

POPUP  
**POMO**  
ITLV

Tel Avivian Architecture 1980-90

Search for a new language in the  
**POST MODERN CITY**

**PopUp PoMo TLV**  
**Tel Avivian Architecture 1980s-90s**

**Elad Horn**

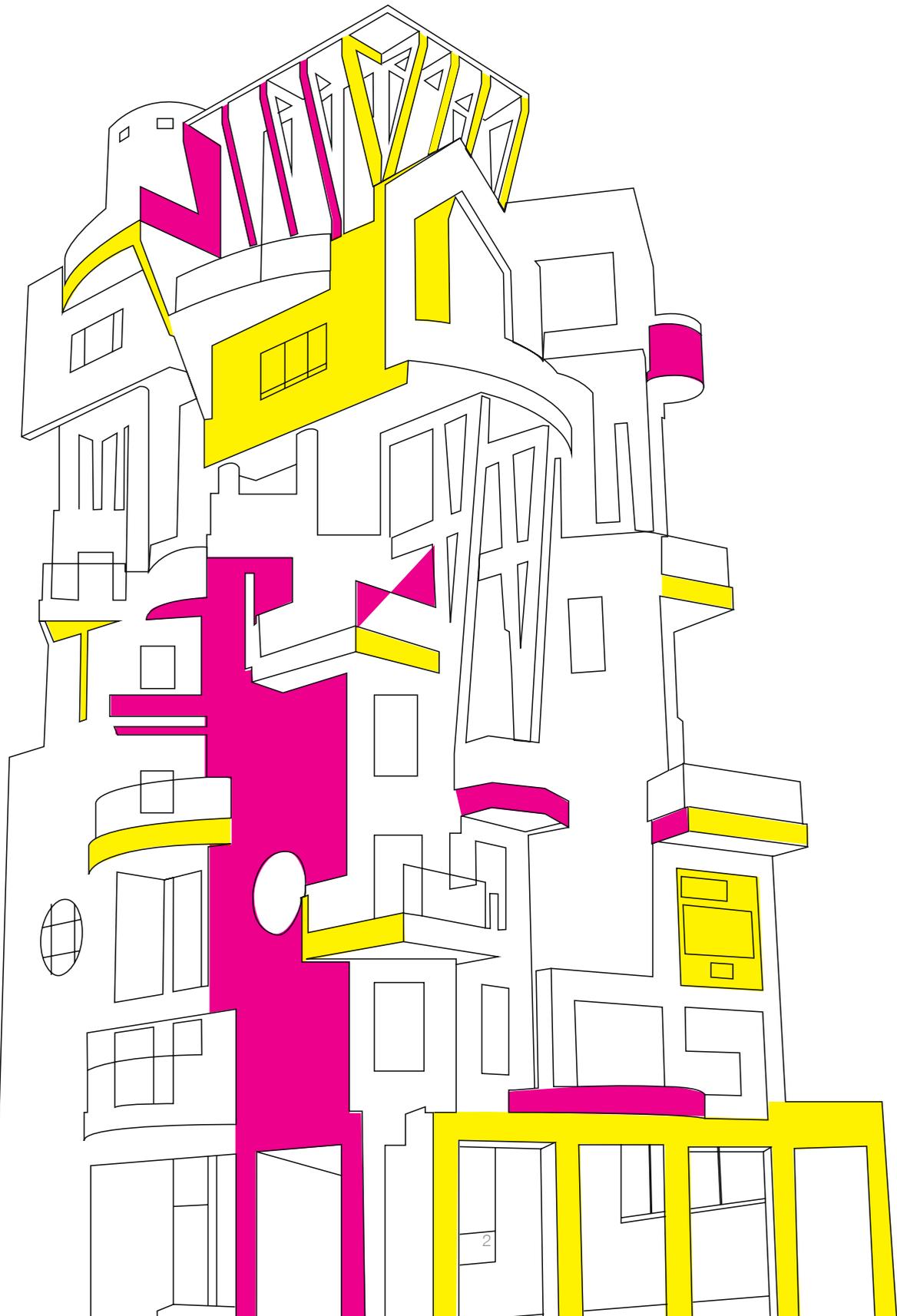
The content of this publication is the result of the author's research project for the Master in Design Studies in Critical Conservation at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. This thesis work has been conducted under the supervision of Professor Michael K. Hays, with the support of George E. Thomas, PhD, Susan Nigra Snyder and Jeremie Hoffmann, PhD, and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in January 2016.

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**PopUp PoMo TLV**  
**Tel Avivian Architecture 1980s-90s**

Exhibition curated by Jeremie Hoffmann and Elad Horn  
At The White City Center - Liebling House  
July 2015



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# Preface

This catalog documents and expands the breadth of the exhibition “PopUp PoMo TLV” which took place in Tel Aviv at the “White City Center” in July 2015. The exhibition uncovers the urban processes and design evolution in Tel Aviv, in the era after the demise of modernism. Its main aim is to introduce a comprehensive understanding of this period from the perspective of design and culture.

Postmodernism, in Israel, is commonly regarded as an exclusively aesthetic style which failed to maintain its influence. This study, however, initiates a pioneering and clear-sighted debate about the term and considers it as a signifier for many of the wider and richer cultural transformations which developed contemporaneously in Israel under political and economic instability. The rearrangement of capital and social orders, partly as a result of the 1977 political upheaval, rapidly altered the urban and design concepts of the city. These shifts were developed and intensified and are relevant to the interpretation of Tel Aviv today. The abbreviation of Postmodernism - PoMo - is used in order to differentiate it from the common dismissive connotations associated with it in the local context which hopefully appeals to a more diverse and wider audience.

This catalog documents the artifacts shown in the exhibition alongside excerpts from interviews with architects, planners and other stakeholders, all of whom significantly influenced the image and built environment of Tel Aviv in the postmodern era. Many of these ideas and memories are documented here for the first time. Two articles are presented to provide context, the first establishing the narrative of postmodern Tel

Aviv in terms of economic transformations, while the second deciphers its aesthetic intentions.

I was first asked to conduct an inquiry of postmodern architecture in Tel Aviv by the head of the conservation department in the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality, Jeremie Hoffmann. In doing so, trailing through recent history and forgotten ideas, I was overcome with the urge to uncover and document the strange logic of Tel Avivian postmodernism. Jeremie and I curated the exhibition together. He has been a mentor and a friend and I deeply thank him for his guidance and support. The main part of this exploration was done as my research project in the Masters in Design Studies program at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. I was very fortunate to be instructed by Michael K. Hays in this endeavor. I wish to thank Susan Nigra Snyder and George E. Thomas for their unconditional support and invigoration since my first days in the GSD.

I would like to express deep appreciation to the exhibition’s sponsors: The Municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo, The Tel Aviv-Yafo Foundation and The German Federal Ministry for Building. I would like to express a personal gratitude to Tal Yam for his sensitive photography, Noa Olchovsky for the engaging graphic design of the exhibition and this catalog, and to Sabrina Cegla and Adi Rose who formed the production team of the exhibition and the accompanying events. Finally, I would like to thank the architects, planners, artists, city officials, and entrepreneurs who opened their archives and shared their memories with me.

*Elad Horn*

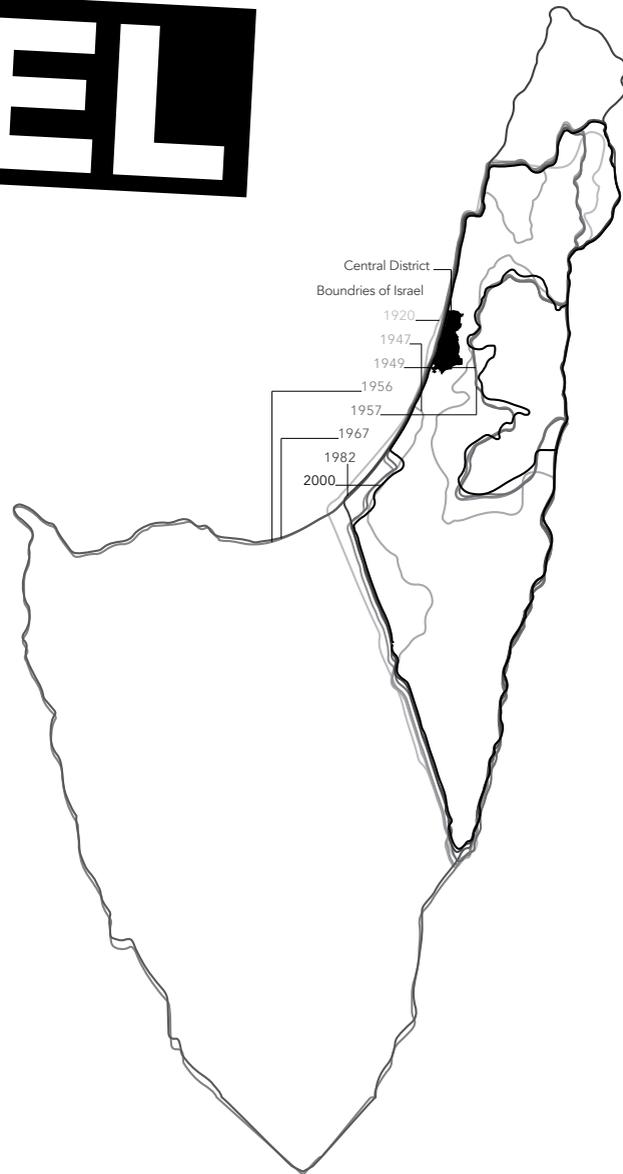
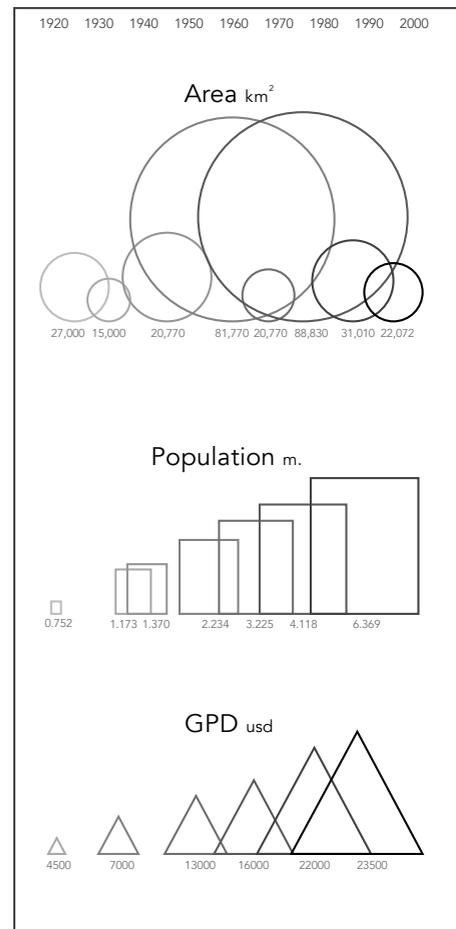
*Cambridge, January 2016*

# Introduction

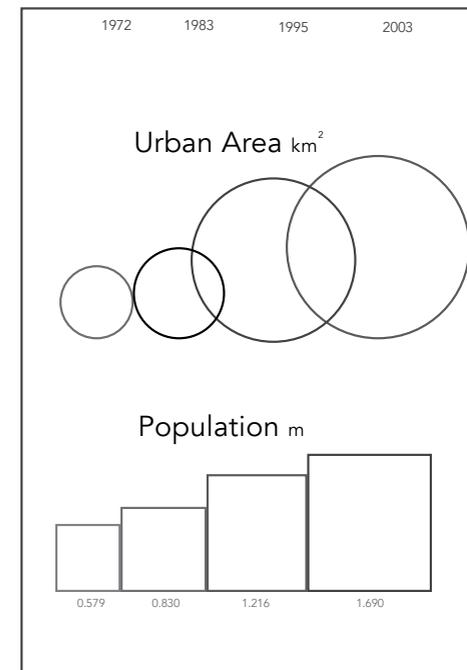
The decline of socialism and modern-utopianism in lieu of new realities of political and economic unrest, beginning in the late 1970s in Israel, fostered the emergence of new aesthetics based in capitalism alongside new preservation tendencies. These aesthetics were gradually translated into dissimilar and contradicting branches of postmodern architecture and into planning ideologies, which were closely tied to the specific place and time. These rich and fruitful ideologies emerged within postmodernism through the work of groundbreaking and radical individuals who transitioned Tel Aviv

from the modernist “white city” and the late modernist “grey” brutalist city toward a revolutionary and exciting new period. The decaying city was slowly regenerating, being reinvented and adopting new styles in music, cinema, design, and architecture. Local influences mingled with design trends from around the world to form a local interpretation of postmodernism. The scholastic aim of this research is to bring to light these stream of ideas, most of which have yet been investigated, and furthermore, have been overlooked or ignored by scholarship and city dwellers alike.

# This is ISRAEL



# This is the Central District of ISRAEL



Since its establishment in 1948, the Zionist utopian movement was facing a reality of territorial struggles. Its population was growing rapidly due to unprecedented waves of Jewish immigrants. The end of the 1970s marked a radical change in its social structure. The old establishment was voted off, and a new right neoliberal government came to rule. The economy was liberalized and a vision of late-capitalism was induced.

**Israel moved from austerity to neoliberalism, from Socialism to Capitalism.**

It is the most populated region and is the cultural and economic center of the state. Its urban area has grown rapidly since the 1980s, and was reinforced by the great immigration from eastern Europe after 1989. These years marked a massive development of infrastructures together with new re-zoning policies and liberal attitudes toward private housings initiatives. The urban form changed, the outskirts became attractive.

**From Urban it became Suburban.**

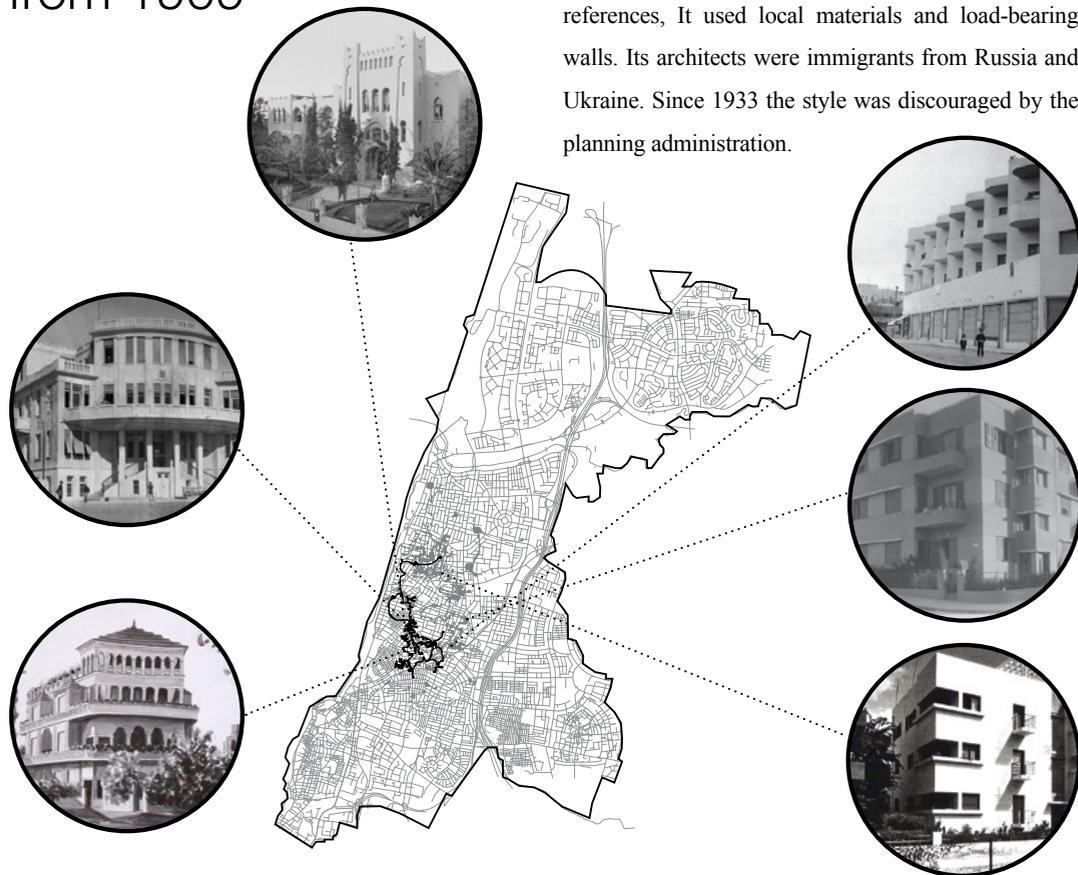
and this is

# Tel Aviv

The biggest city in the central district. The transition to the post-utopian period can be traced by mapping its prior architectural styles into four major periods.

## Pre-Modernism - Eclecticism from 1909

Tel Aviv was established in 1909 as a small residential suburb of Jaffa and was mainly built in the Eclectic style, found mainly in the historic center. As a mixture of European traditions with oriental and biblical references, It used local materials and load-bearing walls. Its architects were immigrants from Russia and Ukraine. Since 1933 the style was discouraged by the planning administration.



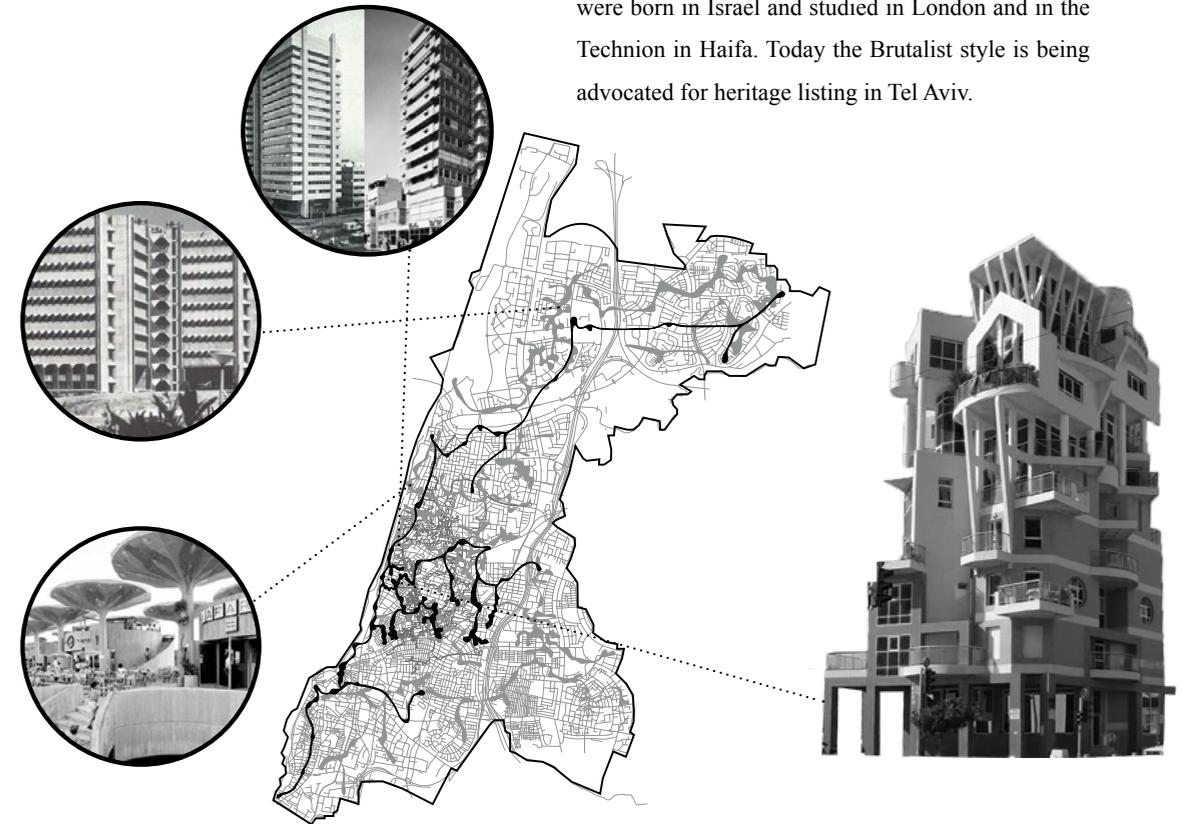
## Modernism - International Style from 1933

In the 1930's the small town became a city and an economic center. Its development was planned by Patrick Geddes as a modern garden city. The International style's white cubes were adapted to the

mid-eastern climate, raised on columns with ribbon windows. It was built using local silicate bricks and reinforced concrete. Its architects were educated in east and western Europe. In 2003 a compound in the city center was inscribed as World Heritage site.

## Late Modernism - Brutalism from 1955

The brutalist style imported post-war European models of raw concrete and pure forms. It was praised as being characteristic of the Israeli spirit due to its roughness and austerity. It was used to construct utopian mega-structures and was built with pre-cast components and local gravel stone. Its architects were born in Israel and studied in London and in the Technion in Haifa. Today the Brutalist style is being advocated for heritage listing in Tel Aviv.



## Postmodernism from 1977

The socialist ideologies fell apart along the 1970s together with population growth, economic liberalism, armed conflicts and the shift in government. Tel Aviv fell into decay, and a change was waiting to happen. As a private-led entrepreneur city it spearheaded the change and new rebellious tendencies found a place within its real-estate and public environments. The architects of the post-utopian period were taught by the brutalists. Though they rebelled against the strict

order of the modernists and practiced new styles which celebrated individualism and freedom. The city moved from modernism to postmodernism.

from **Utopia**  
to **Post Utopia**

# The Capital Paradox of Postmodern Tel Aviv

Societies construct their distinct aesthetic logic in an attempt to spatialize their values and identity, in most cases according to the hegemonic powers. The sociologist Doreen Massey argues that the different ways in which the past is interpreted are the mechanisms by which the identities of places and nations are constructed.<sup>1</sup> She asserts that a place's identity is constructed from both space and time. This assertion grounds our understanding of the often contradictory ideas of place posited by different groups with contrasting memories of the past and also of space. Investigating an aesthetic movement as a product of a certain space and time, and vice versa, is therefore essential to our understanding of the past. It is a tool for speculation and the critical investigation of the narrative of a place.

