

Storefront for Art and Architecture

Curatorial Statement

Aircraft Carrier

Curated by Erez Ella, Milana Gitzin Adiram, Dan Handel

“Israel is the largest American aircraft carrier in the world that cannot be sunk...and is located in a critical region for American national security.” - Alexander Haig, U.S. Secretary of State, 1981-82.

The eventful year of 1973 marks a watershed in the workings of global capitalism, in the American strategic interest in the Middle East, and in Israel’s social, economic and political structures. Together, these elements, shaped by territorial struggles and energy crises, radically transformed Israeli architecture.

Focused on the period between two crises of capitalism, 1973 and 2008, the exhibition deals with this transformation and with the American influences through which its innovations, and tragedies, were enabled.

In the exhibition, an architectural history becomes more than a succession of projects, to be understood as clusters of associations, influences, and innovations that circumscribe spatiocultural phenomena, and sketch out the boundaries and the dark sides of the special relationship between the United States and Israel.

The space is divided into two: a "store" and an exhibition space. The first takes the form of a “souvenir” shop where custom-made merchandise items (made by product designer Tal Erez) are on display; creating an instantaneous interaction between the spectators and *Aircraft Carrier*. Each piece of merchandise represents a key event in the history of Israeli-American relations; however the context of each piece is only revealed in the exhibition space. In this space, the merchandise items become a field of information, in which four architectural “phenomena”, comprised of archival materials and commissioned artworks are shown on big objects.

The exhibition highlights four such “phenomena,” each identifying an American influence on Israeli architecture: **Signals** (attempts by companies and individuals to announce, through built projects, their social and political power); **Emporiums** (the rise of the free-market theorem and the rapid transformation Israeli society

Storefront for Art and Architecture

from socialist austerity into hyper-consumerist frenzy); **Allies** (the state capitalization of private development models and ambition as a means of promoting national goals) and **Flotillas** (the segregation of Israeli space into discrete environments with parallel architectures, built for different sub-societies).

Each of the four is represented by a different combination of archival materials and commissioned art piece form leading Israeli and international photographers and artists which reflect on them. In combination with the merchandise, the spectators will get a wide understanding of the processes that shape contemporary Israeli architecture.

- Erez Ella, Milana Gitzin Adiram, Dan Handel