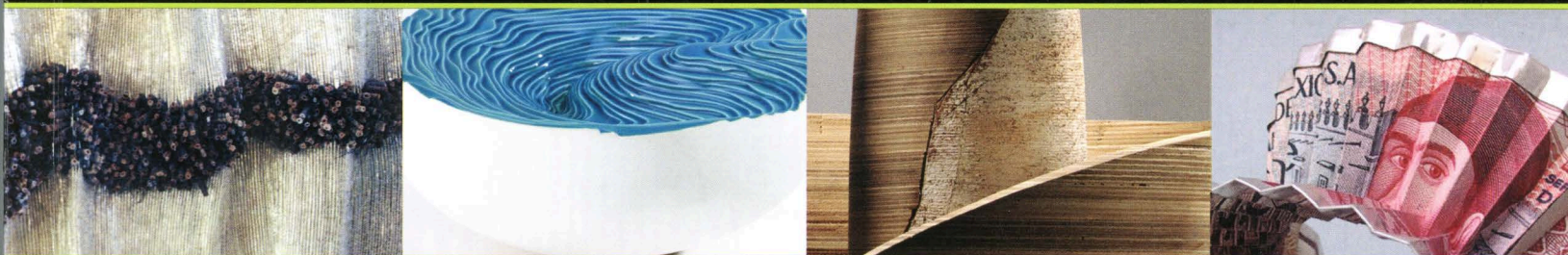


Material Culture: **Craft of Israel**



September 9 - October 24, 2004
Curated by: Shoshana Dagan

Craft Alliance presents

Material Culture: Craft of Israel

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Craft Alliance

Craft Alliance provides inspiration and education in fine contemporary craft to the entire community through exhibitions, sales and instruction.

Forty years ago, a small group of dedicated artists, working in the craft media, banded together to form Craft Alliance, so that they would have a place to exhibit and market their work. Over the years, Craft Alliance has remained committed to exhibiting the work of emerging and established artists. Our exhibition history is replete with names familiar to the craft enthusiast.

Throughout the years, Craft Alliance has drawn upon a national—and sometimes international—playing field in its search for the best of contemporary craft. As we approached our fortieth anniversary in 2004, we saw the opportunity to widen our vision and our audience by stretching our boundaries. We expanded the educational programming that accompanied an exhibit, incorporating curator's talks and visiting artist's workshops into our exhibition plans, in an effort to reach the entire community.

We strive to forge a link between the maker, the collector, and the community at large; helping the artist gain an audience for his work, and helping the collector discover new artists working in the field is the facilitative role of Craft Alliance. We create the opportunity for a match to occur, while the community observes, perhaps joining in as participants, and is educated by the process.

It is exciting that the culmination of our 40th anniversary series is such a wonderful example of this wider view. We have built many bridges. Stuart and Susie Zimmerman saw a new way to collaborate with Yokne'am and Meggido. Curator, Shoshana Dagan, took the premise and led us from that original location to the far corners of Israel to find the very best artists working there today. We are thrilled with the quality and scope of the work presented here, by artists new to St. Louis, and for the most part, the United States. We are very grateful for the support of all the contributors to this exhibit, as well as to the vision and support of Craft Alliance's Board of Directors, and we are particularly thankful to the Zimmermans who took the leadership role in finding the necessary underwriting and making this exhibit a reality.

Schuyler Gott Andrews
President, Craft Alliance

Material Culture: **Craft of Israel**

The journey I took among artists from various fields of design led to the formation of an exhibition that reflects a wide variety of contemporary artwork in Israel.

The creations in the exhibition are personal expressions of artists with a different heritage who communicate with each other in the Hebrew language. However, there is a difference between the spoken language and the language of design. Among the artists there are some who were born in Israel and others from the four corners of the world. Israel is a land of immigrants and different communities, where every person brings with him or her, their own language, culture, tradition and customs. A wide variety of styles and perceptions, which blend together under a roof of sun, blue skies most of the year, desert, sand, and granite mountains. In this social, cultural and geographical mixture, which encompasses them all, the artists work to realize their personal expressions and artistic freedom.

Acting as curator of the exhibition means visiting the artist Sasha in her home in Yoqneam. She emigrated from Russia twelve years ago. A loom stands in her living room with which she weaves her life (her past) into amazingly beautiful and extremely moving tapestry. From Sasha, the journey continues to the artist Tennat, who emigrated from Ethiopia and is eight months pregnant. She kneads the black material on a small table in the center of her living room, while four children run around her. She has no studio and the nearest kiln is an hour drive away. She wastes no time as she works and creates the figures, the jugs, and the customs that she brought with her from Ethiopia.

