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Shiri Mordechay, "Pneuma Pleats," 2010, installation detail, Ink, watercolor and acrylic on paper with wire, thread and mixed media, dimensions variable.

SHIRI MORDECHAY DEALS WITH DARKNESS

Cinema of the Brain

by Annabel Osberg ·

November 3, 2015 · in

THE MAGAZINE

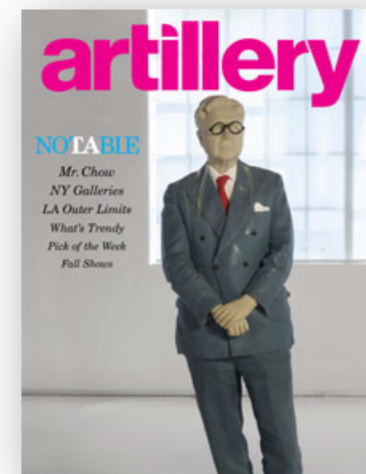


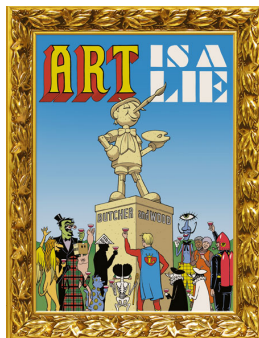
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During her childhood in provincial Nigeria, Shiri Mordechay recalls traversing roadways littered with human skulls, glimpsing live babies discarded in trash cans and being spellbound by a harrowing band of voodoo practitioners that surrounded her abode and pounded insistently on its doors and windows. A green mamba once encircled her ankles while she sat at a classroom desk. Years later, in college near the Lebanese border in Israel, she narrowly survived dormitory bombings. Even now, these morbid early-life memories animate her paintings that teem with grisly scenes, lascivious figures and otherworldly beasts.

Mordechay studied at the Avni Institute in Tel Aviv, but received her BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2005 and her MFA from New York's School of Visual Arts in 2007. Over the past decade, she has lived in New York and shown internationally, attracting the attention of critics like Jerry Saltz. Notable solo exhibitions include Plane Space in New York (2005) and Honor Fraser in LA (2010). Next year, she will release a pop-up book as an extension of her 2014 show at San Francisco's Alter Space.



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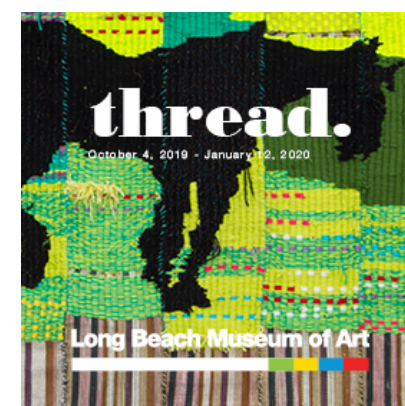
ARMANDO LERMA
LOST IN THE ANDES





Shiri Mordechay with installation: "Pneuma Pleats," 2010.

Mordechay recently moved to Los Angeles, where she maintains a studio downtown. Her cosmopolitan outlook is echoed in her eclectic creations and the cosmic ambitions therein. She works primarily in ink on paper, assembling multi-layered collages that protrude into space yet maintain painterly identities by virtue of 2D pieces that together read as single images. Surprising profusions of detail result in paintings within paintings that can be viewed from multiple angles besides the main pictorial coalescence. At Honor Fraser, Mordechay transformed a room into an elaborate installation composed of multifarious fragments unified by her peculiar organizational logic.





Shiri Mordechay, "Pneuma Pleats," 2010, (detail).

"It's like the cinema of the brain," she explained during a recent studio visit. "When you look one way, there's one event. From another angle, there's another situation. It becomes almost like a film that you experience all at once, yet you have to focus on one scene at a time. All these things are happening simultaneously, but I'm giving you moments, small chapters, like frames and sequences."

She compares her process to peeling back onion-like layers of reality and excavating the pith. The rippled textures and the torn edges of her paper surfaces provide counterpoint to the intricate renderings and delicate 3D filigrees. This material contrast mirrors tensions inherent to the paintings' graceful grotesquerie.

"Highlighting dark, nightmarish things that people don't want to deal with is a way of contributing

Highlighting dark,

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to the curing process, by showing things that people want to ignore,” she said. “Putting them into art beautifies them—they’re still gross and sick like a tumor, but you’re drawn in by the labor and detail and care, and seductive characters beckoning you to join their uncensored world.”

**nightmarish things
that people don’t want
to deal with is a way of
contributing to the
curing process**



Mordechay seeks to contrive, through her art, an alternate universe that extracts real-world maladies and concentrates them into a mirror that enhances awareness of societal defects.

Exiting her studio building’s door into prickly sunlight and detritus-dotted street, I saw the prosaic civic surroundings through new eyes, as though returning from a journey to a piquant alien land.

One Response



Anonymous November 5, 2015 at 11:53 am ·

Some people are born with gifts. Most times they can't network, talk or all the other bullshit that makes completely weak talented people more visible. You know what I mean, playing the game. But here, sometimes the light gets thru. Well done, bringing Shiri to attention.

Comments are closed.