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BIJOUX ET OBJETS CONTEMPORAINS



ANDREA WAGNER

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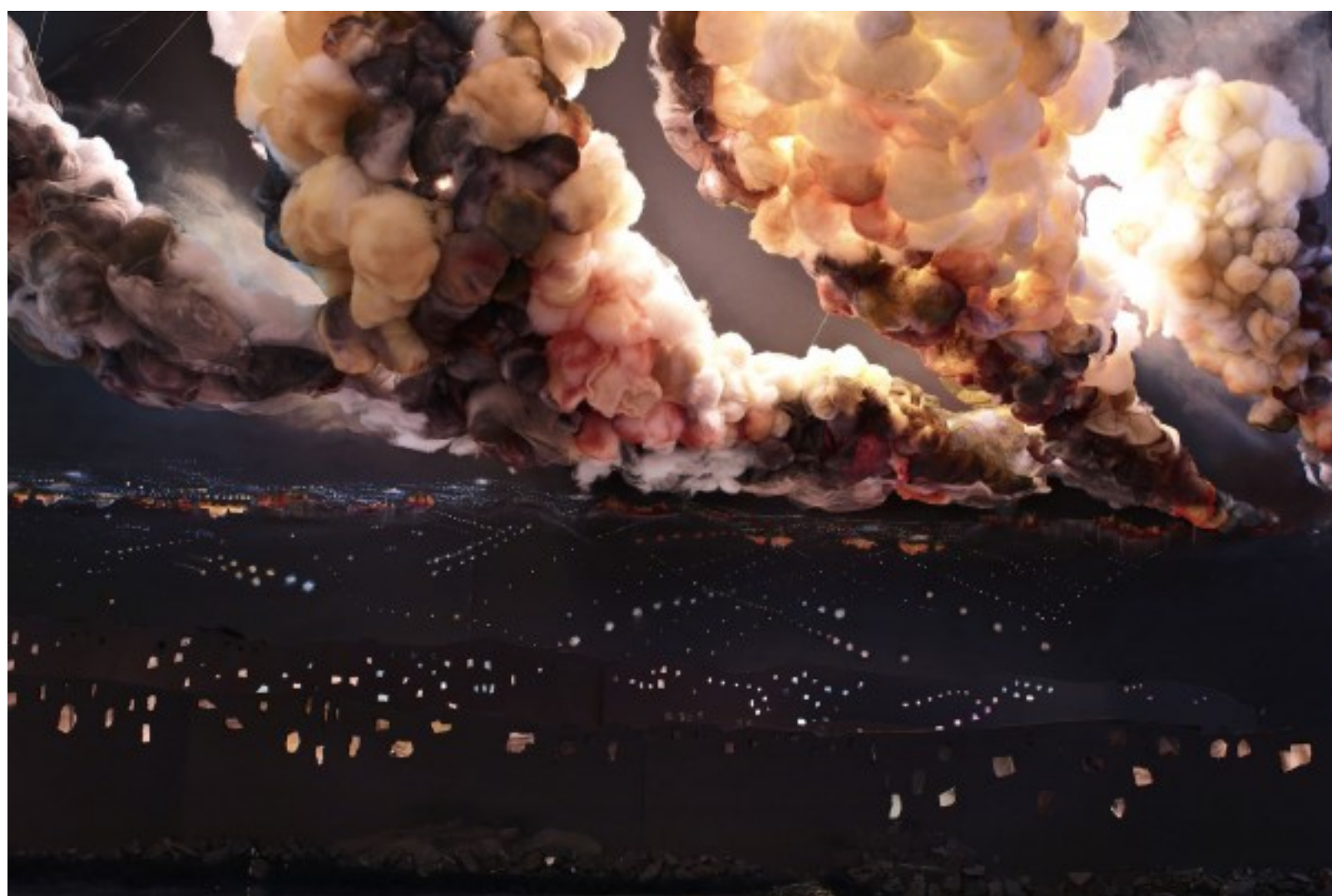
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## SHIRLEY WEGNER

