

Implementing activism through art

ART ROUNDUP

• By HAGAY HACOHEN

Mass protests against ongoing efforts to change this country's judiciary, basic laws and the norms of government have had wide-ranging artistic aspects. In Jerusalem, artists painted a red line connecting the new Bezalel Art Academy building to the High Court, symbolically linking the protection it offers all those who live here with the artistic and creative freedom needed to produce artworks of merit. Police arrested Bezalel Professor of Industrial Design Ido Bruno and four other activists involved in this protest, art writer Naama Riba reported.

In the north, feminist activists inspired by the television adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale*, a 1985 dystopian novel by Margaret Atwood, gathered around the Alexander Zaïd monument near Beit She'arim. Created by Warsaw-born sculptor David Polus to honor one of the earliest champions of Jewish self-defense in this land, the activists noted he was not alone. His wife, Tzipora, co-founded Hashomer with him and owned her own gun.

The activists noted that if radical alterations in the norms of this country are allowed to pass, women might be pushed out of active participation in national life.

The Zaïd monument also stars in the 2007 dystopian novel *The Happy Man* by Tzur Shezaf where it is dismantled by Bedouins before an Arab revolt spreads across the Negev. For the cover, the Israeli book employed the 1891 painting *A Bedouin Arab* by John Singer Sargent. Sargent, who was a famous portrait painter and watercolorist in his lifetime, visited Israel as part of his travels.

Readers concerned with silencing women might turn to the 2018 novel *Vox* by Christina Dalcher. In it, American women are forced to wear a bracelet that delivers an electric shock when they speak more than their allowed quota of daily words.

In Herzliya, activists



THE ALEXANDER Zaïd monument with feminist protesters. (Lior Carmon)

altered the Theodor Herzl monument created by Uri Lifschitz and wrapped it in a massive banner that read "This is not a legend, this is a revolution!" Harking back to the famous expression that urged readers of Herzl's *Altneuland* to act for modern Zionism, "if you will it, it shall not remain a legend."

Dozens of museums, art schools and galleries publicly affirmed their commitment to the values expressed in the Israeli Declaration of Independence and closed in solidarity with protesters.

Seven years ago, sculptor Itay Zalait placed King Bibi, a massive gold monument to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at Rabin Square, Tel Aviv, as an attempt to explore what would an Israeli dictator be like. Today, almost every active artist in the country shares his concerns.

TEL AVIV

Visit *A Place Among the Nations* by Noy Haimovitz and Tamir Erlich at Hamidrasha Gallery. Recently opened, the title of the exhibition refers to the 1995 book by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as well as a concern: What sort of place is being built under the sun and for whom?

Noy and Tamir continue their playful fascination with hardcore sexual and fascist icons to shape highly disturbing images of figures leaping to their death and a crowd being turned against



IN HERZLIYA, activists altered the Theodor Herzl monument created by Uri Lifschitz and wrapped it in a massive banner that reads 'This is not a legend, this is a revolution!' (Rani Graf)



'BANGLADESH' BY Tomer Dekel. (Hamidrasha Gallery Beit Berl)

some sort of other, maybe some vermin.

Stay and explore *Bangladesh* by Tomer Dekel. Imagined as a tour into the mind of a secret agent operating in a distant land, visitors will be admitted every 30 minutes and granted a guided tour of the works. This is actually a performance given by Dekel himself and a dancer, Tamar Even-Hen. Bangladesh, incidentally, means the land (*desh*) of those who speak Bangla. What seems exotic to our eyes might seem just as dread-filled when seen through local eyes.

Curated by Avi Lubin. Opening Hours: Tuesday to Thursday 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. An English-language tour of Bangladesh is possible. 19 HaYarkon St. Closing date: Friday, June 2.

The first Autonomous Art Biennale at Gymnasia Herzliya – Created without state

funding, this is the first attempt to offer the public a series of lectures, workshops and events under the banner of resistance (*See Dies Irae*). Guy Ben-Ner will present his latest video art, *Whatever Helps You Through the Night*, on Saturday, April 8, at 2 p.m. and will discuss the work with members of the audience.

Efrat Ganoor will offer a workshop about broken landscape painting on Wednesday, April 12, from 3:30 p.m. onwards. The workshop is limited to those 15 years old or up. 106 Jabotinsky St. Admission is free. For more, see: <https://a-a-b.org/en/>

DALIYAT AL-KARMEL

Visit Sam Halaby's *House or Colors*. The Druze artist transformed his childhood home into a celebration of action painting and creativity which delights the many visitors who flock to see it. Curated by Doron Polack,

this is a chance to combine a visit up north with a relaxing, non-political artistic activity.

Al Alastah St. Opening Hours: Sunday to Thursday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. NIS 45 per ticket and NIS 110 for a family ticket (up to three children). Call 052-363-5678 to book.

GIVAT HAVIVA

Attend a performance workshop with Adina Bar On held on Saturday, April 1 at noon. Open to members of the public, the work-



JOHN SINGER Sargent's 1891 painting 'A Bedouin Arab.'
(Wikimedia Commons)



SAM HALABY'S 'House of Colors.' (Dimitry Spector)

shop explores the tension between being individuals and also members of larger groups. Admission is free upon pre-registration here: <https://katzr.net/407e2e>.

ART NEWS

The 2012 video artwork *Abraham Abraham Sarah Sarah* by Nira Pereg is featured at the artist's first solo exhibition at the Tate Modern, London (Curated by Nabila Abdel Nabi). "Nira Pereg depicts a choreographed interchange between Jewish and Muslim communities, reflecting the bureaucracy of occupation," Nabi noted.

Filmed at Hebron's Cave of the Patriarchs, the work offers a double vision. Of Jewish worshippers getting ready for prayers and Muslim worshippers gearing up to pray at the Sanctuary of Abraham. Shown until September 2023. It is possible to see some of the work via shorturl.at/GPVX9.

Art Roundup is a monthly glance at some of the finest art exhibitions currently being shown across the country. Artists, curators and collectors are welcome to send pitches to hagay_hacohen@yahoo.com with "Art Roundup" in the email subject.