

"To truly laugh, you must be able to take your pain, and play with it."
[Charlie Chaplin]

The group exhibition "No Kidding" was sparked by contemplation of the dual nature of humor and its ability to relieve pain, if only momentarily. The use of humor is characterized by an inherent tension: humor often preserves power structures, reproduced stereotypes, and even prejudice, but at the same time—it is also a form of rebellion, offering freedom from social constraints and from reality via pleasure and amusement. As a tool for social criticism, humor can cross the lines, turn the "obvious" around, and point out all that is flawed and distorted, especially in times of uncertainty, difficulty, and distress.

The featured artworks address the identity of the exhibiting artists as well as social issues they confront in their everyday lives. Through emotional and material excess and the blurring of normative social boundaries, the humor in these works acts as a coping mechanism and a balm for pain. According to Henri Bergson, the basic condition for the creation of the comic effect is "a momentary anesthesia of the heart."¹ The suspension of emotion, which occurs in the comic moment, is generated by a temporary alienation from reality, which allows a change of perspective. The participating artists employ various comic and artistic devices, such as ironic reversal, self-humor, and defamiliarization, to create a different gaze at the commonplace and familiar. The humor arising from the works is bittersweet, unsettled, and dark on occasion. The diverse humorous expressions, including nonsense, parody, and grotesque, serve as a kind of resistance movement: a rebellion against real or imaginary authority, and even against the existential absurdity of life.

Izabella Volovnik
In Saved by the Bell (2024), Izabella Volovnik created an object which combines painting and sculpture, presenting a bizarre scene of a young woman and a tiger/tigress in the midst of a wild encounter in a dark forest. In her artworks, Volovnik challenges

Harvey (1957). When made, these drawings were regarded as a reliable depiction, but Almor emphasizes their speculative, fabricated, and even absurd nature. By transforming them into copper objects, she highlights their being an archaic relic of patriarchal ideas about the female body. Reminiscent of the display of archaeological finds, their presentation casts an ironic light on their underlying scientific pretension.

In *Venus of Willendorf*, Piñata (2023), Almor created a Piñata doll in the image of the Venus of Willendorf figurine, dating to c. 24,000–22,000 BCE. The work was inspired by Rachel Cusk's memoir, *A Life's Work* (2001), reflecting her fears and anxieties of giving birth and becoming a mother, and comparing the potential of pain and violence inherent in childbearing to playing with a Piñata doll full of sweets.

Ariel Hacohen
Ariel Hacohen presents three self-portraits, *Measurement #38*, *Measurement #56*, *Measurement #69* (2024), in which he is seen measuring his body using various measuring tools. The series alludes to the history of suspect photographs and police anthropometric identification and cataloging methods, developed in the late 19th century by French researcher Alphonse Bertillon. Measuring facial parts also echoes pseudoscientific practices associated with race-based hierarchies, conducted by Western physical anthropologists.

The suspension of emotion, which occurs

in the comic moment, is generated by a temporary alienation from reality, which allows a change of perspective. The participating artists employ various comic and artistic devices, such as ironic reversal, self-humor, and defamiliarization, to

create a different gaze at the commonplace and familiar. The humor arising from the works is bittersweet, unsettled, and dark on occasion. The diverse humorous expressions, including nonsense, parody, and grotesque, serve as a kind of resistance movement: a rebellion against real or imaginary authority, and even against the existential absurdity of life.

Laila Abd Elrazaq
Laila Abd Elrazaq invites us to sit in what appears to be either a living room or a waiting room, and watch an unassured television broadcast. In the video *Linguistic Limbo* (2024) she creates an absurd sequence, combining interview shows, reality shows, and commercials in which she stars in the lead role; some of them are based on her real life events, while others—on fictional events. As the broadcast continues, it gradually departs from the expected televised order, becoming more and more extreme and far-fetched. Through the television broadcast Abd Elrazaq introduces troubling issues: questions concerning her national identity, self-definition, and her mixed speech, which moves freely between English, Hebrew, and Arabic. Through playfulness, nonsense and parody, she criticizes the repeated attempts to put her into a defined slot.

