

## **Maya Aroch - *Changing Room***

Alfred Cooperative Institute for Art & Culture, Tel-Aviv, In collaboration with Gal Melnick

5/9/19-12/10/19, Text by Yael Sloma

The experience of bathing in a Roman-Turkish style bathhouse, located in the heart of the German Black-Forest, is the premise of Maya Aroch and Gal Melnick's exhibition. There, the bathers move between endless corridors with rooms embedded all the way through, passing through all the hot saunas into the cold water pools.

Subjected to the caretakers' precise instructions, the bather's naked body, sleek from sweat, is led between the steam immersed rooms. From one room to another, he advances towards a spiritual-fantastic experience, to which he devotes himself in the company of other bathers presently there.

This transformative occasion that binds polishing of the body with the elevation of the soul is converted into the 'Changing Room' exhibition space by the artists. By using a structure resembling an undulating snake, whose heart continues to beat, they lead the spectator into the moment of transformation when the bather sheds, not only his former body but also his awareness.

The boundaries and structure of the gallery space are blurred by the artists who built a winding walking trail dictating the movement of the visitor present. The length of the path is embedded with peepholes, enabling a view into the area enclosed between the blue satin curtain and the gallery walls. Finally, the walking trail leads the visitor into a red room of small dimensions, where the beating smoke-immersed heart of the exhibition is located. Placed in its' center is a sculpture shaped as the head of a human whose limbs are marked by simple geometric shapes, and he is covered by large drops of sweat – or tears.

Just like the tumult in the Roman bathhouse, Aroch and Melnick's exhibition space holds various occurrences that mature together into a multi-sensual experience. In the exhibition, the gallery space functions as a setting for four performative events from different disciplines, and those exist in the location throughout the exhibition. The events – collaborations with other artists – create a live dialog with the installation and its' visitors, and after their completion, leave footprints in the gallery. Thus, the artist's Changing Room turns into a dynamic installation, which prolongs and transforms throughout its presentation, accumulating the different layers that the exhibition visitors have shed.

### **\*Events hosted at the exhibition:**

**A Vocal-Instrumental performance featuring  
Maya Dunietz, Uri Brauner Kinorot, Adam Scheflan & Ram Gabay |  
Thursday, 5.9.19, 20:00. (Exhibition opening event)**

The performance will take place in the liminal space between the blue curtain and the gallery walls. The playing musicians will be viewed through peepholes embedded in the curtain. The performance will be recorded, and its sound will accompany the exhibition until its closing.

**Of Beetles and Butterflies – A lecture by Oz Rittner |**

**Tuesday, 10.9.2019, 20:00**

Oz Rittner is a collection manager at Steinhardt Museum of Natural History, which is the national center for the exploration of the biological diversity, located inside Tel-Aviv University. As an expert on beetles and Lepidoptera, Rittner deals with the historical and cultural aspects of the investigation of nature and man. Oz will talk about butterflies, beetles, people, and everything in between and refer to the life cycle of the different creatures – which includes transformation, regeneration, and modification. The lecture will hold a presentation of the arthropods collection.

**HatCut Salon – Hairdresser Tamar Amir, will cut the exhibition visitors hair |**

**Throughout the exhibition**

In her haircuts, Amir will apply "the natural method" – she will give her customers a dry haircut while being fully attentive to them and to the nature of their hair. The aesthetic-physical changes the visitor will experience will leave their mark on the space: Hairs of the customers will slowly pile up until the exhibition closing.

The audience is welcomed to get a haircut during the exhibition. A hat will be passed for collecting payment.

**Snake Charmer – An intimate vocal performance by Tal Ganor, Soprano |**

**Tuesday 10.10.2019 (exhibition closing event)**

Ganor, A singer in the Israeli Opera, will do a vocal performance in the red room.

Using her voice, Ganor will guide the visitors of the closing event, while adapting, speaking, and discomposing a single song.