

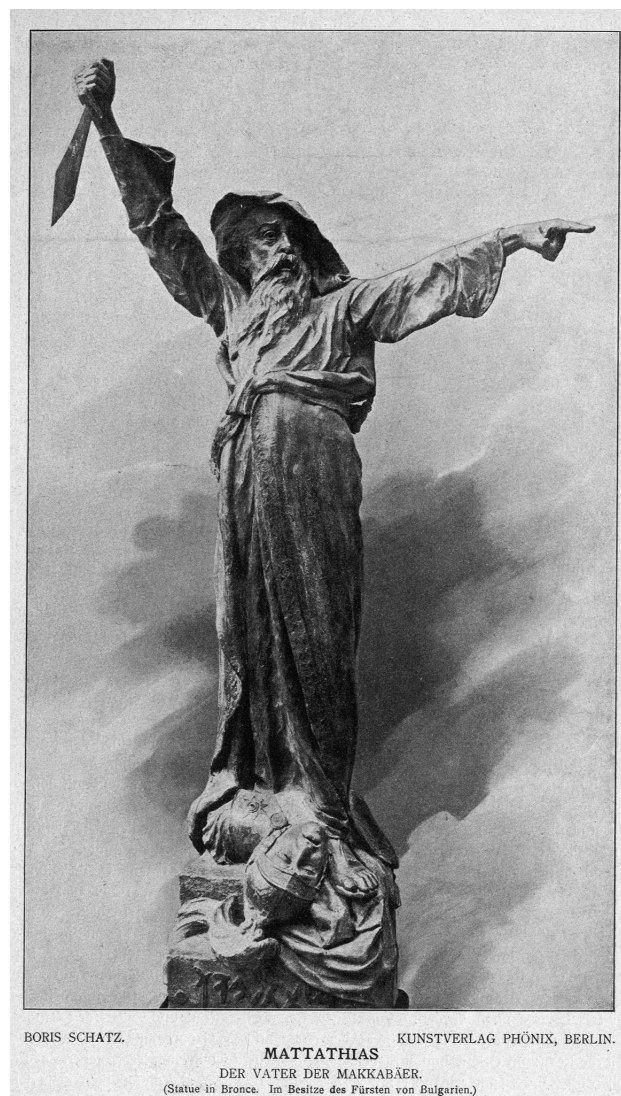
75 Works of Art

Choosing 75 works of art to commemorate [Israel's 75th anniversary](#) is daunting; Israel has a robust artistic scene that started well before the state's founding. Early Zionists such as [Martin Buber](#) considered art a key element in the Jewish people's rehabilitation. "A nation without art is not a nation," he declared. As is evident in this compilation, Israel has compensated for the historic dearth of a Jewish artistic tradition resulting from both Second Commandment prohibitions and historical circumstance. Indeed, since the founding of the [Bezalel Art Academy](#) in Jerusalem in 1906, Israel's art scene has flourished. This collection, while not a comprehensive survey, comprises a wide range of media and artists, including painting, sculpture and architecture, and reflects the vibrancy and complexity of life in Israel, as well as the rich sources from Jewish and Israeli history that inspired these works. My hope is that the compilation will be at once stimulating and uplifting.

— Dr. Susan Nashman Fraiman

1896 — *Mattiyahu*, Boris Schatz

[Boris Schatz](#) (1866-1932) is the father of Israeli art. Lithuanian born, he studied in Paris and was influenced by the Russian Jewish sculptor Mark Antokolsky. The drama and strength with which Schatz depicts the father of the Maccabees in this lost sculpture reflects Jewish vitality and agency and heralds both Zionism and a nascent desire to create a school of art for the Jewish people in Jerusalem. Schatz would found that school, [Bezalel](#), in 1906. (Image courtesy of Alec Mishory and [the Bezalel Narkiss Index of Jewish Art](#), Center for Jewish Art, Hebrew University of Jerusalem)



1906-1914 — Triple Arch Bezalel Rug: Abraham's Tamarisk, Mount Sinai and Herzl's Cypress

One of the first departments [Boris Schatz](#) (1866-1932) created at [Bezalel](#) was rug weaving. This rug, part of the collection of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, typifies that production with its unique design and conscious iconography, in which Mount Sinai is flanked by Abraham's tamarisk, as described in Genesis, and by the cedar [Theodor Herzl](#) planted in Motza. The lettering of the stylized caption, "Bezalel Jerusalem," reflects the Art Nouveau style of the school's early works. (Image courtesy of the [Tel Aviv Museum of Art](#), Recanati Fund for Acquisition of Israeli Art)

18.6



1923 — Triptych: First Fruits, Reuven Rubin

[Reuven Rubin](#) (1893-1974) was a well-established artist in his native Romania when he made aliyah in the 1920s. The light and atmosphere of the Land of Israel led to a striking change in his work — from a darker, more expressive language to a lighter palette, cleaner lines and a fresh outlook. In this large triptych, oil on canvas, in the Rubin Museum collection and currently on display in the Israel Museum, two couples of the [Yishuv](#) (the area of Jewish settlement) are contrasted with each other and the occupants of the side panels. The shepherd and sleeping Bedouin seem to be one with the earth; they are grounded. The kibbutz couple, harvesting the new fruits of the land, such as bananas, contrast with the more traditional fertility of the couple on the left. At their feet are shoots, symbolic of the new growth in the land. (Image copyright [the Rubin Museum](#), Tel Aviv)



1916-1925 — *The Chair of Elijah*, Ze'ev Raban, built at Bezalel School

This ceremonial chair in the collection of the Israel Museum, designed by Ze'ev Raban (1890-1970) and constructed over almost 10 years, epitomizes [Bezalel](#)'s work with its eclectic combination of materials and techniques from its workshops: worked leather, ivory, enamel, bronze, wood carving and mother-of-pearl inlay. This imposing object reverberates with symbols of Judaism — the Ten Commandments, the Twelve Tribes, the Lion of Judah — as well as a depiction of Elijah going to heaven in his chariot (II Kings 2:11). This chair was meant to be used at the circumcision ceremony, where Elijah, according to Jewish tradition, is always present. (Image by David Harris, copyright [the Israel Museum](#), Jerusalem; item purchased through the gift of Yossi Benyaminoﬀ, New York, to the American Friends of the Israel Museum)



1926 (circa) — Standing Hanukkah Lamp, Ze'ev Raban and Yehiya Yemini

[Boris Schatz](#) (1866-1932) brought Yemenite silversmiths to [Bezalel](#) as part of his desire to incorporate traditional Jewish metalwork techniques in the workshops. The youngest, Yehiya Yemini (1896-1983), started at Bezalel as a young boy and continued his craft, combining Yemenite technique with Bezalel style. This Hanukkah menorah, held by the North Carolina Museum of Art and used in the White House Hanukkah candle-lighting ceremony, is an example of that combination. The third generation of the Yemini family continues this tradition today. (Image courtesy of [the North Carolina Museum of Art](#), Raleigh)



1929 — *Les Fiancées*, Reuven Rubin

[Reuven Rubin](#) (1893-1974) met Esther, an American Jew who had won a prize to visit the Land of Israel and later to be his betrothed, while on a ship bound for Jaffa. In this oil painting in the Rubin Museum collection, the two sit on a balcony overlooking the [new city of Tel Aviv](#). On one side, an airplane, symbol of modernity, is seen over Jaffa; on the other, a sheep sits with them on their balcony, symbolizing both purity and the village life of the past. Esther clutches a bouquet, and Rubin holds a new, clean palette with which to start their new life together. (Image copyright [the Rubin Museum](#), Tel Aviv)



1930 (circa) — Self-Portrait, Boris Schatz

[Bezalel](#) founder [Boris Schatz](#) (1866-1932) was a visionary but lacked managerial skills. World War I forced Bezalel to close, and after it reopened in 1919 under [the British administration](#), the school employed the same methods and styles of art even though Jerusalem in particular and the art world in general had changed. Bezalel went bankrupt and closed in 1929. This oil self-portrait with a repoussé brass frame by Ze'ev Raban (1890-1970), part of the collection of the Schatz House, shows the brooding and perhaps bitter Schatz at the end of his life. He died on a fundraising trip in Denver. But Israel has an art scene today largely because of Schatz, and Bezalel, albeit in a different form, continues to educate artists. (Image courtesy of [the Schatz House](#), Jerusalem)



1928-1934 — *The Roaring Lion*, Abraham Melnikoff

Abraham Melnikoff (1892-1960) was a well-known figure in the art scene of [Mandatory Palestine](#), sculpting funerary stones, portrait busts and other works. This Galilee marble sculpture at Tel Hai commemorates the eight who [died defending the compound](#) in the winter of 1919-1920, among them [Joseph Trumpeldor](#). The lion roars in pain but is strong. It faces east, affirming that the Jewish people are part of the peoples of the ancient Near East and should aspire to continue in that tradition. Melnikoff and his wife are buried at the foot of this sculpture. (Image by Dr. Avishai Teicher, PikiWiki, [CC BY 2.5](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



