

This Is Not Uganda

This Is Not Uganda, a 72-page graphic novel, is a travelogue and account of several journeys made by Tine Fetz in Israel, as she is confronted by day-to-day life in the country: strolling along apartment complexes in Ashkelon, hanging out at friends' homes, wandering through colonies and the occupied territories, traveling along the shores of the Dead Sea, visiting punk concerts in Jerusalem, and observing mass protests for social justice in Tel Aviv - always making herself invisible, a wallflower.

The intermittent texts, quoting historic political speeches, Eurovision and Punk songs, memorable sentences from her close friends, and proclamations of the social-protest leader Daphni Leef, go side by side with her subtle black-and-white ink illustrations. As a tourist and resident of Israel, Tine follows the ideological discourse of nineteenth-century European Jewry's debate over a possible Jewish „homeland“ through Herzl's vision of the youth as leaders, as it was delivered from his balcony. Fast-forward to present day, statements about affinity for a homeland prise apart the bond between Land and State. One innocent scene, presented with a half-smile, captures linguistic absurdity in the public domain where marching protesters on the empty streets are shown against the background of the „smart“ answer to the city's parking problem, titled „urban movement“. Through vacant lots and overcrowded housing projects, Tine blurs the boundaries of time. A trail of travelers roaming the landscape becomes an endless walk in the desert. As a camping tent out in the wild merges with a protest tent where protests are demanding affordable housing in the city, a feeling of transience and temporariness hovers above the pages of the book. The representation of coffeehouse-culture, traditionally a space for political debate, reflects a mood slung somewhere between boredom and frustration, while the leisure of bathing in the beach, sea or spring is somehow constantly accompanied by a military presence that is unnerving, even if it is accidental. Israel-not-Uganda is marketed as a bizarre destination for the German tourist, blending images of Lemon Popsicle, cucumbers, depression, Goldstar beer, champagne, Punk, and black coffee. For one awkward and fascinating moment, the hipster's (Herzl) beard and ultra-Orthodox beard become one.

Tine's graphic novel offers a journey through a place that is also a state of mind.