

about the exhibition  
"Night Walk Home"  
Rami Maymon  
6.10-12.11.2022  
**Keren Goldberg**

**"... You shall not take the mother with the offspring. You shall send away the mother, and take the offspring for yourself, so that it be good for you, and your days be long."**

Sending-away the nest commandment (*Shiluach Ha'ken*), Deuteronomy 22:6–7

In the days preceding his current show, Rami Maymon could not work at his studio as usual. This fact influenced the working process, which took place mainly in the artist's mind, took shape on the computer's screen, and resulted in relief-like, three-dimensional collages whose layers came together only in the exhibition space – as can be seen in the three main works composing "Night Walk Home". However, the artist's absence from his studio also effected the studio itself, whose emptiness summoned new tenants – a female pigeon that entered through a small window opening, weaved a nest and laid three eggs.

As opposed to Maymon's previous shows, which were the result of premediated acts leading to what can be called a "conceptual collage" corresponding with western art history and specifically Israeli art history, the current show reflects an intuitive, almost poetic process. Remnants to local canonizations can be seen in images of the sculpture "Nimrod" (Itzhak Danziger, 1939) and of a heron sculpted by Arie Resnik (circa 1952), as well as the work "Genesis 87" (circa 1968) by Pinchas Eshet, which is presented as a prologue/epilogue to the exhibition.\*

"Nimrod", or more precisely a human-size blow up scan of its photograph as found in a book, is hung upside down, and censored in a similar reversed manner: his torso and the famous hawk resting on his shoulder are concealed, while his genitalia is exposed, erecting upwards. Erectile, pointed or edgy movements are present in other works as well, in which beaks are pecking, feet are peeking and edges of amorphous shapes protrude. These stand in sharp contrast to the concealment present in the show, for which rounded, as if impregnated fields of shade are turned into nearly solid screens. Maymon's characteristic material translation, which combines photography, scanning and printing, as well as his acts of enlargement and the collagist configuration in space, grant the original sculptures' and papers' materiality a deceiving quality.

The spectator moving in space encounters not only concealing shades, but also shadows which materialize the void. These linger between the loose colorful topographic layers hung on the wall, in the negative spaces emptied between the legs of the heron and between her body and the soggy soil behind it, as well as between Nimrod and its cover. As such, the shadows in the show become another collagist force: while in the hand-made, material collages they mask and conceal, in the spatial collages they also open, distance and separate.

Either way, the shades hold violence that empties the show almost entirely of its figurative presence, in a similar way to the disappearance of the artist's figure from his studio, which enabled nature to incubate. An egg is the ultimate inner/outer, negative/positive, light/shade space – an external uterus; a bright whiteness shadowing an intimate darkness; an hermetic elliptic perfection cracked by the pecking of life. Eshet's "Genesis 87" brings forth similar oppositions: it treasures an egg as if it was hovering in space, while in fact skewered midair and framed inside a rectangle, which in turn cuts another egg in half. Gideon Ofrat called Eshet's aesthetic an "'impregnate' sculptural language", which bares tension "between the egg-like body and the encompassing 'casing'."\*\* The sculpture's title, which enumerates and serializes genesis, stresses a further dissonance – that between the uniqueness of each creation and its egg-shaped duplication.

According to the Jewish "sending-away the nest" commandment (*Shiluach Ha'ken*), s/he who encounters a bird's nest must scare away the mother and keep her eggs. Surprisingly, this seemingly marginal, ambiguous and perhaps violent commandment is one of the only two Jewish commandments that specify a reward; and not just any reward – a desirable longevity. Nonetheless, upon returning to his studio, Maymon did away with this alluring promise and tried to reunite the female pigeon with her eggs, but with no success. Eventually, the creation of life was pecked by the creation of art, with all its violence and eternality.

\* Pinchas Eshet (1935-2006),  
"Genesis 87", 1967  
Nickel-plated bronze, wooden base  
Collection of Ashdod Art Museum  
Gift of Maya Gal Eshet

\*\* Gideon Ofrat, "Pinchas Eshet:  
impregnations," *Gideon Ofrat's Warehouse*, 2020  
(Hebrew).