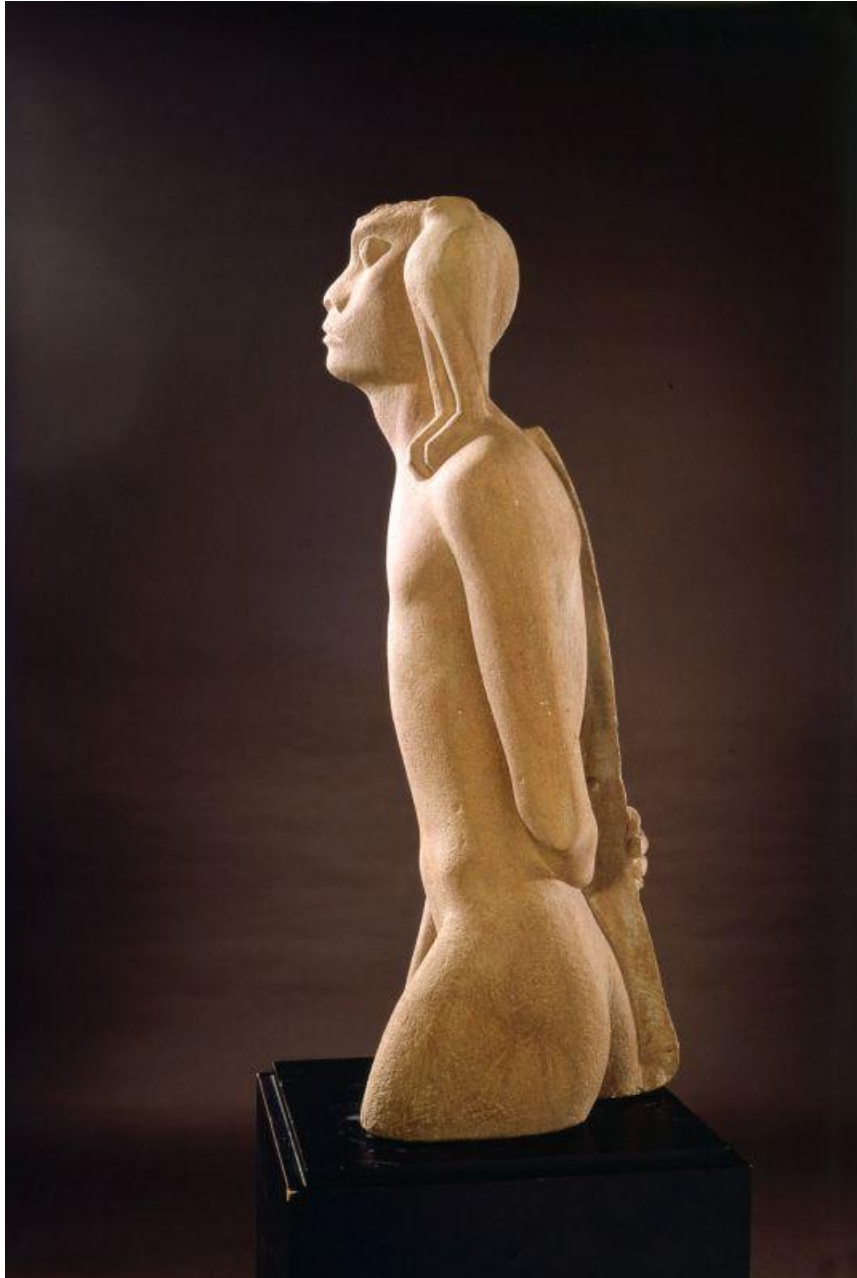
1929-1937 — *Monument to Work and Defense*, Batia Lishansky

Batia Lishansky (1899-1992) was a pioneering Zionist sculptor, and this sculpture in the Hulda Forest was the first of several memorial sculptures for which she received commissions. The Hulda agricultural station was attacked during the [riots of 1929](#), and three defenders were killed. By drawing the viewer's focus to the several tools at the base of the figures, Lishansky emphasizes the agricultural nature of the locale. At the dedication of the memorial, the hope was expressed that the land would be conquered by work and not by sword. (Image by Y.S., public domain, via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



1939 — *Nimrod*, Yitzhak Danziger

Yitzhak Danziger (1917-1977) probed the Semitic roots of the Jewish people. Born in Germany but raised in Tel Aviv, Danziger was part of the Canaanite movement, which aspired to meld into a greater pre-Abrahamic people. The choice of the subject for this statue, now at the Israel Museum, the mighty warrior Nimrod, and the use of the hard Nubian sandstone convey that idea. The falcon on Nimrod's shoulder, the club in his hand, the impassive, mysterious look on his face, and his naked torso all aroused passions in the [Yishuv](#). Nimrod symbolizes a native strength and vigor to which the young generation aspired. The Canaanites were a literary, artistic and even spiritual phenomenon that reached its peak with the [Palmach](#) generation but remained influential after that. (Image copyright [the Israel Museum](#), Jerusalem; gift of Dr. David H. Orgler, Zurich and Jerusalem)



1938-1941 — Alexander Zaid, David Polus

David Polus (1893-1975) emigrated from Poland to Palestine, where he spent his life as an itinerant artist. His figure of Alexander Zaid (1866-1938), the founder of HaShomer, a group dedicated to the self-defense of Jewish settlements in the Jezreel Valley and farther north, is a symbol of courage and determination. Zaid was instrumental in uncovering the burial caves at Bet Shearim and survived two attacks by local Arabs but not a third. This pre-state, figurative statue, recast in bronze in the 1970s and standing in Bet Shearim National Park, captures the strength and vision of those who risked everything to settle the land. (Image by De Hanay, own work, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



1947 — *Children of the Diaspora*, Zeev Ben-Zvi

Israel's first Holocaust memorial stands at Kibbutz Mishmar HaEmek, associated with one of the youth movements that led the resistance in the Warsaw ghetto. The kibbutz members built the monument themselves under the guidance of artist Zeev Ben-Zvi (1904-1952). The simple lines and lack of facial expression of the memorial reflect not only the artistic language of the day, but also an emotional restraint characteristic of that period. The focus is on the children who could not be saved. The area of the sculpture is called Diaspora Corner and is the site of the kibbutz's annual [Holocaust Day](#) ceremony. (Image by Dr. Avishai Teicher, PikiWiki Israel, [CC BY 2.5](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



1947 — *Sabbath on the Kibbutz*, Yohanan Simon

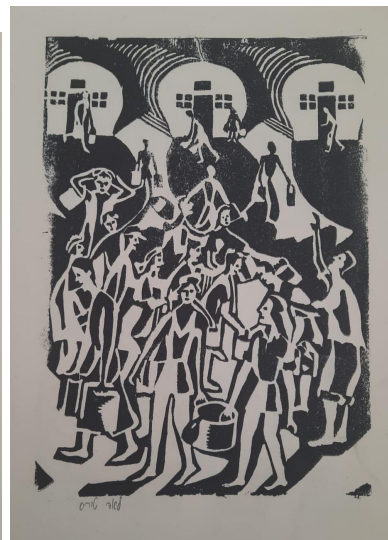
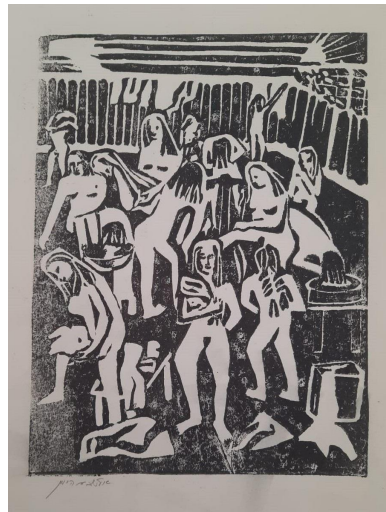
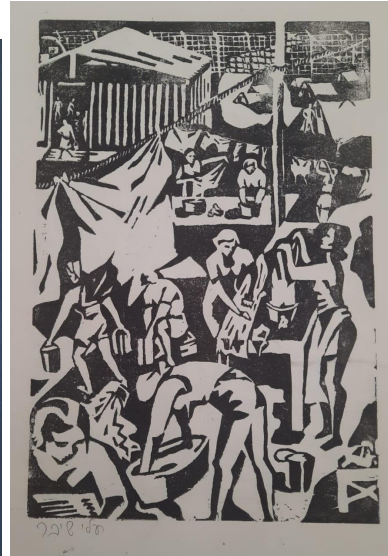
Idyllic kibbutz life was part of the romanticized founding ethos of Israel. The kibbutznikim were the elite, working the land. Sabbath, portrayed in this painting in the Tel Aviv Museum of Art by Yohanan Simon (1905-1976), was the only day off, a time when parents could see and play with their children, who lived in children's homes. Simon's figures are monumental, with little facial detail, befitting a collective philosophy that downplays individuality. Simon, who later left the kibbutz, was roundly criticized for showing workers relaxing instead of working in the fields. (Yohanan Simon, *Sabbath on the Kibbutz*, 1947, [Tel Aviv Museum of Art](#), Municipality of Tel Aviv Award 1947; image copyright Tel Aviv Museum of Art)

1766



1948 — *In the Cyprus Deportation, various artists*

In August 1946 the British established displaced-persons internment camps in Cyprus, a bitter affront to those who had just survived the concentration camps in Europe. Industrialist [Pinhas Rutenberg](#) set up a seminar to prepare the newly interned for eventual aliyah, teaching them Hebrew and art, among other subjects. The young artists Naftali Bezem (1924-2018) and Chana Lieberman (later to be married) arrived in 1946 and helped organize exhibits and the printing of this album, each of whose pages was designed by a different student. The album, 27 linoleum cuts on paper of poor quality, is rare and fragile, yet it evocatively depicts everyday life in the camps, as well as the desire of the survivors to overcome their hardships, sustained by the belief that they will be able to settle in Israel. The Mishkan Museum of Art at Ein Harod has a copy of the album. (Images from the Collection of the [Mishkan Museum of Art](#), Ein Harod, Israel)



