

La Biennale di Venezia
59th International Art Exhibition
Israeli Pavilion 2022
Curated by Shelley Harten
Artist Ilit Azoulay



La Biennale di Venezia

59. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

מַלְכוּת
Queendom
מְלֻכּוּת

Ilit Azoulay

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Queendom

مَلِكُوت
מַלְכוּת

Curated by Shelley Harten

Pre-opening: April 20–22

Exhibition: April 23—November 27, 2022

The Israel Pavilion at the 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia features the internationally acclaimed artist Ilit Azoulay. Her work minutely scrutinizes how visual information is processed, by means of a unique photographic and interrogative method that disassembles and reassembles previously unexamined elements. Through a prism of knowledge production and the imagination, Azoulay changes how the world is perceived. Within the context of the Biennale Arte 2022, she addresses intersectional questions of cultural appropriation, shared histories, and the sovereignty of art.

Azoulay's project, *Queendom*, comprises large-scale panoramic photomontages, a sound installation produced in collaboration with a light-language channeller, and architectural interventions. The *Queendom* is governed by art, and its story is one of female and cultural empowerment. It is compiled from data that arises from a comprehensive system crash, following a malfunction of existing power structures, and pours out of the digital realm into the physical realm of the Giardini della Biennale. Beneath an ultramarine canopy, the pavilion is transformed into the *Queendom's* palace, shifting from of its decades-long national and patriarchal programming into a trans-regional and re-gendered space. Azoulay also reconfigures its architectural orientation from West to East—away from a male-centered gaze to female empowerment, and from Eurocentric modernity to Middle Eastern contemporaneity.

Azoulay habitually composes images based equally on information gleaned from oral histories and storytelling, and rigorous research and investigation. Her point of departure for the current project is a nearly forgotten archive of obsessively photographed medieval metal vessels from the Islamic world, compiled by the Austro-Jewish-British art historian David Storm Rice (1913–1962) and bequeathed to the L.A. Mayer Museum for Islamic Art in Jerusalem. These are precious objects that were produced in the Middle East, traded in the Levant, brought to Europe via Venice, and are now mostly held in Western museums. Azoulay engages with these archival photographs by scanning, cropping, and changing them onto new data carriers, and the photomontaged images are then digitally “welded”

onto scanned metal plates. She uses digital craftwork to visualize the afterlife of the images and their transformations, accentuating histories of appropriation and missing links in their geographies of knowledge. The resulting panoramic photomontages function as pathways to the imaginary expanse of the Queendom, from whence a universal language of healing projects out to the visitors and extends throughout the pavilion's premises. Within the terra artis of Queendom, the migration of visual data can be explored. What do images that are twice removed from their source remember—and in a digitally connected world, can these be recontextualized? Is it possible for art to transition from its assigned identity? What at first appears to be an innocent foray into a realm of fantasy is, in fact, a call to take responsibility for one's imagination.

Queendom (2022) is curated by Dr. Shelley Harten, Curator for Contemporary and Modern Art and History, Jewish Museum Berlin.

Artist | Ilit Azoulay

Ilit Azoulay (b. 1972 in Jaffa–Tel Aviv, Israel; lives and works in Berlin) has works held in numerous museum and private collections worldwide, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Guggenheim Museum, New York; LACMA, Los Angeles; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Art Institute of Chicago; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Julia Stoschek Collection, Berlin; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; and Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv.

Her work has been exhibited extensively around the world, including solo exhibitions at Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, Herzliya, Israel (2014); KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2014); The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (2017); CCA – Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv (2019); and Braverman Gallery, Tel Aviv (2021). She has also participated in group exhibitions at major international venues, including The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (2011, 2017); Daimler Contemporary, Berlin (2012, 2020); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2015); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris (2015); Australian Center for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (2015); Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2016); Bauhaus Museum, Dessau (2019); and the Eretz-Israel Museum, Tel Aviv (2021).

Azoulay attended the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem. She is the recipient of several awards, including the Constantiner Photography Award for an Israeli Artist, Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2011); the Israel Ministry of Culture and Sports Prize (2011, 2017); and the Rencontres d'Arles Discovery Award (2014); and was among the finalists for the Prix Pictet (2015).

