

Sphere – Meirav Heiman and Ayelet Carmi

“Feminine time,” a charged term in feminist discourse, relates to the general concept of “time” that serves to produce a social order, norms, identities, and civil and religious ceremonies. In contrast to “male time,” which is linear, historical, and rational, “feminine time” is perceived as cyclical, mythical, and relative. Critics of this theory argue that this gendered notion of time creates a dichotomy that perpetuates hierarchical relations based on power and inequality. The exhibition “Sphere” explores the concepts of cyclicity, myth, rationality, ritual, and historicity in an autonomous female sphere, as a process of cultural female activism.

Audible throughout the gallery space is a woman’s choir from the video work **Chen, Samira, Einav, Noam, Alma**. This time-specific work was created in response to the commandment of counting the *omer* (*Sefirat Haomer*), which takes place in the 49 days between the two Jewish spring holidays, Passover and Pentecost. This work was created in response to the exclusion of women from the fulfillment of this commandment, while attending to the current phenomenon of excluding women’s singing from the Israeli cultural sphere. As is the case during the counting of the *omer*, each of the women in this video work complete 49 circles, while counting from one to 49 in Hebrew, Arabic, Amharic, and English. The tune sung by the women is based on the “music of the spheres”: in Ancient Greece, philosophers believed that the heavenly constellations (sun, moon, and stars) make sounds as they moved through the sky. Based on this belief, the composer Maayan Tsadka created the “Song of the Spheres” sung by these female figures.

The hothouse in which the choir sings is by definition a space that provides protection from external climactic conditions. This site in which the women’s ritual of counting takes place, a sphere that calls to mind both a connection to female biology and to the world at large. The camera angle is enigmatic; the figures must obey the force of gravity, and clearly show signs of the effort involved in counting and singing while pushing the wheel. The visual use of a circle to mark the progression of the *omer* count goes back to ancient calendars for counting the *omer*.

The work set in the window, **Jaffa Road**, captures two identical woman scientists engaged in an act of measuring. Standing atop an ancient astronomical clock, they appear as mirror images of one another. The scene unfolds in nature, and each figure is associated with a specific type of vegetation. Nature does not ignore the scientists: branches and a bird disturb the women, and even the rays of light penetrating through the window cast shadows in the gallery, transforming the appearance of the work throughout the day. In ancient Greece, the word “sphere” referred to

a ball, while also symbolizing an area in which a specific activity took place. The sphere presented in this exhibition is a female sphere, which is not utopian – since the public sphere must enable women to enter ritual spaces and exert their influence.

“Sphere” is the third joint exhibition of works by the photographer and video artist Meirav Heiman and the painter Ayelet Carmi.

Curator: Shira Friedman

1. **Chen, Samira, Einav, Noam, Alma**, 2018, video, 4:36 min.
2. Meirav Heiman and Ayelet Carmi, **Jaffa Road**, 2018, wallpaper cutout
3. Meirav Heiman and Ayelet Carmi, wall painting, 2018,