

**LEE
YANOR**

**SMALL
SONGS**

**VIDEO
EXPOSÉ**

JUDISKA TEATERN, STOCKHOLM JUNE 2010

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Lee Yanor, Choreographer of Essences

See/Perceive

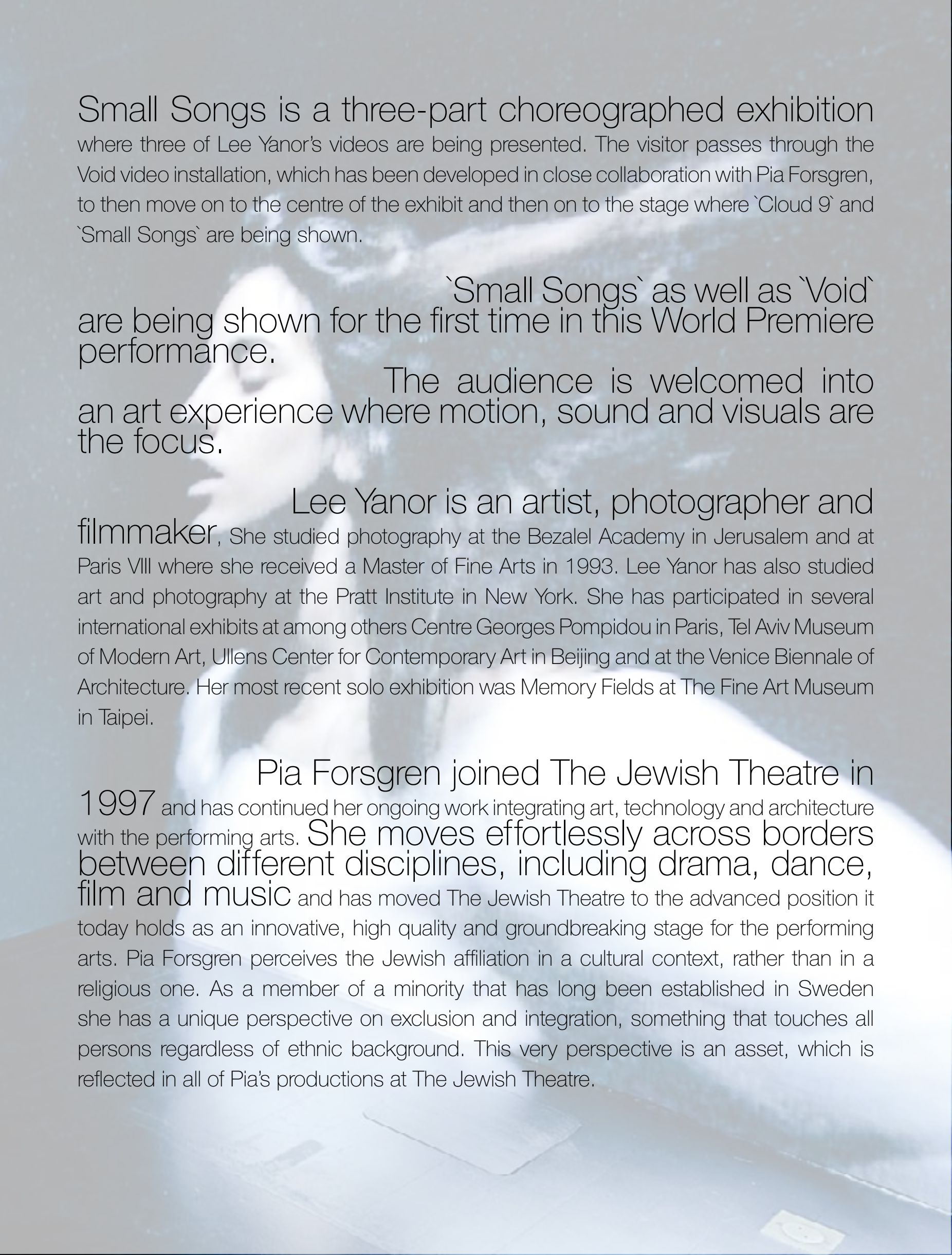
To see, close your eyes.

The eye listens.

As far as the eye can see.

