

Roy Mordechay_ROUGH-CUT

Helena Rubinstein Pavilion_Tel Aviv Museum of Art

Curator: Ravital Ben Asher Peretz

As a child, Roy Mordechay used to observe his father, Avner, his role model and hero, for hours, as he toiled in the busy carpentry shop. The variety of raw materials and the sounds of splitting wood sparked his imagination and stimulated his senses. Under the father's watchful eye, he would collect the wood scraps and build cross-shaped airplanes. For the current project, he had to return to the carpentry shop in South Tel Aviv.

Mordechay oscillates between the spiritual and the corporeal, between art and carpentry. His engagement with an external as well as an internal world, with both the high and the low, the sublime and the inferior, stems from the fusion and differentiation of the two images: car and airplane. The headlights of the life-size wooden auto(biographical)mobile, Subaru Station-Wagon, project the portraits of the artist and his father, sketching the figures of the Israeli artist and the Israeli carpenter.

Mordechay's private mausoleum began when his father lost a finger from his right hand to the Kreissäge circular saw in the carpentry. A hand missing a finger has become an iconographic status symbol and a trademark of carpenters. In the darkness of that day, the "superhero" became an "anti-hero", and the carpentry shop transformed from a playground to a junkyard and a site of horror. Mordechay embarks on a journey to retrieve the lost finger. From the root of a stump he spawns and sprouts an (accusing) Plasticine finger of demonic dimensions.

In the video Leone Helena, the Plasticine finger is lowered from the gallery in the shop and loaded onto the car's roof. The Subaru, ordinarily used to transport commissioned carpentry works, now transports art. A funeral procession departs from South Tel Aviv toward the Helena Rubinstein Pavilion. The Subaru enters the exhibition level, where the phallic monument is unloaded with great awe and reverence. The journey concludes when the finger is lifted to the wooden gallery built for it.

The finger finds its final resting place inside a large Formica laminate "kitchen cabinet." The moments of communion with the awkward Plasticine stump are akin to a burial ceremony for the last hero who sacrificed himself on the altar of carpentry. The return of the missing finger enables reconciliation and farewell with childhood, perfection, and raw nature, with craftsmanship, family businesses, guilds, and the middle class.