

YOSSI MILO



For Immediate Release:

Orit Hofshi: *Nebulous*
Artist's Reception: Thursday, March 21, 2024, 6-8 PM
Thursday, March 14 – Saturday, April 27, 2024

Yossi Milo is pleased to announce *Nebulous*, Orit Hofshi's debut solo exhibition with the gallery, and the artist's first to be held in New York in over two decades. *Nebulous* opens to the public on Thursday, March 14, and an artist's reception will be held the following week on Thursday, March 21, from 6-8 PM. The show will coincide with the inclusion of Hofshi's work in *The Anxious Eye: German Expressionism and Its Legacy*, a group presentation at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. On March 23, 2024, Hofshi will participate in a conversation with Shelley Langdale, the National Gallery's Curator and Head of Modern Prints and Drawings, which will draw connections between the artist's practice and the historic 20th century works on view.

Orit Hofshi (b. 1959; Kibbutz Matzuva, Israel) creates her monumental works through a laborious combination of mediums, taking a purist, traditional approach to each. Hofshi's works on paper are often immersive in size, verging on the scale of installation. In the studio, the artist begins by drawing directly onto pinewood panels, which she herself then carves with hand tools. Hofshi engages in a deeply physical dialogue with pinewood through this process, forming a collaboration with the natural qualities of her materials. The artist prints these woodcuts by hand, rubbing the back of large sheets of handmade paper with a wooden spoon, forgoing the use of presses or assistants. This solitary and labor-intensive process exists as a performative extension of the works themselves.

Hofshi's methodologies encompass not only this distillation of traditional printing technique, but expansions on it. The artist shifts strategies of transferring ink from each woodblock, moving between printing, rubbing, and offsetting, often working in bold, saturated colors. Hofshi also adds drawn elements, incorporating layered movement and texture. These differing techniques play into a sense of alienation and displacement of the complex relationships within and between humankind and the natural world. Her frequent depiction of solitary figures draws on the artist's philosophy that humanity must overcome adversity, and that growth only comes through reflecting upon one's own held values, while facing the consequences of their decisions and actions as individuals and as part of society.

YOSSI MILO

Hofshi has maintained a "library" of her carved wood blocks since early on in her career — one that she continually revisits in the creation of new work. The artist deploys recurring imagery of people, structures, and natural landscapes, reconfiguring them into an elliptical, nonlinear narrative in which the drama of the human condition plays out in the open. One particular recurring figure is a self-portrait of the artist, an avatar by which she locates herself within her work's ongoing allegorical struggle. Hofshi's own likeness makes clear that these reappearing forms are not just a pictorial strategy, but an existential situation. This replication of imagery throughout the artist's oeuvre forms a dreamlike logic: a language of symbols that form cycles in an inescapable space, representative of a seemingly endless universal psychic state.

These large-scale works on paper relate natural phenomena with mass social and political events. Drawing from the artist's experiences witnessing conflict in the Middle East and across the world; the lasting effects of the Holocaust; and crises across history, Hofshi cautiously populates her compositions with expressive subjects engrossed in mysterious yet urgent activity. Mired in uncertainty, they are caught between searching, finding, and intently looking on. She situates these figures in imagined landscapes that are seemingly forever devastated, yet dotted with evidence of former human life.

The exhibition shares a title with one of its central works: *Nebulous*, a monumental polyptych that realizes a nearly life-sized moment of stillness from an epic narrative. The work shows Hofshi's distinct, desolate landscape ringed by craggy mountains under a low, gray sky. Rising behind a ridge is a lone architectural fragment, a specific element that recurs throughout a few of the artist's works. Its form is derived from a synagogue that once stood in the town of Holešov in the Czech Republic, where Hofshi's mother lived before being displaced in the Second World War. Destroyed in 1944, it now echoes through this body of work as a ghostly reminder of what is lost to time through conflict. In its shadow, figures examine the earth and look off into the distance, engrossed in silent communion with the land. Hofshi's self-portrait appears among them at the work's right side, sharing and observing this state of mourning and confusion. A pair of crossed lines separate the viewer from the scene, seemingly barring them from entering this unsettled universe that branches from our own. *Nebulous* refers to, and portrays, the uncertainty and precarity created by violence, and the lack of clarity Hofshi sees in humanity's search for resolution.

Hofshi's practice renders a shared universe connected by its reappearing figures and landscapes, and each image acts as a glimpse from a single infinite timeline. Taken together, the artist's body of work shows the eternal nature of humanity's search for a lasting sense of peace and order, indicating a deep tension in its unresolved narrative cycles. At the heart of Hofshi's oeuvre is a preoccupation with the phenomenon of time, from personal experiences of its passing to a broader perspective of its persistent unfolding on a geologic scale. This fascination is further evident in her material processes, which are themselves massive in scale and intense in effort. Mining materials and references from across history, the artist grapples with the past in an acknowledgement of an unknown future, creating realms that contain both the darkness and complexities of past turmoil, while envisioning potential in the open expanses of eternities to come.

Orit Hofshi has mounted solo exhibitions of her work across the globe, including at Danubiana Meulensteen Art Museum, Slovakia; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; The Philadelphia Museum of Judaica, PA; Hoch+Partner, Leipzig, Germany; Shulamit Nazarian Gallery, LA; and Locks Gallery, Philadelphia, PA; among others. Hofshi's work has been included in prominent group exhibitions, including at The Janet Turner Print Museum, CA; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Museum, Philadelphia; Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK; International Print Center, New York; and Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel, among others. The artist's work is represented in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Art Collection of the German Bundestag, Berlin; and Israel Museum, Jerusalem, among others. The artist studied at the Neri Bloomfield Haifa School of Design and Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, after which she received her MA in Arts from Leeds University, UK. She currently lives and works in Herzliya, Israel.

Image: Orit Hofshi, *Nebulous*, 2022, Hand Printed Woodcut, Rubbing and Color Pencil Drawing on Handmade Kozo & Abaca Paper, Each Element: 80 3/4" x 40 1/4" (205 x 102 cm), Overall: 80 3/4" x 161" (205 x 409 cm)

For more information, please contact Yossi Milo at 212.414.0370 or yossi@yossimilo.com, or visit the gallery's website at www.yossimilo.com