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"A Corridor in the Sport Center," 2012.

"Reflection of a Glass Panel," 2011.

"A Hall in Belgium House," 2012.

Ellie Armon Azoulay / Photos by Dana Arieli-Horowitz

UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

Throughout her academic life, Prof. Dana Arieli-Horowitz visited the Hebrew University Givat Ram campus many times, but only after taking 4,000 photographs did she really begin to see it. Forty of the photos are now on show at Jerusalem's Artists House

Prof. Dana Arieli-Horowitz has engaged in photography as a sideline for years. So it's not surprising that her first solo show, "Closer Than they Appear: Givat Ram" – on at the Artists House in Jerusalem through June 15 – was shot entirely at the city's Givat Ram university campus.

In the exhibition, Arieli-Horowitz is showing 40 photographs, carefully selected from the more than 4,000 she took over the past three years. The title of this lovely exhibit reflects the closeness Arieli-Horowitz feels to the campus, which she first became acquainted with while studying for her high-school matriculation exams and where she later completed her doctoral dissertation.

Arieli-Horowitz, 50, used to run the history and theory department at Bezalel – Academy of Arts and Design, and is currently dean of the design faculty at the Holon Technological Institute.

She took up photography in 1984, enrolling in photography classes at Jerusalem's Camera Obscura school, but didn't stay for long. She found the classes too pretentious, so changed tack and became a philosophy and political science major. Exactly 20 years later, in 2004, when she began working at Bezalel, she planned to enroll in photography classes again. But it didn't work out that time, either.

"Given the state of the department at the time," she recalls now, "I realized it would be an impossible luxury. But in 2009 I finally went for it. I officially became a student and started studying photography. I didn't study for a degree – at that point it seemed ridiculous – but I did study for three years."

The first assignment she was given in the first year turned out to be the starting point for the current exhibition. "We were told to return to a place that we know well. While everyone else went home, to their apartments, and documented their student life – I was drawn back here, to Givat Ram. To this familiar place that, despite the many years I spent there, I still felt I didn't really know."

Arieli-Horowitz wasn't aiming for an external-formal record of the buildings, architecture or landscaping. She wanted to get at the more hidden, unkempt aspects, those below – or above – the surface.

She attributes this choice to the many years of research she devoted to the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, which she conducted at the library there. "I learned a lot about the background scenes [of the murder]. If not for those scenes, Yigal Amir couldn't have murdered Rabin," she says.

Arieli-Horowitz requested permission to photograph freely on campus, and was assigned a security escort. He helped her climb on roofs in order to photograph, to get into basements, etc.

Curator and photographer Ariel Caine writes in the current exhibit: "Givat Ram is revealed as a place thick with mystery and secrets that hover in the space between the seen and the unseen."

The show is accompanied by a catalog, with essays by Caine, Eyal Chowers, Naomi Meiri-Dan, Miki Kratsman and Ezri Tarazi.