1948 — Portrait of the Artist's Son, Aharon-Jimmy, Menachem Shemi

Menachem Shemi's (1897-1951) son, Aharon, known as Jimmy (1926-1948), was a charismatic [Palmach](#) leader who was killed during a battle for the Jerusalem corridor in the [War of Independence](#). He was buried at the military cemetery at Kiryat Anavim, and his father was chosen to build a monument there in 1951. In 1952 the family published *Friends Remember Jimmy*, a collection of letters written by friends and comrades-in-arms that became a classic for that generation. His parents chose to be buried near him. Shemi's painting of his son, done right after his death, is housed at the Mishkan Museum of Art at Ein Harod. (Image from the Collection of the [Mishkan Museum of Art](#), Ein Harod, Israel)



1948 — Nocturne (Death of a Warrior), Marcel Janco

[Marcel Janco](#) (1894-1985) was a renowned Dadaist before making aliyah in response to the fascist, Nazi-sympathizing rule in Romania at the beginning of World War II. Once in Palestine, Janco worked as an architect and an artist. But the language of Dada, of the absurd, was not suitable to the context of the sacrifice and pain of that period, and Janco moved to a more figurative style. In this painting from a private collection, Janco adopts cubist language reminiscent of Picasso's *Guernica* to portray the death of a soldier in epic proportions, as if a figure in a classical play. Strong lines, dark colors and exaggerated poses imbue the work with a tragic air. Of the [Yishuv's](#) population of about 600,000, 1% died in the [War of Independence](#), a staggering figure. (Part of a private collection; image used with permission of Janco's descendants)



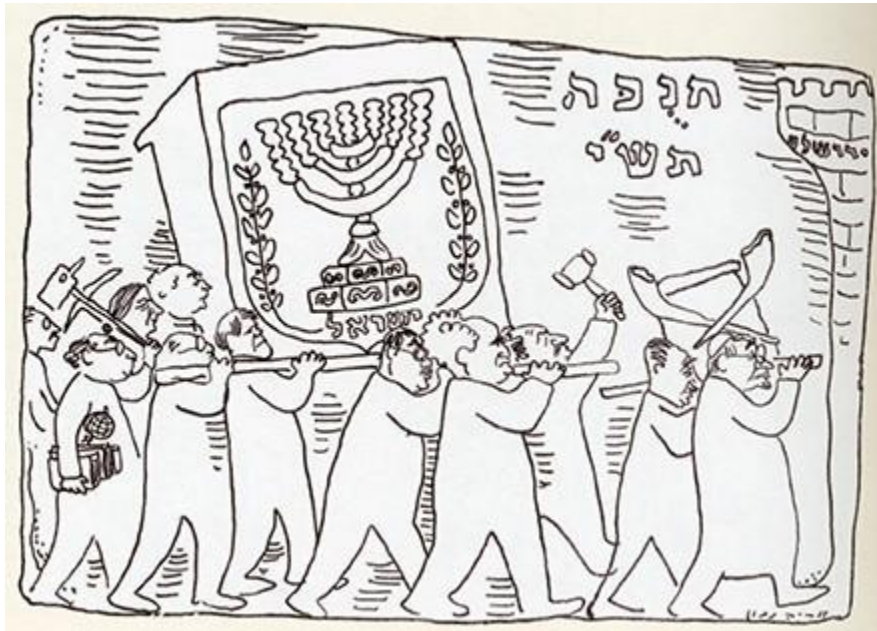
1948-1949 — Torah Case, Ludwig Yehuda Wolpert

[Eliahu Elath](#), Israel's first ambassador to the United States, presented this Torah case to [President Harry Truman](#) in 1949. It is in the collection of the Truman Presidential Library & Museum in Independence, Missouri. The form of the upright Torah case originated with Jews from North Africa and the Middle East. Ludwig Yehuda Wolpert (1901-1981), a Jewish refugee from Germany, adapted it to the style of the New Bezalel, which reopened in 1935. Wolpert worked and taught at [Bezalel](#) until about 1956, when he moved to New York to create the Tobe Pascher Workshop at the Jewish Museum. The style of the case reflects the New Bezalel led by Joseph Budko and then [Mordecai Ardon](#) — emphasizing the importance of the Hebrew letter and using Hebrew fonts designed and developed by Bezalel teachers in a modern idiom. (Image courtesy of [the Truman Library](#))



1949 — The Knesset Moves to Jerusalem, Arieh Navon

Arieh Navon (1909-1996) is well known for gently humorous caricatures that appeared for over 30 years in Davar, the newspaper of the [Histadrut](#), beginning in 1933. In this work, based on the depiction on the Arch of Titus, we see [diverse members of the First Knesset](#), among them [David Ben-Gurion](#), [Golda Meir](#), [Moshe Sneh](#) and [Menachem Begin](#), carrying both the Ark of the Covenant and the new seal of the State of Israel, symbolizing the return of Jewish sovereignty to Jerusalem after 2,000 years of exile. (Image courtesy of David Navon and the [Israeli Museum of Caricatures and Comics](#))



1949-1950 — *First Seder in Jerusalem*, Reuven Rubin

In this oil painting on canvas in the Rubin Museum collection, [Reuven Rubin](#) (1893-1974) depicts a representative gathering of the new state. A Hasidic rabbi, Bukharan immigrants, kibbutznikim, Yemenites, a [Palmach](#) fighter, the artist and his family, and even Jesus attend the traditional meal of the Passover seder, a true reconciliation of groups and religions. To quote Carmela Rubin, the artist's daughter-in-law and curator of the Rubin Museum: "The children and babies personify the promises of a new generation, and Rubin implies that with the birth of the Jewish state, a new page has been turned in world history." (Image copyright [the Rubin Museum](#), Tel Aviv)



1951 — *Life on Kibbutz (Yehiam)*, Joseph Zaritsky

The desire to be part of the greater art world and adopt a more universal style and range of themes led Joseph Zaritsky (1891-1985) to found what became the New Horizons school of Israeli art. Zaritsky was given a place to work on Kibbutz Yehiam, and, as his work became more abstract over time, many of his canvases captured the light and color of the kibbutz. Zaritsky's leadership was unquestioned and set the tone for Israel's art scene for many years. This portrayal of kibbutz life is housed at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. (Yosef Zaritsky, *YEHIAM*, 1951, [Tel Aviv Museum of Art](https://www.tamuseum.org/en/works/yehiam), purchased through the contribution of Joseph and Rebeca Meyerhoff; image copyright Tel Aviv Museum of Art)



1952 — *Mother and Child* — Memorial to Chana Tuchman Adlerstein, Chana Orloff

Chana Orloff (1888-1968), born in Russia, immigrated with her parents to Petach Tikvah in 1905 and went to Paris in 1910 to study fashion design. She pursued a degree in art and over time became a well-known sculptor, part of the Ecole de Paris, the émigré artists who made Paris their home in the interwar period. She survived World War II hiding in the Free French Zone. After the war she did several sculptures in Israel. This sculpture commemorates Chana Tuchman Adlerstein, who died defending Kibbutz Ein Gev in 1948. The emphasis is on Tuchman Adlerstein as a mother; she left two sons. (Image by Dr. Avishai Teicher, PikiWiki Israel, [CC BY 2.5](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



1953 — *Monument to the Defenders of Negba*, Nathan Rapoport

Nathan Rapoport (1911-1987), born and raised in Warsaw, survived World War II in a labor camp in Siberia. As a member of Hashomer Hatzair, he initiated the [Monument to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising](#), which was dedicated in April 1948, shortly before he left Poland for good. The fame of that monument led to other commissions, including this sculpture. Standing 4 meters (13 feet) high and towering over the cemetery, the sculpture depicts three determined figures of massive proportions: the father, a proud agriculturist; the mother, wearing a medic's bag; and their son, holding a Sten gun. Below the figures and behind them, produce sprouts. As in other memorials, the emphasis on defensive fighting alongside cultivation of the land is conveyed by the agrarian details. (Image by Bukvoed, [CC BY 4.0](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



1953 — *In an Immigrants' Transit Camp*, Ruth Schloss

After the [State of Israel was declared](#), the countries of the Middle East where Jews had lived for generations expelled them. Some 500,000 immigrants came in the first three years, severely straining the fledgling state's resources. As a result, these newcomers were housed in makeshift [transit camps](#), some of which lasted throughout the 1950s. The plight of the new immigrants to Israel was portrayed by some of the social realist painters, among them Ruth Schloss (1922-2013), whose painting of a camp is at the Mishkan Museum of Art. Born in Germany and a member of the left-wing Hashomer Hatzair, Schloss' interest in social problems characterized her art throughout her lifetime. (Image from the Collection of the [Mishkan Museum of Art](#), Ein Harod, Israel)



