



Camouflaged landscape, Revisiting Museutopia

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This triptych is composed of two parts. On the sides is a photo I took at The National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History in Chisinau (2009), and in the middle is a photograph I took at the History of the IDF Museum, which was dismantled in 2019. It was the largest military museum in Israel, established on an army base in Tel Aviv in 1988. Initially, it exhibited a trophy weapons collection right after the end of the First Israel-Lebanon War and later expanded to house an immense weapons collection of more than 4,000 items.

The National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History is historically the oldest and most significant scientific museum in Moldova, opened in 1904. Over the years, it went through many phases, and after the fall of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the independent Republic of Moldova, a new vision of Moldovan history had to be presented to the public. It took about four years to develop the permanent exhibition, which was created following a UNESCO manual. The

museum presents the creation of the universe from the Moldovan perspective, both scientifically and theologically. The hall in the photograph depicts the four corners of the Moldovan landscape. What you see is a realistic painting on the wall of the Prut River delta and its typical exotic wildlife, with a three-dimensional topographical scale model in the center. What is important to note—and what adds a twist to its meaning—is that Transnistria is located exactly there. This was the first instance, in 1990, when Russia created a disruption in Moldova, establishing the first independent republic supported by Russia but unrecognized by any other country in the world. The same geopolitical dynamics occurred between Russia and Ukraine in 2014.

What was striking about the IDF Museum in Tel Aviv was that, despite being the largest of its time, it was not designed by professional exhibition designers and lacked a clear vision of its mission statement and visual language. It was divided into 16 thematic pavilions, roughly corresponding to the various branches of the land forces (The Air Force and the Navy have their own separate museums elsewhere). A large section was dedicated to trophy weapons taken from Arab armies, along with a pavilion specifically for weapons captured from Palestinian organizations.

The mannequin wearing the camouflage uniform was displayed in the Israeli chain of supply pavilion at the former IDF Museum.

The essence of the triptych lies in the visual connection between the soldier's uniform, the topographical model, and the poignant landscape painted on the wall.

Frame	None
Medium	Digital Print on Canvas
Location	Cape Town, South Africa
Height	181.00 cm
Width	373.00 cm
Artist	Ilya Rabinovich
Year	2024

