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KEDEM–KODEM–KADIMA

Ilit Azoulay, Alex Mirutziu, and Wilfredo Prieto | Idris Gallery, Tel Aviv

Curated by Nicola Trezzi.

The exhibition “KEDEM–KODEM–KADIMA” includes contributions by Diti Almog, Arahmaiani, Yochai Avrahami, Ilit Azoulay, Guy Ben-Ner, Monica Bonvicini, Born from Rock, Rafram Chaddad, Latifa Echakhch, Ceal Floyer, Shilpa Gupta, Peter Halley, Michal Helfman, Chourouk Hriech, Gaston Zvi Ickowicz, Eti Jacobi, Christian Jankowski, Kitty Kraus, Jannis Kounellis, Agnieszka Kurant, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Benoît Maire, Alex Mirutziu & TAH29, Jonathan Monk, Laurent Montaron, Natan Tarfe, Joshua Neustein, Adrian Paci, Eli Petel, Pratchaya Phinthong, Wilfredo Prieto, Public Movement, Tomer Rosenthal, Miri Segal, Ariel Schlesinger, Shiri Tarko, Jan Tichy, Naama Tsabar, Alice Tomaselli, Lihi Turjeman, Günther Uecker, Johannes VanDerBeek, Lawrence Weiner, and Nevet Yitzhak.

Presented at the CCA together with three additional spaces in Tel Aviv— Born From Rock’s studio, IDRIS, and The Lobby Art Space—“KEDEM–KODEM–KADIMA” is the first exhibition curated by the CCA’s new director, Nicola Trezzi. Among the many ideas connected to this project, six of them deserve to be mentioned in this context.

The first one is the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the CCA Tel Aviv, which was initiated in 1998 by Sergio Edelsztein, who directed it until 2017 and who will stay on as Chairman of the Board. Mirroring this pivotal moment in the history of the institution, “KEDEM–KODEM–KADIMA” will include works by artists whose work has been exhibited at the CCA in the past—such as Arahmaiani, Ceal Floyer, Michal Helfman, Christian Jankowski, Agnieszka Kurant, and Adrian Paci—and works by artists who will present projects in the future—such as Ilit Azoulay, Laurent Montaron, Naaba Tsabar, and Nevet Yitzhak.

The second idea is connected to the title of the exhibition. Hebrew is a fascinating language based on roots; from one root you can “build” multiple words, sometimes different if not in contradiction with each other. This is the case of the root kuf (ק), dalet (ד), mem (מ), from which you can build kedem [ancient], kodem [before], and kadima [forward]. Following this concept, many works will be created, or recreated, especially for the exhibition, and some of them will eventually disappear or be destroyed. Following this attitude, the exhibition is dedicated to Jannis Kounellis (1936-2017), whose last exhibition was conceived and presented in Israel.

The third idea connected to this exhibition is the choice of a specific display. On the ground floor and balcony of the CCA, and also in the three additional spaces, works have been juxtaposed in accordance to disparate associations. Concepts, notions, and figures as diverse as “human condition,” “site-specific,” “Passover,” and “fire and water” have been employed to bring works of art together. Inspired by the “Radiant Face of Moses” (Exodus 34:29-35), on the first floor



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gallery of the CCA, the space will be kept dark and all the works presented there will generate their own light in the form of video projections, light bulbs, light boxes, and more.

The fourth idea is the decision to include an exhibition-within-the-exhibition called “Department of Rocks and Stones.” Rocks and stones both symbolize construction and destruction. They also appear in seminal passages of the New Testament, from Jesus’s provocation “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her” (John 8:1-10) to his verbal testament “And I tell you that you are Peter, [The Greek word for Peter means rock] and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matthew 16:13-20). Scattered within the exhibition, the “Department of Rocks and Stones” includes works by Jannis Kounellis, Michal Helfman, Joshua Neustein, Shilpa Gupta, Johannes VanDerBeek, and Jonathan Monk among others.

The fifth idea is connected to the choice of extending the exhibition to the three aforementioned spaces—going against territoriality and instead embracing collegiality and inclusivity. Following these premises “KEDEM–KODEM–KADIMA” goes beyond its own premises—the Rachel & Israel Pollak Gallery—scattered in different areas of the city. Like its logo, the Center for Contemporary Art Tel Aviv will function as a “black sun” with several satellites (spaces), emphasizing elliptical trajectories (elliptical time versus linear time) and its related concept of “eccentricity.”

The sixth and last idea is a public program that will start before the exhibition opens and will continue throughout its duration. The program includes a conversation between Pratchaya Phinthong and Nicola Trezzi on March 20, a conversation between Monica Bonvicini and Sergio Edelsztein on the opening day on March 29, an artist talk by Chourouk Hriech on April 2, a roundtable with Drorit Gur-Arie, Doron Rabina, and Nicola Trezzi, moderated by Hila Cohen-Schneiderman on May 9, and a conversation between Christian Jankowski and Sergio Edelsztein on May 17. In addition to this program, on April 13 and 14 Public Movement will perform their action The Interview.

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