

Ruti de Vries, Wormhole

Nahum Gutman Museum of Art, curator: Monica Lavi

The wing of the Museum called the **Writers' House** was named for the editorial office of the *Hapoel Hatza'ir* newspaper, formerly located in the building, active in the early 20th century. Writer Devorah Baron, lived there with her husband, and Yosef Chaim Brenner was also a resident. The Schulman Family built the house in 1887 as their home; the house was later rented out.

Devorah Baron is not directly present in Ruti de Vries's exhibition "Wormhole," but the spirit of her stories hovers over it, stories engaged in women on the margins of Eastern European Jewish communities. These women tied themselves to their environs and redeemed themselves by caring for clothing, bed linens, and household objects. Baron did not leave her home during the last decades of her life, earning the nickname "The Imprisoned Princess," "The Living Dead Woman," and "House Arrestee." She used her residence on Oliphant Street, Tel Aviv, as an expansion of her stories. In correspondence with her daughter Tziporah Aharonovitz, she compared her home to the fictional homes she described in her stories.

de Vries draws her inspiration from her personal dynasty of creative women – her grandmother and mother – from the objects they gave her and from rituals and physical gestures associated with them. These all become sculptural creatures located in obsessive, meditative liminal spaces, on the threshold of interior and exterior, between animal and human, exhibition and theatre, object and marionette. "Wormhole" refers to a physical phenomenon enabling a transition between two points distant in space and time. de Vries applies the concept to art objects, transforming them into objects for transitions between souls, spaces, and histories. de Vries's space-time journey takes place by means of objects made of materials close to nature or their raw state, creating a ritualistic and shamanic layer in the exhibition functioning as a site to channel the spirits of the Great Mothers.

"Wormhole" stretches across five exhibition halls, each named by the artist – not necessarily according to the original plan of the historic house. Lobby. Living room. Study. Kitchen. Bedroom. Dividing the space into zones captures de Vries's creative effervescence and calls it to order, while simultaneously generating movement deeper into the house. Preparation during the transition from the street into the entrance area, the stay in the living room

together with others, the rest and intimacy in the bedroom and productive creativity in the study invite the visitor to change while moving and prepare oneself before moving to the next space.

de Vries is fascinated by the concept “home” and draws inspiration from women artists who transformed their home into a work of art, such as Afia Zecharia from Shlomi. As the descendant of a dynasty of women artists, she uses “feminine” practices such as sewing, ironing, folding, and decorating without extraneous complexes, transforming the exhibition space into a home populated with soft sculptures and tapestries. At the same time, the figure of the writer who turned her home into one of her stories and imprisoned herself inside it seems to be sneaking up behind the artist’s back, whispering all the while.

Monica Lavi, Exhibition Curator

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Ruti de Vries (b. 1989, Tel Aviv), lives and works in Tel Aviv. MFA, Bezalel Academy of Art and Design (2015); B.Ed., Art and Education, Hamidrasha College of Art, Beit Berl (2012). Currently in the Associates Program at Alma, Home for Hebrew Culture, Tel Aviv. Solo shows include exhibited solo shows at The Herzliya Artists’ Residence; Kibbutz Gallery, Tel Aviv; Sha’ar Ha’amakim Gallery, Studio Pram, Prague, Czech Republic; la Cité, Paris; and at Schimmel Projects, Dresden, Germany. Group exhibitions include at Tel Aviv Museum of Art; Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art; Bat-Yam Museum; Janco Dada Museum, Ein Hod; Petach Tikva Museum of Art; Biennale of Drawing VI and VIII, Jerusalem; Art Week in Krakow and Warsaw; and more. Her works are in collections of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art; Haaretz; Atlas Hotels; and private collections. Ministry of Culture and Sport Prize for a Young Artist for the Year 2016; grants from the Rabinovich Foundation for the Arts and the Payis Council for Art and Culture. Artist in residence at the Cité internationale des arts, Paris; House of Arts, Brno, and in Pram Studio, both in Czech Republic; participant in career development programs of Artis Asylum Arts, and Artport. Freelance graphic designer and lecturer at Musrara School of Art, Jerusalem.