

PROJECT 3

ISBN
978-1-7352309-2-4
[PAPERBACK]

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CONTROL NUMBER
2021933655

COPYRIGHT © 2021 MINERVA PROJECTS
Copyright of the individual works is
maintained by the respective writers.



Text Book

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the publisher, addressed ATTENTION: PERMISSIONS COORDINATOR, at the address below.

FIRST PRINTING EDITION, ONE of 500

2021

Tamy Ben-Tor
+ Miki Carmi

Book designer Joshua Gamma
Typeset in Centaur MT,
Berthold Akzidenz Grotesk,
Myriad Hebrew, & Adobe Caslon Pro

MINERVA PROJECTS
43 COUNTY ROUTE 7
PINE PLAINS, NEW YORK 12567

Printed by KOPA | KAUNAS, LITHUANIA

WWW.MINERVAPROJECTS.ORG

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. <i>Thank You</i> Yasmeen Siddiqui	7
f. <i>Forward</i> Martin Brest	8
CHAPTER 1. <i>For Tamy and Miki</i> Norman Chernick-Zeitlin	16
Section I עמי בשם בנה צעיר	17
Section II THE ORACLE OF KIEV	23
Section III	28
CHAPTER 2. <i>Opacity of Identity</i> Alpesh Kantilal Patel	34
CHAPTER 3. <i>Journey to Binary Stars</i> Kosuke Kawahara	50
Section I WARP HOLE MANDALA: MIKI CARMİ	51
Section II FERMENTED POT: TAMY BEN-TOR	55
Section III I EMPLOY A PROSTITUTE AND A PIMP	56
Section IV WHO SHALL BE WORTH FERMENTING IN MY POT? YOU?	58
CHAPTER 4. <i>Eros and Thanatos</i> The Paintings of Miki Carmi Coco Fusco	64
CHAPTER 5. <i>Look All You Like, for There is No Meek Gazing Here</i> Kate Gaudy	72
Section I FIRST EXPERIENCE: A START	75
Section II SECOND EXPERIENCE: THE PRESENT DROPPED	77
Section III THIRD EXPERIENCE: UNEXPECTED PRESENTS	80
Section IV FOURTH EXPERIENCE: REPELLENT INTIMACY	81
APPENDIX. <i>Figures</i>	86
G. <i>Studio Notes / Gutter Notes</i> Adara Meyers	G



Capacity of Identity

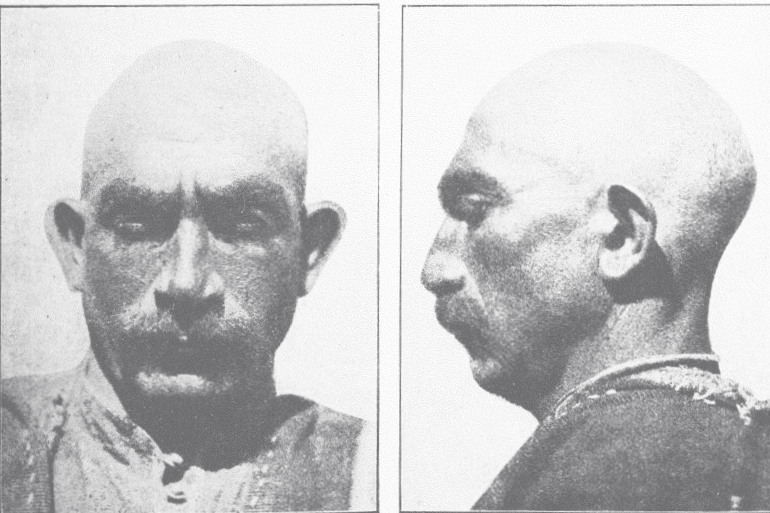
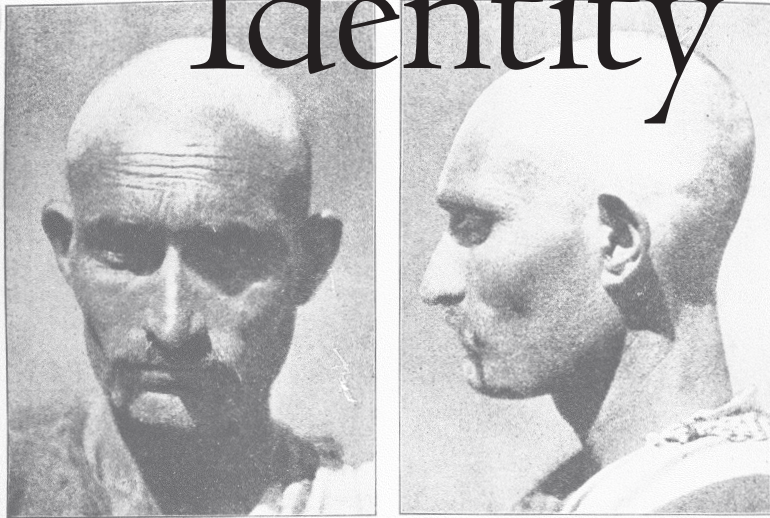


