

VIENNESE COFFEE HOUSE/ Das Wiener Kaffeehaus episode 10 / in conversation with Shira Richter on the 17th of May 2021 Tel Aviv - Amsterdam

About:

A conversation in a Kaffeehaus travels. My Kaffeehaus is an idea, an abstract of a Viennese coffee house. Now, because of the limitations to travel, the Viennese coffee house takes place in my studio in Amsterdam. Opening hours are time restricted. Appointments are made beforehand.

Humanist, Womanist, Motherist, **artist**, filmmaker, Photographer, Writer and Independent scholar, **Shira Richter** and me- **Barbara Philipp**, a visual artist who works with drawing, painting and performances, came together in my Viennese Coffee House to talk publicly about what is supposed to be kept silent: the complexity of feelings in the midst of extreme terror and violence. From the sky, the streets, the neighbour. The quiet around us was misleading, because, Shira didn't know if a siren will go off in the middle of our conversation*, but we started anyway.

"No one asked me if I wanted to go to war. No one asked me if I have thoughts about the situation. Or how it feels to play Russian roulette with fear of death. Even though I have been researching and living the subject of war-women-and-mothers for almost two decades, my feelings views and ideas don't mean anything to anyone. So I want to talk. To the few women who are willing listen".

Shira Richter's ongoing work to expose the invisible obstacles to understanding, and her artistic and multidisciplinary research regarding the socio-economic status of mothers in society, developed from the Award winning film she made several years ago, called **Two States of Mind**.

The research question behind her film was: "Where are women's voices regarding the violent conflict which affects us and our families?" (Echoing U.N. resolution 1325, which calls for inclusion of women at the negotiation tables in regions of conflict). "We produce, create and sustain most lives, how is it we are not at the table when the danger of hurting these lives is on the table?"

[link to Two States of Mind](#)

Binary Thinking

"We scholars talk a lot about the danger of binary thinking. Well- ***War is the most extreme act and result of binary thinking.*** Because there is a "They" and an "Us". That's all. But that's a lie our leaders tell us. Taking sides is just what the powers want us to do, so that we forget to notice what really is happening. Beware of taking sides. It is a trap.

Erasure of the Mother

During our meeting we mentioned the missing and erased mother (**Hot Potato Called Mama-** her work for The MotherLoad project in Dallas) and the reasons for Shira's recent silence.

"During mothering adolescents, I, a feminist who believes in speaking up- became more and more silent. I was doing what is called "self-censorship". This made me realize yet another reason for the erasure of mothers; Our struggle to be a subjective and independent being crashes on the rocks of adolescence. There are many reasons for it. Some are mentioned here.

The MotherPolitic

What would happen if (Good enough) mothers experience and knowledge was honored as knowledge- at negotiation tables in areas of conflict?

Richter's paper [The Motherbody Model: an Invitation for a Care Based Work Ethic](#) (link) (Published in the Demeter book "Inappropriate Bodies" Edited by Rachel Ep Buller and Charles Reeves), is a key work describing an alternative way to the destructive economical and patriarchal corporate system.

Where are their parents?

Is a question I can't stand. Our children are educated not only by us, the parents, but also by society (Schools, media, internet) and their peers, to whom they want to belong and to be esteemed."

We do not come into the world alone

The Mother Body expresses something we tend to forget. Contrary to popular opinion, which has become sort of an axiom; We DO NOT come into the world alone. We come into the world in a woman's body, with a woman's being, heart and soul.

*The way it did in her session with [Desperate Artwives](#).