Her recent publications include the artist-book *Finally Without End* (Sternberg Press, Berlin, 2014); *Shifting Degrees of Certainty* (Spector Books, Leipzig, 2014), which accompanied her exhibition at KW, Berlin; and the monograph *No Thing Dies* (Mousse Publishing, Milan, 2019), published following her eponymous exhibition at The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

Curator | Shelley Harten

Dr. Shelley Harten is an exhibition curator for contemporary and modern art and history at the Jewish Museum Berlin. Harten has written the award-winning doctoral thesis "The Hebrew Orient. Representations of the 'Orient' and the 'Arab' in Zionist and Israeli Fine Art from 1906-1957". Her last project was the large retrospective "Yael Bartana - Redemption Now" (2021) at the Jewish Museum Berlin, voted by a jury of art journalists in tip Berlin as the most important exhibition in the city in 2021. Harten's recent publications include "The Book of Malka Germania" (2021), and articles such as "Israeli Art History and Israel Studies" (2021), "Sun, we'll lock you up in a concrete house!" (2019) and "Le tissage: une voie d'accès à l'Orient" (2016). Her expertise lies in contemporary art, trans-, intercultural, and interconnected art histories and in the interdisciplinary field of history, cultural studies, and art history.



Queendom, Panel 3, 2022

Inkjet print, 215x135 cm

Featuring

Homberg Ewer, Mosul, Jazira (present-day northern Iraq), 640 AH / AD 1242, brass with silver inlay, The Keir Collection of Islamic Art on loan to the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas, USA < Baptistère de Saint Louis, Syria or Egypt, 13th–14th century, hammered brass with silver and gold inlay, and niello, The Louvre, Paris, France < Bowl, Iraq, 9th–11th century, copper or bronze, formerly Collection R. Ettinghausen, USA, present whereabouts unknown < Ewer, Herat, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), late 12th century, bronze with copper and silver inlay, Galleria Estense, Modena, Italy < Ewer, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), first half of 12th century, hammered brass sheet with silver inlay, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, USA < Bobrinsky Bucket, Herat, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), 559 AH / AD 1163, bronze with copper and silver inlay, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia < Mirror, Iran or Rum (present-day Turkey), 12th–13th century, bronze, Max von Oppenheim Foundation, Cologne, Germany < Nisan Taşı, Mongol-Iranian, Iran or Syria, first half of 14th century, cast brass with silver and gold inlay, Mevlana Museum, Konya, Turkey < Plate, Iran or Central Asia, 4th century, gilded silver, The British Museum, London, UK

Courtesy the Artist; Braverman Gallery. © Ilit Azoulay; L.A. Mayer Museum for Islamic Art, Jerusalem



Ilit Azoulay, Detail from Queendom, Panel 3, 2022, Inkjet print, 215x135 cm. Courtesy the Artist; Braverman Gallery. © Ilit Azoulay; L.A. Mayer Museum for Islamic Art, Jerusalem



Ilit Azoulay, Detail from Queendom, Panel 3, 2022, Inkjet print, 215x135 cm. Courtesy the Artist; Braverman Gallery. © Ilit Azoulay; L.A. Mayer Museum for Islamic Art, Jerusalem



