

# Hshuma

Curated by  
Sharon Toval

Assaf Abutbul / R'm Aharoni / Dan Allon / Eyal Assulin /  
Maya Attoun / David Benarroch /  
Esther Cohen / Gil Desiano Bitton / Yosef Joseph Dadoune /  
Mati Elmaliach / Avshalom Levi /  
Michael Liani / Vered Nissim / Dafna Shalom / Nir Shitrit /  
Daniel Shoshan & Amit Matalon /  
Tal Shoshan / Koby Sibony / Merav Sudaey.

me". In this regard, Attoun's work serves as a counterpoint to Liani's, in that it hides what is seen, despite the intensity of its content.

In a more thematically conceptual manner, **David Benarroch** offers a series of photos entitled *Untitled (sideboard buffet)*, 1:1 scale photographs of four doors of a typical, basic wooden Israeli sideboard of the sixties or seventies. The wood pattern resembles camouflage and thus directs our thinking to issues of visibility/invisibility and all that might take place behind closed doors. The way the photographs are framed and hung close together turns them into a single object that extends beyond the photographic image and in a sense offers a closed door, impossible to open. This gesture is diametrically opposite that of Liani's *Origin of the World*, in the sense that it highlights 'that which is hidden' as fodder for our nagging thoughts.

The hidden world as an expression of a gap-ridden identity is explored from a more primary perspective in the work *Savta, Sabba* (Grandma, Grandpa) by **Mati Elmaliach**, based on two photos of the artist's grandparents taken in France on their way to Israel, after having left Morocco. The artist erased their faces by superimposing white squares, in a sense geometrically hollowing them out, and then proceeded to frame them. These two photographs are the only ones that survive from his grandparent's immigration journey to Israel, telling of their lives before arriving in Israel in the fifties. The way he has treated them becomes a metaphorical account of the brutal cultural historical erasure that many feel still today. Does this erasure address the generalisation and abstraction of an entire population from North Africa, whose historical narrative was severed so abruptly? Did the personal narrative survive? Can identity exist from memories alone, or do we need visual cultural aids and objects? How is Elmaliach's identity affected by that erasure?

Inspired by the seventeenth-century French artist Nicolas Robert, who was known for his botanical drawings and lithographs, **Esther Cohen's** drawings *The Mandrake Roots* <sup>(14)</sup> directs our attention to the biblical plant of the mandrake root in its Jewish context. The artist combines the concept of shame rooted in nudity, and the original sin for which Adam and Eve were

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14. Mandrake, or *Mandragora Autumnalis*, is a plant with a thick, curvy root that penetrates as much as two metres into the soil and a shape that resembles the human form. The plant has been used for thousands of years in traditional medicine, since it has many properties related to reproductive health and sexuality, and has generated many myths about its use as an aphrodisiac, an anaesthetic before surgery and a magical serum to ward off the evil eye.





David Benarroch (1982)  
*Untitled (Sideboard)*, 2016.  
Archival pigment print, four units.  
Courtesy of the artist.



left  
Mati Elmaliach (1979)  
*Untitled*, 2018.  
Pigment print on archival paper, diptych.  
Courtesy of the artist.

centre  
David Benarroch (1982)  
*Untitled (Sideboard)*, 2016.  
Archival pigment print, four units.  
Courtesy of the artist.

right  
Eyal Assulin (1981)  
*Moti*, 2018.  
Plastic, fiberglass, industrial paint, 8K gold,  
gourmette and pendent. Private collection, Israel.