

# ARTFORUM

## Ohad Matalon

CONTEMPORARY BY GOLCONDA

117 Herzl Street

March 11–April 17

Unlike the usual photography exhibition, where primly mounted images passively await the viewer's gaze, Ohad Matalon's latest show makes the unwitting visitor part of the installation. Ten giant projections of photographic negatives overlaid on positives become metaphoric passageways into ten different locales chosen by the artist from an ever-growing bank. The photographs—which were taken in countries including Israel, Jordan, Taiwan, Germany, and Austria—present a variety of uninhabited landscapes, and the featured locations are rotated every few days.

In a departure from the ubiquitous color prints of his earlier works, Matalon constructs a complex spatial environment where the darkness of the vast gallery, the white noise of the projectors, and the glow of the positives all work together. The unframed projections are often "framed" compositionally (as in *The School* and *Emanuel*, all works 2009–2010), which compels the viewer to relate to them through space, and not just as optics.

Yet for all the gravitas, Matalon cannot conceal his innate sense of humor. *An Unseen Land or It Is All Gone in Reality* shows a weather-beaten piece of kitschy wallpaper that depicts an idyllic mountain landscape complete with an impossibly picturesque lake in the foreground. The foliage of the trees on the left of the image is punctuated by a floor mop that leans against the wall, its droopy twines duplicating the downward turn of the three branches behind it. There is just enough space in the image to show the ledge of the ground in front of the wall, positioning the viewer in the ambiguous zone of a double-photographed and most likely double-Photoshopped landscape. Having dispensed with conventional photographic factuality, Matalon eschews conventional photographic stillness as he (temporarily) repopulates his landscapes with the visitors of the exhibition.

— Julia Friedman



Ohad Matalon, *An Unseen Land or It Is All Gone in Reality*, 2009–2010, photographic projection, dimensions variable.

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