

Maya Aroch

'After Hours', 2022, Installation, mixed media

Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, July – December 2022

Curator: Sally Haftel Naveh

The installation *After Hours* is a fantastic environment set between reality and dream, a monumental configuration of sculptures and drawings that creates a synthesized landscape on a monochromatic white-gray-black spectrum. The installation's title suggests a "parallel" time taken out of the linear timeline, subverting the tangible and belonging to a world of fantasy and hallucination that disregards familiar logic and the laws of reality. The line between reality and fiction is also blurred in the range of Aroch's invented images. Her figures and images are the product of a process of liberated consciousness and create a rich, child-like, and magical idiosyncratic lexicon – like a dream that has arisen from the depths of consciousness to the surface of the installation, in which candles weep, jugs run to the moon, and a flock of swans assume the shape and body of the figure 2.

After Hours exists as an artificial ecosystem, full of internal contradictions that merge together in exemplary harmony. The values of three different sites – the Park, the Zen Temple, and the Cave – serve as its source of inspiration and conceptual and aesthetic starting points. The engineered Park provides an escape from the daily routine, or a substitute for it, as well as an opportunity for amusement and pleasure. The Zen garden has a decidedly spiritual-ceremonial quality, offering a meditative spell in a man-made space with an aesthetic of refined reduction, and the chance of disengaging experiences and emotions from the fleeting moment. Conversely, the Cave is the embodiment of the wild and natural – a refuge and hiding place in a primeval, raw form.

Within Aroch's garden, in its representations of nature – plain, hill, valley, and reservoir – there are sculptural objects that derive from and merge with them. The silent elements are seemingly shaken into life through movement and sound, charging

and activating the senses. Deep within the installation are four rows of graphite drawings – each capturing a private microcosm with a narrative that arises from the consciousness outwards. Their presence underlines the distinct quality of the installation, as though it were a closed site with unique cultural symbols. The materiality of *After Hours* and its configuration highlight the inner contradiction it captures, as the topography merges into decorative elements: a wall-to-wall carpet covers the floor, unifying the scenery's outlines and challenging the dichotomy between interior and exterior.

Within the timeless bubble, Aroch establishes a deceptive reality that takes shape as a ceremonial space, a cultic setting, or a pilgrimage site – exerting influence on the visitors and triggered by their presence. *After Hours* is a space in which the fictional and the fantastic mingle with the known and familiar, where the consciousness is liberated and roams from the body to an obscure dimension in which everything is possible.