

EAT A PINK OWL
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Beyond Blush: Tamar Ettun’s PINK

Wendy Vogel

Think of a color that’s pretty but polarizing. Think of a color once associated with passive acquiescence and domestic comfort, but now acts as a symbol of political resistance. Think of a color that mobilized a series of movements, from feminism to gay liberation, motivating public-health campaigns about breast cancer and AIDS. Think of a color whose meaning has vacillated over time, yet continues to exert an outsize cultural impact. Think Pink.

Over the course of 2017, Tamar Ettun has launched an investigation into the color pink, linking it with the emotion of aggression. Ettun has explored the visceral possibilities of the dyad pink/aggression through both sculpture and movement, in performances with her troupe The Moving Company and through the creation of static, figurative art objects. The resulting works are presented in “Eat a Pink Owl,” the third chapter in Ettun’s tetralogy “A Mauve Bird with Yellow Teeth, Red Feathers, Green Feet and a Rose Belly.” The artist has dedicated each year in the four-year series to a specific color and emotion. In 2015, she paired blue with empathy (a guiding principle to her whole practice, which moves between art, movement and community-building); in 2016, she assigned the color yellow to the drive of desire; she will dedicate 2018 to orange and joy.

For Ettun, the monochromatic focus of her works differs from the modernist impetus of a way to achieve purity, or to eliminate artistic decision-making. Rather, her intent is to focus on the expressive possibility within a certain color. Her sculptures have a symbiotic relationship to the endurance-based gestures that the performers enact in her Moving Company. A motley mix of artists, dancers, actors and activists, The Moving Company (founded by Ettun in 2013) creates task-based actions through a series of games and discussion of wide-ranging material, from theoretical essays to trauma. Indeed, there is a sense of exorcising personal demons in her performances that can range from the wholesome to the destructive. For the *Blue* performance at the Watermill Center in 2015, in homage to empathy, the dancers squeezed tomatoes between their legs until they popped. In a video accompanying *Part: Yellow*, from 2016, the Movers assembled an omelet that they tore apart and ate together.

As a color, pink is especially susceptible to wildly differing interpretations based on cultural conditioning. Musician David Byrne’s article on pink, for *Cabinet* magazine’s color series, details the shifting, gender-bending associations with the color. Byrne explains that until the mid-20th century, in most Western countries,

the hue was perceived as a toned-down version of red, and thus deemed a virile color. *A Ladies' Home Journal* article from 1918 advised its readers that pink was the “more decided and stronger color,” suited to boys, while the “more delicate and dainty” blue was becoming for girls.¹ (Traditionally, blue—in particular the ultramarine derived from lapis lazuli—has also been the peaceable color illustrating the Virgin Mary’s flowing robes.) In the middle of the 20th century, however, pink was rebranded as a feminine color, with all the ambivalence that that gender identification entailed. In Nazi Germany, homosexual prisoners in concentration camps were forced to wear pink triangle badges. Following World War II, uniform fabricators favored blue for men’s uniforms, while pink became a fashionable color for women’s clothing. Yet Byrne argues that rather than acquiescing to the dictates of consumer capitalism, the linking of femininity with pink clothing and decor might have heralded the feminism of the 1960s: “Far from being a color imposed on women by marketing men, pink was actually a badge of self-determination and power.”

Several decades later, neuropsychological research showed that a particular side of pink produced calming effects, such as a lowered blood pressure and pulse, a decrease in violent behavior, and reduced appetite. The medium-pink hue (on the RGB scale, R:255, G:145, B: 175) was named Baker-Miller pink, after two U.S. naval officers tested its effects in 1979 by using the color to paint a room of a correctional facility. Even short exposures to the color markedly reduced aggressive behavior, leading to its nickname Drunk-Tank Pink.² Several years later, its appetite suppressant characteristics would factor into branding for the diet industry, which disproportionately targets women. (Not coincidentally, Baker-Miller pink is also nearly identical to the color chosen for the stomach-soothing antacid Pepto Bismol.)

Since 2000, the perception of pink as a gendered color has bifurcated. Fashion brands and interior designers of the last decade have cathected to soft shades of the color, from rose gold to the pale hue called Millennial Pink. Deemed “universally flattering,” the peachier or more beige variations of pink give warmth to the skin, while providing an alternative to the whites and greys of minimalist design. Accordingly, several articles have pegged the rise of the shade to the hip yet austere Scandinavian brand Acne Studios, who introduced an off-salmon pink shopping bag in 2007.³ In 2016, pale pink perhaps reached peak (cultural) saturation: the color company Pantone pronounced Rose Quartz one of its colors of the year, along with a pale grey-tinted blue called Serenity. Both colors have since infiltrated the market for consumer goods for either gender, yet Millennial Pink’s approximation of light skin tones has led some writers and fashionistas to be suspicious of the tone’s neutrality.

