

**Reuven Israel:
Formulated
Liminal
Oblique
Openable
Rectangles**



CCA – Center for Contemporary Art Tel Aviv
September 30 - December 11, 2021



















Reuven Israel: F.L.O.O.R.

(Formulated, Liminal, Oblique, Openable, Rectangles)

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Working within the tradition of sculpture and simultaneously questioning its very essence, Reuven Israel (*1978, Jerusalem; lives and works in New York) is a master of opposite solutions. His work often starts from disparate positions and ideas that he links together to reach an endpoint which conveys a deep sense of visual and conceptual harmony, as an equilibrium could only be reached through tension. Associating the algid aesthetics of minimal art and Finish Fetish with the playful look of children's toys, appropriating elements of modern architecture with the visual vocabulary of ancient sites of worship, adopting the legacy of monumental sculpture in order to transform it into modifiable pieces, Israel's objects represent a unique position in the landscape of Israeli art.

For his solo exhibition at CCA Tel Aviv, the artist conceived a new site-specific sculptural installation commissioned and produced by the Center and tailored for its first floor gallery. The work, entitled **F.L.O.O.R. (Formulated, Liminal, Oblique, Openable, Rectangles)**, consists of thousands of wooden segments laminated in different colors. Tiling the exhibition space, these segments create tessellated geometric patterns that crisscross throughout the gallery, covering most of its floor. To physically enter the heart of the installation, to literally go through the work, visitors are obliged to tread on the locking rows of colorful segments. Unfolding from this tiled floor, multiple sculptural structures sprout up, leaving empty gaps in the tessellated wooden surface, where the pieces of wood once lay. Further advancing into the installation, the tiled floor breaks up into groups of segments creating geometric patterns and leaving swathes of bare floor to complete their negative spaces. On the other side of the installation, joint pieces of wood unravels – stretching across the gallery floor and spiraling into a loop, similar to a loose thread – and unties the work, giving a sense of transient temporality.

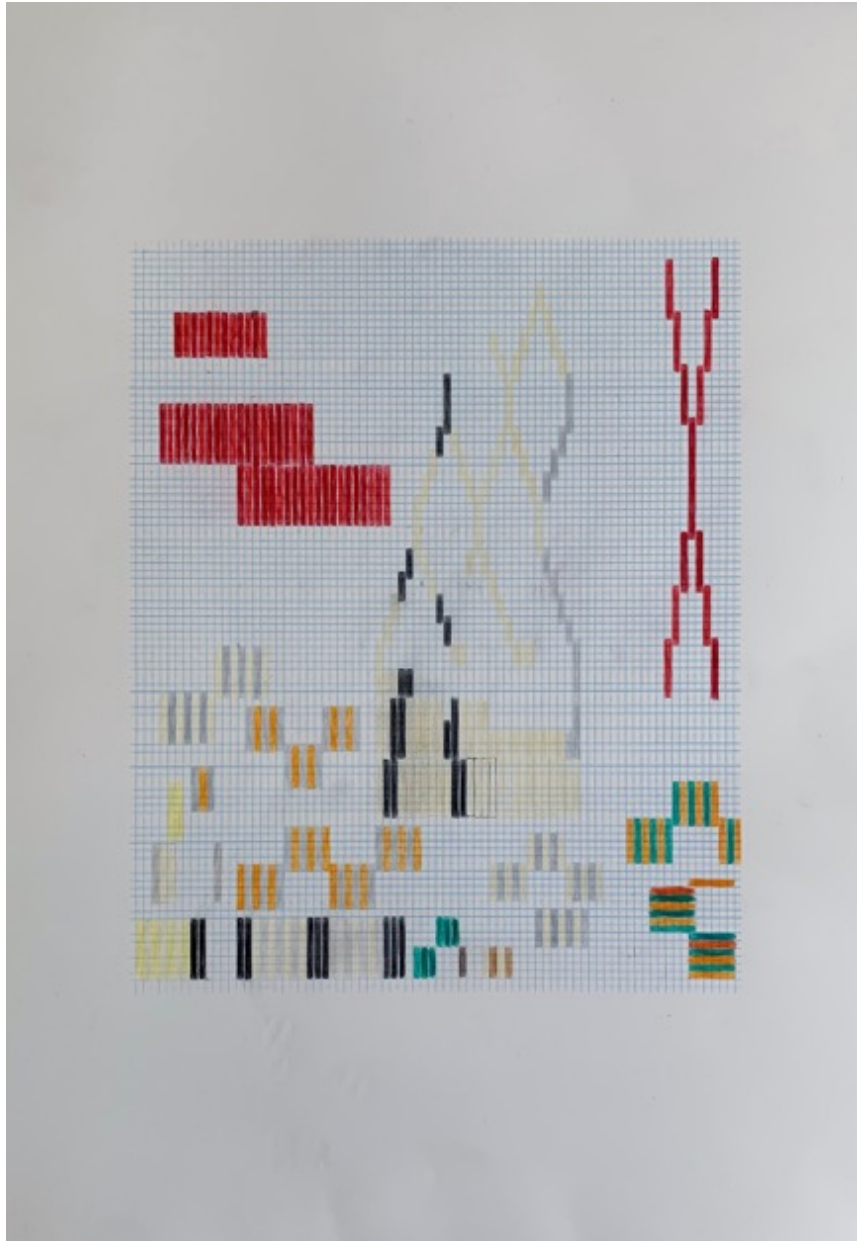
Israel explores the notion of “sculpture as place,” coined by artist Carl Andre, and furthers it by presenting sculpture not only as a physical place but as a virtual one as well. The unified wooden components are the standard units of the entire environment holding the potential of countless configurations to emerge into the three-dimensional space. The towering geometric structures resemble people integrated within a place, moving, taking actions, and some are folded back to fit neatly into the tiled floor. Inspired by early modernist art movements, Navajo and Hopi weaving traditions, Op Art, and sacred geometry, the overall experience is somewhat uncanny as if stepping into a pixelated image or a woven rug – an interconnected, total, and enclosed sculptural environment that holds within itself the tension of self-destruction.

