



Daniel Rothbart, as part of an ongoing conceptual project, carries a series of twelve metal vessels with him on his travels to different countries. The artist selects environments in which to arrange these vessels, and documents the resulting tableaux with photographs. His vessels, due to the intervention of unpredictable outside factors, are filled with transient meanings which open them to new interpretations and effectively shift their meanings. In Israel, at the Gallery of the Herzliya Artist's Residence, Rothbart will exhibit a series of photographs taken in different environments (with a travelling circus, itinerant street vendors, in parks, city streets, and urban environments) that represent an earlier stage of his work in progress. He will also stage *Meditation/Mediation*, a performance project that was originally conceived for the Baruchello Foundation in Rome. For this performance, three large metal vessels will be installed in the gallery. People from the art community and members of the public will be invited to sound one of the vessels with a striker and then improvise in a manner of their own choosing. The performance will be complete when every participant has sounded the vessel a second time. In the words of Carla Subrizi, the "transitory nature of meaning, uncer-

tainty, nomadism, and geographic and semantic uprooting are central elements to Daniel Rothbart's project." The *Meditation/Mediation* performance explores and at times challenges traditional relationships between the artist, artwork, and the public.

Daniel Rothbart's work creates a new paradigm for art through a conceptual project which evades the self-referential condition of *l'art pour l'art*, favoring a cultural dynamic which opens new potential for meaning. In Rothbart's work, myth lends renewed power and substance to the concept of the "Sacred" as an interactive space, in which cultural signs and ciphers acquire form. His work with vessels is informed by a cultural memory bound to the realm of myth and historical sedimentation of collective consciousness. "Semiotic Street Situations," a term invented by the artist, and more recently the *Meditation/Mediation* project, both define and set the stage for social and cultural exchanges. Within these projects, collective spiritual and emotional aspirations take form and resonate. Daniel Rothbart, developing ever greater relationships between people and objects in the world, works not only with the concept of the Sacred but also myths from popular culture, cinema, and

Meditation/Mediation for Daniel Rothbart

Enrico Pedrini



art. These myths animate his theater of life and culture. Memory in the work of this artist is not an eternal return or familiar device but a means to touch that reality which is stratified in the sediment of cultural identity. Rothbart's art is not determined by a formal statute but through intuitive practice which replaces both the representation of and simple appropriation of reality in nature. □

Insight/Oversight, an exhibition of new work by Daniel Rothbart, curated by Varda Genossar, will be on view at the Herzliya Artist's Residence Gallery from December 29 through January 29, 2004. The Herzliya Artist's Residence is located at 7 Yodffat Street, Herzliya Israel, Tel. 972 9951 0601.