This vanishing of the image is at the core of what Lee Yanor captures, in the dance of bodies and landscapes, the fragile apparition of essences, the flux and its return of what ceaselessly appears and disappears and leaves, in the abstraction of the gaze, the imprint of a breath.

Jean-Marc Adolphe Editor-in-Chief, Mouvement



Small Songs is a three-part choreographed exhibition where three of Lee Yanor's videos are being presented. The visitor passes through the Void video installation, which has been developed in close collaboration with Pia Forsgren, to then move on to the centre of the exhibit and then on to the stage where `Cloud 9` and `Small Songs` are being shown.

`Small Songs` as well as `Void` are being shown for the first time in this World Premiere performance.

The audience is welcomed into an art experience where motion, sound and visuals are the focus.

Lee Yanor is an artist, photographer and filmmaker. She studied photography at the Bezalel Academy in Jerusalem and at Paris VIII where she received a Master of Fine Arts in 1993. Lee Yanor has also studied art and photography at the Pratt Institute in New York. She has participated in several international exhibits at among others Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, Tel Aviv Museum of Modern Art, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing and at the Venice Biennale of Architecture. Her most recent solo exhibition was Memory Fields at The Fine Art Museum in Taipei.

Pia Forsgren joined The Jewish Theatre in 1997 and has continued her ongoing work integrating art, technology and architecture with the performing arts. She moves effortlessly across borders between different disciplines, including drama, dance, film and music and has moved The Jewish Theatre to the advanced position it today holds as an innovative, high quality and groundbreaking stage for the performing arts. Pia Forsgren perceives the Jewish affiliation in a cultural context, rather than in a religious one. As a member of a minority that has long been established in Sweden she has a unique perspective on exclusion and integration, something that touches all persons regardless of ethnic background. This very perspective is an asset, which is reflected in all of Pia's productions at The Jewish Theatre.

Unison / Dissemination

The fragment composes.

No restitution of the real (and even less so a dream) is possible as a whole.

We no longer really know how to tell stories, and live in a world in which History is no more apt at telling them. Very old traditions invented cosmogonies for themselves, today orphans of their founding myths.

The global village of our current globalization which blends everything together, indistinctly, in its machine of destruction – human experiences and vegetal essences, languages and bodies, the lot subject to the same profit of growth – is in opposition to the All-World of a globalization that remains to be invented, in the One and the Multiple, between planetary belonging and the separation of intimacies.

Something bigger and stronger than every one of us: the cosmos is present in the tiniest parcel of landscape.

Here is the unison that binds us with our seemings and differences, and that then diffracts in pollinating flower after flower the slightest gesture of being. A dissemination consubstantial to life itself, in each one of the singular essences that spawn their course, temporarily, toward the infinite.

The very acute feeling of the fragment that Lee Yanor develops in her prises de vue or shots (an inaccurate expression that only very feebly translates what is at play in the act of perceiving) then expands into the space of installations where the spectator's gaze (thus disengaged from its penchant for voyeurism) is summoned to embrace a multitude of screens. The projection is, then, fragmented, and it is from this very fragmentation that Lee Yanor re-activates a dancing unity, in the simultaneous song of the images.

A truly choreographic composition, where Lee Yanor creates the space for these essences to transpire – a choreographer of essences, therefore.









Y [Photography]

Sun, look out for yourself!

A.J. Wiertz, Oeuvres littéraires (Paris, 1870), p. 374

“If one day the sun should sputter out,
‘Twill be a mortal who rekindles it.”

*Laurencin and Clairville, Le Roi Dagobert à l'exposition de 1844, Théâtre de Vaudeville,
April 19, 1844 (Paris, 1844), p. 18 [lines spoken by the Genius of Industry]*

The photographer Lee Yanor and I met for the first time when I visited her in her studio in Jaffa. She showed me the just completed video Small Songs as well as emulsions and holograms – photos made with experimental techniques. Instantly I knew that I wanted to create a Room Within A Room for her art. I wanted to rebuild The Jewish Theatre in Stockholm into a choreographed set design for the audience to walk through and inhabit. I wanted to enhance and highlight what had touched me the strongest: movement, time, rhythm, pulse, the human body – all which can be found in dance. Lee is a former dancer and we both work creatively in the borderland where art, dance, photography, music, sound, set design and technology all interweave.