“Reuven Israel: F.L.O.O.R. (Formulated, Liminal, Oblique, Openable, Rectangles)” is curated by Nicola Trezzi.

The exhibition is accompanied by printed matter in Hebrew, Arabic and English, artist talks in Hebrew on September 30 and English on December 9, two Saturday Kids Lab led by Eden Bannet on October 30 and November 30 and exhibition tours in English on October 23, Hebrew on November 20 and 27, and Arabic on November 6.

“Reuven Israel: F.L.O.O.R. (Formulated, Liminal, Oblique, Openable, Rectangles)” is supported by the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation, Sam Ben-Avraham, Sonia S. Cummings, Giora Kaplan, Thomas Rom, Marc Schimmel, Chaim Zach, and the artist’s representing galleries – Braverman Gallery, Tel Aviv and Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles; hospitality provided by Outset Contemporary Art Fund. The exhibition was conceived in collaboration with MAMBO – Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá, where it will be presented in 2023.

Images: Reuven Israel, **F.L.O.O.R. (Formulated, Liminal, Oblique, Openable, Rectangles)**, 2021. Baltic Birch, PVC and brass hardware, variable dimensions. Courtesy of the artist, Braverman Gallery, Tel Aviv, and Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles. Photo: Eyal Agivayev



Preparatory drawing by Reuven Israel



Navajo small serape, circa 1875

Weft-faced plain weave, hand-spun Native wool in natural white, indigo-dyed blue, and raveled red trade cloth or bayeta, 49 × 32 inches



Navajo Transitional Weaving, circa 1900

Rug softly spun wool in colors of red, cream, and brown; designed with a central cross surrounded by a diamond border, 64.5 × 49 inches



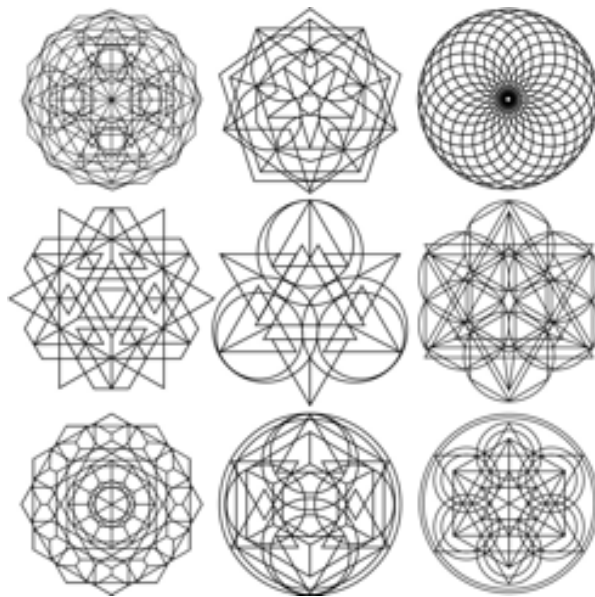
Hopi Coil Baskets



Hopi pottery



“Reuven Israel: In Four Acts,” 2018
View of the exhibition at Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles



