

HUXLEY-PARLOUR

3-5 Swallow Street, London, W1B 4DE / gallery@huxleyparlour.com

Gal Leshem
Looking for Rubia Tinctorum

23 February – 1 May 2021



Huxley-Parlour gallery is pleased to present a new installation by London based artist Gal Leshem. Comprising both textile and video-based work, the exhibition will explore the role of local folklore and material culture in the creation of identity, belonging and orientation.

The title of the exhibition refers to the artist's ongoing search for a particular red plant, used historically for dye. Rubia Tinctorum, also known as Madder, originated in the Levant and was used by the British Empire as the main dye for the British redcoats. Leshem's search for Rubia Tinctorum uncovers the tensions inherent in the dye's history as well as following the artist's own personal journey of migration.

By investigating the dissemination of dyes along Colonial and Imperial trade routes, Leshem states her work 'uncovers the Othering of certain groups through colour'. Leshem's video-based work is a guided search for red fabric in the paintings of the National Gallery. It directly relates to the large-scale textile pieces on display that are made from hand dyed cloth, following traditional dyeing recipes.

Both tactility and colour function as a signifiers of identity in the work. Leshem's textile based works relate to the body and the fabric used to wrap it. Colour is revealed to embody a set of incongruous meanings and connotations. As the artist states, the installation at Huxley-Parlour 'is a meditation on the twofold significance of red – a marker of oriental otherness, mysterious, majestic and desired; and simultaneously a signifier of power and imperial sovereignty.'

Gal Leshem (b. Israel 1998) is a London-based artist with a socially engaged practice. Leshem's work explores history and collective memory within the construction of local identities. She studied at Goldsmiths University, and is currently undertaking her MA in Fine Art Media at the Slade School of Art. Her work has been exhibited in numerous group shows across Europe, most notably at *Bloomberg New Contemporaries*, 2018.

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