On the other hand, pink has become synonymous with gender inequality fueled by consumer capitalism. A demonstrable phenomenon, known as the Pink Tax, asserts that consumer goods and services marketed to women and girls cost more than similar products peddled to men (for example, toiletries, toys and services such as haircuts). The Pink Tax adds insult to injury in terms of women’s economic disadvantages: The average female worker still earns only 80 per cent of a man’s salary (per 2015 U.S. Census data), which adds up to over \$500,000 per lifetime for the average worker. The statistics are even more distressing for women of color.⁴

Ettun made the decision to conjoin pink with the emotion of aggression well before the results of the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election—an outcome that would have an irrevocable impact on the year 2017 and beyond. In the run-up to the election, pink seemed a natural fit as a color of feminine self-determination, symbolizing the race between

candidate Hillary Clinton—the first female major political party candidate in U.S. history—and Donald Trump. In light of Trump’s election win, Ettun’s artistic pairing of pink/aggression seemed to foreshadow a new era, in which pink has become the hue of dissent. According to Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary, one definition of aggression is “hostile, injurious, or destructive behavior or outlook especially, when caused by frustration. *Aggression is often the expression of pent-up rage.*” This frustration has been unleashed in the face of a president that seeks his own power and wealth at the expense of the disenfranchised population at large.

Pink, it seems, has come full circle in the age of President Donald Trump, from a color of passivity to a color of resistance. Today, it no longer functions as a pale tint of the color red, but as a color that openly clashes with it. I speak, of course, of the red that is synonymous with the Republican Party of Donald Trump, which has formulated its ideology in contradistinction to the Democratic Party (associated with the color blue.) Since the late 1970s, the Republican Party mainstream has swung toward neoliberalism tinged with religious conservatism, promoting such policies as military intervention and legislation restricting reproductive choice, while slashing aid to social programs. The Democratic Party, meanwhile, has been attacked as feminized and ineffectual, mired in divisive identity politics, even as politicians like President Obama made strides toward reforming international relations and domestic initiatives like single-payer healthcare.

On January 21, 2017, the day after Donald Trump’s presidential inauguration, pink became the color of resistance. Millions of protesters participated in coordinated Women’s Marches around the world, many of them wearing hand-knitted, cat-eared pink pussy hats. Particularly in aerial views of the protests, the hats created an overwhelming visual counter-response to the blood-red baseball caps donned

by Trump’s supporters the day before, emblazoned with the slogan Make America Great Again. Trump’s motto hearkens to a pre-Civil Rights era of blatant white supremacist patriarchy. While various intersectional feminists have correctly pointed out that the symbolism of the pussy hats is flawed and reductive—not all women have pussies, and certainly not all pussies are pink—the pink symbol nonetheless provided a moment of collective visibility and strategic alliance. Regardless of race, sexual or gender identification, this was a moment where a color represented more than the sum of the people wearing it.

Ettun, who was born in Israel and completed her compulsory military service before moving to New York to study art in 2007, is cautious to distance her works from explicit political interpretation. And indeed, her art focuses more on open-ended sentiment and intuition. Nonetheless, the slow simmer of aggression that starts as a fire in the belly, spreads outward to the limbs, and becomes a tool of social and physical action, manifests in her recent work both in sculpture and with The Moving Company.

After the election, as she began to work on the elements that comprised the pink chapter of “A Mauve Bird...”, Ettun spearheaded a community-building component to her practice with members of The Moving Company. She enlisted frequent collaborator Laura Bernstein as the social project director. As Ettun explains it, she felt a sense of urgency to interact directly with the kinds of people that might be endangered in this new political era. This spring, The Moving Company conducted a workshop with teenage participants of the Work, Learn and Grow Employment Program at the Crown Heights Community Counseling and Mediation Center. For four months, the teens participated in twice-weekly movement exercises with sculptural props, designed to facilitate dialogue and meaningful

exchange. Seventeen participants spoke with four writers (including me) at the Brooklyn Museum, responding to questions about the emotion of aggression, physical responses to stress, and their own lives and fantasies. Ettun compiled the resulting texts and photographic portraits of the teens as a takeaway zine, in the spirit of DIY (do-it-yourself) publishing projects by both artists and political groups.

