

Mishkan Museum of Art, Ein Harod  
Year-End Report, 2023  
From: Orit Lev Segev, Museum Director

Dear Friends,

At the end of 2023, we would like to share with you a little of our work this year, and to tell you about the exciting plans for the New Year. 2023 was good for us until the horror of the October 7 terror attack that changed our life forever. Achievements that I was so proud of now seem almost irrelevant.

Our hearts and prayers are with our soldiers, with the kidnapped still in Gaza and with the families that lost their loved ones in the barbaric massacre.

Thousands of families from the south and the north of the country left their homes and fled to kibbutzim in the Jezreel Valley area, where they were welcomed with open arms. The Mishkan, a beacon of culture and art, and a pluralistic space for people of all backgrounds, immediately opened its doors and embraced them together with our community.

Since then, and alongside the exhibitions and our cultural activities, the Mishkan, (which was the first and for weeks among the very few functioning cultural institutions) operates daily as a Therapeutic Art Center, to ease the suffering of the displaced families with free entrance and artistic activities. Over 5,000 evacuees – parents, grandparents, small children, and youth visit us and enjoy a few precious hours of peaceful and restorative art activities. They repeatedly thank us for providing a ray of light.

Slowly we come together again. The color returned to our faces watching small groups of art lovers and schoolchildren and kindergarteners from our region, interacting with the evacuees. They shifted perspective and toured the new exhibitions we opened in September: **Zvi Lachman: Face to Face** | Curator: Yaniv Shapira; **Chaya Gaertz-Ran: Don't go too far, works 1980-2022** | Curator: Sharon Toval; **Zohar Tal Inbar: Kibbutz Basilica** | Curator: Einat Sinai-Pasternak. In addition, a special Judaica exhibition was opened this year, revealing many of the Mishkan's treasures: **A Sacred Gaze** | Curated by Dvora Liss.

The leading role the Mishkan plays in the art field is expressed through our support of artists in this difficult time. Accordingly, we planned a new series of tribute exhibitions reflecting Israel's current reality and supporting artists from the "Gaza envelope". On December 22, 2023, two displays opened **Haran Kislev** and **Ariel Reichman**. Haran, a resident and native of Kibbutz Be'eri, was locked in the safe room with his family for 17 hours, with terrorists outside his door. The exhibition includes his paintings that survived the attack, which emotionally, turbulently, and materially depict Be'eri's landscape as well as the anxiety and danger that bubbled beneath it—the beauty that masked the fear he felt all along.

In another display on the exterior wall of the museum, a new work by the artist Ariel Reichman reads: "I AM (NOT) SAFE?"—a personal and political question. The public is invited to participate in the work through a website accessible from anywhere, on which they can choose to illuminate a neon light with one of two texts: I AM SAFE / I AM NOT SAFE. The answer formulates a burning statement after Oct. 7. This edition of the work was created for the Mishkan with the support of the Goethe Institution and evolved from two previous versions, exhibited at the Kunstalles Mannheim and the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg. I invite you

to participate in the work of art. You will be amazed to realize how difficult this categorical answer is, and how hard it is to recognize and admit it.

<https://museumeinharod.org.il/en/i-am-not-safe/>

The year 2024 will be challenging. We are preparing accordingly without losing the optimism and joy of creation. However, it is not possible to conclude a year and open a new one without highlighting the fantastic period we experienced in the first three quarters of 2023 with the exhibition that won the title - Exhibition of the Year. Our blockbuster show: **Spirit of Man, Spirit of Place, Artists of Abu-Shakra family in Ein-Harod** - 5 solo exhibitions of 5 members of one Arab family from Umm El-Fahem; curated by Dr. Galia Bar Or and Dr. Housni Alkateeb Shehada, opened with warm greetings by the President of Israel, Mr. Isaac Herzog. The exhibit increased our self-generated income and broke a record with the number of visitors. In addition, we gained incredible national and international recognition for this groundbreaking exhibition with its optimistic message of bringing hearts together and promoting understanding between divided segments of Israeli society: Arabs and Jews, religious and secular. This large-scale exhibition plan summoned us to a rare and wonderful moment, in which our museum institution fulfilled its role in an optimal way: to be a dwelling place for the spirit, a hostel for many voices, a space that contains and connects intercultural dialogue, respectful discourse, observation, recognition and enrichment.

