



TRACES OF THE SEA
סימני ים
DROR MAAYAN
דרור מעיין



TRACES OF THE SEA

Dror Maayan walks on the beach and tries to define to himself, through observation and photography, the essence of boundaries. Everything meets here: water and sky, sand and waves, man and nature, nature and man's nature, and also - sublime beauty and shameful ugliness.

"Traces of the Sea" are, in his own words, "all those things that encircle the sea, that come in touch with it, that go into it and come out of it... Same as symptoms of illness, they are also all those things the sea vomits up after we have forced it to swallow them, yet they are also those organic things it digests and discharges."

Maayan works in a way similar to that of the movie photographer. He documents the appearing reality from various distances, from the "long shot" up to the extreme detailed close-up. The integrative picture is therefore built up of several layers of information, whose interplay provides a complete assembly, presenting the subject in its various aspects. This way of seeing things demonstrates that observation of a piece of landscape from a distance may be deluding, and getting really close is necessary in order to experience the reality in its various elements and instants, whether they be beautiful, or unpleasant.

A dramatic, sublime landscape in which the scintillating surface of the water meets a heavy gathering of clouds, thus creating an exciting stormy picture, presents an ideal possibility, a soulful gift, yet it is undoubtedly not the whole truth. And thus it is revealed that Maayan's photographs feed on the tension existing between the look at the wide landscape and the attention turned on the details in that very landscape, under your very nose, so to speak, and throw at our face the sad story in which we humans perform an ugly destructive role vis-à-vis our own world.

Is it possible to attribute to these photographs the cliché that says that there is beauty in every object and it is the artist's mission to find it and give it expression in his creative work? Is there any beauty in a shrimp bag the sea cast on the sand or maybe the beauty is imbued in the mere thought-stirring, ironical idea that the sight itself arouses in us? It seems that Maayan reacts with an ample range of feelings and thoughts: he feels committed to describe such wastage and the remains of life that both nature and man produce, but at the same time he is not ready to give up on the capability to be surprised and excited by sights of beauty, splendor and power.

Peter Henry Emerson (1856 - 1936), considered by many to be the father of direct photography, claimed that photography is an independent art having unique properties, that should be used and emphasized. He was against all attempts to view photography as similar to drawing, engraving or painting. He kept fervently claiming that whoever is unable to recognize "pictures" in nature will never be able to be an artistic photographer.

Dror Maayan apparently works in that spirit, and it may be correct to state that the principles of naturalistic photography from the beginnings of the twentieth century suit his personality. He directly photographs the subject itself, devoid of any masks or artificial effects, without overburdening it with any interpretation, without any need for camera or lighting tricks. These are simple, direct photographs, not intended to emphasize the photographer and his mannerisms, but, by means of his camera, to capture and frame the pictures caught by his glance.

Avraham Eilat