FIGURE 2a

Zwei Kurden, Ibo und Bako, Nemrud-Dagh 1883
v. Luschan phot.

° Alpesh
Kantil Patel

2. BEN-TOR AND CARMİ'S EXHIBITION AT ZACHĘTA-NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WARSAW, POLAND, 2015

During a studio visit, my interest was piqued when Tamy Ben-Tor and Miki Carmi told me they had a joint exhibition of their artworks at Zachęta—National Gallery of Art in Warsaw, Poland.¹ I knew the museum well, having lived in Warsaw to explore artworks dealing with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) themes in Poland.¹ It turns out that we were all in Warsaw in 2015, but not at the same time. The election of the conservative Law and Justice party in December of that year—just as I was leaving—was a watershed in the country's politics. The party has created an explicitly homophobic and xenophobic climate.² Predictably, the country's cultural sector began to lean dramatically towards the right as many appointments have been made by the government.³ In the context of this political shift, it is not so surprising that plans for a catalog for Ben-Tor and Carmi's show were scrapped by Zachęta. Indeed, the museum that put up Ben-Tor and Carmi's exhibition with the subtitle "Young Emerging Artists Eating and Fucking"—borrowed from the title of one of Ben-Tor's videos—would

five years later remove a video by feminist artist Natalia L.L., who came to prominence during the 1970s in Poland, that showed her sucking on a banana.⁴ Eating and fucking—like sucking—are basic human desires yet become highly politicized.

In this essay, I will explore how Ben-Tor's and Carmi's works queer, or destabilize, identity in the broadest sense. I do not mean to imply there is not a politics of their identities—as immigrants, Israelis, Jewish, married, or even parents—undergirding their work, but I take more of an interest in exploring them as opaque, or not fully knowable. In this sense, I will examine how their works re-work the body as no longer singular, heteronormative, disembodied, contained, and easily racialized. Instead, the body is non-binary, embodied, decentered, messy, and leaky. The exhibition was an experiment for the two artists in that they were showing works together for the first time in a museum context. Doing so seems to suggest how authorship is protean—always shifting and unable to be definitively defined. I will discuss each artist's works in turn,

¹ Information on the exhibition and photographic documentation of the installation can be found on the museum's website: [HTTPS://ZACHETA.ART.PL/EN/WYSTAWY/TAMY-BEN-TOR-AND-MIKI-CARMİ](https://zacheta.art.pl/en/wystawy/tamy-ben-tor-and-miki-carmi)

