



Untitled #18 (Paradise of Idetail) © 2015, Michal Rovner / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

PRESS KIT

MICHAL ROVNER

Dislocation

The artist's first solo exhibition in Switzerland

Espace Muraille, Geneva
31 January - 4 May 2019
Curator: Laurence Dreyfus

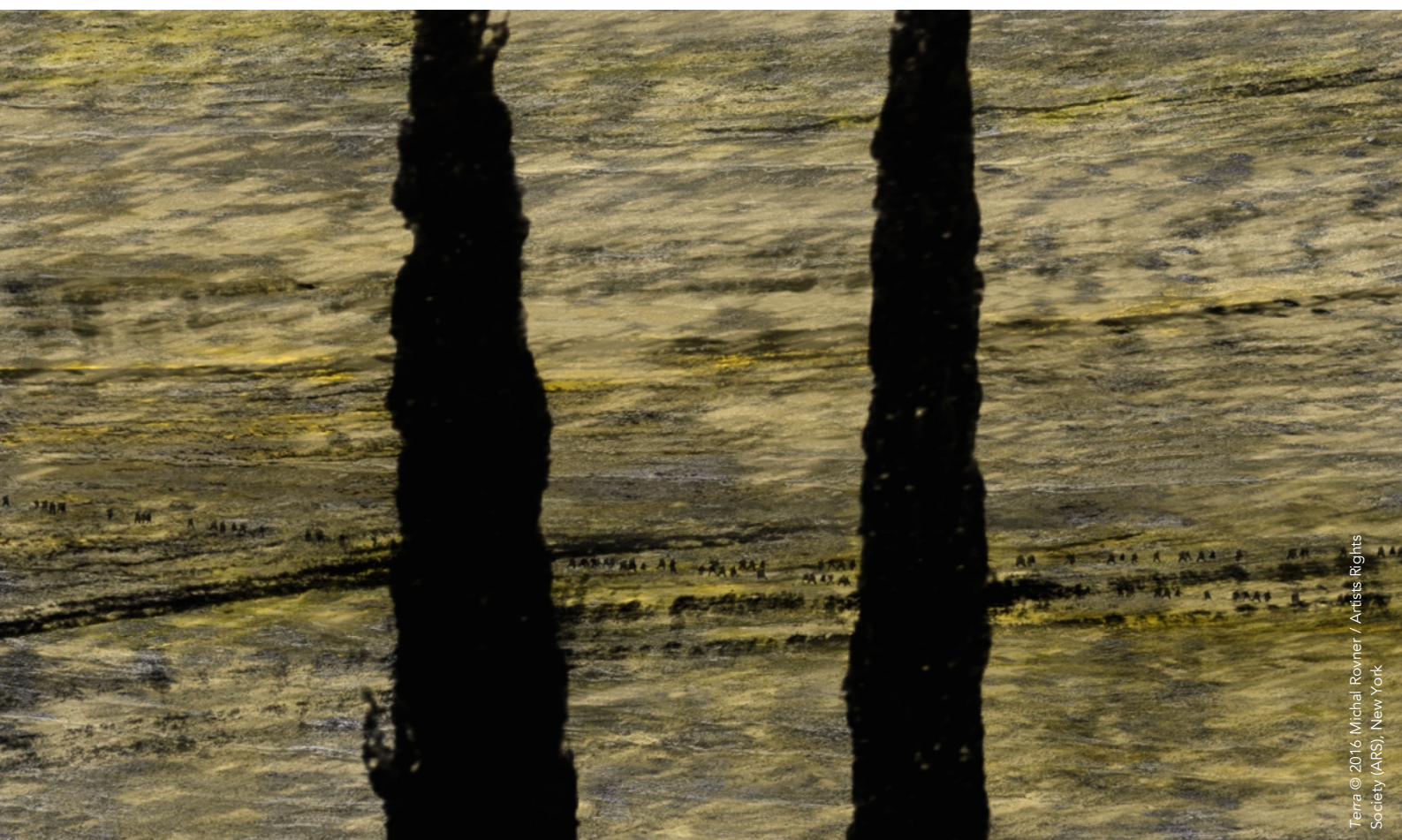
Espace Muraille, a singular exhibition space dedicated to contemporary art, was founded by Caroline and Eric Freymond. The couple are both collectors and patrons who wish to share their passion for contemporary art and for artists with the widest possible audience. The venue, situated at the heart of Geneva's Old Town, is loaded with history, and the space was entirely reimagined and remodeled by Caroline Freymond, its artistic director, in order to host ambitious exhibitions—notably solo shows dedicated to international artists.

