

Unearth

LIHI TURJEMAN

February 10 – April 17, 2021

Quartz Studio is pleased to present *Unearth*, the first solo show in Italy by artist Lihi Turjeman (Tel Aviv, Israel, 1985), curated by Noam Segal. With a new body of work focused on the connections between ancient and contemporary culture, Turjeman reimagines our relationship to contemporary notions of time, archeology, restoration and historical artifacts.

For the site-specific exhibition at Quartz Studio, Turjeman will create a painting installation defined by a lust for the archaic, a desire that signals a crisis attitude toward the culture of the present. Turjeman started this body of work with a series of small pseudo-scientific paintings, titled *We Are Dealing With Very Dangerous Materials* (2020), which depicts gloved hands and amorphous shapes made with sand, that encourage a scrutinizing gaze. A scientific, classifying way of looking at the world is activated by the work, as though further data, hidden within the pieces, remains to be unearthed.

Earthen Pots (2020) and *Holding Pattern* (2020) depict a multitude of empty clay amphorae gathered together over a black backdrop that is typically identified with archaeological research and laboratory work. Some of the pots are boldly painted, separated starkly against the canvas, while others are darker, obscured, or else yet to be drawn. The pots, arranged in a way that recalls choreographed human bodies, hint at the possibilities of another kind of gaze, one that leaps out and away from our binary understandings of science, truth formation, and of still life.

A central piece in the show is inspired by a 4,000-year-old “pensive” figurine that was discovered atop a pottery vessel in the land of Israel/Palestine. This ungendered “thinker” sculpture design is unusual. It was discovered in the grave of a Canaanite warrior. History shows that warriors were often buried with figurines, which functioned as spiritual guides to the dead, along with other pottery objects, such as weapons and animal bones. Turjeman produced a blow-up of that guiding figurine, its eyes open wide and empty, as it seeks to unearth a present moment that has not been (re)visited before.

Lihi Turjeman (Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1985) lives and works in Tel-Aviv and Turin. She received her MFA from Bezalel Academy of Art in Jerusalem. In 2015, she was awarded the Israeli Ministry of Culture Award for young artists. Turjeman is a former resident of Cité internationale des arts in Paris; Artport TLV; Fondazione Spinola Banna in Italy; Nars Foundation; and ISCP in Brooklyn, NY. Her large-scale painting installations are characterized by a monochromatic nature and revolve around space in all of its multiple forms and meanings. Her works emphasizes an extreme duality, moving freely between an epic approach and a microscopic concentration on details that are drawn by “mapping” and scratching the surface. Her practice includes a manner that can be categorized as action painting, in which she performs physical actions on the surface of the picture plane. Through smearing, rubbing, peeling, staining and gluing, she hardens the fabric, while emphasizing its folds and textures. The canvas functions as a wall, a territory or a map that is yet to be drawn. Turjeman has exhibited widely during the past decade. Some venues include: The Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, CCA TLV, Frieze NY, Artissima, the Petach-Tikva Museum of Contemporary Art, the Haifa Museum of Art, and others. She is represented by Sommer Contemporary Art, Tel-Aviv. Her works may be found in public and private collections in Israel, Europe, and in the United States. The artist is represented by Sommer Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv/Zurich and Emanuele Norsa, London/Milan.

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