² Poland made it a criminal offense in 2018 to accuse the country of complicity in Nazi war crimes. After outrage from many constituencies both within and outside Poland, it is now a civil rather than criminal offense: "Poland Holocaust law: U-turn on jail threat," *BBC News*, June 27, 2018, [HTTPS://WWW.BBC.COM/NEWS/WORLD-EUROPE-44627129](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44627129). See also Rick Noack, "Polish cities and provinces declare 'LGBT-free zones' as government ramps up 'hate speech,'" *Independent*, July 22, 2019, [HTTPS://WWW.INDEPENDENT.CO.UK/NEWS/WORLD-EUROPE/POLAND-LGBT-FREE-ZONES-HOMOPHOBIA-HATE-SPEECH-LAW-JUSTICE-PARTY-A9013551.HTML](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/poland-lgbt-free-zones-homophobia-hate-speech-law-justice-party-a9013551.html)

³ Alex Marshall, "A Polish Museum Turns to the Right, and Artists Turn Away," *New York Times*, January 8, 2020, [HTTPS://WWW.NYTIMES.COM/2020/01/08/ARTS/DESIGN/POLAND-CONSERVATIVE-ART.HTML](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/08/arts/design/poland-conservative-art.html)

⁴ *Ibid.*

not to counter this idea but rather to illustrate more clearly an uncanny connection between their artworks through a discussion of “opacity.” Then, I will focus on how their work was installed together at Zachęta.

The majority of the ten paintings by Carmi on display were portraits of family members. These depict heads, all of which are in profile. One exception is *Pinchas Schatz* (1999), a frontal portrait based on a mug shot of the titular Russian Jewish communist for which the work is titled. Carmi found the photo in a brochure at the Jerusalem Cinematheque Archives, where he was studying the communist underground of the 1940s.

Referring to this work, Carmi wrote via email that

he “was with those by which he depicting are treated

obsessed authoritarian specimens,” means images humans which as objects.

His painting *Armenian* (1999), which depicts a man in profile with a bent nose, is another example of how subjects are reduced to objects or more specifically generalized types.⁵ The latter brings to the fore the Nazi search for a Germanic *Übermenschen*, or master race, the desirable qualities of which were based largely on arbitrary correlation of class and race to physiognomy and phenotype. Based on this pseudoscience, Jewish bodies (among others) were deemed to be degenerate.

⁵ This painting of an Armenian soldier and two other portraits—one of a Georgian man and another of an Asian man (not on display in the exhibition)—are based on images from Hans F.K. Günther’s notorious book *Short Ethnology of the German People* (1929). As an undergraduate, Carmi displayed these three portraits alongside a painting of his father both to re-enact and to show the absurdity of Günther’s scientific racial topologies, in particular his connection of European Jews to the Armenoid race of North Asia (such as Georgians and Armenians).

The other portraits on display can be read as persistently fleshy, and it is in this move that Carmi provides the possibility for subjectification rather than only objectification to take place. To explain, flesh refers to the area between the skin and bone. Unlike skin, it is indeterminate and thereby makes the portraits irreducible to a racial identity of any kind. For that “matter,” without the titles—*Red Dad* (2010), *Cactus Grandma* (2015), *Big Mom* (2013), and *Acidic Grandma* (2010)—the gender of the sitters is ambiguous: a decision reinforcing the way in which I am describing fleshiness. Importantly, Carmi shifts the portraits from the discursive, or a body of knowledge, to the corporeal, or a body as and of flesh. Like a pendulum, Carmi’s work is best conceptualized as moving between these kinds of bodies: it is both/and rather than either/or. Moreover, a pendulum will ultimately stop because of friction, but there is no stillness evident in Carmi’s work. Rather than reduce the portraits to a flat, affectless plane, Carmi invites the movement of our eyes along the contours of the flesh.

In contrast, the eyeball is constructed of definable rudimentary geometric shapes. Philip Guston also had a recurring singular eyeball in his work, and it became part of a more elaborate

visual vocabulary of signs. If there is a vocabulary emerging from Carmi’s self-described life-long project, it is one born and animated through his depictions of flesh. That is, for Carmi, his more complex rendering or inscription of flesh ultimately is the window to the soul—not the eye, which functions more as a red herring in that it attracts us but does not take us on the journey the flesh does. This is not to imply that each eye is the same in every painting. There is a variability which certainly makes them specific to the individuals depicted. Yet the cornea reads more as an impenetrable surface or skin despite its transparency: the eye becomes an oculus which ironically does not illuminate beyond a disembodied visuality.