Tair Almor
Tair Almor created a parodic installation centered on the medical-scientific preoccupation with the female body. In *Speculative Wombs* (2024) she presents statuettes of wombs, based on anatomical illustrations of female reproductive organs from Charles Singer's book, *A Short History & Physiology from the Greeks* to

taking on a tragicomic air, and drawing the teacher into the role of therapist, without her having asked for it and without any appropriate training. As noted by Terem herself: "I told her about my broken heart, and she wanted me to shift to simple perfect present."

Maayan Rohar

Using nuanced humor, Maayan Rohar's *Filtered* (2024) directs criticism at the ways in which social media influencers make cynical and sometimes degrading use of women's self-image. Rohar turns the overwhelming experience of watching reels and scrolling endlessly on a mobile phone into a gigantic "feed," which scrolls into the gallery interior. It is juxtaposed by a poetry booklet, whose size is identical to that of an average mobile phone. The browsing experience returns a personal, intimate dimension to the contents, enabling one to contain them, while drawing attention to their meaning. Via comic shifts from "low" to "high," Rohar converts the jumble of words into "Concrete Poetry": a form of poetry which uses linguistic and typographical elements,

where the visual effect is equivalent to the words in conveying the work's content. The texts' layout on the page requires lingering, not only on the meaning of the words and the misogynistic messages that arise from them, but also on the "emptiness" inherent in them.

Bar Russo

Bar Russo's work, *I Have a Secret* (2024), comprises two screens, each showing a masked figure. Without sound, using sign language and subtle gestures, the figures tell each other a secret. Russo connects us to a prankish childhood moment in which her sister turned to her and said: "I have a secret, do you want me to tell you?" Russo's ears heard light explosions, emanating from her sister's mouth, and there was a sweet scent in the air. The secret turned out to be a ruse, and in her heart she felt a double betrayal: for the very existence of a secret, and for its essence. The sound of percussions heard in the background presents the tension underlying a secret and the desire to reveal that which is not expressed in words, but is felt and heard over and over again.

مشهد غريب لفتاة ونمره في ذروة لقاء عاصف في غابة قاتمة. تتحدى فولوفينك في أعمالها المفاهيم التقافية الناثنة فيما يتعلق بالأنوثة والجنسانية.

نقطة انعطافها في الكلمات، الصور والتمنيات التي تربط الأنوثة بعناصر الطبيعة وبالمملكة الجبوانية. توافقها فولوفينك وتكون مشهدًا متعدد الم بطاقات ومعهاً، يمكنها تفسير العلاقة بين الفتاة والنمرة أو النمر زماً، بطرق مختلفة: هل هما في صراع عنف، وربما يقتربان من الحلة المفترضة؟ هل هي لحلقة مرحة وفعالية على الشوق بينهما؟ أم ربما هما صراع داخلي بين الجنابي الجنوبي والجنابي الآسياني.

يمكن أن ترى على الشاشة أن الأم تصل إلى الوقت

الحادي عشر، كالعادة.

نبط تمرين

في عمل القبيري الخامس نبط تمرين، لدلك أحزاني (2023)، تتحول دروس اللغة الإنجليزية الخامسة بغيرها إلى لغاءات علاجية. في المكالمات الهاتفية سبارك تارك معلماتها، يبني، بأحداث حياتها، بدلاً من تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، تأمل في أن تجد آذاناً لتداعي واستساغة إنسانية.

هي أيضاً نوع من الواقع، يسمى بالمعنى من خلال المتعة والاستمتاع، تختفي فيها الفكرة المفهومة "ممتناً" بشاشة عقب، وتغيير المطبوع والمشوه، خصوصاً في

أوقات عدم اليقين، الألم والمأساة.

تطرق الأعمال المعرفة في المعرض إلى

العقل

الآخرين

