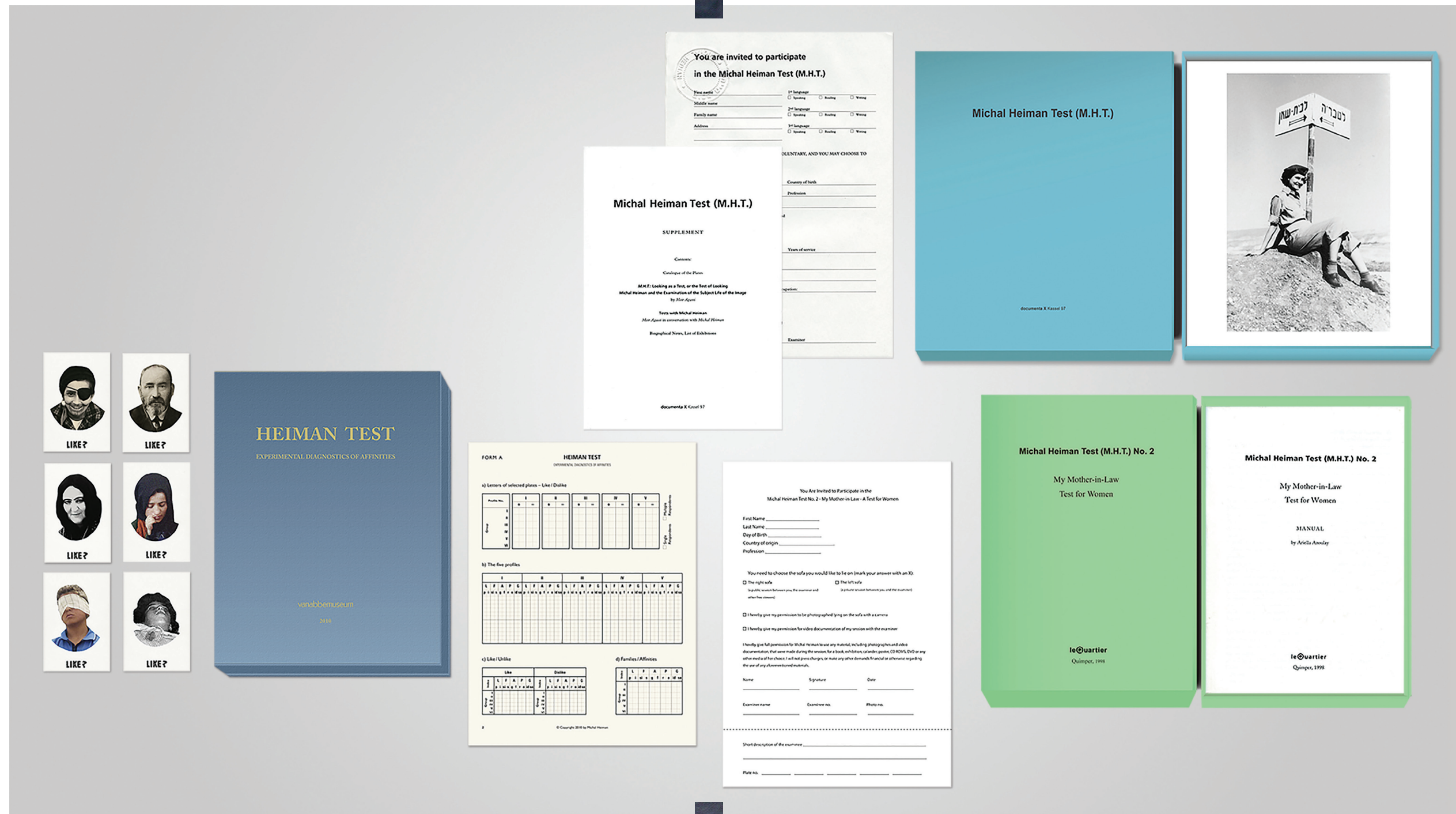


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IMAGES

1. Michal Heiman, *Radical Link: A New Community of Women, 1855-2022, Mask: "Plate 34: My Self," detail from a manipulated photograph by Dr. Hugh W. Diamond, 1855, 2016, photograph. Courtesy of the artist.*
2. Michal Heiman, *Plate 34 My Self*, 2016, digitally manipulated ready-made and stamp on a photograph by Digitally detail from a manipulated Dr. Hugh W. Diamond, 1855. Courtesy of the artist.
3. Michal Heiman, *Female Infiltrators – San Servolo Asylum, Venice, 2020*, video still, HD video, color, sound, 11:00 min, looped. Actors: Emily Heiman, Michal Heiman, camera: Michal Heiman and Meir Rackotz, editing: Yasmin Verdi, sound editing: Daniel Meir, color editing: Peleg Levi. Courtesy of the artist.
4. Michal Heiman, *Radical Link: A New Community of Women, 1855-2022, Noureldin Musa (b. Bendisea, 1976) asylum seeker, photographer, lives in Toronto, 2015, photograph. Courtesy of the artist.*
5. Michal Heiman, *Michal Heiman Test No.1* (1997), *Michal Heiman Test No.2* (1998), *Michal Heiman Test No.4* (2010), Photographs & printed material. Courtesy of the artist.
6. Michal Heiman, *Michal Heiman Test No.2*, 1998, enactment, Le Quartier, Quimper, France. Photo: Alan La Noel. Courtesy of the artist.



MICHAL HEIMAN: CHRONICALLY LINKED

September 8 – December 10, 2022

Binghamton University Art Museum



Michal Heiman (b. 1954, based in Tel Aviv) is an artist, curator, member of the Tel-Aviv Institute for Contemporary Psychoanalysis, theorist, and activist whose work inhabits the spaces between art and therapy, photography and diagnosis, theory and praxis. As installations, video, sound, photography, performance, and archival displays, her work has been shown in venues such as the University of Melbourne Museum of Art, Documenta X (Kassel), Le Quartier (Quimper), The Jewish Museum (New York), The Museum of Modern Art (Saitama City), The Van Abbe Museum (Eindhoven), Museum Ludwig (Cologne), the American University Museum (Washington DC), and the American Jewish University (Los Angeles).

Reflecting on her practice, Heiman notes:

Over the years I have attempted to examine the differences and (mostly problematic) commonalities between psychoanalytic writing (its need for camouflage, obfuscation and erasure, case study publication, projective tests, [an] oscillation between truth and fiction), writing about visual culture (transitions between research and fictional discourses, combination of verbal and visual texts, use of photography as evidence), and the practice of photography (questions of ethics, the analogy to the analyst/analysand relationship, unknown photographers).*

