



All My Sons / Effi & Amir

2002 | video 22' Hebrew and Arabic with English subtitles | photos, installation, instructional videos, software

Synopsis

A video work reconstructing the future history of Effi and Amir's eight, out of dozens of, possible children. The kids, animated characters, whose faces composed from the artists' facial features in the same way police identikits are made, are planted in their parents' real world. Belly to belly the parents lie, head to head fantastic, pseudo-documentary episodes are conceived and vanish, telling the tales of the eight children. Through comical and touching stories, Effi and Amir deal with their existence and identity as a couple which work and live in Israel today.

Longer synopsis:

"So we declare ourselves to be twins, Symmetrical creatures of a whim of nature, henceforth we shall be the same age, the same height, with the same hair, walking the highways and byways of the world in identical striped clothes with the same bow tied under our chins. People will turn around and look after us, half touched and half scornful, as always happens when something reminds them of the mysteries of their own beginnings." (Man Without Qualities/ Robert Musil)

This text is the voiceover in the last scene of a video work reconstructing the future history of Effie and Amir's eight, out of dozens of, possible children.

The kids, animated characters, whose faces composed from the artists' facial features in the same way police identikits are made, are planted in their parents real world.

Belly to belly the parents lie, head to head fantastic, pseudo-documentary episodes are conceived and vanish, telling the tales of the eight children.

Through comical and touching stories, Effie and Amir deal with their existence and identity as a couple, which work and live in Israel today

About the Exhibition

All My Sons is flexible and modular exhibition and it should be adjusted to a given space. Not all its components are necessary. The description below is optional:

The video (22 min) is a reconstruction of the future history of our eight, out of dozens of, possible children. The kids, animated characters, whose faces composed from our facial features in the same way police identikits are made, are planted in our (their parents) real world. Through the different episodes, we deal with our existence and identity as a couple and artists and with stereotypes, moral conventions, common beliefs and behaviors of the Israeli society in which we live. As the kids came to existence through morally suspicious process (=artificial), and their appearance relates to the visual representation of "criminality", their identities and actions are also "not in line" with the ordinary.

In the **web site**, www.identikids.org.il the visitor can find portraits of the 8 children, with our request for help in constructing the kids' personalities and biographies, through a questionnaire, which enables the visitor to choose the kid's age, name, nationality, prominent traits etc. Based on the filled up forms, we intend to trace stereotypes and their relation to the kid's appearance.

The Installation consists of video projection, large scale digital prints, computer and souvenirs workshops:

In the computer space the visitor can access the mentioned website, and also to create new optional kids from our facial features by using a very simple compute program. The new portraits are printed and they can be either taken home as souvenirs or hung as a contribution to the exhibition.

In the souvenir workshop the visitor can learn how to create, following an instructional video, an origami game that also plays with the idea of possible identities.

IDENTIKIDS website:

<http://www.ffiandamir.net/www.identikids.org.il/www.identikids.org.il/english/index.html>

Translated text of ALLMY SONS video

1. Where is it...? Yes, I think that...

A Peak Price for "Old Freehand":

Old Freehand and his silver brush did it again: in a public auction held last night, his most recent work was sold for a peak price of \$450,000.

Old Freehand's unique painting technique, to which he owes his nickname, developed, as a matter of fact, as a result of a congenital defect which caused his shoulder joint to remain loose, thus allowing his right arm a completely free 360° movement.

Old Freehand did not seem excited over the successful sale, and said only that he is now preoccupied with "Mountain Air", his new work, to be completed soon. It will become, he says, a turning point in his artistic career.

2. Why did he do it?

You see, the kid doesn't believe he really exists.

It started at a very young age, we didn't really paid that much attention to it.

He's really not there in the photos.

That is, he was in the picture, but you can't see him in the photo, for example,,, I have some photos of him here, photos from various times in his life.

This is high school, with his certificate.

This is from his birthday, I can't remember how old he was, but he's here with his brothers, and already you cannot see him.

Here he is... I think, two years old. Yes, two and a bit.

