

LYCHEE (Noam Edry)



Self-sacrifice on a silver platter

Artist Noam Edry presents her view of Israeli reality in her provocative exhibition in Ein Harod

• By BARRY DAVIS

Noam Edry is not a woman to be messed with. Judging by her artistic output to date and the unequivocal messages she tries to convey, she knows her own mind and how she wants to go about sharing it with the rest of the world. The 29-year-old artist was selected to present the inaugural exhibition of the new auditorium of the Ein Harod Arts Center, her provocative "Silver Platter," which opens this evening.

The Israel- and London-trained artist

has been putting across her straight-shooting works for a few years now, and Silver Platter is a portrayal of Edry's take on various, mostly unsavory, aspects of feminist and social issues, with some political stuff thrown in. Basically, Edry paints and sculpts 'em as she sees 'em.

That approach, naturally, often places Edry in the firing line but, as she says, needs as must. "I work with my gut feeling, always," she declares. "I have no choice. I am an artist, and I have to go with what I believe in."

Edry spent a couple of years

art exhibit

studying at Goldsmiths, University of London where, after an initial period of toeing the line and keeping her Israeliness largely under wraps, she came out of the trenches firing with both barrels and began to show the people around her exactly what she thought and felt about the oppressive anti-Israel environment at the university.

"People there had this idea about Israel and what we were doing to the Arabs, and all the terrible things they see and hear about us," she says. "I am not saying that some of the things they said weren't true, but how much do they really know about the reality of life in Israel? I wanted to show another side to life here."

Going for broke is, by definition, the professional credo of every true artist, but in Edry's case, doing that in London in a far from friendly political environment required an act of bravery.

"As soon as I told people about the exhibition I was working on, they all - including the teachers - tried to dissuade me," says Edry. "They said it was artistic suicide because it wasn't a good idea to feature Israel like that. But I didn't care. That was what I wanted to do and say, and I went for it."

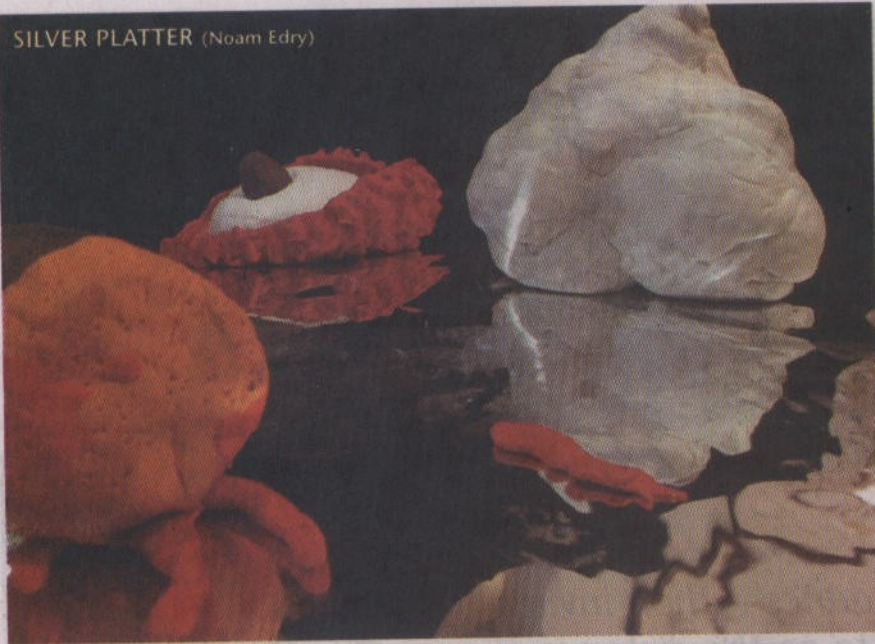
In the end, everything turned out right on the night and thereafter. Her Goldsmiths graduation show, which went by the name of "Conversation Pieces: Scenes of Unfashionable Life," featured a screaming woman running amok in and around the university building as part of a work called "Date Rape," and there was a mock security man, complete with earpiece, who checked people's bags as they entered the installation space.

The "reality" ambience was enhanced by some people wearing T-shirts with the words "I come from the most hated place on Earth" emblazoned across the front, with the words "(second to Iran)" printed on the back.

"It did challenge people, but it was voted the best out of 45 exhibitions," declares Edry proudly, adding that it also got a pretty good write-up from *Art Review*, the only one of the student shows that warranted any space in the prestigious publication.

"I wanted to show the complexity of the situation [in Israel] and my place in it. People came up to me, even months after the show, and told me that the exhibition was very humanist and had moved them and that they wished there were more

SILVER PLATTER (Noam Edry)



people like me. They said it had given them some food for thought about Israel which they had not considered before," she says.

That is likely to be one of the products of "Silver Platter," which has a strong feminist theme and features a bleeding orange, a giant humous and other highly suggestive and expressive objects.

"The humous is a bit like a tank, and it looks very masculine, explains Edry. "There will be feminine objects moving all around it at the opening event, which is very much the way it is here in real life – the man just stands there while the women run around." The "humous" will also shoot out chickpea-like pellets, and there will be plenty of other action to be had on what promises to be a very dynamic opening night.

In Ein Harod, Edry will also revive one of the themes from her London show, which she called "Save the Date" and "Date Rape." The former provided something of a marketing service for Israeli produce, while the latter ties in with the new exhibition.

"In London, I pleaded with the audience to eat me, even though I was an Israeli date. With 'Date Rape,' a girl dressed in brown, like a date, ran around screaming. That talked about physical rape and political rape – there [in London] people assumed they knew what my political opinions were and forcefully categorized me."

That, naturally, will take on a different sentiment here. "I will serve up the date and other fruits to the public in Ein Harod on a silver platter which, in fact, is the floor of the exhibition space."

The said serving implement, the name of the exhibition, references Natan Alterman's stirring poem "The Silver Platter" in which he talks about the sacrifices the generation of the state's



HER OWN MIND – Noam Edry
(Yoav Karmon)

founders made so that later Israelis could enjoy the fruits of their efforts and sacrifices.

"I want to talk about something that is so sacred to us, the sacrifice we make, and about the artistic sacrifice we make and the international embargo on our art around the world. I want to talk about the discomfort and about things we don't feel too comfortable with. I think that is something important that we should deal with," says Edry.

For more information about 'The Silver Platter': (04) 651-3670 and www.museumeinharod.org.il



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