



My Name Is Legion For We Are Many

Meital Katz Minerbo and Niv Cohen | Idris Gallery, Tel Aviv

Curated by Barak Rubin and Livia Tagliacozzo

"...a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain"... "...What is your name?" Jesus asked. "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many..." (Mark 5:9)

This verse from the New Testament describes the encounter between Jesus and a man possessed by a legion of demons. In the military language of that time, a legion denoted 5000 soldiers. A legion of demons possessed this man, tormenting him day and night and at the same time providing him with the strength of many, making him uncontrollable.

A "subject" as a multiplicity is a testament of its state of endless transformation. A subject with broken boundaries whose form is hard to define. There is an animalistic force that bursts out of him like a pack of wolves, where there is no place for individuality. In that way Meital Katz-Minerbo and Niv Cohen create a space where multidisciplinary pieces use aesthetics to question definitions of identity and form. The artworks act together as a group, marking the territory where the viewer can evoke and experience the motives that connect the practices of the artists.

Katz-Minerbo's paintings, collages and fashion items are part of her research on the hybrid character of The Cactus Man: the merging of a cactus and a man into an androgenic creature covered with thorns. Through this character the artist intends to give visual representation to definitions of otherness. Cactus Man is also the brand that stands behind the line of wearable art articles the artist had developed during the last two years, with the belief in fashion as the voice for new identities.

Cohen creates masks and sculptures influenced by African and tribal aesthetics. This assemblage pieces combine contemporary urban elements and daily-life objects and waste. The masks function as images that freeze human expression and at the same time they expose the means of processing, reflecting and healing highly intense emotions such as anger and anxiety. The sculpture's role is similar to that of totems, upon which Cohen directs the power of redemption and hope.

The works in the exhibition are intertwined into groups, creating an atmosphere that resonates between Cohen's pagan world and Katz-Minerbo's hybrid bodies. In both cases, the pieces function as attributes transferring magical powers to those who wear, hold and even observe them. Through the exhibition the artists extend a call to claim territories for new identities and forms to inhabit.

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The exhibit will also include a painting by the Venezuelan naïve artist Elsa Morales (1946-2007), an old and close friend of Katz-Minerbo's family, and santera (a priestess of Santeria, which combines African and Christian rituals). This talismanic painting is believed to be charged with arcane powers.