

ART SPIEL

Reflections on the work of contemporary artists

MARCH 28, 2022 BY ART SPIEL

Sharon Yavo-Ayalon: Laminated Earth at ZAZ

Featured Artist



installation views; 7ft Mud Curtains, photo courtesy of Yunha Choi

Laminated Earth, Sharon Yavo-Ayalon's large-scale multimedia installation at ZAZ10TS intersects architectural representations of housing with land art practices—raw soil and synthetic matter coalesce. [Sharon Yavo-Ayalon](#), an artist and architect, draws from both

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disciplines to transform the confined lobby of 10 Times Square into a shimmering dreamy landscape. The exhibition extends to the ZAZ corner billboard on 41st and 7th with video art, taken from a performance of the artist who builds, destructs, and rebuilds her own plastic home. The show is curated by Professor Lala Ben-Alon and runs in the gallery through April 28th, 2022.

Tell me about the genesis of the body of work in this project.

Working with earth starts with a childhood memory, my first home in the Kibbutz. Growing up with the local mythology of the drying (and dying) Hula Lake—this was the first home to die or to be ruined. The soil used in this installation was sourced from Goshen, a village in upstate NY that is named after the Biblical Goshen in Israel, very close to the actual fishpond in which I bath in the video art that appears in one of the installations. Earth as the base material, represents my personal home and the collective home “plant earth”. It appears in most of my works. The concept for this specific exhibition however, crystalized after a conversation with the gallery owner, in which we contemplated how to use earth as the base material, and at the same time to keep the lobby clean.

As an architect, I’m a great believer in limitations. And out of this limitation: of keeping the lobby clean, I started laminating earth. As I kept doing that, I realized that this is what we do. We, as humanity, as a species, cover our whole world with plastic. Metaphorically and literally. We want to make things beautiful and clean, and at the same time to protect nature. We want to have “fine” “designed” environments, and at the same time to feel as if it “has always been there”. Without a human touch (as an example – Central Park). In this tension between nature and culture, we consume everything, so we’ve laminated our earth and now it’s dying.



Caption: Past works that inspired this exhibition (From left to right): Screenshot from the Mud Bath videoart that inspired the Mud Curtains installation, Without Body, earthworks installation at Carmel Gallery Haifa, Israel; Bathhouse, Artists House Tel Aviv, Israel. photo courtesy of the artist.

<https://artspire.org/shows/your-system-laminated-earth-at-lazy>

Please guide us through the show.

The exhibition is comprised of a series of site-specific installations and a video art, with a main theme of mediating between the personal and collective homes while engaging in the obsessive preservation of raw soils as an increasingly eliminated resource. The first impression of the exhibition is of a golden surreal space, but at a second glance, you realize that not all that glitters is gold but is rather a muddy, dirt matter on plain nylon. *Laminated Earth* is both the action and the outcome, the process, and the objects.

Laminated Earth depicts moments from my 2019 performance at Acco Theater Festival, *Nylon Architect*. The Nylon Architect teaches the foundations of building a sound family home, while at the same time, destroying her own nylon-made home, inhibited by madness and the premise of immigration to a better land. An edited videoart of the performance is projected at the remote end of the lobby, and on the ZAZ billboard. Upon entering the lobby, you face two of the four *Nylon Homes* that are recreated in this exhibition. They are in different stages of being built or falling apart, referring to my original family home, or the lack of, and the existential fear of losing it. With their number— the first home, second home—they convey the broader meaning in Hebrew: “Bait Rishon”, “Bait Sheni”, which are also the common names for the ruined temple in Jerusalem.



*installation views: The fourth Nylon Home and Nylon Dress with its “descends”
Dehydrated Maritime Creatures. Photo courtesy of Yunha Choi*

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installation details: *Skeleton Shelves and Dehydrated Maritime Creatures*. photo courtesy of Yunha Choi

The lobby's long hallway contains a site-specific installation titled *7ft Mud Curtains*. Each curtain, in the series of 7 contain a female figure bathing in mud, taken from my previous video art. Thinking about the lobby as a passage space this installation speaks about a process of change. It accompanies the viewers as they walk, from the outside to the inside, with a process of reduction: the amount of earth on each curtain decreases, while the amount of earth in the foundation block of each curtain increases. It is a change from a full curtain made mostly from earthen material to a transparent nylon curtain. Viewing the same work from the inside-out the processes is of accumulation. From this perspective, the process begins with a pink female figure painted on a transparent nylon curtain. This work and the processes it metaphor's refers to the move from a homeland and childhood memories to America and all that it represents. The move from a muddy, yet warm and familiar land to the glittering, shimmering, nylon made Land of Opportunities. At the opposite side of the hallway are *Skeleton Shelves*. Those are floating cracked earthen shelves with *Dehydrated Maritime Creatures* on them, which again, echo the dead Hula Lake.

At the far end of the lobby, adjust to the video projection, there is a combination of the *Nylon Dress* and its “descends” *Dehydrated Maritime Creatures*. The dress originated in the *Nylon Architect* performance where it illustrated a different kind of home, the one that protects our body. It is recreated here near the fourth Nylon Home, which is hanging in the air, waiting for resolution.



Excerpt videoart from Nylon Architect performance as it appears on ZAZ Corner's In Between. photo courtesy of Changbin Kim

Sharon Ayalon is an architect, artist, curator, and researcher. As a Postdoctoral Associate at Cornell Tech, her current research focuses on visualizations and simulations to achieve social impact in planning. Currently, she has focused on mapping NYC social distancing stories through interactive maps that aggregate people’s stories about living in the city during the COVID-19 pandemic. The maps combine individual stories with big data and content analysis. In addition, to harness technology to elicit social change, she has developed a Digital Twin for Roosevelt Island with a focus on equity and social justice. The digital twin integrates a 3D that can be scrolled back into history or fast forward into a simulated future as the first step towards an Urban Displacement Simulator.

Laminated Earth at ZAZ Solo exhibition by Sharon Yavo-Ayalon
Curated by Lola Ben Alon Through April 28, 2022 10 TIMES
SQUARE, 1441 Broadway, New York, NY 1001 In collaboration:

The Natural Material Lab, Columbia University

The Future Automation Lab, Cornell Tech

Videographer: Gil Ayalon Photos: Changbin Kim and Yunha Choi

Robotics Choreography: Rei Lee