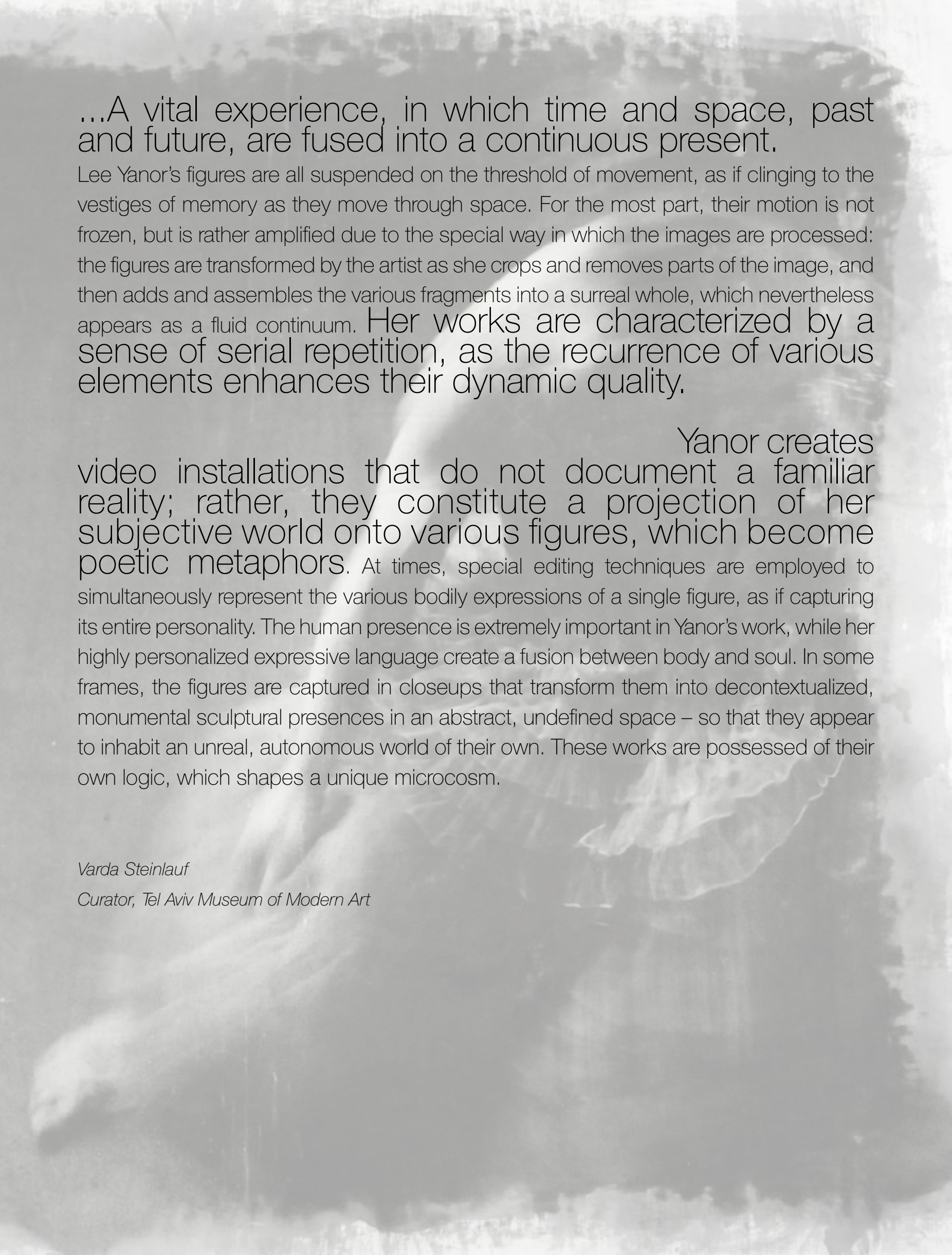
... The dancer in Cloud 9 is filmed back stage. There are flowers in a vase that another dancer burns in the famous film Coffee with Pina. A secret greeting between the artworks, everybody is entitled to their interpretation. As with everything.

“All actual life is encounter”, as the Austrian-born Jewish philosopher Martin Buber used to say.