The experiences with the teens helped inform Ettun's work on the pink chapter of "A Mauve Bird..." At this point in the tetralogy, Ettun has honed her sculptural vocabulary to a set of recognizable elements, almost all plucked from the flotsam and jetsam of "real life." She constructs large inflatables from pieces of fabric, which are utilized either as props to keep buoyed in the performances or as secluded environments for play. Tubes, lengths of cloth, and strings link together her performers in The Moving Company, who must negotiate their relationships to one another and the audience in her time-based works. Uncanny casts of faces and body parts are secured to materials like pool noodles and boxing gloves, giving her sculptures a charge that is equal parts attractive and lumpen, much like the constructions of Isa Genzken or Sarah Lucas, suffused with a cool feminist humor.



Like her previous chapters in "A Mauve Bird...", the pink series began with a performance by The Moving Company. In May 2017 at Battery Park, *Part Pink* debuted with 11 performers. The 45-minute work, scored with ambient music by Nire, began with the performers strung together, wearing magenta outfits with white trimmings made of parachute material by the futuristic designers, Ab[screenwear]. Women with flowers in the mouths began cawing. Through the performance, several actions occur: one performer attempts a turning, balletic arabesque in silver fluted skirt, composed of painted cardboard made rigid with foam, while supporting herself with a golf club. Another Mover uses the club to support herself upon large concrete spheres, her feet grasping desperately on the unwieldy platform. In another sequence, two movers spin a plastic yellow rope, with which they wind each other together and either pulling apart or working in tandem. At the apex of the performance, all the movers attempted to dip candlesticks, suspended from their waists, into spools of thread that look like "nests" of multicolored hair. Perhaps a nod Ettun's interest in mid-20th-century avant-garde movements like Gutai and Fluxus, the gesture playfully resembles Shigeko Kubota's *Vagina Painting* performance of 1965. First performed the work at Perpetual Fluxfest in downtown New York, Kubota's performance attacks the idea of male painterly genius as a desublimation of erotic energy. She attaches a paintbrush to the crotch of her underwear, crouches over a bucket of red paint, and proceeds to paint crimson marks that resembled menstrual blood. At the conclusion, the Movers wrap an inflatable airborne in packing tape, securing themselves to it in the process.

Seeing this performance by the Movers, who were almost all female, brought to the fore unresolved questions about aggressive relationships between women and girls. Female aggression is coded as a social pathology, particularly when it manifests as passive-aggressive actions that



Pages 6-7: *A Mauve Bird with Yellow Teeth Red Feathers Green Feet and a Rose Belly, Part Pink*, 2017
Performance at The Battery, NY



undermine a competitor in subtle ways, all the while being civil on the surface. This type of backstabbing is also known by shorthand (regardless of the gender identification of the enactor) as "mean-girl behavior." Even in 2017, debate rages about whether female-on-female aggression is a natural defense mechanism, or if it developed in response to patriarchal structures that inhibit women's ability to succeed. The consequences for pursuing such research about the origins of female aggression, particularly if it clashes with popular opinion, can be negative. As a recent article on the topic points out, the psychologist Joyce Benenson has experienced "academic isolation" in response to her theories that "women and girls are less willing than men and boys to cooperate with lower-status individuals of the same gender; more likely to dissolve same-gender friendships; and more willing to socially exclude one another." Although the depth of Benenson's research is debatable, this anecdote shows is that the stigma attached to female aggression is still strong. So strong, in fact, that attempts to naturalize it carry serious social and professional consequences.

Ettun's sculptures have taken a remarkable turn in response to the dictates of aggression and pink. The suggestion of a body has been the unifying concept to all of her previous sculptural efforts. But where her process before relied on metonymy—the isolation of a hand, breast, cast face, to stand in for the whole—her new group of sculptures depict fully-formed female figures. Visiting Ettun in her studio this summer, four floors below ground in a skyscraper near Times Square, had the effect of entering another world. The space once served as a makeshift pool, and retained a paint job of calming aqua, as well as the residual humidity. It's a space where time seems suspended, without cell phone service or the intrusions of the outside world. Ettun's figures, along with related collages, pop against this blue background.