According to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the full reality of the sensible world arises not simply from the power of sight, or any single such mode, but from the mutual reference and intertwining of all forms of perception: “There is double and crossed situating of the visible in the tangible and of the tangible in the visible; the two maps are complete, and yet they do not merge into one.”⁶ Flesh, according to Merleau-Ponty, is the chiasmic intertwining of viewer and viewed and seeing and seen, a

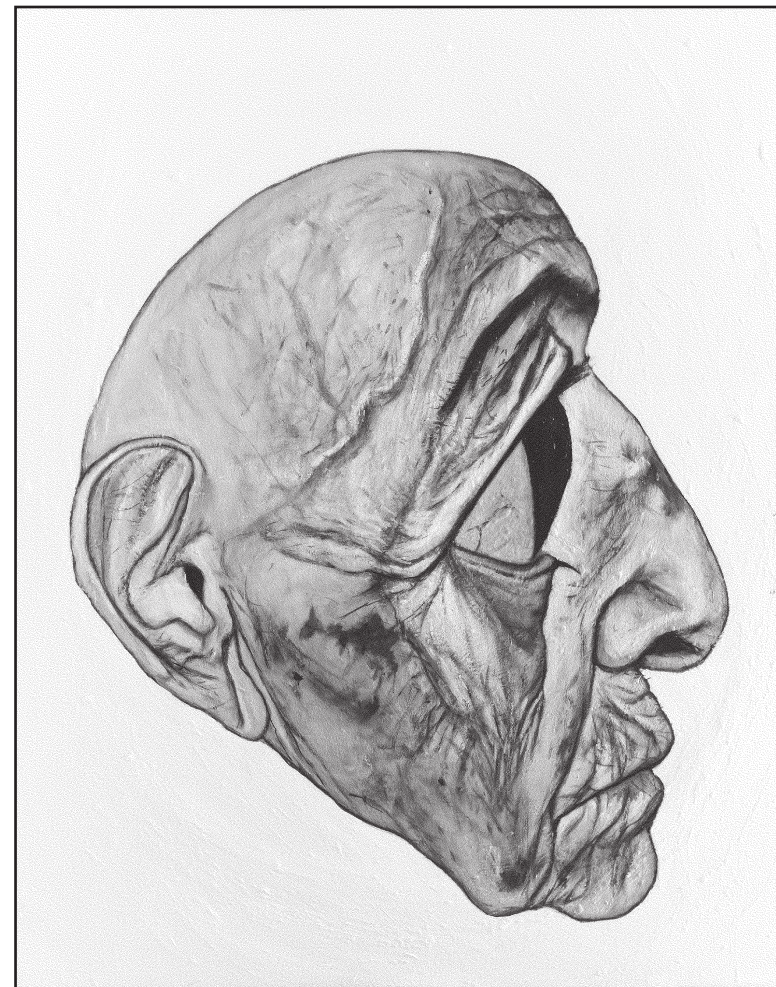


FIGURE 2b

⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. Claude Lefort and trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 134.

“coiling over of the visible upon the visible,” and characterized by the interpenetration of subjects and objects in the world—like the woof and weft of a fabric.⁷ Carmi’s portraits and their emphasis on flesh embody visuality as a complex entanglement that cannot be reduced to opacity.

Flesh is always in the process of becoming, and therein lies its powers.

Through a process of enfleshing his subjects, Carmi brings in the possibility, however fleeting, of illegibility—opacity—rather than a stabilized mode of resistance. Opacity as theorized by Martinican poet and theorist Édouard Glissant is not necessarily that which is opaque, although it can be; rather, it is a mode through which a subject—he is referring to the postcolonial subject—has the right not to be interpellated into discourses of power that originate from elsewhere.⁸ Here, Glissant is specifically referring to the way in which the West renders its subjects as transparent as a condition of citizenship. Carmi’s “enfleshment” of his subjects produces poignant studies both of how subjects identified as “Jewish” were/are violently denied their opacity and of the possibility of becoming something else.

