

**Discussion – Thursday, 27 September 2018, 19:30, ICI Berlin, in English**

Nathan: "My parents still call me, even today,  
asking "so, what about a boyfriend?"  
I tell them, "listen, I have a boyfriend every day!  
Every day I have a new boyfriend".  
And then the question is of course,  
"do you want to be alone?"

And this is another reason  
why it is better to live in this country [Germany],  
where being alone is not the Mark of Cain.

Sexual orientation and left-wing political affiliation often play significant roles in decisions to leave Israel. Queer Israelis question nationalist and heteronormative expectations regarding army service, monogamy, and procreation. A general despair over the current political situation and the collapse of democracy further motivate their departures and leave many feeling that they don't belong to the Israeli national collective, while Berlin is frequently celebrated as a cosmopolitan and unassuming city where LGTB people can live in peace.

Hila Amit argues that queer Israeli emigrants, in their decision to depart, undermine Zionist ideology as well as change the obvious paths of resistance to Zionism. In stepping out of the territory of Israel, they avoid the Zionist demand to perform as strong, masculine courageous citizens. But the left-wing resistance to the regime is just as committed to a heroic ideal – the willingness to take part in often violent demonstrations and risk imprisonment or injury. Amit recognizes the vulnerability of the emigrants, who can no longer bear the hardship of the life offered to them in Israel. To be explored, then, is the political potential of passivity and unheroic conduct. As Adi, one of the participants of the study, puts it: "I've been an activist for 10 years. I can't live there anymore. People come to Berlin to heal, that's why some people call it the Berlin Sanatorium."

The discussion builds on the contributions to *A Queer Way Out – The Politics of Israeli Emigration* (SUNY, 2018), an award-winning study by Hila Amit. The evening presents an opportunity to hear both from the author and the participants of the study and hence the rare chance to discuss the product of a long-term research project with the subjects of the research themselves.

An ICI Event in cooperation with the Jewish Museum Berlin

**Organized by  
Hila Amit and  
Claudia Peppel**

**With  
Hila Amit  
Yossi Bartal  
Gil Kremmer  
Ruth Preser**



IMAGE CREDIT: NAOMI SAFRAN HON

# Queer Israelis in Berlin

**Belonging, Resistance,  
and the Politics of Emigration**



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