**Personal Style and Self Expression**

Eyal Ben-Simon is a multidisciplinary artist noted for using a wide range of media from video art and photography through wall sculpting, to typography and digital art. However, as far as I am concerned, his artistic expression is primarily the way light is putty in his hands and his ability to utilize, shape, and sculpt it.

His photography and video art, created using techniques that involve both singularity and ingenuity, evoke a three-dimensional experience as though he molds and shapes light and shadow, eliminating the gap between light as a metaphor and the light in itself.

Eyal's body of work is usually characterized as abstract and surreal as he has no interest in presenting reality figuratively. He thoroughly examines the boundaries of any medium in which he creates whether it is as boundless and infinite as light, or more solid tangible materials. He generates "deliberate accidents" to create serendipity and goes on to deconstructs and reconstructs compositions over and over again until time and space are annihilated.

Feelings and emotions that are registered in Eyal's mind following his contact with nature, objects, and humans are reflected in his art. When shooting portraits, for example, he does not aim to capture the appearance of the subject, but rather the feelings and sensations that come through to him from the person in front of him. He seeks to convey this into his work to create a subjective experience of true contact between the viewers and the art. Active participation on the part of the audience in the form of interpretation, curious examination, perception, and sympathy serves to resonate with the reflected reality and may turn art into a porthole leading us into our inner world.

**On Eyal's Journey into the World of Art**

Growing up in the Noga neighborhood of Jaffa – at the time, disadvantaged, violent, and subject to many ethnic and religious conflicts – his search for an alternative reality started from an early age. The high school pedagogical tracking system forced him into the mathematics-accounting track although he felt a strong attraction to the art track. So, he ended up playing hooky and sneaking into art lessons. An invitation from Nir Nader who headed the art track, to participate in an "Artivistic" (artistic-activistic) project, opened the door to him to the prospect of a different reality accessible through art.

Eyal worked his way to artistic expression in an autodidactic manner through profound and extensive studying, attending many courses as a free listener, hands-on experiencing, reading, and through formal and academic education, which he pursued, due to having no interest in degrees and diplomas, for only as long as he felt it contributes to enhancing his knowledge and enriching his world.

His first steps, at the recommendation of Nader, were in photography. He chose Jacob Bornstein's Creative Photography School that focused on the fundamentals of light and technical work in the darkroom. He went on to complete most of the Photography & video Engineering diploma at the Kiryat Ono College of Photography and then moved on to a practical internship in the studio of Ilan Bsor while also broadening his horizons in philosophy, art, and sciences as a free listener at the Tel Aviv University. He then studied for three and a half (out of four) years, at the Ascola-Meimad College of Art Design in conjunction with the Open University.

During a year-long stay in Japan, besides going to lectures on the history of arts & crafts at the University of Tokyo, Eyal also submerged himself into Butoh Dance Theater whose strong influence is evident in his aesthetic vision and [attitude towards life](https://www.powerthesaurus.org/attitude_towards_life/synonyms). He used to travel twice a week from Tokyo to Yokohama to take part in lessons taught by one of the two key founders of Butoh, the great master Kazuo Ohno, and was privileged to absorb insights and inspiration that had been material to his life ever since.

**From the Inside Out – Worldview**

The camera and computer technologies possess a magical ability to empower human vision, show what the eye cannot normally see. and make the invisible visible. In the same way, Eyal perceives artistic activity as a means to enhance our sensitivity and responsiveness, while bringing invisible layers to the forefront, and manifesting multiple viewpoints on the world and reality.

Both the process and the outcome of art must, in his opinion, possess an aesthetic quality that attracts the eye and captures the heart. The aesthetic virtues of art are what arouse emotions and stimulate curiosity. They motivate the viewers to delve into the work, observe its different facets, find meanings, statements, references, and associations, discover humor, knowledge, and experiences, or simply pure pleasure.

