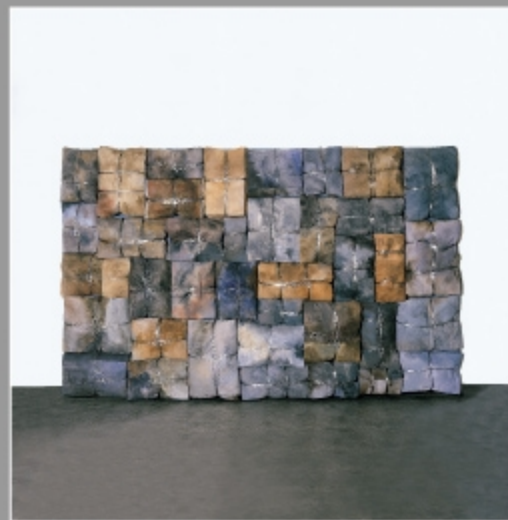


Foreword

I was drawn to Dina Recanati's work because it critically addresses contemporary issues. It has been a great pleasure to work with her, and I am pleased to have had the opportunity to present this haunting and evocative body of work to the Western New York community.

I would like to thank Dina Recanati, Ton Reutelingsperger, Rebecca Moda, and everyone who participated in all stages of preparation and installation. I would also like to thank all of the corporate sponsors, private foundations and individual donors without whose support this exhibition would not have been possible.

Joanna Angie, Director
Buffalo Arts Studio



Archives, 1999, Acrylic on canvas and steel wire

Dina Recanati's art seems to exist in temporal as well as spatial isolation, in a time and place beyond our perceptions. The literal suspension of some pieces underscores the figurative suspension of her work. Her rough textures and caustic palette bring to mind the desert expanses of Egypt, while her busy composition and color juxtapositions recall the urban bustle of her upbringing in Cairo. Each of her bundles preserves a fleeting moment or memory, and is imbued with varied meanings by virtue of the different experiences of each observer.

Rebecca Moda,
Exhibitions Coordinator,
Buffalo Arts Studio

Of Memory and Metaphor: Recent Works by Dina Recanati

It is a truism to say that we all respond differently to art. Yet there is common ground, despite the differences. Where I find common ground with Dina Recanati and her work is in its close embrace of "the historical sense," as T.S. Eliot defined it, a sense that involves not only "the pastness of the past but its presence." Recanati's images emerge from experience and memory, both personal and collective, as an homage to ancient cultures, to the beginnings of civilizations, to earth and time. While her art is often a combination of painting and the sculptural, the three-dimensional is conditioned by prevailing aesthetics. It is never solely about formal issues and strategies but always rooted in metaphor.

This body of work, mostly from 1999, merges contemporary forms with primordial shapes and motifs and is more narrative than ever – with its somber drapes, empty tents, gray spectral shrouds outlining attenuated figures; mysterious, splattered and stained bundles alone, bound together; its whirling, cosmic paintings; its assemblages of opened books

Excerpted from "Folds and Soft Sculptures" by Professor Mordechai Omer, Director and Chief Curator Tel Aviv Museum of Art



Passage (Detail), 2000, Acrylic on canvas and wood

without text. The sculptures, wall pieces and paintings function as an ensemble; each component charges the space it occupies and relays that charge to the next, creating a field of imaginative energy that links them all together. It is silent theater, a shadow play, a sequence of afterimages, unsentimental. In fancy, I see nomads in the desert winding their way through sand, a silent procession at twilight, at night, under twinkling skies lit by the light of distant

stars. They wander, burdened by their tents, their bundles, their histories and memories. It is an elemental view of life, harsh but vital, attuned to cycles and rhythms we have lost touch with in the rush of our modern, urban lives.

But this is too literal. Like shadows, meanings shift, images yield and resist; our memories and knowledge, while specific, are plastic, pliable and often faithless. But what these images represent, I think,

remains unchanging: hope, despair, sorrow, desire, matters of life and death. Recanati permits herself these themes, which are both sweeping and not, grand and homely. They underlie the quotidian and worldly fictions we tell ourselves, our worldly philosophies. They are the thoughts and images that crowd sleepless nights

Recanati's objects also project a quiet but fierce sense of triumph. They are the survivors of other objects, of objects lost, destroyed, part of an endless chain of begets. In their embodiment, their existence, they bespeak endurance, at whatever cost, and an unutterable wisdom. They are containers that hold and conceal, protect and keep and absorb memory. Recanati takes the long view from past to present, a passage tinged by a haunting sense of loss. Her art, in part, marks that passage, a testament to having been here, to the mysteries of memory and existence.