The journey continues north, to Gush Halav, Jish, in order to meet Mervat, a Palestinian artist from Israel. Her statement comes from pain and distress. Then the journey leads back south, to Jacaranda's spacious studio which also functions as a workshop for teaching pottery. She came directly from Mexico to attend school at Bezel'el. In Tel-Aviv we find Vered, Lia and Kobi, young jewelry makers who are coping with the special search after their art, while at the same time trying to make a living.

Conditions are not easy for artists in Israel. The local market is small, crowded and competitive. Some teach for a living and some have jobs that are not at all related to art, but they persist in their artistic work. There are many art colleges and universities around the country, in a large number disproportionate to the size of the population.

Artists display their work in one-man or group exhibitions in Israel and around the world, while peace and quiet are very far from them, and while living in the shadow of grim events that reach international media in a matter of seconds. In the midst of all this, creation takes place.

I chose to show you a small segment of each field: ceramics, jewelry, glass, wood and metals. The exhibition combines all of these things to create a broad map of the local design language.

Shoshana Dagan
Curator

Evolution of an idea: **It's all about Partnership**

A little more than two years ago, we were in Israel, sitting in the studio home of an Israeli ceramic artist. We saw her work and realized that there were many others like her, whose art was unknown outside that small country. Fortunately, we knew we had the link that could connect the craft art of Israel with the Craft Alliance of St. Louis - Partnership 2000.

In 1995, the St. Louis community, through its Jewish Federation, joined with the community of Atlanta in partnership with the Israeli city of Yokne'am and the surrounding region of Meggido in the central Galilee. Known as Partnership 2000, the heart of this hands-on program is its "gesher l'keshet", or people to people connections. A few years later we became active members of the Partnership. In the course of our joint community projects, we met several extraordinary and talented individuals who exposed us to the new and exciting craft art that was being created in the Yokne'am/Meggido area. And that got us thinking. As a past president of the Craft Alliance, Stuart knew one of its missions is to provide the space and the opportunity for established as well as new and relatively unknown craft artists to display their work. What a perfect fit! And so, with the enthusiastic support of Craft Alliance, we began the challenging, but immensely rewarding task of turning an idea into a reality. We owe a great debt to all the wonderful people of Yokne'am and Meggido who have shown us that there is great art, not just in our particular region but in the entire country of Israel. And it is our pleasure to be able to share some of it with the people of St. Louis.

Susie and Stuart Zimmerman

Artists

Tennat Awoke
Vered Babai
Ronit Gueller-Band
Samuel Barkai
Orna Ben-Ami
Nora & Naomi
Beny Bronstein
Dafna Schwimmer-Dagan
Israel Dahan
Tanya Englestein
Mervat Essa
Udi Even
Israel Hadany
Lia Kirel
Jacaranda Kori
Adi Tzur-Mouki
Nir Mouki
Yoav Reches
Gali Rosinnes
Kobi Roth
Deganit Stern Schocken
Aleksandria "Sasha" Stoyanov
Michael Tropper
Felicity Bernstein Yaacobi

Tennat Awoke

"I see them in my dreams and in the morning I sculpt them..."

Tennat immigrated from Ethiopia in 1991 during Operation Moses. In her creations, Tennat tries to keep the culture, customs and traditions of the Ethiopian Jews. The sculptures are made of special clay that in its color and texture is very similar to the basic of all materials, the Earth. Dreams and reality combine together to an authentic art full of emotion, flavor and talent.



Ram Bowl
Earthenware
12"d x 7"h



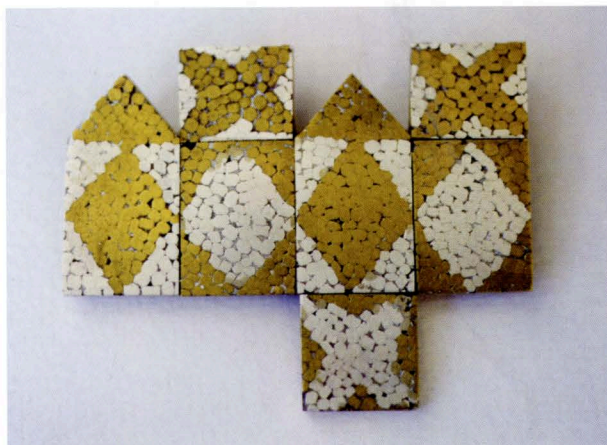
Women Carrying Jug
Earthenware
16"h x 10"w x 10"d

Vered Babai

The most appealing aspect of metalsmithing for me is the process of work. While my work is ever so often evoked by various present and past impressions, be it a particular childhood memory, an intriguing object I've come across or a pleasant colorfulness which has caught my eye, it is the process that I find the most fascinating, rigorous and demanding. It engulfs an endless quest for a new form being carried out through material, ceaseless up to the moment of the forms apparent detachability and pure independence.