According to Plato's Cave Allegory, the reality perceived by the chained people is restricted to the shadows projected on, and the sounds that echo off, the walls in front of them. Art, according to Eyal, is the power that can remove our shackles and chains, release us from our limiting bonds of perception, lead us to the light that shines on that which is concealed or dark, and reveal an inner or hidden truth.

**Methods and Techniques**

Eyal's creative process almost always involves concentrating on a theme and working in series. Constructing, through a collection of pieces that have a common theme, a singular language that allows for expanding the scope of discussion on that subject and making the viewer's exploration more comprehensive and profound.

His multidisciplinary works spread across different artistic fields, including photography, video art, sculpture, installation, and digital art. The techniques are also varied, including unique darkroom methods and processes, computer technology and typography. The materials he utilizes are wide-ranged, from light-sensitive paper through rusty metal or concrete, to ready-made items such as artichokes, plastic dolls, books.

The techniques Eyal employs are unusual, diverse, and experimental, such as still and video shoots, which he laboriously studies and manipulates in the darkroom (stills,) or on the computer (video,) or sometimes even uses as raw material. He produces surprising and unorthodox combinations such as the fusion between rusty metals and photographic prints to create wall sculptures or the coating different objects such as a book or even an artichoke, in concrete.

The work processes include creating repetitive imagery from a single photo using methods such as multiple exposures, deliberate disruptions during the final developing stages, extracting objects from their photographed background and re-setting them in a space that is abstract and detached from any realistic context.

Applying these and other methods help to produce complex video and still images comprising of recurring and layered shots so that the images are stratified and have great visual depth. Eyal combines traditional media with innovative technologies, blurring the borders between old and new and between time and space.

**From the Outside In - Influence and Inspiration**

Eyal's perception of the world of art and how it influences humans started to form as he was faced with the personality, beliefs, and activism of Nir Nader, who is an unconventional and prominent figure in the Israeli radical art scene and who played a key role in Eyal's views on art and how it influences people. Nader identified and encouraged his fascination, invited him to participate in a school project where the art track high school students were sent, with a video camera, to create video art that was presented in an exhibition intended for saving the Karim a-dalk slum, in search of a solution for its inhabitants. The artistic-activistic action was a success and what struck him most, was the realization that, with the same footage that he had, he could have created a completely different and even contradictory message. He felt that the way to his aspired alternative reality passes through the ability of art to observe from different perspectives to mold, to sculpt, and to shape the world.

Jacob Bornstein had imparted on Eyal, aside from theoretical knowledge, a profound understanding of the fundamentals of light and a specialization in the darkroom practices. Bornstein, who was one of the first photographers in Israel, was also a great inspiration and encouraged him to venture on different roads and not be afraid to start over and explore another path... "Until you find that beauty has been there, at the starting point, all along."

Cinema is another strong influence, and one of the most powerful examples is Akira Kurosawa's Rashomon that helped him articulate and refine how multiple viewpoints can help in that same childhood quest to find an alternative reality.

The Butoh Dance Theatre, which he immersed himself into during his stay in Japan, dealt with developing means for changing our perception of the human body so that the dancers let go of their image and become the thing which they dance. Master Kazuo Ono was over ninety years old at the time, yet still active and influential. One of the most memorable things he told Eyal was "if you want to dance a rock, you must become a rock yourself." This statement struck a chord in Eyal's soul and even to this day, he conducts himself according to it. In his words: "Even when I aim to capture light in a photo, I become light myself."

Various artists and movements in art history have influenced Eyal's work in a variety of ways. Artists such as Vassily Kandinsky, Paul Clay, Joel-Peter Witkin, David Lynch, and others presented him with new ways of dealing with color, shape, and representation of reality. Significant landmarks in the history of art in general and the history of photography in particular, such as abstract art, Surrealism, and Dada, inspired him to exploit the occurrence of a specific moment in time and turn it into a unique image that takes on a life of its own.