



“There was an undeniable force that seemed to emanate from Andy and make good things happen for many, many people,” said Jeffrey Solomon, President of ACBP. “She derived much of that energy from the young people whom she made it her purpose to serve.”

Andrea M. Bronfman 1945-2006

Andrea (Andy) M. Bronfman, co-chair of The Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies (ACBP), passed away in January as the result of injuries sustained in a traffic accident. Through her leadership at ACBP and numerous other philanthropic endeavors, she was a shaping force in initiatives aimed at strengthening Jewish identity worldwide, with a focus on Jewish youth, the arts and education. In 2003, she and her husband, Charles, were named honorary citizens of Jerusalem, the first North American Jews and the first couple to receive this historic honor.

Known to friends and colleagues as Andy, Mrs. Bronfman also served as Founder and Deputy Chairman of The Gift of New York, a non-profit initiative which provided admission to New York City’s cultural, arts, entertainment and sports venues, without charge to the bereaved families of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The program, intended to give solace to the grieving families, ran through the spring of 2003 and served 12,000 families.

In 2003, she and Charles founded AIDA: The Association for Israel’s Decorative Arts with collectors Doug and Dale Anderson. Inaugurated in a special exhibit at SOFA CHICAGO 2003, AIDA was a vehicle designed to expose Israeli artists to North American galleries and collectors, as well as to educate North Americans about decorative arts in Israel. Charles established The Andrea M. Bronfman Prize for the Arts (“The Andy”) to honor his wife’s life-long passion for and support of the arts, and to create a showcase for Israeli decorative artists.

Andrea inherited her love of Israel from her parents and her love of art from her mother. Born in London in 1945, she moved to Canada as a young bride where she lived until 1998, when she and Charles moved to New York City. Her father, Hyam, was, for many years, a leader of the United Joint Israel Appeal of Great Britain. Her mother, Doris, was the founder of the British Friends of the Museums of Israel. Andrea Bronfman devoted much of her energies to fostering interest in Jewish identity, community and meaning, both in North America and in Israel.

Andrea was on the Board of Directors of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Inc., New York and The Jewish Museum, New York. In her capacity as National Co-Chair of the Canadian Friends of Beth Hatefutsoth, Andrea created and directed a national cultural project, *A Coat of Many Colours: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada*, a major traveling exhibition with a companion book and film. Her commitment to human rights and fundamental freedom led her to found the *Group of 35—Montreal Women’s Campaign for Soviet Jewry*. The “35s” played an active role in alerting both the Canadian government and the public at large to the plight of Soviet Jewry.

The Bronfmans were co-founders of birthright israel, a program offering 18-26 year-olds their first Jewish living and learning experience in Israel. In just six years, almost 100,000 participants have benefited from this program. In May of 2000, Andrea was awarded Doctorate of Philosophy, Honoris Causa, from Tel Aviv University.

Remembrance by:

Mark Lyman, Founder and Director of SOFA
Anne Meszko, Director of Advertising and Programming

Our first meeting with Andy and Charles Bronfman was arranged by Doug and Dale Anderson in the spring of 2002 at the Bronfman's stunning New York apartment overlooking Central Park. We were greeted by Andy in a great-looking pants suit that was, like the woman we would come to know, at once stylish and comfortable. We admired the great view of the Park and their amazing art collection. Charles made us a drink—a very good drink, we recall. The conversation was relaxed and flowing.

Talk turned to the project they had in mind—to present a curated special exhibit of decorative artworks by Israeli artists at SOFA CHICAGO, artists who, because of the second *Intifada*, were having a great deal of difficulty exhibiting and selling art in Israel. Andy and Charles wanted to bring the work to SOFA, where it would be shown alongside top contemporary arts from around the world—where it would, they were sure, hold its own against the best. They felt that its exposure at SOFA to a broad public as well as to prominent gallerists, museum curators and collectors, would be most productive. We were moved by Andy's confidence in the quality of the work, and her genuine delight when we agreed to place the AIDA Special Exhibit just inside the entrance to SOFA CHICAGO 2003, making it a major part of our presentation and promotion.

We watched with amazement as The Association for Israeli's Decorative Arts (AIDA) was born—quickly, efficiently, guided by top professionals like Jane Adlin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rivka Saker, Sotheby's Israel, Aviva Ben-Sira, Eretz Israel Museum, and Davira Taragin, Racine Art Museum, who provided key curatorial support to Dale and Andy, and architect Norman Sandler, who designed the stunning AIDA booth. We were awed and excited when Andy and Charles arranged for Alon Pinkus, Israel Consul General in New York to speak at the International Reception at SOFA CHICAGO 2003. Just as Andy predicted, we were delighted with the quality of the artworks AIDA presented and not a bit surprised when many of the artists were picked up for representation by top US galleries and dealers. This trend continued at SOFA CHICAGO 2004 and 2005 with a total of 21 AIDA exhibiting artists having acquiring US gallery representation to-date.

All of us at SOFA are deeply saddened by Andy's tragic death. We hope she knows how committed to AIDA we remain.

