

Picket Lines

A group show

Carolina Lehan, David Duvshani, Hadeel Abu Johar, Liran Shapiro

Curator: Hagai Ulrich

July 22, 2021 - September 23, 2021

Opening: July 22, 2021, at 20:00

The second show at Bread and Roses Gallery | 45 Ha'aliya Street, Tel Aviv (at the offices of the MAAN Workers Association R.A.)

Opening hours: Tuesday 16:00-20:00, Friday and Saturday 11:00-15:00

Picketing is a form of protest held outdoors, usually in front of an entry to a specific building, to draw attention to a social or political cause. Throughout the 20th century, many of these protests have become identified with the need to improve employment conditions and workers' quality of life. They became, alongside strikes, a common tactic by workers' associations. In a picketing event, the demonstrators usually set up Picket Lines: boundaries that separate between the goals of the demonstration, as well as its declared ideals, and the material reality on the ground. Whoever "crosses the picket line" is in effect defined as violating the demonstration goals.

One of the demonstrations most identified with picketing tactics took place in front of the Lawrence textile factory in Massachusetts in 1912 and is known as *The Bread and Roses Strike*. Following a state regulation, the local Everett Mill, cut off working hours of workers. For that reason, the workers embarked on a series of demonstrations and strikes - a course of action that gained success and was repeated across the United States. The term "bread and roses", coined by women's rights activist Helen Todd in 1910, became identified with women's rights and improving employment conditions. The term indicates that workers need not only a source of livelihood (the bread), but also fair conditions, quality of life, spirit, love, as well as the arts (the roses). For 15 years, these values have accompanied the Bread and Roses exhibition - the annual fundraising exhibition, held in Tel-Aviv, for the "Women, Work and Livelihood" project, led by MAAN Workers Association and Sindyanna of Galilee.

"Picket Lines" is the second exhibition held at the new Bread and Roses space on 45 Aliya Street in Tel Aviv. After 15 years, the exhibition seeks to draw attention from the mere works of art to the bread and roses' values. In the exhibition, the installations mark the boundaries between the picketing goals of the show and the difficult realities of life.. This Picketing exhibition is a site-specific show asserting that social change is essentially the change of the physical space in its visual, economic, and historical aspects, affecting the possibilities and opportunities that any site produces. The exhibition wishes to contemplate the actuality of the building's walls, and its wrappings and textures: the various barriers that affect the possible materialization of these values.

Carolina Lehan instills into the gallery space fragments from the streets that surround the office building in south Tel Aviv. She presents an installation work that changes the surface of the place: a scaffolding fence common at construction sites, side-walk facade, with soil and plastic roses that is leading the viewers to a dead-end "alley", showing a casting work standing on a stake. The origin of the word *picket* is a "stake" and the meaning of "putting something at stake" may insinuate risk-taking, but also raising something above the ground so that it can be seen better. Next to the stake, Lehan installed concrete casting work of windows as well as a carved marble sculpture, indicating an opposing aesthetic experience of construction uses.

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David Duvshani presents a wall painting of a life-size figure that he saw in a photograph taken immediately after the end of the recent fighting in May 2021. The photograph shows a Gaza resident raising his hands to mark the V sign. The wall painting suggests that the gallery's space cannot be separated from the wider geopolitical picket line of our area. Using the comics style associated with his work, Duvshani emphasizes the irony that exists in the endless fighting rounds between Israel and Hamas as a kind of Tom & Jerry conflict: meaningless confrontations and wars at the expense of the working people's body.

Hadeel Abu Johar also refers to the reality of the occupation as a boundary line that defines the conditions of existence of the gallery space. Abu Johar wrote the words **رصاص مطاطي** (Rasas Matati, a rubber bullet) on the gallery curtains. In the dispersal of demonstrations, IDF soldiers fire rubber bullets directly at the protesters. This is a weapon that can cause blindness if hitting the eyes. The curtains, which until recently were used by the gallery to hide the shelves of the bubble-wrapped Bread and Roses artworks, are turning to a demonstration of power relations present in the act of looking at the art works, as well as of the problematic aesthetics enjoyment they conjure.