Opacity is a conceptual thread that runs through all of Ben-Tor’s nine video works, but it manifests slightly differently than it does in Carmi’s paintings. Through multiplicity—of personas, genders, languages, senses (smells, sounds, tastes), and genres—opacity emerges as a theme. Firstly, Ben-Tor plays many roles as part of a live performance during the exhibition opening as well as within her low-tech videos.⁹ In the videos, she seamlessly becomes a panoply of characters, each distinct from the other, such as the aloof German woman, seemingly unaware of her racism and interviewed in a style inspired by Claude Lanzmann’s 1985 epic documentary *Shoah* (*Baby Eichmann*, 2006)¹⁰; a right-wing male Jew and a Ukrainian folk dancer (*Gewald*, 2007)¹¹; an arrogant expert on the Middle East and civil rights, Dr. Hamamm (*Memri TV*, 2012)¹²; Melvin, a diasporic male Jew who is anti-Israel (*Yid*, 2011)¹³; a nonbinary-identified person (*I’m Uzbek*, 2012)¹⁴; a young mother who chose to give her son Isaac instead of Ishmael to the angel of death (*Izaac*, 2008)¹⁵; and a European gallerist or collector and the hypersexualized blonde art world bimbo (*Young Emerging Artists Eating and Fucking*, 2015).¹⁶ This is not even a complete list. Throughout the videos, Ben-Tor’s use of various disguises—masks; false breasts, teeth, noses, and ears; and wigs and

⁷ Ibid., 140.

⁸ See the chapter titled “For Opacity” in Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 189–94.

⁹ During the thirty-minute live performance (Untitled, 2015), she played five distinct characters: a Hasidic-looking woman wearing “Satmar” house clothes who speaks in Polish about an Israeli woman who lives in a condo; a nonbinary person; a grotesque Israeli curator woman wearing a plastic ass on her groin and a face stocking with holes in it; a character with a burned face mask and exposed plastic breasts singing a Yiddish folk song in a high-pitched voice; and in English with heavy Yiddish and German accents, a hunchback half-Nosferatu half-Jewish stereotype relaying an antisemitic story about a Jew in the forest stealing the leaves from the trees. She transformed into these characters in front of the audience on “stage”—the landing of the museum’s grand staircase, on which were strewn various clothing items, props, masks, and plastic body parts that were within easy grasp.

¹⁰ *Baby Eichmann* includes a short sequence of impressions mimicking a post-Holocaust imagined Germanic state of mind, inspired both by Claude Lanzmann’s documentary interviews and by “Baby Mozart” programs. It also incorporates Miki Carmi’s footage of a nursing home in Jerusalem. In German, Hebrew, and Gibberish.

¹¹ *Gewald* references everything from Nordic fairy tales and American private property rights to right-wing Jewish propaganda and Primo Levi’s *If This Is a Man* (1947). The soundtrack for a scene involving a gentle Ukrainian folk dancer is based on an excerpt of Levi’s work translated into Romanian. *Gewald* includes a poem about Jews giving birth to baby pigs as well as an imitation of Adolf Eichmann’s trial, the transcript of which is translated from Yiddish to German. In Swedish, English, Romanian, Yiddish, and German.

¹² *Memri TV* is loosely based on Arab Anti-Jewish propaganda viewed on Memri TV and heard at lectures at various Ivy League universities. In Gibberish.

¹³ *Yid* is a monologue by an anti-Israel diasporic Jew. In English.

facial hair—create a dizzying array of subjects, all of which are productively illegible. What is clear is the contingency rather than fixity of racial and gendered identity. This is further underscored by the many languages employed by Ben-Tor. For example, *Gewald* includes Swedish, English, Romanian, Yiddish, and German languages. My favorite is the “gibberish” that is included as a language in Ben-Tor’s descriptions of *Baby Eichmann* and *Memri TV*. That is to say that even if one were conversant in all the languages she mobilizes, it is likely that they will fail to signify any meaning, and this is one way through which the possibility of opacity emerges.