My attempts at achieving my own personal language in the metalsmithing realm as well as at developing existing unique techniques, spark an exciting dialogue between the traditional metalsmithing and the techniques that rest beyond it. They adjoin them, only to become organic elements in the zone of contemporary metalsmithing in which I create.

2



"850 Parts" (Brooch)
Silver & Brass
4.8 x 3.9 cm



"150 Parts" (Ring)
Silver & Copper
1.9 x 1.6 x 2.1 cm

"40 Parts" (Ring)
Silver & Brass
0.9 x 2.3 x 2 cm



"850 Parts" (Pendant)
Silver & 22k Gold
1 x 1 x 2.3 cm

Samuel Barkai

I see myself as an artist involved in jewelry as a theme, rather than a jewelry designer.

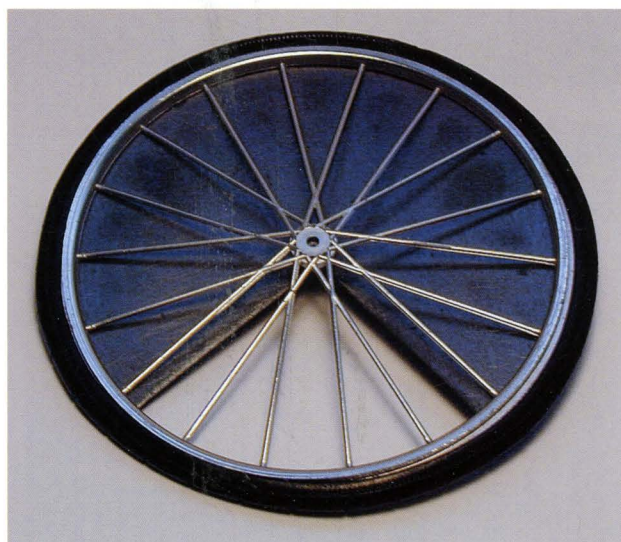
Although my objects are created using traditional precious metal techniques, I essentially attempt to combine the craft work with the world of fine arts, viewing the body as a space/platform on which I present my work.

My work deals directly and indirectly with childhood, most probably deriving from difficult childhood experiences, but also a fascination with the clash between the child's naïve view of the world and the adult's "polluted" and more conscious perspective, conveying criticism, irony...

The exploration of the "notion" of childhood, involving the miniature objects and toy-like elements which are charged with social and cultural symbols; the use of non-traditional techniques - this personal language allows me to transcend the normative concept of jewelry and expand its conventions, involving aesthetic and political notions which occupy my world.



Bracelet
Silver Plate 18k Gold
18 x 12 x 3 cm



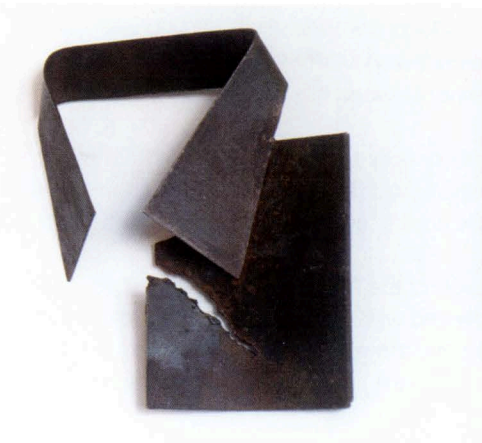
Wheel Brooch
Silver, Plastic, Rubber
10 x 10 x 1 cm

Orna Ben-Ami

Joining one scrap to another, forming a sculpture
Like joining words together into a line of verse

To speak in iron
To cry in iron
To laugh
To use the toughest material
For saying the most sensitive things,
To be human, to be a woman
To communicate
To tame the material, to conquer it
To feel
To imagine
To think
To cut, to weld, to polish
To be moved

Like choosing the right words
For my own personal poem



Tearing
Iron
25 x 25 cm



Ballet Slipper
Iron
48 x 40 x 8 inch



Memories (Dress)
Iron
16 x 12 x 4.8 inch

Nora and Naomi Bitter

We worked and signed together, "Nora & Naomi" since our graduation from Bezal'el Art Academy in 1962. We created large scale outdoor clay sculptures as well as pottery. Pottery helped us to support sculpture and function also as "time out" for meditating and developing new ideas. All our ideas derive from nature as a starting point. Human beings are expressed in juxtaposition to nature, resembling it, diffusing in it or diverging from it.