The investigation of aesthetics as a product of space and time has been lacking from recent historical narratives. Only in recent years have we seen published any new inquiries about the aesthetic ideas of postmodernism. Contemporary studies are broadening this philosophic and theoretic debate into a complex design issue.<sup>2</sup> In Israel, there have been attempts to interpret the local configuration

of postmodernism mostly in the disciplines of literature, philosophy, and the arts. However, the spatial, urban and architectural manifestations of postmodernism have not been thoroughly explored, nor sufficiently defined in correspondence with time and space.<sup>3</sup> I am curious about the reasons behind this paucity of information and documentation for Israeli postmodernism. I chose to center my attention on the postmodern developments that occurred in Tel Aviv, which may function as a case study in order to contextualize postmodernism within a congested urban environment which is and has long been considered a cultural and economic center.<sup>4</sup> In this research paper, I construct a comprehensive overview of the postmodern moment in Tel Aviv in relation to its design values and urban implications. I make use of first-hand interviews with relevant stakeholders alongside archival material.<sup>5</sup> These efforts are complemented by a review of the theories of Fredric Jameson and David Harvey on postmodernism as

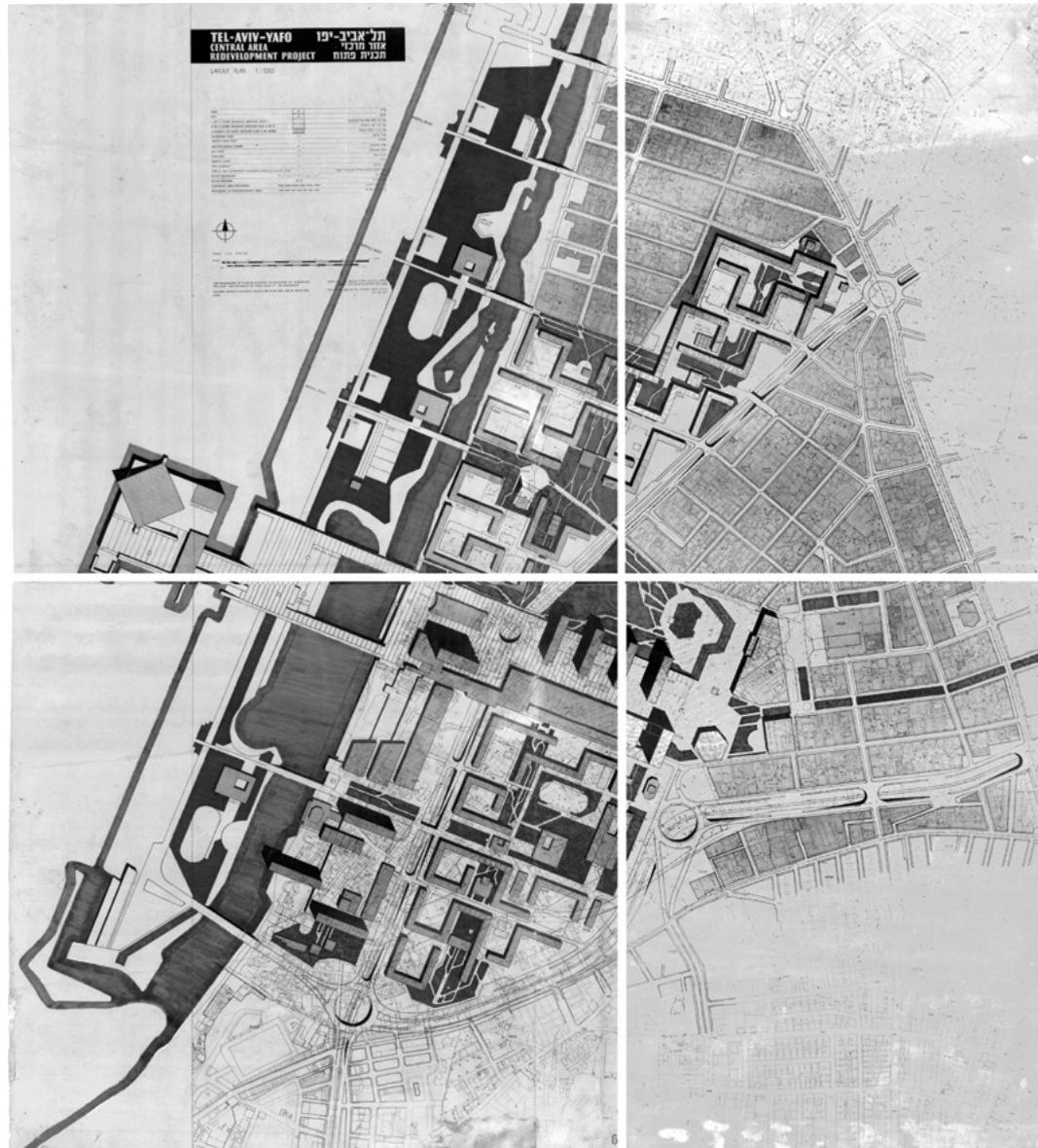
<sup>1</sup> Massey, Doreen. "Places and Their Pasts." *History Workshop Journal* 0.39 (1995): 182. Web.

<sup>2</sup> For recent writings on postmodern architecture and space see: Martin, Reinhold. *Utopia's Ghost : Architecture and Postmodernism, Again.* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2010. Print. ; Petit, Emmanuel. *Irony, Or, the Self-critical Opacity of Postmodern Architecture.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013. Print.

<sup>3</sup> This recent publication depicts the process of Americanization and its capitalist implications in Israel: Gitzin-Adiram, Milana, Ella, Erez, and Handel, Dan. *Aircraftcarrier : American Ideas and Israeli Architectures after 1973.* Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2012. Print.

<sup>4</sup> On the importance of Tel Aviv as a cultural center during the British Mandate of Palestine see: Spiegel, Nina S. "Constructing the City of Tel Aviv: Urban Space, Physical Culture and the Natural and Built Environment." *Rethinking History* 16.4 (2012): 497-516. Web.

<sup>5</sup> Qualitative interviews were conducted throughout 2015. Excerpts are included in this catalog and will be referred.



## Central Area - Redevelopment Project, Tel Aviv-Yafo, 1970s

The plan suggests the destruction of three historic neighborhoods: Menashiya, Neve Tzedek and The Yemenite Quarters. It is an adaptation of the winning proposal of the Menashiya competition of 1963.

The document was found in the attic of the apartment where the PopUp PoMo exhibition took place. It was used as the offices of the city's 'Master plan team' in the 1970s.

foundational resources for further interpretation and debate.

Jameson and Harvey exhaustively develop and expand the theoretical foundations of postmodernism as applied to historical formations within multiple disciplines. They ascribe the emergence of postmodernism to transformation in economic arrangements that occurred since the 1970s, specifically the introduction of late capitalism. Jameson uses Ernest Mandel's definition of "late capitalism" as the advancing of a new economic mechanism after the Second World War, which acquired features such as mass consumption, multinational corporations, globalized markets and labor, and multinational flows of capital and information.<sup>6</sup> Jameson extracts Mandel's ideas into his main thesis, which is that "postmodernism is nothing more than the cultural logic of late capitalism."<sup>7</sup> Harvey expands Jameson's argument and proclaims that postmodernism results from new organizations and technological forms, which were developed by capitalism. Furthermore, "[s]ince crises of overaccumulation typically spark the search for spatial and temporal resolutions, which in turn create an overwhelming sense of time space compression, we can also expect crises of overaccumulation to be followed by strong aesthetic movements."<sup>8</sup> The

phenomena of time and space compression occurred when technological innovations were introduced in congruence with postmodernism. Given these points, Jameson and Harvey's main determination is that postmodernism is an aesthetic response to the processes of universal commodification within the world market. My inquiry regarding postmodernism within Israel and Tel Aviv is structured around their arguments. Nevertheless, their investigation of postmodernism is situated chiefly in an American context. I critically evaluate its validity and congruity within the local context, with a desire to enrich and diversify the limited Israeli discourse and expand the universal scope of scholarly understanding of the postmodern condition outside north America.

### I - The Demise of Utopian Modernism

As much as postmodernism is acknowledged as a response to economic advancements, it is initially (as indicated by its name) a reaction to the preceding aesthetic movement - modernism. For Harvey, postmodern formations of planning and urban design "broadly signify a break with the modernist idea." This idea, as imposed by the high modernists<sup>9</sup> in the 1960s, determined "that planning and development should focus on large-scale, metropolitan-wide, technologically rational and efficient urban plans."<sup>10</sup>

Harvey documents the paradigm shift toward postmodern planning strategies in opposition to these assertions, while delivering a sharp analysis of the difference between modern and postmodern planning by saying that "[m]odernist' town planners [...] tend to look for 'mastery' of the metropolis as a 'totality' by deliberately designing a 'closed form,'" whereas "postmodernism cultivates, instead, a conception of the urban fabric as necessarily fragmented, a 'palimpsest' of past forms superimposed upon each other, and a 'collage' of current uses, many of which may be ephemeral."<sup>11</sup>

As a newly formed socialist welfare state, vigorously expanding its urban landscapes, Israel's planning mechanisms during the sixties carried out modernist designs similar to those identified by Harvey. Israel also utilized two components of administrative ordering identified by political scientist James Scott as characteristic of the authoritarian modern state; the power accumulated by the modern state is used in order to implement its scientific ordering; and the lack of civil society's capacity to resist and actively object to large-scale plans imposed by the state.<sup>12</sup> These elements were implemented in Israel to a great extent, due to the successive one-party ruling government throughout the first three decades of independence. In addition, the new Jewish nation was born of a Zionist utopian movement, which adopted modernist aesthetics and ideologies, and further implemented these in the formation of its urban and rural identity. Another

common point of view between modernism and Israel's planning foundation is the 'Tabula Rasa' approach. Israel, in its constant expansion, vastly employed this approach while disregarding the existing heritage and former prevailing aesthetics. This planning position reemerged during the sixties and seventies as a destructive idea in Tel Aviv.

Modernist planning schemes for the future of Tel Aviv, as were conceived throughout the 1960s, were employing the 'Tabula Rasa' approach as the local municipality was eager to replace the city's 'slums' with all-inclusive modernist-socialist projects. These intentions disregarded urban revitalization plans and preservation solutions for urban problems. This ideology is well demonstrated in the urban renewal competition for the planning of Menashiya and its surrounding historic neighborhoods, Neve Tzedek and the Yemenite Quarters, in 1962.<sup>13</sup> The municipal planning administration solicited plans for the development of a new Central Business District and necessary transportation solutions in a vast area situated in the city center by the seashore. The majority of the proposals disregarded the existing neighborhoods and were composed of massive transportation networks, repetitive residential blocks, and monumental avenues with urban focal points. Though the winning plan was never fully

6 Jameson, Fredric. *The Cultural Turn : Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998*. London ; New York: Verso, 1998. 139. Print.

7 Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke UP, 1991. 388-89. Print. *Post-contemporary Interventions*.

8 Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity : An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Oxford [England] ; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell, 1989. 327. Print.

9 Harvey defines High Modernism as such: "The belief 'in linear progress, absolute truths, and rational planning of Ideal social orders' under standardized conditions of knowledge and production [...]. The modernism that resulted was, as a result, 'positivistic, technocentric, and rationalistic' at the same time as it was imposed as the work of an elite avant-garde of planners, artists, architects, critics, and other guardians of high taste." (*Ibid.* 35.)

10 *Ibid.* 66.

11 *Ibid.*

12 Scott, James. *Authoritarian high modernism*. in Campbell, Scott, and Fainstein, Susan S. *Readings in Planning Theory*. 2nd ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003. 125-141. Print.

13 *The competition was internationally renowned and drew 155 entries from more than 33 countries. On the competition and a chronology of the rise and fall of the Menashiya plan see: Marom, Nathan. 'Ir 'im Konseptsyah : Metakhnemim Et Tel Aviv*. Tel Aviv: Bavel, 2009. 299-310. Print. (Hebrew). For a closer look on the Palestinian history of Menashiya village see: Rotbard, Sharon., and Gat, Orit. *White City, Black City : Architecture and War in Tel Aviv and Jaffa*. London : PlutoPress, 2015. 124-128 Print.

executed, and instead a new plan was developed later in the 1970s based on the winning proposals. Two components of the newer plan were implemented: First, Menashiya was gradually evacuated and its residents, who were largely marginalized Mizrahi Jewish immigrants, were displaced. And second, a small part of the plan was materialized in the form of a condensed compound of office towers and hotels, blocking the access to the beach and enclosing the outskirts of the historic neighborhoods.

One of the many repercussions of this incoherent implementation of high modernist ideologies was the instigation of megastructure projects. These were usually promoted by rudimentary entrepreneurs using informal planning practices for achieving spot-zoning amendments of area schemes, and consequently generating inequality in building rights distribution. Nevertheless, the municipality was attentive to their needs since these projects were usually replacing dilapidated residential quarters, which it regarded as slums, at the developers' expense. These projects, such as the new Central Bus Station and Atarim Square, were publicly received as an infringement of equitable planning processes and attracted fierce opposition.<sup>14</sup>

These anomalies accelerated the demise of modernist planning practices and contributed to a decline in local government accountability. Under those circumstances, during the sixties and seventies the city center was falling into a state of urban decay. A combination of social and urban processes led to

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14 The convoluted planning history of the New Central Bus Station is depicted in detail in: Neuman, Eran, Horn, Elad and Davidi, Talia. *The Labyrinth - Ram Karmi and the Planning of Tel Aviv New Central Station*. Tel Aviv : Tel Aviv University Press, 2013. Print. (Hebrew)

a major decrease in the city's population as young middle-class families and individuals emigrated from Tel Aviv's aging center to the northern district, the adjacent cities, and the new and attractive suburbs.<sup>15</sup> Destructive planning strategies, together with traffic congestion, air pollution problems, and physical deterioration of the built environment led to the insertion of businesses and offices into former residential neighborhoods, which in effect resulted in a degradation of the city's image and livability.

Within the American context, Harvey's "new organization of capital" refers to the disintegration of "Fordism."<sup>16</sup> Fordism, as the process of "coordinating production with consumption in order to attain a more complete assimilation of the

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15 70,000 residents immigrated from Tel Aviv since 1963 until it reached population of 330,000 residents in 1983 (17% reduction). See: Graitser, Iris and Shnel, Yitshak. *Returning to Tel Aviv, Regeneration in the Central City in the Eighties*. Haifa : Regional and Urban Research Center, The Technion. 9. 1994.

16 In Steve Best's summary of Harvey's writings he deduces that "Fordism" is "a process of coordinating production with consumption in order to attain a more complete assimilation of the working class to capitalism [...] Fordism [...] was too rigid as a mode of organization and accumulation. Governing the post-war boom years, this regime crumbled with the 1973 recession and gave way to a far more complex and supple economic structure with respect to such things as the labor process, the labor market, products, and consumption patterns. One of the key aspects of this regime is that it greatly increases rates of commercial, technological, and organizational innovation." Best, Steve. "Review of David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity*." *Left Green Notes*, 1991.

working class to capitalism," transforms into a "more flexible mode of accumulation."<sup>17</sup> This earlier form of capitalism disintegrated in conjunction with the 1973 recession and gave way to a far more complex and flexible economic structure "with respect to such things as the labor process, the labor market, products, and consumption patterns."<sup>18</sup> Postmodern developments are therefore directly related to "the more flexible motion of capital" which "emphasizes the new, the fleeting, the ephemeral, the fugitive, and the contingent in modern life, rather than the more solid values implanted under Fordism,"<sup>19</sup> and modernism.

Under these circumstances, American architecture underwent a tremendous evolution in style and ideology throughout the seventies. These transitions are systematically depicted by Charles Jencks.<sup>20</sup> He argues that with the convictions of consumer society in the west, the contemporary architect was left without "uplifting social content to symbolize." He is then obliged to couple with increased capitalism, and symbolize the new "way of life." Other professionals have developed a self-conscious, ironic and complex form of design as a way to express their objection to and incongruity with the new capitalist elite.<sup>21</sup> American postmodern architecture established a diverse and dialectical language of design, ranging from "Straight Revivalism" to "Deconstructivism."<sup>22</sup>

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17 Harvey. 133.

18 Best.

19 Harvey. 171.

20 Jencks, Charles. *The Language of Post-modern Architecture*. 4th Rev. Enl. ed. New York: Rizzoli, 1984. Print.

21 Ibid. 35-37.

22 Jencks classifies the postmodern streams and their proponents in his well-known evolutionary diagram

Nevertheless, in Israel, Harvey's theory of the evolution from one form of capitalism to another was never introduced. The continual ruling order has been thoroughly redesigned from a socialist welfare state into a conservative national government since the dramatic political upheaval, which brought the right-wing party into power in 1977. Milton Friedman, the American neoliberal economist, was called upon to consult the newly elected government. In a speech he delivered in Jerusalem he said that "if political-Socialism was in power all around the world in the 20th century the state of Israel would not exist today. Where did Jewish life thrive? Only in countries which enabled the free market and competitive capitalism."<sup>23</sup> Friedman's visit best presaged the future economic stance that Israel would follow. Harvey identifies 1973 as the first postmodern moment, as shifts in the organization of capitalism and new forms of time-space experience were emerging in response to world crises following the demise of modernism. However, in Israel, this moment of change came forth in later years in response to local crisis and social unrest.

The Israeli economic system hurried to adopt American late capitalist practices in the late 1970s. The rapid insertion of neoliberal and free market ordinances performed by the right-wing government resulted in economic unrest and hyperinflation, which

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and includes Historicism, Eclecticism, Dissonant Collage, Contextualism, Critical Regionalism, Classicism, Romantic Revival, Symbolism, and Deconstructivism. Ibid. 80.

23 Translated from the 'Author's notes for the Hebrew Edition' from the 1978 Hebrew edition of: Friedman, Milton. *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chicago: U of Chicago, 1962. Print., University of Chicago Press, 1962.

eventually led to a banking and monetary crisis in 1983-84.<sup>24</sup> Israel's adoption of capitalist features was proven to be a mismatch, regarding Israel's socialist foundations, and nearly resulted in a national bankruptcy. Only in 1985, during a rotation period in the government, a "Stabilization Plan" successfully stopped the economic decline.<sup>25</sup> Consequently,

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24 Israeli neoliberalism was recently depicted in Ronen Mandelkern's afterward "A Brief History Of Neoliberalism In Israel" that appeared in the 2015 Hebrew edition of: Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford UP, 2005. Print. The liberalization processes of the Israeli economy appeared first in "foreign trade, quantitative restrictions on imports were replaced by tariff protection, which was slowly reduced, and both import-substitution and exports were encouraged by more realistic exchange rates rather than by protection and subsidies. Several partial trade agreements with the European Economic Community [...] culminated in a free trade area agreement (FTA) in industrial goods [...] By late 1977 a considerable degree of trade liberalization had taken place. In October of that year, Israel moved from a fixed exchange rate system to a floating rate system, and restrictions on capital movements were considerably liberalized." In: Halevi, Nadav, and Klinov-Malul, Ruth. "Economic Development of Israel: [by] Nadav Halevi [and] Ruth Klinov-Malul." (1968). Web. See also: Reuveny, Jacob. "The Political Economy of the Likud 1977-1984," *The Economic Quarterly*. No. 126/1985. 237-247.

25 The Stabilization Plan "was inevitably the result of a series of compromises between the desire for measures that would decisively solve the inflation, budget, and balance of payments problems, and the need for political support [...]" while "[m]ost important of all, and the rationale for the program, was the desire and political necessity of avoiding unemployment." In: Fischer, Stanley. "The Israeli Stabilization Program, 1985-86." *The American Economic*

Review 77.2 (1987): 275-78. Web.

Israel's economy continued moving toward the institutionalization of increased privatization and avowed free market economics while continually weakening the welfare state's establishments and its ethos. Compared to the American economy, Israel's economy had experienced a dissimilar adjustment period in its shift to the world market and to capitalism.<sup>26</sup> Adam Hanieh, who analyzed the evolution of Israeli capitalism, concisely concludes that "it is widely recognized that Israel's economic structure over the last two decades has changed significantly to embrace an outwardly expanding vision of global capitalism. This shift has been marked by the privatization of state-owned and quasi-state enterprises, the relaxation of government control of the capital markets, and increased foreign investment."<sup>27</sup>

For Tel Aviv, the 1973 municipal elections marked the end of the socialist labor party's rule and the beginning of a long term for the new mayor, Shlomo Lahat, mirroring the national political transition that was soon to come. The modernist plans and

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Review 77.2 (1987): 275-78. Web.

26 Aharoni concludes this adjustment period arguing that "[t]he changes have not been sweeping or revolutionary but the result of several processes: a gradual transition of ideological beliefs, the impact of the United States as a role model, an increasing globalization of the economy, and the perception of most citizens that the issue of the immediate danger of annihilation has become less pressing." Aharoni, Yair. "The Changing Political Economy of Israel." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 555 (1998): 127-46. Web.

27 Hanieh, Adam. "From State-led Growth to Globalization: the Evolution of Israeli Capitalism." *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 32 No. 4, Summer 2003, 5-21.

violent evacuations were coming to an end later in the seventies while Tel Aviv experienced a major decrease in development rates due to a turbulent decade. The seventies started with the Yom Kippur War and ended with economic uncertainties after the introduction of neoliberal injunctions. This depletion persisted until the mid-eighties when Tel Aviv saw the igniting of an urban transformation due to factors such as the ameliorated economy, new entrepreneurial forces, alterations in planning regulations and the creative class's return to the city center. Postmodernism was introduced to Tel Aviv during these years under this amalgamation of economic and social occurrences. It was defined and expressed in opposition to the modernist and socialist past. Hence, Tel Aviv's postmodernism after 1977 should be assessed as a deviation from the American depictions that sharply relate to the intensification of accumulation under late capitalism. This deviation dictates an alternative approach for examining the formation of Tel Aviv's postmodernism.

## II - Institutional Pomo and Urban Revitalization

Postmodernism reflects the ideological change in Israel's ruling elite and a shift towards an outwardly economic take on freedom and individualism, as projected through privatization and free market acts. Postmodern ethics and aesthetics were evolving parallel to this neoliberal reordering. These changes fostered the creation of two reactionary divisions of postmodern planning and design ideologies in Tel Aviv. On one hand, a form of postmodernism based its aesthetics and ideologies on non-capitalist economic devices, and embodied notions of localization, urban revitalization concepts, and preservation of space. This form was largely interested in a new kind of

urban planning, and in self-initiated contextual small projects. I will refer to this form as "Institutional Postmodernism." On the other hand, another form of postmodernism coalesced with the new capitalist elite. It utilized privatization, economic speculation, and other early capitalist tools, which fostered the rise of a new dominant class of entrepreneurs and new capitalists. This is the "Entrepreneurial Postmodernism" which I will return to in the following section.

The formation of institutional postmodernism was based on two main changes in Tel Aviv. First, the revival of urban ideas and the population's movement back to the city center. This change in zeitgeist was initiated by urban and cultural experiments carried out by young musicians, artists, and designers who were "seeking a new urban lifestyle."<sup>28</sup> <sup>29</sup> The second change was due to institutional changes in the municipal engineering administration, which, since the early eighties, had been rethought and reconstructed. These two occurrences were supposedly contradictory, though harmoniously integrated to form the mechanism behind institutional postmodernism.

The project for the revitalization of the Ajami neighborhood in Jaffa illustrates the municipal role in institutional postmodernism. The project was

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28 Schnell and Graicer published several researches depicting the social and demographic reasons for the back-to-city movement in the 1980s. See: Schnell, Itzhak, and Iris Graicer. "The Revitalization of Tel Aviv's Inner City." *Israel Affairs* 3.1 (1996): 104-27. Web. and Schnell, and Graicer. "Rejuvenation of Population in Tel-Aviv Inner City." *Geographical Journal* 160 (1994): 185-97. Web.