Ettun guided her sculptural inquiry by the simple question: “What do the objects want?” In terms of construction, it’s a practical one, as her compositions—assembled from various materials—must submit to structural concerns such as balance, stability and tension. One work depicts a cartoonish full-size horse, painted in zebra stripes of pink from the deepest fuchsia to the palest wash. A craft-store Venus de Milo straddles the horse, as a stand-in for what Ettun considers the cross-cultural trope of a female warrior. Her curvaceous torso has been wrapped in pink yarns of various shades, while her head is suggested by a mass of fine pink flossy

thread crowned by a bamboo Elizabethan-style collar, surrounded by the silver-painted skirt from the Battery Park performance. Nearby stands a figure whose body is constructed of V-shaped bamboo baskets, positioned to form a rough double-hourglass shape. Ettun has weaved white thread through and around the baskets, and adorned the awkward legs with flower kneepads. On closer inspection, the reason for the sculpture’s awkward stance reveals itself. It is supported by one male-mannequin leg and one female-mannequin leg, both stuffed into the artist’s black sneakers and supported by pink foam, which spills out and around the ankles. Like

the Barbie dolls I remember from childhood, the female mannequin’s arched foot is rigid, made for a high-heeled shoe, and unburdened without even the slightest articulation of toes. The sculpture’s base of support, split between one flat foot and one arched foot, resembles a dancer performing a *tendu* in ballet. Unlike a controlled dancer, however, the top of the sculpture cantilevers dramatically to make up for the imbalance.

Two other figures riff on the idea of dependency and support, a suggestion of a mother and child indebted to Julia Kristeva’s idea of female abjection. A sculpture with only the slightest suggestion of a head, its back studded with brass tacks, is a grotesquerie of long yellow fabric arms, which wrap around a pole half a dozen times. Ettun has suspended its inverse twin upside down from the ceiling. This sculpture’s legs look as though they were taffy stretched to its breaking point. Headless, she confronts the viewer at eye level with a hole for its womb, represented by another basket in which bird feathers are embedded. Traces of pink smeared on the sculpture’s back, ranging from Day-Glo coral to a muted shade of carmine, intimate a birth or a purging. They also propose that it is the feminized figure who often acts as a system of scaffolding, architecturally, within the family, and within society.

These sculptures, along with The Moving Company’s performances, portray violence interwoven with love, and an aggression that might give way to compassion. A final aspect of the exhibition asks the viewer to participate with these same ideas. Ettun has constructed a wearable sculpture from a hot-pink construction hat, embedded with nails along the top and sides like lethal thorns. When she brought the item along to a recent teen night event at the Brooklyn Museum, reactions were mixed. Some teens posed for photos while wearing the hat, while others shied away from its weight. One viewer looked past questions

of construction, and went straight for the meaning that the hat might introduce about a certain kind of feminism (made all the more troubled in the age of Trump). Alluding to the fact that few women are construction workers, the teenage girl mused that the nails might symbolize breaking the glass ceiling. It’s the kind of image that feels hopeful, even if it’s clear that the road is long on the way to toppling the structures of patriarchy. But perhaps the throughway is by collective joy—the emotion that Ettun and her Moving Company will embrace in 2018.



¹ David Byrne, “Colors / Pink,” *Cabinet* no. 11 (Summer 2003), <http://cabinetmagazine.org/issues/11/pink.php>

² James E. Gilliam and David Unruh, “The Effects of Baker-Miller Pink on Biological, Physical and Cognitive Behaviour,” *Journal of Orthomolecular Medicine* 3, No. 4 (1988), 202-206.

³ Lauren Schwartzberg, “Why Millennial Pink Refuses to Go Away,” *The Cut*, March 19, 2017, <https://www.thecut.com/2017/03/why-millennial-pink-refuses-to-go-away.html>

⁴ United States Congress Joint Economic Committee. *The Pink Tax: How Gender-Based Pricing Hurts Women’s Buying Power*. Washington: U.S. Congress, 2016. https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/8a42df04-8b6d-4949-b20b-6f40a326db9e/the-pink-tax---how-gender-based-pricing-hurts-women-s-buying-power.pdf

PINK: Tamar Ettun in conversation with Barry Schwabsky

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Barry Schwabsky: As someone who was born in Jerusalem and educated both there and in the U.S. and now living in Brooklyn, to what extent do you find artistic practice independent of nationality, religious background, and other identities?

Tamar Ettun: With the *Mauve Bird* project, it's about figuring out a common ground that is not about what separates people, which could be identity. When I was living in Israel, having just stopped being Orthodox, a big part of the work was about this transition. I did these walks from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv, and dealing with these cultural, religious questions was the work.

[S]: Is that because the two cities somehow represented for you a secular city and a religious city?

[E]: Yes, I grew up in Jerusalem, which is a very religious city, and Tel Aviv, was where art was happening. The art school was also in Jerusalem, but in order to be educated and see galleries and museums, I had to go to Tel Aviv. It felt like the language was very different: not literal language, but the cultural decoding. In ancient times, Jews from all over the world would walk up to the temple in Jerusalem three times a year, so I did the opposite, I walked in the opposite direction, like an inverted pilgrimage. The walk was about 60 kilometers, I did it once a month on Shabbat for three and a half years.