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# THE CERTAINTY OF DOUBT

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**ONE OF THE MOST FASCINATING ASPECTS OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION (AND ITS EXPERIENCE) — ON ALL ITS MULTIFACETED DISCIPLINES — IS REVELATION. AN ASPECT OF THIS, FOR EXAMPLE, CAN BE FOUND IN THE FRAGILE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REALITY AND IMAGINATION, AS FUNDAMENTAL NOTIONS OF LIFE ARE REVEALED TO US THROUGH OUR DUALISTIC VIEW OF OPPOSING ENTITIES. HOWEVER ...**

## THE IMPERCEPTIBLE PRESENT

Art allows us to capture the imperceptible present. The one that condemns us to remembrance, as a trace of experience that immediately becomes a notion of the mind trapped in the clutches of time. We are indefinite beings living in approximation. Art reminds us that truths will reveal themselves to us through illusion, through evocations and through strata but never in one single block and in one single way. The real, the imaginary, the now, tomorrow and yesterday, all represent so many mysteries that our sensory, intuitive and cognitive (both individual and collective) allow us to decode... and, through force and circumstance, to fabricate for ourselves a world within a world.

## CROSSING THE CONSCIENCE OF BEING

The work of Shirley Wegner was for me the trigger of a great shock. An aesthetic and lucid revelation. I was immediately seduced by her ingenuity, her dexterity and her capacity to link to her artistic practice this conscience of being [both personal a societal] which she expresses in a philosophical context with strong political marks, through her childhood's eye and memento-like elements.

## FROM TEL AVIV TO NEW YORK

Shirley Wegner was born in Tel Aviv, Israel. For more than ten years now, she has lived and worked in



Night Explosion, 2013, chromogenic print, 55" x 40", Edition 4

New York. Her career, which speaks for itself, is punctuated with individual and group exhibitions throughout the world, of which the most recent one held at Farideh Cadot Associés in Paris (Fall 2013). Her work involves many mediums, from in-situ installations to photography through works on paper. Her approach involves many elements, but they all revolve around one center of interest: her motherland, Israel. In fact, the real subject is remembrance; that of the first traces left behind by life itself in this confrontational part of the world.

## A CHILD'S MEMORY

The works that first attracted my attention were her photographs. The process by which they are brought to life is very peculiar. She literally builds three- dimensional landscapes with different materials: wires, cotton wool, fabric, painted backdrops, and lighting. In short, she portrays chaotic situations with a lot of inventiveness. The end result is striking. Yet, she does not seek the perfect illusion. On the contrary: threads are hanging, materials highlighting their true nature. She thus creates ambiguous visions lending themselves both to reality and to unavoidable interpretation. Her approach rests mostly on illusion which nonetheless reveals a spectrum of truly real emotions rich in nuances. Her works are made up of many memory sets where the child's universe mixes in with the brutal external world's universe, which may seem serious to some, and poetic to others.





Explosion with Road, 2012, Chromogenic print, 55" x 40". Edition 4

## A PICTORIAL APPROACH

Once the landscape construction is completed, she has it photographed. She never does this herself, maybe because she sees herself first and foremost as an observer of her own universe, in which the Israeli landscape is, in and of itself, the actor. This way of working leaves room to the other – to the unavoidable appropriation of the viewer.

This shift from the third dimension to a two dimensional image reinforces the pictorial mindset already well established within the artist's approach. Indeed, Shirley Wegner thinks like a painter when she builds her sets, allowing the actual exposure itself to represent the trace [both in reality as well as in symbolic terms]. The trace is one of a souvenir to an emotional and cognitive experience on all its imperfections on one hand, and on the other, with the strength of its reminiscence. It is not the real that is important here but instead its trace that was confronted with it, as she says in an interview for the New York Arts Magazine: "construction and illusion are inseparable." The center of her creation remains the childhood memories with both the proximity and the distance that they entail.

## THE REVEALING ANTINOMY

Thus, when you look at one of her photographs you are bombarded by a multitude of contradictory

feelings, visions, perceptions and thoughts, seemingly opposed, as they answer to one another in reality. Cumulatively, they bring to light bits of truth and bring our interpretation towards multiple “elsewheres”.

Shirley Wegner’s work is expressed through doubt and lucidity. And it is for that reason that her expression resonates so much in our entire being.



Shirley Wegner

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