29 See "Back To The City Center" section. "PopUp PoMo TLV" Catalog, 26-31.

initiated by the new administration in the engineering department of City Hall. Small planning teams, dedicated to smaller regions of the city, were created at that time and immediately targeted the shortage in neighborhood-scale planning, and the disregard for deteriorating urban fabrics.<sup>30</sup> Ajami was almost completely abandoned when the municipality's Jaffa planning team, together with private initiatives and armed with groundbreaking ideas from young architects, began formulating action-plans for the neighborhood's revitalization. These replaced former plans, which subjected massive alteration through new zoning and ordered an evacuation of the "slums," which was already taking place. It further prescribed the re-parcellation of historic parcels for achieving higher and denser development capacities in favor of private speculative ventures. The lands of many of the small Arab neighborhoods in Jaffa had been in the possession of governmental institutions since the 1948 war, and were about to be marketed to private entrepreneurs. Instead, the Jaffa planning team recruited a young architectural firm to help generate a new strategy. They created a general building plan for the neighborhood while fostering two main principles: the preservation of historic parcellation and routes; and the insertion of new public and commercial uses. Another product of this collaboration was the first local manual for historic conservation, which was widely distributed to professionals.<sup>31</sup> As a consequence, other comprehensive plans were promoted for the rehabilitation of other neighborhoods

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30 See interview with Shamay Assif, the head of the engineering department in that period. "PopUp PoMo TLV" Catalog, 34-35.

31 See Interview with Ramy Gill and documents from the Ajami building plan. "PopUp PoMo TLV" Catalog, 44-51.

in Jaffa, and elsewhere.<sup>32</sup>

Following these new urban design and planning strategies, architectural aesthetics followed the concept of institutional postmodernism and developed a local and contextual language. The new architectural projects were usually self-initiated (and occasionally financed) by local architects, and situated in neighborhoods of historic significance. The architects were typically involved with the local communities (some founded their residences and offices in proximity).<sup>33</sup> Their projects favored inside-out design concepts, which focused on interior spaces and structural compatibilities rather than on the symbolism and the projection of the facade. However, the institutional postmodernists weren't lacking in innovative design solutions and were influenced by western postmodern styles of the time. They were promoting certain postmodern attributes such as the contemporary interpretation of history, though they were not fully able to abide by the rules of the past.<sup>34</sup> They perfected their historic conservation practices and were motivated by the growing awareness of preservation and the shift in the municipality's position toward the built heritage. With the progression of generations, the institutional

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32 For instance, a rehabilitation plan for the historic neighborhood Neve Tzedek was promoted in congruent. See "PopUp PoMo TLV" Catalog, 52-53.

33 See interview with Kisselov-Kaye for an example of these relationships. "PopUp PoMo TLV" Catalog, 54-55.

34 The Kisselov-Kaye studio, for example, took advantage of the tectonic and technologic freedom and developed an industrial language using metals and prefabricated elements, while using historic references of the site. For elaboration on the design language of the institutional postmodernists see section in the catalog. "PopUp PoMo TLV" Catalog, 54-59.

postmodernists promoted different interpretations of the past, dissimilar to that of their modernist predecessors.

These attitudes toward history come across as contradictory of the values of capitalism, which strive for cyclical renewal and expansion of the urban form. Lewis Mumford demonstrates why capitalism in the city necessarily holds an anti-historicist approach, and its motivations are in tune with constant re-building and re-planning of the city. Capitalism promotes the demolition of the old in the face of the new and "[i]n the interest of expansion [...] was prepared to destroy the most satisfactory social equilibrium."<sup>35</sup> For Mumford, this is the paradigm of urban-capitalist methods for arranging the city. This is the prevailing principle at work in the formation and evolution of urban configurations.<sup>36</sup> Harvey expands Mumford's approach and presents postmodernism's alliance with history as yet another manner of satisfying the gratification of consumers' "nostalgic impulses."<sup>37</sup> Though in contrast, Leon

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35 Mumford, Lewis. *The City in History : Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1961. 413-14 Print. Harvest/HBJ Book.

36 Mumford draws his conclusion from his inspection of the origins of the city as a capital manifestation and describe the human transition and its urban results shortly after the introduction of capitalism. He sees that from the begging of urban settlements and believes that as much as the capital city's forces consolidated along the centuries "its destructive dynamisms has increased." He further stress that "the human constants had no place in the capitalist scheme: or rather. The only constants it recognized were avarice, cupidity, and pride, the desire for money and power." Ibid. 413-14.

37 The emerging abnormality of the "heritage industry" validates his argument and ultimately leads to representing

Krier's theory of postmodernism correlates with Tel Aviv's institutional postmodernism. He believes postmodernism originates from the "restoration of an older urban fabric and its rehabilitation to new uses, or the creation of new spaces that express the traditional visions", and "seeks the active restoration and re-creation of traditional 'classical' urban values."<sup>38</sup> This debate will be further assessed following the introduction of the second form of local postmodernism of Tel Aviv.

### III - Entrepreneurial Pomo - Speculative Architecture

The second form of postmodernism to emerge since the early eighties in Tel Aviv was the entrepreneurial version. It coalesced with capitalist agendas in order to pander to consumer demands. Capitalism harnessed postmodern aesthetics and used them as a device to increase revenues in speculation ventures and manifest its ambitious identity. The architects of entrepreneurial postmodernism no longer served the state or city's institutions as their modernist predecessors did, but rather the new private free-market elite. The new financial instruments, such as construction loans along with the elimination of foreign investment restrictions enabled entrepreneurs of all financial capacities to

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"heritage sites" as history and "historical forms" in architecture as a series of meaningful "distinctions" that construct identity through consumer choice. Harvey. 87.

38 Harvey presents Krier's approach, as part of his urban design debate, from: Krier, Leon. "Tradition-modernity-modernism: some necessary explanations." *Architectural Design Profile*, 65, 1987. Similar approach was expressed by Ramy Gill concerning the revitalization plan for Ajami. See "PopUp PoMo TLV" Catalog, 44-45.

easily conceive speculative construction projects. Jameson defines the relationship between the financial discipline and the aesthetic one, or “between the distinctive form [of] land speculation” and the “equally distinctive forms we find in postmodern architecture.”<sup>39</sup> This relationship is articulated through the aesthetics of “contrived depthlessness” - with this term Jameson reveals the postmodern facade as just that - a facade. A building’s exterior component that doesn’t hold a real function in the building’s structure, and holds no relation with its interior. The facade’s only mission is to “please the eye”.<sup>40</sup> He further asserts that “the ‘enclosed skin volumes’ [...] illustrate another aspect of late capitalist abstraction[...].”<sup>41</sup>

In the light of Jameson’s argument, what kind of relationship evolved between the advanced form of land speculations and capitalist developments, and postmodern architecture in Tel Aviv? One aspect of entrepreneurial postmodernism is characterized by an assimilation of the architect and the entrepreneur. The architects conformed to Jameson’s contrived depthlessness aesthetic and were concerned with the projected marketing value of the facade, enhanced with “luxurious” architectural elements.<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless, they developed systems of metaphoric

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39 Jameson (1998).163.

40 Ibid. For a discussion on the building envelope see interview with Ada Karmi. “PopUp PoMo TLV” Catalog, 84-85.

41 Jameson (1998). 186.

42 The architects’ intentionality regarding their role in the production of these postmodern versions are discussed in the article “Intentional Ugliness.” See “PopUp PoMo TLV” Catalog, 90-103. For visual examples see “PopUp PoMo TLV” Catalog, 71-73.

justification to support their design values. They developed local historicist styles, largely as an interpretation of the city’s rediscovered modernist heritage. However, their experimental designs were vulgar and salient in the context of the monotonous urban fabric of the modernist city. Furthermore, the entrepreneurial postmodernists examined imported themes of postmodernism such as deconstructivism, while making expansive use of the architectural grid, and its disfigurements.<sup>43</sup> All this was sporadically used with humor and irony in order to convey complex and elitist criticisms of the new capitalists, who financed the innovative designs as a manifestation for their ingenuity.<sup>44</sup> All the same, these distinct aesthetic logics served the rising hegemonic power in manifesting its values and neoliberal identity, until it reached an obstacle.

The ideology of capitalism, by the Marxian theory, dictates a process of endless growth, and the accumulation of marketing products results in expansion and further accumulation.<sup>45</sup> While

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43 For a visual example see “PopUp PoMo TLV” Catalog, 74-75.

44 This tension is discussed in the article “Intentional Ugliness.” See “PopUp PoMo TLV” Catalog, 90-103. For visual examples see “PopUp PoMo TLV” Catalog, 63-69.

45 Harvey elucidates the idea of capitalist expansion in a talk he gave in 2010 regarding the Enigma of Capital: “[T]he circulation and accumulation of capital cannot abide limits. When it encounters limits it works assiduously to convert them into barriers that can be transcended or by-passed. This focuses our attention upon those points in the circulation of capital where potential limits, blockages and barriers might arise, since these can produce crises of one sort or another. Capital, Marx insists, is a process of circulation and not a thing. It is fundamentally about putting

adjusting to the freedom granted by the free-market economy, and to national economic growth, I identify restricting factors for the speculative nature of capitalism, that might have affected its expansion and caused a reaction. The main planning limitations were produced, first, by the Urban fabric rehabilitation sensibilities which resulted in statutory restrictions for re-parcellation, and for building heights in neighborhoods designated to revitalization and preservation. New developments were restricted and closely monitored as rehabilitation and mission statements schemes were produced by the municipality. Second, development projects were restricted to privately owned land, while publicly owned parcels (mostly owned by the municipality) were located in desirable and strategic locations). Third limitation was produced by reorganization of the city's engineering administration throughout the eighties that was invested in increasing transparency of planning processes. It resulted in clear and comprehensive policies manifested in small-scale zoning plans for neighborhoods segments and streets.<sup>46</sup> It reduced arbitrary spot-zoning decisions and increased the transparency of rights’ distribution procedures. The municipal planning leadership transfigured its planning standpoint into an active process.

These limitations restricted the growth of entrepreneurial postmodernism and were based upon the ideologies of institutional postmodernism.

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money into circulation to make more money.” For Harvey’s complete thesis see: Harvey, David. *The Enigma of Capital : And the Crises of Capitalism*. London: Profile, 2010. Print.  
46 The Lev Ha’Ir plan of Adam Mazor was the first urban planning project working to ‘regenerate’ the city center, in particularly the historic ‘heart’ of Tel Aviv.

The inherent contradiction of postmodernism in Tel Aviv was established on the presumption that institutional postmodernism supports rehabilitation and preservation of urban fabrics, restraining development and making it anti-capitalist in essence. Compare this to entrepreneurial postmodernism, which is the product of a capitalist order in which restrictions and planning limitations cannot be subsumed, and therefore should have opposed preservation initiatives. Such contradictions are strange to capitalism in its endeavor to achieve any and all instruments for actualizing its strength. As it will be suggested in my conclusion, capitalism's agents in Tel Aviv have had to transform and elaborate their mechanisms in order to maintain growth. Therefore, they harnessed the contradicting languages of both forms of postmodernism and learned to utilize this merging in order to overcome restrictions.

#### **IV - Late-Capitalism PoMo - Public-Private Preservation**

The formation of late-capitalist postmodernism began in the late eighties and reached its pinnacle with the convergence of late-capitalist idealism with institutional cooperation. In response to growth restrictions postmodern logics under Tel Aviv’s thriving capitalism were slowly reformed to better fit the current time and space. This change advanced in three steps. In the first stage, the municipality designed a joint venture mechanism with the private market. Influenced by increased privatization processes performed by the state, the municipality legitimized this partnership. Moreover, planning restrictions for private development on publicly owned land were reduced and applied for vacant lots

left underdeveloped in prime locations. Afterwards, entrepreneurs utilized the city's progressive flexibility and perfected an advanced form of private-public initiatives. Though public-private projects were not strange to Tel Aviv's legislators, the neoliberal freedom considerably increased the variety of opportunities, financial incentives, and building rights.<sup>47</sup>

At the same time, the municipality searched for financial resources in order to maintain its rehabilitation efforts under the circumstances of decreasing state-funding. Therefore, the city was receptive to alternative financial opportunities which linked the public interest with private resources. For the municipality, these opportunities would achieve a broadening of the city's public and social infrastructures in the form of public tasks by the private market. In response, the city enabled the implementation of flexible forms of urban design strategies, which had the potential to encourage local economic growth and urban rehabilitation. The new planning schemes had to guarantee feasibility and economic benefit for the entrepreneur. This was facilitated by granting extra floor rights to high-rise developments. The new projects largely misfit the surrounding low inner-city urban fabrics and were designated for higher class returning residents. They symbolized luxuriousness in their design and further alienated local communities. This form of public-private partnership seemingly contradicts the municipality's revitalization efforts, which were promoted by the institutional postmodernists, for

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47 Private-public ventures analysis in Tel Aviv is closely discussed in: Margalit, Talia. "Multi-spot Zoning: A Chain of Public-private Development Ventures in Tel Aviv." *Cities* 37 (2013): 73-81. Web.

their lack of contextual sensitivities.

The "Marom Basel" project in the northern part of the inner city represents first attempts to carry out this advanced kind of public-private venture in the late eighties. The municipality revised the zoning of the municipally-owned land, prepared the structural infrastructure and marketed the land through an open auction. The public land was sold together with building rights which speculate the project's profitability beforehand. The project included two luxury towers and a small commercial center. In return, the chosen entrepreneur was obliged to finance public works, including the evacuation of the property from its former hazards, construction of a public square and the relocation of the municipal fire station.<sup>48</sup> This project singled a triumph for private-public ventures and anticipated the second stage of the capitalist response to planning limitations.

In the Second stage of capitalist's reaction to planning restriction, they embraced the limitations imposed by regulations for the preservation of urban fabrics. 'Strong,' higher-class residents rediscovered the renewed neighborhoods, they purchased assets for inhabitation as investments and consequently created geographic and economic exclusion. This process of rapid gentrification of rundown neighborhoods was aesthetically supported by entrepreneurial postmodernists who were

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48 See interview with Lior Duschinsky CEO of the municipal company "Ezra and Bitzron," and initiator of the Basel project. "PopUp PoMo TLV" Catalog, 82-83. Margalit depicts the nature of urban development practices implemented in Tel Aviv chronologically throughout a considerable period of time in: Margalit, Talia. "Land, Politics and High-rise Planning: Ongoing Development Practices in Tel Aviv-Yafo." *Planning Perspectives* 28.3 (2013): 373-97. Web.

quick to realize the potential of the institutional postmodernists rehabilitation efforts. Entrepreneurs hired the formal experts and caretaker of these neighborhoods, institutional postmodernists architects, who were eager to implement their designs and knowledge on a larger scale. Neighborhoods which were designated for alterations in the near past were now becoming desirable for capital investments. This process, together with the impact created by the insertion of prestigious residential towers, created "a proliferation of exclusion" and spatial segregation.<sup>49</sup> This process of urban and social segregation eventually caused the formation of gated residential projects. Nevertheless, the municipality couldn't withstand encouraging these initiatives as their positive implications for the rehabilitation efforts overcame negative social considerations.<sup>50</sup>

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49 Marom expands the debate on spatial and social segregation: "[A]nother form of spatial distinction at the center emerged: the proliferation of exclusive residential towers, some with shared leisure facilities, which appeared on Tel Aviv's skyline from the late 1970s[...]. In the 1980s-90s more towers sprang up, their names branding a coveted urban lifestyle (City Garden Tower, Opera Tower, Heart of the City Tower). They were followed in the 2000s by numerous high-rises, [...] often sited within 'parks' for residents only - reflective of the increased socioeconomic polarization of Tel Aviv and Israel generally." Marom, Nathan. "Relating a City's History and Geography with Bourdieu: One Hundred Years of Spatial Distinction in Tel Aviv." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38.4 (2014): 1344-362. Web.

50 Marom further criticize the social implications of these urban tensions which started when "new residents [...] moved into a vacated and disinvested urban space, transforming

As an illustration, the Lev-Ha'ir Quarter project implemented the "achievements" of late capitalist postmodernism by planning an upscale residential cluster in the heart of the White City compound.<sup>51</sup> The urban block was inclusively formed, with few openings to the surrounding streets, designed to reconnect an intersecting street. Eventually, the street remained detached as the quarter was permitted to the residents' entrance only. Another component of the project was its maximization of floor rights in exchange for public tasks. One task included the preservation of historic buildings in the eclectic style on the project's margins. Persistent negotiations between the entrepreneur and the municipality proved to yield considerable extra building rights, materialized in a 24-story tower.<sup>52</sup> The Lev Ha'ir Quarter project served as a precedent for the development of segregated residential communities in the city center and as an influential example for the integration of preservation components in public-private ventures.

This recognition of preservation as an economic instrument for attaining intensification of construction's capacity is the third stage in this

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'ruins' into stylish urban villas and converting their cultural capital (e.g. their ability to appreciate old architecture and historical street fabric) into real estate profit. Municipal investments to improve urban infrastructures and services in these gentrifying areas usually followed the new residents." *Ibid.* 1356.

51 See visuals and interview with Ada Karmi, the project's architect. "PopUp PoMo TLV" Catalog, 84-87.

52 As part of the public-private agreement, the developers included a swimming pool in the project for the use of resident and the surrounding neighbors, however, membership fees proved to be unfordable for outside users.

investigation of capitalism and its postmodernism adjustments to the late-capitalist rationale. The anti-capitalist heritage-saving trend eventually became the ultimate mechanism for maximizing revenues mediating resource distribution used by late-capitalists. This collaboration began thriving in the early nineties at the southern end of the elegant Rothschild Boulevard in the city center.<sup>53</sup> A growing number of office tower ventures had tunneled restoration tasks of historic landmark buildings into extra floor rights.<sup>54</sup> Talia Margalit comments, in her study of public-private ventures in Tel Aviv, that it was “all aimed at benefiting the public by financing urban beautification and preservation efforts along the boulevard.”<sup>55</sup> However, this relationship benefitted public-private objectives in a different and rather an implicit manner. It generated a sophisticated device for achieving reciprocal legitimation. Acts of built heritage restoration, usually by disneyfying it, conveyed an image of contribution and community participation while at the same time was deployed to realizing capitalist necessities from the public system for the benefit of the entrepreneur. Conversely, the preservation scheme benefitted the municipality by creating public legitimation for its intruding planning decisions

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53 For further reading on urban design within the context of the political-social tension in Tel Aviv in Relation to Rothschild Boulevards see: Tali Hatuka, and Leslie Forsyth. "Urban Design in the Context of Glocalization and Nationalism: Rothschild Boulevards, Tel Aviv." *Urban Design International* 10.2 (2005): 69. Web.

54 See interview with Orly Arel, deputy city engineer and director of the city planning Division in the engineering department. "PopUp PoMo TLV" Catalog, 88-89.

55 Margalit. 79.

for the city's urban core as long as preservation components were integrated. It could have publicly justified abnormalities such as luxurious residential towers in low urban fabrics, for the projects' public benefit. Both the city and capitalist agents could offer an image of sustainability and convey their altruism toward the city's urban landscape. Institutional and entrepreneurial preservation operations turned into a symbol of status, and a sign for Tel Aviv's inflating land values.

The language of the late-capitalist phase of postmodernism merged with Jameson's predictions regarding the contrived depthlessness. The aesthetic of the new towers symbolized late-capitalism through their "shiny glass and smooth marble surfaces materializing their impenetrability,"<sup>56</sup> though they had an historic monument attached to their feet. This phenomena of the creation of an urban image to represent the city's identity and its capital is described by Harvey as a postmodern reaction that occurred when cities "take much more care to create a positive and high quality image of place, and have sought an architecture and forms of urban design that respond to such need." And furthermore "imaging a city through the organization of spectacular urban spaces became a means to attract capital and people (of the right sort) in a period of [...] urban entrepreneurialism."<sup>57</sup> Tel Aviv's attractiveness and renewal were achieved with the incorporation of entrepreneurship and heritage to form a local 'heritage industry' in parallel with UNESCO inscription of the White City of Tel Aviv in 2003.<sup>58</sup>

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56 Marom (2014). 1357.

57 Harvey. 92.

58 In 2003, marking two decades of advocacy efforts, the historic compound of Tel Aviv was inscribed as a UNESCO's

This later evolution of postmodernism, as evident through planning and design practices, uncovers the paradox in its structure. It lies in the resolution that both forms of conflicting early postmodernism had to amalgamate in order to maintain their relevancy and overcome planning limitations, which afflicted them in equal ways. The process of mutual transformation included the improvement of public-private mechanisms, benefitting urban rehabilitation while creating class segregation, and increasing public legitimation by means of preservation. Through these advancements a Tel Avivian form of late-capitalism postmodernism was conceived.

In concluding Harvey's criticism of postmodern architecture and urban design, I highlight three pivotal arguments: 1. Postmodern architecture failed to deliver its promise for endless aesthetic variety through freedom, and very quickly degenerated into gentrification and monotony. 2. Postmodern urban planning is itself increasingly rationalized, and oppressive toward marginalized communities and places. 3. Postmodern conceptions of space simply pander to the consumer demands endorsed by late-capitalism and creates an intrinsic bond of heritage with postmodernism that ultimately construct identity through consumerism. It appears that Tel Aviv's narrative of postmodernist evolution holds

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*World Heritage Site: "White City of Tel Aviv - the Modern Movement." Tel Aviv was depicted as "a synthesis of outstanding significance of the various trends of the Modern Movement in architecture and town planning in the early part of the 20th century" (Criterion (ii)). It contains the largest and most condensed ensemble of early modernist buildings in the world. See: White City of Tel-Aviv, The Modern Movement, UNESCO inscription, 2003. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1096>*

similar attributes with the American generalities as Harvey's criticism could be applied, to a large extent, to the Israeli condition. However, it must be noted that Harvey criticized north American postmodernism since 1973, whereas Israel's capitalism only began evolving in the late seventies. This gap in time and in the evolution of ideologies deviates the Israeli postmodernism from its American counterpoint. The eagerness to implement American capitalism since 1977 materialized in gaudy adaptations of postmodern styles, which failed to maintain their influence. Additionally, American postmodernism reorganized its rich historical references into systems of symbols and pastiche, when Tel Aviv only started identifying its heritage within hardly seventy years of history. This investigation of identity in space and through time shaped the distinct aesthetics of the local postmodern era and its pro-heritage movements. Nevertheless, since its canonical language of modernism vanished, Tel Aviv's postmodernism was invested in a parallel search for a new almighty power to abide. Eventually, it joined forces with advanced capitalism, or as Jameson simply concludes: "postmodernism is nothing more than the cultural logic of late capitalism."

*the end of*  
**Utopian**  
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**ism**

Modernism's planning schemes for the future of Tel Aviv, as were conceived throughout the 1960s, were implementing the 'Tabula Rasa' ideology to urban planning, as the local municipality was eager to replace the city's historic neighborhood, or 'slums,' with massive modernist-socialist urban-renewal projects. These intentions were indifferent to historic attributes or rehabilitation and preservation solutions for urban problems. During the sixties and seventies young middle-class families and individuals emigrated from Tel Aviv's ageing center. The combination of destructive planning strategies, traffic congestion, air pollution problems and lack of social infrastructure led to a dramatic degradation in the city's population. These processes worsened the city's image and its center was falling into a state of urban decay.

