

## Contemporary Israeli Photography

**Podbielski Contemporary's** and **Ncontemporary's** project aims at presenting to the public of Photo London 2018 a selection of works from four most interesting Israeli photographers. During the last years Israeli photography has attracted the attention of the art world, both for its formal and political research. The Israel Museum of Jerusalem is actively expanding its collection of Israeli Photography and in recent years a number of institutions across the world have acquired significant works.

**Naomi Leshem** (b. Israel 1963) is one of the most renowned female photographers of her generation. Having spent part of her life in Switzerland, her photographic technique is strongly influenced by the geometrical structure used in the Swiss academies. Her works deal with the idea of time, by focusing on specific moments of her subjects' lives that can be considered of passage, from the freedom of the youth, to the strict rules of the army; from the unconsciousness, to the awoken status.

In Naomi Leshem's photographic process, the camera serves as a tool for recounting stories, which are the offspring of her thoughts, recollections, or research. Leshem's interest lies in areas of life and being that may be defined as "in between". This is an aspect that feels familiar, giving her the freedom to shift between worlds - conscious and unaware ("Sleepers", 2006-2010) and directed and accidental ("Runways", 2007).

**Matan Ashkenazi** (b. Israel 1986) is a recent graduate of the Royal College of Art. In his works the spectator can see different realities, coexisting in one single place. His practice deals with the production of photographic images and photographic installations. His work research the political use of landscapes and the controlling of space and architecture.

In his series "Stratum" he has photographed the facades of the Bank of England as it was being cleaned. The act of cleaning is defined as an historical event and as an ambiguous metaphor for erasing the past. Within the series (composed of 26 subjects), the appearance of multiple versions of images of the façades, both before, during and after cleaning, captures the apparent reality of the logic of photography whilst simultaneously playing with indexicality.

**Yuval Yairi** (b. Israel 1961) is a Jerusalem-based contemporary artist working in the media of photography and video. Yairi studied visual arts at the WIZO College Haifa (1984-1988). He has been an art director and graphic designer and works in documentary and corporate film production.

In his current project “Surveyor”, Yuval Yairi adopts the figure of the surveyor as an alter-ego, which allows for introspection and personal soul searching. The surveyor’s role, which Yairi has performed for years as an aerial scout in the army, has left a deep and traumatic imprint on him. His photographic technique is a meticulous process of capturing environments. His works resemble photographic mosaics and are created by a process of frame-by-frame shooting and then combining and revising the photographs. Podbielski Contemporary successfully featured his project the “Surveyor” at Photo Basel and at Artissima in Turin.

**Ohad Matalon** (b. Israel 1972) is an artist based in Tel Aviv who works primarily in photography. He received his MFA at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in 2007 and teaches at Bezalel Academy in Jerusalem. In his works Matalon investigates the changing role of the photography in culture and its influence on our perception of reality. He combines photography with other mediums using digital techniques to create nuanced, layered and highly thought provoking images, poised between photography and film, between reality and the sublime. In his project “The Zone” he reflects upon the way Israel is perceived in the West. He uses stereotypes, and exaggeration to expose the manipulating ploys of the media.

In his “Across a dark Land”, he captures ruinous structures. His buildings are eerily bare, stripped of both their original inhabitants and function. He shoots them mainly at night as darkness in his works comes to represent perdition, transgression and irrationality.

In 2014 he had a solo exhibition, “Photo Op”, at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art and has won the BNL BNP PARIBAS GROUP AWARD 2012.

Both **Naomi Leshem** and **Ohad Matalon** are featured in the newly published *Il vento e il melograno – Contemporary Photography in Israel* by De Bonis and Youdovich, soon to be translated in English.