

Tami Suez – "Giva't Hayeladim" (Children's Hill Summer Camp) – Homage

By Irit Levin- Curator

The photography exhibition of Tami Suez refers to the summer camp, held by her parents, Ziva and Israel Ben Dror. For the last ten years, the artist keeps documenting the ravages of time - objects worn away, toys and games that were left behind. Two parallel narratives are discernible: a public narrative within space and time as well as a personal one. Both narratives are inter-dependent.

The summer camp was the fulfilled vision of the artist's parents, who established it in 1961 as a part of their residential house in Even Yehuda. The father was, like his entire family, an outstanding sportsman and athlete who achieved great acclaim, including many rewards and medals in soccer, long jump, triple jump, javelin and discus toss, and shot put. Ben Dror was the driving force of the camp, for he also excelled as a teacher, an educator and an instructor. The camp became a mythological place in Israel and abroad, due to its open spaces, adventurous spirit, playfulness, its the love of the new homeland and its alternative and challenging activities. Children who were part of the camp grew up while their children continued the tradition, often becoming, in their turn, instructors for a new generation.

The imagery of the father, taken from a family photo album dating in the 50's and 60's, shows an athlete well aware of his muscular handsome body, anointed with oil, jumping off a diving board, or being carried on shoulders, as a volunteer instructor, by prisoners after winning a volleyball tournament. Ben Dror was a pioneering figure for introducing new sport methodology and raising awareness of the role sports can have in increasing philanthropic activities. The works of Tami Suez wander between her childhood memories and the public persona of her father and the camp itself. Thus the viewer may see radiant colors along with fractured and worn away motifs.

The artist's private home serves as a standstill reservoir of past occurrences and objects: a garment closet, family photographs, and an ambient of subdued grief mirrored through the mother's facial traits. The concrete figurative remains of the past are reinterpreted by the photographic dimension – as quasi-lyrical, poetic abstract works, like the fragment of the disheveled pool wall. This ambiguous visual iconography also characterizes works in which objects are playfully placed on strongly textured surfaces, making up multi-nuanced compositions. These are enhanced by the additional play of altering close and distant viewing angles. The exhibition also features a documentary work as well as a sound piece and a video art piece that attempt to investigate the myth of the camp, by artist and film-maker Gili Danon.

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Giva't Hayeladim Camp - Pastime

Nir Harmat

Tami Suez goes back to her childhood home in an attempt to dredge up a once luminous past. Her camera drifts through the deserted yard, one that for 38 years, every summer, was teeming with campers' laughter – Giva't Hayeladim Camp, her parents' lifework. She wishes to stir up the past, its sights and sounds; she asks to remind and be reminded. In his last essay, *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes ties photography to reality through its indexicality. The photograph mechanically repeats that which can never be repeated in reality, as the object of the photograph holds fast to it.

Suez's works offer a multi-layered gaze. Some offer bits of the camp as they are today. This is a view of a tattered reality in the childhood provinces of a "wanderer". In other works, the artist intervenes with the "scenery". For instance, she positions her father's golden seal ring on scraps, as though placed on time itself, time the all-consuming. This body of work is a capsule of time and space which the artist observes, while she oscillates between longing and amusing; daydreaming, she is associatively hoarding her memories. She breaks the yard down into fractured fragments that are filled with that which is gone, that cherish the past and hold on to it.

The exhibition brings together black and white photographs of the home and of the camp that the family established, alongside contemporary and sharply expressive colorful images that bring to light deserted corners of the house, which were once occupied and are presently left behind, as a monument. Looking at these pictures incurs a feeling of déjà vu. This is an illusionist hide-and-seek game where the object retains its volume, its materiality, and memory on the one hand, but, on the other, independently acts as an object with cryptic, vague qualities. The photographs call for the speculative realms of imagination and the emotional reconstructions they possess.