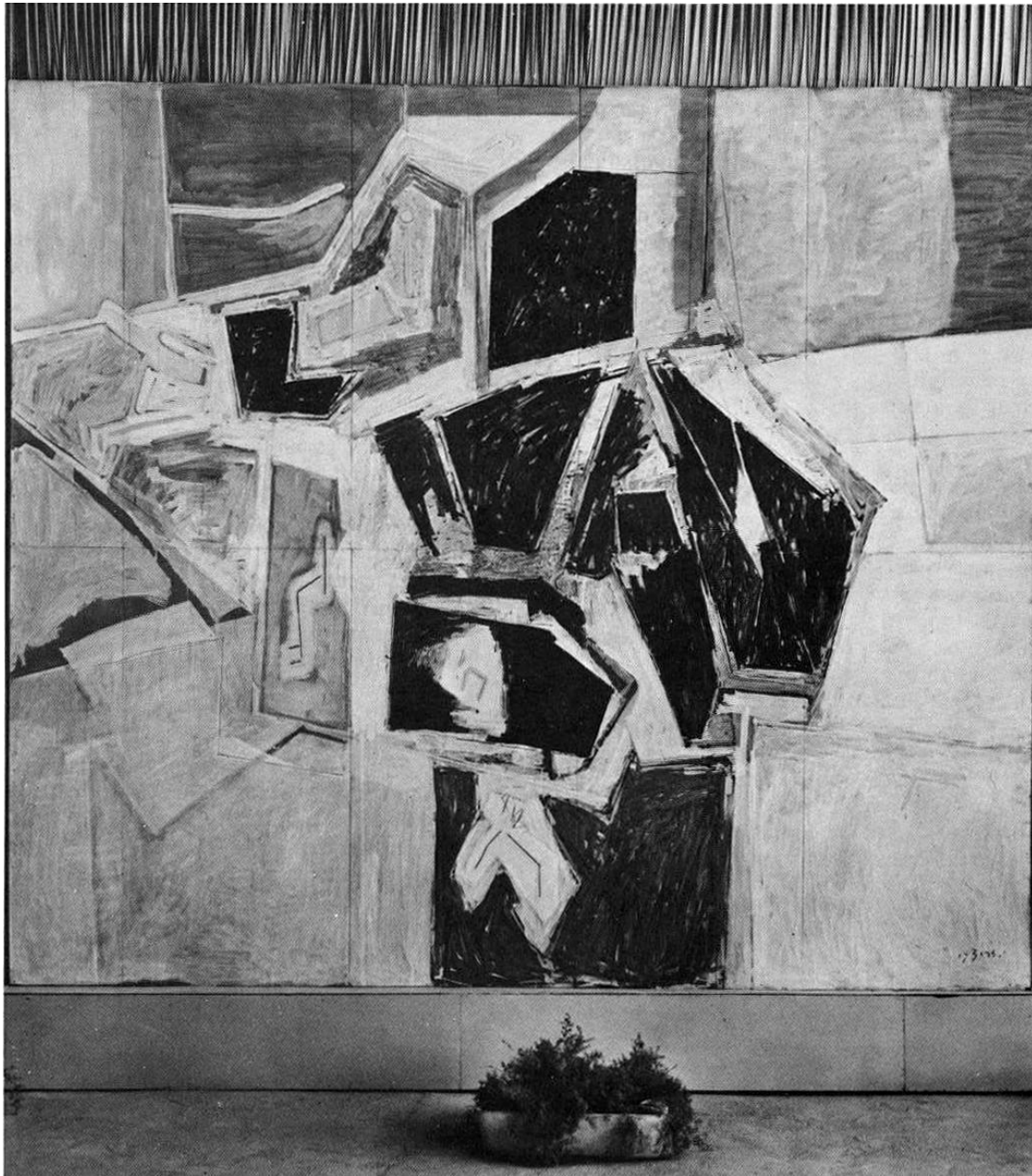
1957 — *In the Courtyard of the Third Temple*, Naftali Bezem

Naftali Bezem (1924-2018) won the Dizengoff Prize for this work, now housed at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. He painted it in response to the [murder of citizens living in Kfar Kassem](#) in the Galilee who had gone to work their farms, not realizing they were violating a military curfew imposed in the wake of the [Sinai Campaign](#) of 1956. Forty-nine villagers were killed; only in October 2021 did President [Isaac Herzog](#) issue an official apology. The painting avers that the newly reborn State of Israel, as the Third Commonwealth, must act with justice. The three women are reminiscent of ancient Greek mourners; the dead man on the ground clutches his blue Israeli identity card, showing that he is a citizen. Although this painting won an award, New Horizons painters exhibiting at the same time protested by turning their canvases around because Bezem's work was not in the abstract vein they promoted. (Naftali Bezem, *In the Courtyard of the Third Temple*, 1957, [Tel Aviv Museum of Art](#), Dizengoff Prize, 1957; image copyright Tel Aviv Museum of Art)



1958 — *Might*, Yosef Zaritsky

This massive painting by Yosef Zaritsky (1891-1985) was given primacy of place at the First Decade Exhibit held at Binyanei HaUma, now known as Jerusalem's International Convention Center. Prime Minister [David Ben-Gurion](#) was heard to say of this work, based on the landscape of Kibbutz Yehiam, "One can live with modern art, or without." [Teddy Kollek](#), who was the head of the Prime Minister's Office and later Jerusalem's mayor, understood Ben-Gurion's displeasure and moved the work to a less prominent location. Zaritsky, greatly insulted, later destroyed the work. The debate in Israel about politicians' role vis-a-vis artistic expression continues today. (Image by Yair Talmor, public domain, via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



1960 — *Fountain*, Kosso Elul

The need for a new campus for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem after the loss of [Mount Scopus](#) in 1948 led to a search for an indigenous architectural design. The Canaanite school, which glorified the notion of a greater Middle East and aspired to a melding of the pre-Abrahamic cultures, was a prominent movement in both art and architecture of that period, and its style is reflected in the [campus at Givat Ram](#). One of the Canaanite school's tenets called for the use of local materials, along with the strong influence of early Mesopotamian art. This fountain, designed by Kosso Elul (1920-1995) and located opposite the National Library building, also built at that time, resembles an ancient watering hole where shepherds could water their flocks in tranquility. (Image by Amitay Katz, public domain, via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



1961 — *Ohel Yizkor*, Yad Vashem's Hall of Remembrance, designed by Arie Elhanani, Arie Sharon and Benjamin Idelson

This building is a mausoleum for those who lost their families in the Holocaust and who have no cemeteries to visit. Form and function join to create a powerful sculptural presence: outside, a brutalist concrete square atop black volcanic stone; within, black marble floors, an eternal flame, and, buried underneath, the ashes from six extermination camps in Poland. The structure is open to the sky. As the locus of all dignitaries' visits to Yad Vashem, each of whom is called upon to symbolically relight the eternal flame, this solemn edifice is a fitting site for the preservation of that tragic and solemn memory. (Image by Yossi Ben-David, [Yad Vashem](#))



1964 — Agripas Street, Arie Aroch

Using oil, oil pencil and scratching and considered a seminal work, *Agripas Street* by Arie Aroch (1908-1974) represents an important trend in Israeli art of the 1960s: the move away from the colorist abstractions of New Horizons to a more personal idiom, combining Pop Art elements such as the ready-made sign, the use of wood as a painting surface and the childlike scribbling of early memories. Aroch, who studied at [Bezalel](#) in the 1920s, was a full-time diplomat who made time for painting and became one of the most influential artists of his era. (Image copyright [Israel Museum](#), Jerusalem; work copyright Jonathan Aroch, gift of Walter and Marianne Griessmann, London, to the Israel Museum and [Tel Aviv Museum of Art](#))



1966 — *Wall to the Glory of Jerusalem*, Moshe Castel

Moshe Castel (1909-1991), born in Jerusalem, developed an unusual style and technique in his later years, using ground-up basalt in his works. This basalt relief in the reception hall of the President's Residence often serves as a backdrop for important state ceremonies. Castel's use of stylized figures is an ancient idiom that, in his words, "connects me with artistic elements from the ancient Near East, Sumer, Assyria and the Canaanites." But there is also Jewish symbolism in the large stones reminiscent of the Western Wall, which was inaccessible when he created the piece, and in the figures representing each of the Twelve Tribes, united by the modern institution of Israel's presidency. (Image by Mark Neyman, Israeli Government Press Office, [CC BY-SA 3.0](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



1966 — *Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem*, Dani Karavan

The importance of Jerusalem in Israeli society receives prominence in this wall relief by Dani Karavan (1930-2021) right behind the podium of the Knesset Assembly Hall, made from Galilean stone. The title is taken from the Book of Psalms 122:6, expressing the hope for peace. The stones, reminiscent of the large ashlar blocks that make up the Western Wall, were hand-carved by local artisans under the supervision of Karavan, a process lasting nine months. On the left of the wall is an aluminum print portrait of [Theodor Herzl](#), based on a photograph chosen by the artist. (Image by Yair Talmor, public domain, via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



1966 — *Flying Spice Box*, Yossi Bergner

In his fanciful works, Yossi Bergner (1920-2017) often used objects to symbolize the human condition. In the foreground of this piece at the Mishkan Museum of Art in Ein Harod, the top of an ancient wall frames a mysterious and stormy landscape. The floating and somewhat dented spice box symbolizes the wandering of the Jewish people, who carry their sweet-smelling heritage with them, even as they are forced at times to wander. (Image from the Collection of the [Mishkan Museum of Art](#), Ein Harod, Israel)