Pia Forsgren

Theatre Manager and Artistic Director, The Jewish Theatre





...A vital experience, in which time and space, past and future, are fused into a continuous present.

Lee Yanor's figures are all suspended on the threshold of movement, as if clinging to the vestiges of memory as they move through space. For the most part, their motion is not frozen, but is rather amplified due to the special way in which the images are processed: the figures are transformed by the artist as she crops and removes parts of the image, and then adds and assembles the various fragments into a surreal whole, which nevertheless appears as a fluid continuum. Her works are characterized by a sense of serial repetition, as the recurrence of various elements enhances their dynamic quality.

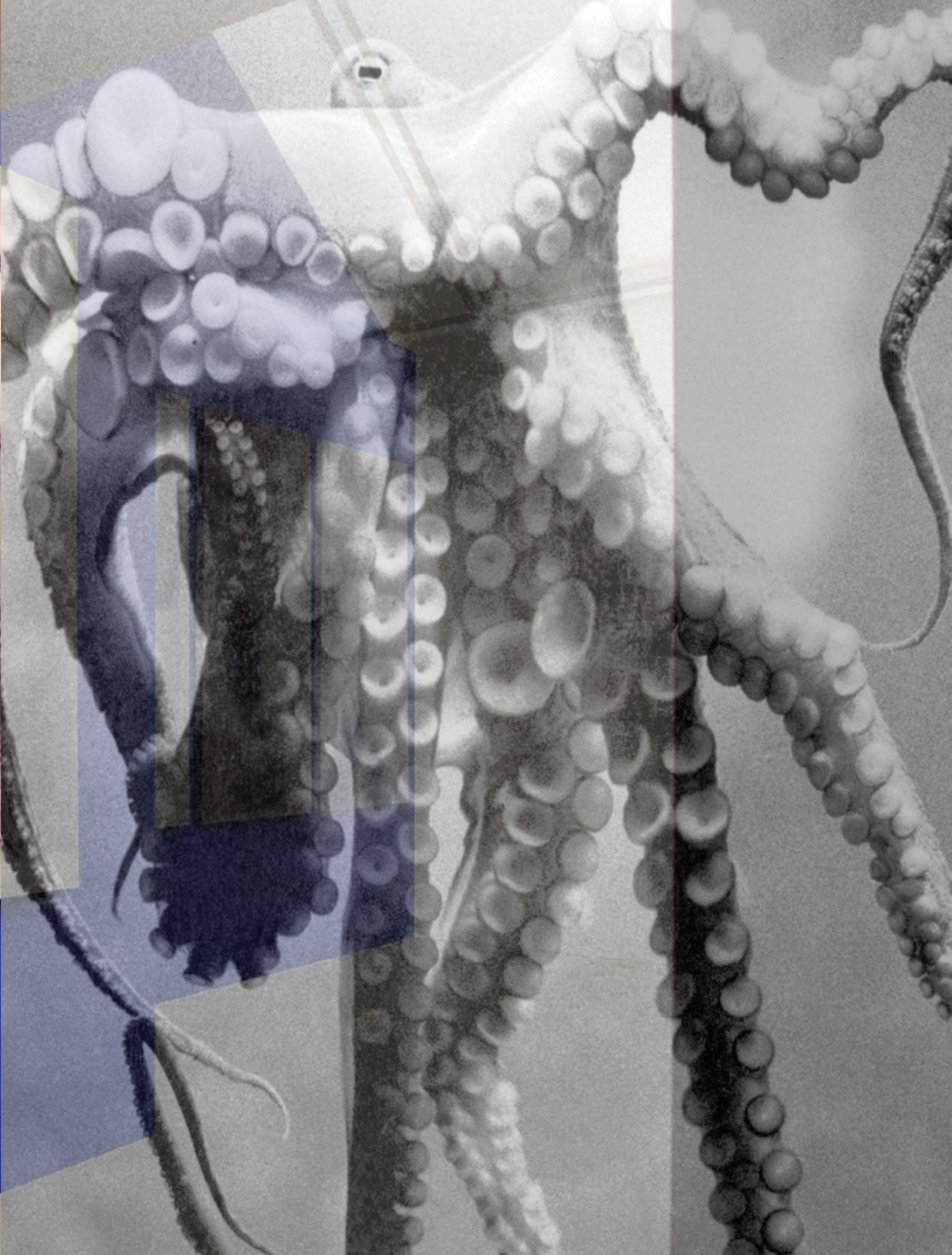
Yanor creates video installations that do not document a familiar reality; rather, they constitute a projection of her subjective world onto various figures, which become poetic metaphors. At times, special editing techniques are employed to simultaneously represent the various bodily expressions of a single figure, as if capturing its entire personality. The human presence is extremely important in Yanor's work, while her highly personalized expressive language create a fusion between body and soul. In some frames, the figures are captured in closeups that transform them into decontextualized, monumental sculptural presences in an abstract, undefined space – so that they appear to inhabit an unreal, autonomous world of their own. These works are possessed of their own logic, which shapes a unique microcosm.

