



A

A

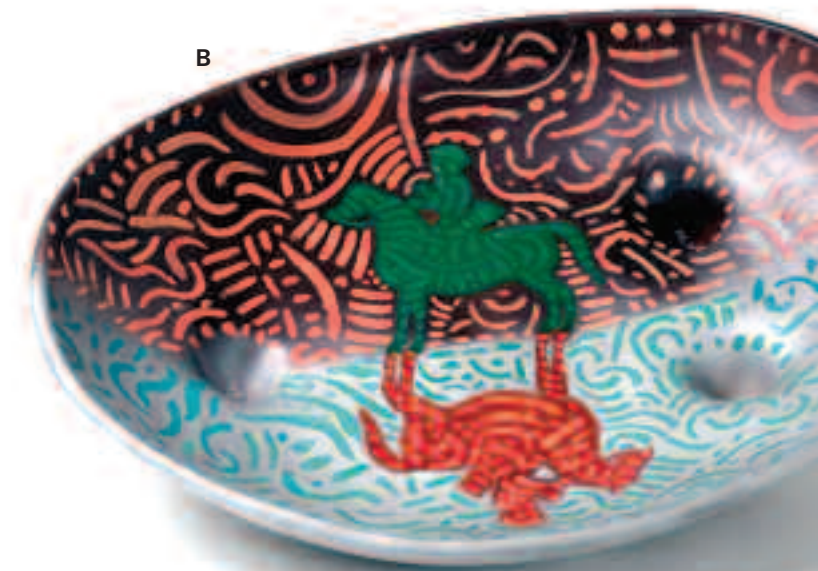
Curators Tamir-Schestowitz and Zmora wrote in the exhibition catalog, “In some of the bowls a clear statement emerges of the essence of the conflict, a conflict of cultural difference on the one hand and common pain on the other, and above all quivers the yearning for simple and peaceful daily living.” This mosaic by artist Lauri Recanti suggests memories of simplicity in her use of buttons, beads, jewelry fragments, and shards of everyday china.

B

Ahmad Canaan, b.1965, created this work in industrial paints. As in Alima’s bowl (*below*), the hues chosen juxtapose the patriotic colors of Israel and Palestine. The mounted figure on horseback is a recurring theme in Canaan’s art. A beloved painter and sculptor, Canaan is also curator of the Tamra Municipal Art Gallery, where he showcases the works of young Arab artists.

C

Rita Alima, b.1932, who signs all her works “Alima,” is a member of the distinguished Plus Ten Group and Burston Workshop for Lithography in Jerusalem. Hers is one of several works that draw on symbolic colors, particularly emphasizing the green and red of the Palestinian flag and the blue of the Israeli flag.



B

Brimming

In late March and early April, Brandeis’s Rapaporte Treasure Hall was the first stop on a nationwide peace tour featuring Israeli and Palestinian artwork. The exhibition, *Offering Reconciliation*, showcased 135 interpretations by prominent artists of the intrinsic realities of reconciliation: coexistence, pain, loss, fracture, and fusion.

The Israeli and Palestinian painters, sculptors, and photographers, representing many different faiths and countries of origin, created one-of-a-kind pieces from identical ceramic bowls. The vessels served as a common denominator for artistic depiction of the pain-filled, yet hopeful, stories of the conflict. Their fragility symbolizes the fragility of the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians.

Offering Reconciliation was commissioned by the Parents Circle–Families Forum, a grassroots organization of bereaved Israelis and Palestinians who promote reconciliation as an alternative to hatred and revenge. It was first exhibited in May 2006 at the Museum of Israeli Art in Ramat Gan, Israel, where it drew an unprecedented 2,500 viewers, including politicians, prominent members of the international and Middle East communities, and media representatives. The

U.S. tour was cosponsored by the Association of Israel’s Decorative Arts, a nonprofit dedicated to exposing the work of contemporary Israeli decorative artists to a global audience.

During its Brandeis stay, hundreds of area schoolchildren viewed the exhibition. In addition, the university hosted talks by Parents Circle members Ali Abu Awwad, whose brother was shot and killed by an Israeli soldier, and Robi Damelin, whose son was killed by a Palestinian sniper while guarding a settlement. Awwad’s and Damelin’s stories are featured prominently in *Encounter Point*, a documentary by a team of Palestinian, Israeli, and North and South American filmmakers that was screened at the university’s Wasserman Cinematheque.

From Brandeis, *Offering Reconciliation* traveled to the World Bank in Washington, D.C., and it is now on view at the Bellevue Art Museum in Bellevue, Washington, through August 19. The exhibition will be featured at the United Nations in New York September 1 to 28; at the Pomegranate Gallery in New York October 4 to 18; and at SOFA in Chicago November 2 to 4. A full-color, trilingual catalog with an introduction by curators Orna Tamir-Schestowitz and Daphna Zmora documents the exhibition.

Bowls of Understanding

In a remarkable collaboration, Middle Eastern artists share visions of common pain and promise.



