



Efrat Gal

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Efrat Gal, The Netherlands 2012

Edited version of a text originally written at MaHKU.

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The structure of this essay is inspired by the structure of the “Talmud”, a central text in Judaism written down and edited at around 200 CE. The word “Talmud” in Hebrew comes from the words- teaching and learning. The Talmud text is a record of rabbinic discussions about Jewish law, ethics, philosophy, customs and history. The Talmud is a collection of discussions edited in an associative way which follows the thread of thought of the participants in the discussion and the dynamic of it. One can find discussions about the same topic in different parts of the Talmud in different contexts. In the same manner a discussion that seems to focus on one topic might take surprising directions to different issues. The Talmud also combines legal issues with fantastic legends and sometimes even gasps without clear hierarchy between the content.

The Talmud is divided to six orders of general subject matter. The orders are divided into 60 or 63 tractates, of more focused subject compilations. Each tractate is divided into chapters that are both numbered according to the Hebrew alphabet and given names, usually using the first one or two words in the first paragraph. Each discussion includes a statement, a question on the statement, an answer, a proof for the answer or a refutation of the answer with its own proof. Rarely the debates are formally closed. Each Talmud page contains the Talmudic discussion in the center of the page and different later commentaries and interpretations around it at the edges of the page, both on the right and the left side. The commentaries are by different Rabbis from different generations and different countries. The interpretations start from the time of the Talmud itself, go through important thinkers from the 11th century and the 14th century and in some ver-

sions end with later explanations from the 20th century.

Each page is a unique composition of thoughts of different thinkers and generations set up in a formal layout next to one another in a both organized and associative structure. I choose to barrow this traditional structure to discuss matters of identity, moral and art.





German ground-soil- "Boden"

The ideology of Blut und Boden (in German-blood and soil) celebrates the relationship of the people to the land they occupy and cultivate. The German curriculum inspired by it included half formal tools like tours in the nature and learning how to use maps. History lessons in schools were emphasizing on events that took place on the country's soil. In music lessons songs about the landscape and about farmers' life were taught. German land was bound mystically, to German blood and race.

Luftgesheft A Yiddish expression which literally translates as 'Air-Business'. This term was used by the Zionist movement with derision towards the livelihoods of the Jews in the Diaspora, who earned their living mostly from trade or money lending and were rarely farmers, (usually because of regulations that forbidden them to own a land or anti-Semitic persecutions that forced them to move from one place to another). The Zionism regarded the Jew of the Diaspora as corrupted, because of the lack of connection to the ground and national ambitions. According to the German concept of Blut und Boden, the Jews were wandering people without roots or land, and did not belong on German soil.



"The Wandering Jew" (easily regenerating invasive plant) and me, 2012.

Being

in Germany- The feeling and the associations of **the landscape and the language**, thoughts and sensations of being on **German ground- soil- "Boden"**.

I had to apologize to a journey partner that all my associations are about the holocaust. At the beginning, it was mostly language associations- seeing a trivial word as "Luft" on a sign in a gas station, makes me think of the "Luftwaffe" and about "Luftgesheft".



The place where we had a picnic on the way Kassel 31.05.2012

Landscape



Anselm Kiefer, "The Milky Way", emulsion-paint-oil-acrylic-shellac-con-canvas-wires-and-lead, 1985-87.

Landscape



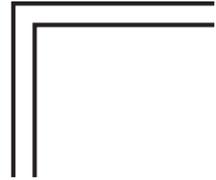
Efrat Gal, "From My Grandmother's Drawings Book", frame, mosquito net and thread, 2005.

The Landscape and the Language



Efrat Gal, "Untitled" (from the series "The Black Forest"), oil pastels, coal and acrylic, 2008.





Old gym located in an old train station W.J.T Mitchell in a lecture, part of Documenta 13 program, "The Arts of Occupation: Image, Space, Revolution" (10.06.12 16:00)-"Historical events must take place somewhere. The place becomes monumental".

Train station As a metaphor of place of transition and in between. A place of short encounters and departures. A place that manages transporting of people. (Since I left my home in Israel, I feel like I am living in a train station. Some people define it as stepping outside of your comfort zone and say it is a positive and a necessary experience). The dynamic and temporal aspect of a train station as a contradiction to the stability of the concept of **Homeland** or ground.



"Oh, Homeland!", July 2012
Coincidental frame from the decorations my friends made with pieces of newspaper in my room in the hospital in Germany. (I was hospitalized because of virus attack on my balance organ.)

Theresienstadt



A drawing by H. Cohen of my aunt as a child in the Ghetto of Theresienstadt in 1944.

Inhabiting

a traumatic site with the presence of my body. During my two months workshop (AndAndAnd) in Kassel, Germany, as part of Documenta 13, I was spending my time mostly in an **old gym located in an old train station**. At the first few days, I discovered that during the second world war the Jews of Kassel and the area were deported from this **train station** to their death.