Varda Steinlauf

Curator, Tel Aviv Museum of Modern Art











Photographing or filming, is this still dancing?

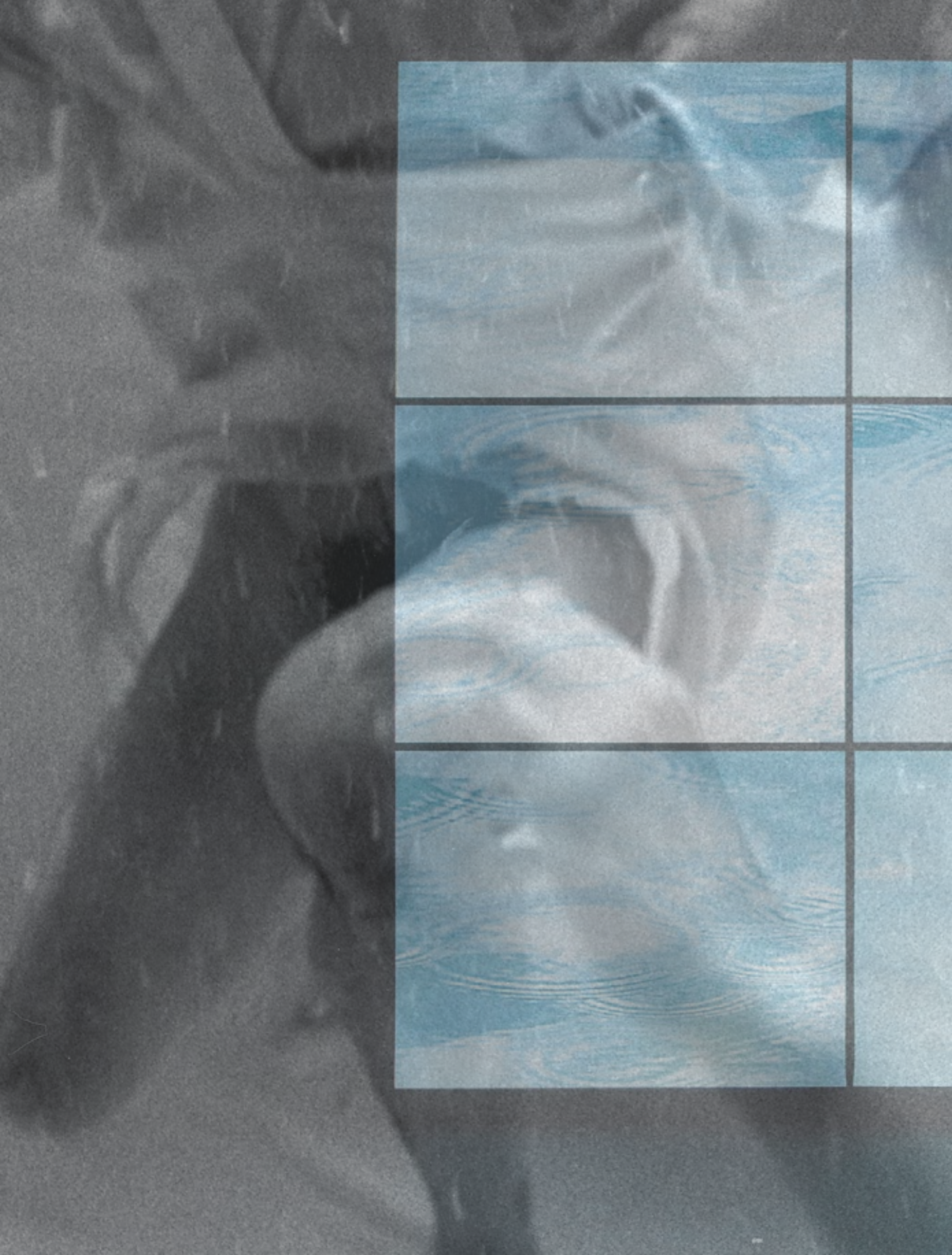
I will leave it up to the others – those more theoretical than I – to qualify Lee Yanor's art. Let it suffice, for now, to relate here a passage from a recent book by Michelle Debat that outlines a new dialectics between 'photography', 'dance' and 'choreography':