Queendom, Panel 2, 2022

Inkjet print, 395x150 cm

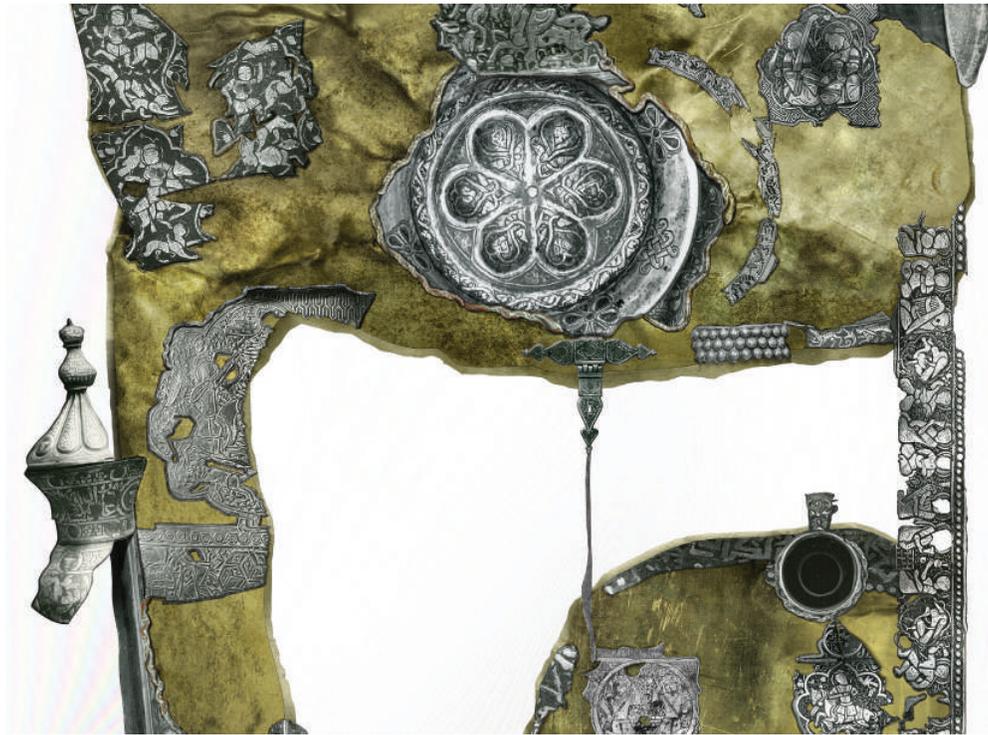
Featuring:

Baptistère de Saint Louis, Syria or Egypt, 13th–14th century, hammered brass with silver and gold inlay, and niello, The Louvre, Paris, France < Plate, Iran or Central Asia, 4th century, gilded silver, The British Museum, London, UK < Fould Bucket, signed Muhammad Ibn Nasir Ibn Muhammad al-Harawi, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan) or Rum (present-day Turkey), late 12th–mid-13th century, cast brass/bronze with copper and silver inlay, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia < Tray, belonging to Badr al-Din Lu'lu', Atabeg of Mosul, hammered brass with silver inlay, Mosul, Jazira (present-day northern Iraq), 1233–59, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK < Pen box, Syria or Egypt, 704 AH / AD 1304–5, brass with silver and gold inlay, and niello, The Louvre, Paris, France < Ewer, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), first half of 12th century, hammered brass sheet with silver inlay, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, USA < Holmes Ewer, western Iran, ca. 1220–30, brass with silver, gold, and copper inlay, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, USA < Ewer, signed by Ibrahim ibn Mawaliya, Mosul, Jazira (present-day northern Iraq), first half of 13th century, cast copper with silver and copper inlay, The Louvre, Paris, France < D'Arenberg Basin, made for the Ayyubid sultan al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub, Syria, 1247–9, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, USA < Fano Cup, Syria or Egypt, 13th–14th century, cast bronze and beaten copper with gold and silver inlay, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Cabinet des Médailles, Paris, France < Basin, possibly northwestern Iran, 1384, copper or bronze, probably at Türk ve Islam Eserleri Muzesi, Istanbul, Turkey < Candlestick with Ducks, Khorasan (?) (present-day Afghanistan), second half of 12th century, copper alloy with silver and red-copper inlay, formerly Harari Collection, The Louvre, Paris, France < Incense Burner with Christian Priests, Syria, first half of 13th century, brass with silver inlay, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, USA < Tray with Nestorian Priests, Syria, mid-13th century, brass/bronze with fine silver inlay, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia < Homberg Ewer, Mosul, Jazira (present-day northern Iraq), 640 AH / AD 1242, brass with silver inlay, The Keir Collection of Islamic Art on loan to the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas, USA < Lock, Iran, date, material, and technique unknown, probably at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK < Ewer, signed by Iyas, apprentice of 'Abd al-Karim Ibn al-Turabi, Mosul, Jazira (present-day northern Iraq), 627 AH / AD 1229, cast brass with red-copper and silver inlay, Türk ve Islam Eserleri Muzesi, Istanbul, Turkey < Nisan Taşı, Mongol-Iranian, Iran or Syria, first half of 14th century, cast brass with silver and gold inlay, Mevlana Museum, Konya, Turkey < Tray, Syria, 1240s, sheet brass with silver inlay, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, USA < Florence Cup, Iran (?), late 13th–early 14th century, engraved brass, probably at the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy < Vaso Vescovali, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), ca. 1200, high-tin bronze with silver inlay, British Museum, London, UK < Jug, Iran, late 15th century, gilded bronze with silver inlay, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland, USA

