

# Jewish QUARTERLY

PREVIEW

## SUMMER ART

by Julia Weiner

*Tsibi Geva's tyres give a defensive appearance... of a country that is regularly attacked with words and rockets.*

**T**he primary place to be to view art this summer is, of course, Venice, where the Biennale, the world-famous festival of contemporary art, continues until 22nd November. This year, Israel is represented by artist Tsibi Geva, who has combined paintings with sculptures and installations to fill the Israeli pavilion both inside and outside.

It all begins on the exterior, which Geva has covered in tyres, which give both a defensive appearance to the representative of a country that is regularly attacked both with words and rockets, while also forming a lattice-like pattern so common in the Middle East, and which echoes metal lattices that can be found inside. Geva's father was a leading Israeli architect, and much of his son's work concerns itself with the notion of home—with large-scale paintings of terrazzo tiles being shown alongside installations of shutters, lattices and cement blocks. Geva also references the Boidem, or crawl space, found in so many homes, by creating such a place in the Pavilion, which he has filled with an assortment of abandoned objects.

Asked about this, Geva says, "the Boidem is my way to express the historically Jewish complex of fear-of-throwing-out, which ultimately leads to hoarding, typical to the 2nd and 3rd generations to the Holocaust."

For something more light-hearted at the Biennale, don't miss London-based Jewish artist Doug Fishbone's "Leisure Land Golf". Fishbone has installed a mini golf course in Venice with each of the nine holes designed by a different artist. They include Fishbone himself, who has players skirting around a model of the wreck of the Costa Concordia, which was driven onto the rocks off the coast of Tuscany in 2012. Fishbone notes this episode "embodies the contradictions of capitalism—class divisions and reckless leadership, indifference to its workers, disregard of the environment, the hidden price tag for a few days of fun in the sun." Architect Eyal Weizman, on the other hand, presents an abstracted scale model of the famous seven bridges of Kaliningrad, formerly known as Königsberg.

Jewish artists are well-represented at the first exhibition of the new Whitney Museum of American Art, "America Is Hard To See", which

### "Leisure Land Golf" by Doug Fishbone

SEBASTIANO LUCIANO



brings together 600 works by 400 artists from the Whitney's own collection. Designed by Shard architect Renzo Piano, the museum was recently opened by Michelle Obama in its new home in Manhattan's Meatpacking District. Jewish Abstract Expressionists, like Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman and Lee Krasner (still sadly best-known as Mrs Jackson Pollock) are, naturally, on show—but so are artists Louis Lozowick (who was fascinated by the machine age), and social realist Ben Shahn (whose strong principles led him to press for social change through his work). A personal favourite work is Max Weber's "Chinese Restaurant", a Cubist glimpse by one immigrant (Weber was born in Bialystok) at another immigrant culture.

Finally, if in London, don't miss the popular BP Portrait Award at the National Portrait Gallery. One of the three works short-listed for the top prize is by Israeli artist Matan Ben-Cnaan, whose allegorical portrait of a friend and his daughter recreates the biblical story of Jephthah, the Israelite judge who had

to sacrifice his daughter to God. And, if the skies in London remain grey, head over to Tate Modern for some colour at the Sonia Delaunay exhibition. Delaunay, who was born Sarah Stern into a poor Russian-Jewish family before being adopted by her wealthy lawyer uncle, married leading French artist Robert Delaunay. Together, they developed a new abstract art movement, which they named "Simultaneism", in which they created abstract compositions of dynamic contrasting colours and shapes. Whilst also a talented painter, Sonia took her ideas from the canvas to create clothes and accessories, household furnishings, and even painted cars. This exhibition is full of vibrant colour and movement that will inspire you whatever the weather. —JQ

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Israeli Pavilion:  
Tsibi Geva  
Venice Biennale