# Interview: Yitzhak Gonen

Head of the Development Master Plan Team of Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality in the 1970s

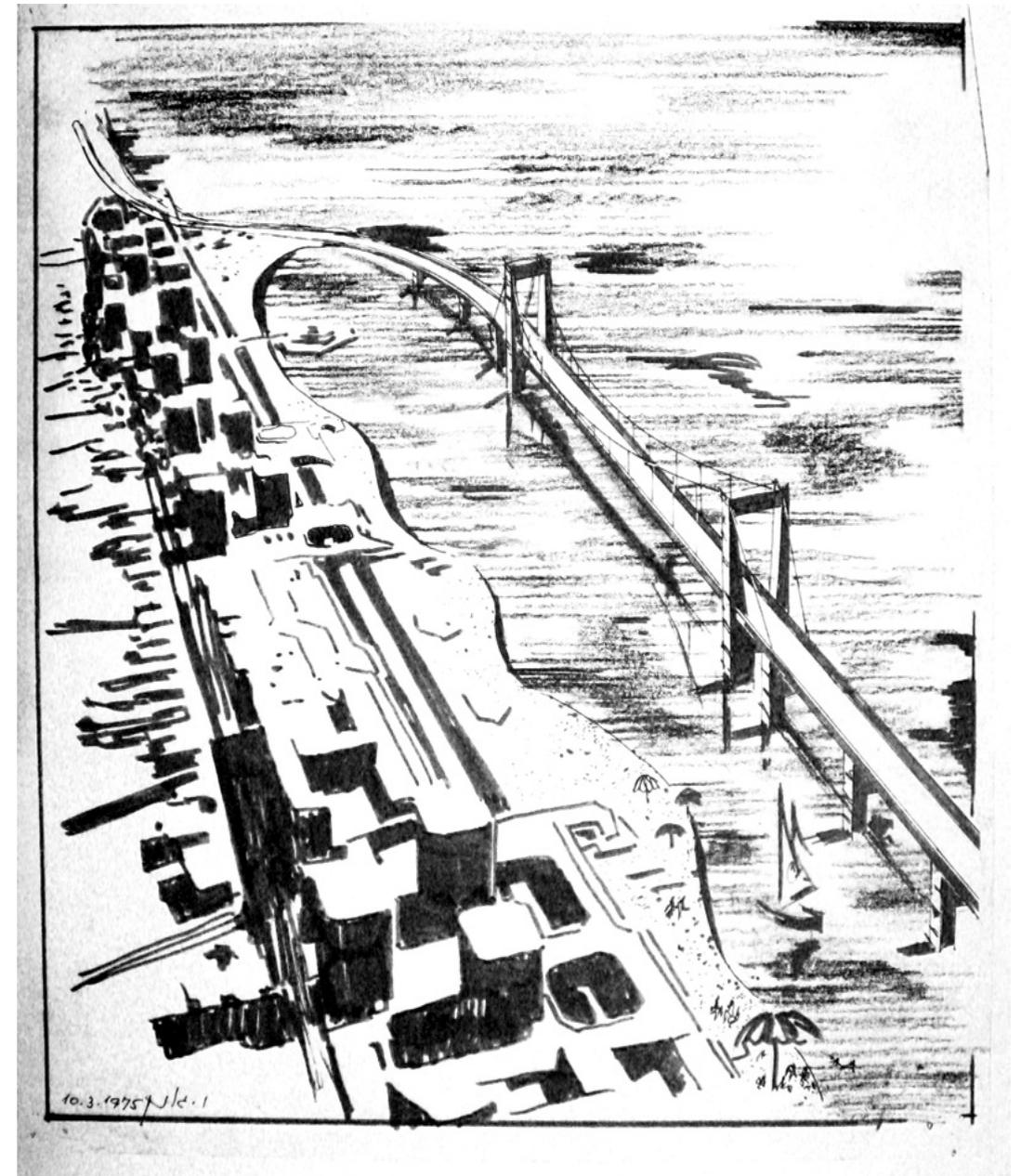
**Can you tell us about the planning process for the city's master plan of 1968?**

The processes started in the early 1960s, I started working there in 1965. It was a bustling office with plenty of workers. First it was Zion Hashimshony who was in charge of the operation, later came the former city engineer, Moshe Amiaz. When he retired, I was left with just two workers and I was then appointed to be the head of the team. Throughout the 1970s the office slowly expanded, as we were working in full capacity and we were working very hard. We aimed our plans for the year 2000 as we conceived the towers of the new Central Business District away from the beach, in the east, unlike the preceding programs of the 1960s. The rationale was to have the downtown develop along the Ayalon River, as we have predicted its future importance for the city's growth. We opposed the intense high-rise development by the sea, as in the Menashiya project. We wished to leave a wide-open gap between the city and the sea. Eventually in 1973 the document was published - "Tel Aviv-

Yafo Development Master Plan 1968" - though it was never officially approved. Nothing really came out of it. It didn't even make it to the municipal planning committee. There was no one interested in long-term planning, not even the mayor or the chief engineers.

**Where did the concept of coastal development and the sea bridge come from?**

I spent some time in Nice and Cannes and was impressed by the vibrant beach promenade. There were no commercial elements, only cafes and lots of people, walking up and down. This is how I have imagined Tel Aviv. As a consequence, I planned to remove the main road from the seafront to a suspended bridge inside the sea. All that for widening the beach for pedestrian use, and to move the traffic congestion away. I sent the plans to the mayor and chief engineer but never heard back. In fact, as much as I recall, there hasn't been a lot of planning going on these days. Not until the new chief of planning, Shamay Assif, was appointed. He brought impetus and true desire to plan the city's future.



*Yitzhak Gonen, Development Plan, Tel Aviv-Yafo, 1975*

*Compilation of municipal plans for destruction and transportation from 1960s-1970s, Integrative map drafted on aerial photographs, 1970*



# *Back* to *the*

The rediscovery of Tel Aviv's decaying center after two decades of urban crisis was in motion since the early eighties. The municipality promoted a new master plan aimed at enhancing the ageing central city neighborhoods after decades of institutional neglect, following western urban trends of inner-city gentrification by young professionals and members of the creative class. These groups found in Tel Aviv's rundown historic center fertile ground for urban

# *city* **Center**

experiments and for the growth of edgy alternative urban lifestyle. This process centered on Sheinkin Street, where a revolutionary new-wave scene coincided with the rediscovery of Tel Aviv's White City area and its International Style architecture. These groups distinguished themselves in urban space through their cultural capital and artistic activities, and were preparing the ground for the future formation of the "Tel Avivian Bubble."

# Interview: Shamay Assif

City Engineer, Tel Aviv 1984-1994. Director of Engineering Administration in the Ministry of the Interior 2004-2010

**I'd like to suggest that a crisis point occurred in urban planning in Tel Aviv. Urban planning in the 1980s couldn't deal with the sudden arrival of numerous new initiatives derived from rapid cultural changes. What happened in the United States happened in Israel – municipal authorities took over the planning process at the expense of private initiative. You recognize this problem and decide to establish the planning teams: small, geographically focused teams that could deal with these initiatives. Sometimes they are affected by these initiatives, in that they adapt their plans; and sometimes they lead them, in that they create policy that enables them. Do you agree with this assumption?**

When I arrived at the engineering administration in Tel Aviv at 1984, the system was conducted largely around private initiatives. It was the way things were. City Hall wasn't used to planning. It was a reactive system that at best responded out of various planning-based considerations, but still – always from a systematic perspective. There were in fact no architects or planners at all. It was a very technical

system. The city engineer was a real estate appraiser for a time, and before him was a construction engineer who wasn't actually involved in planning – someone else worked on his behalf. The private sector alone would initiate things in Tel Aviv, and that's the way things were.

For example, until I came to Tel Aviv, two employees occupied the engineering administration: Kantermann and Tenenbaum. Tenenbaum was a great guy, trained as a transport engineer. He would inspect the plans that came in and determine whether to add building rights and how many, check how the traffic handles, etc.; Kantermann was an urban planning technician. He held a senior position without a single degree in architecture or planning. These were the leading men, the deputies of the planning department director. They would come see me once every two weeks at the urban planning committee with a list of recommendations, including the city engineer's recommendation already written and prepared. They'd let me know that entrepreneur such-and-such is arriving in a couple of days and all I need to do is sign, that I

shouldn't worry because they're handling it, and they've been here, after all, for quite some time. I said to them: "guys, this isn't acceptable, enough is enough. I want to see what it is exactly that you're asking me to approve of. So let's meet two weeks ahead, let's see what you've arrived at and why, and check where it comes from." After that I established the planning forum, where all new initiatives went under my scrutiny, and then I reestablished the planning division, and brought in professional architects, even for the licensing department.

I think my most important contribution was establishing the planning teams: four professional teams responsible for different city zones. This was done with the intention to respond professionally and broadly to the incoming initiatives, but furthermore, to create the planning infrastructure needed to better react, actuate and initiate. I wanted to transform the system from a reactive one to one which not only initiates, but responds to the private sector with a more mindful, comprehensive view.

Through these actions the "Lev Ha'Ir" [heart of the city, city center] plan was formed, as well as many

other contextualized municipal plans which arose not as reactions, but as urban initiatives. There were, of course, entire segments in which I saw no harm in involving the private sector. It was a force which maintained the centrality of Tel Aviv. The driving force behind the development was still the private sector – at best we received some funds from the ministry of housing. But in Tel Aviv the government was not a major player, and private forces always operated within.

**How, then, was the private sector recruited for the public's benefit?**

Harnessing the private sector to the benefit of the public sector was done in a variety of ways. For example, the regulatory way, of routing the initiatives according to the outline plan and derived plans such as "Lev Ha'Ir," Jaffa and smaller-scale segments. Some of them significantly precede the private initiatives and some react to them, but overall it was done from a normative point of view, as a derivative of the outline plan and an attempt to view the system comprehensively.

# Rani Blair, "A Short Film"

Director and writer for film and television

He: You're not from around here.  
She: Nope...from Nahariya. Ever heard of it?  
He: Yeah.  
She: Ever been?  
He: Long time ago.  
She: You from here?  
He: Um... I've only been here for two weeks.  
She: Two weeks? But you live here right?  
He: Yeah... not far.  
She: Wow! If only I could live here... it seems so great. Don't you like it here?  
He: After 2 weeks, I don't know.  
She: Where were you before?  
He: Abroad.  
She: America?  
He: Europe.  
She: Where?  
He: Germany.  
She: Germany? Doing what?  
He: I played.

She: Jazz?  
He: Jazz  
She: Where?  
He: Hanover.  
She: Why did you come back?  
He: The club I played in became a casino... I just got tired of it all.  
She: What, of Hanover?  
He: Germany. Europe.  
She: So you came back?  
He: Yeah.  
She: Are you sorry?  
He: No.  
She: Come play in Nahariya. No, really! There aren't any Jazz clubs or anything, but on Independence Day they have concerts in the square.  
He: Sure. Ok.  
She: You'll come? I'll give you the Mayor's phone number.



Rani Blair (Director), Ari Folman (Cinematography), "A Short Film," Israel, 1993, 20:32 min.

# Dani Dothan

Author, filmmaker and musician. Founder and lead singer of the new-wave band HaClique

In 1980 I lived completely underground, in the performances of HaClique, founded by Eli Avramov and myself. We were originally from Jerusalem and our goal was to conquer Tel Aviv from below, from the dark burrows of the city.

## Time of the wolves

It is time for the fools to give up their thrones  
 It is time for the guards to abandon their posts  
 It is time for people to run from a sleeping world  
 It is time for the wolves – to prey

It is time for governments to decline and fall  
 Is it time for flames to rise from the underworld  
 It is time for people to run from a sleeping world  
 It is time for the wolves – to prey.

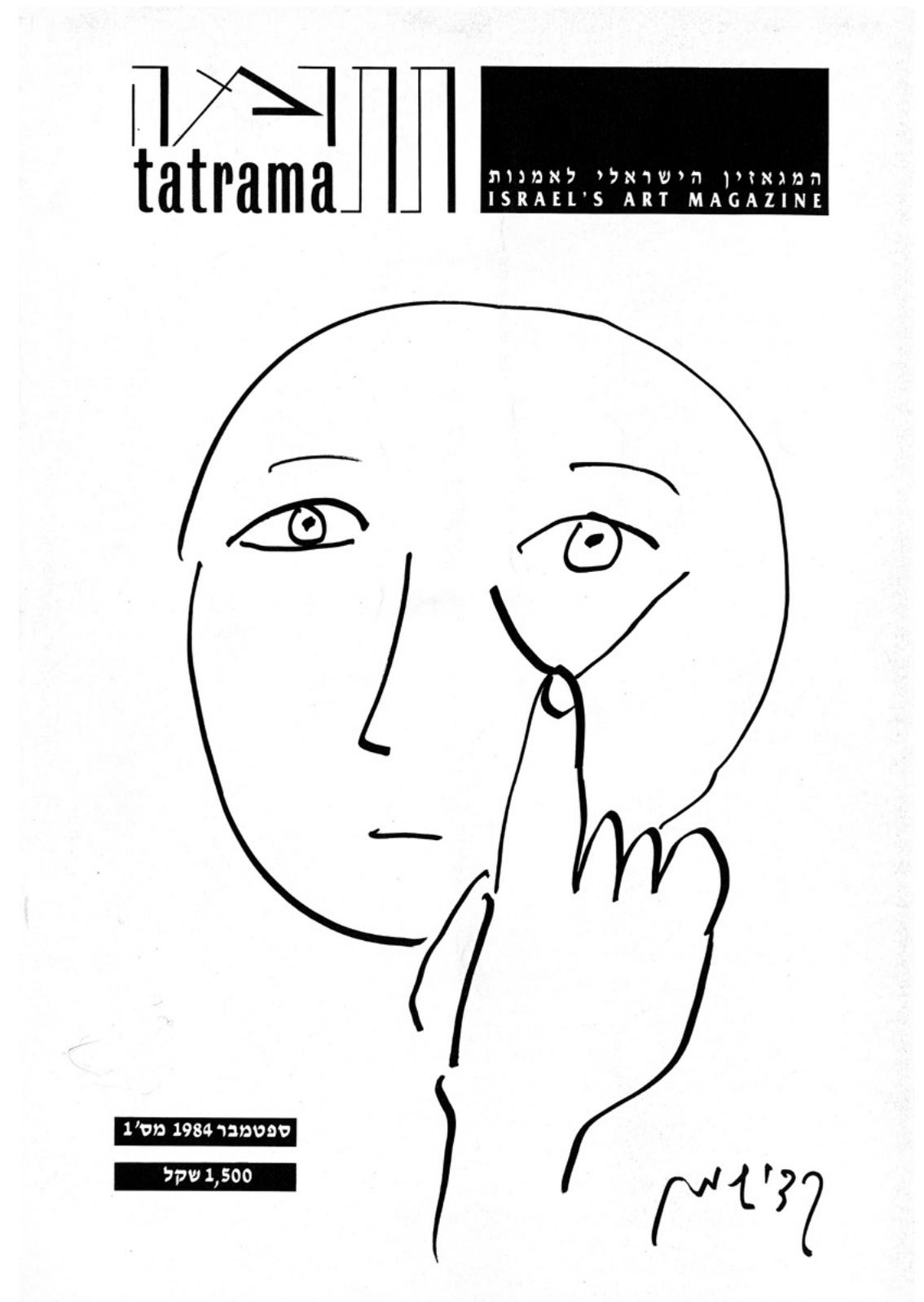
In 1984 I published, along with my brother, Uri Dothan, the art magazine "Tatrama" ["sub-level", in Hebrew also colloquial for poor quality]. It was a part of an attempt to transform Sheinkin Street, in the city's decaying core, into a center of art and culture, independent of everyday Israeli reality. We already had two "Tatrama" galleries as well as "Sheink-In", a

gallery-café. We had our black flag, displays spilling young art onto the street, and a firm ideology. Like HaClique, the galleries and magazine were a part of a countercultural journey, and we knew we were on a mission to create a different culture to replace the reclusive, old Israeli one. In the 3rd issue we wrote "Tatrama, as a work of art, speaks an international language, with the target audience and participants defined not within the borders of a country, but within the borders [here meaning "boundaries", "limits"] of art."

## What, to you, are the main characteristics of Tel Avivian architecture in the 1980s?

Our territorial marking of Sheinkin Street was a classic architectural move. It reclaimed a place, it was our Sheinkin, marked by us all the way from Ahad Ha'am to Yohanan Hasandlar [streets].

The virtual construction of a street is an architectural act; we defined a zone and decided that, within our streets, the rules do not apply to us whatsoever. We believed that creating art and culture was the most important thing in the world, above the nation, above everything. And anyone who shared this view was invited to be a part of it.



Dani and Uri Dothan (Editors, publishers), "Tatrama" magazine, issue 1, 1984, Front cover

## Tatrama – Magazine for Magazine Art

Magazine art makes use of journalistic formats and means of production (graphics, print, binding and distribution) for the purpose of creating art.

One is invited to look upon magazine art as a form of paper sculpting just as films can be perceived as celuloid sculpting. From this aspect, the artists participating in Tatrama are, in fact, creators of a paper-sculpture-magazine art.

The purpose of the editorial work is to turn 45 pages, each a different artistic expression, into one, coherent work of art. This unified issue comprises of 45 units of equal importance and various purposes.

The first edition of Tatrama No. 3 came out in 1500 copies that acquired higher artistic value due to the fact that each one of them was signed and numbered individually.

All the works in the magazine were made exclusively for Tatrama and will not be exhibited in any other form.

### LOCAL-INTERNATIONAL:

Tatrama speaks the international language of art. Its audience and participants are not confined to any other borders but those of art. Magazine art is destined to reach all comprehending audience and collaborate with all artists regardless of origin. Thus, one can find in Tatrama No.3 works of art by artists from various countries, made specifically for the magazine.

### TATRAMA 3:

**FRONT COVER**  
YEHUDA PORBOCHRAI – PAINTER  
BELLY DANCE

**BACK COVER**  
DOV OR-NER – MULTIMEDIA  
KAMPO HARDA – CALLIGRAPHER  
WINES AND MUSIC TOGETHER  
ARE HARMONY

ILAN YANIZKY – PHOTOPERFORMANCE  
TOKYO – SOFT PRIMITIVISM  
GEISHA  
SELF PORTRAIT

NOAH SHACHAR – PHOTOGRAPHER  
EUROPEAN DECADENCE  
ON ROTHSCHILD BLVD.

RUTH ROSENGARTEN – PAINTER  
THE ANIMAL LOVER

PAMELA LEVY – PAINTER  
PAMELA BEACH

LETICIA ARBETETA – PAINTER  
CARNET DE INENTIDAD

JUAN FERNANDEZ LACOMBA – PAINTER  
HOT WINE

HERODIAN LANDSCAPE

RENE JOLINK – MULTIMEDIA  
UNTITLED

GABI TOREN – PAINTER  
THE EMPTY CUP

MOSHE GERSHUNI – PAINTER  
KISS MY ASS  
SHIMON PERES LEADER  
OF THE NATION (TWO MORE SOLDIERS)

UDI ERNEST – PHOTOGRAPHER  
FADE-OUT

DANY HABER  
TALKING HORSES

YUVAL DANIELY – PAINTER  
THE BLACK CARPET

MHIR AGASSI – PAINTER

GUILERMO PEREZ VILLALTA – PAINTER  
ASUNTO EN UN INTERIOR

YOEL GILINSKY – GRAPHIC DESIGNER  
NOB

RAFAEL ZAPATERO – PAINTER  
SELF SEX

EFRAT BALER – PAINTER  
V

EYAL ONNE – PHOTOGRAPHER  
RITUALS

ILEET LEVIN – PHOTOGRAPHER  
PUZZLE

HENRIETTE KLEIBLAND – MAKE-UP ARTIST

MIRIAM NEIGER – PAINTER  
FOUR STEPS IN THE NIHILIZATION  
OF GREGORY SAMSA

TULY BAUMAN – ARTIST/ Print maker  
FLAG (coloured insert)

**KEY**  
◀ Next page by the same artist  
☞ Transatlantic dialogue

מהדורה ראשונה חתומה וממוספרת \* 1500 עותקים

FIRST EDITION SIGNED AND NUMBERED 1500 COPIES

דני דותן

אורי דותן

## תתרמה מגזין לאמנות מגזין

אמנות מגזין עושה שימוש בפורמטים ואמצעי יצור (גרפיקה, דפוס, כריכה, הפצה) של עיתונות, לצורך יצירת אמנות. אפשר להתייחס לאמנות מגזין כפיסול בנייר, כשם שיש המתייחסים לקולנוע כפיסול בצללוידי. האמנים המשתתפים בתתרמה, הם יוצריו של – פסל הנייר – אמנות מגזין.

מטרת המערכת – הפיכתם של 45 עמודי יצירות שונות, ליצירת אמנות אחת. יצירה המורכבת מ-45 חלקים זהים בחשיבותם, אך שונים בתפקידם.

מהדורה ראשונה של תתרמה מס' 3 – 1500 עותקים חתומים וממוספרים. ולכן כל אחד מהם הוא יצירת אמנות. העבודות בתתרמה נעשו במיוחד למגזין ואינן מיועדות לתצוגה בצורות אחרות מלבד זו של אמנות מגזין.

### מקומיות / בין לאומיות:

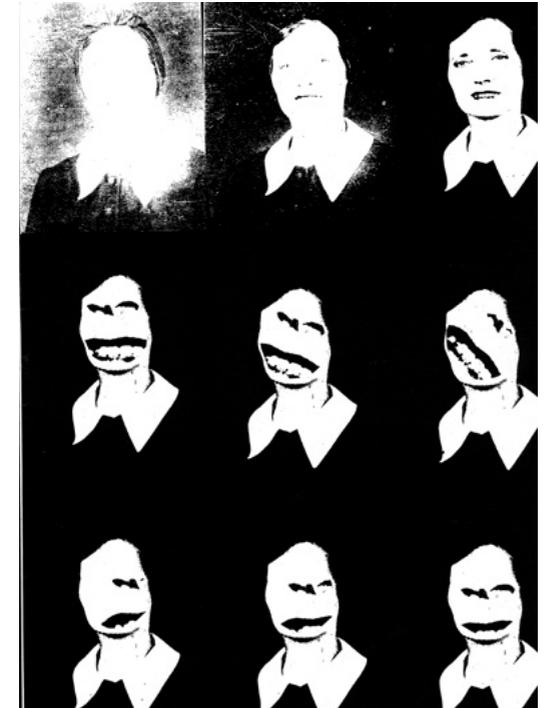
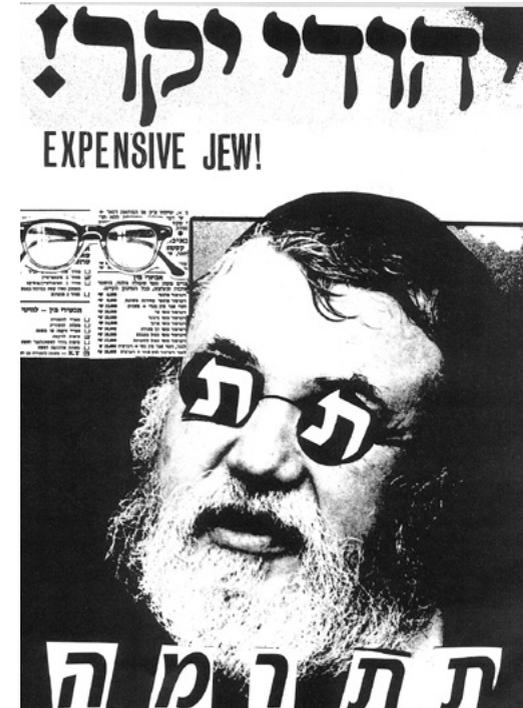
תתרמה כיצירת אמנות מדבר בשפה בין לאומית – כשקהל המטרה והמשתתפים בו אינם צריכים להיות מוגדרים בגבולות ארץ, כי אם בגבולות האמנות. ממש כשם שיוצרו של פסל או ציור אינו מגביל את אמנותו לקהל מסוים, כך שואפת אמנות מגזין להגיע לכל קהל מבין ולהשתמש באמנותו של כל אמן, יהיה מקום מוצאו אשר יהיה, לכן אפשר לראות בתתרמה 3, יצירות של אמנים מארצות שונות שהמשותף להן הוא שהן נעשו במיוחד למגזין.

