

Moran Shoub

## Let the Things Come Forth

What is it to these objects, these things Israel Kabala is enchanted with? Of what virtue were our forefathers possessed, back then and there, when they figured this out and named *hafatzim* (objects) these things we desire (*lachfotz*?); a kind of Wabi-sabi of old objects that, infused with desire, also radiate it. An old object is like a note that refuses to die; all determined and refusing to die.

There's an aura surrounding these objects, even when we cannot see it. We can train ourselves in ways to perceive it, yet the best way of all – which to me is the sixth sense – would be to let things come forth.

Israel, intense with desire, is drawn to the *old*: he melts down the *old*; makes things look *old*; is wrapped up in *old*; he studies the *old*; hones himself with the *old* (an olden guy, Kabala).

The 13th century book of *Mishlei Shualim* (Fox Fables), from which Kabala borrowed the title to his show, gives the following example: “he who loves a mouse and a turtle, to him they are like two shining lights.” It could just as well be an old colander that Israel's heart desires (for is it not an object of desire?). To him, everything the size of a breast held in the palm of the hand is akin to a dome in a place of worship.

This hand that Israel reaches to get hold of this colander – or any other organ or object his palm desires – is akin to the hand that, in the history of art, by holding an apple, symbolizes Eros, yearning and desire. But this we should know: it's not the fruit that symbolizes desire (that would be a grave mistake!). Rather, desire is symbolized by the sweet touch of the hand, the hand that clutches, sensuously and with feeling.

Touch closes and electric-like circuit. And it is the palm of the hand, in touching the old object, that transmits the energetic current of the eternal Eros. Wanting to unload this current that runs within him, Israel dips his fingers in paint to unleash it on paper, in black undulating lines and yellow lacquer.

But what if these drawings were actually maps? In the same way that the maps of antiquity mirrored psychological states, so are the drawings that Israel Kabala makes like maps. Every artist, even abstract and working outside the bounds language, longs to be read; and maps were made to be read. Israel battles language, and language fights back. This is the rock of Sisyphus: from language to picture to art to

matter to body – and map again.

The artist longs to go beyond words. Bound as we are to words, what we want is to go back to the body, to sensation and feeling. We'd like to break free from mind and language, even for just a moment. Eros's fire burns constantly, and our wish is to burn with it.

Art – as a wallowing in matter, in rhythm, color, smell and movement – is likewise an attempt to feel and to know with the body in all its might. And to feel with the body is to return to a nature still wild and unruly, a nature not yet tamed, formulated and civilized. On the show's wall of objects Israel hangs a drawing titled "Very Very" (but what is depicted in it? A plant sprouting? An avocado seed? A tongue? A bird lying on its side?), above which he scribbles, on the wall: *all the feeling in the world*.

The drive of Eros and desire is to go *there*. Language, however, cannot take us *there*; it can only take us to *a* place, named and specified. As we've said already, we are bound to language. Hence to get *there* one needs to step out of language. Metaphors offer a way out; dreams can circumvent language; poetry verses let us break free of it; fantasy can overcome it; and art is a demon that battles language. Art, dream, fantasy and poetry are all metaphorical, and metaphor is a chance of breaking the limits of language.

Yet language is also a main road that we cannot stray away from for too long. Which is why we constantly go back to it. It is the rolling stone of Sisyphus, going from language to metaphor to image to body and back again – to language.

Israel, all your senses are true. Let the things come forth.