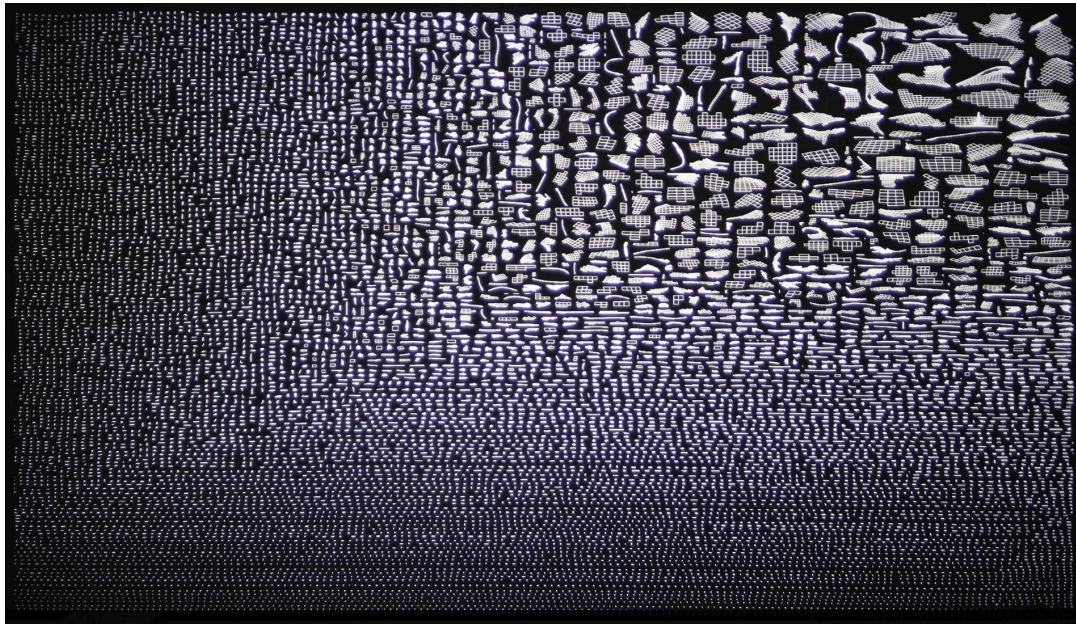


Body Language

In the series *Body Maps*, artist Carmi Dror feeds three-dimensional models of human bones into a digital mapping software, which deconstructs them into as many two-dimensional fragments as possible. Dror instructed the software to arrange the skull fragments, which are presented before us in their flattened form.

