

Recommendations and Reviews

Yaron Fried, *Literature & Culture Supplement, Maariv, September 25, 2020*

"*Five Legs* is a riddle that most likely I did not manage to solve, which is good, because that means that I can go back to it every time I want to find more clues, sounds, shadows, and directions. The format is the real star here. A book that is an objet d'art in every way, a rich and challenging exhibition for an audience of one... *Five Legs* is a wondrous and one-time creation – not exactly a graphic novella, not really an Artist's Book, but perhaps a 'polygraphic novel,' as text editor Shoham Smith suggests in her afterword, when she likens the experience of reading it to the investigation by polygraph that she once underwent. It is definitely worthwhile to undergo this particular investigation, in which the reader is both investigator and interrogee."

Riky Cohen, *Online Literary Supplement, Ha-Mussach, September 9, 2020*

"Something mysterious and unusual happens within the consciousness and in the body when reading *Five Legs*... Ben-Alon, familiar to the contemporary art lovers for her minimalist drawings, for her figures characterized by fine and truncated lines, wrote a story (edited by Shoham Smith) that cannot be categorized as a familiar genre in the literary domain or as an "Artist's Book." This is illuminated prose, written in Ben-Alon's inimitable style which seems as though it is a written version of her drawings: condensed, interrupted, one that creates an emotional affect with the absences and holes within it... The dismantling which lies at the foundation of the story, a biographical dismantling which leads to a fundamental identity crisis, and the attempt to rebuild, with the gaping spaces, is the total experience of this book, which shook me up."

Zohara Ron, *Literature & Culture Supplement, Globes, October 10, 2020*

"There are books for which it is worthwhile to make a bit of an effort, and this is one of those instances when the readers are asked to move beyond their comfort zone and join the writer-illustrator on a kind of adventure."

Keren Dotan, *Literature & Culture Supplement, Israel Hayom, September 3, 2020*

"More than on the literary or textual plane, the book operates as a physical object d'art that can be peeked at from different directions: the book is constructed as if it was a room with five entrances in which one can start to read from any one of its five parts. As is customary with curatorial texts, it is written in Hebrew and in English, and this is the reason why it opens neither from the right or the left but upward, as if it were a sketch pad or a treasure chest."

Yuval Avivi and Maya Sela, *Kan radio*, July 20, 2020

"An extraordinary book. A very moving biography. It's hard to define what it is, this beautiful thing. It's amazing what can be accomplished with so few words. Very wise, very intelligent."

Tzipi Gon Gross, *Galei Zahal radio*, July 31, 2020

"Minimalistic, intriguing drawings, which Merav deconstructs and fuses back together, she uses only black and red, creates tension, releases it and makes the reader feel a sense of playing a simultaneous game of tag and hide-and-seek in open space. As I reader I was fascinated, curious, and at the same time working and deciphering."

Liat Regev, *Kan radio*, August 1, 2020

"*Five Legs* is fascinating also from an artistic perspective and certainly from a literary perspective. A very interesting book, very beautiful and special."

Miri Krymolowski, *Kan radio*, August 21, 2020

"*Five Legs* by Merav Shinn Ben-Alon, a fabulous artist who I have been following for years... Very highly recommended, a lyrical book which takes you on an extraordinary journey."

Reut Barnea, *Art and Design Section, Calcalist*, August 17, 2020

"The first thing you notice is that this is not an 'ordinary' book: it's a graphic novella, an innovative amalgam of an Artist Book and prose – in which Shinn Ben-Alon is responsible for both the text and the drawings. From the moment you open the book in the unusual way that it opens (upward, like the top of a box), you understand that it holds something different. Later one can marvel at the wonderful minimalistic visuality, from the drawings executed in fine lines, black and red on a white background or against other backdrops like office labels."

Hagit Peleg-Rotem, *Online Magazine for Design, Art and Visual Culture, Portfolio*, August 25, 2020

"The Artist's Book *Five Legs*, by Merav Shinn Ben-Alon, is a requiem and a journal, a detective story and a late journey of revelation. Her minimalist drawings merge with the gaping chasms that the story leaves in its wake."

Ofra Offer Oren, Soferet Sfarim, *Book Review blog*, August 9, 2020

"Gently, with a touch that appears to hover, but is revealed to be as sharp as the blade of a knife, the artist Merav Shinn Ben-Alon unfurls a story that isn't shouted but implied, and even so is clearly heard. She accomplishes this with a unique and compelling book, which brings together words and drawings to create a wondrously beautiful whole... each page encompassing a surprise, in words, in drawings, in the relationships between them. The secrets unveiled, the sketches combined with them leave us with the sense that we have undergone an extraordinary and mysterious experience."

Smadar Sheffi, *The Window*, *Art Review blog*, August 12, 2020

"The book flows like a storyboard, but it also has the character of a palindrome that can be read from beginning to end or in the reverse order and that is how Shinn Ben-Alon succeeds in creating the sense of a labyrinth built among the locations and the memory of a box, a basement, a convalescent home, a cemetery, and a hospital. The sense of suffocation that develops in the reading, the sense that the prophecies of the stars were false grows and swells to disgust. The fragility and vulnerability, the tenuousness of the thread of life and the truth which unspools, one fiber at a time on every page of the book as though ridiculing the expectations of the observers derived from the words of the title *Five Legs* which sounds like another charming book for children."

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A family secret is gradually revealed in [@meravshinn](#)'s graphic novella "Five Legs". The artist book is a work of art in itself and developed into a solo exhibition. "Five Legs" is written in English and Hebrew, the story line jumps between periods of time using real accounts from the artist's diary that she has kept consistently logging for years. The reader discovers truth and lies accompanied by black and red illustrations and a mysterious typed letter.