"Time and matter are never entities and in this sense the practices that deal with them must work with that which from event-instant vanishes into advent-moment. For this passage from time into matter to occur, it has first to go through the interval, the fragment, the segmentation and break the point of view, multiply the sequences, destroy linearity, stick together the extremes, even act upon the deconstruction of the body, its disfiguration, until the resulting formlessness opens the doors to the pulsating image and no longer to the discourse. For it is as true with dance as photography that it's a question of creating the singular out of the vanishing, taking as their starting point the disappearing, which is also the universal, or, more precisely, to draw from the fragmentary to tell the ineffable. Then let us give Franz Marc, a German expressionist painter, the friend of Kandinsky and Gauguin, the privilege of reminding us that dance and photography are the sites of revelation for the formal writing of space-time, for both 'invite the world to speak rather than the soul, moved by the spectacle of the soul of the world'. Such is the underlying paradox that unites photography and dance, in their paradoxical capacity for thwarting objects and bodies in these instants close to the ritual, where the magic of space and time engenders the form which tells us 'where it looks' and 'where it dances'".*

In his short-film *La Ricotta*, Pier-Paolo Pasolini has Orson Welles play a part. An inopportune journalist comes to interview the maestro right during the shooting and asks him, when it is over, "What do you think of Fellini?" Orson Welles smiles and simply says, "He dances...he dances". About Lee Yanor, I would say the same thing: "She dances...she dances!".

Jean-Marc Adolphe Editor-in-Chief, *Mouvement*

* Michelle Debat, *L'Impossible image. Photographie – Danse – Chorégraphie*. Editions La Lettre volée. Brussels, 2009





The Poetics of Time and Space in Lee Yanor's Work

"What happens is so far ahead of what we think, of our intentions, that we can never catch up with it and never really know its true appearance."

Rainer Maria Rilke

The medium of video transforms the artificial representation of the world into what appears as a distinct reality – a shift described by Paul Virilio as a radical change in the human perception of space and time...

Although video art initially centered on single-channel videos broadcast on television monitors, over the past few decades this medium has assumed the form of complex installations. Today, multi-channel video works are projected onto giant screens using cutting-edge, interactive digital techniques, which enable artists such as Lee Yanor to study multiple experiences of time and space. The temporal continuity of the flow of images appearing on a series of different monitors or screens may follow the traditional cinematic model, or may appear fragmented and discontinuous; in some cases, the images may dissolve into particles of light and colour, repeating and duplicating themselves at varying speeds.

Yanor, in her video installations, gives concrete expression to this approach by revealing the technical mechanism underlying the production of the artwork, she does so by introducing multiple photographic angles, or rupturing linear narratives of the kind typical of traditional cinema. Like other postmodern artists, her works underscore the more psychological and spiritual aspects of filmmaking.

As the viewers enter the exhibition *Small Songs*, the first work they come upon is 'Void', which was commissioned by The Jewish Theatre. The viewers must pass through a labyrinthine space that provokes a sense of disorientation. 'Void', this non-place, is filled with closeups of agitated figures, immersed in a near-ecstatic state whose origins remain unclear. Flashes of light play an important part in this work, while the viewer is thrust into the whirlpool of figures.



As Lee Yanor

describes it, "This is a dreamlike world that rises up from a bright white surface, and whose horizon seems to stretch to infinity. "These human figures all suggest the possibility of a metamorphosis, or a more extreme scenario in which there is no longer any distinction between humans and animals. For the most part, the changing camera angles leave the task of completing the image to the viewer, giving rise to baroque-like scenes.