Lilly Wei, Art Critic and Independent Curator

New York, 22 March 2001

Chronology

- 1928 Born in Cairo, Egypt
- 1946 Traveled to England, History and Art studies
- 1948 Moved to New York, built a home and brought up a family Since then lives in New York and in Israel
- 1960-63 Art Students League
- 1961 Prize of National Arts Club, New York
- 1964 Joined America-Israel Cultural Foundation as active board member
- 1967 America-Israel Cultural Foundation Award
- 1970s Board member, Friends of The Israel Museum
- 1980s Board member, Bezalel Academy of Art, Jerusalem Directorate member, Recanati Foundation, Israel
- 1982 Joined "Elem-Youth in Distress" as Vice President and active member

Outdoor and Indoor Sculptures

- 1965 The Israel Museum, Billy Rose Garden Collection
- 1970 The Israel Museum, Jerusalem
- 1971 Tel Aviv Museum of Art
- 1972 Garden Collection, The President's Residence, Jerusalem
- 1975 Jewish Museum, New York
- 1976 Ben Gurion Airport, Lod, Israel
- 1977 Continental Grain Collection, New York
- 1978 Gray Gallery Collection, New York University
- 1980 Israel Embassy, Washington, D.C.
- 1984 Beit Ariella Public Library, Tel Aviv Jewish Museum, New York, (Installation)
- 1985 Weizman Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel Tel Aviv University
- 1986 The Israel Museum, Jerusalem Jewish Museum, New York
- 1990 Herliya Museum, Israel The Israel Museum, Jerusalem
- 1992 Gates, Ben Gurion Airport, Israel
- 1996 Ovarim, International Convention Center, Jerusalem
- 1999 Art Omni - Fields Sculpture Park in Hudson Valley, New York
- 2000 The Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya
- 2001 The Law Faculty, Tel Aviv University

Solo Exhibitions

- 1970 Gordon Gallery, Tel Aviv
- 1975 Gordon Gallery, Tel Aviv
- 1977 America-Israel Cultural Foundation, USA Danforth Museum, Boston
- 1978 E.P. Gurewitsch Gallery, New York
- 1981 Julie M. Gallery, Tel Aviv



Promise, 1995, Acrylic on canvas, fiberglass, wood and metal clamps

- 1984 America-Israel Cultural Foundation, New York Julie M. Gallery, Tel Aviv
- 1986 Julie M. Gallery, Tel Aviv
- 1989 Julie M. Gallery, Tel Aviv Top Gallant Farm, Andre Emmerich (Installation) "Indoor and Outdoor Sculptures, 1988-1989," Museum of Israeli Art, Ramat Gan, Israel

Group Exhibitions

- 1966 "The Hand," Claude Bernard Gallery, Paris
- 1967 "The Portrait," Claude Bernard Gallery, Paris
- 1973 Queens County Art and Cultural Center, New York
- 1977 Delson Richter Gallery, Washington, D.C. Nina Freudenheim Gallery, Buffalo
- 1978 Padua Biennial, Italy
- 1985 Hebrew College, Boston
- 1986 Basel Art Fair, Switzerland
- 1988 Brooklyn Museum, New York
- 1990 "The Jewish Experience," Barbican Center, London The Sculpture Biennial, Ein Hod, Israel "The Column in Contemporary Israeli Sculpture," Tel Aviv University
- 1993 "Free Falling," Berlin Shafir Gallery, New York
- 2004 "Sculptures in Wood," Tel Aviv Museum

Dina Recanati: Passage

Already in 1965, the art critic of *The New York Times* described Dina Recanati's work as "jagged, volcanic islands in a placid sea." It appears that encounters between very powerful eruptions and a profound tranquility continue to constitute the energy fields of her art. The new works are all made of fabrics, mainly painted canvases, some of which hang flat on walls, while others are folded and converted into receptacle-like objects that recall a row of wide dresses

or tent structures whose presence attests, more than anything, to the absences of their owners. In the installations *Diaries*, 1999-2000, and *Passage*, 2000, Dina Recanati successfully captures feelings of sublimity and ritual as well as of desolation and anxiety. In *Passage* we can see a caravan that has frozen in mid-journey, and it seems as if the figures have halted for a moment to conduct a dialogue of silence among themselves. The caravan's disconnectedness is accentuated by...the installation

Diaries, where attributes of wanderers - bundles of folded cloths tied tightly with ropes - hang down from the ceiling and are heaped up on the floor...The way the bundles and ropes are deployed accords the works a rhythm that makes possible a synthesis between the temporary or transient and unlimited duration (*durée*, in the Bergsonian sense), a rhythm that attests to both the past and future of these objects...

Dina Recanati's tents no longer serve for human