### בתתרמה 3:

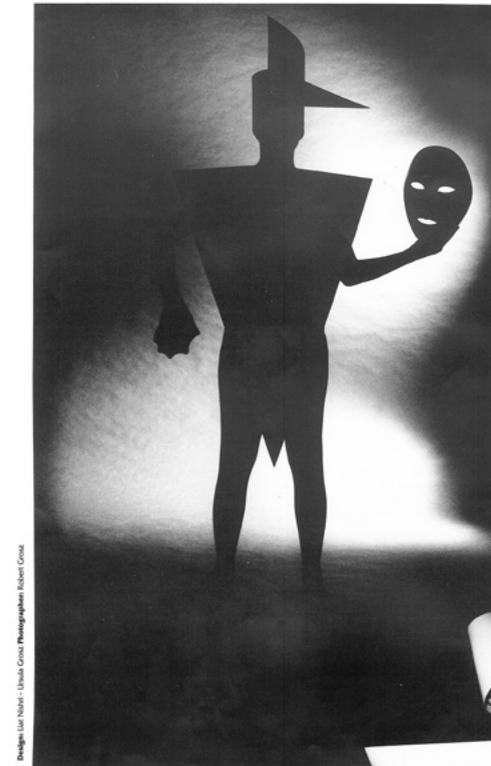
משה גרשוני – צייר  
שקו לי בתחת  
שמעון פרס מנהיג האומה  
אודי ארנסט – צלם  
דני הבר – צלם  
סוסים מדברים  
יובל דניאלי – צייר  
השטיח השחור  
מאיר אנסי – צייר  
ג'ולירמו פרו ווילאלטה – צייר  
מצב פנימי  
מצב בחדר  
יואל גילינסקי – צייר  
נוב  
רפאל זפטר – צייר  
מין עצמי  
אפרת בילר – ציירת  
V  
אייל און – צלם  
פולחנים  
עילית לווין – צלמת  
הנרייט קליבלנד – מאפרת  
מרים נייגר – ציירת  
ארבעה שלבים בהתיינותו  
של נרגור סאמסא  
טולי באומן – אמן הדפס  
דגל (אינסרט צבעוני)

בשער הקידמי  
יהודה פורבוכראי – צייר  
ריקוד בטן  
בשער האחורי  
דב אורינג – מולטימדיה  
קמפו הרדה – קליגרף  
משקה ומוסיקה ביחד הם הרמוניה  
יופי  
אילן יניצקי – צלם / אמן מיצג  
טוקרפרימיטיביזם רך  
גישה  
פורטרט עצמי  
נח שחר – צלם  
דקדנס אירופאי בשדרות רוטשילד  
רות רוזנרטן – ציירת  
אהבת חיות  
פמלה לוי – ציירת  
חוף פמלה  
לטיסיה ארבטטה – ציירת  
תעודת זהות  
חואן פרננדו לקומבה – צייר  
יון הם  
רנה יולינק – מולטימדיה  
ללא כותרת  
גבי טורן – ציירת  
הכוס הריקה

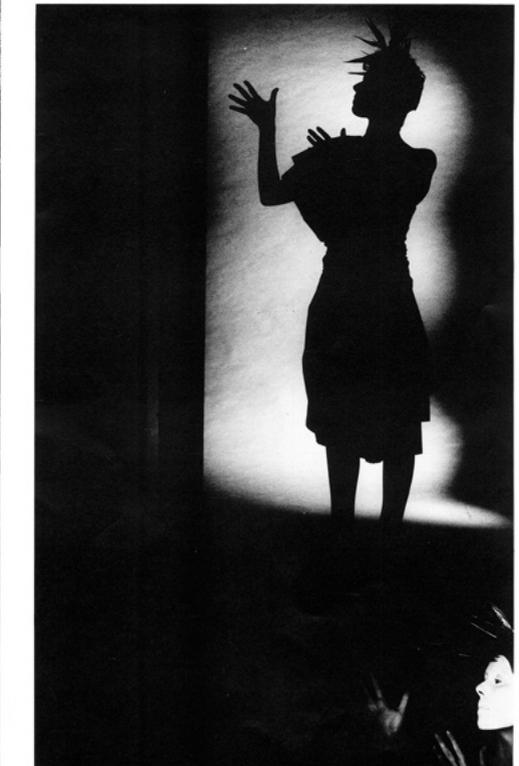
מפתח סימנים במגזין  
◀ המשך עבודות האמן  
☞ דיאלוג טרנסאטלנטי



2 Improvisation no. 2 אימפרוביזציה מס' 2



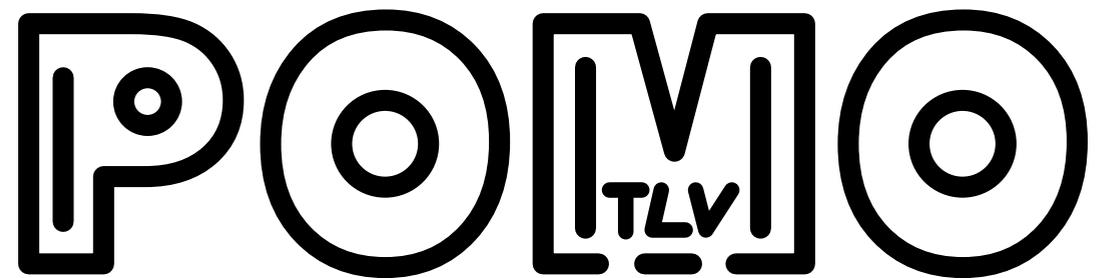
1 Improvisation no. 1 אימפרוביזציה מס' 1



"Tatrama," issue 3, 1984

"Tatrama," issue 1, 2, 1984

# Institutional



The rediscovery of Tel Aviv's urban values, alongside its architectural heritage since the early eighties won renewed appreciation for the historic neighborhoods that had been on the brink of destruction not long before. Neve Tzedek and Ajami were all but completely abandoned when the municipality's planning teams, together with private initiatives, armed with the groundbreaking ideas of young architects, began formulating action-plans for their revitalization using new visual language. They mediated between sensitivity for existing qualities, street structure, building materials and cutting edge building technologies. They developed a visual language which emphasized the tension between past and present, and was considerate of the needs of local communities. These initiatives greatly contributed to the city's attractiveness.

# Interview: Ramy Gill

Senior Partner in Architectura – "Ramy Gill, Shmuel Groberman Architects & Urban Designers" 1986-1997

**What is the significance of postmodernist architecture for you?**

The cosmic burst was released during the seventies, a boom, from which we are still being fed. It was a time of change. The winds of change were those of the postmodernism. Only a fool can't understand how it changed our world. Artists and authors felt liberated, things were seen and heard differently, the effect of juxtaposition appeared. Other things than the utopian

modernism of Le Corbusier was happening in the background. The prevailing dogma slowly digested itself and reached the bottom and suddenly things were perceived and heard differently. We could absorb more oxygen in one breath. Our chakras opened up. The modernism of today would have not existed without the emancipating ideas of postmodernism.

Though slowly regression started. The architects of the "caricature drawing" presented a formal catalog of

shapes corresponding with periods in history. It was reflected in visual manipulations but not in the general idea, which was very progressive. When the architects brought fixed agendas with affinities to histori-sophical shapes the movement's weakness was revealed. That's how we ended up today, but the idea never waned. We are still in the age of the postmodern.

**You were young architects when you were asked by the administration to propose a plan for the old neighborhood of Ajami in Jaffa. What were your intentions there?**

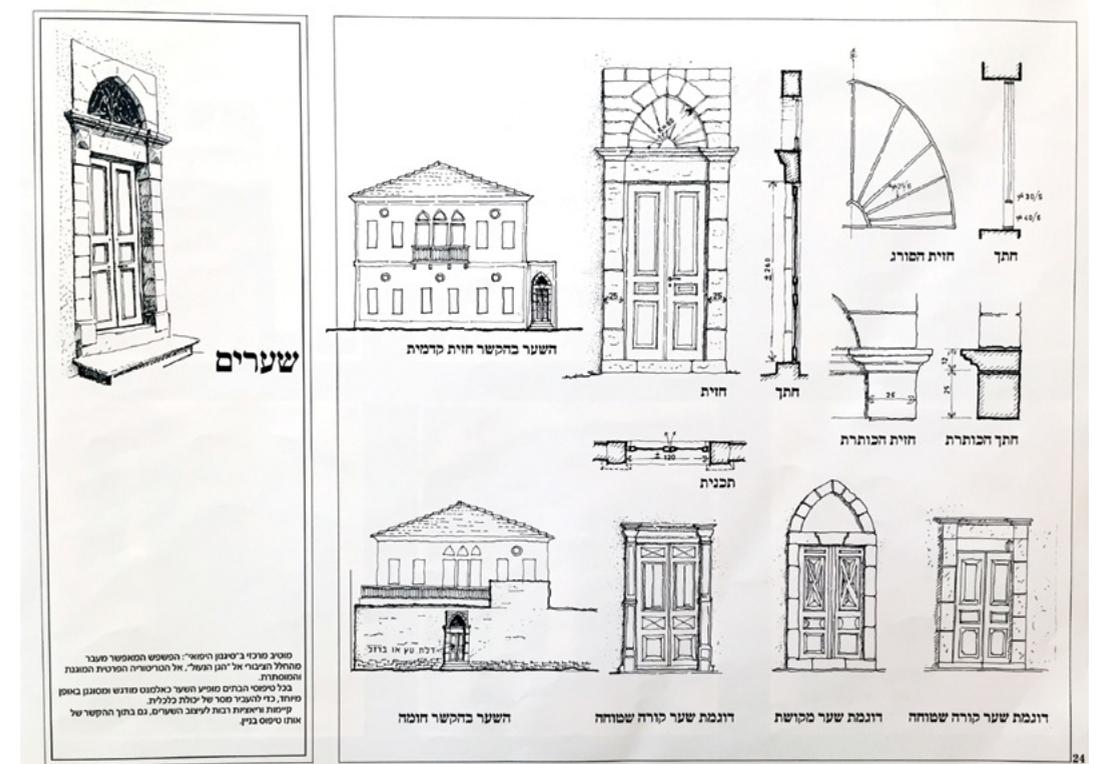
It was almost unoccupied by its original Arab dwellers after 1948. In the 1970s, a big wave of demolition was taking place in the Kasbah of Ajami. No-one understood then what exactly should be done with the old parts of Jaffa. In this vacuum we started asking: Can't we try to preserve? Should we continue

and demolish everything? We decided to preserve the existing fabric and let the time be manifested with no shame. We opposed reparcellation of the land which would have eventually supported the materialization of utopian speculations, such as high-rises. We realized that this decision will determine the fate of Jaffa.

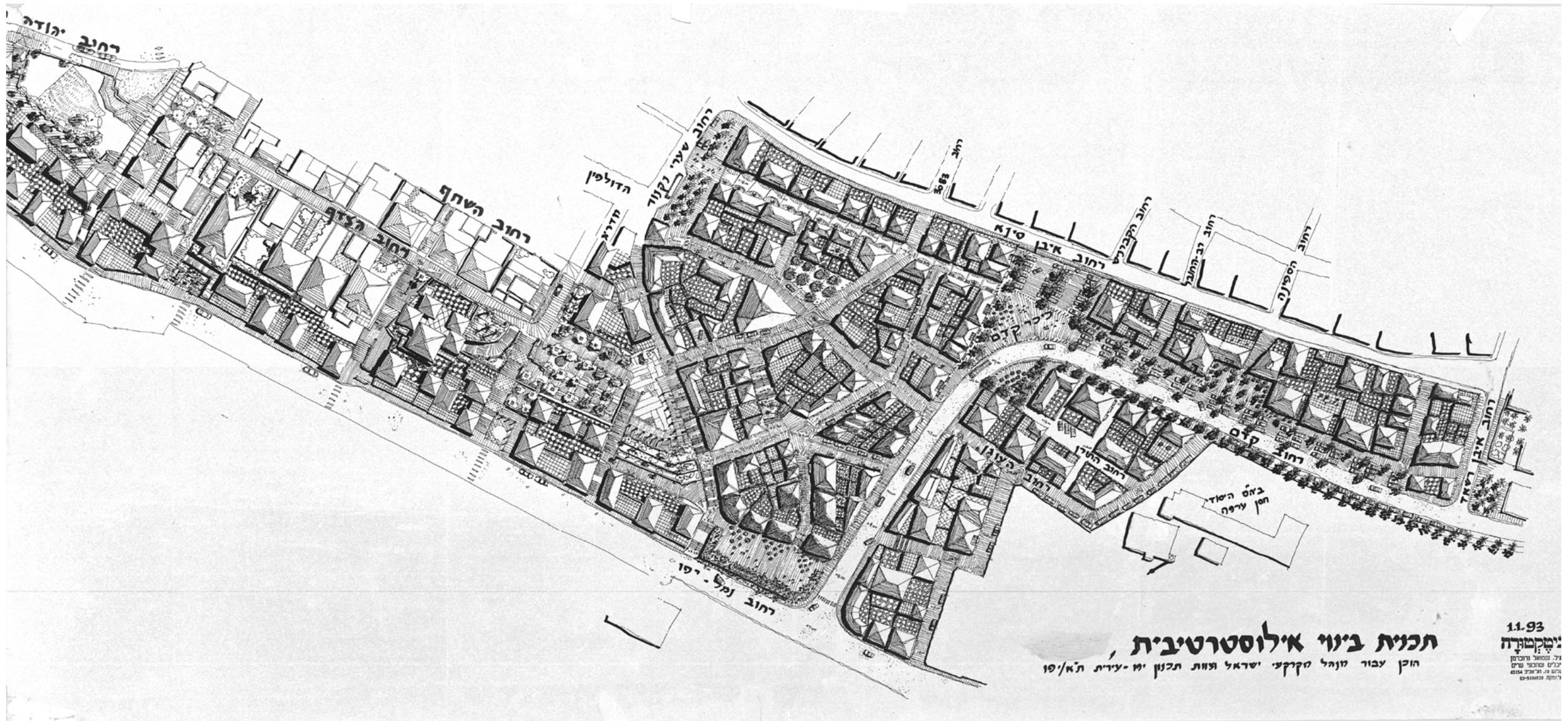
Our proposal was completely innovative. We fixed the plan to the historic structures, while trying to minimize the production of new paths. The most important feature was the use of the existing historic parcellations. We wanted to avoid the Tel Avivian ethos of reparcellation. The important thing was the past, we were less critical toward the future. However, with time other architects that corresponded with non-Zionist canons came along, and now it's a terrible fiasco of bonbon architecture. The ambience is of pastiche



Jaffa Planning team - Doron Tzafrir, Sergio Lerman, Dani Ravas, and Architectura - Ramy Gill, Shmuel Groberman, and Nachum Cohen, and Moria-sekely Landscape Architecture - Yael Moria.  
A Glance at Ajami - An architecture profile, 1985, Booklet front cover



Architectural details of Ajami - Gateways



Architectura - Ramy Gill, Shmuel, Groberman  
 Architects & Urban Designers, Planning brief for  
 Ajami, 1983-1985, General building plan





Planning brief for Ajami

Analysis of construction possibilities for new Ajami urban blocks (For 11 dwelling units): A - Cluster

B - Classic Ajami C - Heaven and Earth D - Heaven

and Earth with Alleyway E - Private yards encircle a pavilion F - Jaffa's clutter

Urban design sketches, analysis for commercial insertions

# Interview: Etan Kimmel and Michal Kimmel Eshkolot

Architects, owners of the Kimmel-Eshkolot architectural firm founded in 1986. Awarded the Rokach prize for architecture in 1993 for four residences in Neve Tzedek

## What prompted your interest in the renovation and conservation of Neve Tzedek in the 1980s?

Discovering the immense value of The White City after the first exhibition on this topic in 1984, was truly a huge discovery of local modernism. Neve Tzedek was never considered to possess any value, so the new appeal of history was of extreme significance there. We began to connect with the place while clarifying and redefining subjects such as the Israeli building style, and local design culture.

Because the environment in Neve Tzedek was so detached, we searched for components that would strengthen the already existing elements. We wanted to accentuate the basic components of the local architecture, using the Village in New York as reference, among others. We belong to the contextual

era, and therefore believed the project must fit in its location, in its context, and that this must have broader influence than the stylistic choices.

Since this all happened during the return of population to the city, entrepreneurship in Tel Aviv suddenly blossomed, allowing for construction between the already existing buildings and in small, previously uninteresting plots. At the time, Tel Aviv was developing northward without looking back, and all of a sudden the Bauhaus and eclectic architecture in the city's center and its south were rediscovered and revealed as something you could actually work with. Amidst the housing projects and contracted buildings, there was growing room for innovation and small inner-city projects through which young architects could express their new ideas. This was particularly fortunate since, when we finished school



*Kimmel Eshkolot Architects, Neve Tzedek houses, 1988-1993*

in 1985, there was absolutely no work anywhere for architects. Economically this was an extremely difficult time, prompted by the financial stabilization program and the hyperinflation that stemmed from it, leading eventually to the introduction of the New Shekel. There was absolutely no new construction during these years, and there was hardly any point in looking for work in the firms because everyone was just barely scraping by. To try and work through this situation we initiated what is known today as Group Buying – we published in the paper that there is a plot in Neve Tzedek that can accommodate six families, and we'd like to start a group that will buy it jointly, and let us handle the architecture. Luckily we decided to be one of those six families. It was essentially our first project.

The Neve Tzedek zoning was approved at the end of the 1980s, and our buildings were among the first built as part of the revitalization. We usually worked with small-scale entrepreneurs who owned one or two plots in the neighborhood, and generally encountered some difficulty convincing clients that architecture had any economic value at all. We found ourselves needing to prove to the entrepreneurs that the buildings we had planned were worth more than the neighboring ones, and were therefore worth their investment. In time, however, demand grew for this type of architecture. These buildings cannot be judged by their external presence alone – they represent an architecture that deals, first and foremost, with the dialog between the complex spaces within and the ordered façades without.

# Interview: Thea Kisselov and Olesh Kaye

Kisselov-Kaye Architects is a partnership of three generations of architects of the same family, founded at 1979. Awarded The Rechter Prize for Architecture for the Kalisher College project in 2000

## What is postmodernism in your opinion?

Thea: We don't really feel like part of the postmodern movement. It is an interesting period in the larger cultural context, but specifically in architecture it is expressed in a very formal, superficial fashion – I simply do not like this type of buildings, and therefore feel no particular attraction for the period. I do, however, feel that lately the world is beginning to reach deeper layers of exploration which are connected to other design concepts.

## How did the Rabbi Hanina neighborhood renovation project, near Jaffa's flea market, begin?

Olesh: The project began through our personal viewpoint of the people and urban community living in the city. This is always a guiding principle to us. The Rabbi Hanina residential neighborhood project started after the 1977 political revolution and the banking crisis. At one point, many acquaintances of ours couldn't afford an independent housing unit in their own neighborhoods.

We decided to look around with the intention of creating an urban fabric which will function as an independent community, and that will be socially and financially heterogeneous. We searched all over, while our office was always based in Old Jaffa. When we first arrived at Rabbi Hanina we encountered a strong, positive living environment. While it was only a 150-meter segment of street, it felt like a community. At that point we assembled a group of friends and got to work.

## What did you strive for, if at all, in relation to regional influence?

Olesh: I came from the Bauhaus and Corbusian ideology of the mass-housing projects. At some point I realized that this theory was ruinous to residential life and could not, in fact, sustain it at all. The street, as a public space, is of prime importance. Still, arriving at Jaffa, we didn't plan to induce a revolution – the starting point was the attempt to build a reasonable, friendly and inexpensive residential area.

Thea: The place was neglected and suffered from a criminal reputation. Even so, we wanted to build an open-bordered neighborhood, unlike the closed ones we remembered from our childhood. And indeed, we eventually succeeded in creating an inclusive atmosphere.

## What was the state of the place before you arrived, from a political and planning perspective?

Olesh: First of all, The street was mostly sealed when we arrived. This was because after the state was established, the street was abandoned – by the very people who built it, the Palestinians. In their stead new immigrants were introduced, though they fled to the new housing projects once they acquired some dwell time in Israel, and some wealth. There were a few tenants, ex-immigrants who remained mostly because they had no alternative. But in the beginning of the 1970s the street was abandoned and sealed.

## How did City Hall participate in the development?



*Rabbi Hanina Street at a neighbors gathering, early 1990s*

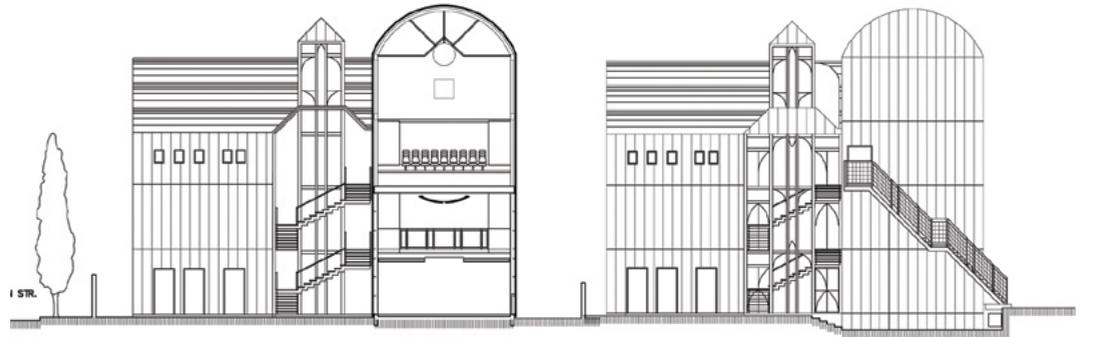
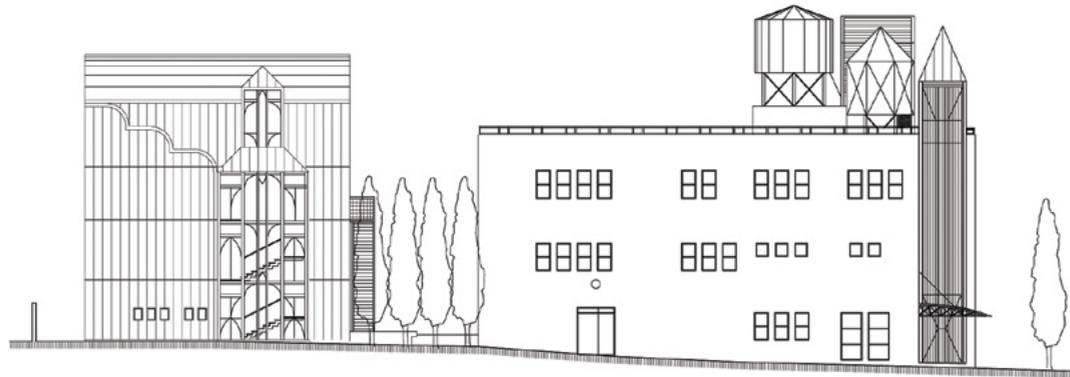
Olesh: This was during the term of mayor "Chich" [Shlomo Lahat]. Before that, City hall couldn't care less about Jaffa. This changed when Shamay Assif, the Director of Planning, established the planning teams, at which point we received the full support of the Jaffa team. The team took part in many of the new realizations regarding the existing local value.