Doug and Dale Anderson
Co-Founders, AIDA

Andy loved having AIDA as Special Exhibit #1 at SOFA CHICAGO. She believed that there was no better way to present Israel's position in the world of contemporary decorative arts and, indeed, after the British Crafts Council saw what we were doing at SOFA, they invited us to the COLLECT show at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Yes, Dale and I introduced Andy to Mark Lyman and Anne Meszko of SOFA, but she quickly developed her own relationship with them and at the end of each SOFA, when the rest of us were exhausted from the effort, Andy would ask Mark if we could come back again and he always said that we could... and then she would smile at us and say, "Isn't that terrific?" Dale and I must confess that there were times we thought that terrific opportunity daunting ...Andy never did.

SOFA has been the making of AIDA and has had an immeasurable influence on Israel's art community. Not only has it provided the opportunity to introduce the work of 27 artists over three years to the North American collecting community and to the dealers who now represent them, it has given these artists an opportunity to see the work of hundreds of artists they never would have otherwise seen. In our first year, we learned that many of the artists we bring to SOFA are teachers. They have taken thousands of photographs at SOFA and those slides play an important role in their lectures.

SOFA is now a word in Hebrew and a powerful brand in Israel, just as AIDA is now a word in the lexicon of the North American contemporary decorative arts community. Our partnership has been a complete success.

Jane Adlin
Assistant Curator, Department of Modern Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art

The day of our first AIDA meeting was set for a spring day at Dale and Doug Anderson's New York apartment. Dale, Davira Taragin, Andy and I were going to look over the many artists' portfolios that our colleague in Israel had gathered and sent to us and from which we were to make a selection for our special exhibit at SOFA CHICAGO. Andy had been "invited" to join us—the selection committee—but had been told (by Dale) that she had no vote. I wasn't sure about this arrangement—after all, AIDA was the brainchild of Andy along with her husband Charles and her dear friends Dale and Doug. Would this be a tenable situation?

The day turned out to be one of my most favorite days. We unwrapped the portfolios as if they were birthday presents—we all squealed with delight, groaned with agony, and laughed with happiness. Andy loved it. She loved the process, she loved the camaraderie, she loved every moment of it. For Andy, the very idea that she could make a connection for young, struggling artists in her beloved Israel with the opportunities awaiting them in the United States was profound—and it was instantly apparent to us how strongly she felt about this burgeoning project. Her unwavering enthusiasm was highly contagious. By the end of a long afternoon, we all felt it.

Now after three shows of Israel's decorative artists at SOFA CHICAGO, two appearances at COLLECT in London, a summer program at Watershed in Maine and other projects in the works, AIDA is growing into a self-sustaining organization. I know that the very successful collaboration between all of us, whom Andy gathered together, will continue to have a meaningful life.

Aviva Ben-Sira
AIDA, Project Director, Israel

I was very lucky to get to know Andy in the four years since AIDA was established. Andy loved life, loved people, loved her family, loved the decorative arts and the artists themselves. The activities of AIDA, to helping decorative Israeli artists enter the international market, made her very proud and happy.

Andy knew every Israeli artist, visited their studio and bought their work to show support. She maintained personal contact with the artists and related to everyone as an equal, always with words of encouragement and expressed amazement. Never did Israeli decorative artists benefit from such generosity, and Andy's warm and attentive approach made each of them feel like one of her children.

Andy was actively involved in the preparations for each show. Instead of arriving at the Opening Night as a guest, she was there with the wonderful AIDA team, setting up the booth and paying attention to every detail—from sandwiches for the workers to organizing receptions and dinners. During the exhibition she stood at the AIDA booth for hours, in her high heels, with her very special charm and big smile, communicating with the visitors, explaining the creative details of the artwork. She was so delighted when a sale was made and a new contact established.

This is the Andy I knew, Andy who realized the AIDA dream—generous, creative, energetic, vivacious. We all loved her and in return gave her great love, honor and respect. The loss is enormous and she is irreplaceable.

Davira S. Taragin
Director of Exhibitions and Programs, Racine Art Museum

I had the great pleasure of working with Andy Bronfman on two projects developing parallel to one other: AIDA, and RAM's upcoming collaborative exhibition with The Israel Museum, Jerusalem entitled *Women's Tales: Four Israeli Jewelers*.

I was continually impressed by the fact that she was an "idea" person. Starting to talk or e-mail her about a concept was like a tennis match. Volleying a thought to her generated an immediate response and the dialogue continued until a resolution was reached and a path of action developed. Once there was a decision to proceed, the plan was implemented. If things did not work out as planned, another course was developed and implementation began again.

Throughout the entire process, no matter the outcome, Andy's enthusiastic, can-do spirit prevailed. The fact that AIDA continues to grow is a testament to the high energy and level of commitment of this wonderful woman.



Left to right:
Elisabeth and Norman Sandler,
Dale and Doug Anderson,
Andrea and Charles Bronfman
in front of the AIDA special
exhibit at SOFA CHICAGO 2003



Left to right:
Andrea Bronfman, Mark Lyman,
Doug Anderson, Anne Meszko
and Dale Anderson at an AIDA-
hosted reception honoring Mark
Lyman and Anne Meszko during
SOFA CHICAGO 2005