



# The Bureau of Authentication

Michal Baror and Patrick Hough

4<sup>th</sup> April – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Private view and performance 4<sup>th</sup> April, 6-8pm

narrative projects is pleased to present *The Bureau of Authentication* a collaborative project by artists Michal Baror and Patrick Hough that includes performance based installation work, video and photography.

The project, produced as part of the ArtPort, Tel Aviv residency program, is the result of a two-month period of intensive research around the intersection of archaeology and politics in the region of Israel/Palestine. The exhibition explores the process of transformation that occurs to objects and stories through bureaucracy and the creation of official documents. It also examines the dynamics of recording and translating oral history into written historical text, ideas relating to provenance and market value.

As part of *The Bureau of Authentication* performance, members of the public are invited to bring evocative objects to the office of the Bureau where after a consultation, a unique certificate is issued for their object, recording both its physical aspects and the story/history surrounding it, as told by its owner. All objects are photographed in situ and reproduced within the signed and stamped certificate. An additional copy of the certificate is hung on the wall of the gallery forming part of the Bureau's growing public archive. Participants are also invited to choose the language of their certificate - English, Arabic or Hebrew and these languages are used throughout the entire Bureau's graphic design concept.

The work springs from an interest into the antiquities trade in Israel, one of the only countries in the Middle East where the buying and selling antiquities is legal. The laws regulating the sale of these objects can be traced back to the British Mandate period when Palestine formed part of British Empire.

The British Mandate's new laws permitted trade in antiquities by recognised dealers, and, under certain conditions, the export of antiquities from Palestine. This period saw the rapid development of Antiquities stores, who issued certificates of authenticity for artefacts along with export licences through the British Mandate laws. Despite increased regulation of the trade in recent years, the practice continues to this day. Reflecting on this, the exhibition raises questions about what these documents are, who has the authority issue them, and how they change the value and meaning of objects and their histories.

The two video works in the exhibition open up the conversation to a wider historical time frame: both films were shot in Masada, a mountaintop fortress built by Herod The Great between 37 and 31 BCE. In the film *Above The Black Line*, the camera follows the black line that demarcates the border between the original archaeological material and its contemporary reconstruction. The sites resonance today reveals the way in which symbols can circulate throughout time and through institutions and reemerge in ways that reshape the past for use within the present. Rather than separate fact from fiction, Masada's black line serves to paint a hybridised present. It creates a relationship between a real and impossible world that is 'neither here nor there' but is oscillating in between. What results is an assemblage of compressed layers, superimposed structures, artifacts and debris that mix together to remodel collective memory.

### About the Artists

**Michal Baror** (b.1984, Safed, Israel) She received her B.A in Fine Art at the Bezalel academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem in 2008. And her M.A. in the Photography department at the Royal College of Art, London in 2013 Her solo-show *The Hawks and the Sparrows* was showing in the Petach-Tikva Museum of Art in 2015. The show came out of a year of Artistic research Baror made in the Museum. In the same year she was awarded the Young Israeli Artist Prize, and Artport fellowship. Recently Baror participated in a number of group exhibitions in Israel and abroad. Those include *Dead Land*, NURTUREart Non-Profit, New York (2016); *Vanishing Point*, Bait Hagefen, Haifa (2015); *Panacea*, Inverness 43 gallery, London (2015); *Crystal Palace and the Temple of Doom*, Petach Tikva Museum (2015); *New Sensations*, Saatchi Gallery, London (2013); *Laboratory Austria*, Xhibit, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna and *Exile* (part of Host and Guest), Tel Aviv Museum of Contemporary Art (2013).

**Patrick Hough** (b.1989, Galway, Ireland) received his BA in Fine Art Media from the National College of Art and Design, Dublin in 2011 and his MA in Fine Art Photography from the Royal College of Art, London in 2013.

Recent solo exhibitions include: *Hierophanies*, The Swiss Church, London, (2017); *Unobservables*, narrative projects, London (2016); *An Archaeology of Cinema*, Dagestan Museum of Fine Art, Makhachkala, (2015); *Once More, With Feeling!*, MOT International project space, London, (2014); *Those Who Dissolve Into the Future*, narrative projects, London, (2014). Recent group exhibitions include: *Jerwood / FVU Awards 2017: Neither One Thing or Another*, Jerwood Space, London (2017); *Levitate*, Museums Quartier21 INTERNATIONAL, Vienna, (2015); *Verto*, Gallerie Fatiha Selam, Paris, (2015); *Control / Shift / Escape*, Black Box 2.0, Seattle, (2015) *Sound Fossils*, Binyamin Gallery, Tel Aviv, (2015); *Crab Walk*, Northern Gallery of Contemporary Art, Sunderland, (2015) *and previously:* *Karst*, Plymouth, (2014); *Wild Things*, The Green Parrot, Barcelona, (2014); *Chronovisor: Archive*, South Kisok, London, (2014); *...all silent but for the buzzing...*, Royal College of Art, London, (2014); *Bloody English*, OHWOW gallery Los Angeles, (2014); *When the Sleeper Wakes*, Aperto Gallery, St Petersburg, (2013).

For further information or high-resolution images, please contact:

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The works were developed during The Artport Residency