

ARTFORUM

Valie Export

THE ISRAEL MUSEUM, JERUSALEM

POB 71117

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The drawings, photographs, and videos in Valie Export's first exhibition in Israel reveal the vivid and provocative character of her work, wherein political protest is linked to feminist struggles. Since the late 1960s, Export has engaged in an artistic shift that annuls both traditional art techniques and any gap between subject and object, art and life. *VALIE EXPORT—SMART EXPORT*, 1970, the emblematic work that opens the show, depicts the artist holding a pack of cigarettes with her visage on it; it's a symbol of extreme self-determination in an aesthetic, social, and political sense and has become an iconic logo for the artist.

Export has concentrated on the body in her work with the goal of challenging—in a society characterized by a false egalitarianism of gender—contradictions, pressures, and violence toward women. In her practice, performance is a means of investigating physical and psychological limits (as in *Hyperbulie*, 1973) or is employed as a parameter of self-determination (as in *Body Configurations*, 1972–82). Performance is also used as a tool for the specific investigation of the female body (as in the celebrated *Aktionhose: Genitalpanik*, 1969), and it functions as a device to destabilize sexist ideologies (as in *Tapp und Tast Kino*, 1968).

While the works in this show bring to mind those of many other artists—from Orlan to Joan Jonas, Annie Sprinkle to Karen Finley—Export's recent works on paper are exemplified by a refined formal grace and tension between a conceptual framework and an emotional, as well as performative, process. These are mental landscapes from which sensations, visions, and dreams can surface, almost like pages from a diary. They seem indiscriminately culled from personal and collective memory.

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

—Eugenio Viola



Valie Export, *VALIE EXPORT—SMART EXPORT*, 1970, black-and-white photograph, 33 x 31".

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