Through exaggeration, Ben-Tor invokes the body and thereby works against the ways Nazis transformed Jewish subjects into objects, which could be *visually* identified through supposedly easily recognizable characteristics. Ben-Tor’s masterful body language—gestures, positions, and expressions—ensures the body does not remain abstract and disembodied, as does her nuanced modulation of the timbre, pitch, and intensity of her voice. A few examples include the cackle of the slimy, despicable diasporic male Jew who is “anti-Israel” in *Yid*; the convulsive laugh of the German woman being interviewed as she describes Jews as

“primitive” in *Baby Eichmann*; and the screeches of the European gallerist or collector as they—I am using this pronoun as the gender is not clear—say the word “busy” in *Young Emerging Artists Eating and Fucking*. Finally, her use of bodily fluids and reference to them in spoken language further underscore the corporeal body. For instance, at one point in *Yid*, saliva is dripping from her beard, which has partially fallen off. She somewhat unsuccessfully tries to spit out hair that gets into her mouth. In *Izaac*, the narrator discusses the stench of the eponymous character and that he is referred to both as a pig and as filthy. Another example is the reference to shit in *Young Emerging Artists Eating and Fucking*.

In the end, storytelling is neither fact nor fiction but both. She mixes the documentary (a genre of filmmaking) with fairy tales (a genre of folktales), incorporating marionettes (*Izaac*) and backdrops of illustrations from the story of the three little pigs (*Gewald*). In this way, Ben-Tor’s videos can be confusing, not least because they are not always linear. They can also be difficult to watch because of her perversion of non-secular material and exaggeration of stereotypes. However, the videos can offend just about any viewer, so in the end, it is difficult to take anything at face value—and this, I think, is a major theme of the videos.

Being dislodged
comfortability
allows for
to emerge and
BECOMING —

from a mode of
is exactly what
multiple truths
a space of
of possibility —
to open

¹⁴ Miki Carmi participates in this video, which mocks the deterioration of the artists' careers as a result of their collaboration. The video also incorporates a monologue of a calm non-binary person. In English.

¹⁵ *Izaac* is an imagined anti-semitic and anti-Arab folk tale that is partially inspired by the post-Holocaust violence written about in Jan T. Gross's book *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz* (New York: Random House, 2006). The protagonists are a Polish woman who has a sexual fetish for Jews and the Old Testament's Ishmael and Isaac. Intermixed are porn images and—tapping into

Israeli anti-Arab propaganda—a Muslim Russian woman on television discussing how Muhammad likes Ashkenazi women. Included are a voiceover by Miki Carmi's father as well as excerpts of his work. In Hebrew, Polish, Russian, and English.

¹⁶ This video was filmed in Jerusalem and Brooklyn, and the character was shot in a studio. Also, it incorporates documentary footage of the Jerusalem Bible Zoo and footage by Miki Carmi. In English, Yiddish, and Polish.

¹⁷ Upon repeated viewing, I found that any displeasure or confusion I had in watching a video ultimately was replaced by pleasure and clarity, but I was a little concerned that I was having too much "fun" re-watching the various works. I eventually concluded that this pleasure and the fact that I knew what to expect, and therefore felt more in control, did not lead me to a place of political malaise.

Rather, I was now enjoying being in a space of becoming that could imagine different futures while remaining cognizant of the horrors of the world.

amongst the cacophony of toxic, caustic anti-Semitic rhetoric, even if for just a moment.¹⁷ This is what I argue Carmi's work does, too. Both of their bodies of works refuse the production of recognizable objects of knowledge. Instead, they instantiate what Merleau-Ponty would describe

as the "chiasmatic" structure of flesh, which neither belongs to the subject nor to the world exclusively. They blur a variety of other binaries, which the Nazis cleaved with brutal efficiency: self/other, subject/object, mind/body, and visible/invisible.