After large-scale exhibitions spotlighting the French artist Monique Frydman (2015), Argentinian artist Tomàs Saraceno (2015), Iranian artist Shirazeh Houshiary (2016), American artist Sheila Hicks (2016), and British artist Edmund de Waal (2017), Espace Muraille will give *carte blanche* to Icelandic-Danish artist Olafur Eliasson in 2018, for an exhibition-event hybrid encompassing several new works created in-situ.

Starting January 31, 2019, Espace Muraille will invite the Israeli artist Michal Rovner for her first solo exhibition in Switzerland, perpetuating the venue's stature as one of the top spaces of artistic creation in Switzerland. Curated by Laurence Dreyfus in close collaboration with the artist, her studio and PACE Gallery, which represents her work, the exhibition will present a dozen of Michal Rovner's works of art - video installations and projections - , conceived specifically to dialogue with the space, including a new video especially made for this exhibition. An exhibition catalog will be published on this occasion.

Simultaneously, PACE Gallery will present a solo show of her works in its new space in Geneva, located on quai des Bergues.

It is an ambitious spotlight upon the work of a singular artist, humanist and sensitive, whose works speak to universal themes.



Michal Rovner

Biography

Michal Rovner (b. 1957, Israel) is known for her multimedia practice of drawing, printmaking, video, sculpture, and installation. Her work has and continues to define a new and evocative language of abstraction, broadly addressing themes of history, humanity and time. While generally avoiding specific issues or events, Rovner's work shifts between the poetic and the political, and between current time and historical memory, raising questions of identity, dislocation, and the fragility of human existence.

Rovner has been the subject of over seventy solo exhibitions held at venues including The Art Institute of Chicago (1993); Israel Museum, Jerusalem (1994); Tate Gallery, London (1997); Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Missouri (2001); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2002); and Museo d'arte contemporanea Roma (Al Mattatoio), Rome (2003). In 2003, Rovner was selected to represent Israel at the Venice Biennale where she presented the exhibition *Against Order? Against Disorder?*. In 2005, *Fields* was presented at Jeu de Paume in collaboration with Festival d'Automne à Paris, before traveling to the Tel Aviv Museum of Art in 2006. Other major monographic exhibitions have been held at L'Espace Culturel Louis Vuitton, Paris (2011); Musée du Louvre, Paris, (2011); Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara, Mexico (2014); and the Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow (2015). Rovner was the recipient of the Tel Aviv Museum Award in 1997 and received an honorary doctorate from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2008, Ben-Gurion University in 2015 and Tel-Aviv University in 2016. In 2010 she received the prestigious honour "Knight of the French Order of Arts and Letters".

Rovner was recently awarded the 2018 EMET prize in the culture and art category.

Michal Rovner has been represented by Pace since 2003.



Michal Rovner, 2006 © Daniel Tcheitchik © 2019 Michal Rovner / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Dislocation

Since first showcasing her video work at her Whitney Museum of American Art retrospective in 2002, Michal Rovner has pioneered the use of the moving image as a non-narrative, non-cinematic medium for the creation of painterly images and installations which, like painting and sculpture, conjure the timeless realities in a way the narrative arts cannot.

"I'm not trying to ignore or get away from reality, but to detect something about reality, which is underneath the details, underneath the story." -Michal Rovner

Abandoning any sense of narrative, Rovner displaces her figures in fragmented sites. Time seems like an event without beginning or end. These abstract, painterly video works explore reflections of an unresolved reality that is troubling.

The work of Michal Rovner is particularly relevant today, in a world immersed in crisis of displacement and dislocation.

"The faith of the uprooted, their ceaseless, epic wandering, is at the heart of the work of Michal Rovner" - Simon Schama (from BBC's Civilizations)

In Dislocation, The large-scale multi-screen works combine Rovner's signature human figures with landscape elements. Human figures are moving in trails across arid landscapes ploughed with dark lines. The soulful expression of the human and nature is intertwined with the increasingly bold abstraction and evoke a sense of persistence of history, creating a new level of immediacy by further removing the narrative to its barest and most urgent elements. The eight-panel work that make Untitled 4 (Panorama) resemble large sheets of paper featuring a panoramic weave of paths, or a folded map. The human figures that navigate across the screen in different directions are woven into, and pulled down, by a black current that sweeps across the work.

