders to visit historical and cultural sites, taking part in architectural tours, museum visits, and stops at artists' studios. Two of the contemporary artists encountered—established sculptor and video artist Rovner, and mid-career photographer and video artist Shochat—resonated with travelers in the group. Both women represent the Nevada Museum of Art's focus on artists and their creative interactions with natural, built, and virtual environments, and were invited to exhibit their work at the Museum.

TAL SHOCHAT

Gardens and trees are a recurring theme in Israeli artist Tal Shochat's work. They allude to the Garden of Eden, as well as to Tu BiShvat or "New Year of the Trees"—a holiday on the Jewish calendar which is celebrated among secular Israelis as a day of ecological awareness. Shochat's work is connected to a specific place: the Golan Heights in Israel, near the border with Lebanon and Syria.

In a country perhaps best known for its contested history, Shochat turned her focus toward the remarkably resilient fruit trees that grow on this land. Farmers have cultivated these trees in roughly the same manner for the past 400 years. Shochat selected trees whose appearances change throughout the growing season—cherry, plum, and apple. She created triptychs recording each tree in a different stage of the seasonal cycle: the fruit set stage, the exfoliation stage, and the bloom stage. Regarding the location of these trees in the Golan Heights, the artist observed, "The war in Syria and its consequent movement of refugees close to the border colored my searches throughout this beautiful but dangerous rural environment, with an apocalyptic feeling."

MICHAL ROVNER

Untitled 7 (Panorama)

2015

LCD screen, paper and video

Courtesy of the artist and Pace Gallery

Michal Rovner creates evocative works touching on timeless themes of humanity and the human figure in the landscape. With *Untitled 7 (Panorama)*, Rovner evokes topics of human interaction, dislocation and the persistence of memory, while creating a new level of immediacy by further removing the narrative to its barest and most urgent elements. Rovner creates her videos by filming actors who enact sequenced movements. Little by little through the video editing process, she removes all traces of their individual identity so that all that remains is a broad focus on humanity in its entirety.

Rovner, whose artworks range from video to sculpture and installation, is an established artist whose work has been shown at institutions including Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum, Jerusalem; the Louvre Museum, Paris; the Tate, London; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.