

Building and Rebuilding

This group exhibition addresses the effects of the rapidly-changing landscape in our urban surroundings as a result of sprawl, evident by endless demolitions, empty lots and new high-rises. The works in the show contain familiar elements from city landscapes, such as scaffolding, urban detritus, abandoned buildings, and public gardens, all addressing the hurried transformation of cityscapes closely related with gentrification. The social and architectural shifts in which many neighborhoods in Brooklyn (and elsewhere) encounter are primary themes within the artists' works. Some of the works in the show are more abstract than others, presenting imagined structures as a way of exploring the notion of permanence and impermanence in "new" territories and spaces. Other works in the show mirror a tangled topography and inspire association with urban sprawl, interrogating urbanism and the tension that occurs due to shifts in landscape. Participating artists: Noa Charuvi, Esperanza Mayobre, Kristyna And Marek Milde, Naomi Safran-Hon, Ivan Stojakovic.

Destruction is a subject matter present in the works of **Esperanza Mayobre** and **Naomi Safran-Hon**. Mayobre's architectural drawing, *Everybody knows that cities are built to be destroyed*, drawn directly on the walls of the gallery, is of unknown structures, evocative of construction and de-construction of buildings. Resembling piles of frames, the artist considers these rectangle shapes to be "monuments to a city that no longer exists." The depiction of collapsing fragments in Mayobre's site-specific piece is also reminiscent in Safran-Hon's works on paper, which are the ghost image of the paintings they accompany. In this series, the artist expresses a state of abandonment and chaos, suggesting notions of displacement, and the way in which vacated homes, either by choice or by force, turn into ruins. The textures in her paintings are vivid and tactile, intensifying the idea of place (or the lack of it), while the mirroring drawings further emphasize the loss of its identity. Surrounded with the reality of gentrification almost everywhere, both these artists' works convey the way low-income neighborhoods are essentially erased due to new investments, pricing out longtime residents.

The work of **Kristyna And Marek Milde**, *Public Library*, is a sculpture of a growing archive of found books the artists retrieved from New York City waste stream. The piece functions as an interactive library allowing for browsing and reading of over 30 book collections. Composed from a variety of custom sized rectangular segments, the library takes form of an irregular structure, recalling the architecture of modern buildings and new developments often seen in neighborhoods taken over by investors and real-estate moguls. The artists consider the library as an "imaginary portraits of unknown characters reflecting the multitude of unique contexts and cultural narratives defining a place such as NYC." As though mapping the city's demography through text— from philosophy and history books found in one area, to romance and novels located in another—the artists carefully arranged these books, juxtaposing contrasting subject matters and book owners. Similar to Safran-Hon's and Mayobre's narrative of displacement and abandonment, the Mildes' library serves as a monument to lost places.

Exploring the process and the craft of building, the artist **Noa Charuvi** depicts various construction zones she encountered around New York. In her series *Construction Workers*, Charuvi examines and conveys the notion of labor by focusing primarily on the builders

themselves, rather than the buildings. In a different body of work, *Assembly*, 2015 and *Blue Hose And Rebars*, 2015, she solely portrays building materials and equipment as though attributing human qualities to these inanimate objects. Portraying the metal beams, steel frames, and scaffolding that have hijacked the city's horizon—sights we encounter daily—raise the question of what existed in these places previously and who will be living there now?

With New York's endless construction sites, one wonders about the destruction of natural habitats and the absence of green space. **Ivan Stojakovic** abstract topographies, explore the role of nature in urban places. His works, *Island X*, 2016 and *Plastic Skyline*, 2015 contain live and sustainable plants, referring to the wilderness that still remains within large metropolitan areas. By including live elements in his works, Stojakovic emphasizes the dichotomy of natural and artificial forestation in urban areas. On one hand, by erecting new buildings, developers destroy existing environments of nature; on the other hand, adding more public parks and gardens for the beautification of a city makes it appealing to more developers, generating additional potential for real estate. This phenomenon is almost too familiar in urban ecology circles. Adding green space and other amenities to under-resourced neighborhoods can attract wealthier outsiders, who displace long-time residents.

The notion of neighborhood improvement often comes over the expense of lower-income tenants. Or, in certain cases, a community may get together and do the neighborhood cleanup on their own- and then lose it to new, more affluent residents. The aim of this exhibition is to raise questions about the outcome of urban sprawl, and explore how architecture and urbanism affect existing communities.