A monument for the transports of the Jews in the train station of Kassel.

Outside of the old gym, we could hear every day the gloomy music from a sound work by Susan Philips. The work is called "Studie für Streichorchester" (Study of Strings), same like the music piece by the Czech composer Pavel Haas, which was written and first performed at the Jewish Ghetto of **Theresienstadt** in 1943. Haas was deported to Auschwitz and killed very soon after. Philips is playing this music piece from speakers above the railway few times a day. Later on, some elderly people, who visited the gym as part of the Documenta, said that this gym belonged to a school, which is located up the hill. They said that they used to study in this school and back then, it was called "Adolf Hitler School".



Inhabiting a place In the article "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street" Judith Butler (inspired by Hanna Arendt perception of the public space) is regarding the presence of the bodies on "Tahrir" square in Egypt. "After all, in Cairo, it was not just that people amassed in the square: they were there; they slept there; they dispensed medicine and food, they assembled and sang, and they spoke. Can we distinguish those vocalizations from the body from those other expressions of material need and urgency? They were, after all, sleeping and eating in the public square, constructing toilets and various systems for sharing the space, and so not only refusing to be privatized – refusing to go or stay home – and not only claiming the public domain for themselves – acting in concert on conditions of equality – but also maintaining themselves as persisting bodies with needs, desires, and requirements."

Home



"The Sinking House" August 2011.
- "The sinking House" was built by a group of artists; I was part of, during the social protest in Tel Aviv, Israel. (The main protest act was living in tents in the boulevard).
"The Sinking House" reflects the problematic situation in Israel, our homeland, as we see it; the unmoral occupation, the danger to democracy, the poor shape of the health and education systems and the lack of investment in culture and art.

One night I stayed to sleep in the empty gym. I stared at the old stains on the wall, then closed my eyes and lay quietly for few minutes, I felt a haunting scream. I opened my eyes, we laughed about it a bit and then I fell asleep.



My boots/ Getting up in the morning in the gym, July 2012.

Inhabiting a place is making it a "Home". Home can be seen as a core of the identity in the personal or in the national level. **Living in a traumatic site can give it a new meaning.**

Living in a traumatic site can give it a new meaning.

The Ballad About Yoel Moshe Salomon / Yoram Taherlev

On a wet morning in 5638 (1878) during the grape season five riders went from Jaffa on horses.

Shtampeper came and Guttmann came and Zerach Barnet And Yoel Moshe Salomon, with a sword in his sash.

And with them rode Mazraki, the silvery doctor. Along the Yarkon river, the wind sang in the bamboo reeds.

Beside "Petach Tikvah" they stopped. In the heart of the swamps and thicket and up a small hill, they climbed to see the surroundings.

Mazraki said to them after a short time: I don't hear birds and it's a terrible sign.

If birds aren't singing death rules here, we should go out of here fast, here I go.

The doctor jumped on his horse for he pitied his health, and his 3 friends turned to return to the city with him.

Yoel Salomon then said with his visionary eyes: I'm staying the night here on this hill.

He remained on the hill from midnight till the light. Suddenly, Salomon grew the wings of a bird.

To where he flew, to where he flew, until today, no one knows. Maybe it was only a dream, maybe just a legend.

But when the morning arose again, across the mountains, the cursed valley was filled with chirping of birds.

And some say, until today, along the Yarkon river, the birds sing of Yoel Moshe Salomon.



An old sign What is a clue? Calling an object or a thought a clue says more about us and our investigations. A clue is always attached to something else, which is attached to something else again. Where we decide to stop seeing clues reveals the shape of our own desire. Something becomes a clue when we remove it from its everyday location. Understanding the present through the past is always a dynamic process of negotiation. Memory is a theatre in which we restage past events here and now. History is a dynamic process where social and political conditions are not considered fixed, but open as possibilities of transformation. (From an interview with the artist Matthew Buckingham who research the process of producing and consuming history.)

Staging my body next to bomb wounds Mitchell in a lecture, part of Documenta 13 program, "The Arts of Occupation: Image, Space, Revolution" (10.06.12 16:00)- mentioned the different concepts of space of appearance, space of memory and space of action. He referred to space of appearance as it's perceived in Hanna Arendt's essay "The Human Condition". Arendt is writing about the political act as the basic act of appearing in the public space. He said that historical events must take place somewhere and that makes the place monumental.

Monuments create a space of memory that often immortalizes pain. The monuments are there to make us remember a trauma and not to forget. Wounds are kept open deliberately to direct pain into war and violence. When a body is being stage in a space, it always creates space of appearance. It might be a space of memory or it might be a space of action. The act of staging a body in a monumental space might create new meaning and lead to an action and change.

Smoking

Chimneys, on a rainy day, on the way to the train station. My friend and I are wondering if it is a romantic vision or a horrifying one.

