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Art review: Nira Pereg at Shoshana Wayne

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Nira Pereg's three-channel video, "Kept Alive," is an engrossing meditation on some of the physical and social implications of death and burial in Israeli society. Projected in an asymmetrical arrangement on two adjacent walls at Shoshana Wayne, it documents everyday activities at the Jerusalem cemetery, Mountain of Rest.

Yet the piece is anything but restful. One screen shows a continuous loop of a man digging a grave, filling the room with an almost constant drone of scraping and scuffing. On the other two screens, long shots of the hillside cemetery – a veritable city of concrete tombs – are interspersed with scenes of mausoleum construction, weed cutting, stone clearing and the carving of grave markers.



(<https://latimesblogs.latimes.com/.a/6a00d8341c630a53ef01287721aba1970c-pi>)

These markers, it turns out, are not tombstones but merely labels indicating plots purchased for future use. They read simply in Hebrew, "Kept Alive."



(<https://latimesblogs.latimes.com/.a/6a00d8341c630a53ef0120a81ef374970b-pi>)

monotonous physical labor that goes into caring for the dead. On one hand this speaks to the importance of tradition and memory in Israeli society. On the other, it reminds us that the houses of the dead are not so different from those of the living – built, cleaned and maintained by an otherwise invisible underclass.

– Sharon Mizota

Shoshana Wayne, 2525 Michigan Ave. B1, Santa Monica, (310) 453-7535, through Feb. 27. Closed Sundays and Mondays. www.shoshanawayne.com (<http://www.shoshanawayne.com>)

Image: Kept Alive. Photo credit: Courtesy Shoshana Wayne Gallery / Michael Spezialy.