C

D

Mohammad Said Kalash, from Kara, near Hadera on the plains of Sharon, calls himself “a Palestinian Israeli.” His creation in mixed-media includes a quote from poet and political activist Taufik Ziad: “I offer more than half of my life to anyone who ever made a crying boy laugh.”

E

As a photojournalist in Jerusalem since 1983, Jim Hollander used his bowl to memorialize a hopeful instant he captured for Reuters in 1986. “I was in the Old City of Jerusalem covering a story after a religious Jewish ‘settler’ was stabbed in the Moslem quarter, close to its border with the Jewish quarter,” he recalls. “Tensions were high, and the police tried to broker a ‘sulka,’ or reconciliation. Two men—leaders of the opposing sides, I presumed—briefly kissed, then moments later scuffles again broke out as someone yelled, ‘Arabs are murderers!’”

F

Artist Alex Kremer was born in Tadjhistan in 1966 and immigrated to Jerusalem in 1982. He has exhibited widely in both Israel and the United States. Among his many awards are the 2001 young artist prize of the Israel Ministry of Science, Culture, and Sports. His design, which suggests two people reaching out to each other, is rendered in oils.



D



E



F



G

G
Palestinian artist Osama Zatar sculpted a barbed wire olive tree that grows out of a painted rural landscape. The legs of his inverted bowl are adorned with symbols of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Zatar told the *Jerusalem Post* he chose an olive tree “because it is something shared by us all, something that represents life whose roots are deeper than human roots, and which lives peacefully with the earth and gives its fruit to all.” He asked, “If we continue to water our trees with blood, what legacy will our children inherit?”



H

H One of the most celebrated artists of her day, Maya Cohen-Levy has received myriad awards. Her images are often derived from nature, evoking greatly magnified details of sunflower hearts, thatch, and honeycombs. She decorated her bowl in black and red oils, choosing colors known to illustrate grief, blood, loss and pain.



I

I Israeli conceptual artist Micha Ullman, b.1939 in Tel Aviv, is a leading painter and sculptor of his generation. He serves on the faculty at the University of Stuttgart, and his work is represented in London's Tate Collection. One of several interpretations that emphasize breaking and destruction, his bowl—fractured and then reconstituted with marble glue—speaks volumes about his current view of the Middle East. In several other artists' renditions, the bowl was left in fragments.

J Numerous artists incorporated the written word—in English, Hebrew, or Arabic—into their messages. After coating her ceramic vessel with a mirror-like material called PVD—for physical vapor deposition—artist Shira Sagol set forth the salient but unanswerable question, “Who is the righteous of us all?” Another literal interpretation came from Aliza Olmert, daughter of Holocaust survivors and wife of Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert, who spiraled in a continuous loop on her bowl the words “Jews do not evict Arabs do not evict Jews do not evict Arabs...”

K Iranian-born artist Yehuda Porbuchrai emigrated to Tel Aviv as an infant. His incorporating of the words “Hava Nagila”—the title of a traditional Jewish song—typifies works in the exhibition that drawn upon what the curators called phrases “from the cultural warehouse of poetry and prose of both nations.”



J



K



M

L Artist Shirly Bar-Amotz is a faculty member in the Bezalel Academy's Department of Jewelry and Fashion. She often works in enamels and glass. Her mixed-media design is among those that blend idyllic memories (the swan, the palm trees) with evidence of disruption (the depiction of shattered glass). Other artists contributed pastoral designs featuring woodlands, fields, and gardens.

M Sculptor Ofra Zimbalista is creating a sensation throughout Europe with site-specific installations that show often frightening life-sized figures, frequently in the shadows of public places. For this exhibition, she worked with Narin Zimbalista to re-create one of these eerie scenes in microcosm. Her hopeful twist: instead of bullets, the soldiers' guns are spouting butterflies and flowers.



L

N



O



N

Speaking with a reporter for Aljazeera.net, artist Dalia Reizel described this mixed-media work as showing a woman's womb with hands emerging, trying to grasp olive leaves, the universal symbol of peace. "The leaves are just out of reach," she commented, "but hopefully the hands will get there one day." Birth is also the theme in a jarring sculptural treatment by Assi Meshullam, who used the bowl as a whelping dish where what appears to be a dead mother dog lies crumpled in a pool of blood and covered with giant flies.

O

The color red is a unifying theme among many of the bowls, used to represent blood as well as anger, courage, and a range of other emotions. In this mixed-media work, fashioned by Israeli industrial designer Ezri Tarazi, director of the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem, the outside of the bowl is painted black, while the crimson dome is illuminated from beneath.

P

Yuval Caspi was one of several contributing artists who elected to put a face on the conflict through self-portraiture. Wrote the curators, "Here [in personal portraits] the statement is more direct and clear—reconciliation is me. The personal overwhelms the national. Portraits are presented on many works, harsh or soft faces, pleasant or brash, all reflecting a sense of hope." In June, Caspi joined with dozens of other artists to mount the show *40 Years of Occupation, 1967–2007—Israeli and Palestinian Artists against the Occupation and for a Just Peace* at The Artists' House gallery in Jerusalem.



P