

# Borrowed Syndrome

Einat Leader and David Goss

The book *Borrowed Syndrome* (2017), followed our exhibition (2015) with the same title. This project addressed the rise of the messianic right in Israel over the last decades, intertwining it with South Africa's Apartheid history of racism and anti-democratic legislation. We were both born and raised in these regions - one in Jerusalem, the other in Cape Town - where messianic racial supremacy violently enforced silenced and unequal environments on subordinated populations.

We borrowed the term "syndrome" from the Jerusalem one - a pathology of messianic delusions with extreme sense of righteousness when encountering Jerusalem. Syndrome sufferers are admitted to the Shaul Village Psychiatric Hospital, ironically built on remains of the Palestinian village Deir Yassin - itself symbolizing a repressed past from 1948 when the Israeli army attacked and deported the village's population.

In this project, a site-specific installation of objects, jewellery and paintings, we created representations capsulizing the divisions and mutations of reality, in which the roots of the new extreme right have repetitive and common traits, apparent in both region's histories.

**Editor's note:** it felt important to include this project ten years after its original conception. The world's current political climate is urgent, but trails behind it decades of past struggles. To this, the artists state that "Nevertheless, we hope that eventually both sides will acknowledge the others historical suffering and the basic human longing to live with equality and dignity today. "

The Ofer prison (now called the Ofer camp) is an Israeli army base on the outskirts of Palestinian city of Ramallah on the road to Jerusalem. The camp was used initially to hold Palestinian detainees.

This work is a site-specific wall painting, using the transparent painting medium called: Arabic gum directly on the wall. The gum is a transparent medium used to make watercolor paint.

The painting is painted on one face of the two columns that were constructed in the gallery for the exhibition. On the opposite face of this column were paintings of an air-view image of Robben Island in Cape Town, that held anti-Apartheid political prisoners.

On the two other faces of the column, between Ofer prison and Robben Island were images of an oriental carpet.

David Goss, *Ofer Prison* (exhibition view)  
Wall painting, gum Arabic on wall, 2015  
Photo: Elad Sarig





Souvenirs from Jerusalem #8 is a reflection on the body – seasoned, scarred by war, marked by injury, a symbol of pain.

*Einat Leader, Souvenirs from Jerusalem #8  
Brooch, patinated silver, aluminium, stainless steel, 2014*

*Photo: Liat Elbling  
Borrowed Syndrome, pp.10-11*



Bottled up was created out of the pain caused by the war in Jerusalem and the madness that's overtaken it. These small bottles, filled with different building materials and topped with ironic crowns, stand somewhere between a utopian skyline; a symbol of possible destruction; and a nostalgic reminder of a landscape that no longer exists.

*Einat Leader, Souvenirs from Jerusalem #10  
Cement and pigment, ready-made bottles, aluminium, gold-plated iron, matches, 2015*

*Photo: Liat Elbling  
Borrowed Syndrome, pp.80-81*



This is a group photo of olive wood camels, once a typical souvenir from East Jerusalem and a proud example of skilled local craftsmanship. Here they are pendants and brooches, all disturbed and distorted. The camels that seemingly have “gone mad” act as ornaments, but in fact they reflect the mutation and blindness of messianism.

*Einat Leader, Souvenirs from Jerusalem, group picture  
Pendants, brooches, mixed media, 2014-2015*

*Photo: Liat Elbling  
Borrowed Syndrome, pp.8-9*