

## **Sand in the Eye / Ofra Harnam**

Tal Yerushalmi focuses her work on the painting of functional objects; creating them had a practical, everyday reasoning crafted using archaic techniques: rugs, mats, and woven straw items from antiquity which have been found in archeological digging sites attest to the material and spiritual culture of their creators.

Through the objects, Yerushalmi attempts to reactivate something that had a past, but has no future: Indian arrow heads, flint, beaded necklaces, and various types of rope. These items may have been forgotten, tossed away or buried but miraculously survived in caves or underneath the surface; their ability to withstand the elements and the ravages of time gives witness to the talents of the creators while bestowing the objects with an enigmatic or mystical dimension, through which Yerushalmi examines the link between the real and the imagined.

Yerushalmi carves layers of paint, chisels them, as if weaving and braiding the brush strokes. The physical aspect of the painterly action is carnal and laborious but the works' internal logic is breached through the blurring of time and place.

According to Yerushalmi, the painting has no physical or geographical space, no time and era, no ground or horizon; objects have no weight— they become anonymous. She invokes the painting to become a platform through which she inserts somewhat spiritual attributes to practical artifacts – furthering them from their original meaning.

The action of duplicating objects from archeology books, also transforms from a logical and concrete act of collecting and categorizing into an action that which refutes logic: ancient ropes transform into arches and tools floating in air, containing water; a sickle has been converted from a working tool or an ancient fighting tool into a handle holding pieces of sky; drawn shreds of wood and campfire remains are lacking foothold, leaving only a trace of the moment when order broke; ancient rugs and mats found crumbling to dust in the arid landscape of Ein Gedi obtain a saturated and colorful humidity in the painting. Yerushalmi's painterly invention ignites the imagination by making the object shining, enticing, and even eternal but even so, the objects are not experienced as signs of power but rather create a sense of solidarity and compassion.

Among the paintings are installations utilizing canvas cutouts. The painterly installation creates a sense as if the painting is realized; becoming an object in the world as a dismantled painting that is liberated from the canvas and turned into relic.

In a way Yerushalmi refuses to accept the failure of these objects to fulfill and restore their original purpose. She reconstructs them and imagines a new life for them. The moment of recognition within the action of reconstruction becomes in itself a reconstruction of an un-experienced memory, a reference to ancient life skills. Yerushalmi creates a new interpretation of an object that has ceased to function - an object that contains a reminder of all those who used it in the past, and passed from this world