Thea: We had an opportunity to plan a long-term project. We wanted to create a diverse environment which evolves and changes with time. On the other hand, the urban layout of Jaffa is mostly a remnant of the British mandate, solid enough to take in different

new layouts and still maintain its character. Our motive and premise were not at all design-oriented; instead we wished to understand the spirit of the place, its character. The use of metals was a big part of this, but a more important notion was blurring the lines between interior and exterior, creating different degrees of privacy. This wasn't about building an arch and calling ourselves Jaffites, but rather trying to truly understand the different layers of what we had there. There is an expression of individuality here which is the exact opposite of modernism – even within the same building, no two apartments we planned are the same.

Kisselov Kaye Architects, Moria-sekely (Landscape architecture), Kalisher College, 5 Kalisher Street, 1995

*"The project is situated in a poor and sweaty area of south Tel Aviv, and yet it is also vibrant and colorful. The Carmel Market is just few steps away and projects energy, freedom and freshness to its environs. The building is a crossroad, a meeting point for creating interaction between the arts and its audience. The project has no fences, and the simple buildings are part of the street life in an attempt to encourage the local community to get engaged." (Kisselov Kaye, 1995)*



*West Elevation*

*Gallery section*



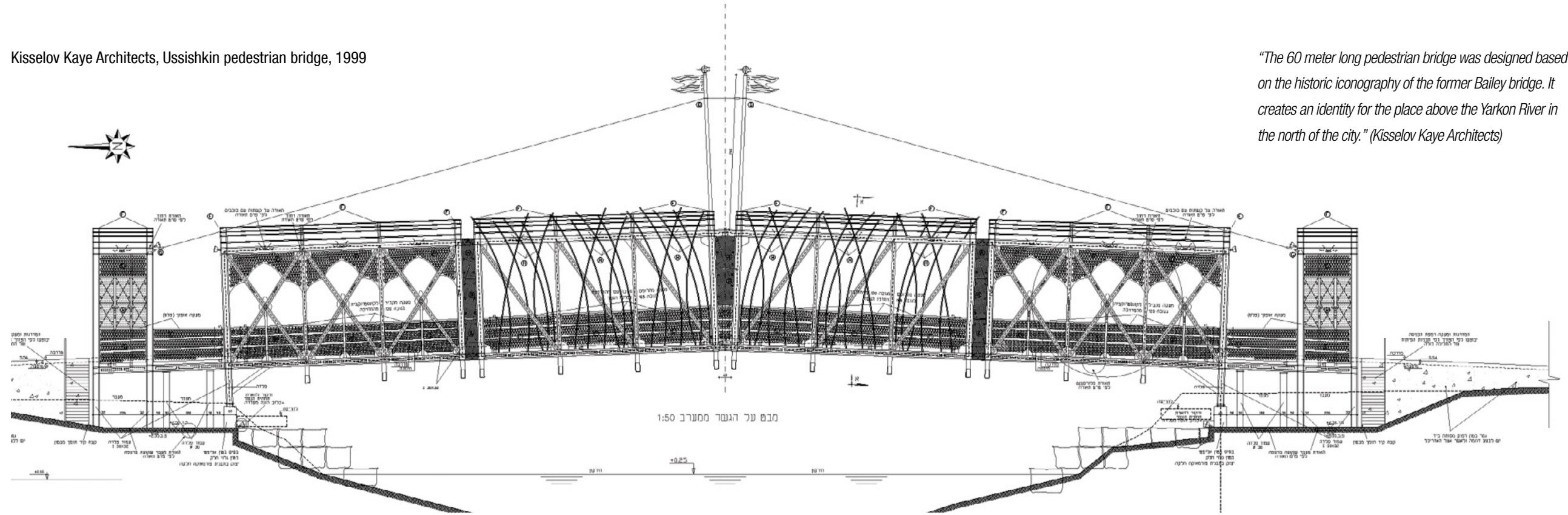
*South elevation of the gallery building, 1995*



*Rooftop of the workshops building, 1995*

Kisselov Kaye Architects, Ussishkin pedestrian bridge, 1999

*"The 60 meter long pedestrian bridge was designed based on the historic iconography of the former Bailey bridge. It creates an identity for the place above the Yarkon River in the north of the city." (Kisselov Kaye Architects)*



West elevation



Interior view, 2000



View from the west, 2000

# Entrepreneurial POMO

National economic reforms, employed by the new right government after 1977, marked the transition into an early form of neoliberal-capitalism and free market ideologies based on the American model.

Central power mechanisms were dismantled by increased processes of privatization, and a new form of capital entrepreneurship emerged. The central city was in the process of urban and social rehabilitation and new opportunities for development were opened up by the municipality. The entrepreneurs, constantly looking for ways to increase revenues, coalesced with young architects who were eager to materialize new concepts of freedom and individuality and express their revolt against outdated high modernism. They developed a heterogeneous and experimental postmodern visual language. They absorbed international design influences such as Historicism and Deconstructivism and their noticeable and unique designs were utilized for better marketing values.

# Tzvi Harel

Architect and Educator. Awarded The Aryeh Elhanani Prize for Integrating Art with Architecture for Ha'Baal Shem-Tov Pedestrian Bridge in 2003

I think Post-Modernism is obscene, it is misunderstood, it is elitist - maybe everything done in Post-Modern architecture is rubbish.

It had two opposing poles: the Gravitationists and the Entropists.

The Gravitationists were interested in going back, like gravitation.

Their buildings are highly hierarchic, always heavy below and lighter above.

History is too.

The Entropists said we are in chaos and that catastrophe is optimistic.

We entered a catastrophic age, and they celebrated.

The fantastic thing about Post-Modernism is that everything interests you.

And you can't say that the modernists aren't worth it.

On the contrary, you have to love them. And hate them.

They are enormous, and more interesting than their predecessors.

Before them, it's history.

A building with a disruptive plan is more intriguing.

One with a different sub-consciousness, a hangover.

The architect has to free the building from its program.

I was interested in being critical, humorist and absurd, a narrator.

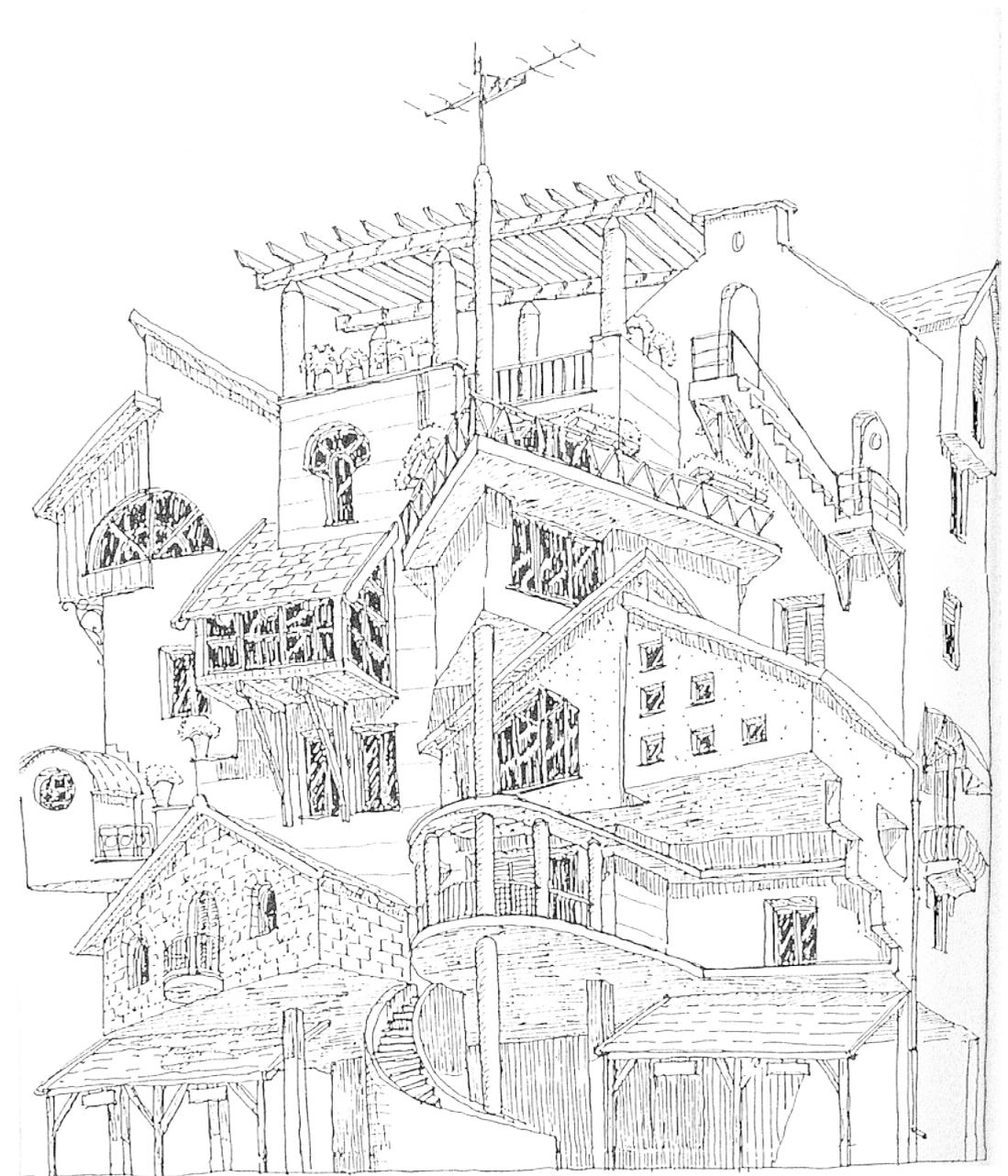
I did a decent thing within the architectural discourse.

I want to look at a building and talk to it.

I did something that made me happy, it's eye-candy.

You could argue it's a fallacy, but I have no choice.

This is what I do.

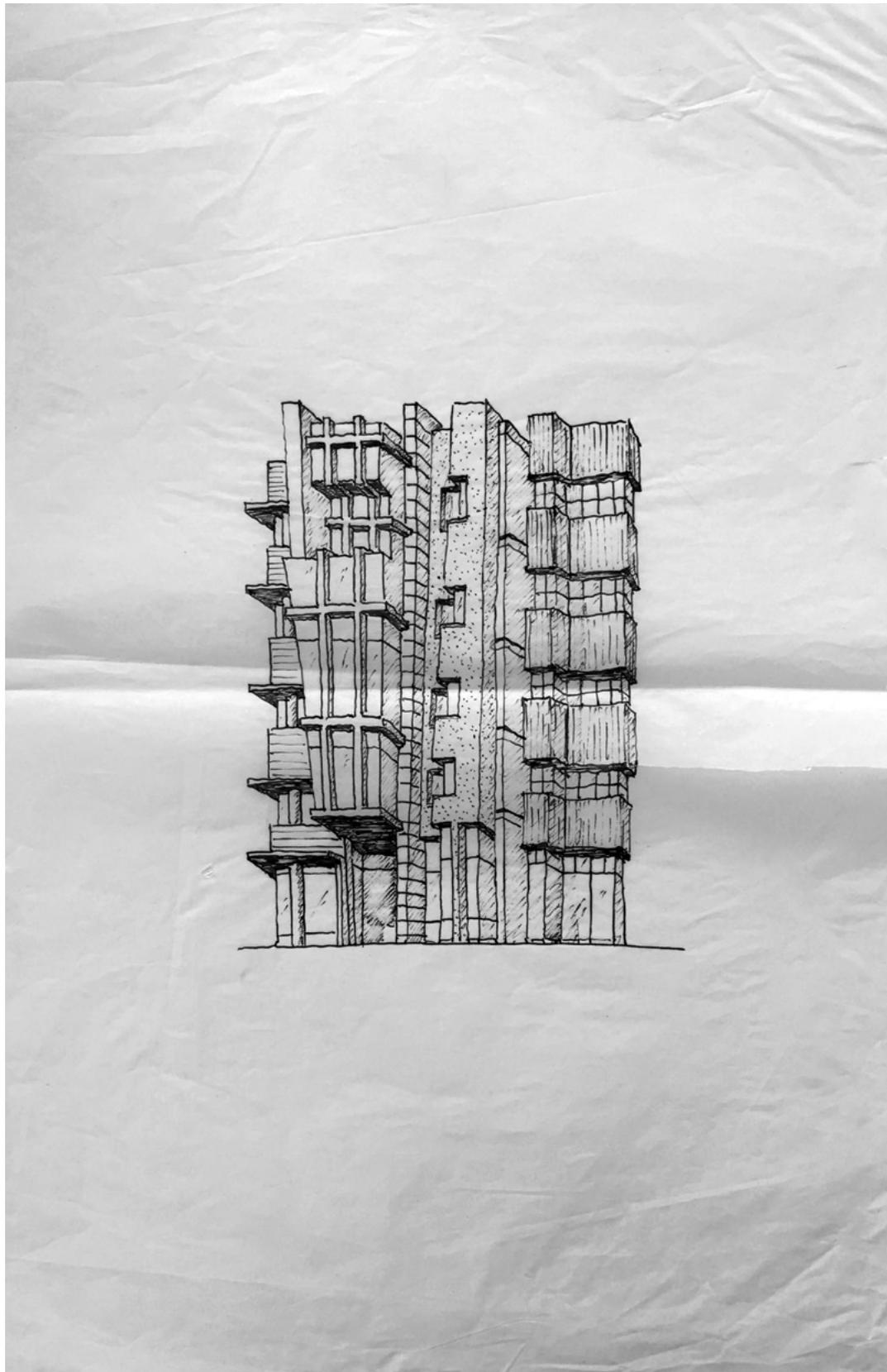


*Tzvi Harel, Conjoined villa caricature, 1985*

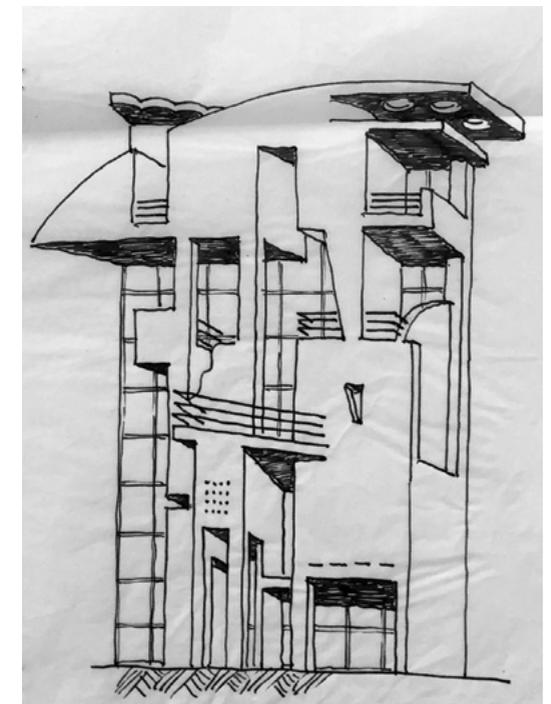
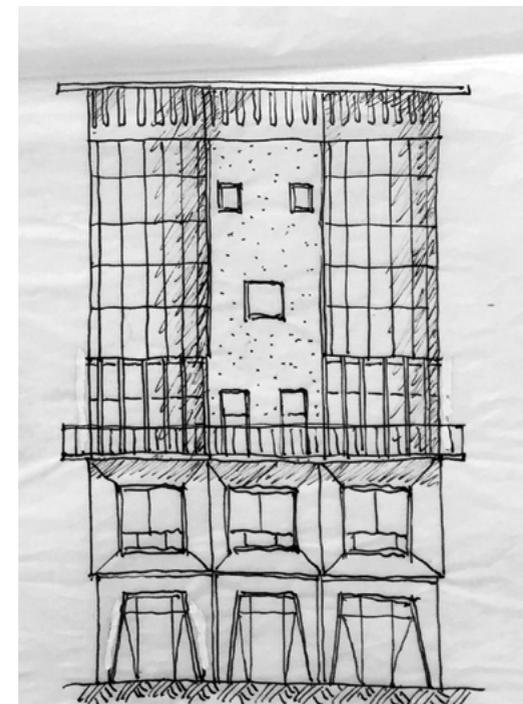
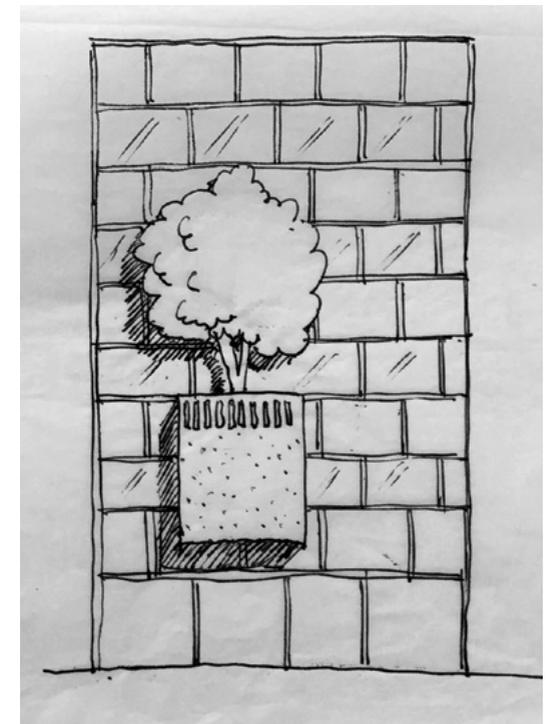
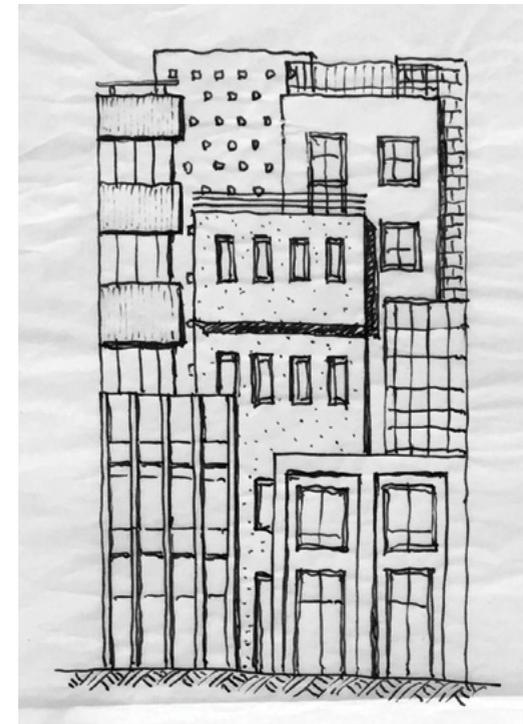


*Tzvi Harel, Residential building, 2 Trumpeldor Street, 1988, Scaled model*





Tzvi Harel, Office building, 68 HaRakevet Street, 1992, Preliminary sketches



*"For the Americanization of our small country I propose a Wild West architecture. For a formal office building I tailor a facade and nothing more, a deep engraving. And behind it a box, sealed with shutters. Thomas Mann expressed his impressions from his first car ride. He felt as if the trees and utility poles are being slanted and the houses compressed and merged. I learn from him how to design a building on a highway. The facade becomes a billboard. It is made from segments of condensed and crowded fronts." (Tzvi Harel, 1993)*

# Simona Bar Sagi

Architect and Town Planner, owners of Simona Bar Sagi Architecture and Town Planning firm, operating in Tel Aviv since 1975. Awarded The Tel Aviv-Yafo Appreciation Prize for her notable architectural work in 2014

I moved to Tel Aviv in 1975 and have been living here since then.

I loved this city, the parties, the tempo, the people and the chaos.

I see Tel Aviv for its unusual real-estate and design potential, which we should exploit.

We can't just build glass towers, that's terrible -

we should not try and be America, or to build cubes with their backs to the sea.

Remember, the Bauhaus was here before.

Architecture is a figure-making creation of spaces that uplift the human spirit.

I was inspired by nothing but what is right for the time and for the place.

In my school, the Technion, I was taught about Modernism, exclusively.

Later I felt the need to oppose Modernism.

My architecture serves the people and is generated from love for mankind.

I believe that a human being living in an aesthetic environment is a better person.

My profession is a creative one, and I strive to give back the best I can.

This is a great privilege.

Since this building on Hayarkon Street was built two streets away from the beach,

I gave it waves in ocean colors.

The waves are smashing the front facade of the regular contractor's box and make it dynamic.

