

On March 27 two drawing exhibitions opened at The Kibbutz Gallery. These two exhibitions are related even though this was not the intention of the two artists, **Lida Sharet Massad** and **Belle Shafir**.

In these two solo exhibitions the artists seek to revitalize the past that connects them to their childhood homes. Each in her own way looks through the transparent base upon which she works, diligently copy items from a limited reservoir of family objects and of memories of moments in time that are meaningful to her.

Lida Sharet Massad's exhibition titled **Majme** is on display in the entrance of the gallery. The exhibition contains 15 small (20/30 cm – 40/50 cm), intimate and exposed pieces, graphite drawings on strips of transparent masking tape glued next to one another on treated parchment.

Majme means "tray" in Farsi, the mother tongue of **Sharet Massad** who emigrated from Iran as a child with her family. Scenes from Iran's Achaemenid period (6th century BCE) are engraved on the tray using delicate and dense silver crafting. At the center of the tray is a scene showing a *minkhah* or gift offering being brought to the king who is sitting on his throne surrounded by servants. Other scenes depict characters from the daily lives of agricultural workers and shepherds, caravans of camels and donkeys, houses, tents, trees and more.

The artist uses the frottage technique (rubbing the surface of the tray onto paper using a pencil) to copy scenes from the various **Majme** stories and to adapt them to characters

and contexts from her own world. The character of the king that appears many times in her works echoes the figure of her father, who was dominant in her home. The few female characters appear solitary and independent, placed in a scene of everyday handicrafts. In this context **Sharet Massad**'s work is reminiscent of the women in the paintings of Johannes Vermeer and of the work of Louise Bourgeois in the series *Femme Maison*.

Lida Sharet Massad and **Belle Shafir** both revitalize their childhood pasts, each experienced in a different culture. The proximity of their exhibitions expresses large expanses of time. Lida's exhibition revives an ancient past that goes back to the time of the Bible and the stories of Arabian Nights. Belle Shafir creates a stormy instinctive world of far-off commercial trading within the space of the local gallery.

Majme (Farsi for large copper tray)

A tray with fine silver craft engravings that depict stories and scenes from the Achaemenid period (6th century BCE). At the center of the tray is a scene showing a *minkhah* or gift offering being brought to the king who is sitting on his throne surrounded by servants. Other scenes show characters from the daily lives of agricultural workers and shepherds, caravans of camels and donkeys, houses, tents, trees and more.

I copy the contents and scenes from the *majme* stories using the frottage technique (rubbing the surface of the tray onto paper using a pencil). After that I disrupt their order

and adapt them to new statements. In this way I create my own figures and contexts. For example, I join the king's torso to the body of a camel, creating a type of Minotaur.

In my work I focus attention on the women and on their hard and diligent labor. Even though there are fewer women compared to the many male characters on the tray, I isolate and emphasize their work. For a change, I place the women at the center.