Suddenly, a phone call from the hospital, some nurse on the other end, she says come here a quick as you can and... no, the kid just took his leg off, took his leg off. That's it, there's nothing more to say.

This... This is all that remained. He just doesn't come out.

3. These are his. One day he just disappeared, after a long time of doing nothing, just sitting around at home. And then he was gone, packed a bag and was off.

After a while we got a postcard from him - he'd gone down to Egypt .

A few months later - a knock on the door. I open, the boy's there: "Mum, Dad, I'm an origamer". You see, at the time we didn't know how it would affect our lives.

4. [QUOTE (Nitsze)] "....:but whoever heeds commands does not need himself."

5. Well, your child - is an Arab.

When he was a baby, he just, well he cried all the time. Simply screamed. All the time. We thought he was teething, that's natural, six months old and he was rather forward. In fact he's still forward, to this very day.

And then one day it just, well, started growing.

He started speaking fluently. Only Arabic. At first it was very difficult, we couldn't understand him at all. But today we're OK with it.

(originally in Arabic) One day, a Greek dervish appeared in the king's palace and claimed, helped by an interpreter, that he knew the wisdom of the Greek sages.

Addressing the king he asked whether there was a scholar among the wise men of his kingdom who could contend with him.

How will you speak to him? wondered the king.

If he is a true scholar and is learned, my gestures will suffice for him to understand me.

Not a single scholar did the king find in his entire kingdom who would dare contend with the Greek dervish, except for Juha.

The next day, all the wise men of the kingdom convened to watch the contest.

The dervish grabbed his cane and drew a circle on the ground. Juha snatched the cane and divided the circle in two. Seeing that the dervish was not pleased with his response, he added another line and split the circle into four parts.

Only then did the dervish seem pleased. He raised his hands and began shaking them.

Juha did likewise, but with his hands downwards.

The dervish bent over and began walking on all fours, like an animal, while pointing at his stomach.

Juha in turn took an egg from his pocket and began waving his arms, as if intending to fly.

Juha's responses pleased the dervish and he promised the king to recommend the wisdom of his kingdom's scholars everywhere.

After the session, the scholars asked the dervish to explain to them the meaning of his signs.

Aided by his interpreter, the dervish explained:

Greek and Israelite philosophers disputed the question of world's creation and its shape. Therefore, the first thing I drew was a circle, meaning: the world is round. Your scholar agreed with me and divided it in two, saying: the world has a northern and a southern hemisphere.

Then he divided the circle in four, meaning that three quarters of the globe are covered with water.

I then asked him about the origin of nature and he replied that everything comes from the rain.

When asked about procreation in nature he said: It is all from the egg.

And so I was convinced that there are true scholars in your country.

After the dervish left the kingdom, the king asked Juha how he had succeeded in understanding the signs of the Greek philosopher.

Said Juha: Your Highness, that dervish is nothing but a crook! He only came here for food, and therefore the first thing he drew was a circle, meaning: the plate of food he required.

Lest he thought we would fulfil his request, I divided the plate in two, when I saw he wasn't pleased, I decided to irritate him even further and split it into four.

I pointed at one quarter only, and he was forced to concede.

When the dervish saw he was not getting any food at all, he wished to tell me how hungry he was, and so pointed at his stomach, but I put him in his place and showed him the egg my wife had prepared for me, and I hadn't had the time to eat on his account.

So he decided to give up on the whole matter and left.

The main thing, sir, is that each of us understood the other.

6. Ladies and Gentlemen!

After taking many stages by storm, tonight they are here!

In a fabulous, breathtaking psycho-symmetric show!

The Rorschach Twins!

[QUOTE (Robert Muzil)]

"so we declare ourselves to be twins, Symmetrical creatures of a whim of nature, henceforth

we shall be the same age, the same height, with the same hair, walking the highways and byways of the world in identical striped clothes with the same bow tied under our chins. People will

turn around and look after us, half touched and half scornful, as always happens when something reminds them of the mysteries of their own beginnings."