

The Opening Gallery presents:

ORIT BEN SHITRIT

ECHOES IN MY MOUTH + WARD OF THE FERAL HORSES

Opening Reception: Thursday, July 20, 6-8pm

Exhibition on view: July 19 - July 29, 2023 (Tue-Sat)

The Opening Gallery, 42 Walker Street, Tribeca, NY 10013 www.openinggallery.com

Curated by Maureen Sullivan

Public Program: Wednesday, July 26, 6:30-7:30pm “Becoming leaf: queering technologies toward human photosynthesis” talk by Vanina Saracino. Followed by a conversation with Orit Ben Shitrit.



Orit Ben Shitrit, ECHOES IN MY MOUTH, 2022, video, 7 minutes.

The Opening Gallery presents Orit Ben Shitrit's solo show and New York premiere of two moving image speculations about the fragmented Mind: ECHOES IN MY MOUTH and WARD OF THE FERAL HORSES (EMPAC commission), as well as a related series of new paintings, MEMORY DAYDREAMS.

ECHOES depicts humans who struggle to find purpose and motivation in a future society where memories have been rewritten, and conflicts resolved. WARD lays out a cyborg's upheaval. Their broken and fractured mind is ultimately celebrated through imagination, color, music and dance.

In ECHOES IN MY MOUTH, 2022, individuals struggle to find meaning and motivation in a futuristic society where artificial intelligence has achieved machine consciousness. Within this world, human memories and traumas have been erased and rewritten, leading to the supposed healing of our current

fractured humanity and its conflicts. Bodies in robot-like movement approach a cave, in their search for a memory transplant. Referencing both seed banks and memorial archives, as well as Plato's Allegory, the work questions reality and our ability to create intelligent beings, beyond our self-referential cognition. Activated by the sun's orange-hued energy, and unified by an original score to a poem written by the artist, the video utilizes various forms of generative AI, toggling between bodies in movement—performed by acclaimed Batsheva Ensemble dancers, and a fantastical world inside and outside the cave.

Surrounding the video installation are new black and white acrylic paintings, entitled MEMORY DAY-DREAMS, 2023, a rumination and an extension of the images from ECHOES IN MY MOUTH. Depicting trans-species combines of humans, plants, animals and machines, they are futuristic in essence, imagined beyond the limits of our human-centric perspective.



Orit Ben Shitrit, *Ward of the Feral Horses*, 2014-17, HD video, 19'24" Ed. 5.

Commissioned by: Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) RPI, Troy, NY

WARD OF THE FERAL HORSES, 2014-17, is set in a 19thc. horse stable. It depicts the upheaval of a cyborg who struggles with suppressing his primal urges to conform to societal expectations. Distraught and failing to communicate his pre-Oedipal being, he exhibits a breakdown. His mind cracks and unleashes an emancipatory carnivalesque dance troupe—Jinns—who emerge from the room's furnishings. They liberate the senses and fluidity of gender, in a festive Solarpunk reclamation of the present. The action in the film is

further propelled by quotes from Gertrude Stein. Recited almost 100 years later, the ideas she expressed are surprisingly timely and hint at repetition echoing from the industrial revolution: our cyclical failing.



About:

The Opening Gallery is an initiative that supports contemporary art and international artists beyond the confines of the art market, while it fosters cultural engagement and exchanges between the US and the globe. This alternative art ecosystem attempts to go beyond prevalent gallery models and to showcase global underrepresented artists, performances and live events, and the work of women artists and artists of color. Proceeds support neurodiversity, charitable causes, and the non-profit Luv Michael, which is committed to enriching the lives of autistic adults.

Orit Ben Shitrit is a transdisciplinary visual artist, filmmaker, choreographer and an educator. In her moving image work, she utilizes movement and bodies to implicate the powers that be, their mechanisms of domination, and their effect—the potential for violence. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally at C24 Gallery, New York; American University Museum, Katzen Arts Center, Washington D.C., MACRO Museo d'arte contemporanea, Roma; Museum Van Loon, Amsterdam; El Museo Cultural de Santa Fe; Herzliya Museum of Art; Haifa Museum; Videobrasil in São Paulo (2011, 2013) Biennial of Moving Image (BIM) at Museum MUNTREF, Buenos Aires; the Royal College of Art, London; as well as in Austria, China, Finland, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, Russia, Slovenia, Spain and the US. Ben Shitrit is a fellowship recipient from the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) and Foundation for Contemporary Arts. She received video production grants from Artis, Ostrovsky Family Fund, International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP), and Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) in New York. Publications include: The New York Times, Time Out Shanghai, artnet.com and more; exhibition catalogues include: American University Museum, Haifa Museum, MABSociety Shanghai, Videobrasil, Kino Der Kunst, to name but a few. Ben Shitrit participated in residencies at Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC), EMPAC, Troy, New York; Marble House Project residency, Vermont; and more. Orit received her MFA from Hunter College in 2010. Since then, she has taught art, photography and film at the New School/Parsons and The San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI) where until recently, she served as the Chair of the Film Department. For more information: www.Orit-Ben-Shitrit.com

Maureen Sullivan is an independent curator, writer, and founder of Red Art Projects, an art consultancy and communications company based in NY that works with artists and contemporary art organizations nationally and internationally. Curated solo exhibitions and projects have included artists Jeremy Blake, C. Finley, Elmgreen & Dragset, Fall on Your Sword, Ghost of a Dream, Christian Jankowski, Colin J. Radcliffe, Eve Sussman and Simon Lee, Antonia Wright; as well as group exhibitions that have featured Julia Chiang, Jen DeNike, Richard Garet, Ragnar Kjartansson, Bjorn Melhus, Walter Robinson, Ugo Rondinone, Betty Tompkins, Naama Tsabar, and many more. Maureen initiated and co-produced the collateral exhibition for the Venice Architecture Biennale 2016 for the non-profit space Izolaytsia, Ukraine, after the invasion of Donetsk. See curatorial work at redartprojects.com.

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