1966 — *Peace Monument*, Yigal Tumarkin

Many are the war memorials in Israel; in 1966, the peace activist [Abie Nathan](#) decided there needed to be a monument to peace. A site was chosen (later home to the B'nai B'rith Bridge) opposite Jerusalem's Old City walls (under Jordanian rule at the time), and Yigal Tumarkin (1933-2021) was commissioned to make the stone sculpture. The stone is roughly hewn, and at its base are actual weapons of warfare — guns and cannons fused with other metal implements in fulfillment of the verse from Isaiah (2:4) etched on the stone. (Image by Gveret Tered, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



1966 — *The Story of Tel Aviv*, Nahum Gutman

The charming works of Nahum Gutman (1898-1980) are best known from his book and newspaper illustrations. Gutman grew up in Little Old Tel Aviv, known as Ahuzat Bayit, which he also wrote about. The Shalom Meir Tower was built on the site of that neighborhood, so it is fitting that Gutman's mosaic depicting the story of Tel Aviv, starting with Jonah the prophet, should adorn the tower lobby's walls. The work captures the charm of the city from those early years until the first years of the State of Israel. (Images by Itzuvit, [CC BY-SA 3.0](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



1967 — *At the Gates of Jerusalem* triptych of (from right) *Rock, Ladders* and *Sign*, Mordechai Ardon

The reunification of Jerusalem in 1967 reverberated across Israeli society. For Mordechai Ardon (1896-1992), the repercussions had a mystical quality expressed in the both the subjects and colors of this triptych painted in oil on canvas and housed at the Israel Museum: on the right, the Foundation Stone on which the world was created; in the middle, the ladders that connect heaven and earth; on the left, the Hebrew letters and texts, above the symbol of the kabbalistic Tree of Life, the divine emanations on which, according to tradition, our world is founded. This work expresses the strong emotional connection the artist felt to Jerusalem. (Image copyright [Israel Museum](#), Jerusalem; work copyright Ardon estate, gift of the artist in honor of Israel's 20th anniversary and the unification of Jerusalem)



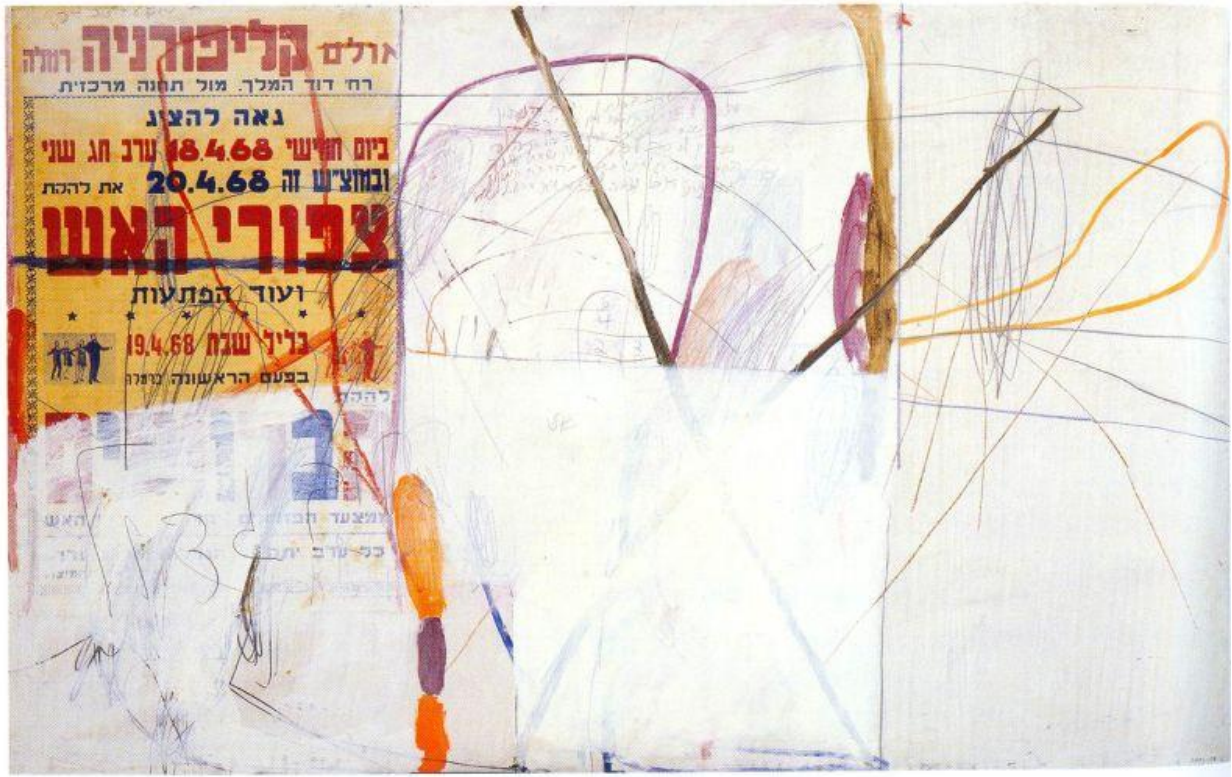
1968 — *Monument to the Negev Brigade*, Dani Karavan

This concrete work in Be'er Sheva is probably Dani Karavan's (1930-2021) first environmental sculpture, creating a space of memory that must be walked through to be appreciated. Elements of the work symbolize different stages of the battles fought to preserve control of that place. Text from the diary of the commander of the outpost is etched on a leaning wall; a small, lighted chamber under a split dome commemorates those who fell in battle. The tower whistles in the desert wind and, along with the rough concrete, gives expression to the harshness of the desert and the difficulty of its defense. (Image by Nir Tober, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



1969 — Untitled collage, Raffi Lavie

Raffi Lavie's (1937-2007) works were influential on the Israeli art scene. A combination of collage, paint, scribbles and erasures on plywood, this work at the Israel Museum questions the role of art even as it uses art to raise the question. The inclusion of found and simple materials gave birth to a movement called For Want of Material, an art form eschewing the materials traditionally associated with fine arts and an expressive style based on an internal, personal language, as opposed to a collective one. Lavie's art was chosen to represent Israel in the 2009 Venice Biennale. (Image copyright [Israel Museum](#), Jerusalem; work copyright Lavie's estate, gift of Shaya Yariv, Gordon Gallery, Tel Aviv)



1970 — *From Holocaust to Revival*, Naftali Bezem

Naftali Bezem's (1924-2018) cast-aluminum wall sculpture at Yad Vashem is composed of four sections, moving sequentially from the crematoria of Auschwitz to the fallen ghetto fighters to the immigrants making their way to Israel and new lives. At the end, a crying lion bears the Sabbath candlesticks from which a sabra plant grows. The lion, symbolizing the survivors, looks back in sadness, even as new life flourishes. (Image copyright [Yad Vashem](#) Art Museum, Jerusalem; collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem, gift of Shmuel Hirurg and his family in memory of Pinchas and Hanna Gerszowski)



1971 — *Ingathering of the Exiles*, Abraham Ofek

[Shimon Peres](#), then the minister of communication, commissioned Abraham Ofek (1935-1990) to decorate the inside of the [Mandate](#)-era Central Post Office in Jerusalem in the spirit of using art for public edification. The mural he painted, which extends the length of the long hall, begins with survivors following [Theodor Herzl](#) to the promised land. Their ancestors and those they lost in the Holocaust look on from above. The last panel shows diverse groups in Israel living and working together. (Image by Heritage Conservation Jerusalem via Pikiwiki Israel, [CC BY 2.5](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#); detail image by DiggerDina, [CC BY-SA 3.0](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



