

# These Are the 13 Most Beautiful Buildings in Israel

Historic, innovative, not over-designed and in conversation with their surroundings: Haaretz picks the best buildings in the country (and one in East Jerusalem)



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Mishkan Museum of Art, Ein Harod. Credit: Gil Eliyahu

## Mishkan Museum of Art

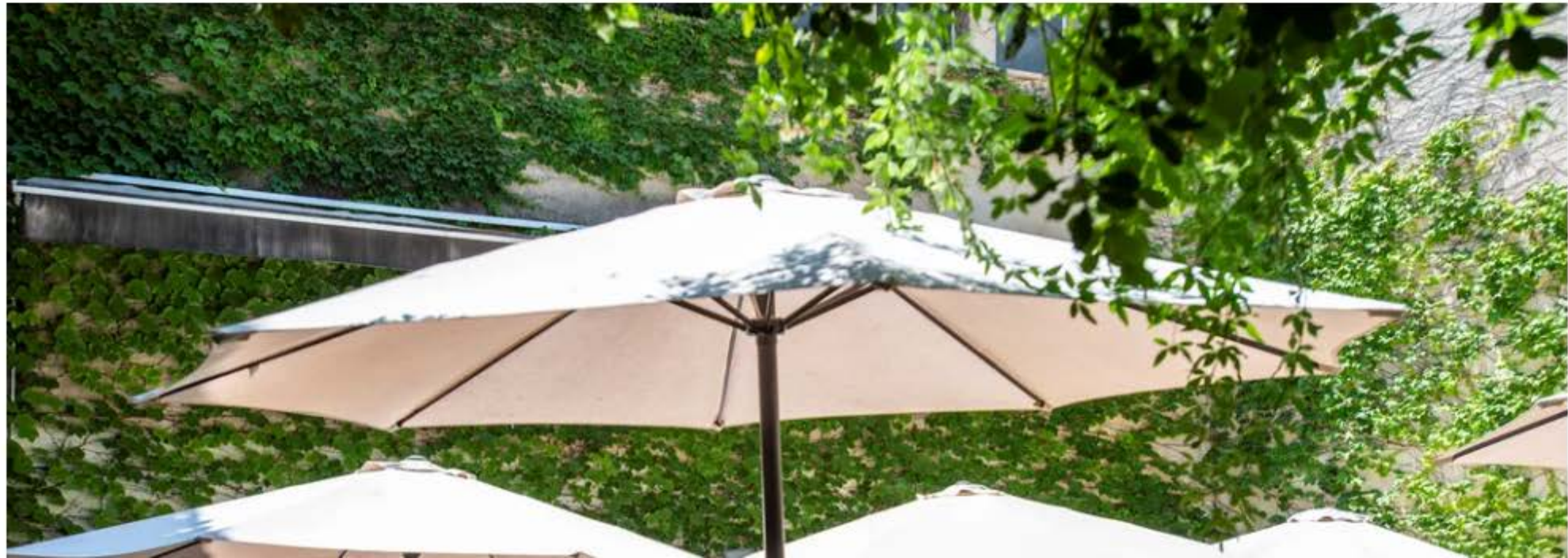
## Mishkan Museum of Art

Ein Harod

Architect: Shmuel Bickels

Established: 1938

The first building in Israel designed as an art museum was built at the initiative of artist Haim Attar and Aharon Zisling, Israel's first agriculture minister. In the previous decade, the museum had been housed in Attar's atelier. Bickels, who was born in Poland and lived in nearby Kibbutz Tel Yosef, was chosen to design the project. Like other architects of his time, he planned the building in the International Style, taking into consideration and taking advantage of the local climate. The main planning principle was the use of natural, indirect light, so the sculptures and paintings could be viewed properly.





The Mishkan Museum of Art, Ein Harod. Credit: Gil Eliahu

The entrance to the building is up a few stairs and through a modest double door, which does not presage what is found inside. The facade features narrow windows that admit light with no need for electric lighting. The director of the lighting department in the international company Arup wrote that the museum is simple and influential.

The building consists of 14 exhibition spaces, whose uses have changed over the years and allow a wide variety of displays, and several courtyards. Movement through the building is circular, and occasionally one can look out onto a pleasant interior courtyard. There are five different kinds of ceilings and another five different kinds of high windows that admit light in different ways. Bickels completely avoided ceiling windows that are not vertical. In an article about Bickels, Avital Efrat writes that the architect “did not want to illuminate the floor, but rather the walls, and direct light from the ceiling floods the floor of the room and overshadows the artwork.”