

## **Shahar Afek - *Terminan en el Mar***

Minshar School of Art Gallery, Tel Aviv / December 2017, curator: Hila Cohen-Schneiderman

Shahar Afek's artistic work relies on loitering the urban space, gathering summoned objects, materials and ideas. Afek addresses photography as a tool for sampling reality in order to transform its components into abstract pawns of varying scales, and to construct a new space within them one which contains their various layers. The exhibition deals with the concept of the model - the model, as an effective tool, which gives the ability to simulate reality - to illustrate or reflect on it, while holding the possibility of viewing it from the outside as well. In the current exhibition, Minshar's gallery space transforms into a real-life scale model which can be entered vagrantly or overviewed from the terrace.

In order to transform the photographs into playful forms, Afek instigates several conversion processes - first a process of compression and abstraction, and then processing by using digital collage. These actions restore the photos their volumetric and three-dimensional sense, as the tangibility intensifies even further during the printing phase -done on alucobond- a material which combines aluminum and plastic plates giving it elasticity; usually used for outdoor signs and cladding of buildings. Printing turns the photographs into real sculptures, ones which can be installed in space and walk around or among them.

Afek's actions can be regarded as a contemporary adaptation to the minimalist sculptures of the 1970s, or at least as a tribute to it. Richard Serra's heavy and massive iron plates are given a light version and low resolution, with the photograph of the rusty iron turns into a long print that tries to trace the sculptural gesture in the material and conjure its actual memory. Afek does not create images through the photographic process, but seems to be more concerned with the creation of raw materials, which he forms into fragmented space. The unbridgeable gap between the memory of the material and its photograph, creating a certain longing, is on the verge of developing a nostalgia for the original material; But at the same time, the process opens up another horizon, simulating and enabling. Afek plays make belief, but it is a very serious game, that relies on technological innovations, kinetic mechanisms and large-scale ambitious prints. He works into the technological innovations of the materials as well as the wide range of printing possibilities. The photo that leaves the paper becomes in his hands a raw material for building reality, not but a mere reflection or distortion.

The gallery space is driven by a photograph of a sewage cover spinning on its axis, like a stone thrown into the water. It produces ripples of materials moving away or perhaps approaching, an explosion or a magnet?