

The Gaza War Tattoos / Lucy is Sick

A new one person exhibition and a new book by Roe Rosen

November 29, 2024 – January 17, 2025

Curator: Gilad Melzer

HaMidrasha Gallery at HaYarkon 19 is pleased to announce Roe Rosen's one person exhibition. The opening on November 29 will also mark the book launch of *Lucy is Sick* (Pardes publishing House). The exhibition features two new bodies of work, each stemming from an ongoing dramatic event. One event is private: multiple myeloma cancer Rosen was diagnosed with several years ago, the other is collective – the war in Gaza that has been raging since October 7, 2023

Rosen, a teacher artist, filmmaker and author who has been showing internationally for more than three decades, has been known to tackle political themes before. However, *The Gaza War Tattoos* may be the first occasion in which he is responding directly, critically and in real time to urgent and traumatic reality as it unfolds. The series presents eighteen photographs of temporary tattoos rendered on the skin of different men and women. These include images, verbal expressions, sights and signs that have become disorienting and chilling over the past years. What would the actual meaning of “a total victory” be? And how would an image of “a tunnel” echo now? Also on display will be the paintings upon which the tattoos were based.

At the crux of Rosen work are different ways to present identity through a dismantling of the self and questioning its cohesion. Yet *Lucy is Sick* may be the first time that Rosen does not maneuver around the autobiographical realm, but deals directly with his own struggle with cancer. In his entire, rich oeuvre, including projects that have become classic, such as *Live and Die as Eva Braun* (The Israel Museum, 1997), *Justine Frank* (Herzliya Museum, 2001), and *Maxim Komar-Myshkin: Vladimir's Night* (Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 2014), identities ranged from speculative and fantasized, to historical figures, but were always speculative and fabricated. *Lucy is Sick*, on the other hand, described as “a children book for adults,” is a memoir accompanied by drawings in which tells of multiple myeloma: “... an evasive cancer, not a full-bodied tumor, hidden away or palpable, but rather fluid and formless, never one.” While it is impossible to get more exposed and revealing than what follows, this is still, after all, Roe Rosen. The description of the transformation of the body, and of language, with the illness entails reflections on grotesque and intimate instances, on poems and fantasies, on philosophy and cinema as they relate to illness, and more. The drawings are coloring pages that do not only accompany the text but become an integral part of it. Out of this arises a literary-visual creation that is both pleasurable and horrifying, funny and painful, and at the same time inspiring and positive.

The 51 black and white drawings will be installed on a 25 meter long colorful mural – a gigantic coloring page of sorts based on the book's drawings. Being that this will be the last exhibition of HaMidrasha gallery in its current location, Rosen took an act of pedagogic and artistic continuity by inviting a recent graduate of HaMidrasha, the young painter Oryan Yakobi to design the mural, which was painted to completion by other students and graduates.

The exhibition at HaMidrasha gallery is showing parallel to Rosen's expansive one person exhibition at Kunstverein Hannover, *The Kafka Companion to Wellness*, and the publication of the artist book *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Roe Rosen*.

The exhibition will be accompanied by several activities and panel discussion, and *Lucy is Sick* will be offered at a special price for the duration of the exhibition.

Gallery opening hours: Tuesday–Thursday 11:00-17:00, Friday and Saturday 10:00-14:00