FIGURE 2c



FIGURE 2d

^G NOTE
Tamy:
 This can also be
 an answer to your
 question about
Gewald.

To me it was
 about how people
 decide what's
 dirty and what's
 clean and what's
 dirty is always
 someone else.
 When I heard
 James Baldwin
 talk about the
 white man
 creating the
 n-word for the
 same reasons,
 I was moved.

Gewald was
 created in
 America, and
 it was sparked
 by whites in
 America. In the
 video there's
 a bit that's
 shot upstate
 in New York,
 and I remember
 someone told
 us to get out
 of a reservoir:
 "this is private
 property." Being
 new here, those
 words seemed
 extremely
 perverse to me.
 Now I wouldn't
 give it a second
 thought, but I had
 this notion that
 white Americans
 were Germans.
 But again, I'm
 not commenting
 or criticizing, I'm
 merely bearing
 witness to
 my perception
 of things.

^G **Tamy (CONT.):**
Baby Eichmann
 and *Smudi* are
 two other videos
 that touch on
 the subject of
 Jews. *Baby*
Eichmann has a
 whole "interview"
 with a character
 of a German
 lady I saw in a
 Lanzmann movie.
Smudi was shot
 at Skowhegan,
 after I read Jan
 T. Gross's book
 about how Jews
 were slaughtered
 in Poland after
 returning from
 Auschwitz. It
 left a deep
 impression
 on me.

This shared sensibility becomes discernible through the installation of works by both artists in the galleries. For instance, on the wall adjacent to the projection of Ben-Tor's *Yid* were two of Carmi's paintings: *Pinchas Schatz* and *Armenian*. The dehumanizing discussion of Jews by this vivid and wicked character of Ben-Tor suggests where such language might go: the production of stereotypes. The character in *Yid* is humorous and even enjoyable to watch—despite also clearly being horrific, given his trivialization of the Holocaust—but Carmi's paintings seem to ground our response. Between the paintings and the projection is a smaller television playing *Memri* TV. It is only visible if one's back is to *Yid* and can be heard with headphones. *Memri* TV and *Yid* depict largely the same rhetoric but from diametrically oppositional positionalities: the Arab and the Jew. Moreover, peppered throughout the show are Carmi's portraits of family members. Wherever they are placed, their fleshiness meets the multiplicity of Ben-Tor's videos.

Another room includes two videos playing on monitors and two display cases full of gestural drawings on paper. Carmi described them to me in an email "as a vehicle for less disciplined painterly practice and

more of a performative act of reaction to gestures and impressions." When I first saw these in the documentary photography of the exhibition, I thought they were Ben-Tor's. Scans of his photographs, meant as studies for his paintings, were on the walls of the gallery, too. He wrote to me that they have "accumulated some patina" given they were "scattered on my studio's floor for years." My misrecognition of the authorship of the photographs and drawings suggests to me that they function as a semipermeable membrane, on either side of which is the work of one of the artists. By semi-permeable I mean that such a membrane maintains each artist's "major" practice while allowing for some effective cross-over.

I want to be careful here not to minimize the autonomy of the drawings and photographs and thereby reinscribe the supremacy of painting. My reading is based on this specific installation, which, importantly, I am not reading as one work. Glissant's thinking about identity and subjectivity, based on Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's writing on the rhizome, is instructive here. A rhizome is an enmeshed root system, a network spreading either in the ground or in the air, with no predatory rootstock taking over permanently. At the same

time, the notion of the rhizome maintains the idea of rootedness *but as*

*“a root reaching out to other roots.”*¹⁸

This perfectly describes how Ben-Tor’s and Carmi’s works—by that I mean paintings and videos—function in this room where the “reaching out” is facilitated by the photographs and drawings.