"Behind each of these faceless figures, there is a person, an individual, who had to depart from his reality, from his home, his roots, and move through unfamiliar harsh roads to look for a place."

Michal Rovner

Michal Rovner at Espace Muraille

By Caroline Freymond, founder

The art of making stones speak is what artist Michal Rovner does best. Indeed, this is exactly what we are striving to do at Espace Muraille, where we have transformed cellars nestled in the fortifications of the Geneva's Old Town. These ancient walls now host contemporary art exhibitions: they dialogue with, and are transformed by, the imagination and the talent of the artists who reinvest this space.

Initially intending to pursue dance, Michal Rovner turned to visual arts (photography, film, video installations), giving herself the means to address current and historical world issues. She is particularly associated with human figures, without any apparent identity, who move on screens or are projected onto stones, conveying to the viewer that the landscapes they cross often mineral and spare—have something timeless and primordial to reveal to us.

Through her tireless fascination, Michal Rovner's work is about questioning and examining memory, writing, identity, existence and time.

Born in Israel, where she still lives, I discovered her native country with astonishment and deep interest last spring: this ages-old coveted land, with its strategizing and tense geopolitical situation, a crossroads of the routes of civilizations and their faith. It offers to those who trek through it a wealth of information and of perceptions, about everything it has witnessed over the course of its long history.

Within this context, we of course think of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but Michal Rovner's approach—while based on objects or symbols that are necessarily associated with a loaded territory—remains apolitical and timeless.

For this exhibition, held in less-controversial territory, Michal Rovner selected the term "Dislocation," prompting the visitor to reflect upon the contextual contrast. Indeed, in French as in English, "dislocation" is synonymous with devastation, dismantling, like the houses destroyed by war and conflicts: in Israel, of course, but alas in many places around the world, past and present. Yet the word "dislocation"—especially in English—also refers to uprooting, to violent separation and migration, which are the inevitable consequence of destruction.

Thus, through the animated panoramas at Espace Muraille, Michal Rovner presents the visitor with uprooted characters, marking a fragile and ephemeral presence, confronted with the same vagaries of the world they have always been.

We perceive, however, that the feverishness and agitation they display echoes ours, through the sinuous paths of our respective lives.

These panoramas are designed for the most part in the seclusion of the artist's residence and studio, which is situated on the road to Jerusalem and not far from Ramallah. It's a haven where she gardens and grows organic produce: a place that invites silence and meditation.

That's where Michal Rovner's art and teaching bringing us to, to the edge of ourselves, inviting us to look at the world with the lucid gaze of Anubis (as in her video of the same name, presented at Art Basel Unlimited in 2017). In the work, the shining eyes of jackals—captured by surveillance cameras—place us to in turn observe ourselves, on the map and territory of our respective lives, populated with significant stones, illuminated by the narrative that her art brings to our attention.

"I am beautiful ... like a stone dream... I hate the movement that shifts the lines ..." Baudelaire says of Beauty in "Les Fleurs du Mal"... Exile is not a solution for anyone, but Michal Rovner's migrations do not leave their frame, or only brush the surface of their revival upon the stones on which they are projected.

They fascinate, because they are there for us to question ourselves.

Because in the end, Michal Rovner's work, when it addresses dislocation, tends constructively towards the conciliation and enhancement of the individual.

This is what can be found in "The Hug," the beautiful text by David Grossman that Michal Rovner illustrated. In it, a mother tells her young son, full of questions about the world: "You're wonderful; there is no one like you on earth." And in fact, as she was able to say: "For me, the most important thing, when you're an artist, is knowing how to ask questions." We salute the beauty of this approach, which is so true and so fundamental!

Laurence Dreyfus

Exhibition curator

Laurence Dreyfus is a curator and arts acquisition consultant. She founded her business, LDAC, in 2000, which advises institutions, businesses and private collections on their approach to acquiring contemporary art. She travels the world year-round, searching for contemporary treasures and modern masterpieces.

She has organized several exhibitions in France and internationally, in such prestigious places as the Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon for the Biennale de Lyon in 2001, the Palais de Tokyo in 2002 and La Maison Rouge in 2004. She has also worked for Lincoln Center in New York in 2008, the city of Geneva and the Caixa bank in Barcelona in 2006, and the Parasol unit in London in 2007.

