Art, much like the art of science, sprouts from an inner seed, within the awareness of the artist or scientist. Each must then undergo a rigorous process of refinement, isolation and experimentation. Each of these worlds is based on a central tenet of precision and consistency. Thus, these two spheres, which, on first glance appear to be so distant from one another, spring from the same aspiration – to better understand the world.

At the Weizmann Institute of Science, art is seen to be a complementary activity, so that scientists and artists can, together, observe the world from a higher vantage point in a more critical and precise way. In other words, the synergy that occurs when science and art are brought together – when the two world views meet – can lead to more significant achievements in the enduring quest to understand the world and our place in it.

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Aviva Shemer (b. 1942, Israel) first attempted to create art from the perspective of a tormented artist: expressing pain, criticism and despair. She managed to bring upon herself quite a bit of suffering, but she was not satisfied with the results. After much contemplation, as well as deepening her knowledge of scriptures, Shemer remembered the legacy of her great-grandfather, Nathaniel Mendel Schwartz of Safed, whose friends called him a nickname meaning "be happy and make others happy."

Shemer abandoned the theme of grievance and adopted the concept of "Tikkun Olam" – a term coined by Hillel the Elder – which simply prefers the cup half-full, positive thinking, the desire to repair the world and help improve the lives of all human beings, wherever they may be. Tikkun Olam, in Shemer’s world view, stems from every good deed, from every smile, from helping others. Mean well and do good – and good will come to you.

The series of works Tikkun (Repair) in this exhibit is part of her greater "Tikkun Olam" effort. On the one hand, it represents the change in the artist’s perception – a shift from distress and suffering to positive thinking and joy. But equally important, it allows observers (almost urges them) to soar to a unique point where they, themselves, can embrace darkness and then part ways with it – and grow toward the light.
Art on campus

אמנות בקמפוס
Art on campus

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And the Anchorman | Joshua Griffit

In the world of journalism, "yesterday's news" is worthless and unimportant. That is, if the story is not reported immediately, the opportunity is missed and the "story" will be casually tossed and forgotten, not to see the light of day. In the world of art, on the other hand, the "processing" of information and the germination of ideas can take a long time, sometimes even entire generations.

Joshua Griffit’s current series of works offers an unusual hybrid between these two worlds. It is, unsparring, art in real time. It is art that, on the one hand, communicates current affairs, and on the other, combines its "news" report with updates of preliminary feelings, connotations and "gut reactions" that pass directly – almost unfiltered – from the thought that has not yet matured to the hand that holds the brush.

The bitter feelings conjured by the frequent sight of burning fields on Israel's Gaza border, shrouded as they are in helpless anger, undergo rapid transformation and, with Griffit’s treatment, raise their heads to glare at us with sharp sarcasm. Representations of time – cars from the 1960s – bring us back to more innocent days when a burning field was deemed a disaster that no one would dare offer to "contain." The frivolity Griffit attributes to current policymakers is expressed in the starkness of the painting in which Minnie Mouse exclaims to the children among us: "Look, a burning field" (as casually as: "Look, a bird"). The distance and lack of understanding of this harsh reality are ascribed to policymakers who do not share the daily suffering of those living on the "periphery." Their words and promises are nothing but lip service.

Airborne firefighters, falling one after another ("like flies," as the mythical broadcaster of "The Voice of Thunder," from Cairo, said during another war – the Six-Day War) imply that the solution to the situation is far in the distance. That our hands, at this stage, for better or for worse, do not hold our salvation. Only the press photographer, standing at the forefront of one of the paintings, meticulously dressed and focused on his work, reminds us that his professional "objectivity" is made possible because immediately after the assignment is over he will get in his car and return north to his home, far from the danger zone.

And the burnt fields – and the burning, right now – will remain the exclusive realm of the “peripheral” citizens.
Joshua Griffit, *Madonna of the Fields*, 2019
Acrylic on canvas

Joshua Griffit, *Field in the South*, 2019
Acrylic on plywood
Joshua Griffit, See the Field Burn, 2019
Acrylic on paper

Joshua Griffit, Orange Sky, 2019
Acrylic on paper
Joshua Griffit, *Kibbutz in the South*, 2019
Acrylic on paper
Yochi Shrem | *Following the Line*
Three sculptures from a series
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אמנות בcampus
Maya Smira, *Errors*, 2013

מיאה סמירא, "שיבושים", 2013
Maya Smira, *Errors*, 2013
Art on campus

Maya Smira, Reflections, 2018

מaya סמירה, "השתקפויות" 2018
Carmi Dror, Sungazing, 2018
Carmi Dror, *Characters*, 2017-2018
Now with Noise | Maya Smira, Carmi Dror

Noise is generally unwelcome, especially when it competes with a desired signal. There is an ongoing struggle between noise and signal in our natural environment as well as in our various technological systems. Sometimes the wanted information comes out on top, sometimes the noise drowns it out. Noise can be a whisper or a hum in an audio system, the snow on a radar screen, or the "camera shake" in a digital image. The information deluge that continually floods our senses also contains an enormous amount of noise that keeps us from concentrating on our tasks.

The Errors series by Maya Smira (2013) was created as the result of inaccuracies in the transfer of digital photography data. The electronic noise that overtakes the information "conquers" it as it allows pixels to erase parts of the image, replacing it with one that is nearly abstract and creating a new, original narrative instead of the disappeared one.

The photo image Sungazing by Carmi Dror (2018), was created through a data processing method meant for fabricating 3-D models from photographs: A man sits on a bench, his face turned to the sun. Here too, noise – originating in the strong, blinding sunlight – obfuscates the data processing. Thus random segments of the image disappear as though the wind has carried them off. These torn-out spaces represent stages or steps in tasks in which the data processing has failed.

The series of digital collages Reflections by Maya Smira (2018) suggests, at least at first glance, too much information. These images are composed of photographs taken on the Tel-Aviv-Yafo beaches. Smira’s camera focuses on the characteristic elements of the city’s beaches: sand, beach umbrellas, people and shorefront structures. All of these are copied, deconstructed and reconstructed so that the new integration between noise and information presents a new reality (or an alternate view of the future).

In the Characters series (2017-2018), Carmi Dror offers drips of information that appear to be letters written in an unknown language. In fact, these are light signals bouncing off moving water that reach the camera lens accompanied by noise. On the one hand, there appears to be a message and on the other, the noise is so dynamic, there is no way we can extract the information from the noise.

Carmi Dror lives and works in Tel Aviv. She has a BA in photography from Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, and The Cooper Union, New York. Her work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in Israel and is included in private collections. She is a lecturer at Bezalel and an article on her work by Elinor Darsy appeared in Shirat Hamada 2019.

Maya Smira lives and works in Israel and the US. She has a BA in humanities from Minshar College and the Open University, and an MA in art from the San Francisco Art Institute. She has been awarded the Christopher Coppola "Pah" Festival, Mobiflicks Competition First Prize; a Finalist Award, LG Art of the Pixel Contest, New York City; and the Outset Award for Video Greenhouse Artist, Fresh Paint Art Fair, Tel-Aviv. Her work has been exhibited, among other places, in Santa Cruz, California, the Haifa Museum of Contemporary Art, the Petach Tikva Museum, and the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. She has had a number of solo exhibits in Israel and her video work was screened in the Venice Biennale and in Times Square in New York.
Art on Campus

Curator: Yivsam Azgad