

Name of the periodical (newspaper, magazine): Haaretz- Gallery

Date: 10/22/12

Title of article: "Multiplication table exercises"

Author (if known): Galia Yahav

Body of text: **Multiplication table exercises**

Tom Pnini demonstrates polish technique and talent as a way to distinguish cultural codes.

"In the history of cinema the train is an important marker of time and duration", is written the exhibition text. Beyond the many uses of trains to represent displacement of time and place, it also references, knowingly or mingled, the very essence of cinema as every train scene that exists also references to the 1895 Lumiere brothers, "Train enters a station" film. In a similar way the term double is being examined in the essence of cinema, both through the extensive use of doubles and stunt man, as for the reproduction, the magic of the split. The first who realized the false magical potential of duplication, disappearance in smoke and other manipulations over reality was the magician Georges Méliès, that changed his career after watching "Train enters the station", and ended up directing over 500 films. With these two opening elements, a train and duplicity, took Pnini a journey back in time, to the foundation of the medium. The central piece in the exhibition was shot on a course of a year on the track of the New England train museum in Connecticut. The work is constructed from four simultaneous channels, almost identical except for the season of the year in which they are shot. By that the viewer vision is spread with a sort of mirror tablet- allowing to observe each channel's plot from beginning to end, or to absorb panoramically the perfect sync between the channels, which acts as relay race.

A journey turned on its axis

This is a movie that lasts a year, but as one is being turned on its axis, going nowhere. The comparison between the different frames (four train entries to the visiting center, or the four framed train rides under a cement bridge, that resembles the famous images of entering Auschwitz) creates a notion of passing time, but the repetition of plot creates an effect of stepping in one place, of determination. Every season has a different scene that begins with her and follows to the other ones. The little scenes all deals with a certain disturbance to the train, in stolen attempts to defy its course and logic and to create a human scale to the powerful ride. All of the scenes are being performed by the same actress, each time in different outfit, suitable to the weather. You can see her carry a toy

train, or eroding coins on the track, playing harmonica on top of a train as a wanderer searching for jobs, and in an especially beautiful scene playing a banjo. Being duplicated again and again creates a sort of a repetition chorus, in what is an obvious paraphrase to the wonderful “dueling banjo” scene from the movie “Deliverance.” And just like that the multiplication reproduce and so does the mirror figures, as the duet in the movie is transformed to a solo act, played by a woman , who is the double.

In another video work, “Double Windsor” (a term used to tying a tie), Pnini replicates another famous cinematic scene- Buster Keaton enters a station in the movie “The Goat” from 1921. The movie has the first cinematic train chase, and a couple of revolutionary insights of the time of ways of shooting from moving vehicles. Keaton escaping police officers throughout town and inside a moving train, disconnect his train cart and peacefully sits on the top of it. The Locomotive, shot in Keaton’s movie not from the side but from a view of someone standing on the track itself, is coming closer to the camera, and stops centimeters from it. This creates an effect of an intensified portrait of Keaton. Pnini reproduces this shot staring Howard Pincus, the train manager, positioned as Keaton on top of a 19 century steam locomotive. Both of them are constantly reappearing to the viewer, in one duplicated look instead of one lens. The video works, and the exhibition in full, is based on the logic of stereoscopic photography- a technique developed in the 19 century- that places two almost identical images one next to each other, and from one lens that transforms them into a three dimensional image. The stereoscopic image (developed from the view master to the current three dimensional) represents the lost of origin that is the essence of reproduction, as for the logic of twins, two that are the same. Pnini presents a series of stereoscopic photographs documenting the railroad companies in the US. The train carts follows each other, but do not combine to one image. For that the artist painted the smoke coming out of the trains, using watercolors.