The Four Elements – wind, fire, water and earth – occupy an important place in Yanor's work. In the installation 'Cloud 9', the work is transformed into a choreography in digital space, while the viewer connects the films into a continuum of his own making. This installation gives rise to a new language and dynamic viewing experience, which unfolds to different temporal rhythms. The work is composed of different chapters that intermix and create fluid visual images.

Patches of light signal the arrival of a train early on in the film; children splash in water that scintillates in the light of a blinding sun; a flock of sheep advances and effaces a field of red anemones, giving way in turn to an image of a wheat field blowing in the wind. This flow of images is disrupted by the appearance of a dancer in a red dress – a powerful figure that seems to imbibe her strength from the earth. The image of a polar bear that enters the frame in one of the last scenes offers a silent ending. The human, animal and vegetal elements – three categories distinguished from one another as early as the biblical story of creation – are not separated from one another. The resulting sensation, says Lee Yanor, is of "a glowing whiteness that engulfs the work; rich, textured strata of floating, minimalist light render it abstract, material, sensory. The work oscillates between the blinding light associated with the end and a yearning which marks a new beginning."

Varda Steinlauf
Curator, Tel Aviv Museum of Modern Art
Translated by Talya Halkin



In the video installation *Small Songs*, two figures – a man and a woman – sing the lyrics to an identically titled song by Lhasa De Sela. Caught up in different emotional states, they attempt to internalize the words through various bodily movements – dancing, falling, running. We are faced with a scene that seems to be alternately coming to the fore and dissolving, giving rise to experiences of existence and annihilation that follow one upon another in a never-ending cycle. Human emotions and states of mind such as love and innocence are transmitted by means of a series of pulses that encapsulate fragments of time and memory, while echoing the beating of the human heart.

The visual image dissolves and reassembles, as subtle as a whisper or a soft breath. It eludes us, leaving behind traces of its suspension and gathering them back into itself. “I try to push the figures to the threshold, to bring up whatever emotions are there and to touch upon the memory and pain of loss,” Yanor says. The images appear and dissolve simultaneously on six screens, creating a musical rhythm: “Sometimes they sing in unison, while in other instances they are partially or completely out of sync,” Yanor adds. “The screens are like single syllables. The two figures appear both jointly and separately; the connection between them is fragile, and creates a visual relationship that evolves in a kind of unconscious realm, and in a different temporal dimension.”

Varda Steinlauf
Curator, Tel Aviv Museum of Modern Art
Translated by Talya Halkin

















In 2006 Yanor got a lot of attention for her piece **Coffee with Pina**. The nearly hour-long film depicts a meeting between Yanor and the famous choreographer Pina Bausch who died last year. Yanor was among the very few who were ever invited to Bausch's studio, and the piece which was filmed between 2002 and 2005, is a unique and beautiful portrait of one of the dance world's giants.

Coffee with Pina is a film that refuses to adhere to conventions. It is not fiction, yet not quite documentary either. More than anything else, this film is a study of documentation, memory and experience. This film creates a stream of consciousness that immerses the viewer in beauty, strength and an intense joie de vivre. Within these one can find a rare ingredient that can be defined as realistic optimism.

The film created by Yanor comprises images from these intimate meetings interweaved with dance parts filmed at rehearsals and performances, although most of them have been changed beyond recognition. Yanor's camera focuses on the characters on the margins of the stage. She transferred musical elements from parts of the performance to other parts, introduced sounds of trains, wind and rain into the soundtrack and created layer upon layer of images. Yanor, who uses photography extensively created a film that could be frozen at any given scene and framed as an image in its own right. She offers the viewer an abundance of images that at times becomes almost abstract, although the entire film is figurative. The meetings with Bausch are short, include little verbal communication, but are rich in expression and beautiful movements, and she appears at times to be a fictitious character, a woman whose movements are so complete, whose presence is so intense, that they seem almost impossible. The intensity of the film is captivating. It ends in a black and white shot of Bausch and leaves the viewer with a new insight into the power of motion as a means of touching the soul, the most inner self. The images, that appear so evasive, linger in memory long after the film is over.

Smadar Sheffi

art critic for Haaretz newspaper and a cultural theoretician.





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