[S]: I see.

[E]: After I moved here, and started working with The Moving Company which is very diverse, mostly immigrants from a different places in the world, I was looking for a shared form of communication; talking and connecting was through emotions and colors. Giving room to express individual cultural experiences, while thinking of a common ground, and a community that can be inclusive. Maybe it sounds very naive.

[S]: Or maybe we need more naivete. What exactly is The Moving Company, and how did it, come about?

[E]: The Moving Company started four years ago, when I was at a residency at the Abrons Art Center: in addition to getting a studio as a sculptor, I could use the rehearsal spaces. I'd been wanting to research movement in a deeper way

for a long time, so I reached out to people I knew and asked who would want to play with me once a week and think about movement and stillness. A few people responded and it started as a study group, whoever was committed. After we'd worked together for almost a year, a performance organically emerged. Since then, it became more official, and now the work has a few sides. One is our kind of study of the body, movement and emotions. Another is the social project that we started this year, working with teens in Crown Heights, that added a new layer that is really meaningful. The last one is the performances I direct, which come up from the material we work on as a group. Some of the Movers are professional dancers, choreographers, artists, singers, actors – it's all very organic, but everyone is genuinely committed to researching these ideas, and the work is shaped by their body history, muscle memory, their unique movement imprint.

The Moving Company in collaboration with teens from Community Counseling and Mediation Center in Crown Heights, The Brooklyn Museum.



[S]: So when you started that four years ago, had you already been working as an artist with movement and performance, or was it something that was, more or less, new to your practice?

[E]: I have been working with movement since I started working as an artist in different ways. When I was at Yale, I collaborated with Emily Coates, who was my professor at the dance department, and is one of Yvonne Rainer's dancers, on a sculpture performance piece for the Performa Biennial. She did the dance and I did the sculpture. Before that, I was making videos for a long time, but making live performances was a change, yes.

[S]: It sounds like your work has been cross-disciplinary from the beginning. You are not a sculptor who branched out into movement.

[E]: Yes.

[S]: But it's interesting to me that with The Moving Company, the idea of having a presentable, performable result is only one dimension of the endeavor, and that there are a lot of other aspects of it that the audience, the art public, doesn't necessarily see.

[E]: Right. Everything feeds the end performance, but there's a lot of focus on the process. I guess in the same way a sculptor would spend weeks in a library and research different materials and then come up with a piece, that effort isn't visible in the physical thing that is in front of your eyes. The research and the process with The Moving Company informs the final piece, and I believe you can sense it as an audience. Especially because the choreography comes from within, from the Movers, and is not imposed. The ongoing meetings inform the movement. This year we met with a neuroscientist who talked about empathy, and we have been meeting with a lot of different people. Some of them

are present in a more direct way. Like the teens we've been working with. At the end, we had writers interviewing them asking them questions regarding aggression, and made a zine. These stories are part of the performance - the performers came up to the audience and told them secretly, whispered in their ears. So even though you don't know about the teens' contribution, it is layered into the work and is present in a very literal way.

[S]: I like the fact that the secret is not revealed, but you know that it is there.

[E]: Yes, you remember in *Yellow*, we researched Desire, and collected texts and poems that we whispered to the audience (and you gave us a few!), this time it was the teens' personal stories.

[S]: Could the pieces that you do with The Moving Company be potentially represented in different spaces and different situations with different performers, or are they specific to a given situation? And if they are redoable, would the new performers be trying to redo what the original performers did or would they be giving new input? In other words, is it an open form or a more or less finished form?

[E]: Yes, it is definitely possible to remake the pieces with other performers. Last year, we did *Yellow* in Bryant Park, and then we did it in Uppsala, Sweden. Two Movers came with me and we worked with five additional Swedish dancers. I make objects that limit the body's movement, and there is a map which is the structure of time and space of where people are going, how they will interact and when they meet – a formal composition of colors and shapes.

[S]: I see.

[E]: The way the Movers interpret their own movement with the object is unique. In Sweden, before rehearsals, we did a workshop talking about

Desire and introducing the new Movers to the vocabulary of The Moving Company. It's not technical – move your right leg to the left for 15 seconds – but a series of physical states: this year we have been talking about readiness to attack, something that looks calm on the outside, but has the potential to snap.

[S]: So do the performers have a very wide latitude to interpret those ideas or do you direct them towards a certain interpretation?

[E]: I see the Movers as collaborators. They are free in their interpretations, and I guide the way they fit together. Sometimes I have specific images I want to create, and then we workshop them together.