Samples of sacred geometry



Crossing Lines, 2019
Installation view at Kunsthalle Osnabrück, Germany

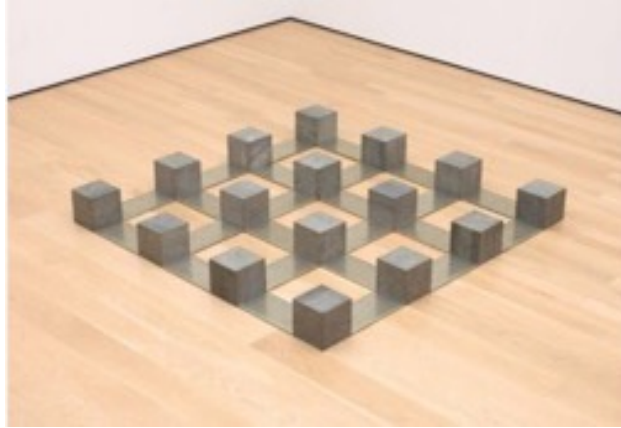


Untitled Folding Object 27A, 2018

Painted oak and brass, hardware, 56 cm wide (height and depth are variable)



Bridget Riley, **Nataraja**, 1993



Carl Andre, **Belgica Blue Tin Raster**, 1990



Floor of the Mosque inside the Citadel of Qaitbay
Alexandria, Egypt, 15th century



Floor of the Ein Gedi Synagogue, 5th-6th century



John McCracken, **Unconfirmed**, 2008.

About the artist

Reuven Israel (*1978, Jerusalem; lives and works in New York) received his BFA and MFA from Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design Jerusalem. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles (2018, 2016), Braverman Gallery, Tel Aviv (2018, 2016, 2010, 2006), Fridman Gallery, New York (2014), the Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2011, with Shai Azoulay); Museo Civico Floriano Bodini, Gemonio, Italy (2010). His work has been included in several group exhibitions such as “Crossing Lines” at Kunsthalle Osnabrück (2019); “Twist” at Fused, San Francisco (2018); “Flair” at Fridman Gallery, New York (2017); “Same Same But Different” at Minus1 Gallery, Tel Aviv (2017); “The Museum Imagined” at Danese Corey, New York (2017); “The Museum Presents Itself 2” at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2015); “Domestic Ideals” at Lesley Heller Gallery, New York (2015); “The Readymade Centennial” at Haifa Museum of Art (2013); “Re:Visiting Rockefeller” at Rockefeller Archaeological Museum, Jerusalem (2012); “Senses of the Mediterranean” at Hangar Bicocca, Milan (2011). He is represented by Shulamit Nazarian in Los Angeles and Braverman Gallery in Tel Aviv.

About CCA – Center for Contemporary Art Tel Aviv

Center for Contemporary Art Tel Aviv is a non-collecting institution fostering practices, discussions and reflections connected to the most relevant issues of our times. The goal of CCA Tel Aviv-Yafo is to commission and produce new projects by radical living artists with a special focus on giving an institutional frame to artists from Israel. Presenting a rigorous and multifaceted program of exhibitions, events, and printed matter in Hebrew, Arabic and English, the Center is a dynamic hub with an artist-driven spirit that makes it a home for the city’s vibrant contemporary art scene. Founded in 1998, CCA Tel Aviv is housed in a 300 square meter building that contains two exhibition spaces and a multipurpose gallery. These spaces often come to life through solo exhibitions, and have housed the work of major international artists in Israel for the first time ever, including Marina Abramović, Sharon Lockhart, Gary Hill, Rosa Barba, and Christian Jankowski. Many important Israeli artists have had their first institutional solo exhibitions at CCA Tel Aviv, including Yael Bartana, Guy Ben Ner, Roe Rosen, Nir Evron, Michal Helfman, Nira Pereg, and Naama Tsabar.

About the curator

Nicola Trezzi (Magenta, Italy, 1982; he lives and work in Tel Aviv-Yafo) is an educator, exhibition maker, editor and writer, currently Director and Curator of CCA Tel Aviv, where he curated exhibitions by Laurent Montaron, Alex Mirutziu, Keren Cytter, Noa Glazer, Jordan Nassar, Esther Kläs, Noa Zuk & Ohad Fishof, Jonathan Monk, Sharif Waked, Adi Fluman, Reuven Israel, Augustas Serapinas and the group exhibition “KEDEM–KODEM–KADIMA.” From 2007 to 2014, he was the US editor at Flash Art International, and his writings were published also in artnet News, artpress, and Monopol. From 2014 to 2017, he served as Head of the MFA program at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem and previously lectured at Yale University School of Art, New Haven CT, SAIC, Chicago, and iCI, New York. A staff member of the Prague Biennale Foundation from 2007 to 2014, Trezzi also co-organized the following exhibitions: “Four Rooms” at the CCA in Warsaw, “Modern Talking” at the Muzeul National de Arta Cluj-Napoca, “Circa 1986” at HVMOCA in Peekskill, NY, “Champs-Élysées” at Palais de Tokyo in Paris, “Yael Efrati: Eva and Emerick,” MNAC in Bucharest and «Sharif Waked: Halftones» at Kunsthaus Baselland in Basel.