Another horrifying vision, was a visit in the former Gestapo building, that my friend found by chance, when he noticed **an old sign** next to a closed building.



Staging my body next to bomb wounds on the former Gestapo building on Weigel street, Kassel.



"Lee Miller in Hitler's bath", 1945
photographer: David Scherman. This photo was shown in Documenta 13 exhibition.

Chimneys "The most impressive thing, of course, said Ferber, were all the chimneys that towered above the plain and the flat maze of housing, as far as the eye could see. Almost every one of those chimneys, he said, has now been demolished or taken out of use. But at that time there were still thousands of them, side by side, belching out smoke by day and night. Those square and circular smokestacks, and the countless chimneys from which a yellowy-grey smoke rose, made a deeper impression on me when I arrived than anything else I had previously seen, said Ferber. I can no longer say exactly what thoughts the site of Manchester prompted in me then, but I believe I felt I had found my destiny." (W.G Sebald, "The Emigrants", page 168, a story about a painter that arrives in a "children transport" to Manchester and knows by the smoking chimneys, that he arrived to his final destination.)

Chimneys "What is the difference between Santa Claus and a Jew? Santa comes in through the chimney and leaves through the door. A Jew comes in through the door and leaves through the chimney"

I learned this joke from a video art by Guy Koenigstein. In the video, Koenigstein is approaching people in Germany and ask them to read a joke from a given paper. All the jokes appear to be black jokes about the Holocaust and the video is showing the embraced and ambiguous reactions of the readers. Koenigstein was one of the visitors in my artwork "Punch Line-German Bakery" (Part of the show "Three Artists walking into a Bar", De Apple, Amsterdam, 2012). Since my work was dealing with the question of German humor, he told me about his video and later on let me watch it.

Where are you from? W.J.T Mitchell in his lecture, "The Arts of Occupation: Image, Space, Revolution" said: "Your origin is the place that comes to your mind when people ask you where are you from".

Ahh, I am from Israel My friend says that when people ask me where I am from, I am whispering it. I told him there are two reasons for that.

(1)- Paranoia (which is a part of the Jewish and Israeli heritage).

(2)- Fear of nationalism. When people start to shout out loud proudly their nationalities it always ends with violence towards others.

My European friend said that one should mention his or her nationality in a regular tone without making any issue out of it and then there will not be any issue.

Language In a conversation with Suely Rolnik, "Notes toward the Decolonization of the Body-Knowing" on the 10th of July, she says that her mother tongue is a memory of trauma. (Her mother tongue is Portuguese and she left Brazil to Paris after she was released from prison in her home country.) Rolink says that using a foreign language was like a plaster cast on a wound.

Woman

A: Hi, **where are you from?**

Woman B: I am from Palestine.

Woman A: **Ahh, I am from Israel.**

Woman B: Ahh, are you OK with this?

Woman A: Yes, are you OK with this?

To arrive from her home in Palestine to Germany, where she meet woman A, woman B had to take a flight from Jordan. On her way to Jordan, she had to go on a bridge and cross through three **check points**- The Palestinian, the Israeli and the Jordanian. She was held in the Israeli check point for 6 hours. It is considered a short time. She was lucky.

Woman A (trying to look strait into woman B eyes):

I know.

I understand.

I perfectly understand.

Woman A and Woman B counting together from one to ten in **each other's language.**

Woman A	Woman B
wahad	ehad
tnein	shtaim
talate	shalosh
arbaa	arba
hamsa	hamesh
satee	shesh
sabaa	sheva
tamaniye	shmone
tisaa	tesha
asara	eser

Check points



Efrat Gal, *Untitled*, ink on paper, 2011.



Banksy, *graffiti on the security wall in Bethlehem, Palestine*, 2007.

Each other's language Woman B was teaching Hebrew in a school, but she does not know to speak much. She says that when soldiers approach her, she pretends that she does not understand anything. But, she wants to know the language in order to understand what the soldiers are saying about her. It makes me think about the choice of using or not using a language as power and about choosing to be active or passive or being an object or a talking subject.

Against normalization

Efrat Gal, "Coexistence", oil pastels on paper, 2010. A drawing of a frame from the epic movie "Exodus" by Otto Preminger that shows the Israeli- Palestinian conflict in a one sided stereotypical and naive way.

To gather in public places W.J.T Mitchell in his lecture, "The Arts of Occupation: Image, Space, Revolution", mentioned Hanna Arendt's ideas from "The Human Condition" about the political act as the basic act of appearing in the public space, the basic right of bodies to get together in a public space, like a square; the occupied square as a meaningful site in revolutions. Mitchell also referred specifically to the presence of the woman body and as a historical and contemporary symbol in revolutions. Some examples he mentioned are "Liberty Leading the People" by Eugène Delacroix, the famous photo of the woman in the blue bra in Tiananmen Square or the women's protest in Cairo last year. He focused on a poster from the Wall Street occupy that shows a figure of dancing ballerina on the wall Street bull.



