

Kad Alla Ras *

* [A jug over a head]

Kad: Hebrew for jug; ras: Arabic for head

Dana Darvish / Rami Maymon

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One is always the index of a multiplicity: an event, a singularity, a life...¹

Like a "Body Without Organs," an open plateau with no defined borders, or a collage with multiple sequences and possibilities – Rami Maymon and Dana Darvish create new forms for the sensory and intellectual experience. They operate in an open system that allows them to lose control, crumble identities, and construct new ones. Past and future are non-hierarchical events: the past is active in the present, as a dynamic source within reality, continually changing, regenerating, existing.

A shared vacation has led to an action that stems from friendship, a mutual passion for matter, and a relationship that includes photography's constant presence, with or without a camera. Loaded with papers, glass plates, and chemicals, like in the early days of photography, Darvish and Maymon set out to the Sinai Peninsula to make sunlight-printed cyanotypes.² Their practices were identical: they coated the photographic paper with chemicals in the dark, then stacked layers of found objects on top of it – desert plants, shells, metal bits, paper cutouts, black crayon drawings on transparent paper. The raw materials bleed from one photogram to the next, from his to hers and from hers to his, creating repeated forms in a multiplicity of states. The same glass plate (with the

¹ Deleuze, G. (2001). *Pure Immanence: essays on a life*. Zone Books: New-York. pg. 30

² The rays of the sun were the primary source of light for the pioneers of photography. They viewed themselves as writers in light, turning the sun's light into physical objects. They had been able to cast fragments of reality onto pieces of paper and fix them there for a while. Photograms and cyanotypes are camera-less photographs – papers coated with light-sensitive materials, laid with various objects, and exposed to sunlight for a long time. After the removal of the objects, their outlines and details remained on the paper and were partially fixed with table salt. Following the invention of photography, many have sought the best way to retard the fading of the photographic image and to fix it permanently. In 1841, the scientist John Herschel coated the paper with a chemical mixture containing a solution of iron salts, which gave it a blue tint that could be preserved for a long time. He named this process a cyanotype.

From: Colberg, J. *New Blues*. Foam Magazine #49, pg. 229. 2018

same scratches and flaws) is set on top of the arrangement of paper cutouts and various objects. The identical raw materials, in different arrays, were exposed to the blazing Sinai sun. After the images were set and the layers removed, the photograms were rinsed and set on a white sheet to dry. By chance, Maymon's row of jug images was set down above Darvish's line of heads. A variety of blue compositions of jugs-over-heads came into view.

In Sinai, the two were exposed, with no visual or textual resources to turn to, dependent on their various routines, inclinations, and preferences. They worked intuitively, out of the subconscious of the visual culture they have accumulated in their long artistic career, recollection of representations from the history of art, archeology, and the history of photography. Between the strata of signs and symbols in Maymon's jugs, features were revealed echoing shards collected in archeological sites, ornaments from Philistine or Canaanite pottery, decorative motifs from pre-state Israeli ceramics, and forms inspired by the Bauhaus School. Darvish's heads evoked African masks, Cubism, German Expressionism – a language of abstraction that turns to Surrealist and Modernist art. Jug and head in the process of construction and deconstruction – a remembrance of shapes from the yellow desert that have become fixed and joined together under the color blue.

Sunlight printing confers a reverse image upon the world. The darkness gains life; life remains without light. The first photographers who had experienced the photogram called the process "shadow writing."³ Only ghosts remained on the paper, shades of the existence of the place, the object, or the portrait. In the 18th century, the German poet and thinker Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, giving his protagonist a blue coat and yellow vest and trousers. In the early 19th century, he published *The Theory of Colors*, arguing that light and shadow, and the correlation between the ways the human eye sees and the brain, determine how people experience color. The blue and the yellow were, for him, the absolute means for creating chromatic harmony. In the Victorian era, when photography and the cyanotype were invented, blue was perceived as representing melancholy, love, and dreaminess. Goethe undoubtedly helped establish the idea that began with medieval Symbolism and carried on to the modern age – blue was the color for depicting agony and melancholy.⁴ At the turn of the 19th century, blue became the dominant color in Pablo Picasso's paintings. The art historian Anne Baldessari thinks that a cyanotype Picasso made in 1899 had been the source of inspiration for his Blue

³ Henry Fox Talbot named sun printing "scianography," or writing with shadows. Warner Marien, M. (2002). *Photography, A Cultural History*. Laurence King Publication: London. pg. 18

⁴ Pastoureau, M. (2001). *Blue, The History of a Color*. Princeton University Press: New Jersey. pg. 134-141

Period. It is a photograph of his friend Carles Casagemas, shortly before committing suicide, like Werther, because of unrequited love and depression. He became the subject of several blue paintings by Picasso.⁵

Two artists present a joint exhibition using diptych-like practice and thought. He and she; jug and head; Arabic and Hebrew; reality that is painted yellow, and the image is covered in blue. Culture inundates culture, East blends with West. In "Kad alla Ras" one language hosts the other: in the Hebrew title, the head is *ras*, in Arabic, while in the Arabic one, the Hebrew *kad* is written phonetically, without translation.

Darvish and Maymon create an assemblage of identities, flowing into one another. A head becomes a jug; a jug turns into a head. Their sun is from here and there, from East and West, effortlessly passing between geographical/cultural/ linguistic vistas, through art histories and the histories of their personal lives. They operate in a multiplicity of events and possibilities. They construct a world while using practices of improvisation, appropriation, and reliance on the unexpected, with or without a predetermined destination. A world of everywhere and every moment, its products, despite being singular, attest to a multiplicity of plateaus – they are unique and stratified, open to interpretation.

Ilanit Konopni

⁵ Baldassari, A. (1999). Brassai-picasso: conversations avec la Lumiere. Reunion Des Musees Nationaux: Paris