Small Boat within Big Boat
Earthenware, terra-sigillata
11 x 10 x 1.59 cm



Boat Carried by Three Men
Earthenware, terra-sigillata
40 x 23.5 x 1.74 cm



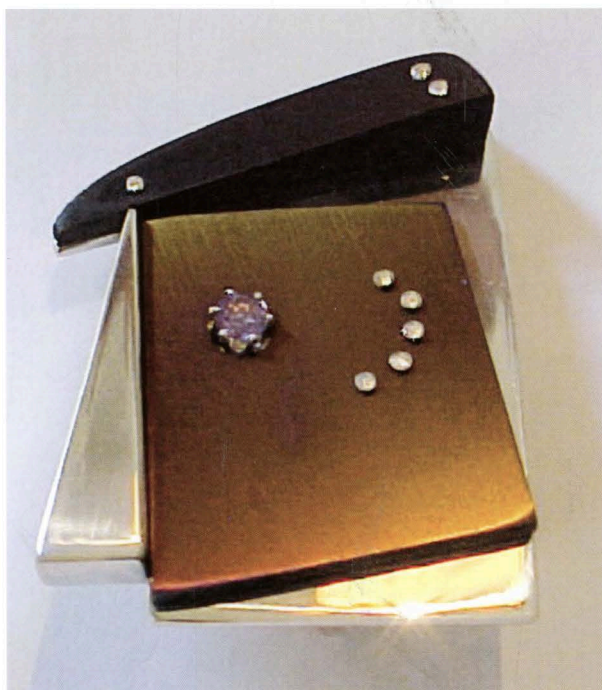
Boat with a Sail and Paddle
Earthenware, terra-sigillata
46.5 x 16 x 1.81 cm

Beny Bronstein

The creation of this set of brooches was influenced by "Nasser A-Din Hodja" stories that describe human nature, the weaknesses of mankind everywhere... "the comic, eccentric and inconsistent aspects of human beings."

The stories are a combination of humor and absurd, a silent dialog of looking towards faces that look back. Brooches that are looking towards the world through semi precious stone eyes.

6



Face 1 (Brooch)
Ebony, Titanium, Amethyst, Silver
4 x 5 cm



Face 2 (Brooch)
Ebony, Titanium, Citrine, Silver
4 x 5 cm

Dafna Dagan

I design every ring with unique style and taste. While my designs use original and innovative techniques, they unmistakably bear a classic trademark. All of my jewelry is born from a place where precision technique, quality craftsmanship and creative inspiration meet.



Three Part Ring
18k Gold, 14k Red Gold, SS,
Diamond, Citrine, Agate
3 x 3 x 3 cm



Tulip Necklace
18k Gold, Sapphire
49 cm long

Tanya Englestein

My recent ceramic works deal with the subjects "Structure and Tower" and "Veils".

These subjects have occupied me for the past few years. My search for a deeper understanding of the world of architecture and buildings, originating in the eastern deserts and constructed out of the Jerusalem stone, binds me to the visions of my childhood in Jerusalem and to my oriental origins.

The search for materials which would fit this special atmosphere, has created special textures characterized by the hand-shaping of the substance, colors which suggest sand and stone...with the glittering addition of gold.

The result is an artwork resembling pottery - a container, a structure, a mosque, a ceremonial bowl, a mirage citadel created in clay, and the "Harem" women clustered behind their veils in pure white, ochre, blue and gold.

Constantly working along theme-lines of my local environment, I attempt to transcend the middle-eastern shapes, colors, sounds and techniques through my personal prism, with my personal sign-language, into something universal yet authentic.



Embroidered Childhood 2
White Clay, Yarns
35 x 25 x 10 cm



Veils
White Clay, Iron Wire
60 x 20 x 20 cm

Mirvat Essa

I deal with many issues in my art; place, time, volume, belonging, connection, material, clay, ornaments, "Me" and "Them", here and there, present and past, identity and land. I integrate these issues with the values of modern art and decoration. It is sometimes strange to stand in the 21st century and see how this simple and impossible material continues to interest and fascinate the spectators, the human beings.

