

ISRAELI PHOTOGRAPHER REVIVES ARCHAIC ART FORM IN BORDER SERIES

“Even my dog is borderline”

Edward Kaprov makes a final adjustment to the oversized, traditional-style camera perched on a heavy tripod aimed at an Israeli military jeep near the Gaza border. “Let’s give it a shot,” the 43-year-old says as he strides briskly to the tent that serves as his darkroom. Kaprov, a professional photographer, says he took to the mid-19th century wet-plate collodion process as part of an artistic project to “create a dialogue between the past and future”.

The method entails coating a glass plate in liquid substances, fixing it in the camera, exposing it for a few seconds and then developing it—all within 10-15 minutes. Technological advances are all but ignored in the process which has remained nearly unchanged since it was invented in 1851 — though Kaprov does use his smartphone as a light meter. Kaprov unloads a table, basins, coolers and plastic jerrycans from the back of his panel van and deftly sets up his field darkroom in the tent.

He brushes clean the plate and carefully pours the collodion mixture on it. Then he inserts it into a silver nitrate solution, which upon exposure would turn dark, with the collodion solidifying the forms to the plate. Kaprov

military vehicle and gate appear on the glass.

Borderline disorder

The end product, a piece of glass roughly the size of A4 paper, doesn’t reveal the labor put into the process. “And now, a cigarette,” Kaprov sighs in relief as he pats his pockets for his rolling tobacco. The outdated technique is worth its remarkable hassle to Kaprov, who began a series of Israeli border images nearly 10 years ago using a regular digital camera, and around the year 2015 had something of an epiphany.

“I suddenly understood that I had to continue taking the pictures the same way the first images from the Holy Land were produced to create a dialogue between the past and future,” he says. He spent a year learning about the technique through books and internet tutorials, experimenting with potent chemicals and assembling the necessary equipment before he was ready to hit the road and resume work on what is now called the Borderline Personalities Disorder series.

Kaprov’s interest in borders is part of his own quest to define or understand his place in Israel, the country he



Edward Kaprov, an Israeli photographer, adjusts his large format camera, near Kibbutz Kissufim overlooking the northern Gaza border. — AFP photos

Ancient novelty

Israel’s frontiers tend to be marked by ominous fences fending off the unknown dangers of the surrounding Arab states and entities. The absence of hikers, tourists and industry in much of those areas afforded him not only the raw images that could correspond with the old ones, but also much-needed peace of mind to focus on his art. “I escaped one utopia only to find myself in another,” he says of his move from Communist Russia to the Jewish state.

The slow pace of the wet plate technique, used by just a few other photographers professionally in Israel, necessitates a special focus not only from the artist but also from his human subjects, who “enter a meditative state-of-mind,” Kaprov says. And while using this method deprives most of the opportunity for spontaneity—one of modern photography’s key characteristics—its ancient novelty attracts attention.

The soldiers who were in the jeep on the Gaza border approached Kaprov by the tent to see what he was doing. A brief encounter led to the four paratroopers agreeing to pose for him on the same backdrop of their vehicle, accompanying him back to the tent again to see the outcome of the picture. “As much as I’m result-oriented, there’s no denying that the process is a very central part of the issue,” Kaprov says later. “It’s like magic taking place, to me and anyone around.”—AFP



Edward Kaprov prepares a glass plate in his field darkroom.



Edward Kaprov is pictured with his dog.

returns to the camera with the black magazine containing the wet glass. He inserts it, pulls out the magazine and leaves the glass in.

Covering himself with a blanket as he stoops over the camera, he opens the lens and counts out loud to three before retrieving the glass. Back in the tent the plate is carefully removed and treated before being taken out into the sun, still immersed in liquid—as the images of the

left his native Siberia for at 17. “I haven’t really found myself since leaving my homeland for my historic homeland. I’m still searching,” he says. With his cropped hair, short beard and trim physique, Kaprov looks every bit the outdoor man he is, spending days in the field seeking interesting frames in the company of his mixed border collie Robin. “Even my dog is borderline,” he says with a grin.



Archaeologists discover Incan tomb in Peru

Peruvian archaeologists discovered an Incan tomb in the north of the country where an elite member of the pre-Columbian empire was buried, one of the investigators announced Friday. The discovery was made on the Mata Indio dig site in the northern Lambayeque region, archaeologist Luis Chero told state news agency Andina.

Archaeologists believe the tomb belonged to a noble Inca based on the presence of “spondylus,” a type of sea shell always present in the graves of important figures from the Incan period, which lasted from the 12th to the 16th centuries. The tomb had been broken into multiple times, possibly in search of treasure. But despite evidence of looting, archaeologists recovered items including vases.