[S]: What about the colors you have been using as keys to the particular pieces. For example, this time it's pink. The moment I think of pink I think of a gender stereotype: blue for boys, pink for girls. Is that part of the content of the work or is it something that the work, uh, overtrumps?

[E]: Pink used to be a boys' color before WWII, and blue was a girls' color, which was considered more delicate and pretty. During the War, pink triangle badges were used to identify gay men. When the war ended, women embraced pink, but it's not completely clear why. Perhaps because the men who returned from the War were crushed and traumatized, and women needed to find an energetic color that allowed them to take a more active role in society, and the queer association with the pink triangles opened that door. Throughout the years, it became more and more culturally associated with submission. In this work, I think about aggression as having two sides: as a natural urge, it has assertiveness and power, but at the same time, it can be violent and harmful.

[S]: I didn't know about that switch in gender coding for pink and blue!

[E]: As I was working on *Pink* this year, it was interesting to discover how far apart shades of pink could be read. In *Blue* or *Yellow*, the shades still felt very much connected. Pink feels volatile, manipulative, unpredictable. Pale pink, rose gold and bright magenta have very different reads to them, and are still under the same name.

[S]: I see. But all colors are like that, the name seems to confer unity on the various shades, but in fact, different blues are very different. William Gass wrote a book about that, for instance—*On Being Blue*. So, there's a difference between the experience of the color and the name.

[E]: Definitely, there are subtleties for all colors. I think pink is more extreme than other colors, but yeah, maybe, that's my personal opinion.

[S]: Well, having worked on it so much, you probably have much more experience with the color's effects than I do, so I am sure you are right.

[E]: Another thing I discovered, as I was researching *Pink*, was the Baker-Miller Pink that has a physical calming effect on the body. It's the only color that has been discovered to have such sensation. Tests shows that it lowers violence; they paint prisons in that color, and they say that after 15 minutes the heart rate lowers. It was interesting to find out there is a biological effect that comes from the color pink, but only from one specific shade of pink, not all pinks.

[S]: I'll have to look up that shade, that's fascinating.

[E]: Yeah, Weight Watchers' logo uses that shade of pink because it was discovered to suppress appetite.

[S]: Interesting.

[E]: Which connects to the idea of submissiveness, and gender, through biology.

[S]: The colors you've done previously are yellow and blue, now pink, and orange is still to come, right?

[E]: Orange and Joy will start in November.

[S]: Joy, that's a good one to end on. In the title of the series, *Mauve Bird with Yellow Teeth Red Feather Green Feet and a Rose Belly*, some of the colors are actually in the title, then there are other colors, like mauve, that don't have particular works connected with them. Why is that?

[E]: I guess mauve could be included in *Pink*. The title is from a poem by Maria Laina, a Greek poet. I took the last line of the poem "is not a Mauve bird", because she has all these colors within her. But I thought the bird could call herself Mauve if she chooses to.

[S]: What's the relation between a gallery presentation of your work, and the performative presentation of it? How do they relate to each other?

[E]: The works in the gallery are part of my practice as a solo artist. The performance work with The Moving Company is usually done in public spaces to mixed audiences, and that is a very important part of the work. On the sculptures I work alone, sometimes I cast the Movers, and the ideas behind them come from the same research and movement exercises done with The Moving Company. It's a different manifestation of the same concepts. The performance work has a lot more compromises, as I am working with a lot of other people, and the hope is to have them included in the making of the work. When I make sculptures, my collaborators are the materials. Now I am making seven sculptures and I am thinking of the seven Movers with whom I've been working this year.



*A Mauve Bird with Yellow Teeth Red Feathers
Green Feet and a Rose Belly, Part Pink, 2017*

[S]: I see. In a sense, portraits?

[E]: Loosely. They don't look like them, but they embody their essence. Only two of the sculptures have a face, and they don't look at each other. Each character is in her own world, but their placement, their materials, and the shared pink, suggest they are a group. This is very similar to how the performers work: each Mover has a task and an object, and is physically trapped while attempting to fulfill her task. There are moments when they interact, but mostly, it's solo, multiple solos.

[S]: So it sounds like the two sides of the work are independent, but there's a communication between them.

[E]: Yes.

[S]: And can you imagine ever opening up that division, having performance aspects in a gallery show, or do you feel there is a kind of necessity behind this distinction for you.

[E]: I am starting with this show – there will be an ongoing performative element, where I am going to wrap one of the pieces with more thread throughout the show and do some subtle interventions. The Moving Company is going to do the *Pink* performance outside the gallery. In the past, the audience could go inside these giant inflatables and feel more connected to the performances, because the inflatables are not precious and have a direct physical

relationship to the body. Performance and sculpture keep flowing back and forth.