Courtesy the Artist; Braverman Gallery. © Ilit Azoulay; L.A. Mayer Museum for Islamic Art, Jerusalem



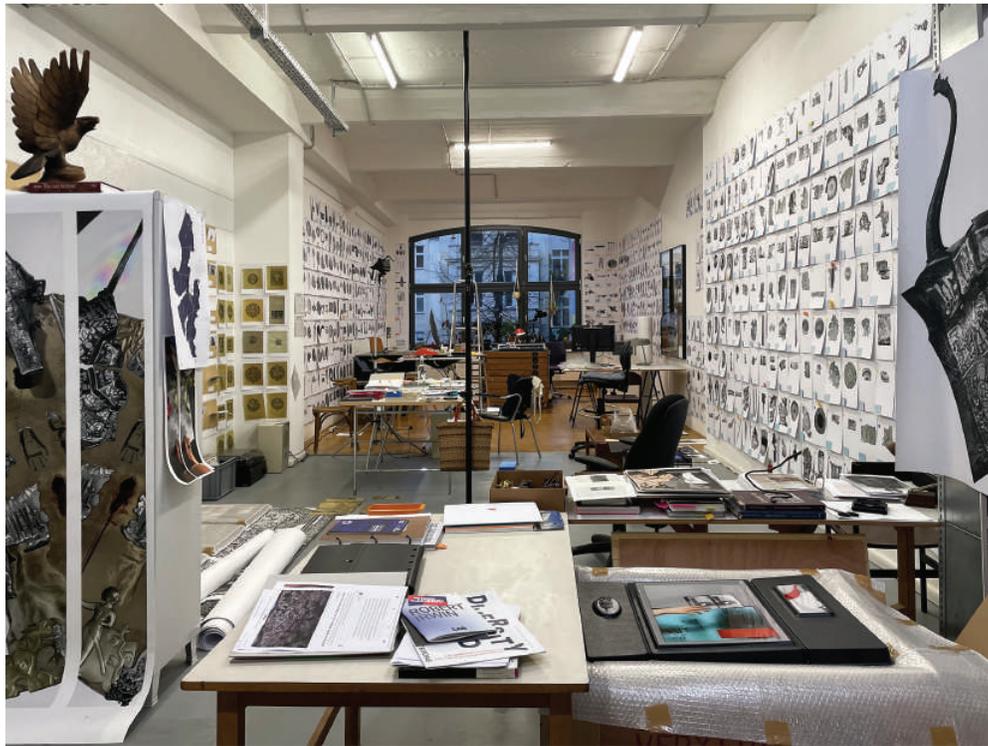
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Ilit Azoulay, Detail from Queendom, Panel 2, 2022, Inkjet print, 395x150 cm. Courtesy the Artist; Braverman Gallery. © Ilit Azoulay; L.A. Mayer Museum for Islamic Art, Jerusalem



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Ilit Azoulay, the artist's studio, Berlin. Courtesy the artist_ Braverman Gallery. © Ilit Azoulay



Ilit Azoulay, the artist's studio, Berlin. Courtesy the artist_ Braverman Gallery. © Ilit Azoulay

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Ilit Azoulay, Mousework, 2020, installation view, Braverman Gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel. Courtesy the Artist_ Braverman Gallery.
© Ilit Azoulay



Ilit Azoulay, Mousework, 2020, installation view, Braverman Gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel. Courtesy the Artist_ Braverman Gallery.
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Ilit Azoulay, *Shifting Degrees of Certainty*, 2016, installation view, Australian Center for Contemporary Art, Victoria, Australia. Courtesy the Artist_ Braverman Gallery. © Ilit Azoulay



Ilit Azoulay. © Ilit Azoulay



Shelley Harten. Photo: Yael Bartana

Information

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Collaborators: Israel Lottery Council for Culture and the Arts

Partner: Jan Fischer

59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

Pavilion of Israel 2022

April 23 - November 27, 2022

Ilit Azoulay: Queendom

Curator: Shelley Harten

<https://www.ilitazoulay.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/ilitazoulay/>

<https://queendom.str-ing.org/>

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