In 2015, she was selected as the in-house curator for Espace Muraille in Geneva. Since then, she has overseen several large-scale exhibitions.

Since 2006, Laurence Dreyfus has been invited each year to participate in the VIP program at FIAC for the exhibition cycle Chambres à Part. After more than 10 years of success in Paris, Laurence Dreyfus inaugurated the first American edition of Chambres à Part, which took place at Art Basel Miami in 2016 and at the Fontainebleau Hôtel in 2018; it was also brought to Galerie Félix Vercel on avenue Matignon in Paris. In 2017, she staged an original exhibition at the Grand Musée du Parfum in Paris.

Laurence Dreyfus has closely followed and analyzed Michal Rovner's work since 2003, having discovered it at FIAC and again during the Venice Biennale at the Israeli Pavillon.

Caroline and Eric Freymond, who have been collecting the artist since 2015, were able to reinforce their relationship with the artist and complete their understanding of her work over the course of two trips to her exceptional ateliers: one situated between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the other in New York. These two spaces of creation, imbued with her personality, enabled the couple to better evaluate Michal Rovner's body of work and understand the way in which she brings a poetic and technological vision within the anonymity of large cities.

Espace Muraille: sharing the art of today

A unique exhibition space dedicated to contemporary art, Espace Muraille was established in 2013 by Caroline and Eric Freymond, a couple of collectors and patrons who wish to share their passion for contemporary art and artists with as many people as possible. The 275m² space, spread over two levels—which is steeped in history and located in the heart of Geneva's old town—has been completely redesigned by its artistic director Caroline Freymond. The venue hosts ambitious exhibitions, including solo shows dedicated to international artists.

Caroline and Eric Freymond have forged lasting trust and complicity with the artists they collect. This enables them to propose *carte blanche* to artists, who then take over this exceptional space, creating exhibition-events of international scope, often featuring previously unseen work, integrating art conceived and produced especially for the space.

Each exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue edited in tandem with the exhibition.

Espace Muraille integrates within Geneva's very dynamic artistic and cultural scene, thanks to the museums and galleries brought together through the associations Art en Vieille-Ville and Quartier des Bains, which both encourage and help develop the standing of contemporary art within French-speaking Switzerland.

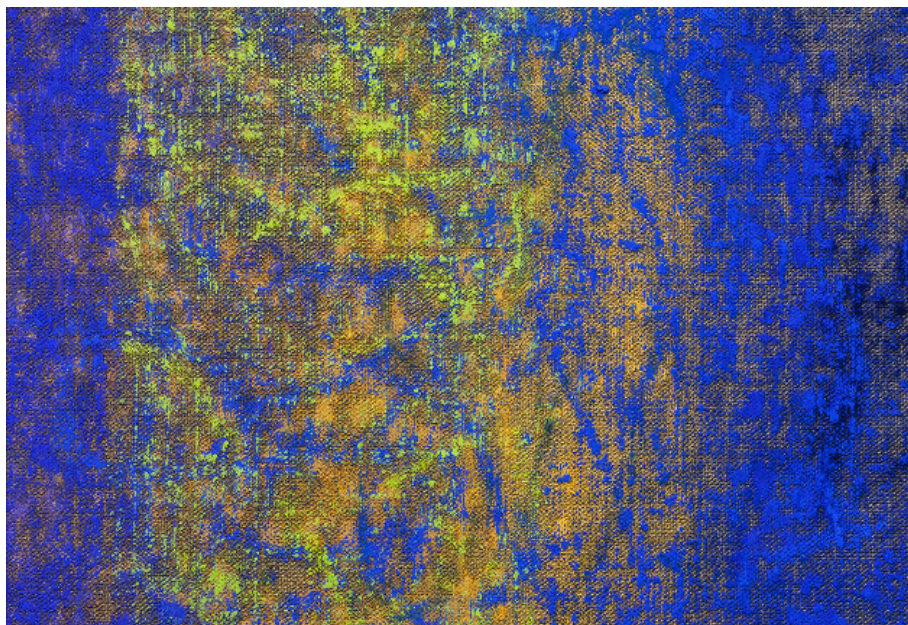
After solo exhibitions devoted to French artist Monique Frydman, Argentinian artist Tomàs Saraceno, Iranian artist Shirazeh Houshiary, American artist Sheila Hicks, and British artist Edmund de Waal, Espace Muraille gave Icelandic-Danish artist Olafur Eliasson *carte blanche* in 2018. He appropriated the space to create several *in situ* works that had never been presented before.

