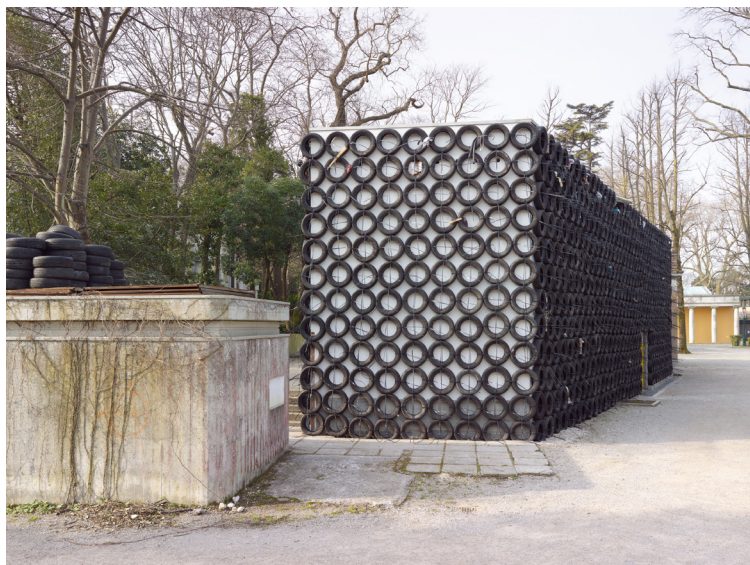




## Tsibi Geva: Archeology of the Present

Curator: Hadas Maor



Preview: 6 – 8 May 2015

Exhibition: 9 May – 22 November 2015

[www.israelipavilion2015.tsibigeva.com](http://www.israelipavilion2015.tsibigeva.com)

Tsibi Geva, one of Israel's most prominent and influential artists, presents "Archeology of the Present", a new, site-specific installation for the Israeli pavilion at the 56th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia.

Geva's most ambitious project to date extends over the exterior of the Israeli Pavilion building as well as through its interior. The pavilion is entirely enveloped with over a thousand used black tires, brought in from Israel, tightly tied to each other to create a grid which forms a protective layer of sorts.

Although Geva has been working with used tires for many years, this is the first time he has covered the exterior of such a large structure. This envelope turns the entire pavilion into a sculptural event that is visible from afar and which functions, at first sight, as an outdoor work on the grounds of the Giardini. The used tires, which are impregnated with a distinct odour, form an organized network of holes imbued with a protective potential, while simultaneously attesting to a state of danger, constituting a powerful material presence, and communicating a charged, urgent visual and political statement.

Upon entering the pavilion, the exterior installation is visible once again from the inside, together with an interior installation including paintings, sculptural elements, and found objects, abolishing hierarchical distinctions between artistic mediums and structures.

In a year when curator Okwui Enwezor proposes to focus on “All the World’s Futures,” Geva’s site-specific, all-encompassing installation may also be read with regard to the current state of humanity and the world. His long-term engagement with the stratified structure of identity, and “Archeology of the Present” in particular, offer an opportunity to explore this notion within the wider narrative of nationality as proposed by la Biennale di Venezia.

Tsibi Geva (b. 1951) has exhibited extensively in major venues in Israel, the United States, and Europe. He works in diverse media, his work often pushing beyond its physical limits into unique large-scale, site-specific installations.

“Archeology of the Present” gives expression to Geva’s ongoing concern with elements related to the notion of ‘home’ – including terrazzo tiles, windows, shutters, lattices, and cement blocks; elements which exist as fragments of what once was, or could in principle constitute, a home, yet not as the vestiges of an actual, concrete house. The concept of home, which repeatedly resurfaces in Geva’s work over the years, thus remains, a locus of distilled longing; an unrealized dream about a coherent, unquestioned identity.

Hadas Maor, curator of The Israeli Pavillon at the Art Biennale 2015, comments in the catalogue that “The project encompasses the thematic and formal characteristics that have come to define Geva’s work over time. Using the exterior as well as the interior of the pavilion, it destabilizes familiar divisions between inside and outside, the functional and the representational, high and low, abandoned, found, and modified elements. It raises self-reflexive artistic concerns and epistemological questions, as well as political and cultural questions pertaining to locality and immigration, hybrid identity, existential anxiety and existence in an age of instability.

