

**MoMA PRESENTS RECENT WORKS BY ISRAELI PHOTOGRAPHER
BARRY FRYDLENDER**

Large Color Photographs Explore the Diversity of Contemporary Israel

Barry Frydlander: Place and Time
The Robert and Joyce Menschel Gallery, third floor
May 17—September 3, 2007

NEW YORK, May 10, 2007—*Barry Frydlander: Place and Time* presents ten large, color photographs made since 2002 by Barry Frydlander (Israeli, b. 1954). Technically innovative, rich in precise detail, and often panoramic in scope, the pictures forthrightly probe life and society in Israel today. The exhibition is organized by Peter Galassi, Chief Curator of Photography, The Museum of Modern Art, and is on view from May 17 through September 3, 2007, in The Robert and Joyce Menschel Gallery on the third floor.

Mr. Galassi states, "A good deal of contemporary art derives its creative energy from the assertion of this or that identity. What is remarkable about Frydlander's recent work is the equanimity with which he addresses the diverse and divergent identities of contemporary Israel—religious and secular, Arab and Jew, ancient and modern."

Among the subjects of the works on view are a group of men playing cards in an East Jerusalem café (*Jaber Coffee Shop*, 2003); another all-male gathering, of devout Haredi Jews on an annual pilgrimage (*Blessing*, 2005); young people on the street in Tel Aviv (*Friday*, 2002); and the interior of a convenience store whose crowded display of wares reflects the cultural range of Israeli society. Two of the photographs (*Flood*, 2003, and *Blessing*) are in MoMA's collection.

Frydlander's large photographs at first appear seamless. In fact, each is stitched together digitally from dozens or even hundreds of individual shots. This innovative method produces prints that are unusually sharp for their size. (For example, *Blessing* measures more than 13 feet wide.) The method also often yields clues that disclose the artifice of the process, such as figures that appear more than once because they moved as the photographer worked. Frydlander welcomes these glitches in his system and believes that they may encourage patient study of his pictures.

Most of Frydlander's photographs describe ordinary, everyday realities. Two works, however, derive from a highly newsworthy event: Israel's forced evacuation of Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip in August 2005. One picture takes its title from the name of a settlement: Shirat Hayam, meaning "Song of the Sea." In the Bible's book of Exodus, it is the song sung by the Israelites after the Egyptians had driven them to the edge of the sea and God parted the waters to

save them. In Frydlender's *Shirat Hayam* (2005), however, the armed force that confronts Israelis at the edge of the sea is the Israeli police. In the companion work, titled *Waiting*, local Bedouin men watch the confrontation from a short distance away. *Flood* (2003) alludes to another key episode in the Bible, from the book of Genesis: teenagers visit the museum of the Israeli Defense Forces as the pounding rain on the foreground roof evokes the violence of the flood that God unleashed to cleanse the earth of sinful mankind.

"Dense with facts," explains Mr. Galassi, "Frydlender's photographs are also highly charged with symbols—echoing both the Bible and the evening news."

Frydlender was born in 1954 in Tel Aviv, where he lives and works today. After earning a degree in film and television from the University of Tel Aviv in 1980, he was a photojournalist and pursued independent creative work until 1989, when he ceased making photographs. He began again in 1994, when digital technology opened new creative paths. Although the present exhibition focuses on his work in Israel, he has also worked in Europe and America.

PUBLICATION:

The exhibition is accompanied by an illustrated publication, *Barry Frydlender: Place and Time*, which includes an afterword by curator Peter Galassi. The book is distributed through Distributed Art Publishers (D.A.P.) in the United States and Canada and through Thames & Hudson outside of North America. 12 1/2 x 9 1/2 in.; 48 pages, 30 color illustrations. Hardcover: \$24.95. Available in May 2007 at the MoMA Stores.

SPONSORSHIP:

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Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019
Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m. Closed Tuesday
Museum Admission: \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs)
Film Admission: Target Free Friday Nights 4:00-8:00 p.m.
\$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)
Subway: E or V train to Fifth Avenue/53rd Street
Bus: On Fifth Avenue, take the M1, M2, M3, M4, or M5 to 53rd Street. On Sixth Avenue, take the M5, M6, or M7 to 53rd Street. Or take the M57 and M50 crosstown buses on 57th and 50th Streets.

The public may call 212/708-9400 for detailed Museum information. Visit us online at www.moma.org.