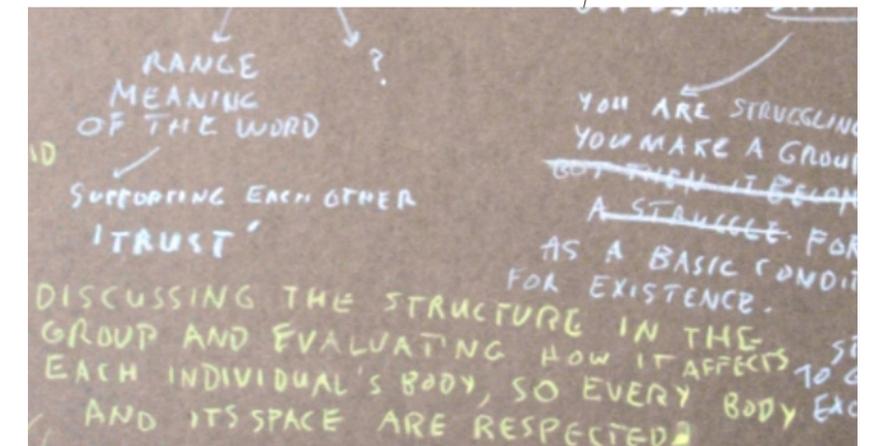
By dancing on the bull, the ballerina is changing the meaning of it. From an aggressive capitalistic symbol, it is transformed to a supporting element of an act of beauty. The woman body as a symbol of revolutions translates weakness and vulnerability to power. It is a process of creating a new meaning to old symbols by reusing them.

Woman B is **against normalization** in relationship with Israelis. Woman A and Woman B are serving tea to a Dutch man.
Dutch man: Where are you from?
Woman B: Palestine.
Woman A: Israel.
Dutch man: Oh I visited in Israel.
Woman B: Where did you visit?
That is all occupied Palestine.
Woman A to woman B: So where should I say I am from?

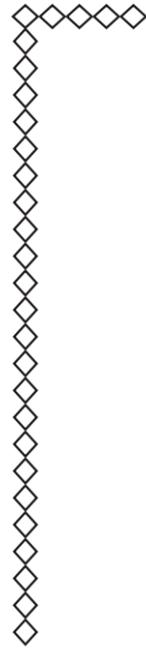
05.06.12

We are talking in the deportations station. I came two generations too late. She is on time. Being held at the army checkpoint. I do not want to say that we are all victims or that this encounter between two women is a sign of hope.

Moving bodies with force, avoiding bodies from moving with force. It is all about control over movements of bodies. Rene Gabari (artist and initiator of "AndAndAnd" commune and art project) suggested to block the public entrance of the gym with a wall and to write on it the last laws that were legislated in Germany, as a reaction to the arose of the occupy movement, that restrict the right **to gather in public places.**



A frame from the board in the workshop "The Politics of Small Groups" with Leon Redler. Woman A and woman B phrased the sentence-"Discussing the structure in the group and evaluating how it affects each individual's body, so every body and its space are respected."



Landscape Story

Dutch, Palestinian and Israeli are riding in a car, next to the German Fulda river. The three of them feel attached to the landscape. The Israeli asks the Palestinian what is her **favorite landscape**.

The Palestinian says that when she visited "Wadi Kelt" next to Jericho, the desert landscape impressed her deeply. The Israeli says that she likes the desert a lot and thinks that there is something primal and sublime about it. (Her brother lives in a settlement next to "Wadi Kelt", she does not tell that to the Palestinian).

"Wo Werra und Fulda sich küssen und ihre Namen büßen müssen dort entsteht durch diesen Kuss durch ganz Deutschland der Weserfluss"

Translation- Where the rivers Werra and Fulda are kissing and have to give up their names, the result of this kiss is the Weser- river, that streams through all over Germany. (A short rhyme that is taught in Geography lessons in Kassel, as it was told to me by a German friend).



Merging with the ground, the photo was taken by my aunt when she visited me in the Netherlands.

Favorite landscape The geographical space that a nation is living in is one of the less abstract and more tangible aspects in the national narrative. The whole of landscape and nature, mountains, valleys, water sources and typical flowers and animals, gives the individual a primal feeling of belonging. The connection of the individual to his or her place of birth is defined as patriotism. The modern nationalism wanted to widen this primal feeling towards the bigger unit of the state and to create an imaginary collective vision of it. (Tadmor, Shimoni, Tali, "Homeland Lesson- National Education and State Founding 1954-1966", Ben Gurion Institute, Israel, 2010.)

