



The quest for the man on the white donkey © Yaakov Israel

As I found myself passing through the same places over and over again, the personal identity of my project was revealed to me: I had to let go the idea of narrating the physical journey itself and concentrate on the intimate, emotional reactions that these places evoked in me; I focused on trying to understand how I was reacting to the occasional encounters with people and sceneries; and how those people and sceneries appeared to be revealed or lost at the same time, as if they were part of a scene that was ever changing or not changing at all.

As my messenger started to reveal the "message", the search for a deeper understanding of my Country and what defines me as an Israeli became an urge to look for the in-between places, the unexpected situations: suddenly a detail requested my attention as I stood for hours waiting for a meaning to reveal itself: or pushed me away, puzzled. But in the end I had to hold on to it. I could not let go until that detail was made mine, until the elusive and enigmatic found their place in my understanding of what I deemed as authentic, real encounter.

The "The quest" is my attempt to relay a personal take on the Israeli reality with a broader sense of belonging to the global human collectivity.

In Israel I feel that the evidence of the past are strongly intertwined with the marks of the present and the questions about our future, this is why sometimes it is possible to see all past, present and future revealed in front of one's eyes at the same time.

Part of my identity as Israeli is to question everything, not to leave anything for granted: to show the tensions that constantly

exist, to convey the truth behind the construction of the reality here and now.

Religious, social aspects filter into everyday life and their meanings are exposed as the journey moves on. Jewish missionaries, lost souls and individuals living on the fringe of society: all blend into this landscape of humanity.

Yaakov Israel

The quest for the man on the white donkey, Yaakov Israel.
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OSLO6
contemporary photography

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The show will be part of culture scapes Israel, a festival that takes place in Basel this September – November
for more info about the festival check out there website –
<http://www.culturescapes.ch/>

EXHIBITION

Yaakov Israel, The quest on the white donkey



As per the Orthodox Jewish tradition the Messiah (the Prophet) will arrive riding on a white donkey. A few years ago, as I was photographing near the Dead Sea a Palestinian man rode past me on his white donkey and I took a picture of him. It was after having developed this plate that I've realized that I had encountered my "Messiah"; it was this chance encounter which brought me to initiate the body of work that carries the name: "The quest for the man on the white donkey".

The American tradition of the great photographic journeys served as a blueprint for the initial phase of my "quest": with the definitive difference that in such a small country as Israel the size of the territory in which my hunt was pursued necessarily shaped my proceedings. A condensed experience: what in any other country should have been a photographic journey which spanned over months of continuous traveling was inevitably reduced because no matter what destination I chose it always brought me back home by midnight at the latest.