—Shlomit Dror

Artists Bios:

Noa Charuvi

Born in Israel and based in New York City, Noa Charuvi holds an MFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York and a BFA from the Bezalel Academy in Jerusalem. Selected Artist in Residence programs she participated in include Artist-in-Construction by Art-in-Buildings in Manhattan, Art Omi International Artists Residency in Ghent, NY, Yaddo artist colony in Saratoga Springs, NY and The Keyholder Residency at the Lower East Side Printshop in Manhattan. Her work was exhibited internationally, in venues such as The Bronx Museum of The Arts (New York), Haifa Museum of Art (Israel) and Mishkan Museum of Art, Ein Harod (Israel). In 2017 she had two one-person shows in H Gallery in Paris and Art100 in New York. Her most recent group shows include “Art Work: And Exploration of Labor” at Love Apple Art Space in Ghent, NY and “Land Marks” at The Cluster Gallery in Brooklyn. She is currently part of the studio program at the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts in Manhattan.

Esperanza Mayobre

Esperanza Mayobre is a Venezuelan artist that lives and work in Brooklyn NY. She is the recipient of the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship, the Lower East Side Printshop Keyholder Residency, the Jerome Foundation travel grant, the International Studio and Curatorial Program, the Smack Mellon Studio Program, the Workspace Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. She has exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, La Caja Centro Cultural Chacao Caracas, the Bronx Museum, Hallwalls, MIT Cava, the Art Museum of the Americas, Washington D.C., the Contemporary Museum of El Salvador, the Incheon Biennial Korea, among others. Her work has been in Artshock Revista, Bomb, The Brooklyn Rail, Hyperallergic, Creative Time Reports, Arte al Día and Art in America. She recently was part of the Panel Art and Power, From Museum to Real World at NYU and had a solo exhibition at Westchester Community College State University of New York.

Kristyna and Marek Milde

Kristyna and Marek Milde are interdisciplinary artists and curators working as a collaborative tandem, based in Brooklyn, originally from Prague, Czech Republic. In their art practice they use installations, in-situ interventions, and socially engaged actions to explore cultural mechanisms, and conventions of modern lifestyle focusing on domesticity, while investigating its connection to the context of environment and nature. The Mildes exhibited and presented their work nationally and internationally including at MoMA Studio, Queens Museum, NURTURE art, EFA Project Space; Wave Hill Sunroom Project Space, Smack Mellon Gallery, Anna Wallace Gallery, Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art (HVCCA), Temple Contemporary, Space Gallery Pittsburg, Dumbo Street Festival, Knockdown Center, Abrons Art Center, Silent Barn, DOX Center for Contemporary Art; Futura Center for Contemporary Art; Meet Factory; Karlin Studios, Galerie Califa. They have been awarded the International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP) Residency in 2017, Studio in the Park Residency at the Queens Museum in 2016, LMCC Process Space Residency 2016 at Governors Island, Shift EFA Residency 2014 – 2015, A - Z West Residency in California in 2015, and the Russell Wright Design Center Residency, Garrison, NY in 2014. They gave presentations and participated in panel discussions in venues such as MoMA, Queens Museum, Pratt Institute, Tranzitdisplay, Bohemian National Hall, and Mildred's Lane.

Naomi Safran-Hon

Born in Oxford, England, Safran-Hon grew up in Haifa, Israel. She received her BA Summa Cum Laude from Brandeis University, 2008, in Studio Art and Art History and an MFA from Yale University School of Art in 2010. Safran-Hon attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2012 and Art Omi International Artists Residency in 2016. She had solo exhibitions at Slag Gallery, NYC, Brandt Gallery, Amsterdam, Holland and Marfa Contemporary, Marfa, TX and group shows at Haifa Museum of Art, The Brooklyn Museum, Marianne Boesky Gallery, P.P.O.W Gallery and Asya Geisberg Gallery as well as at NURTUREart and Momenta Art, Brooklyn. Safran-Hon was a visiting artist at Montclair State University, Towson University, Caldwell University, Yale University and Vassar College. Safran-Hon visual work reflects on the way in which political reality effects the every day. She

lives and works in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. Safran-Hon will have her third solo show with Slag Gallery, *A Room With No Exit* opening February 9th, 2018

Ivan Stojakovic

Ivan Stojakovic was born in Belgrade, Serbia. Stojakovic studied drawing and painting at FLU in Belgrade and received a BFA from OCAD University, Toronto. He received an MFA in painting from Pratt Institute in New York, where he is based. His recent solo exhibitions include 'Earth's Atlas' at DOB Gallery in Belgrade, 'Wildscapes' at Christian Duvernois Gallery in Manhattan, 'Urban Wild' at Honey Ramka Gallery in Brooklyn, and 'Global Nature' at Bridgette Mayer Gallery in Philadelphia. His most recent group shows include Formulations, Sculpture Space NYC; Public art installation titled 'NYState' in Marcus Garvey Park /Flux Art Fair, Harlem, NY; '2% precipice' at BronxArtSpace; 'WILD' at Gallery Nine5 in Manhattan; TD Bank sponsored 'Art for Trees' at the Grand Central Station, Manhattan and at the New York Highline. Stojakovic is a recipient of the Bernard Bierman award / 1st place Haym Salomon Arts Awards Competition – for artist collaborating with children (Green Model City from recyclables), NY, NY.