

Petzel

Eleanor Heartney, "Yael Bartana," *ArtNews*, May 2015, p. 114.



Yael Bartana, *Inferno*, 2013, Alexa camera transferred onto HD video, 22 minutes.

Yael BARTANA

PETZEL GALLERY
JANUARY 8 - FEBRUARY 14

Israeli artist Yael Bartana is best known for her video trilogy, *And Europe Will be Stunned* (2007–11), that chronicles a fictional movement to bring Jews back to Poland. In two new videos, she continues to play with transplanted traditions and hybrid identities, but this time, mixing more fact with the fiction. *True Finn* (2014) is an engaging work that documents a social experiment in which eight Finnish residents—a Somali Muslim immigrant, a native of Japan, a Roma woman, and even a couple of native-born Finns—come together to explore the question, Who is a true Finn? This has gained urgency as right-wing nationalists attempt to exclude “outsiders” from Finnish citizenship. Mixed with clips from vintage Finnish films brimming with ethnic stereotypes, the film concludes that nationality is more a matter of choice than birth.

Bartana’s second video here, *Inferno* (2013), is visually quite different. It has the stylized slickness of a Hollywood epic, but it is also about transplantation, this time of a replica of the ancient Temple of Jerusalem, which was built by Evangelical Christians in São Paulo, Brazil. Bartana reimagines the destruction of a replica of the replica, giving an apocalyptic spin to a defining event in Jewish history. In her retelling, the followers are multiethnic Brazilians scattered to the four winds as part of a diaspora that is as much modern as historical.

ELEANOR HEARTNEY