Around the exhibition, our innovative and impactful educational programs welcomed 22,000 children, many of them from the region's diverse communities. The highlight this year was our pioneering program that accompanied the Abu Shakra Family exhibition which brought together 6,000 Arab and Jewish children for joint and meaningful series of meetings. Even in these dark days, we know to appreciate the importance of fostering understanding, and building bridges for a shared future. In addition, we held over 100 gallery talks and artist meetings, and we produced special and exciting cultural events. We learned how great the thirst is in the Israeli public for bringing hearts together and how important and influential is the social and cultural role of the Mishkan.

### [Educational projects](#)

Our newest educational project, the Mishkan's Art Innovation Center for youth is pioneering in its pedagogical discipline: "*Artivism*" (Art+Activism) - *Art Changes Reality*. In our programs, we rely on the tools of art for creativity, creative thinking, curiosity, and critical thinking to empower youth to find an independent voice and take an Artist action in their world. The new center in memory of Ann Weiner was launched this year with an unforgettable event with our incredible friends from the US. This event was the highlight of our unique and exciting "Culture and Art Trip" in the spring.

Another channel of activity in which we invest a lot, is our work with populations at risk and with special needs. Collaborations with associations in the fields of society and welfare, invited us to heart-expanding meetings that illustrated the importance of art as a tool to cling to life. Young men and women from welfare associations, treatment and rehabilitation centers found in the Mishkan a home and a space to observe, create and slowly learn once again to feel part of society.

## Branding and marketing

This year, with well-organized preparations, we succeeded in increasing the visibility of the Mishkan and bringing new audiences – groups and individuals - to the museum and its cultural activities. A major achievement is the media's recognition of the importance of the Mishkan. This year we were included in the list of the 13 most beautiful buildings in Israel (the Mishkan was the only museum in this exclusive list). Another article determined that the Mishkan is one of the top 3 most important museums in Israel. In addition, a wide-ranging article about the Mishkan and the Abu-Shakra exhibition was published in the New York Times.

## Thanks

I want to thank from the bottom of my heart to our friends and supporters in Israel and around the world, first and foremost, Wendy Kantor, the chairwoman of the Association of Friends in the USA, and Laure Brown, the chairwoman of the Association of Friends in Israel, for carrying out with outstanding determination their huge efforts on our behalf.

Deepest gratitude goes to our loyal partners, pillars of support for us, who continue to help stabilize our financial situation: Michael Staenberg from St. Louis and the Staenberg Family Foundation, the Beracha Foundation in Israel, and a foundation from New York who prefer to remain anonymous.

In addition, I extend send my most sincere admiration and gratitude to Paul Burger for his generous contribution and for assembling the group of donors to commemorate our beloved friend Ann Weiner z"l. The list of donors to this vital project is long and distinguished. We would like to thank in particular Todd Myers and Peggy Prindival, Susan Eisen, Jay Myers, Viviane J. Bregman, Chris McKibbin, John and Jacqueline Menna, and Ambrose Wang.

Much appreciation goes to our dedicated friends, whose extensive support includes financial and professional contributions: Zila & Giora Yaron, Wendy & Harry Kantor, Laure & Kobby Brown, Dalia Prashker, Monique & Daniel Birenbaum, Amy & Kenneth Goodman, Elana Spitzberg, Geri Manning, Chaya Zuckerman-Shapot, Patricia Kravtin, Joan & Bill Alper, Sarah & Jonathan Klein, Sheri & Richard Jaffe, David Weinstein, Nancy & Mark Gilbert, Helyn & Michael Goldenberg, Francis Greenburger, Amy Eskind, Amon Yariv – Gordon Gallery, Ricor Ltd., Lenox Investments Ltd, Mira Grossbard-Baron, Amanda Weiss, Tenor Ltd, Shuli & Tal Bend, Fred & Annette Keller, Reuven Ella, Dov Shiff, Michal & David Fuhrer, Eli Arluk & Maya Brodetzky, Amir Mukadi, Shoshana Almagor, Edna & Avital Fast, Karen Bromley, Judith Fridman, CBH Compagnie Bancaire Helvetique, Outset Contemporary Art Fund, Ilanot of Gold, and the Asor Foundation.

A big thank you also to BFAMI, the Azrieli Foundation, the Rogoff Foundation, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and to our dear partners at Partnership 2000 Afula-Gilboa.

In closing, I would like to express my immense gratitude to the Kibbutzim: Ein Harod Ihud & Ein Harod Me'uhad, the Gilboa Regional Council, the Ministries of Culture and Education, and the Council for Conservation of Heritage Sites in Israel for their long-lasting partnership. Finally, I salute the fantastic Mishkan team, who work tirelessly to promote our museum with grace, smiles, professionalism, and endless dedication. It is an honor to work with you!

With high hopes for better days ahead and warm wishes for a safe and successful 2024,

Yours, Orit