

Press Release

Touchstones Nelson
Museum of Art and History



Media contact:

Stephanie Delnea, Communications Coordinator
Touchstones Nelson: Museum of Art and History
marketing@touchstonesnelson.ca
250.352.9813 x. 204

For immediate release

Exploring the world through Hester's eyes

Nelson, BC (August 1): Through vivid colours and a strange sadness, the odyssey is told of a small doll lost in the real world. This is the subject of *There Once was a Girl Named Hester and Other Damaged Kids*, a collection of paintings by Nelson-based Dutch/Israeli artist Amitai Ben David, which opens at the Nelson Museum on Friday, August 19.

The images in *Hester* were inspired by *Ziva the Doll*, a black and white Israeli children's book from the 1960s. Through *Hester*, Ben David explores the upbringing of his Jewish Dutch mother, Hester Trompetter, who, as a young girl was orphaned, and lived through the traumatic experiences of war - experiences that are both unique to his family history but universal in regards to impact and inheritance.

"I create settings where the individual is surrounded by both the beautiful and the toxic, where brushstrokes build images and deconstruct them simultaneously," Ben David writes in his artist statement. "[My] 'damaged' and scarred protagonists are balancing themselves in a disintegrating landscape, stumbling and rising. I depict a world where horror and beauty are entangled, where nature blossoms and burns away in fantastic shapes and colours."

As a father himself, Ben David sees *Hester* as an opportunity to explore feelings of vulnerability, dependency, courage, and belonging, as he watches his children grow and wade through challenging emotions, feelings and experiences - not unlike the subjects in his paintings.

"There is a dissonance to these works, both abstract and familiar, sing-song sweet and sinister, and the story they tell is a compounded and diasporic fairy tale of sorts, about people both real and imagined," says Nelson Museum Curator Arin Fay.

Ben David was born in Israel in 1966, holds a Fine Arts Doctorate from the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts & Music, and has been exhibiting his work around the world since 1990.

There Once was a Girl Named Hester and Other Damaged Kids runs August 20 to November 5, 2022. For more information about the exhibitions and other events and programming at the museum, visit touchstonesnelson.ca