

## Beyond the Boundaries of Our Physical Existence

**Preceding the Political.** In his exhibition, “It Took Me Till Now to Find You”, Addam Yekutieli—better known as Know Hope—continues to examine the political, cultural, current, and concrete aspects dictating our lives and separating us from other people: borders, walls, flags, languages, and foreign customs. He once again suggests turning to the efforts of the emotional experience, whatever it may be, which is shared by all humankind—an experience whose poetic-lyrical dimension lifts us beyond the boundaries of our physical existence.

Much like the wall between Ovid’s Pyramus and Thisbe (who served as the inspiration for Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet), the wall between the Israeli and Palestinian people—both physical and allegorical—as it appears in the exhibition and in Israeli culture at large, is a decisive and deciding symbol of the conflict. Yekutieli refuses to allow political context to decide our tragic fate; he reminds us the a-political nature of our uninhibited being.

**The Lyricism of the Soul.** As in his previous projects, Yekutieli collaborated with different people who did not know each other, using their life’s material to distill a shared creation: this time, Yekutieli invited Israelis and Palestinians to write letters to each other. He then used the letters to put together a personal-poetical continuum of statements that discuss the notions of longing, yearning, and belonging. The statements are all empathetic. Those who look inward into their own souls can see that anyone whose gaze they meet outwardly is also busy looking inward, no matter what side of the wall they live on.

“But I also feel”, “As if we are”, “I was proud”, “I can remember”, “That grey area”, “Our home”. These are some of the statements chosen by Yekutieli. They are mostly written in first person, expressing a generic, autonomous message that does not necessarily depend on a particular circumstantial context. It is precisely because of this that each of us can identify with the statements, while also recognizing the other’s identification with them. Seeing and imagining the other is a force that pulls us outside of ourselves.

**A Crack of Light.** Pyramus and Thisbe had a love affair through a crack in the wall. The only vessel they had for consummating their forbidden love was the words they spoke to each other in hiding through the crack. Yekutieli engraved the statements he collected from the letters into replicas of the Segregation Wall. But while the wall is a political fact enforced by the government, engraving into its concrete is the outlet of the individual. It is human, non-technological; the handwriting and physical expression “the cog in the machine”, and it is done in hiding and in haste. People who write on city walls or engrave into the Segregation Wall carry a sense of purpose and an urgency to have their voices heard. Engraving in a concrete wall is an attempt to form a crack and reach or see the other side.

**An Alternative Reality.** Yekutieli takes the limited and limiting reality of the wall, transforms it, and elevates it. The wall hovers, revealing a surreal image, exposing the shared roots of the locals, embodied by the roots of olive trees that lie within the concrete like bodies. Simultaneously, the roots remind us of the possibilities of blossoming and fruition they contain;

This transformation from one reality to another, alternative one, is a recurring element in Yekutieli’s art—he does this, among other ways, by transforming and creating dialectics between materials. Yekutieli uses the concrete dust that spread during the engraving process to paint the silhouettes of the roots, which are presented alongside the original letters that produced the engraved text. The shank-like tool used for the engraving, that which could be used as a weapon becomes a writing tool used to engrave the words into concrete (“And they shall beat their swords into plowshares”, Isaiah 2:4).

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