

Shirley Wegner: Merge and Flatten

30.03.23 — 20.05.23

Curator: Maya Frenkel Tene

The images in Shirley Wegner's work are constructed as theater sets in her studio, they are made by hand, using labor intensive processes, layer by layer. The underlying materials which Shirley investigates stem from the Zionist ethos and the local history - prickly pear cacti, eucalyptus trees, crop fields, bunkers, ruins, rocks and stones. Shirley returns again and again to these places as she reconstructs the visual mechanisms of capturing the landscape from both a nostalgic and a critical points of view at once. The different layers which comprise her models merge into a final two-dimensional image, as a product of the act of photography. The works represent a conflict between mediums (painting, sculpture, photography and video) and between analog and digital practices. On the one hand the labor intensive process appears as a gesture to painting and craft. On the other hand, a visual play of shapes and colors that were fabricated by hand seem to represent visual glitches and errors that relate to the technology of capturing and producing screened images - pixelization, color filters, sensor errors, or color correction issues - all these create a disruption of the image, and form a cacophony that represents a breakdown in the actual viewing process of the place.

The title of the show is borrowed from Photoshop toolsets of **Merge/ Flatten Image**, whose function is to merge all working layers of the image's production into one, flattened final image. The reconstruction of the digital processing of the image is present in other works - the gray and white grid in the work **Field and Pixels** references Photoshop's Background Layer, while the piece **Invert** simulates the digital inversion of positive and negative.

The video installation **Effacement** represents a concrete site, yet, it does not ask to document it, rather, to create an immersive viewing experience, around the geometry of the building. The camera is moving away from it and coming close the same time, yet does not lead to any specific destination.

Shirley Wegner (b. 1969) is a multidisciplinary artist who focuses in photography. Wegner graduated with honors from Yale University School of Art (MFA, 2002) and is a graduate of Hamidrasha School of Art (B.Ed.,1994). Recipient of The Ministry of Culture Encouragement Award for Creativity (2017) and a graduate of numerous residency programs among which is The Dieu Donné Workspace Program residency, New York (2009). Her works were exhibited in the US, Europe and Israel, among others at Goch Museum in Germany, The Islip Art Museum, New York, The Tel Aviv Museum of Art, The Kallmann-Museum, Germany, Farideh Cadot Gallery, Paris and Slag Gallery in New York. Her work is included in museum collections and private ones, among which are the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, and Goch Museum permanent collection. Wegner is on the faculty of Shenkar's School of Multidisciplinary Art.