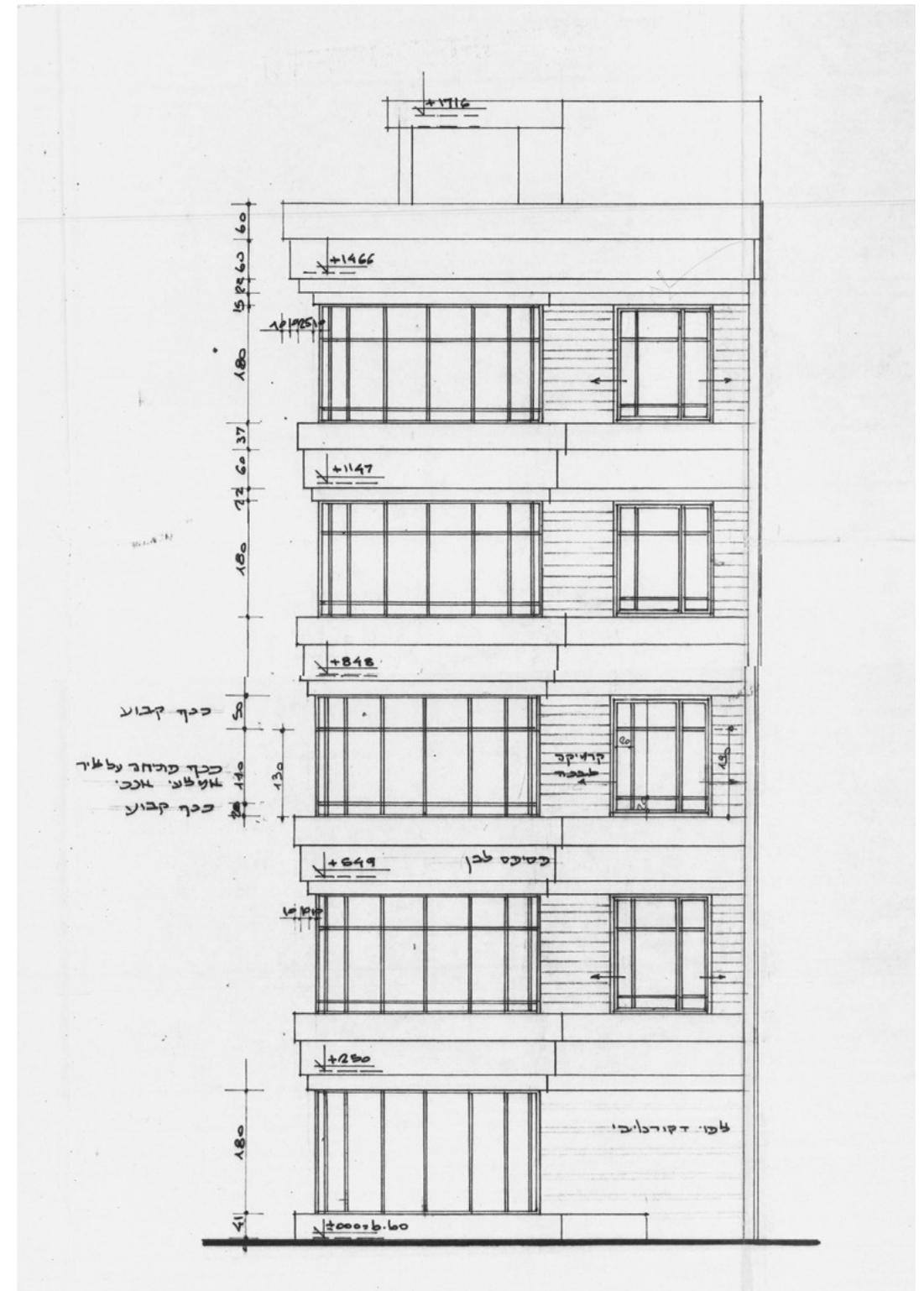
In these years all buildings were squares, standing on stilts with brisoleis.

I wanted to give something back to the streets and the residents.

So I did something different.

My buildings interprets the Bauhaus heritage of Tel Aviv in a new way.

I created a new design style - "The Post-Bauhaus."



Simona Bar Sagi Architecture and Town Planning, Residential building, 42 Isaiah Street, 1984, North facade



Simona Bar Sagi Architecture and Town Planning, Residential building, 272-274 Ha'Yarkon Street, 1993, Front facade



הרב קוק 18



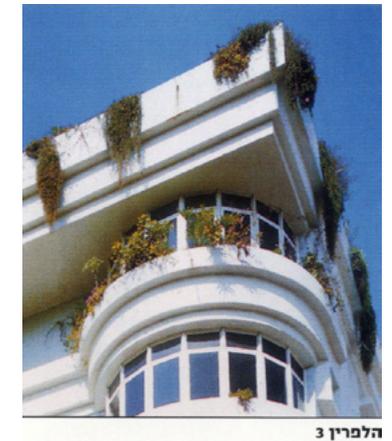
יונה הנביא 32



לסל 3



הגלבוע 10



הלפרין 3



הלפרין 3



בן יהודה 75



גאולה 13

Residential buildings in Tel Aviv, 1986-1991

From left to right: 18 Ha'Rav Kook Street, 32 Yona Ha'Navi Street, 3 Lesel Street, 10 Ha'Gilboa Street, 32-34 Herbert Samuel Street, 3 Halperin Street, 3 Halperin Street - Cornice, 75 Ben Yehudi Street, 13 Geula Street

# Yitzchak Lipovsky Lir Architect,

owner of the Lir architectural firm, founded in 1981

Kopilov House – the architectural concept:

Protest is the foundation of the building's architectural concept.

Protest against the decline of public parks in Tel Aviv.

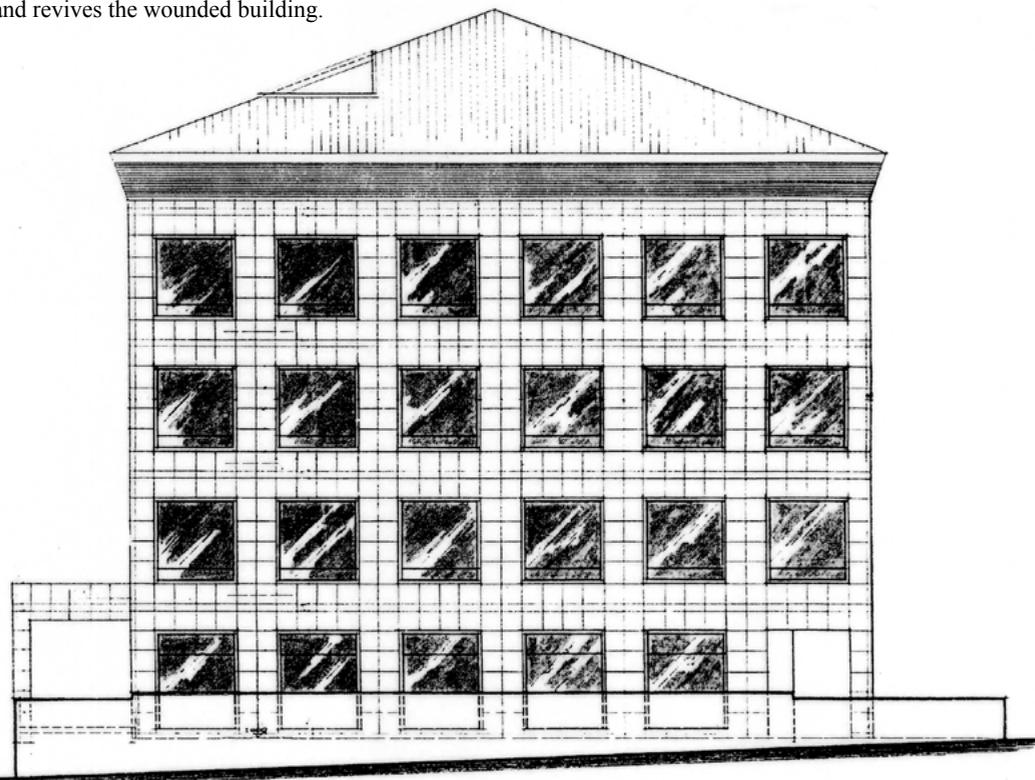
Protest against the disappearance of green spaces in favor of built ones.

Protest against the office buildings in Tel Aviv which are alienated from their surroundings.

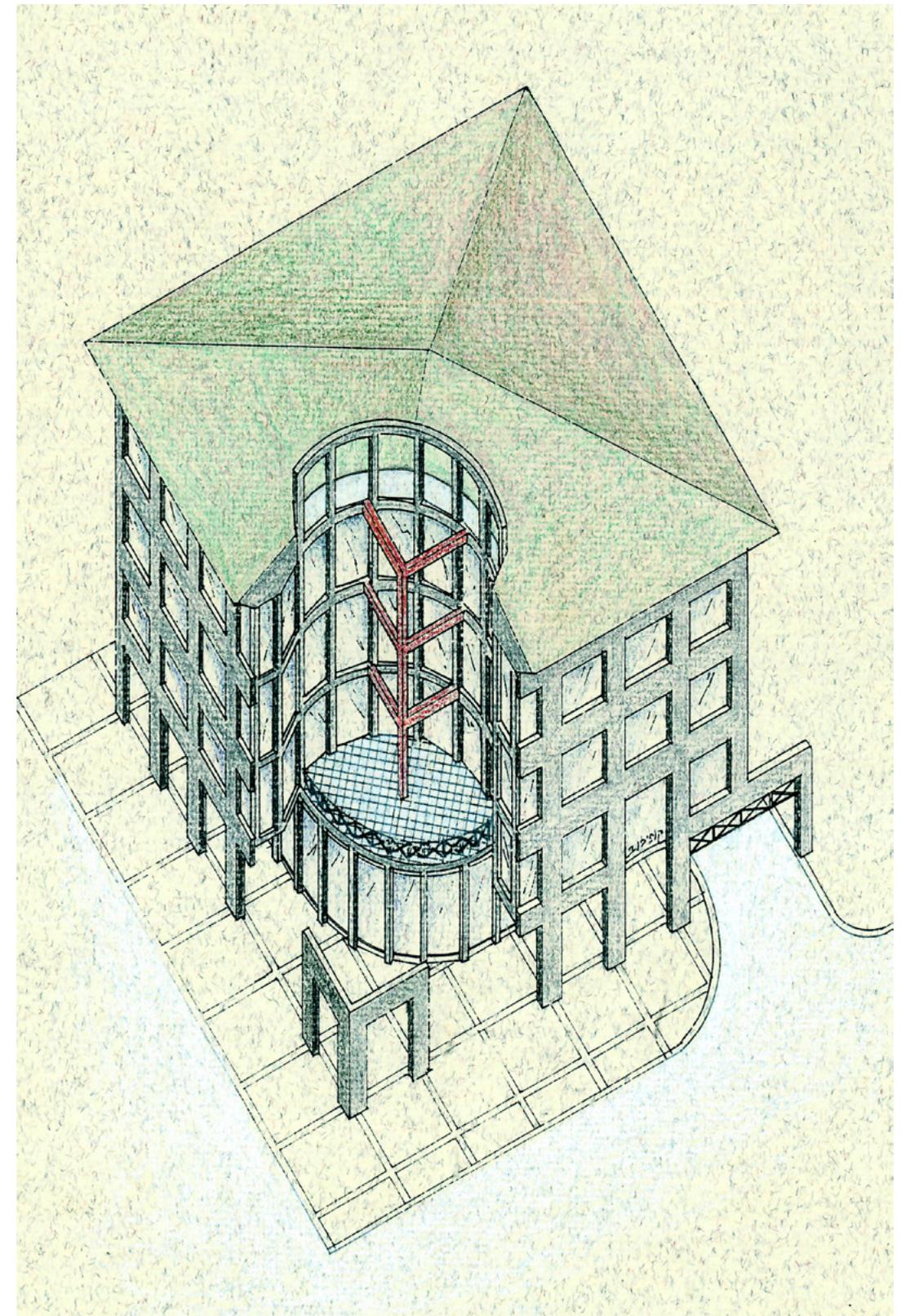
Protest through a reverse process of architecture where the garden eats away at large portions of the building.

Through a process of erosion, Sharon Garden consumes parts of the adjacent building and leaves behind exposed foundations and bits of wall. The building was designed as a simple Tel Avivian cube, maintaining a memory of the tiled roofs preceding the white city. The roof's cornice is thickened and airy, its façade simple and rhythmic, and the building overall is local and connected to its surrounding.

At the junction between the streets there is an arcade, placed along the garden to improve the dialog with pedestrians. The arcade evolves into a small square within the realm of the building, where the main drama takes place. The garden consumes a quarter-circle of the building, leaving an exposed part of the building's foundation, and a detached corner which becomes a sculptural element. A large metal grid, inlaid with windows, bandages and revives the wounded building.



Lir Architects, Kopilov Building, 8 Levontin St, 1989, South facade



Kopilov Building, Perspective

# Interview: Roni Zeibert

Architect and Town Planner, partner in Zeibert-Krugman Architectural firm 1983-1986

**How did you react to the postmodern inclinations in your architecture?**

The postmodern went back to history. It was a story of reclamation, not of styles. Maybe we felt unease with the prevailing concrete and abstraction of the modernism. I thought architecture was too abstract, which was less accessible for the public who is our target audience. But we were searching in our local environment and created a concrete architecture, always functional. It's the kind of people we were.

Doing it all clean and white was very hard for me. I appreciated it, though my technique was different. I used the form and materials to distinguish between functions, as a kind of collage. So it was easier to approach the people, my audience.

I don't like jokes, but my buildings have a distinct sense of humor. Usually it's in their

subtext. Considering the context, life is more complicated than you thought and humor is an important component in it. This is why architecture, as a public structure, needs a course of vagrancy as a state of mind.

**This residential building in Chen Boulevards is a prominent example of pomo architecture in the city, could you describe the design process?**

This building is a collage of Tel-Avivian styles. The materials are playful. It starts with terraces, a chunk of local limestone, which we all live on, then shifts to the international style curves. Then something else happens. The top floor takes the shape of an extensive cornice. It's important to the closure of the building, as they do in Italy. The mosaic, covering the exterior, was mandatory, though it is all white. It was a desire to teach a lesson in architecture. It's not a conventional building.



Roni Zeibert and Marsel Krugman, Residential building, 28 Chen Boulevard, 2015

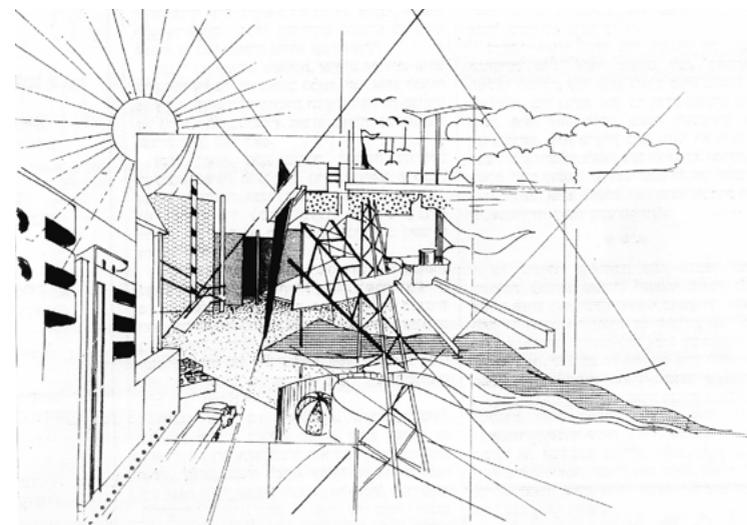
# Interview: Orit and Doron Pinchas

Architects, owners of Arcod architectural firm, founded in Tel Aviv in 1986

**The project on Dizengoff Street pioneered the concept of adding floors on top of an historic residential building intended for conservation, how did it come to be?**

With this conservation project of a building on Dizengoff Street we made a change in the world of architecture. The prevailing concept in city hall was that preservation means restoring a building to its original state. When we got the conservation project we wanted to add one floor on top of the historic building, but we stopped and asked ourselves if we should add an identical floor. We then realized that we shouldn't do that. It would destroy the architect's intention since he designed

the building with only three floors. It would have been as if we just continued the original building, but we actually could have ruined it. Therefore, we decided to design an addition that will make the old part stand out, while making it clear that it is a new thing. That was our way to stay loyal to the old structure. The tendency of the municipal planning department was that "if this works, we might approve of this method." Since the concept of additions was related to the Bauhaus idea, City Hall adopted this option in its conservation master plan as a method to extend historic buildings using dissimilar styles. This is an option that many architects still deploy today.



Arcod Architects, Interior design for children's room, 1989

*"Arcod rejects all the axioms of a children's room. As far as they're concerned, there is no necessary connection between the place where the child sleeps and where he prefers to play. The street, therefore, eligible to be a closet and clouds of sheep become a mobile." (Ha'ir, Issue 474, November, 1989)*



Arcod Architects, Rosenberg building's addition, 166 Dizengoff Street, 1993

# Late-Capitalism

## PO[M]O

The latest evolution of postmodernism, produced through planning and design practices in Tel Aviv, uncovers the paradox in its structure. It lies in the resolution that both forms of conflicting early postmodernism had to amalgamate in order to maintain their relevancy and overcome planning limitations, which afflicted them in equal ways.

The process of mutual transformation included the improvement of public-private mechanisms, benefitting urban rehabilitation while creating class segregation, and increasing public legitimation by means of preservation. Through these advancements a Tel Avivian form of late-capitalist postmodernism was conceived.

# Interview: Lior

**Duschintsky** Engineer, entrepreneur and project manager. CEO of the municipal company "Ezra and Bitzron" during the 1980s, a subsidiary of Tel Aviv municipality for housing and construction, responsible for the planning, management and execution of public works in the city

**As an entrepreneur who transferred from the private sector to the public sector, what innovations have you brought with you?**

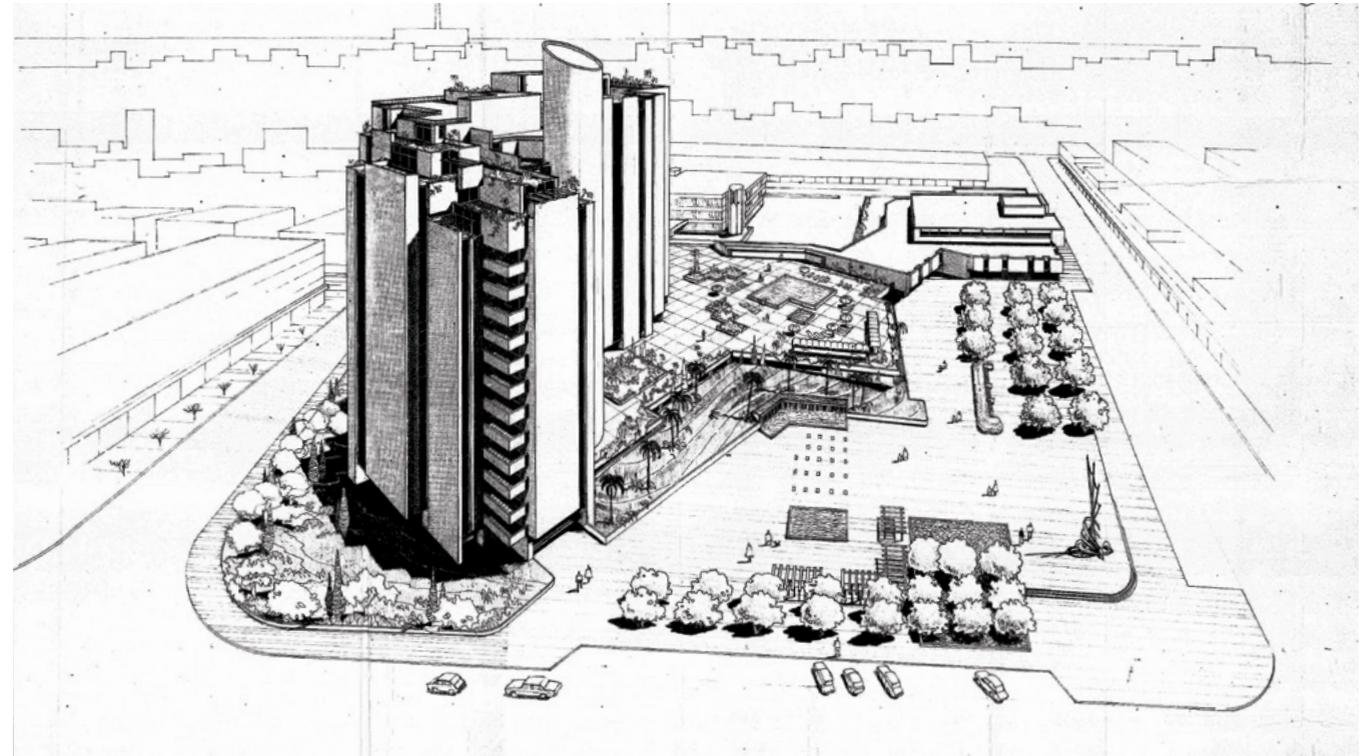
While I see the value of a world view which respects the social aspect, I still believe the motive for action should be mostly financial. The interests of society and of the individual, and the ability to harness these interests and capitalize them, can prove beneficial for all of those involved. In a city that is able to actualize its vision, aspirations and intentions regarding developmental standards, the right project can lead to impressive results. The privately owned environment then can self-actualize and realize the expectations of it. This is the type of city that can connect and channel the private capital, and recruit this capital to serve the public agenda.

I came to work for the Tel Aviv municipality because I recognized the city's power as a regulator and property owner, and believed in this power. These are the conditions that need to be met before the urban system can improve. And, true to that approach, my first action as CEO of the urban development company "Ezra and Bitzron" was conducting a survey of the city's property. This had never been done before. We gathered all of the assets the city owned,

with the intention of checking their designations and what is happening within them – what the demands were for urban-public properties in these locations, and how necessary they were. If there is need for a school there, for example, or can the land be utilized for something else. That was the beginning.

**How did you analyze the potential of these assets? How did you understand the way to harness the funds and entrepreneurs in the interest of public gain?**

Let us take for example Basel Square, where we built the first significant residential tower in the city, 17 stories tall. Though located in the beautiful heart of the north-central city, a process of rapid decay had begun to take place: There was a fire station which served as a nuisance to the residents, an emergency medical center was built, as well as a regional market, warehouses and a sanitation center. All of which was gathered in one city block. That was actually what spark the idea. It was in fact quite easy to convince city hall to start a project that will breathe new life in the area. The deal was that the municipality will handle the initiative legislation and development of the project, while the financing will be done with private capital. We sold the land to entrepreneurs – a bold new move



*Yitzhak Gonen, Preliminary proposal for "Marom Basel" project, 1984*

in the field – and this, in turn, brought in massive funds which the city could use for other public purposes, such as clearing the mess from the area and building a new fire station. The idea was for the city to promote a new zoning for the property, like an investor developing a program, which the city could then use for the benefit of its surroundings. It caused the entire city of Tel Aviv to come to terms with the notion of building towers and improving their surroundings in the process.

**What was the attitude towards preserving the existing urban fabric in the area, which originated from Patrick Geddes' master plan?**

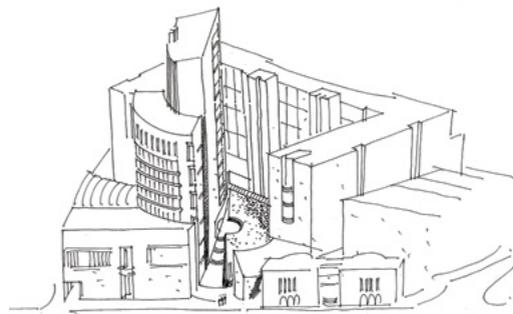
I strongly believed, and in fact still do, that the towers were the best course towards developing the city. I admit there was no proper consideration regarding the limitation of planning processes in order to preserve the existing urban fabric. On the other hand, the ability to recruit the financial leveraging which exercises these projects, as well contributing to their surroundings, was enabled through the production of building rights to modern, contemporary development. Back then, Tel Aviv lacked the historic significance it has since gained.

# Interview: Ada Karmi-Melamede

Architect, owner of Ada Karmi-Melamede Architects, founded in 1985. Awarded the Israel Prize for architecture in 2007

## How do you evaluate the transition to postmodernism, in Tel Aviv and in general?

In essence, as a transition from a state of specificity to a state of hybridity. The difference between modernism and postmodernism (and I don't mean this in the sense of imitating arches or domes or the engagement with history), is that modernism dealt with specifics – not the broad urban fabric, but actual buildings. Up to a certain point everything was specific, and from that point onward everything became hybridized, polyphonous. Postmodernism used contemporary technology to deal with the past and with symbolism, without even attempting to maintain a connection to the here-and-now. One could combine whichever traditions and histories one saw fit to, because the ideas were completely lacking in specificity. There lies the primary contrast between the two eras.

