

אדריכלות נופ

ביטאון האיגוד הישראלי של אדריכלי נופ

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Notes On Promised Land

David Allen Burns and Austin Young / Fallen Fruit

▲ Image detail from "Promised Land" - an artwork installation commissioned by the Genia Schreiber University Art Gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel, 2020 for the exhibition, PLAN(e)T - Dr. Sefy Hendler and Dr. Tamar Mayer, Chief Curators, Yifat Pearl, Assistant Curator, TAU Gallery, 2020.

"And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." Genesis, 1:30

In the past 20 years our lives have become more about experiencing the global. Our collective understanding of the environment, politics, cultural diversity, animal rights, human rights and more has never been so openly communicated. Social media and transnational media like Netflix, corporate news, pop music, and fictional stories translated into languages around the world give evidence that we do in fact share the world. This is powerful.

Ironically, what has been lost to the vast global impact of technology is our precious care and attention to the local - ourselves and our community. For us, the concept of "local" means the distance you can walk on an average day. Specifically, in our project Fallen Fruit, we promote meeting neighbors and utilizing our public spaces for sharing resources. Why are we paying attention to a TikTok in London when we live in Tel Aviv? Why does Norway track Spain or South Korean culture? We love the exotic, but beauty exists everyday

within ourselves, our families, and our own communities.

Fallen Fruit¹ began mapping our own neighborhood in Los Angeles for fruit trees in 2004, as a response to a call for submissions for *The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*. The publication posed this basic question: Is it possible to use the agency of activism without framing as an us-versus-them dynamic, where we only win if the opposition loses?

We discovered that there were over one hundred fruit trees in public spaces that were not being utilized. These trees were healthy, abundant with fruit, and in the public right of way, but were not being cared for in any systematic way. The idea that our urban neighborhoods could become like communal gardens is foundational to our artwork.

We got our name, 'Fallen Fruit,' from a quote in the Old Testament. 'Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you

gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger.' Leviticus 19:10

People go hungry and undernourished everyday while corporations promote processed foods as a way of life. Mapping fruit trees being overlooked in public spaces seems like a beautiful, and radical solution to us. It was interesting for us to discover that when the Carmel Market closes - fruits and vegetables are left for those in need and gathered by gleaners.

We are experiencing the world during a global state of crisis. Israel is both the birthplace of modern culture and an ancient crossroads of Africa, Asia, and Europe. This is a region of the world that has been divided and conquered, it has been developed and destroyed, and it has had the boundaries of kingdoms and nations redrawn, over and over again. Here, culture has dominion over the natural world for thousands and thousands of years and this has created a lasting impact.

Human interference with the balance of nature is not without consequence: The world has changed irreversibly in our lifetime. Will nature rebalance itself? It's inspiring to see how seemingly quickly nature bounces back and thrives while humans are in quarantine.

A recent headline from The Guardian stated that "Humanity Has Killed 83% of All Living Things" on this planet. About 1,000 transnational scientists have formed a coalition to declare the Earth is experiencing a climate emergency. Three billion birds have been lost in North America or 29% of the population of all winged species compared to fifty years ago - and now in the year 2020, 70% of birds are farmed for human consumption and only 30% remain wild.



▲ The Steinhardt Museum of Natural History - We were also really inspired by the museums curation / focus on protection of species and sustainability. We worked with Amos Belmaker to photograph the birds within our artwork

¹ Fallen Fruit is an art collaboration originally conceived in 2004 by David Burns, Matias Viegner and Austin Young. Since 2013 David Burns and Austin Young have continued the collaborative work.

The artwork we created for the Tel Aviv University Art Gallery, 'Promised Land,' collapses both the ancient and the modern to reconsider how we share our histories (and our future). Plants and animals moved with human migration north from Africa and west from Asia over thousands of years. The majority of the flora and fauna that we consider to be native to these regions were relocated during Roman occupation. From London to Tel Aviv there is clear evidence of how naturalized species moved with culture

in ancient times. The land we stand upon right now can mean different things to different people - Our experience of the world can shift over time, sometimes requiring us to adjust our perceptions, to increase our sensitivities, and to reshape our understandings to ever changing conditions that may recalibrate holistically the meaning of life itself.

