

## ***“Diana” - Solo Exhibition***

*Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art. Curator: Dalia Levin*

Situated in the Museum's elongated narrow corridor, the installation engulfs those walking along it with an array at once threatening, intrusive and enveloping. The work consists of a rigid grid made of rows of antlers projecting from the walls, rows of repeated woman-shaped cutouts, and threads tying them together. A geometric, nearly mechanical array is thus created, albeit one that embeds the biomorphic organicity embodied in the female silhouette and the horns' curving. The duality governing the work is also manifested in the tension between the male and the female, between the stretched, protruding line of the threads and antlers on the one hand, and the trickling, uncontrollable line of female bleeding, between the bursting violence of the antlers erupting into the space and the tenderness characterizing the envelope of threads.

The female image consists of a reproduced, flat pattern, a body devoid of volume, akin to a faceless facade of a marionette tied to the antlers with threads. The blood oozing from the female body calls to mind stigmata – bleeding female crucifixion marks, alluding to the visions of Saint Eustachius and Saint Hubert, to whom the crucifix was revealed between the antlers of a stag during a hunting trip. Following the revelation both converted to Christianity.

Hunting grounds, combined with images from the worlds of gender and religion, elicit questions about sacrificed-sacrificer or victim-victimizer relations, as also emerging from the association with Diana, the Roman goddess of hunting, for whom the installation is named. Diana, also symbolized by the stag, is associated with contradictory qualities of gentleness and cruelty. The work refers to the legend describing her encounter with the youth Actaeon, who during a hunting trip saw her bathing in a stream with her virgin companions. Raged by his invasion of her privacy, Diana transformed the youth into a stag. His hounds failed to recognize him as their master and tore him to pieces. Just as the mythological Diana, a victim of the male gaze, became a victimizer, so the row of bound women in the installation develop new powers, growing bleeding antlers from within, as a hybridization of sorts. The “growth” infuses them with vitality, alluding to the possibility of changing their passivity, possibly even to a role reversal between victim and victimizer.