Favorite landscape W.J.T Mitchell in his book, "Traveling in the Holy Landscape", claims that it is not possible anymore to observe landscape for some self satisfaction or with calm philosophical passing thoughts. Observing landscape is always full of historical, political and esthetical tension. The observer should be aware of the violence and evil that are written upon the ground and projected on it by the gazing eye. Mitchell says that violent action of the gaze is strongly connected to imperialism and nationality. The landscape itself is the medium used for camouflaging this evil by presenting it as natural. Landscape can become the idol itself- a force that demands sacrifices and a powerful representation used to show power relations as natural, to erase parts of history and the ability to figure it out.

Merging with the ground On the 21st of June, the longest day of the year, I was invited to a traditional Swedish party in Kassel, Germany. The party involved schnapps drinking, old Swedish songs and pagan dancing around a big phallus made of flowers that symbolically fertilizing the ground. I learned also about an Icelandic tradition of rolling naked on a wet grass on midnight of the 24th of June. The belief says that if one will follow this ceremony, he or she might be seduced by the Elves that are living in the big stones. The person will be unified with a stage of eternal ecstasy or happiness. The melancholic songs sing about this stage of eternal happiness, that no one ever came back from to tell about.





Dirt



A frame from the video-“Vocabulary”, Efrat Gal, 2012. YouTube collage that deals with erotic and morbid aspects of the determinate relationship with the ground.

Splashing some dirt on each other



A frame from the video- “Love- Dead Sea Mud” (Efrat Gal, 2012)
A dialog or a ceremony with the articulating of my friend ceemin and me as representatives of our national identities and states- Iran and Israel (The video was filmed during a week when both states were threatening each other with nuclear weapons).The master of the ceremony and the mediator is a package of Dead Sea Mud- soil that was packed and brought from the holy land and it is believed that it has cosmetic and healing qualities. The video deals with a sensual connection to the soil and the regard to the “Other”.

Dirt

is not dirty- says the German student of **agriculture**. As part of “AndAnd” workshop, we are carrying a tone of **dirt** / soil / **ground** in buckets in order to fill in vertical pillars that are suitable to grow vegetables in an urban environment. While passing heavy buckets, we are **splashing some dirt on each other**. It sticks to our sweaty bodies.

The Joy of Translation

She is a ceramic artist, originally from Kirgizstan, but she speaks soft, smiling German. She makes the clay by herself.

I asked about the components of the clay. My question was asked in English with an Israeli accent.

My question was translated to German with a Palestinian accent. Her answer about different kinds of **native soils** that were mixed together was said in German. Her answer was translated to English with a Palestinian accent. Her answer was received by me in English and was translated in my mind immediately to Hebrew. Soil described by words was passed between 3 women's minds. It involved two spoken languages and two or more languages on the backGround. I know some words in German and some in Arabic. English is a bridge. Nationalities, conflicts and history were there but were not spoken. The old ceramic technique, we were using was called “The Joy of Translation” (Raku). It includes burning the clay in 900 degrees.

Agriculture was a dominant part of the Zionist curriculum and educational program, says Tali Tadmor Shimoni in her book “Homeland Lesson- National Education and State Founding 1954-1966”. Agricultural life were described as the dominant and ideal way of life in the state. The agricultural settlements were in charged of the most important missions; from producing food for the nation to securing the borders by their own existence.

Native soils German nationalism gave a lot of importance to the concept of German soil. Nazi Germany developed the ideology of Blut und Boden (Blood and Soil), that refers to ethnicity based on two factors, descents blood (of a folk) and homeland/Heimat (Soil). Richard Walther Darré, an influential member of the Nazi party and a noted race theorist, suggested a plan called “Rasse und Raum”-race and space or territory and it provided the ideological background for the Nazi expansive policy.

Ground “We also have a guessing game. For instance, we have to guess the three things that give and take in infinite plenty. Of course no one knows the answer, which Herr Bein then tells us in tones of great significance: the ground, the sea, and the Reich”. (The Jewish teacher plays a guessing game with his students, W.G Sebald, “The Emigrants”, page 204.)

Ground Schwindelgefühle (July 2012) Dizzy. Feelings.

Sebald's book, in four parts that combines life's stories of famous writers, war memories, corrosive fire and other torments with what looks like memories from a mental crisis.

Reading in the klinikum in Germany, after vertigo of crawling and vomiting in front of the Ottoneum.

He touched my back and shoved me from scattering in my vomit.

He taught me the term- Fingerspitzengefühl, finger tips feeling
When I was hydrated in Egypt, a tingling at the finger tips was one of the first symptoms. There, as well, I threw myself on the ground and on the others.

Education tactics are forming the body



Documentation of "Punch Line- German Bakery" (Part of the show "Three Artists walking into a Bar", De Apple, Amsterdam, 2012).

My project was dealing with questions of humor, education and violence through two German origin children books that I read in my childhood; "Max und Moritz" by Wilhelm Bush and "Der Struwwelpeter" by Dr. Heinrich Hoffman. These two books which were considered funny books are telling cruel stories accompanied by horrible illustrations. Humor and violence are used as tools to teach a lesson and the end of the story is always bitter. During the project I recreated the illustrations from the books and baked cookies at the site. The visitors were hosted in a domestic environment (that hosted me) and were invited to participate in a sweet bitter educational process, by receiving a morbid drawing and a cookie.



