

The Alchemists

Shachar Freddy Kislev, Tomer Sapir, Rotem Tamir

Kav 16- Community Gallery for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv

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The Alchemists, a common exhibition by Rotem Tamir, Shachar Freddy Kislev & Tomer Sapir features works which explore the relationship between science, pseudo science and art. This is a dynamic composition full of consecutive changes fluctuating between scientific thought and practical work which influence the artistic process and the work itself. The artists share a mutual passion, curiosity and admiration for the flora and fauna, representing for them a fascinating microcosm abundant with physiological and organic formations, all different kinds of physical phenomena and chemical manifestations.

Each artist studio functions as a laboratory: Tamir focuses on scientific observations, tests and experiments, while Kislev and Sapir sees in the experimental process a tool for the examination of situations, conditions, circumstances and phenomena which interest them. Tamir relates to the artistic object as a scientific experiment, converting time in to a crucial parameter in her work. The result is an object subjected to constant tension within specific time, space and physiological conditions, constantly exposed to gradual changes – in terms of material and form. These changes neutralize the universal meaning of the object leaving place to a new personal one from the artist's private history. Tamir exhibits two new works done specially for the show: This Is Also an Empty Ship, a small replica of a 17th century clipper ship floating within a latex balloon. Using a vacuum device built specially for this action, the small replica is inserted in to the balloon, through a slow blowing and filling process with air and water. A constant danger of explosion lies down on the work. Like a kind of laboratory experiment in which the final result is unknown. This intrusive act thrills borders and becomes a metaphor of transition and transformation which enables new surprising and exciting discoveries. The work presents a contradiction between the scientific and the calculated and the feminine and the intimate characteristically of Tamir's work. In the work To Ehud (a Hebrew first name) a big number of folded paper airplanes made from the origami guide book *Flying Origami - From pure fun to true science*, are displayed in a window cabinet. This book integrates between the origami working technique and physical aviation laws enabling the various planes to flight due to the right location of their gravity center. Tamir's uncontrollable desire to investigate "multiplicity", in order to understand the maximal possibilities latent in the material can be seen in the work. Tamir's works a sort of boy's crafts consciously correspond with masculine leisure culture.

Tomer Sapir attempt to investigate a pseudo chemical-scientific formula which combines simultaneously biological elements and chemical materials. This formula serves him as a metaphorical-substantial platform on which he builds a personal layered narrative through which he aims to destabilize frequent cultural dichotomies such as nature and culture, good and bad, masculine and feminine, life and death. Sapir presents at the show the work Charaka (female insect), 2006, and four autonomic objects from The Ongoing Research towards the full Crypto - Taxidermy Index, 2010. Those are doubtful organic doubtful artificial objects looking like laboratory mutations; sort of archeological remains deceiving the viewer while not revealing its authentic and primal source. Formal sculptural manipulations are activated in different methods on materials, from which the object is made; such is the case of the *Bottled Curisa*, an organic plant with an expanding bio mechanical action. Sapir's works concentrate indeed in intermediate situations and the focus on the critical and condense moment is always present; this can be seen in the work presenting a plastic jar in which an avocado is stored for a few months. This is an active work in which the changing moment is dominant – the moment before the real explosion. His works present extreme situations existing in a tense twilight zone, as if every single moment a wave of violence, social alienation, strangeness and wickedness may explode underneath the surface.

More than looking after a "dry" formal-scientific or pseudo-scientific process Shachar Freddy Kislev search to create in his work a scientific atmosphere and illusion. His works looks like copied from a Hollywood cinematographic setting characterized by theatrical aesthetics and great spectacle. Within a mysterious and voluptuousness mixed with fear atmosphere, Kislev investigates the disruptions of nature driven by a desire to move away from the daily and the banal in order to give expression to outstanding, unusual and exciting phenomena. Kislev creates organic hybrid organisms made from ready made and aim to resuscitate them. His beautiful and repulsive creatures, lack any purpose or inside logic. In his work The Bald Mollusca done specially for the show, Kislev presents in a big geometrical construction composed of a setting of modular units, an organic oyster resting on a still dirty black water pool. Inside the oyster a sort of amorphous organism with pulse and movement is lying down. This is a soft sensual organism seducing and repulsing the viewer at the same time. The oyster's location within the geometrical setting looks like a futurist religious ritual site, raising connotations of pagan adoration to an ancient object with antique meanings strengthen the contrast between the humorist and beautiful in Kislev work. The bald mollusk took the place of the precious pearl like a parasite threatening to get over. In Kislev's video art work The African Queen, he focuses on documenting two Holothuroidea (sea cucumbers) as in a scientific behavior investigating of these aquatic creatures, but in practice, the

mysterious track music and the blue lighting interrupt this academic approach and imply a cinematographic setting arousing expectations for a future surprising narrative.

The characteristic feel presented at the show corresponds with ancient alchemists thought. Their study carried in an intermediate zone, of blurred borders between the scientific and the mystical, presented a hasty, obsessive and uncompromising attempt to turn inferior metals in to silver and gold, reminds to a large extent the work of these three artists.

The artists seek to create an alternative existence in which the artistic repertoire is baseless and full of inner contradictions, tension, humor and mystery fluctuating between the scientific and the pseudo scientific and sometimes even overcoming any imagination.