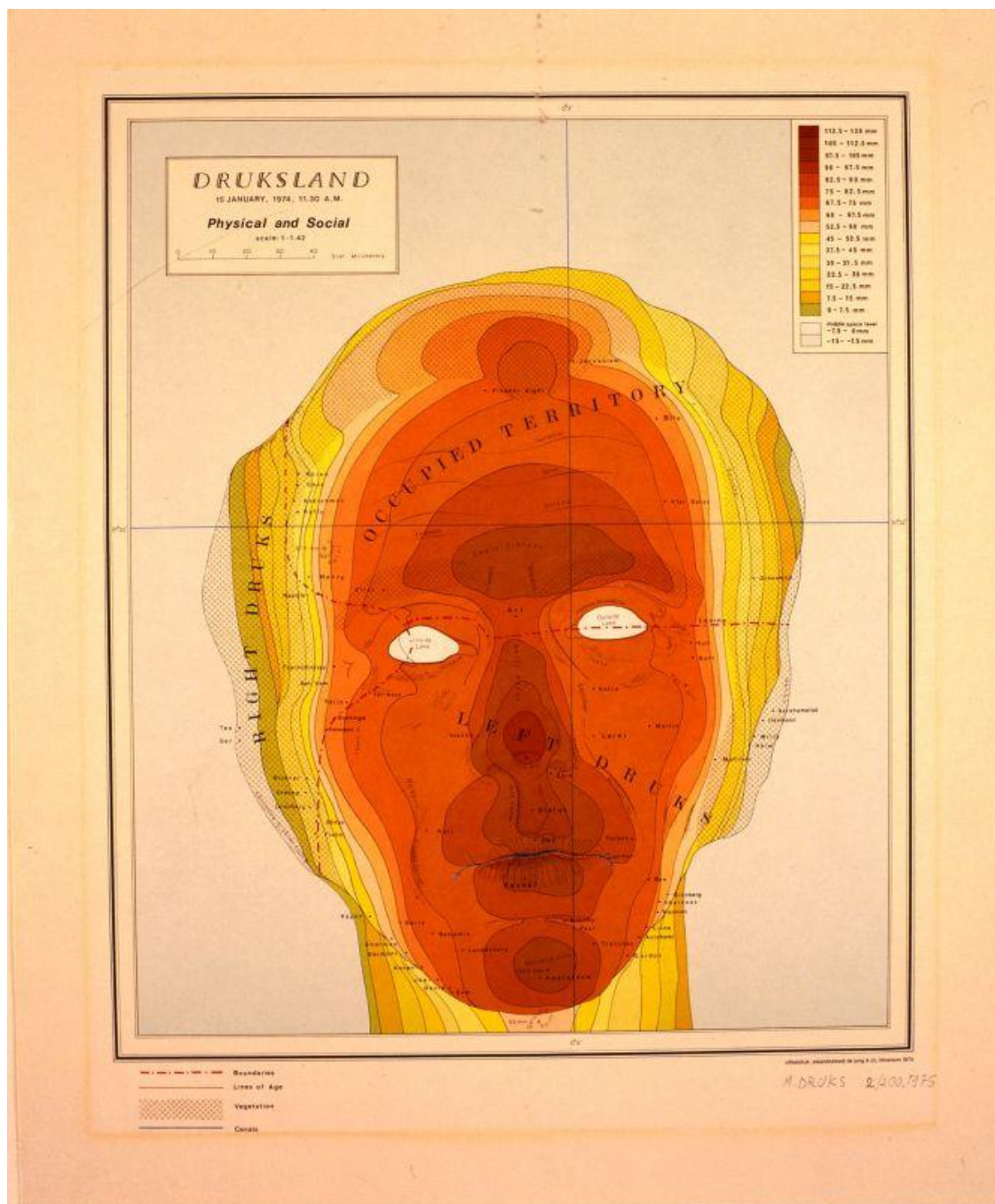
1974 — *Holocaust and Revival*, Igal Tumarkin

Igal Tumarkin (1933-2021) made this monument in Rabin Square in Tel Aviv of corten steel. It consists of two pyramids: a large one inverted and intersecting a smaller one below. The upper pyramid is the disproportionate weight of Jewish history bearing down on but supported by the smaller structure. The openwork bars of the upper structure are references to the striped uniforms worn in concentration camps. Viewed from above, the two pyramids form a Magen David, the Star of David, which the Nazis used to mark Jews but which also represents the State of Israel, now the base of the Jewish people. (Image by Lishay Shechter, public domain, PikiWiki Israel, via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



1975 — *Druksland*, Michael Druks

Michael Druks (1940–2022), born in Jerusalem, spent most of his artistic career in London. This iconic image, created through offset lithography and housed at the Israel Museum, depicts the artist's head as a topographical map, down to the different colors and legend. Druks applies this metaphor to Israel's politics. He uses ironic humor in labeling the upper area of the head "occupied territory" while calling attention to Israel's situation in the decade after the [1967 war](#) and the domestic and international conflicts that ensued. (Image copyright [Israel Museum](#), Jerusalem; work copyright Druks' estate, the Vera and Arturo Schwarz Collection of Israeli Art, Israel Museum, Jerusalem)



1983 — *Holidays Set*, Zelig Segal

Zelig Segal (1933-2015), born into an ultra-Orthodox family, became one of the first artists from that community accepted at [Bezalel](#). A talented silversmith and producer of various kinds of metalwork, he is best known for his modern Judaica, characterized by elegance, minimalism and clean lines. This set at the Israel Museum contains ritual objects for the celebration of Shabbat, Kiddush, Havdalah, Sukkot (etrog holder) and Hanukkah. Bezalel spearheaded the rebirth of the making of modern Judaica, which spread from there to other communities. (Image copyright [Israel Museum](#), Jerusalem; work copyright Segal's estate, purchased by Ari Ackerman Fund)



1984 — *Mita Meshuna (the Artist's Monogram)*, Igael Tumarkin

Igael Tumarkin (1933-2021) undertook this difficult mixed-media work at the beginning of the [First Lebanon War](#) in 1982. Daily casualty announcements flooded the Israeli press; Tumarkin's response was to fashion parts of an army stretcher into an object reminiscent of a cross, with all of its attendant associations. The inscription at the top of this Israel Museum piece is a play on words in Hebrew meaning both "strange bed" (a reference to the stretcher) and "strange death" (a concept in Jewish law referring to an extreme punishment). The words appear where Jesus' monogram is shown in crucifixion pictures. The white and blue fabrics allude to the Israeli flag. (Image copyright [Israel Museum](#), Jerusalem; work copyright Tumarkin's estate, purchased by Recanati Fund for the Acquisition of Israeli Art)



1985 — *The Sacrifice of Isaac*, Menashe Kadishman

The theme of the near-sacrifice of Isaac runs through Jewish literature and art from earliest times until today. Menashe Kadishman (1932-2015) made several works on this subject, some connected with his own son's entering the army. On the right of this work outside the Tel Aviv Museum of Art is a worried couple; on the left, a large ram's head that symbolizes the sacrifice substituted for Isaac in the biblical narrative. In the foreground lies a solitary disk, the head of Isaac. Is he to be sacrificed this time? (Image copyright [Tel Aviv Museum of Art](#); gift of Rachel and Dov Gottesman)

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1988 — *Cactus*, Assem Abu Shakra

Assem Abu Shakra (1961-1990) came from a family of artists in Umm El Fahm, near Hadera. His potted cactus, an oil painting in the Israel Museum, alludes to the metaphor for Israeli identity of the sabra, prickly on the outside, sweet on the inside. Abu Shakra's cactus, however, is potted instead of being in its natural environment and is lit by a light bulb. The sunflowers on which it stands are a reference to those of Van Gogh's work. While Van Gogh's sunflowers are lively and beautiful, these are unnatural, like the potted cactus. (Image copyright [Israel Museum](#), Jerusalem; work copyright Abu Shakra's estate, purchased by the Modern Art Acquisition Fund)



1989 — Herzl, Uri Lifschitz

Driving on one of Israel's main highways, it is impossible to miss Uri Lifschitz's (1936-2011) imposing cut-out metal silhouette of [Theodor Herzl](#) atop a water tank at the Sira Intersection entering Herzliya. Based on an iconic image of Herzl, it is visible from both directions, and the sky shows through the cut-out. This image of Herzl, at the entrance to the city named after him and surrounded by skyscrapers and modern housing, brings to life his famous aphorism: "If you will it, it is no dream." (Image by Dr. Avishai Teicher, own work, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



1995-1996 — *El Maleh Rachamim*, Moshe Gershuni

This work of acrylic paint on paper releases a burst of energy and pain while invoking the beginning of the traditional prayer for the dead, written in Moshe Gershuni's (1936-2017) own handwriting. The image, imbued with a visceral power conveyed by its strong color and brushstrokes, evokes the angel of death. The black dot represents the hollow eye of someone who has witnessed unspeakable loss. Gershuni painted this work, part of the Israel Museum's collection, in response to a collection of Holocaust-era photographs. (Image copyright [Israel Museum](#), Jerusalem; work copyright the artist's estate)



1997 — *Bereshit*, Belu Simion Fainaru

An impressive Jerusalem marble installation in the shape of a large rectangular box with an arched top, *Bereshit* has the first six letters of the Hebrew alphabet incised backward on its sides. A light within projects them outward onto the surrounding floor. Artist Belu Simion Fainaru (b.1958), known internationally for a wide variety of work, is referencing a kabbalistic prism through which an unseen, hidden light generates the letters, each representing one of the six days of the week of creation. Only when projected out are the letters seen correctly. (Image courtesy of the artist)



1999 — Untitled, Adi Nes

This carefully staged photograph by Adi Nes (b.1966) references Leonardo da Vinci's iconic *Last Supper*. These soldiers, caught in the vortex of a conflict over which they have no control, put their lives on the line. An aura of holiness is granted to these young and idealistic figures, for whom this meal could be their last. The chromogenic print is part of the collection of the [Israel Museum](#), Jerusalem. (Copyright the artist, gift of Gary B. Sokol, San Francisco)



1999 — *The Book of Women*, Nechama Golan

Nechama Golan (b.1947), a religious artist who studied at [Bezalel](#), creates a wide range of works in a variety of media, all exploring the place of Judaism and of Jewish women in today's world. This work combines a copy of the opening page of Maimonides' *Book of Women*, which codifies Jewish laws relating to women, with the artist's own face, struggling to breathe behind the barrier created by the text. (Image courtesy of the artist)