Between a plate of cookies, drawings and two "Shabat" candles (as part of a Saturday Jewish ceremony, the woman of the house lights two candles), the visitors were invited to have a look in an old recipes book, that belonged to my grandmother and her mother that tells a story about history, identity and emigration. The book starts with recipes and newspaper clips from Germany at the beginning of the 20th century and continues with some confusion between left and right to recipes and newspapers clips in Hebrew until the late 80s.

Education

is forming the body." Said Jakob Jakobsen who organized **"The Anti University" workshop** (part of Documenta13 and "AndAndAnd" project). Jakobsen said: "Language, architecture and **education tactics are forming the body.** The only way to deinstitutionalized is through the institution itself. The Anti University in London in the late 60s made a conference about violence, not only related to the war in Vietnam, but also to violence in society in general and in **the family** as our first traumatic encounter with education and system."

Love ≠ Violence?
Love + Violence = Education?

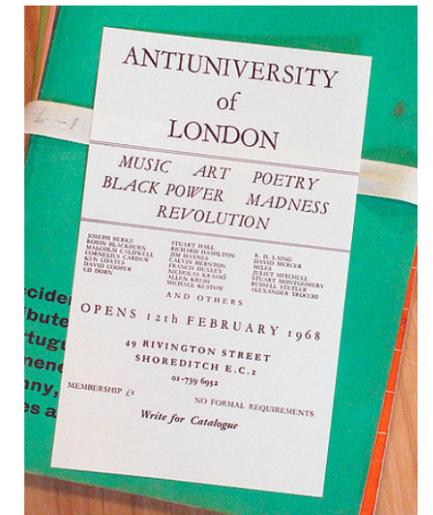


Efrat Gal, Untitled, ink on paper, 2011

"The Anti University" workshop

Monday June 25, 2012
Jakob Jakobsen, Marina Vismidt, John Cunningham and Danny Haywards.

Inspired by the example of the Anti university of London of the late 1960s counter culture this teach-in will discuss/contemplate/tear apart practices and experiments in relation to self-organized education and the communizing of knowledge both historically and at present. The Anti University of London was at its core an experimental process that brought together and broke up different fields of theory and practice as part of the desire to open up an unstable space between revolutionary politics, experimental art and radical psychiatry. As one of the founders put it: 'In the process of making an institution we deinstitutionalized ourselves'. (Description of the workshop from the internet site of "AndAndAnd" www.andandand.org)



The family "History and tragedy can be transmitted through the love of the family" Said by Anand Patwardhan in an introduction to his film "War and Peace" that was screened as part of Documenta program. His films are dealing with racism, nationality, masculinity and religion in India.

Flag



A drawing by Yonatan, a student in 7th grade in a school I taught in Tel Aviv in 2008. The students were asked to draw something for the celebrations of the 60th independence day of Israel.

Hair Salon



"Forever", a frame from the installation "The Essence of Jerusalem", (Efrat Gal, Academy Gallery, Utrecht, 2012), about the promise and the deceit of nationalism and cosmetic products.

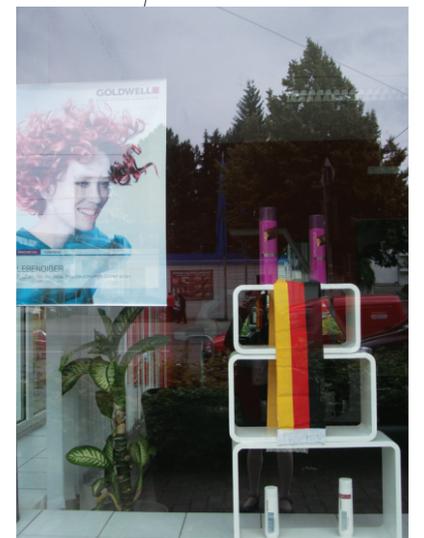
Football Championship



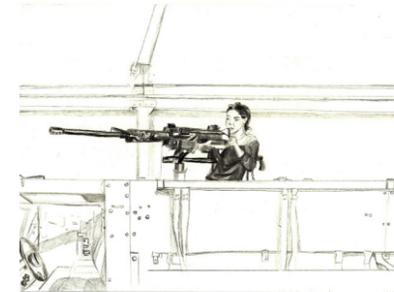
Kassel, Germany, June 2012

During Documenta13 in Kassel, German football supporters were celebrating the 2012 European Football in the streets. The celebrations included German **flags** hanging on houses and on the streets and German flags being waved from honking cars full of screaming youngsters.

A German friend told me that until 2006, this act of celebrating the German nationality was rare and forbidden in an unspoken way. It only became common since the world cup, which took place in Germany in 2006. He says celebrating nationality in Germany started gradually after the unification with the east and it is still more widespread in the east parts of the country.