I close with a discussion of the exhibition in the context of what was happening in the city of Warsaw in 2015—outside of the elections I mentioned earlier. Around the time I arrived in Warsaw, Hubert Czerepok’s public artwork *Plot nienawiści* (*The Fence of Hatred*), 2015, was installed on the grounds of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in the Muranów District. The work is a fifteen-foot-long fence comprised of twisted metal which spells out various kinds of graffiti that Czerepok came across in Poland, such as *Polska dla Polaków* (“Poland for Poles”), *śmierć Cyganom* (“death to Gypsies”), *Łowcy Cyganów* (Gypsies’ hunters), and *Korona Biała* (“White Crown”). Some were explicit German Nazi slogans, such as *Jude Raus* (German for “Jews Out!”).

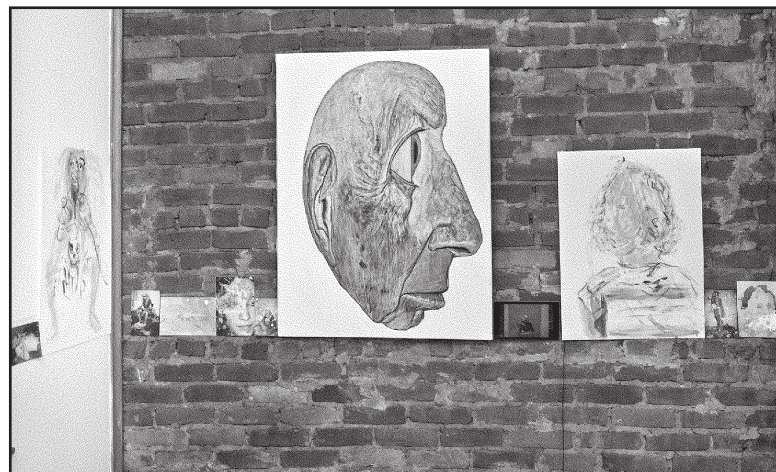


FIGURE 2e

¹⁸ Édouard Glissant, *Introduction to a Poetics of Diversity*, trans. Celia Britton (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020), 11.

In the places I had visited in Poland, there was very little graffiti. However, when I did come across any, it invariably was anti-Semitic. As it was written in Polish, I only became aware of this when it was pointed out to me and, of course, translated into English. I was frankly shocked, but as more recent events in Poland have made clear, none of this anti-Semitism is a surprise, sadly. Czerepok used twisted steel because he wanted viewers to slow down to read the inflammatory text that they might otherwise walk by without much reflection. Ironically, at one point while the artwork was installed, it was covered by a black plastic sheet on which was written in white capital letters: *Prez Zta Hucpa* (“Away with that chutzpah”). It was in Polish, but the Yiddish term for audacity was used.

¹⁹ Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, 190.

²⁰ **Tamy** (CONT.): It’s funny you ask about collecting that imagery. I just saw *Ghost World*, and there’s a scene where the girl finds an old racist poster at Steve Buscemi’s character’s house. She asks him: “What’s up with this? Are you a Klansman?” and he says, “Yes. I’m a Klansman.” Of course he isn’t. He’s joking. But it’s like how people look at Robert Crumb. Some of that stuff is fascinating to look at, to see what was considered normal, not that long ago, by the same people who now pretend to object to it. For those reasons I think it’s fine to collect it. You shouldn’t censor it, because that’s lying. That’s how some people fetishize and exotify the Jew, and it’s just a disguise for racism. At the same time, it’s a slippery ground. Every situation is different. It’s about who’s collecting it and why they’re collecting it. ■

Czerepok’s work and its defamation illustrate the stakes of Carmi’s and Ben-Tor’s works in Warsaw in 2015. There is a political urgency to their practice, but as I have tried to describe in this essay, they move beyond mere politics to something potentially more powerful—even activist. To explain, the multiplicity of Ben-Tor’s videos and flesh in Carmi’s paintings generate the conditions for opacity, the right for any of us not to be known or seen. Glissant provocatively argues that “the right to opacity... would be the real foundation of... freedoms.”¹⁹ Their works have the potential to shift the way viewers experience the world and nudge us closer to a society in which equality is connected to respect for the other as different.



FIGURE 2f