

## Israeli artists bring their wares to Boston

### Best of Show winners display at Craft Boston 2010

BY PENNY SCHWARTZ  
Special to *The Voice & Herald*

BOSTON – Ceramic artist Vered Dayan was once a dancer and later had a career as a documentary film



/Penny Schwartz

**KEREN SHARON MODELS** one of her leather handbags. Sharon designs under the name Kawa, the Japanese word for leather.

editor. Glass bead jeweler Nirit Dekel studied education and sociology and then worked as a computer engineer.

Last weekend, the two Israeli women were singled out from among more than 200 other artists as best of show winners at Craft Boston 2010, a show of contemporary art, craft and design presented by the Society of Arts and Crafts, held at the city's Seaport World Trade Center.

Dayan and Dekel were part of a group of 16 Israeli jewelers, fashion designers, metal artists and other designers whose participation in the Boston show was sponsored by AIDA, the Association of Israeli Decorative Arts, an organization that promotes the work of contemporary Israeli artists.

By bringing selected Israeli artists and designers to shows in the U.S., AIDA opens doors to an international audience of galleries, institutions and collectors that the artists might not be able to do on their own, explained Erika Vogel, AIDA's national director. Artists are selected through a stiff jury process, Vogel

said.

Among AIDA's supporters, and THE co-chair of the Boston area host committee, is Providence-based Toots Zynsky, an internationally renowned glass artist, who donated a 2008 work, Musa Miziamah, valued at \$15,000 to AIDA for a fundraiser last week.

In an email, Zynsky wrote, "Cultural exchanges between countries are one of the most positive and enlightening connections that we make as human beings and far transcends politics."

Though Sally Lapides was unaware of AIDA until six months ago, the Providence Realtor and board member of the Rhode Island School of Design became a member of this show's host committee, combining her support for Israel with her long-term promotion of the arts.

"Not everyone is lucky enough to be able to travel to Israel so this is a way to bridge the world," said Lapides at the Craft Boston show.

Invited to view the artists' exhibits at the show with *The Voice & Herald*, Ronit Tamir said she was impressed – but not surprised – by the quality and creativity of the work on display, noting that Israeli artists make unconventional use of common material. Tamir, wife of Nadav Tamir, consul general of Israel to New England, is a dancer with a keen eye for contemporary



/Penny Schwartz

**CERAMIC ARTIST VERED Dayan, right, at the Crafts Boston show, April 9-11, at the Seaport World Trade Center, talks with Ronit Tamir.**

fashion and jewelry.

"It's very innovative," she said. There are several reasons that their artwork is so creative and innovative, Tamir suggested. Israelis are brought up in a more creative, expressive environment, and Israel is also a small country, she pointed out. "We want to be noticeable and want to expose ourselves to the world so we use every resource we have around us to do something unique."

In the four years she has lived in the Boston area, Tamir says people often ask about her jewelry, attracted to the unique designs, textures, and colors. "That's from Israel, right?" they ask her, she recalled in our conversation.

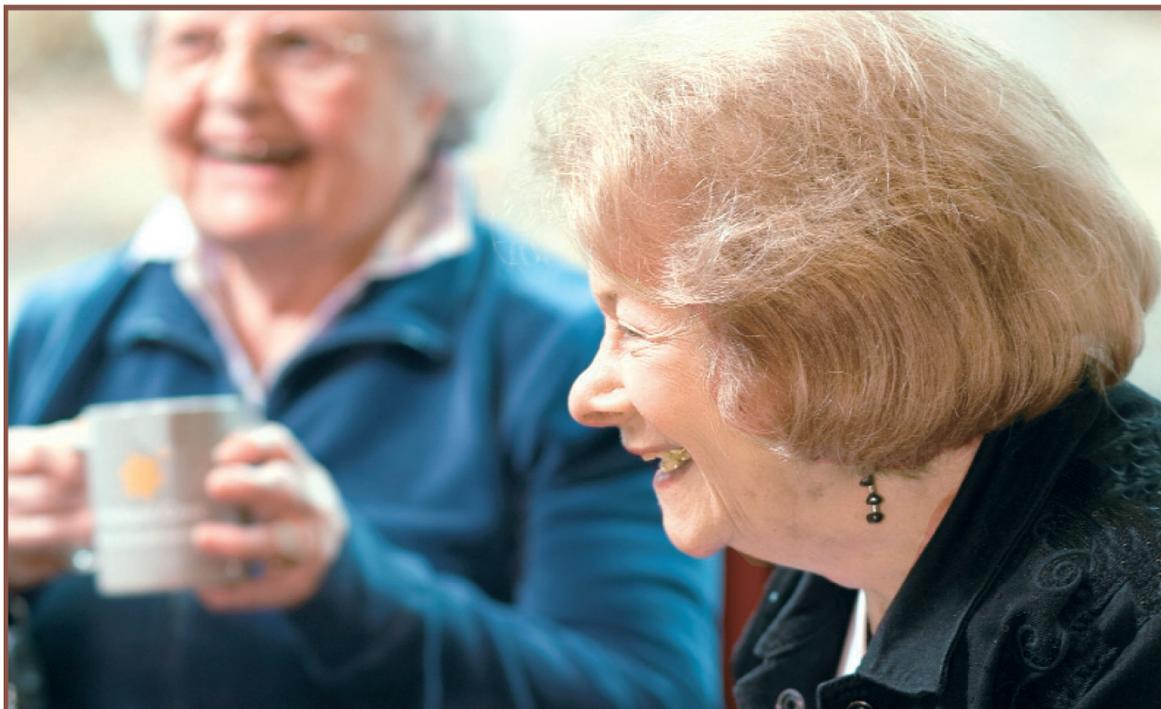
Keren Sharon uses unexpected materials in her collection of leather handbags that combines

stood out for its creations by work made by Bedouin women. The women gain an opportunity to improve their status and economic condition while working in their homes – cultural constraints make it difficult for them to work elsewhere. Their jewelry designs are inspired by many cultures.

As Executive Director of the Society of Arts and Crafts, Beth Ann Gerstein was pleased with the showcase of Israeli artists.

"It's really nice that we can put something out there about Israel that is really positive," Gerstein said.

Leather jewelry artist Avital Coorsh; Talila Abraham, creator of lace-inspired delicately woven metal vessels; jewelers Anat Gelbard, Liat Ginzburg, Omer Lior and Sara Shahak, ceramicist



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**NIRIT DEKEL, ONE** of two Israeli artists to win best of show prizes at the Craft Boston 2010 exhibition, created this glass necklace. After viewing a Dale Chihuly exhibit at the Tower of David Museum in Jerusalem, Dekel left her career in high tech to pursue her passion for art

plastic pipe tubing inside the leather.

A dramatic, one-of-a-kind scarf of silk and felt designed and made by Claudia Manokian, was sold the same day it was featured in an article in a Boston newspaper.

Gil Leitersdorf, a felt maker and designer and a full-time lawyer, painstakingly layers thin pieces of angora, alpaca and other delicate wools, to create gradations of color for her strikingly handsome handbags.

Potter and ceramic artist Marcella Klein exhibited new work that emphasizes sculptural forms that use an ancient Greek technique to produce a satiny finish.

An organization called Karima

Simone Solomon and fiber artist Edit Kaplan Friedburg also exhibited.

"We saw [a] good example of what artists in Israel are doing. We are very proud of it as Israelis," Tamir said after visiting all of the artists' exhibits. "I think art is the best way to connect with people."

For more information on these artists, visit the AIDA Web site at [www.AIDAarts.org](http://www.AIDAarts.org).

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