

Effects of Displacement

Rachel Monosov

23 January — 22 February 2015

New York, January 23, 2015 – Catinca Tabacaru Gallery is proud to present Effects of Displacement, emerging Israeli artist Rachel Monosov's first New York solo exhibition. Bridging photography, video, sculpture, and sound work, Monosov delves into cultural notions of isolation, nationalism, and personal space, exploring which aspects of identity are alterable constructs, and which are inherent. While each work in the exhibition is autobiographical and steeped with a desire to grapple with Monosov's personal history, the collection as a whole reflects a rootless present rife with broader social implications.

Born in St. Petersburg, raised in Israel, and having studied in Ghent, Jerusalem, and New York City, and now residing in Brussels, Monosov sources from her experiences with cultural displacement. While her artistic output has characteristically embodied photographic self-portraiture and manipulated landscapes, this new body of work unveils her expansion into wide-ranging, sensory installation and digital frontiers. As international travel and mass media affect a new global identity, Monosov questions: Does nationality delineate identity? Should it dictate where one can go, or what one can do or own? Are the most threatening borders invisible?

Presenting an array of cross-disciplinary work, Monosov mounts a cascading photograph of an infinite desert landscape, utopian but riddled with notions of unseen boundaries. A found faux hair extension simultaneously calls to stereotypical kitsch accessories and modifiable personal identities, while a sound piece depicting a musician wandering the old city of Jerusalem is overlaid with original electronic music. Filmed in Jerusalem and the Judean Desert in Palestine, The Visitor, is Monosov's pièce de résistance. It channels the artist's return to a proclaimed 'homeland' after eight years abroad and the feelings of re-encountering one's childhood home as a foreigner. As she assumes the rootless detachment, inexperienced perspective and vulnerability of a visiting stranger, Monosov's "character" collects remnants and documents fauna while attempting to capture an image of the divine. The video incorporates sound-work akin to classic science fiction movies to present a palpable alienation, prompting the viewer with a slew of open-ended questions.

Effects of Displacement underscores Monosov's struggle with an in-between present, tackling themes of religion and identity while remaining fundamentally ambivalent. Culminating in vague cultural assertions and unresolved chaos, Monosov hints at the universal quest which lies ahead.