10



Thirty Five
Clay and Glass
9 x 12 x 9 cm



Three
Clay and Wood
30 x 120 x 40 cm

Ronit Gueller-Band

Nature and the world of plants has always been a powerful source of stimulation and inspiration for me, since early childhood. I have observed plants, researched them and created new "members" to that family using all skills acquired.

The Orchid family is a new discovery for me, within the plant world. I was immediately drawn to them with their amazing variegated colors, textures and shapes, and the way in which they present themselves.

My current works have been created during observations of these qualities as shown in these stimulating, enchanting masters of temptation - the orchids.

Among many other qualities, orchids are known for their endless ability for generating hybrids. The jewelry presented here reflects my desire to participate in this feast of nature and join botanists and horticulturists all around the world adding and creating my own new hybrids.

12



Pink Flower Brooch
Silver
5 x 5 cm

Spotted Flower Brooch
Silver and Diamond
5 x 5 cm

Yellow and Red Brooch
Silver
4 x 5 cm

Israel Hadany and Nora & Naomi

This work of art is an example of collaboration between artists. Each of us brings to the table professional characteristics of his domain. The outcome is a sculpture that is a kind of model creating a sculptural language that combines the two materials: the clay and the laminated wood.



Chatzer
Wood and Ceramic
68 x 82 x 65 cm

Lia Kirel

I like to use non-traditional materials to create my objects, especially, if they have a very strict connotation about their meaning and use of them in our society. I am very interested in the reaction of the viewer towards my work, I use a lot of humor and even cynicism. I like to break the rules and explore the limits on what makes a piece of jewelry, in peoples eyes, connected to the message of the material originally chosen.

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Bracelet I
Silver, Bank Notes
9 x 5 cm



Dollar Cubes
Silver, Bank Notes, PVC, Thread
3 x 3 x 3 cm

Jacaranda Kori

My work in ceramics consists in exploring new frontiers with clay and at the same time I keep respecting the shape of the vessel and stay loyal to its original essence.

There are so many ceramic pieces in history, yet I am trying to find a way to excite the viewer once again in the same boring and ordinary shape of the jar.

I am always aware of the roots of pottery and my own roots. Mexican folklore elements can be recalled in my work as well as elements of archeological jars forgotten in a far away museum.



Big Green Vessel
Handbuilt and Wheel-thrown Stoneware
35 x 80 cm



Blue Spiral Vessel
Handbuilt Stoneware
30 x 55 cm



Maroon Vessel
Handbuilt Stoneware
30 x 55 cm

Nir Mouki

It is my belief that an artist is examined by his ability to express his opinions, thoughts, feelings and whatever is in his heart through the very work that he is doing in a way that whoever beholds this work will identify with it in the very opinions, thoughts or feelings that the artist may have had.

Through my artwork, I try to open a "peep-hole" to life for the audience to look at my view of the world with all the beauty and pain that it may have.

I consider that the glass is like a magic material in my hands, allowing me to express my opinions, thoughts, feelings or whatever is in my heart during the time that I work with it.

