

Ram Samocha - Peace Talks in Toronto

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Most Israelis moving to Canada prefer to come to the big city, Toronto. Or narrowing it down, to the Bathurst north-to-south corridor. Feeling a sense of belonging, community, a little kibbutz in the multi-national immigrants metropolis. But there are some exceptions, and one I was happy to meet recently is Ram Samocha.

Ram and his family moved to Canada five years ago, and they are now calling Guelph their home. Finishing his Masters of Fine Art at the University of Waterloo, Samocha draws his conceptual art and visual performances from his life experience, first growing up and living in Israel, and then moving to a Canada. The line, mostly drawn in pastels, chalk, graphite or markers, become a force with its own energy. And that energy, with a full array of emotions, comes directly from these two places, so different, yet so similar in many ways.

In Israel, where Samocha acquired his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Bezalel Academy of Arts, the black lines mostly dominated his body of work. Living through the experience of the Intifadas, the daily stress and fear of the unknown suicide bombers and emergency vehicles sirens, all influenced the emotions and state of being in his work. Not even his marriage or the birth of his first child could completely free him from the constant imagery and stories in the media.

Shortly after their move to Canada, Ram was able to finally introduce color into his drawings. The much more relaxed, peaceful and green environment, all contributed to this change. When moving to Canada, Ram wanted to free himself of any artistic attachments, and the only tool-of-the-trade he took with him was a chalk. That sense of freedom allowed him to continue and grow as an artist. The first impression, looking at his artwork, is of the amazing energy put into each image. Layers upon layers of lines, each insignificant by itself, but all create together a new language, movement, revealing and hiding secrets, aim to tell us a story. And the story is there. It is about Ram's roots, and new life. It is about the contradiction of two places. It is about finding a safe place for his family, and about missing what they have left behind. It is about expressing the most primitive and humane feelings – fear, longing, love, hope.

It is about peace making.

Peacemaking between nations. Peacemaking between needs and wants. Peacemaking between the inner voice of the artist that must express itself fully, to the exposure it gets.

And Samocha dives into this stormy water with no fear, and comes out with bigger than life images. Watching



Ram Samocha, New Born, 2009

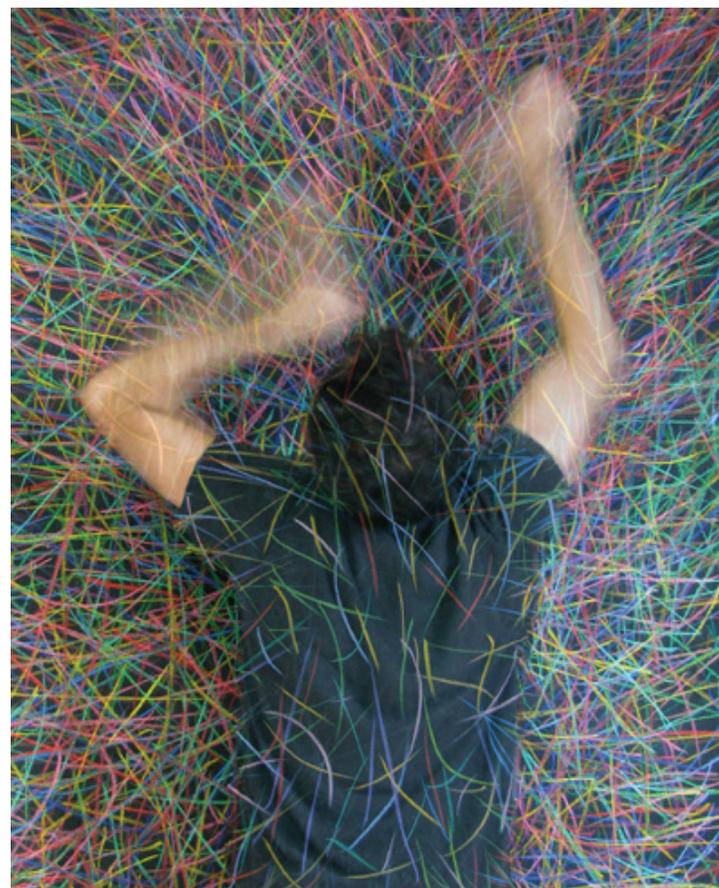
him in action is another treat. As if in trance, he draws continually on a line and goes on and on. During the Scotiabank Nuit Blanche, Ram performed his Peace Talks, a monologue of one artist, creating a dialogue between nations, using simple lines. The audience was mesmerized. They could feel that energy bursting out onto the canvases. And this sense of energy can be seen even through the images here.

Check out the Restless Line at the Julie M. Gallery in the Distillery District. The show is presented till October 31st. And Ram's art performances can be viewed online as well. Just search for Ram Samocha on YouTube and you will find many of his videos.

Ram Samocha, The Restless Line, Julie M. Gallery, 15 Mill Street, Building #37, suite 103, Distillery District, Toronto, 416 603 2626 www.juliemgallery.com
Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 11am-6pm, Sunday 12pm-5pm

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Right: Ram Samocha, Fire Wall, 2009

Bottom: Ram Samocha performs Peace Talks, Julie M. Gallery, Nuit Blanche 2010

