

PRESS RELEASE

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Noa Eshkol

Angles & Angels

Press Preview: Wednesday, 29 June, 12 pm (midday)

Opening: Thursday, 30 June, 7 pm

with dance performance by The Noa Eshkol Chamber Dance Group, 8 pm

Public workshops of The Noa Eshkol Chamber Dance Group:

Saturday, 2 July, 11 am (part 1) and 2 pm (part 2)

The Badischer Kunstverein is exhibiting the Israeli artist, dancer, and dance theorist Noa Eshkol (1924–2007) in a comprehensive show. Her impressive *Wall Carpets* made from found textile remnants are a central element of the exhibition. Eshkol produced over hundreds of these wall carpets in her lifetime. The exhibition also presents a selection of drawings, photographs, films, and texts that cast light on Noa Eshkol's dance-theoretical and practical work and that are being shown on this scale for the first time. The combination of works was made in close cooperation with the Noa Eshkol Foundation for Movement Notation which houses the artist's extensive archive.

Noa Eshkol's interdisciplinary work points far beyond the present to the future of artistic production. In 1958, together with the architect Avraham Wachman, she developed the Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation, a system that transfers bodily movements into lines, numbers, and symbols and registers them in a grid structure. Originally developed for dance, the notation functions as a set of rules according to which specific sequences of movements can be followed and identically reproduced – not unlike a musical score or a linguistic alphabet. To begin with, Eshkol and Wachman reduced the body to a stick figure consisting of limbs and joints. The movement of each limb around its joint describes a circle. But the body being three-dimensional, they developed a spherical model capable of including all possible movements in space. A universal structure was the result and it was used not only for dance but for other fields in which movement plays a role, such as neuroscience, sign language, the Feldenkrais Method, and early computerized programming. The documents and drawings on view in the exhibition provide insight into Eshkol's and Wachman's theories, and show in addition that they are firmly anchored in postmodern thought and close to conceptual practices of the time.

When Noa Eshkol first developed the notation, she was disappointed in the conventional dance repertoire and sought instead a discipline that concentrated on the inner laws of the body. Only by abstracting movement to "material" was it possible, in her view, to articulate dance beyond the common interpretative patterns. In 1954, Eshkol founded the Noa Eshkol Chamber Dance Group to implement her studies in movement with a small number of dancers. Eshkol's practice of dance is based on the clear structures of her notation. The movements performed are minimal and concentrated; narrative, decoration, and music are absent; timing is dictated only by a metronome. Eshkol grew up in a kibbutz in Palestine and collective labor became an important aspect of her work. Her private home in Holon, Israel, was – and still is – a center of collaborative study and work.

At the end of 1973 Eshkol began making wall carpets from textile scraps. She unstitched the found textiles and combined them in new assemblages without first cutting the material to shape. To begin with, Eshkol used scraps of fabrics she found in her home or her own garments. Later, when her carpet production increased, she worked with waste of fabric cuttings from clothes factories and workshops. There were no preparatory sketches or designs; the single pieces were pinned to a background (e.g. old blankets, bed covers, curtains) and then hand-stitched together by Eshkol and some of her dancers. While reduction and sobriety are the central features of Eshkol's work with dance, her wall carpets display a wealth of colors, shapes, and materials. But what unites the two practices is an interest in working with found materials (movement or textile) that are joined in new compositions. The principle of symmetry and repetition in certain motifs can certainly be related to the formalism of the notation – ornaments often have the appearance of a captured movement. A small fabric remnant sometimes becomes a central element in a composition, or a single color suddenly breaks open a monochrome image. Nature, trees, landscape, birds, still life are some of the specific motifs of the carpets, while others remain deliberately abstract in an interplay of the transparent and the opaque. Even though Eshkol herself made no link between her dance and her carpets, the two spheres were intimately related in her home and thus marked a utopian site where discipline, interaction, and spontaneity could coexist.

Curated by Anja Casser, with special support from Mooky Dagan, Maya Pasternak, and Mor Bashan.

Noa Eshkol (b. 1924, Kibbutz Degania Bet, Palestine – †2007) studied music in Tel Aviv and dance at the Tehila Ressler School. In 1946, she moved to London to study with Rudolf von Laban and Lisa Ullmann at the Art of Movement Studio in Manchester. She studied finally at the Sigurd Leeder School of Modern Dance in London. In 1950, she returned to Israel and taught movement and dance at several schools and universities. Her works have been shown in international exhibitions in recent years at venues including Israel Museum, Jerusalem (2011); LACMA, Los Angeles; Jewish Museum, New York; TBA21, Vienna (2012); Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris; Opelvillen, Rüsselsheim (2013); Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2014), and the 20th Sydney Biennale (2016).

The exhibition is being conducted in cooperation with the Noa Eshkol Foundation for Movement Notation, Holon (Israel). Our cordial thanks go to Galerie neugerriemschneider, Berlin, for their support in realizing the project.

Exhibition hours: Tuesday to Friday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday/Sunday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Address: Badischer Kunstverein, Waldstrasse 3, 76133 Karlsruhe, www.badischer-kunstverein.de

For further information, press images, or to order a personal guided tour of the exhibition, please

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