16



Blue Centipede
Blown Glass
30 x 12 cm



Silver Goblet
Glass and Silver
14 x 10 cm

Goblet
Blown Glass
15 x 12 cm

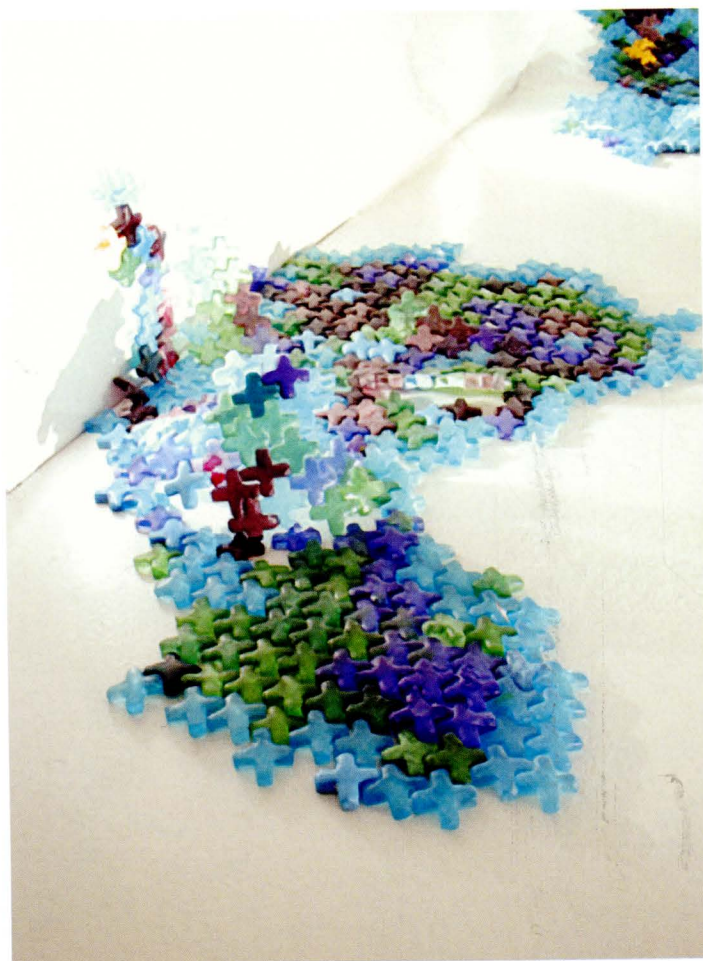


Voodoo Woman
Glass and Metal
50 x 30 x 20 cm

Adi Tzur-Mouki

The willingness to express the beauty of nature is the motive of my art work. I see and feel the beauty of nature in the merging of the water with the sky, in the reflection of nature on the water, in the texture of fruits and through the method of using an array of colors.

Glass is the magic of all materials, allowing me to transfer my feeling of the beauty of nature to whoever may behold my work.



Pieces of Heaven
Kiln-cast Crystal Glass
4 x 4 x 1 m

Gali Rosinnes

In 1975 I was born in Israel. I spent my childhood and adolescent years in a small town called Ra'anana. I was very small for my age which always made me feel inadequate. I am now 28 and still very small.

After I finished my Army service, I spent two years traveling around South America. In this time I took my first steps in jewelry design, studying metalsmithing at Universidad de Los Andes in Merida, Venezuela. Last year, I finished my studies for an art degree at Bezel'el - Academy for Art and Design in Jerusalem. For my final project, I was awarded a scholarship from Keren Sharet - American Israel Cultural Foundation.

I have two cats, Feebi and Arthur who are another source of inspiration and hair. We all live together in Yemin-Moshe, one of the first neighborhoods to be built outside the old city walls of Jerusalem. In addition, it is one of the most beautiful places in Jerusalem and maybe the world. To compliment my size, I live in a very small and cozy apartment where I also work.

In the current situation in Israel, I find my work to be a relief from the tension surrounding the on-going conflicts of my country. The madness of the day to day reality is somehow partially blocked by the ability to escape to the world of art. My projects are an attempt to find a piece of childish innocence in my adult life.



Circus (3 pc set)
Silver, 14k White Gold, Brass
1) 4.5 x 3.3 x 2.3 cm
2) 4.5 x 4 x 7 cm
3) 3 x 2.2 cm



Dancing Girl Jewelry Case
Silver, gold plate, steel, Zirconia stones
3.3 x 4.5 cm

Kobi Roth

My work deals with figurative images, among them issues like the army, soldiers, masculinity, childhood, toys and memories which I find stimulating. I have been inspired by artistic sources and influenced by current events.

The realization of my work is anchored in the tradition of jewelry making and decorative arts, although experimenting and broadening the boundaries of technique are essential elements of my work.

Repousse, forging, fusing and gilding are fundamental techniques in the process. The materials I am using are silver, gold, copper as well as found objects.

20



Rose Brooch
Found object, aluminum
7 x 9 cm



Memento Mori Brooch
Found object, aluminum
6.5 x 11 cm



Wild Life Brooch
Found object, aluminum
5 x 11 cm

Deganit Stern Schocken

In Hebrew, the word for making jewelry is Tsofuf, whose root meaning is "to combine". Jewelry is a language, a system of signs that expresses ideas - that expresses significance. Elements or components of jewelry make sense when they are assembled together as a system. That is to say they relate to the body, to the clothing and to space; in short, to their context. Jewelry has significance as combination.

I came to making jewelry, this particular system of making meaning, via architecture. I treat brooches by themselves as isolated signs, like buildings. Single units placed on continuous lines create dynamic possibilities. Like streets they form a network. Jewelry is spread on the body its earth creates a system of signs - the city.

