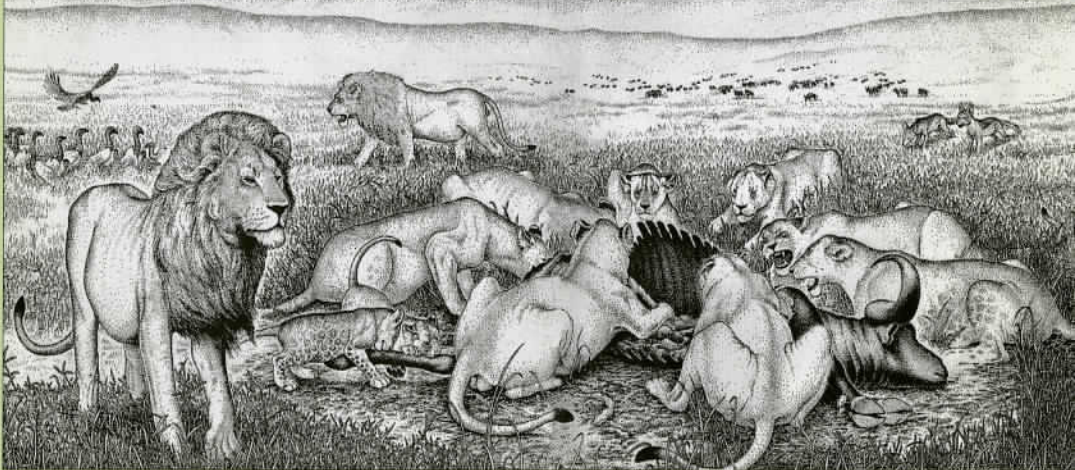


ARTIST
PROJECT AND
RESIDENCY

GAL WEINSTEIN

DECEMBER 7-29, 2001

SAN FRANCISCO ART INSTITUTE
WALTER AND McBEAN GALLERIES



The San Francisco Art Institute continues to integrate its academic and public programs by providing more opportunities for visiting artists to research ideas, create new work and engage directly with its students. Foremost among our efforts is the emphasis on bringing young, international artists to the Art Institute for residencies. By visiting for a longer duration of time, artists now may take full advantage of the unique environment and extensive resources of the Art Institute by participating in a range of activities including exhibitions, commissioned projects, public lectures, seminars and critiques.

Marie Shek, the former cultural attaché for Israel in San Francisco, invited the Art Institute to participate in a series of exhibitions by Israeli artists in the Bay Area during December 2001. This summer I traveled to Israel and was intrigued by the work of Gal Weinstein, who uses building supplies and domestic materials—roof tiles, cotton, steel wool, and silicone—in new ways in his site-specific installations.

Weinstein's exhibition includes a silicone curtain installation and two newly commissioned drawing projects executed on site with Art Institute student assistants. The images in his new projects, derived from "how-to-draw" manuals and illustrated books, initially appear to be delicately drawn in soft pencil or graphite, but are actually painstakingly rendered in steel wool. Weinstein uses mundane materials to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary, as he refers to the artifice of art-making and the artificiality implicit in our concept of nature. With his unusual process, he also makes a wry commentary on the notion of "high" art and craftsmanship and the "skill" of the artist, as he subtly questions authorship and representation.

While in residence, Weinstein is participating in critiques and a graduate seminar panel discussion with the other Israeli artists who are currently exhibiting in San Francisco. We welcome the opportunity to commission and present Gal Weinstein's work and appreciate his generosity in working so closely with our students, faculty and the public.

Karen Moss
Director of Exhibitions and Public Programs

Untitled, (Silicone Curtain), 2000, installation view,
courtesy Chelouche Gallery for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv.



Untitled (Silicone Curtain), 2001**McBean Gallery**

courtesy Chelouche Gallery of Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv.

Weinstein's silicone curtains—the same material used for caulking and the cosmetic reshaping of the human figure—are supple and sticky, like a watery membrane. Reminiscent of the long chains of beads used to block out the sun in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries, the curtains both invite and hinder the visitor's passage through the space, blurring and softening the concrete minimalism of the McBean Gallery.