Hair Salon, Kassel, June, 2012

Weapon is needed

Efrat Gal, "Self Portrait in the IDF Museum", pencil on paper, 2011.

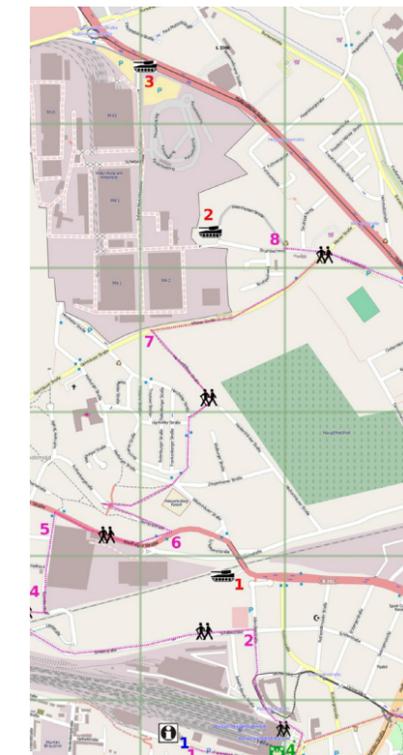
I was part of

My new Anti- Weapon shirt

We kept on talking about nationalism in Israel and in Germany.

He says that as an immediate reaction to the Fukushima disaster in Japan Angela Merkel announced an accelerated phasing out of all 17 German nuclear reactors. In Israel, Fukushima did not arouse any discussion about nuclear energy. It is a common agreement; based on existential fear or constant paranoia that nuclear **weapon is needed**.

The "AndAndAnd" workshop, **I was part of**, hosted for a week, an Anti- Weapon group based in Kassel. Apparently there is a big weapon industry in Kassel. Also during the second world war, Kassel was a center of weapon industry and this is the reason why the city was bombed heavily by the allied forces. One Friday afternoon, I joined a historical tour in the city that was organized by the Anti- Weapon group.



Part of the map of the Anti- Weapon tour in Kassel

Der Tod ist ein Meister*Fugue of Death/ Paul Celan*

Black milk of daybreak we drink it at nightfall
 we drink it at noon in the morning we drink it
 at night drink it and drink it
 we are digging a grave in the sky
 it is ample to lie there
 A man in the house he plays with the serpents
 he writes
 he writes when the night falls to Germany
 your golden hair Margarete
 he writes it and walks from the house the stars
 glitter
 he whistles his dogs up
 he whistles his Jews out and orders
 a grave to be dug in the earth
 he commands us strike up for the dance

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
 we drink in the mornings at noon
 we drink you at nightfall
 drink you and drink you
 A man in the house he plays with the serpents
 he writes
 he writes when the night falls to Germany
 your golden hair Margarete
 Your ashen hair Shulamith
 we are digging a grave in the sky
 it is ample to lie there

He shouts stab deeper in earth you there
 and you others you sing and you play
 he grabs at the iron in his belt and swings it and
 blue are his eyes
 stab deeper your spades you there
 and you others play on for the dancing
 Black milk of daybreak we drink you at nightfall
 we drink you at noon in the mornings
 we drink you at nightfall
 drink you and drink you
 a man in the house your golden hair Margarete
 your ashen hair Shulamith
 he plays with the serpents

He shouts play sweeter death's music
 death comes as a master from Germany
 he shouts stroke darker the strings
 and as smoke you shall climb to the sky
 then you'll have a grave in the clouds
 it is ample to lie there

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
 we drink you at noon
 death comes as a master from Germany
 we drink you at nightfall and morning
 we drink you and drink you
 a master from Germany death
 comes with eyes that are blue
 with a bullet of lead he will hit in the mark
 he will hit you
 a man in the house your golden hair Margarete
 he hunts us down with his dogs in the sky
 he gives us a grave
 he plays with the serpents and dreams death
 comes as a master from Germany
 your golden hair Margarete
 your ashen hair Shulamith.

Not far from the city center, behind high fences, hide some weapon factories. The same factories, under the same management more or less, were manufacturing weapon in Nazi Germany, using labor of thousands of force workers that was tortured and murdered frequently. During the tour that was in German, but was personally translated for me to English, we saw the sites where those labor camps existed. There were hundreds of small camps located in the city next to regular apartment buildings. We saw some barracks where the prisoners lived that still stand in a middle of an immigrant's neighborhood.



The fence of one of the weapon factories that is still active today



"Der Tod ist ein Meister", Propaganda of the Anti- weapon group.



National Identity On the 13th of June at 15:00 I went with my Palestinian friend to see Walid Raad's performance, "Scratching On Things I Could Disavow".