The following are some of the themes I explore in my work:

Function as expression/expression as function;
Movement in jewelry/ jewelry in movement;
Covering/uncovering - systems of relationship;
Material/stones;
Replacements



Big Bead
Silver, Mixed Technique
15 x 12 cm

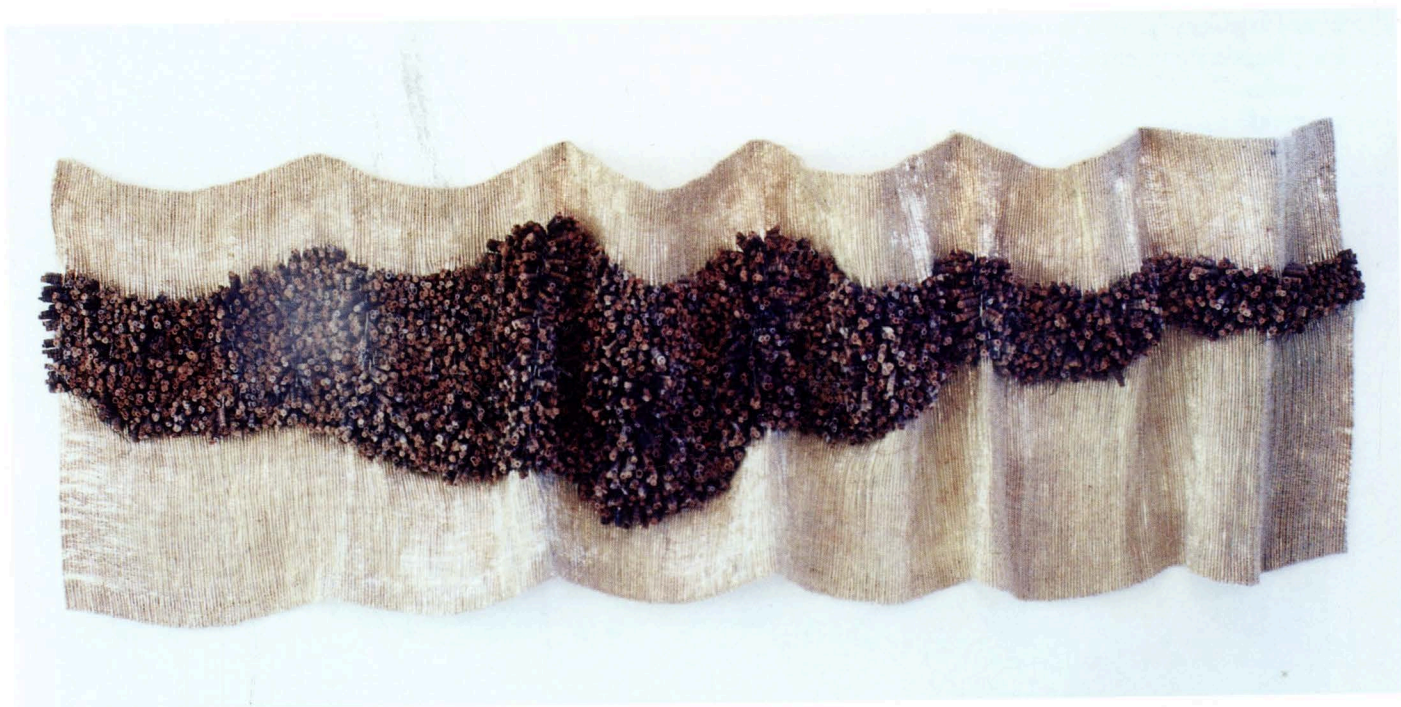


Brooch-Double Fan
Silver, Mixed Technique
7.5 x 6.5 cm

Aleksandra "Sasha" Stoyanov

Israel has two sides, from one it is a land, a country we are living with its contradictions, war, problems, beauty...From the other it is the Holy Land, promised and given by God. The work reflects the Holy Land, shining in the golden light.

When I keep threads in my hands I feel that they are ground, the grass, that there is a life in them. The feeling of thread in my hands is the first appeal for me to begin working on a new piece.