Window Installation, 2001**McBean Gallery**

This newly commissioned installation, inspired by the decorative architectural railing of SFAI's original 1926 building, derives from the image of a wrought iron Louis XV-style gate. Across the plaza one sees the "real" ironwork through the representation of the ornate gate on the window. Drawing directly on glass with steel wool—a by-product of iron—Weinstein re-contextualizes the vine-like forms in this indoor/outdoor, site-specific work.

Wall Installation, 2001**McBean Gallery**

This second commissioned installation derives from an illustrated book on the social behavior of animals. While Weinstein's previous drawings often depicted animals in captivity or sentimental visions of domestic pets, here one sees a landscape in which a pride of lions devours the carcass of a newly killed buffalo. At first this representation of the wild beasts appears soft and tame, but upon closer scrutiny, the cold harshness of the material and subject is revealed.

Artist's Statement

A husband and wife decided to buy a parrot. They trained the parrot to imitate both of them. After a while the husband suddenly passed away, yet the parrot continued to imitate him. What once was amusing became a nightmare for the woman until finally she decided to give the parrot away to the zoo. She would often go and visit the parrot in the zoo. It had become the living memorial of her husband.

These new works are representations of civilized nature. The gate is a decorative image derived from organic shapes originating in plants. The pack of lions is taken from a book about animal sociology—an attempt to try and find civilized schemas within animals. Formally, the drawings are based on stylized lines, which define and enclose areas. Their schematic form implies an attempt to find order, shape and system in what is called nature. All these images lack a concrete physical origin. They are just ideas, visual terms of a pack of lions, an iron gate, and a curtain, that become concrete and obtain a "body" through materials (steel wool, silicone) which imitate bodily fluids and substances (hair, fur, semen, and mucus). These drawings began with domestic animals from books that teach the "ideal" way to draw. The technique of mastering the material became an analogy to the images: "taming" civilized nature. While the connection between the domestic animal and man is usually based on tactile pleasure, here it is complicated by the visual examination of the work, which creates a feeling between attraction and repulsion.

Gal Weinstein

Biography

Gal Weinstein, who lives and works in Tel Aviv, has exhibited his work in Israel and internationally. Recently he has shown at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, the Barbara Davis Gallery in Houston, and is participating in *Transfer*, a cultural exchange between Israel and Germany which will result in exhibitions at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, the Herzlia Museum in Israel, the Bonn Kunstmuseum and the Krefeld Kunstmuseum in Germany. In 2002, Weinstein will exhibit his new work in *LandEscape, Mysteries of the (Holy)land* at the Moore College of Art Gallery in Philadelphia and will represent Israel in the 2002 Sao Paulo Biennale.

Acknowledgments

This exhibition was made possible by support from the Israeli Foreign Ministry, Ralph Tornberg, and other anonymous donors. Very special thanks to Marie Shek for coordinating the Bay Area Israeli art project; Raffi Gamzu for assisting with sponsorship; Nira Yitzhaki and the Chelouche Gallery for Contemporary Art for their loan to the exhibition; and to Maria Park and Maureen Stephan for assisting the artist. Additional thanks to the Exhibitions staff: Merry Scully, Erez Golan, and Bruce Brodie; and student workers Kerri Johnson, Karen Gallagher, Mary George, Joshua Hartsough, Jo Nigoghossian and Sarah Vinci. As always, we are indebted to Sara Cambridge and Nina Zurier for making our publications possible. Finally, special thanks to Gal Weinstein for his beautiful work and his generosity.

San Francisco Art Institute

Artists Projects and Residencies

The San Francisco Art Institute integrates its academic and public programs by providing visiting artists with opportunities to create new work utilizing the resources of the institution and by engaging directly with students over an extended period of time. Foremost in our efforts are residencies with national and international artists who take advantage of this unique creative environment by participating in activities including commissioned projects, exhibitions, public lectures, and critiques.

Upcoming Projects

Michal Helfman

January 10—February 4, 2002

Ghada Amer

Tania Bruguera

February 14—March 30, 2002

The San Francisco Art Institute is a privately supported fine arts college offering educational and cultural programs to the San Francisco Bay area. The Art Institute receives support from the California Arts Council, Friends of the Art Institute, and Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund.

design: Sara Cambridge

cover: drawing for Untitled (Wall Installation), 2001