

Tamar Ettun's sculptural acrobatics

The active spaces Tamar Ettun constructs constitute arenas for physical and mental acrobatic events. Her installations simulate circus-like stages placing the body as the object of beauty and movement in a dialogue with lost and fragmented objects and parts of objects, building assemblages simultaneously poetic and abandoned.

Ettun's sculptural language moves between absurd assemblage based on bricolage, temporary connections and binding parts of objects and between choreographic gestures of nonobjective dance in which the human bodies of Ettun and members of her troupe serve as both engine and fulcrum for an ecstatic, Sisyphian event.

She replaces the human body with artificial objects, and use the human body as an object, fully aware of the tension between the physical acrobatic control and the absurdity and purposelessness of the action, as an installation action. She is also aware of the danger and potential of the destruction, and creates a threshold space in which to address and play with the impossible.

The body acts as an instrument for the action moving between tension and slackness, readiness and release, discipline and control and the absurd and giving in. Paradoxically, the physical effort and the mental concentration required to carry out the impossible acrobatics and hits, actions Ettun often carries out in performances contradicting the laws of gravity, are what precisely increase the emotional and mental intensity, the tension and the vitality in the work.

I have known Tamar since she was a teenager, and recognize her deep passion to create her own world using all possible materials, her outstanding capacity to experience the creative process as a deep, active inner journey, giving her soul entirely over to the experience. Her art studies expanded her range, her ability to construct syntax and language, and her own space.

In one of her works shown at the Braverman Gallery, *One and One, One and Two, One and Three, One and Four* (2014), Ettun used the gallery space as a vessel to contain a huge, empty hot air balloon which became a kind of space within a space, trapped on the ground floor, enabling viewers to look over it from the upper lobby. It thus became an object and a place simultaneously. The viewer's gaze at this work moves through various observation points to create a cumulative narrative of fragments cohering into an event.

Inside the sphere, absurd actions take place, as if within a time capsule. Ettun constructed a table/stage on which she placed absurd improvised musical instruments made of day-to-day objects and tools, trumpets and woodwinds from funnels and jerrycans, barrels and tin containers, sticks and strings, simulating an entire orchestra of missing musicians who are capable of responding to the soundtrack composed by Tamar Muskal from recordings and mixes. This "sound machine" of daily noises have infiltrated her work as additional raw materials in addition to her rich lexicon of materials, in a kind of play and simulation in a world of absent sounds. The performance moves between concrete realization at the moment the audience intervenes and use the instruments and between a frozen installation making present the remains of a past performance, a moment before or after the event itself.

On the lobby floor are “instant sculptures,” assemblages made of mundane objects from daily life, such as rubber gloves, striving to stand upright in an effort to preserve sculptural equilibrium, from their center of physical gravity towards the space. They attempt to rise up, sending tentacles into the space in what may be prayer, reminiscent of the classic sculptures by Käthe Kollwitz, Rodin or Giacometti. These personified objects raise themselves up, echoing the potential musical event in the lower space.

In a new video piece, *It's not a Question of Anxiety* (2014), created especially for this exhibition, Ettun has created a visual choreography with the aid of movements, objects and color, with an original arrangement of the liturgical poem *Yedid Nefesh* playing in the background.

Tamar Ettun entwines sociocultural and autobiographical layers into her fictional theatrical space, where all of the contexts cohere into a circus of the soul, or an orchestra for weddings and funerals. She binds absence with creative fullness, and sadness with joy, deeply conscious of the limitations of art along with great faith in the ability of art to fill the void. In this sense, any work by Tamar Ettun is a hot air balloon, a possible space existing between closeness and distance and between inside and outside.

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