[S]: Right.

[E]: When I create a performance, which is meant to be viewed by a diverse audience in public spaces, it's very different, and the way that I make objects in a gallery setting takes a different kind of setup.

[S]: Yes. It's interesting how self-selected, an art gallery's audience is, compared to other venues. I think the art world would like to congratulate itself for its openness and diversity and so on, but more diversity can be found elsewhere.

[E]: As an artist you are required to answer different questions about the creation of the work. Working with teens this year and having to defend the work on a weekly basis was very interesting. They weren't necessarily interested in art. The hope is that the teens who stay to watch the performances will read the work as personally as someone educated in the art world and knows all the references, that there will be both levels which are valid and meaningful.

[S]: Is it harder to address people who know a lot about art, or those who know less about art?

[E]: That's a tough question. The hope, of course is to address both audiences. I grew up very far away from the art world in Orthodox Jerusalem. I did not have a lot of access, but there were a few public art pieces that were incredibly meaningful to me as a kid: a James Turrell at the Israel Museum, Niki De Saint Phalle's golem and a big red Calder piece. I had no idea who they were and what role they played in the art world, but they changed my life. When I grew up, I've been very lucky go through a lot of art education, and receive scholarships that enabled me to study at the very best art institutions. I feel privileged to be able to have access to this world. At some point I

realized that the work becomes self-referential, and it became important for me to connect to someone who didn't have all this education, and wasn't able to go to these schools.

[S]: I think that color communicates with people most directly, most viscerally. Maybe that accounts for your interest in highlighting that in recent years.

[E]: Yeah, and I think it goes back to your first question about identity, and a kind of broader sense of community.

EAT A PINK OWL



Pink

Eat a Pink Owl, 2017
Fridman Gallery, NY
Installation view



Legs with Woven Basket, 2017
Mixed media
78 x 32 x 15 in





Pages 26-27
Legs with Woven Basket, 2017
Mixed media
78 x 32 x 15 in
Detail

Stretched Bird, 2017
Mixed media
136 x 16 x 16 in



Stretched Bird, 2017
Mixed media
136 x 16 x 16 in
Detail



Limes and Beer, 2017
Digital print
31x31x1.5 in





Birds with Lemons on Pink, 2017
 Digital print
 31 x 31 x 1.5 in

Pink

Previous page
Pink, 2017
Neon
23 x 9.5 x 2 in

Wet Bird, 2017
Mixed media
60 x 44 x 36 in



Screwed Pink Helmet, 2017
Mixed media
14 x 11 x 13 in





Page 42, from right to left
Totem IV (Dark Blue), 2017
Mixed media
72 x 15 x 0.5 in

Totem II (Pink), 2017
Mixed media
71.75 x 15 x 0.5 in

Totem III (Blue), 2017
Mixed media
72 x 18 x 1 in

Totem I (Pink), 2017
Mixed media
72 x 12 x 0.5 in

Page 43
Totem II (Pink), 2017
Mixed media
71.75 x 15 x 0.5 in
Detail

Pink Horse with Warrior with Silver Skirt, 2017
Mixed media
116 x 84 x 84 in



The Hugger, 2017
Mixed media
Dimensions variable







A Mauve Bird with Yellow Teeth Red Feathers
Green Feet and a Rose Belly, Part Pink, 2017
 Performance at The Battery, NY





**A Mauve Bird with Yellow Teeth Red Feathers
Green Feet and a Rose Belly, Part Pink, 2017**
HD Video, 8'45"
Film still

TAMAR ETTUN

Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY

Education

- 2010 MFA (Sculpture) Yale University School of Art, New Haven, CT
- 2008 BFA Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Fine Art, Jerusalem, Israel
- 2007 BFA The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, Fine Art, New York, NY

Selected Solo Exhibitions and Performances

- 2018 TBA, The Barrick Museum of Art, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV
- 2017 *Eat a Pink Owl*, Fridman Gallery, New York, NY
- 2017 *Mauve Bird with Yellow Teeth Red Feathers Green Feet and a Rose Belly, Part: PINK* (performance), The Battery New York NY, travels to Katonah Museum of Art, NY
- 2016 *The Yellow Who Wants*, Uppsala Art Museum,Uppsala, Sweden
- 2016 *Mauve Bird with Yellow Teeth Red Feathers Green Feet and a Rose Belly, Part: YELLOW* (performance), Bryant Park, New York and Uppsala Botanical Garden, Sweden
- 2015 *Alula in Blue*, Fridman Gallery, New York, NY
- 2015 *Mauve Bird with Yellow Teeth Red Feathers Green Feet and a Rose Belly, Part One: BLUE*, The Watermill Center, Water Mill, NY and The Knockdown Center, Maspeth, NY
- 2014 *My Hands are the Shape Of My Height*, Transformer, Washington, DC
- 2014 *One and One, One and Two, One and Three, One and Four*, Braverman Gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel
- 2013 *The Lion Who Liked Strawberries*, Art Production Fund, Las Vegas, NV
- 2011 *One Thing Leads To Another*, PERFORMA 11, Recess, New York, NY and The Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN
- 2011 *One Thing Leads To Another: Part 2*, Andrea Meislin Gallery, New York, NY
- 2009 *Empty is Also*, commissioned by PERFORMA 09, X-initiative, New York, NY