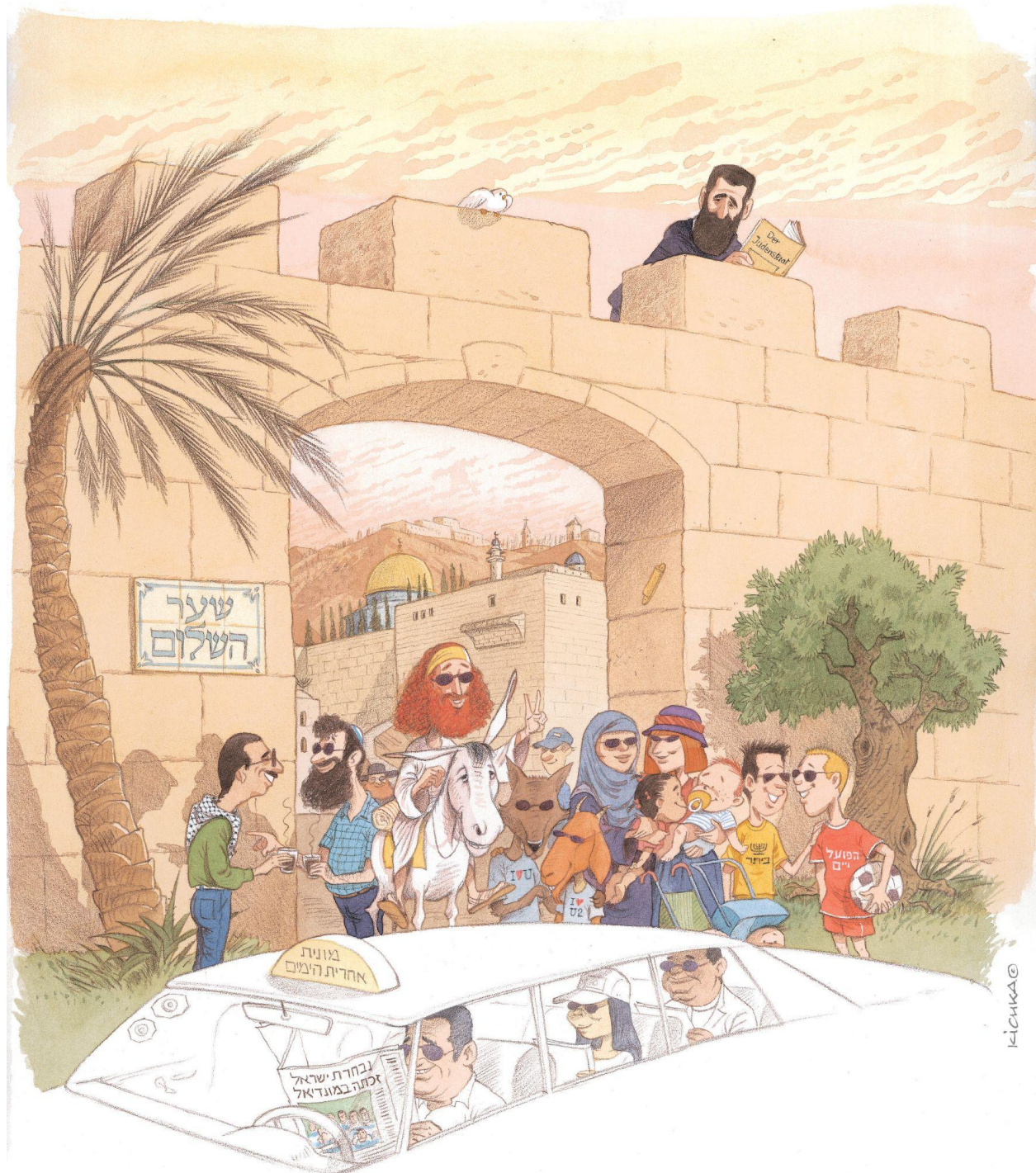
2002 — *Jericho First*, Sharif Waked

In this series of 32 images in acrylic on canvas, Sharif Waked (b.1964), born in Nazareth, responds to the political situation and the original motto of the [Oslo Accords](#), "Jericho First." The artist's first canvas and point of departure is a motif from the mosaic floor of Hisham's Palace in Jericho, a gem of eighth century Muslim art, which depicts a lion devouring a deer. As the work on display at the Israel Museum progresses, its figures merge, and it becomes increasingly difficult to determine where the lion ends and the deer begins, until the final picture is one large red stain with a barely apparent small hoof. For Waked, the blurring into one large field of color raises the questions of who is the hunter, who is the hunted and who even remembers how the conflict began. (Image copyright [Israel Museum](#), Jerusalem; copyright the artist, purchased by ARTVISION Acquisitions Committee, Israel)



2002 — Tomorrow's Jerusalem — Revised and Revisited, Michel Kichka

Michel Kichka's (b.1954) gently humorous watercolor vision of "Next Year in Jerusalem" in Noam and Mishaël Zion's Passover haggadah, *A Night to Remember*, shows the red-bearded Messiah riding his white donkey into a crowd of figures: the sheep and the wolf, Arabs and Jews, religious and secular, and even fans of rival soccer teams in Jerusalem, all fraternizing with one another. The "end of days" taxi driver reads a newspaper whose headline proclaims that Israel's national soccer team has just won the World Cup, while a bemused [Theodor Herzl](#), perched on one of the Old City walls, overlooks the entire scene while holding his work *The Jewish State*. (Image courtesy of the artist)



2003 — *Tree of the Field*, Zadok Ben-David

This plasma-cut, corten steel statue in Yad Vashem's Partisans Plaza was commissioned by a family of descendants of Jewish partisans who, by hiding in the forest, both attacked the Nazis and survived the Holocaust. This work by Zadok Ben-David (b.1949) commemorates those partisans. The leaves of the tree are human figures, and when we view them closely, we see that the trees, which hid people and preserved their lives, are the people themselves, a metaphor based on Deuteronomy 20:19: "For a man is a tree of the field." (Image copyright [Yad Vashem](#) Art Museum, Jerusalem; collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem, through a gift of the Karten family in memory of parents Julia and Isidore Karten)



2003 — *Tilted Tree*, Ran Morin

Environmental artist Ran Morin (b.1958) employs the evocative symbolism of the tree in Jewish life to commemorate the seven students and staff members of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem killed in the terrorist bombing of the Frank Sinatra Cafeteria in July 2001. The Chinese tallow tree is planted next to the site of the bombing on the university's [Mount Scopus campus](#). The artist has changed its pattern of development so that it is no longer upright but grows on a disturbing slant to show how the murders disrupted the natural order of things. A deciduous species, in the spring the tree renews itself, an expression of the hope for regeneration. (Image by Avi Deror, [CC BY-SA 3.0](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



2003 — *Bayit*, Samuel Bak

The story of Samuel Bak (b.1933) encapsulates much of 20th century Jewish history: His first art exhibit was held under the shadow of deportations in the Vilna ghetto when he was 9, and his second was in a displaced-persons camp in Europe after he and his mother survived the war in hiding. Bak is one of the few Israeli artists to employ the language of surrealism. In this work, he depicts the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet and the first letter of the word for home, bayit, to symbolize the fragility, at times, of what we call home. (Image courtesy of [Pucker Gallery](#))



2005 — *Today Gush Katif, Tomorrow Jaffa*, Avner Bar Hama

Avner Bar Hama (b.1946) created this work in the shadow of the [disengagement from Gaza](#) in 2005. As a sculptor and conceptual artist, he makes use in this work of the iconic Jaffa orange, once a symbol of Israeli pride. The oranges create a map of Israel — a map that with one false step could easily be disrupted or even destroyed. (Image courtesy of the artist)



2005 — *Remembrance 2*, Ruth Kestenbaum Ben-Dov

This oil painting by Ruth Kestenbaum Ben-Dov (b.1961) is based on the Jewish law that each home should leave a small square unfinished in memory of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the size of this small painting is that required by halacha. At its center is a 16th century image of Jerusalem used by a printer of Jewish books in Italy. Jewish artists commonly used the image of a round or octagonal building, based on the Dome of the Rock, to represent the location of the Temple. The artist took the original image, which has quotes from the prophet Hagai about the restoration of the Temple, and added a verse from Isaiah (56:7) in Hebrew and Arabic: "For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples," an expression of the hope for peace among the nations of the region. (Image by Yona Schley; work copyright the artist)



2005 — Holocaust History Museum, Yad Vashem, Safdie Architects

Designed by [Safdie Architects](#), the Holocaust History Museum of Yad Vashem covers more than 4,200 square meters (45,000 square feet), mainly underground, on the Mount of Remembrance directly behind the Mount Herzl military cemetery. The triangular prism of the museum, embedded in the slope of Mount Herzl, both preserves the above-ground landscape and re-creates the darkness of the Holocaust period. The triangular cross-section of the structure alludes to the pyramids and, by extension, Israel's bondage in Egypt. At its end, the prism opens up to a view of the Jerusalem forest. (Image by Martin Sykes-Haas, [Yad Vashem](#))



2005-2007 — *Tel Kakun*, Israel Hershberg

Israel Hershberg (b.1948) was born in the Linz displaced-persons camp to Holocaust survivors and moved from the struggling Israel of the 1950s to the United States. Upon his return to Israel in 1984, he founded the [Jerusalem Studio School](#), which was instrumental in bringing about the return of figurative painting to the Israeli art scene. In this work, the artist's eye takes in a verdant panorama in the Galilee, once the site of crusader battles and now peaceful farmland, in dialogue with classical landscape painting and photography. (Image courtesy of [Dubi Shiff Art Collection](#))



2008 — *The Square in Kfar Yehoshua*, Elie Shamir

Elie Shamir (b.1953), son of Kfar Yehoshua, former fighter pilot and now artist, did a series of works about his moshav, which was founded in 1927. In the foreground of this oil painting we see a memorial on the moshav made by Batia Lishansky (1899-1992) in 1953 in memory of those killed in 1948. While the front of the sculpture depicts the fighters, a woman among them, the other side portrays a woman farming, as if to say, "Life must go on; we fight because we must." The sculpture becomes softer in Shamir's rendition, and the monochrome tones stand in sharp relief to the verdant moshav landscape. In the background is the original water tower of the moshav, an iconic and essential element of early agricultural settlements. Shamir's admiration for the generations that built the moshav through sacrifice is apparent in this series. (Image courtesy of the artist; painting from a private collection)