In recent years, Heiman has focused on anonymous and marginalized women hospitalized in asylums. These projects found their genesis in 2013 when Heiman, doing research for another project, encountered a photograph of a young woman taken around 1855 at the Surrey County Lunatic Asylum in London by Dr. Hugh Welch Diamond. A few years later, Heiman found her gaze in the eyes of Maria Dominica D'Alberto, whom Oreste Bertani photographed at the San Servolo Asylum in Venice in January 1880.

Heiman knows that the sitters were photographed in the nineteenth century, yet, while looking at the photographs, she has no doubt that it's her in London in 1855 and again in Venice in 1880. This dissociative free-fall through time forms the basis of her current projects. While Heiman recognizes the impossibility of it, she simultaneously insists on it as truth and feels compelled to examine the implications of this repeated return, this slippage in time and space. Heiman recognized a version of herself in both images, thus setting her on a path to recontextualize the photographs through her artistic process and research. In particular, she considers the political, cultured, gendered, and psychic conditions of "return." Heiman's work has always been both political and personal. Echoing the 1960s, second-wave feminist rallying cry "the personal is political," Heiman has explored the "right of return," intensely charged in the Israeli-Palestinian context, through a process of "returning to herself" as she engages with archival material.

* Michal Heiman, "Through the Visual: A Tale of Art That Attacks Linking, 1917–2008," in *Michal Heiman: Attacks on Linking* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 2008), 166.

Heiman also explores her life through psychoanalysis, importing diagnostic and psychoanalytic methods into her artistic practice. Her *Michal Heiman Tests (M.H.T.s)* are modeled after the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) (*M.H.T. 1* and *M.H.T. 2*) and Szondi Test (*M.H.T. 4*). Both were devised in the 1930s and focused on patients' interpretations of plates featuring ambiguous images. Heiman's conceptual works, themselves grounded in the practice of photography, are composed of archival detritus salvaged by the artist and activated in performance. In the process, the museum becomes, in turn, an intimate and aesthetic analytic space. In doing so, Heiman points to problematic elements of selfhood endemic to the practices of both psychoanalysis and photography.

The associations between analyst and analysand, artist and viewer are manifest in the physicality and performances of the *M.H.T.s*, concepts that are also chronically linked to the themes and slippages of return in Heiman's other project on view, *Radical Link: A New Community of Women*.

A related small exhibition, *Unconventional Care: The Mission of the NYS Inebriate Asylum*, currently on view in the Lower Galleries, considers the histories of Binghamton's asylum.

— Claire L. Kovacs, Curator of Collections and Exhibitions