Selected Group Exhibitions and Performances

- 2014 *Out to See*, South Street Seaport, New York, NY
- 2014 *Last Day of Folly*, Madison Square Park, New York, NY
- 2013 *We Live With Animals*, PERFORMA 13, Van Alen Institute, New York, NY
- 2013 *Goods*, Bat Yam Museum, Bat Yam, Israel
- 2012 *Emerging Artist Fellowship (EAF 12)*, Socrates Sculpture Park, Long Island City, NY
- 2012 *Trees, Art and Jewish Thought*, Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco, CA
- 2011 *Odyssey Of Ikksa*, The Herzliya Biennial, Herzliya, Israel
- 2011 *Israel from Within and from Without*, Boston University Rubin Frankel Gallery, Boston, MA
- 2010 *Hand Held History*, Queens Museum of Art Video Summit, Queens, NY
- 2009 *Reinventing Rituals*, Rite Now: Sacred and Secular in Video, The Jewish Museum, New York, NY
- 2009 *Post Traumatic Trance Dance Disorder*, Center of Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv, Israel

Selected Awards / Residencies

- 2018 AIRIE Fellowship, Everglades National Park artist in residence
- 2016 Iaspis, Swedish Arts Grants Committee
- 2015 Franklin Furnace Fund for Performance Art
- 2015/3 Lower Manhattan Cultural Council
- 2014/5 The Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant
- 2014/5 The Watermill Center
- 2014 MacDowell Fellowship
- 2013 Art Production Fund Grant and Residency Program
- 2011/09 Artis Contemporary
- 2011 RECESS Activities
- 2010 The Alice Kimball English Traveling Fellowship, Yale University School of Art
- 2009 WPP, The World Performance Project

Tamar Ettun
EAT A PINK OWL

September 9 - October 14, 2017
FRIDMAN GALLERY
287 Spring Street
New York, NY 10013

Fridman Gallery
Founder/Director: Iliya Fridman
Associate Director: Lindsay Jarvis
Design Director: Naroa Lizar
Associate: Andrea Klabanova

Catalog
Essays: Wendy Vowel and Barry Schwabsky
Photography: Matt Grubb
Additional photography Charlie Rubin (pp. 6, 7, 12, 50, 51) and Anastasiia Chorna Shama (p. 15)
Design: Naroa Lizar

Video Credits
Mauve Bird with Yellow Teeth Red Feathers Green Feet and a Rose Belly, Part Pink
Performed by The Moving Company: Tina Wang, Rebecca Pristoop, Annabel Paran, Amanda Grossman, Noa Lembersky
Costume design by Ella Dagan
Music by Erin Nire
Videography by Shachar Yerushalmy
Color Correction: David Torcivia
Editing by Amanda Grossman and Tamar Ettun
Filmed at 1410 Broadway, L.H. Charney Associates Inc.

The PINK year was a big collaborative effort, I am incredibly grateful to all of you who supported my process:
The Moving Company: Tina Wang, Laura Bernstein, ruby onyinyechi amanze, Mor Mendel, Maia Karo, Rebecca Pristoop, Sabrina Shapiro, Annabel Paran, Eva Davidova, Nathan Albright, Amanda Grossman, Haleigh Nickerson.
Naomi Lev, Tora Lopez, Jennie Lamensdorf, Sarah Lehat, Anastasiia Chorna Shama, Bonsee Zhongming Yuan, Scynge Yunxin Xing, Aimee Burg, Ryan Wolf
1410 Broadway staff, Glen Falk and Alex Caraballo
Community Counseling and Mediation Center in Crown Heights
Fridman Gallery: Naroa Lizar, Lindsay Jarvis, Andrea Klabanova and Iliya Fridman
Noa Lembersky, Noa Osheroﬀ, Amy Zion, Helga Christoffersen, Steven Madoff, Doreen Remen, Tzili Charney
My Jerusalem and my New York family

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