A look back on several key exhibitions at Espace Muraille:

2014

Monique Frydman, *U-Topie de la Couleur*

For this solo exhibition, conceived especially for Espace Muraille, Frydman's work addressed questions of place, of *Topos*, and especially the role of the color by way of painting, philosophy and poetry.



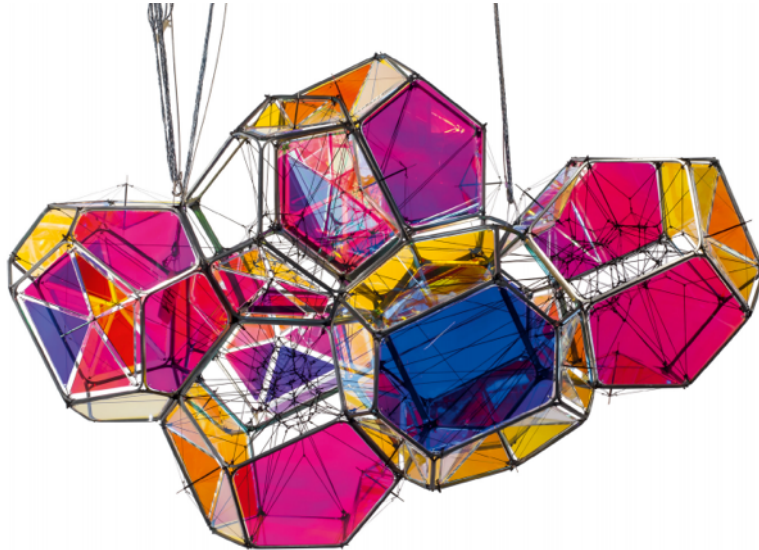
Monique Frydman,
Prédelle 12, 2013 (détail).
Courtesy l'artiste

2015

Tomàs Saraceno, *Aerocene*

The Argentinian artist was invited to present a solo exhibition at Espace Muraille even before his participation that same year at COP 21. He invested the place with a real spider's web and suspended modules-sculptures, allowing for a true immersion into his dream world.

Tomàs Saraceno was given carte blanche throughout the entire Palais de Tokyo in Paris from October 17, 2018 to January 6, 2019.



Tomàs Saraceno, *LGC396, M+I*, 2014
© Tomàs Saraceno. Courtesy Esther Schipper

2016

Sheila Hicks, *Farandoulo*

For her exhibition, artist Sheila Hicks took over an 18th-century private apartment, exceptionally open to the public on this occasion, where she displayed sculpted fibers as well as evolving colors and forms, all evoking a poetic dance: Farandoulo.

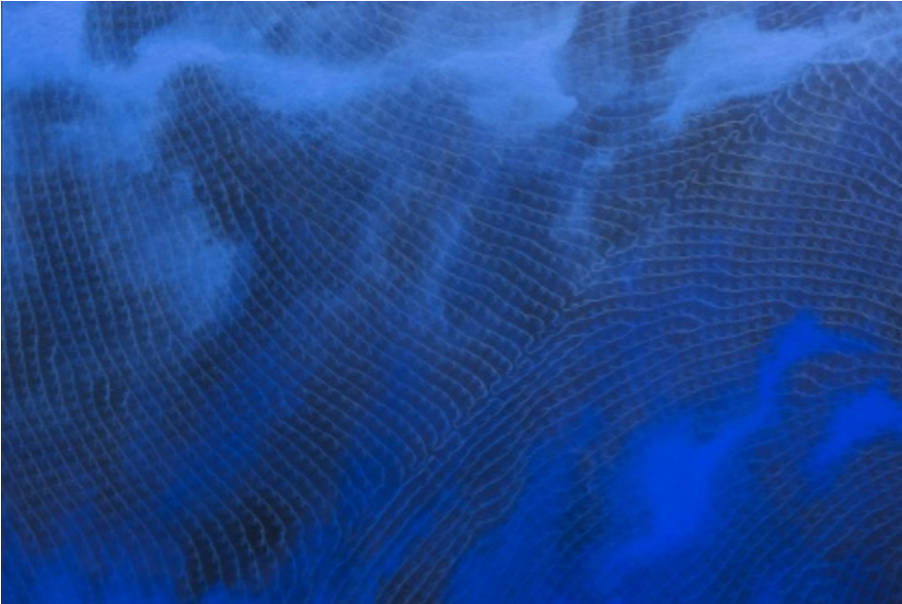


© Sheila Hicks
Courtesy l'artiste

2016

Shirazeh Houshiary, *Les grains tourbillonnent et les ondulations se déplacent*

This solo exhibition dedicated to the Iranian painter and sculptor presented a dozen works, attesting to her observations of nature—its power, its contradictions—as a great source of inspiration further steeped in Sufi mysticism.



