

Bowls for Peace

The works in “Offering Reconciliation,” an exhibition of 135 bowls decorated by Pales-



A “bowl of reconciliation” by Ofra and Narin Zimbalista, 2006.

tinian and Israeli artists, were supposed to be auctioned soon after the show opened at the Museum of Israeli Art in

Ramat Gan, Israel, last May. But **James D. Wolfensohn**, a former president of the World Bank, had a better idea. “He said, ‘You cannot auction it; you have to travel it,’” recalls **Gon Kafri**, director of the Parents Circle–Families Forum, the Israel-based nonprofit that organized the show. So Wolfensohn donated funds to facilitate a six-month U.S. tour.

The Parents Circle–Families Forum, an alliance of Israelis and Palestinians who have lost a member of their immediate families to violence in the region, commissioned artists to express their

visions of reconciliation. Each worked on an identical white ceramic bowl about two feet in diameter, based on a cast by **Orna Tamir-Schestowitz**, who curated the show with **Daphna Zmora**.

“To get 135 dissimilar interpretations is pretty amazing,” says **Pippa Cohen**, the curator for collectors **Ninah** and **Michael Lynne** who joined the organization’s advisory board after seeing the exhibition in Ramat Gan. **Michal Rovner**’s features a photograph of figures spiraling into the bottom of the bowl. **Philippe Boulakia** filled his with stones; **Reut Ferster**’s is filled with ashes.

Wolfensohn’s donation was augmented by additional

funding from the Association of Israel’s Decorative Arts along with the private sale of bowls made in editions of two. “Offering Reconciliation” makes its first stop at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, where it can be seen from the 18th through the 25th of this month. It winds up in Chicago at the SOFA Exposition, which runs from November 1 through 3. Sotheby’s will auction the bowls there, and proceeds will support educational initiatives in Israeli and Palestinian schools. Now, says Kafri, the challenge is “making sure that nothing breaks before November.”

—*Rachel Somerstein*