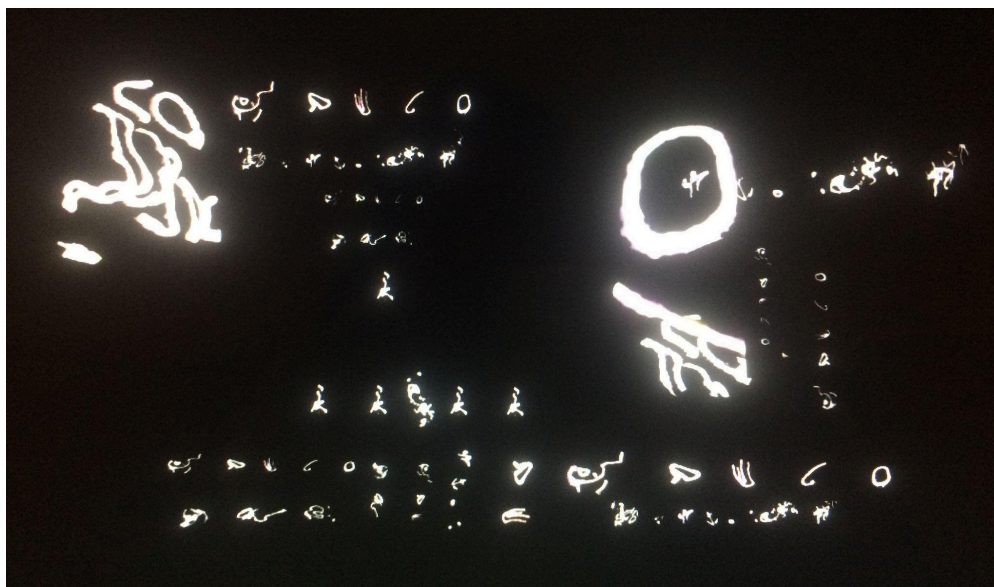


Human Skull, archival pigment print, 2018

In works such as *Human Skull* (2018) and *Human Hand #1* (2019), squares, triangles, and various geometric shapes are meticulously organized in rows and columns, from smallest to largest. Observing the shapes that constitute the bone fragments, the geometric order resembles a list of symbols. The viewer seeks to read, examine, and establish a sequence within the existing arrangement, searching for logic in the forms. Yet, the list of symbols remains ambiguous. The structured sequence contrasts with the lack of meaning and uncertainty, leaving the viewer unsure of where to begin deciphering it. The notion that these countless symbols form human body parts—a skull, a hand—heightens the challenge faced by the observer, whose desire to recognize and connect is left unfulfilled. In the attempt to derive meaning from the sequence, to impose logic on the linear rows, and to transcend from material space into the realm of meaning—where a symbol forms a word and perhaps, ultimately, an answer—the viewer is left silent, in a state of incomprehension. The list of symbols generated by the software illustrates how human parts are constructed. While one may read and perhaps perceive them as order and form, they remain (as of yet) without content.

The interplay between digital and analog language, between computer and human perception, is central to Dror's work. She frequently employs digital software to examine the transition from the living, multidimensional world to its computational interpretation—as a symbol. She then breathes life back into this digitally rendered reality, presenting it as an image that invites inquiry into what was lost or transformed in the process. By depicting the bidirectional passage between three-dimensional and two-dimensional representations, Dror does not merely explore the relationship between objects and mapping software but broadens the question to examine the transition between technological and human realms: between the physical and the signified, and between the material and the immaterial—the emotional or the spiritual. In this sense, the dimensional shift presented in *Body Maps* can also be seen as a metaphor for transformations within photography and human language. Photographic imagery and written language both describe a transition between dimensions: from matter to spirit. But what happens when a photographic work or a written word remains unreadable and indecipherable?

This question arises when examining Dror's ongoing photographic series *Characters*, which she began in 2016. While *Body Maps* provides a technological perspective on the complexity of the human body model through an endless-seeming list of symbols, *Characters* explores movement—boiling water. Dror photographed the light reflections created by the motion of water in cooking pots. Using computer software, she extracted the traces of water's movement, resulting in images that appear as symbols. Although, as in *Body Maps*, these abstract shapes are unfamiliar, and the viewer once again struggles to assemble them into a coherent sequence or meaning, the method of their creation—as well as the series' title—hints at an answer.



Characters (study)

Unlike the symbols generated through computer-based three-dimensional mapping, *Characters* deals with change, movement, and difference. The symbols in this series demonstrate how each character differs from the next because it exists in a different moment, under different conditions—another pot, different lighting, a different home. Perhaps one can also think about how water moves differently each time it boils, each time it is placed in a cooking pot. The title of the series underscores this idea: it simultaneously means “symbols” or “letters” but also “character” or “personality.” Thus, the series’ title reinforces an additional layer of meaning—the symbol is indeed unique, but through its uniqueness, it also differs from others. The distinction derived from the movement of water and the varying cooking conditions in each instance may offer insight into the meaning within the symbols of this series. Rather than frustration over the inability to decode them, it suggests relinquishing the search for meaning through structured rules and invites the viewer to experience the image beyond coherent interpretation—to feel, much like encountering a person or a home, each possessing a distinct character.

With this perspective, one may return to the *Body Maps* compositions and perhaps relinquish the effort to decipher the language formed by its components. Although the series presents a digital mapping of skull and hand models—whose sum of parts remains identical from person to person—the essence of an individual defies absolute, orderly, or uniform definition. Carmi Dror’s artworks remind us that symbols, photographic images, letters, and words, despite being digital and seemingly subject to order and rule, are alive. As such, they exist within an infinite space of meaning that extends beyond the material components of the symbol itself. One might consider the two series together: the meaning of a cooked meal exists beyond nourishment or satiety and varies from person to person, from place to place. Just as one can deconstruct the skeletal structure into its individual parts, one cannot convey the meaning of the body through a single sign. In Dror’s works, technological forms and symbols lay bare the absence of a singular, definitive language or meaning. They signify and remind us that meaning is written freely, without hierarchy or fixed order—only as the heart chooses to read it.