Shirazeh Houshiary
Surge, (detail) 2015
Courtesy l'artiste

2017

Edmund de Waal, *Lettres de Londres*

The first display of the British artist's work in Switzerland—which was named after the eponymous essay by the philosopher Voltaire—included some forty works: large black windows with musical influences and large-scale pieces inspired by Terry Riley's minimalist compositions.

In 2019, Edmund de Waal's work will be exhibited both in Madrid and at The Frick Collection in New York.



Edmund de Waal, *in C*, 2015
© Edmund de Waal
Courtesy Gagolian
Photo: Mike Bruce

2018

Olafur Eliasson, *Objets définis par l'activité*

The first exhibition in Switzerland dedicated to the Danish-Icelandic artist brought together 16 works, including several new in-situ productions, highlighting the artist's research on time, perception, space, movement and the relativity of reality.

Olafur Eliasson's work will be on view at the Tate Modern in London from July 11, 2019 to January 5, 2020.



Olafur Eliasson, *Object defined by activity (then)*, 2009,
Photo : Studio Olafur Eliasson.
Courtesy l'artiste,
neugerriemschneider, Berlin;
Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York
© 2009 Olafur Eliasson

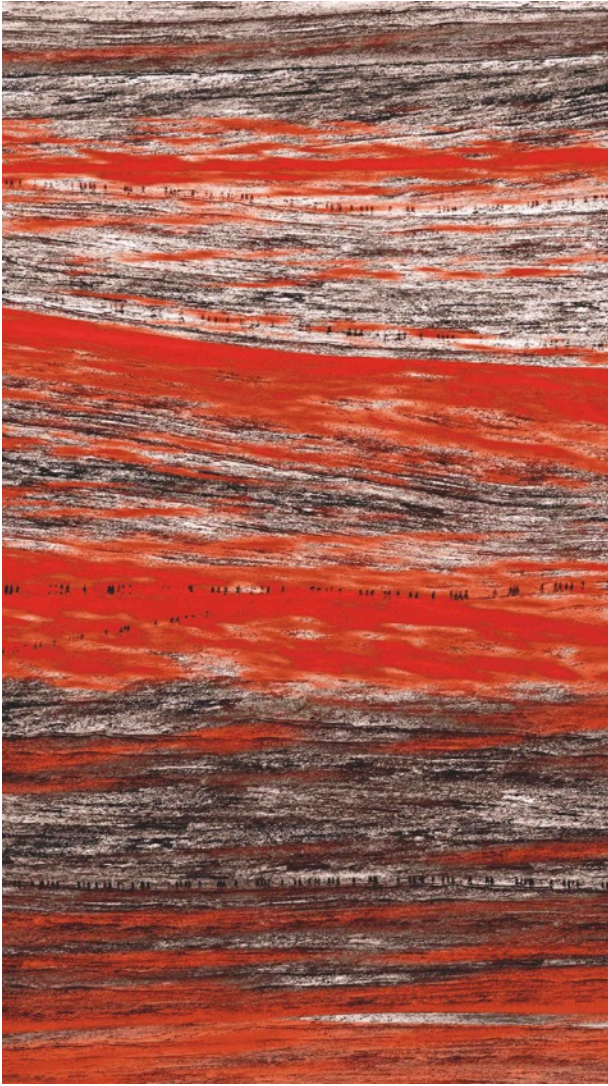


Photo: *Untitled 18 (Panorama)* © 2015 Michal Rovner / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

MICHAL ROVNER

Dislocation

Espace Muraille

31 January - 4 May 2019

Curator: Laurence Dreyfus

Place des Casemates 5, 1204 Geneva, Switzerland

From Tuesday to Friday, 10am-12pm and 1pm-6pm

Saturday 11am-12pm and 1pm-6pm

Access: Bus 3 and 5 to the Athénée stop

Free entry

Additional information:

www.espacemuraille.com

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Additional information and HD visuals are available upon request.