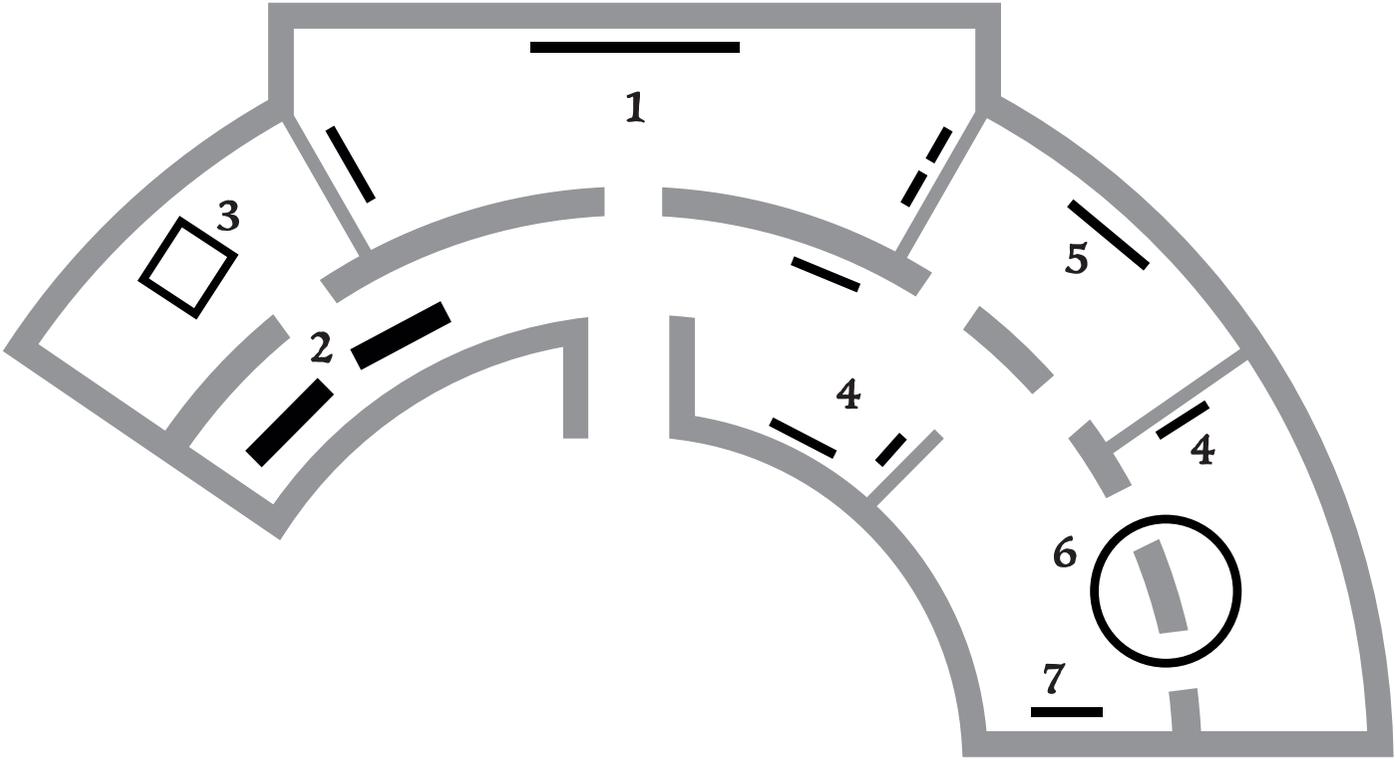


TERRITORY

NETTA LAUFER

TOM SWOBODA



CURATED BY:
AGATA CIASTOŃ

1. **NETTA LAUFER**
25 FT
2016
video (24'44"), photography

The work *25 FT* is based on materials appropriated from Israeli army surveillance cameras monitoring activity along the separation wall with Palestine. The work simulates the position of the soldier controlling the camera, focusing only on animals and the landscape in the occupied West Bank. The appearance of these animals calls the border, its function and what it stands for into question for both the soldier who surveys it and the viewer in front of the work. Man is absent, yet his presence is visible through the tracking movement of the camera, military radio exchanges, the fence and signs of urban structures.

2. **NETTA LAUFER**
35 CM
2017–2020
photography, exhibition copy

The work *35 cm* is an extension of the work *25 FT*, since it focuses on the influence of the passageways built along the fence in order to allow small animals – rodents, rabbits, partridges, etc. to pass from one side of the wall to the other. This project is based on Laufer's ongoing collaboration with Israel's Nature and Parks Authority in Judea and Samaria. In her presence, the authority's workers installed movement-sensitive cameras in the small passageways, built in the form of the Hebrew letter "ב", hence their name. In meticulous editing of the raw materials, Laufer managed to map the more active areas and closely follow the movement of wild animals around the passageways.

The Wall has dramatically changed the ecological system of the area: it divided the natural habitat of animals in two, thus preventing them from moving along their usual tracks to reach food and water sources. The "lamed" passageways were built in an attempt to alleviate the situation created by the Wall. Before the Wall, the predators had to wander around in the open and search for their prey. Watching the footage, we learn that all they need to do now is wait near the passageways, and their "food" will appear at some point in time. The passageways themselves did not change the relationship between the animals – they are still predators and prey – but it did change the location – it looks as if the Separation Wall has become a feeding station for predators. Thus, the passageways turn into another level of control over nature, control whose origins can be traced back to the very basic image stemming from the recorded footage itself: The vantage point of landscapes is historically and culturally related to control over a territory, dominance and the power dynamics of man and nature. The vantage point functions as the position from which the landscape is mapped, defined and surveyed.

3. **TOM SWOBODA**
ANIMAL SPACE,
ELEPHANT SKIN
2020
installation

In 1964, an elephant and rhino pavilion was opened at the London Zoo, based on a design by Hugh Casson. The construction consisted of a series of huge buildings inspired by the shape of an elephant. The walls were covered with concrete whose structure resembled the skin of this animal and was strong enough to withstand the rubbing of these mighty creatures against it. However, the architecture soon revealed its shortcomings – when one of the elephants died in 1980, she had to be dissected inside one of the buildings, otherwise her body could not be removed. The zoomorphic New Brutalism that so wonderfully expressed its inhabitants, as the pavilion was described shortly after its construction, turned out to be a trap without an exit.

4. **TOM SWOBODA**
ANIMAL SPACE
2020
photography

5. **TOM SWOBODA**
ANIMAL SPACE
2020
photography, light box

6. **TOM SWOBODA**
ANIMAL SPACE,
RING
2020
installation

7. **NETTA LAUFER**
365
2020
installation

The installation *365* was created as a continuation of the issues raised in *25FT* and *35 cm*, based on a year-long observation of a hyena living in the wild. The animal became a victim of violence while it was on Palestinian territory; it was saved by the intervention of the Israeli military forces (IDF). After recovering, the hyena was released, but only this time carrying a transmitter. Thanks to this, it was possible to track the animal's moves. This situation shows how the gesture of protection and care for a living creature becomes a form of control, and the activity of the animal has been reduced to abstract lines and dots.

Thanks to the cooperation with the Authority of Nature and Parks, the artist received year-round data on the location of the hyena, the distance it travelled, routes, etc., on the basis of which the installation was created. The artist could not track the animal herself – borders drawn up by humans would not allow her. The project portrays the hyena as the protagonist, but it also shows technological limitations, places where signals are jammed or weakened due to army activity or lack of presence of data collecting companies such as Google. Some areas in the West Bank are "white spots," unnoticed by Google, so the installation is not only an observation of the trajectory of movement but also shows power relations in technology.