Suez's camera makes the absent present. Her father, Israel ben-Dror, a renaissance man, the lively spirit behind the tale she wishes to tell, passed away in 2006. It has been 10 years since he is gone and he is an absent/present entity in the home. His belongings are still in their natural place: shaving razors in the bathroom, clothes in the closet; yet, he is gone. Suez documents the homily scenery, and repositions her father's artifacts on the leftovers of his enterprise, as though she was rewriting scenes that tangle the past with the present. Suez's memory is an integral part of the space between life and belief, one that cannot be disregarded. Memory is at the heart of her work – formalistic, yet magic.

"The Children's Hill" – Tami Suez: Photography – an issue of Time and Memory

By Dr. Dorit Kedar

Religions, beliefs and myths, along the human civilization, kept searching for the purpose of life and death. Two main motifs often appear in this infinite search: heaven and earth. Heaven may symbolize the Ineffable Divinity or Divinities, Abstraction, Eternity, Soul and Spirit, **Time**. Earth stands for the concrete matter, physical phenomena, the ephemeral, all beings, **Space**. Time and space are inter-linked. One cannot be defined without the other a matter is inseparable of energy, body and soul are one.

European Hermetic traditions as well as Middle and Far Eastern philosophies stress the error of decisive categorization and artificial divisions. These paths have a common ground accordingly– the more awareness exposes itself to the infinite variety of Nature (microcosms), the more probabilities it has to experience the One (The Divine, Macrocosm) reflected in the pluralism of the world or microcosm.

The great paradox is that awareness has to experience the motionless Eternal principle (The Divine or Macrocosm) via the dynamic pluralism of phenomena, characterizing the world (Microcosm). Nothing stands still and therefore memory too is subject to the dynamism of life and death and is tinted according to life and death personal experiences and the psychological evolvement of the self.

Memory is an illusory and escapist tool, if there is a desire or an obsession to stop the flux of time, by attachment to an image or a chain of images, believed to have been occurring in the past. A visualization of a past event entirely depends on a dynamic here and now trigger.

If memory is traumatized by the past – past experiences might reiterate as a real threat in the present and harm the psychological adaptability to daily incidents. Any static and repetitive phenomenon is contradictory to the nature of life and death – Dynamism.

If memory is attuned with self-reflection and the creative instinct, past events may become productive links in an artful chain. Tami Suez series of photography, taken in the kids camp ran by her parents, during her childhood, serves as an example for a dynamic here and now creative reintegration of a multifaceted past experience: There are six main ways that the artist chooses to simultaneously integrate past events and present occurrences:

Selecting an item of the past, providing a disharmonious context, altering functions meanings and interpretations:

An old faded blue toy fish lying on its side on neglected soil a dirty white sculpted cock entrapped in a corner, both toys representing animals of a powerful mobility on earth and in water if alive.

Isolation of items and the metamorphosis into orphanhood:

A family room table covered by an old out-fashioned handmade tablecloth with family photography collection, a wall with numerous awards and excellence boards or a stunning collection of sport medals, an open cupboard with men garments – all stand still, witnessing the absence of the people who once enjoyed their presence.

Close up, augmentation of size and a surreal background:

A golden ring placed among stapling gun pins or an old red whistle are exhibited as main compositional motifs. Both ring and whistle have since long lost their initial function. The one designed to adorn a man's finger and the other- to emit a lively sound by children of the camp or their instructors.

Juxtaposition of a representation of youth physical ideal and the menace of old age:

The artist uses old photography of the Father, in his teen and youth years, fully aware of his physical abilities, sport skills and bodily beauty. However the ideal of youth and beauty is challenged by old age reflected by the image of useless old age glasses, randomly positioned in no-one's land.

Juxtaposition of Nature's doings set against the urban:

Everything built by humans have to be permanently maintained by humans in order to be but Nature has its own ways of Being and Becoming. The artist insinuates the deep blue color of a might have been luxurious pool, an old wooden remainder of a might have been beautiful garden pagoda. Weeds and wild plants growing as well as the steady working of erosion, slowly threat to cover the still peeping joyous childish imagery of the past.

A synthesis between the figurative and abstraction.

The once have been figurative objects undergo the working of time in space, converting them into a blurred non defined image and an equivocal identity. The artist chooses the thin line between the once existent and its gradual vanishing.