Liran Shapiro produces picket lines that relate to seeing experiences by emphasizing the distinction between the gallery space itself and the outside. In the work "Landscape", she places a sticker reminiscent of both generic advertisement images as well as a specific existing image on the ground floor of the building where the gallery is located. In another work, Shapiro places a salt and dust casting that hides the dusty alley outside the window. In both works, looking outward is generating a projection of a look inwards that produces irony. In a third salt casting, the term "don't look back" appears. The term connects the myth of Lot's wife turned into salt after looking backward, as signifying a picket line of women's rights in the broader sense, as well as a key aspect of progressivism, that is instilled in the heart of the Bread and Roses project.

Similar to the textile workers of the Bread and Roses Strike of 1912, the artists in "Picket Lines" work with textures and with two-dimensional handicrafts. The thinness, the reproduction, and the ironic use of images, alongside the humor and the idiosyncratic visual languages that reference the body and seeing, emphasize the structure itself and its conditions of existence as a repository of picket lines also in a performative aspect - as a space that is not natural and ordinary, but as part of the conditions of reality that we must meet again and again, reformulate and redefine.

Captions:

David Duvshani, "Celebration", 2021, wall painting (acrylic), 150*200 cm

Hadeel Abu Johar, "Rubber Bullet", 2021, colour on curtains, 140*295 cm

Liran Shapiro, "Landscape", 2021, sticker on the gallery window, 100*100 cm

Liran Shapiro, "Dead End", 2021, salt and dust casting, 83*100 cm

Liran Shapiro, "Don't Look Back", 2021, salt casting, 42*32 cm

Carolina Lehan, "Rose Fence", 2021, scaffolding fence, concrete, plastic roses, soil, 330*250 cm

Carolina Lehan, "Untitled", 2021, marble, 30*18 cm

Carolina Lehan, "Hydra", 2021, plaster, oil paint, carpet, iron, 267*50 cm

Carolina Lehan, "Triptych Concrete", 2021, wood, concrete, oil paint, 120*80 cm

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Carolina Lehan, graduate of Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design (19), has participated in several exhibitions in Israel; Liran Shapiro, graduate of Shenkar (20), is presenting for the first time after graduating; Hadil Abu Johar, an MFA graduate of the University of Haifa (18), has exhibited at several exhibitions in Israel and recently, the Rappaport Foundation purchased her work, *Pillowcase # 1*, for the Tel Aviv Museum of Art's collection - a work that beforehand presented at this year "Bread and Rose 15" annual exhibition; David Duvshani, Graduate of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Paris (2014), and the MFA program of Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design (2019), has exhibited in several exhibitions in Israel and around the world; Hagai Ulrich, the curator of "Picket Lines", an MFA graduate of Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design(15), is a writer in the field of contemporary art and a visual artist whose works have been exhibited in several exhibitions in Israel as well as abroad.

About the Bread and Roses Gallery

The MAAN Workers Association and the nonprofit Sindyanna of Galilee have been holding the "Bread and Roses" exhibition annually for 14 years. The proceeds from its art sales are dedicated to the project "Women, Work and Sustainability." Hundreds of Jewish and Arab artists, young and old, including some from the first ranks of the local art world, have contributed their works over the years, generating funds that have helped thousands of Arab women, including many without education, to find jobs. In the course of the years, a community of about 400 artists has arisen around "Bread and Roses," as well as a large collection of works which have been exhibited just once yearly. Now we have decided to establish a permanent gallery in the offices of MAAN, at 45 Ha-Aliya Street in Tel Aviv, which will make the project accessible throughout the year. The gallery will present rotating exhibitions of artists from the large community of "Bread and Roses." This will allow the unveiling of new exhibitions and projects in the artistically active area of South Tel Aviv-Yaffa. The Bread and Roses Gallery has set regular opening hours for the public. Its location in the MAAN offices follows the spirit of "Bread and Roses" as a project of continuous social action, organically linking art and work.

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