

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Koffler Gallery presents *Pardes*: edgy new works exploring Jewish mysticism and ritual, heresy, military technology and gender ideologies, marginalized voices and the occult

Toronto, ON, August 12, 2014 – The **Koffler Gallery** proudly opens its fall season at its new downtown home at Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw Street, Toronto, with the group exhibition ***Pardes***.

Developed by Toronto-based, Canadian/Israeli curator **Liora Belford**, *Pardes* brings together four Israeli sound and multi-media artists – **Nadav Assor**, **Ira Eduardovna**, **Annon Wolman**, and **Nevet Yitzhak**. The exhibition runs from **September 18 to November 30, 2014**, opening with a free public reception on **Thursday, September 18, from 6 to 9 PM**.

Derived from an old parable, the term *Pardes*, meaning ‘orchard’ in Hebrew, has come to symbolize the realm of Jewish mysticism. In the legend entitled *Four Entered the Orchard*, four great sages who enter the esoteric practice meet different fates: one dies, one loses his mind, and one forsakes the Jewish tenets. Only one enters in peace and leaves in peace.

The four artists in *Pardes* investigate notions of mysticism, heresy and the occult from secular perspectives, as they relate to contemporary society. Creating new works, they examine the mythological aspirations of military technologies, gender ideologies within ritual practices, the collapse of conventional social models, and the impact of marginalized voices on mainstream cultural traditions.

Drawing a parallel to the machine-like Ophanim angels, **Nadav Assor** examines the obscure undercurrents of drone development. The airborne device embodies ambitions of unbridled motion and omnipresent vision, manifesting the will of a remote-controlling power while generating a constant buzzing, chant-like sound that gives drones their vernacular name.

Annon Wolman explores gender and Judaism with a sound embedded *tallit* – a prayer shawl worn only by Jewish men in orthodox circles – that serves as a clear delineation between genders and between different and equal interpretations of Judaism. By wrapping themselves in the tallit, visitors can experience a composition based on manipulated recordings of talking, singing, and praying. In addition, Wolman’s *Soundbook* transforms a text-based object into a sculptural audio work, underlying the impossibility of presenting an idea through language, written or aural. The sound mixes audio manipulations of recordings taken from the book’s text with recorded original music and ambient sounds.

Ira Eduardovna’s audio/visual piece, *A Thousand Years*, juxtaposes chorus-sung reflections on the Apocalypse to the staging of a sitcom family scene. Quoting the prologue from the book *A Journey to the End of the Millennium – A Novel of the Middle Ages* by A.B. Yehoshua, the work revisits ideas connected to the year 1,000 when the world was thought to end. Shared by Judaism, Christianity and Islam alike, this idea reflects a vision of linear time where the world has a beginning and therefore also an end. Juxtaposing this philosophical text with a microcosmic, family unit, Eduardovna presents the domestic structure as a portrait of society in decline.

Nevet Yitzhak’s audio/video installation processes archival recordings from the Israel Broadcasting Authority Arabic Orchestra (1948-1993), creating a new composition based on marginalized traditions. Most of the musicians in the IBA Arabic Orchestra were Jewish immigrants from Iraq and Egypt who arrived in Israel in the early 1950s and preserved the cultural influences, languages and music they brought with them. In time, their repertoire came to include original music and music from the Arab world, becoming one of the key institutions of Arabic music in Israel, acquiring listeners from the entire region. Yitzhak deconstructs and reconstructs archival materials, reinforcing their historic past and providing the orchestra with a new platform.

Through a variety of media and artistic approaches, *Pardes* broadly explores the myth of concealment and mystery, the search for heroic figures, and the need to belong to a collective intellectual realm.

For more information and a full list of the Koffler's fall 2014 programs, please visit kofflerarts.org

Regular exhibition hours: Tuesday to Friday, 12 PM to 6 PM; Saturday and Sunday, 11 AM to 5 PM. Closed Mondays and statutory holidays. Admission is free.

Pardes is generously supported by the **Israel Lottery Council for Culture & Arts**.

The Koffler Gallery gratefully acknowledges the support of the **Toronto Arts Council**, the **Ontario Arts Council**, and the **Canada Council for the Arts**. Funding to support the outfitting of the new Koffler spaces at Artscape Youngplace has been provided in part through a generous grant from the **Ontario Trillium Foundation**. The Ontario Trillium Foundation is an agency of the Government of Ontario.

KOFFLER CENTRE OF THE ARTS

The Koffler Centre of the Arts is a multidisciplinary arts organization and independent not-for-profit based in Jewish culture. We engage a contemporary dialogue through the arts that has local, national and international resonance. The Koffler Gallery and its administrative offices are located at Artscape Youngplace, in Toronto's vibrant downtown West Queen West art and design district.

Koffler Centre of the Arts acknowledges the support of the Koffler Foundation, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Cultural Season Sponsor CIBC Wood Gundy, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Ontario Arts Council through the Community and Multidisciplinary Arts Organizations Program, Artscape, our patrons and members.

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For further information, interview requests and high resolution images, contact:

Tony Hewer, Director of Marketing & Communications

Koffler Centre of the Arts | Koffler Gallery

180 Shaw Street, Suite 104-105, Toronto M6J 2W5

647.925.0643 x224

E-mail thewer@kofflerarts.org



Amnon Wolman, *Eight SoundBooks – Architecture* (detail), 2013



Nadav Assor, work in progress, 2014



Nevet Yitzhak, *A Great Joy Tonight*, 2009



Ira Eduardovna, *A Thousand Years* (video still), 2014