



מוזיאון ישראל, ירושלים  
the israel museum, jerusalem  
متحف إسرائيل، أورشليم القدس

Nona Orbach נונה אורבך  
Restoration, 2013 ריסאת, 2013

Website: [www.nonaorbach.com](http://www.nonaorbach.com)

Blog: [www.nonaorbach.com/blog/](http://www.nonaorbach.com/blog/)

## Ready and Made: Tel Nona, Audience Version. An Installation by Nona Orbach Rivka Bakalash

The title of Nona Orbach's "happening" is derived from an artistic dialogue with the notion of "Readymade"<sup>1</sup> coined by Marcel Duchamp, whose first Readymade, *Bicycle Wheel*, is now celebrating its 100th anniversary. In her "happening," Orbach challenges the distinction between reality and fiction, archaic and contemporary, a museum exhibit and a found object, "high art" and "low art," in keeping with Duchamp's ideas.

In a paraphrases of the Readymades, the quasi-Surrealistic entities created by Duchamp, Orbach creates hybrid worlds which "follow" the archetypal formula, echoing the order of the six days of Creation based on the principle of "thinking ahead": from sorting, through differentiation, location, unification of different types, affirmation-consecration (the installation on the podium in the "happening"), the signature, and finally – the act of naming (as a shared Creation of God and man). It is the last two phases, in continuation of Duchamp, that transform the found object, the Readymade, into a work of art.

Orbach spins myths, this time through the Internet and the threads she weaves into the Museum's Archaeology Wing, between the "there" and the "here," between the exhibits in the Museum's showcases and the objects given to her by the audience, between the given as "ready" and the processed as "made," a hybrid crossing between the fragments and the whole, while performing a "transformation of objects," to use Duchamp's terminology.<sup>2</sup>

Orbach spins myths in time and place which correspond with ancient finds and ritual objects from the distant past, in the spirit of the archetypal myth which Claude Lévi-Strauss defined as "a story that reconciles opposites."<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the joining and reconciliation of opposites is the thread, the binding motif that runs through Orbach's *oeuvre*, especially in the current "happening" night.

In this event the artist creates a link between the personal "story" and the collective "history," embarking from the private-individual to collective archetypes. From a creative chapter which focused on her personal story and evolved in an associative, primal, intuitive manner, she expands to archetypal, collective, Jungian myths, the sources of primeval knowledge embodied by the archaeological finds in the museum, the mausoleum. She spawns an artistic occurrence from items lying like pyramidal mummies inside glass vitrines, as if they were "sleeping beauties" waiting to be awakened by the artist's "redeeming kiss," and the "spectator-decipherer, who brings them in contact with the external world," as suggested by Duchamp in his essay "The Creative Art."<sup>4</sup> The audience's "redeeming kiss" in the installation *Ready and Made: Tel Nona, Audience*



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*Version*, infuses the exhibits and objects with new life, resurrecting them in a lively, crowded event, a joint, fertile and fertilizing work, of the artist and the audience.

From the ashes Orbach creates the substances of life.

Like the phoenix that rises from the ashes.

She affixes wings to the potsherd, returning it to the here-and-now.

By inviting the audience to revive the virtual and metaphorical "Ancient Library of Alexandria" in her website, she synthesizes, via a near-alchemical formula,

the personal-perishable with the eternal human tissue.

Nona moves from the personal mound, Tel Nona, to the collective Tel (mound)—the archaeological finds,

and back to personal objects which carry memory and meaning.

Nona's boat "went and wandered about and returned"

embarking once again on a voyage between worlds

between the realms of "there" and "here,"

between the past and the future,

whether as a fragment or a whole

between creation from the existent and creation ex nihilo,

between sacred rite and mundane object

between self and other,

between imaginary and known,

"Open closed open."<sup>5</sup>

## Notes

1. "Apropos of Readymades," *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, eds. Michael Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: Oxford UP, 1973), p. 141.

2. "Cast Shadows," *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, *ibid.*, p. 72.

3. C.R. Badcock, *Lévi-Strauss: Structuralism and Sociological Theory* (London: Hutchinson, 1975), p. 92.

4. Marcel Duchamp "The Creative Act," *ARTnews*, 56, no. 4 (Summer 1957).

5. Yehuda Amichai, *Open Closed Open: Poems* (Tel Aviv & Jerusalem: Schocken, 1998) [H

**Translation: Daria Kassovsky**