A significant axis in Geva’s work is the integration between different formal and cultural orders. Rather than underscoring the difference between the Middle-Eastern grid and the Western one, Geva produces hybrids that assimilate one pattern into another, one discursive order into the other. His multi-layered oeuvre contains numerous layers of significance which are shaped by processes of figuration and abstraction, revelation and concealment. The question of painting in particular, and of the art object in general, is present in his work alongside political and cultural questions, which simultaneously camouflage and enhance one another. Employing strategies of disruption and displacement, repetition and accumulation, Geva generates liminal, hybrid works that open up onto new discursive channels.

Geva’s work is based on different types of obstructions, which always contain gaps and holes through which the gaze can penetrate, but the body cannot pass. The layout of the project within the pavilion creates sharp transitions between experiences of blockage, discomfort, and spatial ambiguity and between intimate, poetic moments, so that fragility and crudeness, lyricism and violence, are inextricably intertwined.”

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## Notes to Editors

### Artist

Tsibi Geva is one of Israel's most prominent and influential artists. Born in 1951 on Kibbutz Ein Shemer, Israel, he lives and works in Tel Aviv. Since 1979 he has exhibited solo shows in numerous venues around the world, including the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; The American University Museum, Washington, DC; MACRO Testaccio Museum, Rome (traveling to Mönchenhaus – Museum of Modern Art in Goslar, Germany, in July 2015). He has also had solo shows in Israel's leading museums, including the Haifa Museum of Art; the Ashdod Art Museum, Monart Center; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; and a retrospective at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. From 1990 to 2006 Geva was represented by Anina Nosei Gallery in New York, where his work was featured in numerous solo exhibitions. He has participated in group exhibitions in major museums and galleries worldwide, including the Kunsthaus Zürich; Orangerie Herrenhausen, Hannover; Whitebox, New York; Palazzo Reale, Milan; Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin; El Espacio Aglutinador, Havana, Cuba; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Tel Aviv Museum of Art; Museum on the Seam, Jerusalem; and CCA Andratx, Mallorca. He is a professor at the University of Haifa and at Hamidrasha School of Art, Beit Berl College. He is the recipient of numerous awards and grants, including the Sandberg Prize from the Israel Museum, Jerusalem; the Pundick Prize from the Tel Aviv Museum of Art; and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Israeli Ministry of Culture. [www.tsibigeva.com](http://www.tsibigeva.com)

### Curator

Hadas Maor is a contemporary art curator based in Tel Aviv. She received her academic training in art history and photography, as well as critical theory and hermeneutics. Since the late 1990s, she has been working with Israel's leading contemporary art museums (among them the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Haifa Museum of Art, Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Israeli Center for Digital Art, Holon). Maor has curated solo shows for numerous Israeli and international artists, as well as large-scale, thematic group exhibitions such as "Embroidered Action," "(after)," "Temporally," "History of Violence," "Living Room," "showtime," and others. These shows featured works by artists such as Nelly Agassi, Carlos Amorales, Kader Attia, Janet Cardiff, Jordi Colomer, Tsibi Geva, Mona Hatoum, Michal Heiman, Sigalit Landau, Maria Marshall, Ernesto Neto, Chiharu Shiota, Naama Tsabar, Wang Wei, Gal Weinstein and others. Maor's curatorial work often addresses theoretical notions that pertain to contemporary existence. It strives to identify significant relations between Israeli and international art while interlinking the work of emerging young artists with that of established ones. A major emphasis in her work is promoting the creation of new, large-scale and site-specific works. Hadas Maor regularly contributes essays to artist books, catalogues, and other publications. [www.hadasmaor.com](http://www.hadasmaor.com)

The Israeli Pavilion is realized under the auspices of the Israel Ministry of Culture and Sport – Museums & Visual Art Department, and the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Division for Culture and Scientific Affairs.

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