The performance began with a story; Raad was telling the audience in a very persuasive way, about an insurance company that had offered him a special insurance for artists. He made a wide research about the company, its owners and its background. Accompanied by a complicated diagram with photos, he explained how he had found out that the owner was an Israeli man, who served in the IDF intelligence. Many of the workers are former soldiers from the IDF intelligence, the company is inanced by suspicious sources and the whole thing appears to be a strange conspiracy. I was sitting in the first line and while Raad looked into my eyes, telling me his story, my immediate response was a feeling of being attacked in a personal way. I felt that he is spinning an anti-Semitic blood plot that involves Israel, money and power. I am fond of Raad's art works that deals with history and combines truth and fiction. It made me aware of the potential danger and the power of fiction. (Later on I learned this company actually exists and an artist friend of mine from Israel even got a job offer from them). This feeling of attack on my national identity made me so agitated that I almost didn't notice that the performance was interesting and beautiful. In the discussion with Suely Rolink on July 10th, I was sitting next to Raad. He could see me writing in my notebook from the right to the left and I hoped he would ask me where I am from so I could maybe tell him about how I felt during his performance. Was I looking for a confrontation or a confirmation? Why am I always thinking through my national identity?



should not deal with **national identity too seriously**". Said Leon Redler (Who delivered before a workshop called "The Politics of Small Groups" and was a psychiatrist in the Anti University in the 60s). It was part of a discussion on Tuesday, July 10th (day 32 out of 100 days of Documenta13) with Suely Rolnik, "Notes toward the Decolonization of the Body-Knowing".

Rolink said: "National identity is a poisonous concept."

Claire Pentecost (an artist who presented in Documenta 13, art works that are dealing with soil) said: "People are seduced easily by the concept of **national identity**."

Rolink said: "We are fragile and tempted by pimps to the stability that national identity offers to us. We are constructed to desire that."

Karen Hakobian (an artist from Armenia that delivers performance workshops to Turkish and Armenian students about expressing a memory of trauma through the body) said: "War is the ultimate trauma that makes you question your identity."

He tells how after living in NY for a while he came back to Armenia and took part in a local traditional festival. He felt like he got a confirmation there for steps of change that he took in his life (Rolink calls that making a cut as part of her theory about "The body knowing"). The participants of the discussion were questioning if the good feeling that Hakobian had was a feeling of reconnecting to his national identity.

Hakobian mentioned that Armenia is a fascist state. (He is persecuted there for fighting for human rights and participating in a gay parade in Turkey).

National identity too seriously

A conversation with a stranger seeking friendship on Facebook.



Mody Modyy:

hi

Mody Modyy:

how are you frined
plz froom where



Efrat Eemu Gal:

Who are you?



Mody Modyy:

iam mody froom uae
and you

iam very hapy now pecoz you
froom

israel

iam love pepoil israel too much
plz me frined



Efrat Eemu Gal:

Why do you like Israel???





Our names are a curse for us When ever someone is asking for my name, the second question will always be where am I from. A question I wished to avoid after some time. My name is taken from the bible and it is the place where Rachel- one of the mothers was buried. It is also a settlement not far from Jerusalem and Beit Lehem.

The Essence of Jerusalem



"Happy", a frame from the installation "The Essence of Jerusalem", (Efrat Gal, Academy Gallery, Utrecht, 2012), about the promise and the deceit of nationalism and cosmetic products.

Ayreen Anastas (initiator of "AndAn-dAnd" and originally from Beit Lehem, Palestine): **"Our names are a curse for us"**. Rolink presented a story about cannibalism written by a German man from Kassel from the book "The Inconstancy of the Savage Soul". The story describes the ceremony of cannibalism and says that the man who is in charge of killing the victim is not allowed to eat with the rest. The killing is described as a trauma that forces the killer to leave the community and go for isolation in the nature until he comes back with a new name and new body paintings.

The Essence of Jerusalem

(July 2012, Kassel)

I already told you I am willing to give away Jerusalem for you. We tried all the perfume testers together at the German Train Station. You helped me pick socks. We shared a sweet chocolate tablet. We dreamed of living in the Super Market, rubbing our bodies with cosmetics, making everything colorful with many kinds of nail polish. I was like Rabi Akiva picking straw from his lover's hair and promising her the jewel Jerusalem of Gold. My Mother as a child, used to long for the old City, from the other side of the border. My Father conquered the Holy City. He was the first one to use that type of explosive. The parachutists cried in front of the Western Wall, handsome and blond. I want to give it to you. In the name of my cousin who tried to bomb An arab girl's school in Al Quds. Don't cry my little sister. I can't bare the guilt. I will trade my backGround and traditions for our happiness.



Mody Modyy:

is typing ...

pecoz peoil israel very nic and no like
robim iam know pepoil moslim like
probim

put pepoil israel like live good and like
live hapy

iam mahmoud froom egypt put iam work now in emaratis and no like came back egypt

you know

plive me lz frined

you her

alooooo00000

