

PERUSH '90

Habbama, Jerusalem

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A Proposition for a Creative, Experimental Workshop

A group of artists proposes to establish a multi-medumial workshop for study, experimentation, and artistic activity, based on the concept of Perush - interpretation - as a point of departure for personal, contemporary creativity.

The concept of interpretation is brought to discussion now in the fields of philosophy, psychoanalysis, studies of literature, legal studies and so forth, and it is regarded as a key-concept for understanding our culture. In Judaism it has a traditional focal status. Not only the spiritual jewish literary creation as a whole is seen as an act of interpretation of the Book of Books - the Bible; even the daily conduct of a man, and the mitzvoth - the 613 religious precepts which shape his life - are regarded as a way of interpretation.

For us, the concept of Perush offers, first of all, a new way to consider fundamental issues of artistic creativity, such as the effect of an artwork and of its absorption; interpretation as an act in the world, in the artist, in his audience.

An attitude concerning form is implied here. The concept of interpretation revives the interest in the classical form of motif-and-variations; composing different possibilities of developing a subject matter, or different ways of relating to an event, side by side in one artwork. In this context the jewish tradition of Perush sets a special example of the polyphonic principle, with no reductive attempt to subdue it for the sake of one truth, or to curtail the differences of opinion, even; though a rule, or a law, is not established thereby. In this inspiration it would be interesting to try out the aleatoric esthetics, for instance, which applies a plurality of approximations as a fundamental formal principle.

Our manifold medumial framework was decided, then, in view of the nature of an artwork which is a series of interpretations, whose

shaping naturally calls for more than one means of expression.

The physical and political context in which Perush '90 will proceed - the end of the twentieth century as reflected through Jerusalem - can, in our opinion, be considered by way of Perush only, that is, by a series of 'approximate' expressions whose uncentralization into one authoritative voice is already a part of the message.

Perush '90 as a workshop of experimentation and artistic creation, will be a framework for systematic examination of the concept of interpretation in the creative process, and for developing personal and collective ways of expression. In the process of Perush '90 we intend to include other artists working separately now, who have paralleling interests. The particular nature of the matter will open the workshop to thinkers and researchers in study and experimentation meetings of unconventional co-working. Through the workshop's practice and its public presentations we hope to gradually bring about a context for a tendency of artistic creativity and a kind of audience which we believe exist in the country and in Jerusalem.

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Each of the group's members has dealt with those issues in his fields of activity: theater, writing, installation and stage design, painting, performance. Our co-operation has evolved during several years of preparing and producing preliminary projects in the realm of Perush.

1982 - MASSA HASHANA (The year's Journey)

Co-production of the department of theater at the Hebrew University, and the Khan theater, Jerusalem, for the first international festival of Jewish theater. Created by Michal Govrin, Frida Klappholz, Andre' Heidou, with the students of the department.

1985 - PROJECT GOG AND MAGOG: adaptation of the novel by M. Buber created by Michal Govrin, Doron Livne', Frida Klappholz, Orna Milo', Joseph Tal. The preparatory work was funded by the Lakritz foundation, Institute of Jewish Studies, Hebrew University.

1987 - MA'ASSE' HAPERUSH (The Act of Interpretation)

A programme for an experimentation-week and a Perush-night for the

international festival of jewish culture, Teatro Salone Pier Lombardo, Milan.

Participants: rabbi Leon (Manitou) Ashkenasi, rabbi Marc-Alain Vaquenin (Paris), prof. Stefan Moses, Andre' Heidou, Esti Kenan, architect Lou Gelerter, Frida Klappholz, Doron Livne', Michal Govrin.

Our first production in the present framework of Habbama was 1989 - SEDER HALAILA HA-ZE' (The Course of This Night)

In a space, which was a stage and a meeting place at the same time, around a big central table, sat a group of about thirty people, to give a personal, contemporary, interpretation to the Hagada - the ritual book of Passover.

Participants: Israel Eldad, Adi Ophir, Aaron Apfelfeld, Yossi Birstein, Le'a Snir, Yonadav Kaplon, Michal Govrin, rabbi Israel Wollgelerter, Tova Berlinski, Avishai Eyal, Gad Ullman, Ayala Zarfati, Orna Milo', Doron Livne', Frida Klappholz, Alain Baczinski, Lou Gelerter, David Cassuto, Yehuda Liebes, Hayim Snir, Serge Roser, Henry Abramowitz, Steve Hornstein, Esti Kenan, Sergio Molcho, Sharona Karpel, Mario Kotliar, '10 Fingers' group with Hana Orgal.

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Programme

At it's first stage, Perush '90 is to proceed during the years 1990-1993. The work will be done in two ways:

Experimentation and study workshop, to take place in regular meetings, and in periods of concentrated laboratory. During several months a central theme - formal or otherwise - will be examined. Other artists (musicians, actors, dancers, writers, video artists, and so forth), thinkers and researchers, will be invited to those meetings.

The public presentations of Perush '90 productions will be

- multi-media events
- performances emphasizing spatial and visual aspects
- video pieces
- preliminary publication of literary texts or researches (original or translated) linked to the workshop's theme.

All the material of Perush '90 workshop and public productions will be documented for teaching and research purposes.

For the years 1989-1990, two projects are planned:

HASSUKKA (The Tabernacle) - an event which will take place during the feast of tabernacles and will proceed on two levels: the tabernacle itself as an installation piece, in which a dynamic interaction of actors, dancers, musicians, and an audience, will occur. The feast of tabernacles is rich in thematic and visual potentialities. the tabernacle is a space of rite that may give plenty of inspiration to the painter, the stage designer, the thinker, the poet. We are now at the preparatory stage of gathering materials from our classical - and other - sources, and thinking about the spatial and performatory possibilities pertaining this event.

HASSFIRA - HITKARVUT, KIRVA, KORBAN (Counting the Days: Approaching, Nearness, Sacrifice)

Hassfira may also be translated as "Counting of the Omer", or "Days of the Omer". Omer is a sheaf of corn, and the 'counting', as defined in Alkalay dictionary, denotes the 49 days from the first offering of the omer in the Temple, 2nd day of Passover - 16th Nissan - to Pentecost. It is a period of mourning.

Our project is to be an experiment in progressive continuity in time, leading up to a climax. What is the nature of pacing toward-, of an advent? What is the nature of the climax - fulfilment, extatic elation - a moment before a new falling? New artistic forms of charging and discharging will be examined against the 49 Days of the Omer, coming to the 50th gate, Mount Sinay; space of Pentecost and the extension of time until 17th Tammuz (commemorating the destruction of the first Temple), 9th Ay (commemorating the destruction of the second and last Temple); motifs of guilt, atonement, sacrifice, advent, and covenant; a continuity of hope, ascent, and destruction.