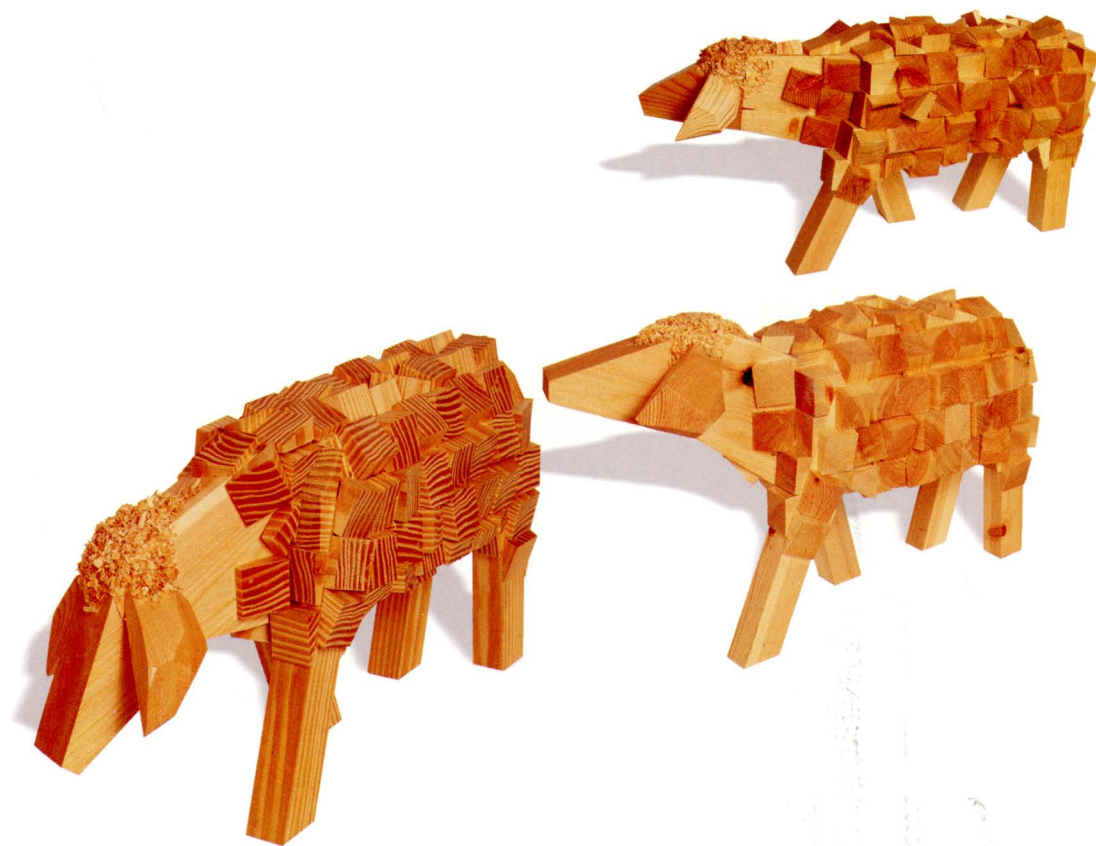


Land
Leather, Jute, Gold, Paper
70 cm x 265 cm

Michael Tropper

The wooden herd of sheep is one of my works that came out of my twelve years experience working with sheep at my kibbutz (farm).

This work, like most of my other work, is a reflection of my daily life on Kibbutz Nachshon in Israel.



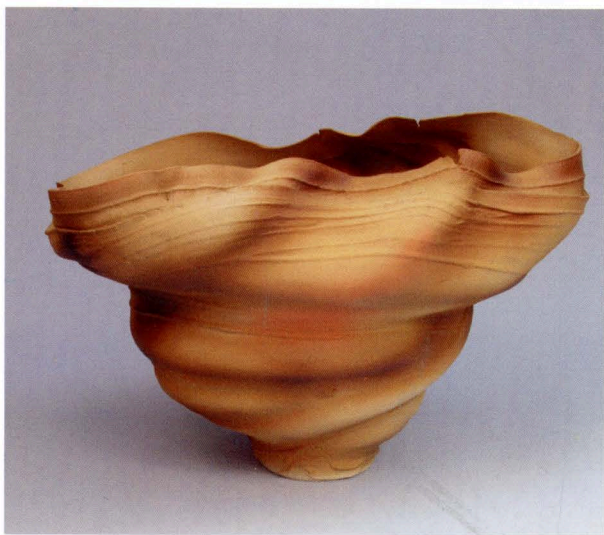
Sheep
Wood
50 x 50 cm

Felicity Bernstein Yaacobi

Light and movement have always been an important and integral part of my work over the years. In the vessels that make up my portfolio, I have taken one base color (as featured in the desert sands of Israel) and just as the sun's rays create shadows as they pass over the earth's landscape during the day, so do the colors of the sand - as seen on the pots - also change in small and subtle ways.

I have tried to depict and reflect - in the same way that the desert winds affect the shape of the rocks and sand dunes in reality - the affect and impact of these natural elements on my pots in their form and continuity, changing their shape and contours and making the eye want to follow the lines to see where they lead.

24



Last Rays of Sun
Stoneware, wheel-thrown & altered, slips & glazes
45 x 31 x 31 cm



Dusk
Stoneware, wheel-thrown & altered, slips & glazes
31 x 42 x 31 cm

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