

Post-Colonialism?

Marcelle Klein, Director of Benyamini Center

Introduction

The POSTCOLONIALISM? Project : Residency- Exhibition – Symposium was raised as an idea in the beginning of 2014. This challenging project was included in the events to mark 5 years since the opening of the Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center in 2011.

The title of this international multicultural project includes a question mark at the end of POSTCOLONIALISM; this is the essence of the activities initiated by the Benyamini Center. It is our aim through the on-going activities and exhibitions to raise questions, to create dialogue and explore the various aspects of ceramics with the intention of extending its scope in the broad spectrum of material culture.

The original idea was to have an international exhibition and instead of bringing artworks we decided to bring the artists since we are interested in the dialogue, which evolved into an opportunity for a multi-cultural conversation here in Israel.

To lead this project we were fortunate to engage Ms. Wendy Gers (from South Africa/France), a knowledgeable curator with experience in international projects and an expert in modern and contemporary ceramics with a unique interest in post colonialism, to be the curator and leader of the project in conjunction with a local advisory board (Shlomit Bauman and Yael Novak) representing the Benyamini Center Gallery – the initiator of the project.

From an open international call for participation, 19 artists were selected from Israel and many places around the world. The international artists were hosted for a residency of 3 weeks by our partner institutions- who together enabled us to create an event that could reach a large audience. The guest artists were given studio space to make their work for the exhibition as well as the opportunity to engage with students and the general public who attended their masterclasses around the country.

A dream of a multicultural art event with visitors from abroad, artists with ambitious projects, a program that involves touring the country, visiting sites of relevance to our discussion and documentation of the process along the way, requires resources beyond the capabilities of a small cultural institution such as ours. Our supporters' generosity and strong belief in the value of this project made POSTCOLONIALISM? possible.

We are grateful to all the participants, the partners, the supporters and the volunteers who enabled the realization of this dream. Special thanks to the Benyamini Team who have the vision and insight as artists and as people and who are dedicated to making the Benyamini Center an ongoing creative process.