

## **Together // Zusammen - International Flair.**

**Exhibition at K70** [www.kultur-port.de](http://www.kultur-port.de)

12.6.2018

*by Christel Busch*



What brings together the artist Janine Gerber from the Schleswig-Holstein village of Barnitz, and the artist Merav Shinn Ben-Alon from the cosmopolitan city of Tel Aviv? Apart from human sympathy and friendship — much more.

Creative work, the passion for experimentation, artistic inspiration and creativity are what connects the two artists from Germany and

Israel. With curiosity and vigor, they aim to get closer to the artistic position of the other artist: on the one hand, the cut paper installations by Gerber; on the other, the minimalistic drawings by Merav Shinn Ben-Alon. Where is the cultural difference? Do any affinities emerge? Rather than the visual dissimilarities, it is the similarities that appear. The results of this exceptional dialogue can be seen until June 23, 2018, at the K70 Art Gallery in the old town of Lübeck.

The two artists participated in a symposium, which took place in 2015 at the Mark Rothko Art Center in Daugavpils in Latvia. They met again at the NordArt 2016 — Ben-Alon was among the 28 artists who displayed their work at the Israeli pavillon. In this exhibition, she presented her work “Lettischer Wald” (Latvian Forest), which, according to the catalogue, was accompanied by the following description: “a change by encountering the self. It presents a travel through a non-existing past, in which one part is closing and another part is opening.” The two artists decided to continue the artistic dialogue and to start a joint project, which would challenge the current artistic debate between Israel and Germany. Drawing versus cut paper? By no means. Art lovers are likely to be thrilled, because the period of work at K70 in the city of Hanse

Lübeck ensued a similar joint period of work at Merav's studio in Tel Aviv..

The title "Zusammen // Together" highlights the aim of this joint workshop, which can be seen at the Engelsgrube 70 Art Gallery. Can German- Israeli art be harmoniously combined? Seventy years after the Holocaust? The exhibition at K70 will continue at the Minshar Art Gallery in Tel Aviv, where Merav's latest drawings will be complemented by Janine Gerber's large scale paper installations. The "work in progress" will be adapted according to the space and cultural situation.

Janine Gerber, who was awarded the Possehl Art Prize in 2018 and the Final Year Prize in 2013, presents her newest installation. This time, it is not made out of monochromatic paper, but of grey awning material. Using a sharp knife, she cut tears in the fabric, thus creating transitional views — the surface receives a space in the installation. The light dances upon the material and creates shadows. The viewer desires to approach the object, and to touch and open it up more and more. Does the open cut ask for another unknown universe? In addition, a large ink painting on Chinese paper also constitutes part of the exhibition.

Her colleague from Israel, who is among the most renowned contemporary artists, uses paper as the ground for her minimalistic drawings of images, which correspond with Gerber's works. She playfully delineates human corporeality on paper and combines it with cuts. Who are these people? Are these dreamlike pictures? Narratively deceptive images or creatures overcome by pain? The artist is playing with the viewer's imagination .

Furthermore, the joint creative process at the K70 Gallery allows for some amusement. Thus, the exhibition displays casual pictures of the Israeli artist "struggling with the paper". There are also pictures of the two artists enjoying the joint period of work in Lübeck and Barnitz; in them, they are dancing and performing, discussing, working and laughing. The international cooperation is successful and worth seeing.