The tomb also had unique architecture including hollows for the placement of idols. Chero said the findings “demonstrate the majesty and importance of this site,” located 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) north of the capital Lima, and 2,000 kilometers from Cusco-capital of the Inca empire which stretched from southern Colombia to central Chile.—AFP



Undated picture shows Andina of pottery and ornaments found in a recently discovered burial chamber belonging to the Inca period at the ‘Mata Indio’ archaeological site in Lambayeque region, Peru. — AFP photos

Ballet bad boy Polunin premieres new show in Moscow

In his Moscow dressing room, dancer Sergei Polunin pulls off his T-shirt to show the tattoo of President Vladimir Putin on his chest as the Ukrainian-born ballet star premieres his new show in the Russian capital. “I see a good energy in him,” he says of the Russian leader. “I think he’s actually building and trying to do something really good. And sometimes (the) press is not very honest about things.”

The 29-year-old, who has been acclaimed by critics a ballet great on the level of Mikhail Baryshnikov or Vaslav Nijinsky, has long been

dogged by the label of “the bad boy of ballet.” He has recently run into fresh controversy for his ardent pro-Putin views and also Instagram posts calling for the slapping of fat people and criticizing gay dancers for being too effeminate and “an embarrassment”.

He is embarking on his first tour of Russia since gaining a Russian passport late last year with his own dance project called “Sacred”. His tour comes after he last month lost a plum role in Swan Lake at the Paris Opera Ballet due to his Instagram posts, which the troupe’s artistic director Aurelie Dupont said were not in keeping with the company’s values. Britain’s The Telegraph suggested that Polunin’s career had plunged to an “unrecoverable nadir”.

But Polunin, who has continued to post similar content on Instagram, is unrepentant, saying that his posts are misunderstood and he should have the right to freedom of speech. “I never regret

anything and I do things as I feel,” says the dancer who speaks in an English that sounds both London and Russian-accented, adding: “I don’t really think about consequences.” “It just proves a little bit that we don’t really have freedom of speech,” he claims of the reaction to his posts. “In the West, you say one wrong thing it doesn’t matter how talented you are, they just destroy (you).”

‘I’m all about change’

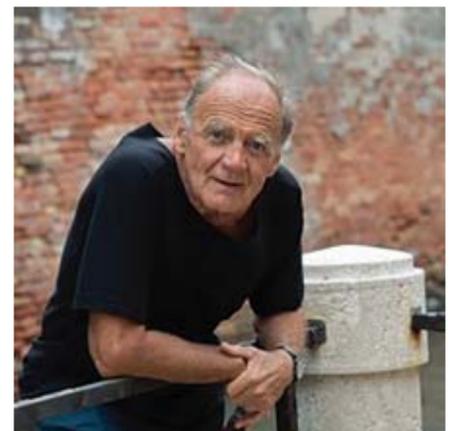
He repeats the views he expressed in one of the posts that lost him his Swan Lake role. “I want man to be man and woman to be woman,” says the dancer who lists his heroes as “macho” actors such as Mickey Rourke and Johnny Depp. He denies he was denigrating gay dancers. “It’s not about being gay or straight it’s about feminine and masculine energy and men shouldn’t be weak,” he says, particularly in ballet where “nobody wants to see weakness on stage”.

Zimbabwean legendary novelist Charles Mungoshi, dies at 71

Zimbabwean revered and internationally celebrated novelist and poet Charles Mungoshi has died aged 71, after a long illness, his family said on Saturday. “He had been ill for 10 years, from a neurological condition to which he succumbed this morning at Parirenyatwa Hospital (in Harare),” the family said in a statement. He published 18 books including “Coming of the Dry Season”, a 1972 collection of short stories which was banned under colonial rule in the then Rhodesia. His novel “Waiting for the Rain” 1975 won him the International PEN Award.

Twice he won the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize of Best Book in Africa and also received the Noma Award for Writing from Africa four times. His works included novels, plays, poetry and short story collections in English and his native Shona language. Some of his works have been translated into various languages including German, Russian and Japanese. His Shona novel “Ndiko Kupindana Kwamazuva”, loosely meaning how time passes, was translated into French.

In 2011, one of his poems was on permanent display at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation headquarters in Seattle. He was also a stage actor, literary editor and translator. “Zimbabwe has lost a great writer. He was a writer of integrity and sensitivity who understood the weight of words,” his publisher Irene Staunton of Weaver Press, said. Born in the southern rural farming region of Chivhu on December 2, 1947, Mungoshi is survived by his wife Jejesi and five children.—AFP



Swiss actor Bruno Ganz dead at 77

Bruno Ganz, the Swiss actor who gave a masterful performance as Adolf Hitler in “Downfall”, has died aged 77, his agent said yesterday. Ganz, who died at his home in Zurich, had a distinguished career on screen and stage before his 2004 appearance in “Downfall”, which unfolds over the final, suffocating days inside Hitler’s bunker. For many critics his nuanced portrayal of the fascist tyrant that veers between explosive and sombre was unparalleled. Hitler is a figure that German-speaking actors had historically been reluctant to take on and the Zurich-born Ganz conceded that being Swiss provided a necessary buffer. “It helped me also that I am not German, because I could put my passport between Hitler and me,” Ganz told The Arts Desk website in 2005.—AFP



Ukrainian-born ballet dancer and actor Sergei Polunin, 29-years-old, shows his tattoos, the one depicting Russian President Vladimir Putin and the other featuring the Ukrainian national trident symbol, during an interview in Moscow. — AFP photos