People experience the world in relation to their individual lives and collective histories. We determine the value of



▲ The garden of Allenby House with Dr. Alon Eliran



▲ Heela Harel, a member of the Onya Collective, community gardener, and forager brought us around to show us hidden gardens and fruit and herbs growing in public spaces. Heela with Curator, Tamar Meyer, Austin Young, and Ronit Verid



▲ David and Austin take photos of flora for their artwork at Neot Kedumim Park

something in relationship to our direct experience of the world around us. In these terms, events like the burning of the Amazon rainforest may seem abstract, or the extinction of a species that we have never seen may not seem meaningful, or the melting of the polar icecap may be unrelatable. It is logical, that it is difficult to have an emotional connection to something that we haven't directly had a relationship with except for as an idea that is represented by words and/or images - it doesn't seem alive. Perhaps, it doesn't seem real.



▲ David Burns and Yifat Pearl, Assistant Curator, TAU Gallery, in front of 'Promised Land' installation



▲ David Burns and Austin Young in front of 'Promised Land'

In these ways, it is understandable that people, in general, may have a limited ability to construct value-based judgments on how to truly understand the very real and possible uncorrectable outcomes about the future of the world.

Nature is a collaboration. It is a co-creation between species that are co-dependent for survival. In a little more than one hundred years, human beings collectively have created an imbalance between all things great and small.

Fallen Fruit's knowledge of plants is primarily from doing projects in public spaces around the world. One of the best ways to learn about a city or neighborhood is to pay attention to the plants (and animals, birds, insects, etc.). You can learn so much about the residents, the history, the cultural attitude of a place from the landscape design.

Is it friendly? Communal? Is it restricted or structured? Is it healthy and vibrant? Is it solely aesthetic or are there other attributes that have seasonal meaning? Our work is social and we do research within a community. These are the ways we learn about plants and animals

in urban spaces - less from reading books or research online. We took all the photographs for our artwork on the streets of Tel Aviv as well as in local public gardens. We want to talk to as many people as possible to understand 'a place' - all of this research informs our final artwork.

Cities and public spaces are not only about people and pets, they are also about the insects, birds, small animals that are also citizens, and of course, the plants themselves. We must also think about the safety of birds and other inhabitants- working with the Natural History Museum we learned that many bird species are in danger because of poisoning jackals (food chain) or they are killed from high-voltage power lines.

We think it's time to make revolutionary shifts in the way we collectively think about the environment and urban landscape, similar to those made in the late 18th century when many incredible urban parks and gardens articulated the foundational understanding of what 'modern' could look like. Integration of living species that coexist without dominating each other, without extraordinary care, without

excessive fertilizers or artificial watering systems.

We believe that fruit trees should be legal to plant in parks and along sidewalks - in fact cities globally could require more urban gardening in public spaces. Fruit bearing trees can sustain the health of all community members; elders, youth, homeowners and the homeless, and the birds and the bees too. We see some great examples of this in Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv seems ahead of the curve in areas like sustainable rooftop farming and in food production.

Israel is a special place; grapes, olives, dates, figs, pomegranates and almonds are parts of a cultural heritage from this area. The geography is diverse and can accommodate the incredible variety of plants that originate from here as well as from regions around the world. This is already visible in Tel Aviv, but more is possible by expanding the civic plantings in public spaces, parks, and more. Civilians could also plant fruit on the edges of private property for sharing with neighbors.

*Check out our online maps on endlessorchard.com



הפירות של תל אביב

ثمار تل أبيب

FALLEN FRUIT OF TEL AVIV

מפה זו מיועדת לשימוש חופשי למדור על הפירות שלכם
תעזרו עליה לשרת את חילוקיכם
This map is a template for free use. Learn your fruits!

מרכז העיר מרכז المدينة City Center

More information at fallenfruit.org.

Plant and map your fruit at endlessorchard.com

▲ Public Fruit Map of Tel Aviv, project commissioned by the Genia Schreiber University Art Gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel, 2020 for the exhibition, PLAN(et) - Dr. Sefy Hendler and Dr. Tamar Mayer, Chief Curators, Yifat Pearl, Assistant Curator, TAU Gallery