

PRESS RELEASE

Yael Bartana *UTOPIA NOW!*

Opening 15.03.2025, 4-6 PM
19.03.2025 - 10.05.2025

Annet Gelink Gallery is proud to celebrate over 20 years of collaboration with artist Yael Bartana.

Utopia Now! brings together a recent body of work, continuing Bartana's exploration of collective hope. Following Bartana's participation as co-representative of the German Pavilion at the 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia with the multimedia project *Light to the Nations*, the exhibition marks the Dutch premiere of the video and sound installation *Mir Zaynen Do! (We Are Here!)*.



Music has long been a vessel for memory in diasporic communities—a home carried through melody, rhythm, and language. In *Mir Zaynen Do!* Bartana brings together two musical traditions from distinct diasporic histories to explore the potential of collective identity beyond fixed labels. Commissioned by the Jewish-Brazilian art space Casa do Povo, the 11-minute audiovisual installation intertwines the voices and rhythms of Coral Tradição, a Jewish-Brazilian choir whose roots trace back to the now-dispersed Yiddishland, and Ilú Obá De Min, an Afro-Brazilian street music ensemble deeply connected to Candomblé traditions. Within the decayed yet resonant walls of the Teatro de Arte Israelita Brasileiro (TAIB)—a theater built in 1960 beneath Casa do Povo with the dream of reviving the Yiddish language—Bartana envisions a space where past and future converge. The work is an exercise in forging new alliances, a choreography of solidarity that transcends history's imposed boundaries, but also a reminder that traditions are constructed and can be ephemeral.

Titling the exhibition is the new neon installation *Utopia Now!*, an urgent and luminous call not to rely on future promises and to reimagine utopia in the present moment. The tension between aspiration and reality, between the ideal and the compromised, echoes throughout the space, inviting reflection on the power of collective imagination.

In The Bakery space, Bartana's celebrated black-and-white photographic series *The Missing Negatives of the Sonnenfeld Collection* (2008) is on view. Drawing from the archives of renowned photojournalists Leni and Herbert Sonnenfeld, who documented Palestine/Eretz Israel between 1933 and 1948, Bartana restages their heroic imagery with contemporary Palestinians and Arab-Jews residing in Israel. The result is a reconstruction that challenges the utopian narratives of Zionism, offering a reinterpretation of history that blurs the line between documentation and possibility.

Through video, sound, neon, and photography, this exhibition positions Bartana's work at the intersection of memory and premonition, identity and fantasy. In the echoes of song and the movement of bodies, she invites us to imagine new forms of belonging—where history is actively reshaped for a collective future.

Yael Bartana's work has been exhibited worldwide, including GL Strand Copenhagen (2024); Jewish Museum Berlin (2021), Fondazione Modena Arti Visive (2019/2020); Philadelphia Museum of Art (2018); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2015); Secession, Vienna (2012); Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2012); Louisiana museum (2012) Moderna Museet, Malmö (2010); MoMA PS1, NY (2008). She won the Artes Mundi 4 Prize (2010) and the trilogy *And Europe Will Be Stunned* was ranked as the 9th most important art work of the 21st century by the Guardian newspaper (2019). She studied at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, the School of Visual Arts, New York and the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. Her work is part of the collection of a.o.: Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, The Hague; Guggenheim Museum, New York; The Jewish Museum, New York; Kadist, Paris; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Amsterdam; Tate Modern, London; Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. In 2011 Yael Bartana represented Poland on the 54th edition of the Venice Biennial. In 2024 she co-represented Germany in the 60th edition of the Venice Biennial. In 2026 she will have a solo exhibition at Kunstmuseum den Haag, the Hague (NL).