

Boaz Vaadia - Sculptures **Curator: Ruthi Ofek; Dates: 9 Feb - 30 Nov 2019** **The Open Museum, Tefen Industrial Park**

Israeli sculptor Boaz Vaadia (1951-2017) will be a leading visual artist in Carnegie Hall's festival *Migrations: The Making of America* from 9 March to 15 April 2019. During the festival, Boaz Vaadia's sculpture can be viewed at Jim Kempner Fine Art gallery in Chelsea New York.

On 9 Feb. 2019, the Open Museum at Tefen Industrial Park, in cooperation with Kim Vaadia, his widow, will open a comprehensive exhibition of his works. The exhibition includes his last relief works, made in his New York studio shortly before he died from a terminal disease in February 2017. This is the first time Vaadia's works are shown in his homeland, having spent 43 years living and working in New York, where he established a successful international career.

The exhibition brings 25 sculptures Vaadia created in different periods including the small reliefs, his last series of works. Vaadia's journey is one of movement between continents and cultures. Presenting an exhibition of his sculptures in Israel, at the Open Museum, Tefen Industrial Park, offers something of a closure to this path.

Vaadia's sculptures are exhibited in public places and private collections around the world. Only two of his works are publicly displayed in Israel, *Asa & Yehoshafat*, installed at Tel Aviv's Independence Park, and *Re'aven*, in the sculpture garden at the Open Museum, Tefen. Many of Vaadia's outdoor sculptures are on permanent view in the United States, including at the entrance to the **Time Warner Center in Manhattan, near Washington DC and Chicago Illinois**, as well as many international temporary public loans over the years, including in **Barclay's Bank HQ Square in London**, and more. His works are **also** in permanent collections of **leading international museums, including The Metropolitan Museum, New York; The Jewish Museum, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California; Norton Museum of Art, Florida; Hakone Open Air Museum, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan; and Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Museum, Japan.** Several early works are in the collection of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

Renowned art critic Ivan C. Karp wrote of Vaadia in 2010: "Boaz Vaadia may be acclaimed as one of the handful of living artists who have successfully challenged 5,000 years of figurative sculpture to produce a consistent body of work of singular identity within the compass of classical composure."

In interviews with the American press Vaadia always mentioned his love of his native village of Gat Rimon, where he was born in 1951, of agricultural work and of the Israeli landscape. Already at twelve years of age he decided to realize his passion to become a sculptor. In 1971 he completed his studies at the Avni Institute of Art and Design in Jaffa. Three years later he received a scholarship from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation to study at New York's Pratt Institute in 1975. A year later he received the Beckman Scholarship from the Brooklyn Museum Art School. In 1989 **he established his studio in Williamsburg, Brooklyn** and became a popular and successful artist with an **international career**. According to Vaadia, in the most bustling urban environments people can still find and create the deepest, calmest nature.

-2-

In the book accompanying the exhibition at Tefen, Vaadia's friend, **Irish artist John Kindness** writes: "The Greeks thought you had to visit Hades to talk to the dead, but the underworld is a somber place. I like to bring Boaz to the surface and have that conversation, that argument, or share that joke in my imagination. Or when quietly looking at beautiful art. Simply just see him in my mind's eye, on his donkey, taking it all in."

Close friend, **artist Raphael Lomas**, held endless conversations with Vaadia about art. He writes: "His phenomenal visual memory, his artistic gift and him being a diligent and dedicated man of labor – all these were clear to see in his many works, made with precision, patience and determination. Universal human figures, at times in pairs or with animals, in different postures, made first by **chiseling layers of slate or bluestone** and later also cast as a series of bronzes."

Ruthi Ofek, the exhibition curator, writes on the abstract and the figurative in Vaadia's work and on the links between the pieces and their surroundings.

Vaadia was the recipient of several awards, including the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington DC; the Utsukushi-ga-hara Open Air Museum Award, Nagano Prefecture, Japan; and the Aviv Award on behalf of the America-Israel Cultural Foundation, New York. In 2014 he was honored Man of the Year in Sculpture by the Russian American Foundation, in a ceremony held at The Met's Temple of Dendur. The comprehensive monograph, *Boaz Vaadia: Sculpture 1971-2012* was published in 2013. Three years later the book *Boaz Vaadia: Sculpture* was published to coincide with his large retrospective exhibition at the museum at Grounds For Sculpture in New Jersey. Other publications include articles in *The New York Times* throughout Vaadia's career and a lengthy obituary in *The New York Times'* Art and Design section as well as articles in the art journals *Artnews*, *Art & Antiques*, and *Sculpture Magazine*.

The Open Museum, Tefen Industrial Park, <http://www.omuseums.org.il>

For more information – Mrs Yael Shavit - PR - 050-7777950