



**FOR
IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

**YEHUDIT SASPORTAS
*THE CARPENTER & THE
SEAMSTRESS***

JANUARY 10 - FEBRUARY 10, 2001

The Carpenter and the Seamstress is a fusion of drawing, painting, sculpture and architecture. It is also a fusion between the emotional and intuitive side of the artist's mind with her rational and analytic approach. She has created a room-sized installation in which an abstracted portrait of her cultural and personal history intersects with the structures of modernism.

Yehudit Sasportas is of Moroccan-Jewish origin. Her family emigrated to Israel and lived in austere modern-style public housing. The work is drawn from her experience as the daughter of a carpenter and a seamstress, adapting the culture and the visual sensibility of North Africa into the utopian modern vision of Israel. The form of the work is based on the floor plan of her family's public housing apartment and on her memories of what she saw when she looked out of its windows.

The artist has written a concise statement which describes her approach to the work:

The installation consists of two major parts: floor and walls; an impossible combination, as it were, between an act of flattening a three-dimensional sculpture and adding an extra dimension to a two-dimensional painting.

A key concept pertaining to the work is the notion of synthetic authenticity. These are visual codes of an Oriental culture (mainly on the level of form and color), that were emptied of their content, and have remained on a two-dimensional level of a shell or a skin.

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The shell itself (like the walls in the work) does not function as a substitute, but rather as a new, complete and independent site. The walls are constructed with numerous boards of variously sized drawings. Drawings hanging close together, so as to cover all three walls.

The hanging mode is reminiscent of colorful wallpaper, possibly bearing alternating images of landscapes, forests by night, artificial vegetation, gardens and flower pots. These are juxtaposed by diagrams and graphs relating to processes of organizing, surveying and probing varying conditions.

The walls explore an illusory, symbolic nature vis a vis the floor piece which will revolve around two-dimensional architecture; like an overview on a modernist unit (or units) of habitation within a city. A part of the floor structure alludes to an apartment designed according to very specific cultural codes. All the objects in the apartment are two-dimensional, referring to an intense environment, Oriental in nature. Another part of the floor work reveals parts of the city surrounding the apartment, featuring intricate interrelations between the urban exteriors and the habitation unit/s interiors.

Part of the floor piece features towering structures, bearing various drawings. The work deals with transformed authenticity, authenticity that has remained in its shell, yet has created a distant, different new place. Syntheticality in the whole positive sense of the word, rather than as a site of low imitation of an original. Synthetic authenticity as a new third space.

The work derives from an interest in Israeli culture that has always been non-homogenous, containing diverse identity fragments. Out of this reality, an interest emerges in a new situation where the different parts of culture lose their ascription to an authentic source, while attempting to preserve it through visual means that were flattened, emptied, recycled, and imitated. It is a new third condition, two-dimensional, perhaps even graphic in nature.

The installation has a focal point concealed in the floor, like a nucleus from which the story or the event originates. The installation, structured as a fairy-tale, confronts various sets of opposites in the same work space:

A "natural" subject versus an "artificial" subject; an organic condition versus a synthetic situation; a lost real nature versus a potential, "eternal", artificial nature. Processes of measuring, organizing, surveying, and collecting "dry" facts versus the realm of emotional expression. A critique of culture and language values while employing the very same values comprising language. Being inside and outside at the same time. Expanses of an illusory, imaginary space versus a concrete reality.

This space of opposites is actualizing in the encounter between a three-dimensional floor work and a two-dimensional wall piece. It is a situation where the floor neutralizes the wall, and vice-versa. It is difficult to simultaneously grasp both conditions: two-dimensionality and three-dimensionality in the same format, equally rational and emotional, organic and mechanical in one and the same drawing. Similar relationship between different elements through a shell-like cover of drawing or painting, functioning as non-adhesive glue, albeit one that

allows restlessness; a concurrent visual and energetic flickering of both content and form. The result is an emotional as well as formal hyper-reality; possibly an imaginary depth, possibly a real depth, in an ostensibly two-dimensional situation.

An important aspect of the work is the manual labor. The drawings are executed manually with rulers and felt-tip pens. The aspect of manual work is essential to the piece. It is an attempt to convey a current *zeitgeist* where the interrelations between image and reality, signifier and meaning, or signifier and signified, have been disrupted. An attempt to convey the disruption or the virus that has infiltrated and created a new, irreversible situation through a total installation. An attempt to delineate a cultural and emotional situation through a manual and human, rather than a technological, position.

The ostensibly primitive position of the work is fundamental.

It is a visual proposal for a world imbued with internal contradictions, floating fragments, a lack of a true capacity to form a narrative, and at the same time, a proposal to observe this system of ruptures from a live, comprehensive position.

Yehudit Sasportas was born in Israel in 1969. She graduated from Bezalel Academy of Art and Design and spent a year studying at Cooper Union. She is on the faculty at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem. Last year she received the Gottesdiener Prize awarded annually to the most accomplished young artist in Israel. A smaller version of *The Carpenter and the Seamstress* was exhibited last year at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

This exhibition has been supported, in part, by the Office of Cultural Affairs in the U.S.A. Consulate General of Israel in N.Y.

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