2009-2010 — *Nahalal*, Gal Weinstein

This work of carpet on plywood by Gal Weinstein (b.1970) is inspired by the first moshav, [Nahalal](#), which was designed by the German-born architect Richard Kaufman and built in 1921. The original design was a perfect circle, which enabled the shared means of production to be concentrated in the center, with each family's farmlands radiating out. With the overall decline of agriculture in Israel, many of the parcels of land have been put to other uses. Some of Weinstein's later work focuses on the changes in these settlements over time and the disintegration of early plans and hopes. (Image courtesy of the [Israel Museum](#), Jerusalem; purchased by ARTVISION Acquisitions Committee, Israel)



2013 — *Hilula*, Shai Azoulay

In this oil painting on canvas, Shai Azoulay (b.1971) explores the tradition of pilgrimage to the graves of Jewish saintly personae, in this case Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, a second century tanna buried on Mount Meron. His tomb, a large building with sky-blue domes, as depicted here in miniature, is a pilgrimage site for hundreds of thousands on Lag b'Omer. Here, the tomb is in the artist's home, decorated with portraits, including one of the artist himself, showing the internalization of piety and perhaps its potential to be all-encompassing. (Image courtesy of the artist)



2013 — *A Delicate Balance*, Andi Arnovitz

American-born multimedia artist [Andi Arnovitz](#) (b.1960) designed this installation to force the viewer to walk through more than 1,000 ceramic scrolls suspended in pairs from metal rods. One ceramic scroll in each pair is embossed with a statement of Jewish law, while its sister scroll's text makes reference to situations in which the law is flagrantly violated or causes conflict. The scrolls are delicate and fragile. Can one walk through the world of Jewish law without breaking something? Can one establish a Jewish state and maintain a balance between religious and civil law? (Image courtesy of the artist)



2014 — *Operation Protective Edge and I*, Sigal Maor

Sigal Maor (b.1966), a textile artist active in developing the art scene in her hometown of Ashdod, embroidered this army uniform with the faces of the 67 soldiers who were killed fighting Hamas in [Operation Protective Edge](#) in 2014. Maor honors the lives cut short and at the same time asks, "Why?" (Image courtesy of the artist; collection of the artist)



2014 — *Return in Peace*, Ken Goldman

Our concern for our children serving in the army is the focus of this mixed-media work by Ken Goldman (b.1960). Goldman embossed into the soles of his son's army boots two Hebrew words from the traditional Traveler's Prayer meaning "return us in peace." The boots, reimagined as a kind of talisman, protect the wearer, whose every stride becomes a prayer. (Images courtesy of the artist; collection of the artist)



2015 — *One Day Passes and Another Day Comes*, Peter Jacob Maltz

Artist Peter Jacob Maltz (b.1973) walked some 85 miles from his home in the center of Israel to Jerusalem, collecting objects on the way. Upon his arrival, he cast the objects in plaster to form a wall that records his pilgrimage. His combination of the holy and the profane in this sculpture at the Israel Museum resonates with the text of Genesis 13:17, "Arise, walk about the land, its length and breadth," and conveys the complexity and beauty of living in Israel. (Image copyright the [Israel Museum](#), Jerusalem)



2015 — *Kav 70*, Dov Abramson

Artist and graphic designer [Dov Abramson](#) (b.1975) created a conceptual map of Jerusalem named for an imaginary No. 70 bus line and based on 70 images from different parts of the city, in reference to the 70 names of Jerusalem mentioned in the Midrash. These images in silkscreen on ceramic tiles are taken from everyday objects as diverse as manhole covers, public phones, water fountains and decorative elements on buildings. Enlarged or stylized, together they symbolize today's earthly Jerusalem, a synthesis of the mundane and the spiritual. (Image courtesy of the [Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies](#), Jerusalem)



2016 — *New Victims*, Zoya Cherkassky

Artist Zoya Cherkassky (b.1976), an immigrant from Ukraine, depicts in oil on linen the difficulties that the ex-Soviet olim (immigrants) faced during the massive wave of aliyah in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Here the immigrants, dressed for the Russian winter, disembark the plane to the mild Israeli weather, where someone is distributing flags. Cherkassky's paintings offer a humorous and occasionally biting commentary on the ironies of aliyah. (Image courtesy of the artist and [Rosenfeld Gallery](#), Tel Aviv)



2017 — Heichal HaZikaron, Kimmel Eshkolot Architects and Liran Chechik

The award-winning [National Memorial Hall](#) building on Mount Herzl serves as a repository of the names of all the soldiers, Jewish and non-Jewish, who have died in Israel's wars. [Kimmel Eshkolot Architects](#), together with Liran Chechik, created a spiral structure, open to the sky, that offers a haven of consolation and healing for the families. Fittingly, a memorial light automatically lights up next to the name of each soldier on the anniversary of the soldier's death. (Image by Nadav Barkai, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#), via [Wikimedia Commons](#))



2017 — Samira, Amira Ziyen

Amira Ziyen (b.1977) is a Druze photographer who lives in Yarka in the north of Israel. Her photographs in this series relate to the role of women in Druze society. Are they simply those who perform household tasks such as cooking and cleaning, or do they have identities of their own? These striking works, printed on a black aluminum background, have a luminous quality and raise questions about those who are often perceived as being behind the scenes. (Image courtesy of the artist)



2018 — *Strangeness*, Raida Adon

Raida Adon (b.1972), the daughter of an Arab mother and a Jewish father, is an actress, performance artist and filmmaker. This [video installation](#) from the Israel Museum addresses the alienation many feel, whether as refugees, newcomers or survivors of a disaster. While the artist herself personifies issues of identity so prevalent in Israeli society, the work conveys a universal message. (Image by Tammy Weis, copyright the [Israel Museum](#), Jerusalem; video purchased by the "Here and Now" Contemporary Israeli Art Acquisitions Committee, Israel)



2019 — *We Came to Our Land*, Jack Jano

Jack Jano (b.1950), who was born in Morocco and immigrated with his family as a young child, studied at [Bezalel](#) and works in a variety of media. He deals with issues of rootedness, tradition and cross-cultural passage. With this work, he asks: What does one take on such a journey, and what are its burdens? (Image courtesy of the artist and the [Engel Gallery](#), Jerusalem)



2019 — *Atlit*, Tigist Yoseph Ron

Tigist Yoseph Ron (b.1979), whose parents made aliyah from Ethiopia with their nine children, first settled in Atlit. The difficulty and displacement of those years are expressed in this powerful charcoal drawing in the collection of the Israel Museum, in which the artist blurs the faces as a memory of a trying past. In her work, Ron addresses both her identification with the traditional lives of Ethiopian women and the pain of leaving one's culture and adjusting to a very different one. (Image by Elad Sarig, used by permission of the photographer, the artist and the [Israel Museum](#), Jerusalem)



2021 — Rooftop Paintings: *Eshchar-Sachnin (Morning)*; *Sachnin-Eshchar (Afternoon)*, Ruth Kestenbaum Ben-Dov

Ruth Kestenbaum Ben-Dov (b.1961) made aliyah as a teenager with her family, graduated from [Bezalel](#), and lives and works in the Galilee. She made these two oil paintings simultaneously. One is the view from her home of the neighboring town of Sachnin, and the other is the view from a rooftop in Sachnin of her village, Eshchar. She raises the question of point of view: Can we truly see the other, those who live in the same landscape? The artist's need to find a place in Sachnin to compose this painting led not only to the creation of a work of art, but also to the creation of neighborly bonds. (Images by Dror Miler; collection of the artist, used by permission)



2022 — *Strand*, Sigalit Landau

This striking installation, part of [The Burning Sea exhibit at the Israel Museum](#) until June 2023, comes from an ongoing project by Sigalit Landau (b.1969) in which she immerses a variety of objects in the Dead Sea. These immersed objects (such as a dress like that worn by [Hanna Rovina](#) for her role in [The Dybbuk](#) and more generic items like boots) become encrusted with salt and acquire an otherworldly quality. On the one hand, the Dead Sea serves as a site of preservation for the immersed objects and of healing for the many who visit it, and these qualities come to the fore in Landau's work. At the same time, the unique attributes of the Dead Sea require its preservation, a fundamental subtext of her works. (Copyright the artist; collection of the artist)



2023 — *Letters of Light*, Micha Ullman

Letters of Light by Micha Ullman (b.1939), a [Bezalel](#)-trained sculptor, is an environmental work based on the Hebrew alphabet and inspired by *Sefer Yetzira* (The Book of Creation), the oldest known Jewish mystical text. Set in a spacious plaza next to the new [National Library of Israel](#) building, the work comprises two major elements: an expansive circle of 18 imposing, free-standing Hebrew letters sculpted in stone and an underground room at the circle's center with openings in its ceiling through which sunlight projects the first letters of the Hebrew, Latin and Arabic alphabets on the room's floor. To walk among these sculpted letters is to sense their primacy and creative potential and to intuit the centrality of the Hebrew language in the foundation of the State of Israel and in the mission of Israel's National Library. (Image courtesy of the artist and the [National Library of Israel](#))