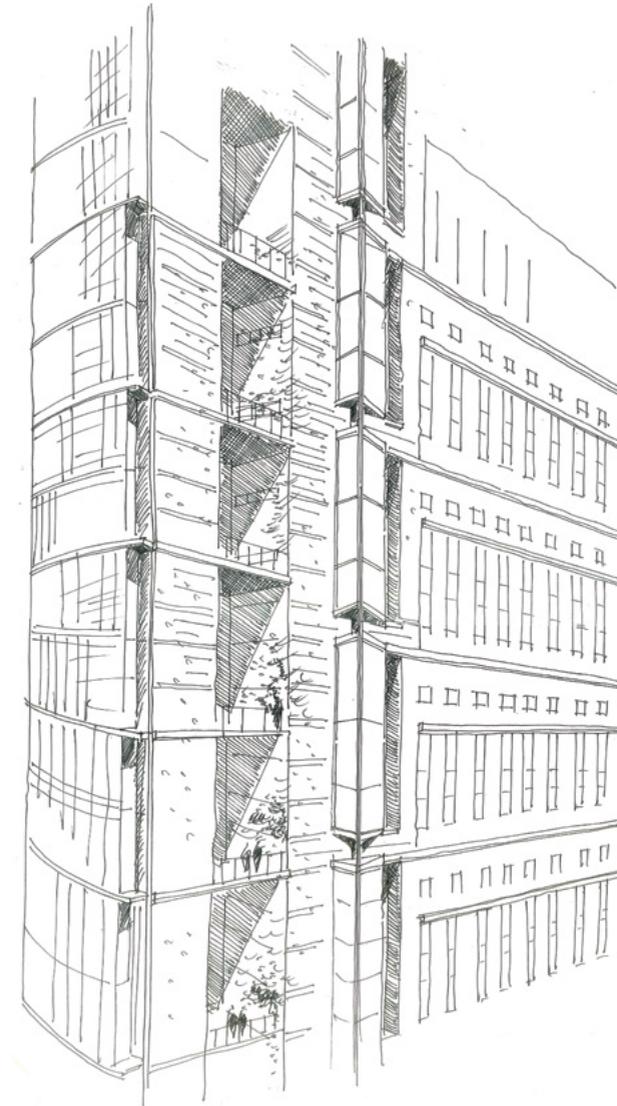


Ada Karmi-Melamede Architects, Lev Ha'lr Quarter, 3 Ma'ze Street, 1994, Preliminary sketches

In my opinion, this can be attributed to the anonymity that once characterized architecture. At some point all of the old regimes changed, and architecture lost its main content: suddenly there was no longer a monarchy or an autocracy of any kind – In other words, no symbol. The entire aspect of architecture that was centered around symbolic representation, around the employer, was gone. Gone was the age of ideology, to be replaced with currency, or more specifically, with the product. As that grew it came to provide and represent growing power. I think that as a result of that, the concepts of place, space, neighborhood and street, simply lost their relevancy. These elements had a target, a focal point, and eventually it became clear that the new form of building was not focused, nor was it a part of something. You are not part of anything bigger than you anymore. As a result of that everyone became the star of their own show, so to speak – thinking themselves alone on the stage.

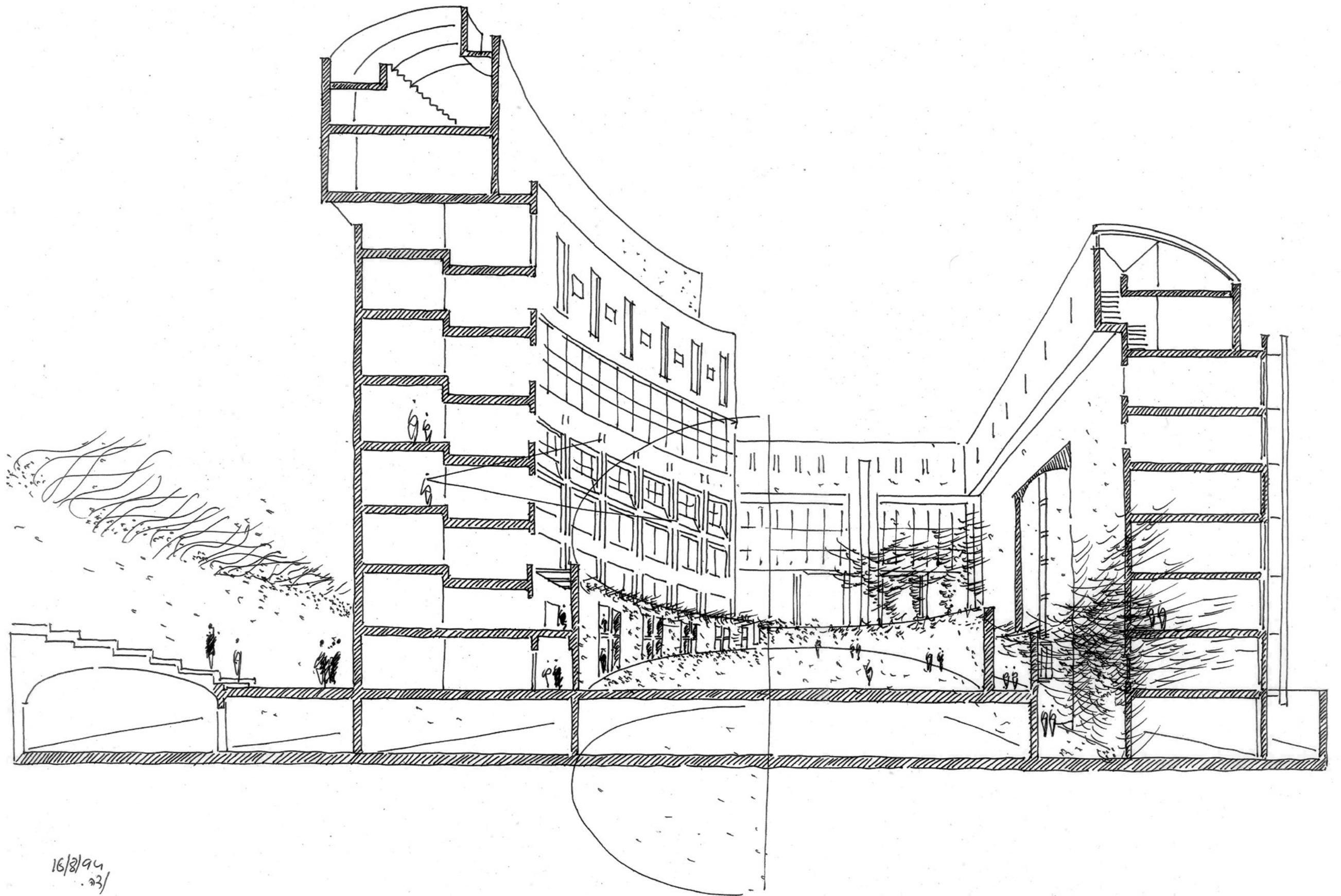
## During this time, what changes occurred in the image of the entrepreneur, and the relations between architect and entrepreneur?

The image of the entrepreneur changed in the same fashion as the image of the state. The main employer was no longer the state, so that aspect of architecture was no longer relevant. This relates to political changes, as well as to the privatization of public land.



Lev Ha'lr Quarter, Sketch of tower's facade

The question is, where does the architect fit in? Until 1977 the primary employer was the government, and the actual client was the end user – the resident. Because the main user was the resident, architects could usually place themselves in the resident's shoes, as opposed to the entrepreneur's. Gradually, though, architects began to serve the entrepreneur, instead of the user. The buildings were no longer a product of the user's needs, but of the entrepreneur. What's more, the entrepreneur believed that the importance of the building lay with the envelope, the sculptural elements of the design. Terms like "space" were removed from the professional vocabulary, to be replaced with the "envelope". The architect had lost his point of view, and remains, to this day, confused regarding it. The face of architecture was transformed, taken over by speculators and the expectations laid out by entrepreneurs. The role of architecture has been inverted owing to this type of entrepreneurship, as well as the culture of façades, the sole function of which is to be visually appealing. The profession is slowly transforming, with the envelope specialists becoming more and more influential at the architects' expense.



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# Interview: Orly Erel

Deputy city engineer and Director of the City Planning Division, Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality. Has participated in the planning procedures in Tel Aviv in the 1980s and 1990s and in founding the preservation team

**At which point did the planning system in Tel Aviv switch from a passive approach to an active one? What, in fact, is an active approach? Where does "urban" thinking begin? And what, according to your view, was missing before?**

At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, an attitude toward comprehensive planning had already been formed; that was what Shamay Assif, the City Engineer, brought to the engineering administration. It started in Jaffa, where the need arose to put a stop to the massive destruction and to plan things more comprehensively, beginning with the Ajami neighborhood, with its many socio-political issues. At the time this was considered a new and unconventional course of action. We addressed the neighborhood's social and economic needs, as well as its infrastructure, traffic and transport requirements. We better defined what it is that we want to create, and the vision for this particular area. According to this vision we promoted a statutory process – the first step towards the new Tel Aviv. The only one to do something like this before was Patrick

Geddes. Up until then, the prevalent method was slow, massive projects, such as the new central bus station or the beach development, where an entrepreneur would show up with a plot of land and urban scheme, and start building as soon as he gets the system's approval. The process of switching from individual to comprehensive planning is a long one, not to mention painful for entrepreneurs: they're suddenly told to stop and allow for a lengthy thought-through process that must precede the work. This is done through team work, through tedious back-and-forth exchanges amongst ourselves, the entrepreneurs, the city engineer, the local committee and the municipal committee. It is also a process in which social, urban and design perceptions are determined and crystalized. Through the plans, we tried to express and actualize these perceptions.

The basic assumption for city planning in Tel Aviv today is that, while entrepreneurship and private initiative is all well and good, the city has needs as well. The planning division represents not only the present city, but also the future city and



*Dov Hershkovitz, Historic Congregation Center, 40 Rothschild Boulevards, 1924*

*Amnon Bar-Or Architects, Conservation, 2008*

*I.M.PeI and Partners, Nir-Kutz architects, First International Bank, Headquarters, 2008*

its residents, and no one truly knows what trends the future holds. For example, we went against the market when it was said that under no circumstances should towers be built in Rothschild Boulevard. And, against the planning committee, we said they should be – and added the option (not, by any means, the requirement) to build offices or residences. This proved problematic years later, because we now have residences on the Boulevard, when in the mid-1990s we neither imagined nor wanted them.

Every mistake we make is an integral part of the learning process. What's written in the plan is never exactly what's built, and so we learn to write it differently next time. I think the Rothschild Boulevard plan, which was the first policy document prepared in the city planning division, was fundamental for developing the outline plan which is currently on the road to approval. We

have shown that the planning-oriented view, along with the aforementioned components of the City Planning Division, can create a good planning framework, even if it does require a great deal of patience from others.

**Who actually plans the city? What is the balance of power?**

I firmly and openly believe in public planning, which includes and ties together the various criteria involved in this process. I also believe, however, that this cannot happen without entrepreneurs: the conditions must exist to make it worthwhile for the entrepreneurs, or nothing will ever happen. But this must happen within certain limitations. When an entrepreneur plans a project he cannot expect it to be completely profit-oriented. The public must benefit as well. Every project is examined through the scope of public benefit.

# Intentional Ugliness\*

## Tel Aviv - The Components of a Postmodern City

\* This article was written in response to a seminar given by Prof. Timothy Hyde at MIT on Ugliness (4.s68)

During the last year I have been searching for the origins and meaning of postmodern style architecture in Tel Aviv. The impetus for this pursuit was the desire to understand which aspects of culture enabled these architectures to emerge on top of the prevailing memory of the “White City” and modernist heritage of Tel Aviv. This transition away from the White City (the ideal of high utopian modernism) towards a new and distinctive aesthetic language that had been previously unseen, is evidence of fragmentation, differentiation and perhaps degradation in the city’s built environment. My search was energized by the desire to understand what I used to consider an ugly kind of architecture. That these buildings are ugly is a widespread public notion about postmodern style buildings in Tel Aviv. In order to understand the latter condition, there is a pressing need to uncover the motivations and the sources of ideas that might answer the questions of “how and why it had become?” and “what does it ultimately signify?”

However, this era in Israel is disturbingly understudied, and sources in academic literature are scarce. Furthermore, popular western and academic discussions of postmodernism tend to construct an essentially American and European narrative, concentrating on theory and philosophy, while referencing the same canon of known architectural examples. Therefore, in order to collect information for this research, I could only rely on primary sources and identify the protagonists and initiators of the era,

interview them and peruse their archives. Through this I could uncover their beliefs, rationales, and intentions. Or, in other words, hear their side of the story.

Consequently, this method of investigation emphasizes the strength and elusive nature of design intentions. These are naturally implemented within a design or planning process but unfortunately leave almost no visible trace. A set of interviews I conducted with some fifteen individuals, mostly architects, allowed me to start considering a more exhaustive and careful understanding of the intentions at work in the creation of alleged ugliness. Through analyzing the interviews and the built work, I am able to address the question of postmodernism and ugliness from the perspective of intentionality under specific and local circumstances. The endeavor to use this particular point of view proved to be constructive and instrumental, inasmuch it allowed me to deepen my understanding of the role played by intention in the creation of ugliness. Through my encounters with these architects, I was able to build a glossary of intentions common to their narratives such as cynicism, irony, compensation, exploitation and being non-apologetic.

Nonetheless, thorough interpretation of intentionality in the production of ugliness should begin with a close inspection of the ideas of Karl Rosenkranz. Throughout his seminal book, “Aesthetics of Ugliness,”<sup>1</sup> he changes his

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1 Rosenkranz, Karl. “Aesthetics of Ugliness,” Translated by

perception of aesthetics from assumed cases of ugliness in form to “intentional ugliness in aesthetic and moral rule-breaking.” One of his categories of ugliness is intentionality, the desire to produce incorrectness. Further described as the production of an incorrect manipulation of style, the deliberate production of caricature, parody or pastiche. Rosenkranz asserts that ugliness is an active negation of the beautiful while he makes a definite linkage between aesthetic judgment and ethical consideration. It might be inferred that intentionality in the creation of ugliness would have to accompany an ethical argument which actively refutes beauty. Pop and Widrich, in their introduction to Rosenkranz’s volume, complement the latter identification by stating that “what makes objects themselves ugly is the recognition of the subject that they fail to conform to some ideal.”<sup>2</sup> This point presents, in brief, the hypothesis ahead, as the new postmodern tendencies came to replace and oppose the ruling order, rediscovered as beautiful, by means of disorder or forming new, non-canonical negating orders. However, Rosenkranz also states it is a difficult task to create a hideous building, specifically since in the art of building every decision is too serious and should be fully monitored for the goal of providing safety. I believe this should be re-examined under the sphere of intention.

Intentionality is an inherent identification, but it is not one that is encountered very often. It is not commonly used as a tool for examination in most architectural history and theory. An aesthetic analysis written from the perspective of intention

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Andrei Pop and Mechthild Widrich, London, Bloomsbury, 2015.

2 Ibid. p. 13.

is seldom produced, especially in addressing postmodernity and its disassembled realities. However, general and global interpretations of postmodernism, as understood by scholars such as Jameson, Jenks, and Harvey in their aesthetic theories, are a fundamental source in my investigation of postmodernism. I will build upon the point of view of Fredric Jameson in his description of postmodernism as the cultural spatialization of capitalism. I will draw upon his introduction to the postmodern debate in which he refers to the perception of intentionality.

Jameson introduces two identifications of the postmodern state in relation to art and architecture. First, the pastiche - mimicry of other styles, particularly of mannerist nuances as well as the parodic - an imitation that mocks the original. Second is the end of individualism in the age of corporate capitalism and bureaucracies in business as well as in the state. As a consequence, the older bourgeois individual subject no longer exists leading to “the erosion of the older distinction between high culture and so-called mass or popular culture.”<sup>3</sup> Jameson continues by arguing that “it is also... a periodizing concept whose function is to correlate the emergence of new formal features in culture with the emergence of a new type of social life and a new economic order - what is often euphemistically called modernization, postindustrial or consumer society, the society of the media or the spectacle, or multinational capitalism.”<sup>4</sup>

In regard to architecture, Jameson does not examine the stages in the creation of buildings but rather assigns his postmodern rhetorical mechanism to any

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3 Ibid. p. 13.

4 Ibid. p. 3.

artistic creation. He implements his assumptions in regard to the Westin Bonaventure hotel in Los Angeles, for example, and breaks it down into components. He begins with the position of the entrances in relation to the city, continues with the “great reflective glass skin,” escalators and elevators and the atrium or lobby space. He does not assign an intentional authorship to the architect, John Portman, in the design production but deploy his theoretic framework to the architectural symbols. The essence of such a description is ultimately the response of the individual subject to what Jameson calls the “great global multinational and decentered communicational network.” For him postmodernism, considered as ugly, is the result of an accumulation of social and economic transitions in the global west. It is a condition, more than an intended artistic stance. Its architectures are groundless and are created as a negation to former orders. Jameson’s notion of postmodern ugliness might complement Rosenkranz’s idea that ugliness opposes beauty as an incorrect manipulation of style. Indeed, it is arguable whether ugliness comes after beauty as a negation, or that ugliness appeared first and beauty was developed as a way to deal with its implications (as Theodor Adorno points out). In the case of postmodernism, as Jameson suggests, the new practices of presentation and of material formation are a conspicuous reaction to modernity, whether beautiful or not. I will be reassessing this western perception in a local context further ahead.

It is crucial to distinguish between the two perceptions, the global/general position and the regional/contextual one, in analyzing postmodern motivations. Jameson and other canonical postmodern interpreters deliver this idea through the lens of opposition and resistance to general ruling orders. They analyze the moment of change

through the progression of late capitalist society and by confronting the consumer society and the shift in its means of production. These are depicted as the central engines of change that enabled the relative freedom which later supported the postmodern explosion throughout the world. However, it is a demanding task to locate straightforward intentions in their depictions of design processes. They construct a broader discussion based on social and economic ideologies through their architectural interpretations. As an exemplary argument it is noticeable how little knowledge we have concerning the visual processes of designing postmodern buildings. Sketches or working drafts illustrating design stages of these buildings are very scarce. If anything does come up, it typically presents symbols and references, perpetuating the popular agenda regarding the interpretation of postmodern architecture.

I would like to offer a different reading of postmodernity while employing a materialistic approach. This could shift the postmodern debate from its focus on theoretical interpretation into an artistic and architectural one concentrated on production. Accordingly, I will develop a viable framework which can later be generally applied, and could produce new angles for analysis in favor of reconstructing the meanings of postmodernism.

## **Tel Aviv**

In beginning this analysis of postmodern architecture in Tel Aviv, it is necessary to establish the context of space, time and national conditions in which Tel Aviv was formed as well as the contradictions of history which served as the breeding ground for later radical opposition and change. Tel Aviv is a Mediterranean city situated in

the geographic center of Israel. It is considered the cultural and economic capital of the state and was established in 1909 as a small residential suburb of Jaffa by Jews fleeing the old city. It was then built in an Eclectic style, mainly found in the historic center today. This style manifested a mixture of European traditions with oriental and biblical references. Its architects were immigrants from Russia and Ukraine using local materials and load-bearing walls. However, due to its non-modernity and the urge to create a new utopian aesthetic language that would better accommodate the Zionist idea, the style was rejected by the planning administration circa 1933.

Throughout the 1930s, the small town became a mid-sized city and an economic center. Its future development was planned by Sir Patrick Geddes in the form of a modern garden city. A massive wave of Jewish immigrants from the west and eastern Europe found the expanding city compatible with their habitation needs in the new unknown land. These immigrants carried acquired ideals of modernism together with architects who were trained within these boundaries. The International style’s paradigmatic white cube was adapted to the middle-eastern climate, raised on columns and outfitted with ribbon windows. It was built using local silicate bricks and reinforced concrete by architects which were transplanting ideas of the Bauhaus school, such as the use of white plaster to cover the simple freestanding facades. The Zionist national movement was defined by its utopian approach towards the land. Therefore, a tabula rasa condition was envisioned in order to achieve the reconstruction of the Jewish nation in historic Palestine. Hence, the past was forcibly forgotten, while a futuristic socialist utopia became the

predecessor of the modernist movement.

In 2003, the historic compound in the center of Tel Aviv was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site: “White City of Tel Aviv - The Modern Movement.” Tel Aviv was depicted as “a synthesis of outstanding significance of the various trends of the Modern Movement in architecture and town planning in the early part of the 20th century”. It contains the largest and most condensed ensemble of early modernist buildings in the world. This inscription was the result of an advocacy campaign, which gained recognition during the 1980s at which point it was hard to imagine that the rundown structures, which were under a constant threat of demolition and alteration, held any significance. Nevertheless, this moment also marked what was perhaps the most important transition of Israel’s postmodern era.

The state of Israel was founded in 1948, based on firm socialist idealism, as the Jewish homeland after World War II. These ideals were physically manifested in the massive institutional construction period of the 1950s-60s. New modernist and socialist forms of habitation were built by state agencies, which were entrenched in austerity and severity. These ideologies were falling apart during 1970s-80s, due to the change of the socialist government, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the importation of American capitalist ideas, amongst other factors. This change was preeminently apparent in Tel Aviv, as the spearhead city of entrepreneurship and private-led development. Development and market-led revenues were slowly soaring and gave rise to new phenomena opposing the modern order and dismantling the Zionist utopian fantasy, which Israel and Tel Aviv had aspired to become.

Throughout the 1970s-80s, the heritage of the modern movement was generally disregarded by the public as the city's whiteness slowly turned gray due to an extreme deflection of the urban population taking place in tandem with a state of suspension of development and growth. These years gave rise to some unorthodox and revolutionary urban methods, such as a shift from formal master-planning and super-structuralist approaches towards a partitioning doctrine marked by planning schemes for single neighborhoods, streets, and compounds. The period also witnessed an insurgent rise of new phenomena in conservation practices and in postmodern (style) architecture. Only then modern preservation practice started to gain recognition while the concept had yet been fully developed. The notion of the past was gaining a gradual importance as an inherent element of architecture and planning while the futuristic view was reduced together with socialist state-led development. Utopianism was patiently dismantled and reconfigured to accommodate new realities in the city and the state.

The emergence of modern conservation culture and the rise of the "White City movement" had been heavily criticized in Sharon Rotbard's alternative architectural narrative of Tel Aviv - "White City Black City."<sup>5</sup> One by one he dismantles the myths behind the creation of the White City. He suggests that the longings to elicit the memory of white modernism were a way by which the old elitists could go back to the notion of an equal and righteous socialist past. In addition, it helped diminish the effect of the Arab-Palestinian past of Jaffa. This past was long gone and forgotten,

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5 Rotbard, Sharon. "White City, Black City: Architecture and War in Tel Aviv and Jaffa," London, Pluto Press, 2015.

and its memory vanished and was replaced by the postmodern and multicultural society. This society grew bigger while obtaining the positions of power inherent in a traditional ruling system. As a result the architectural discipline and artistic elite were left increasingly helpless and powerless.

Rotbard argues that while the contemporary European architects were looking back at their ancient histories (such as the Baroque, the vernacular and other traditions) the Israeli establishment was gazing at a very recent past. For Rotbard, this decision shows that "the singularity of postmodernism in Israeli architecture lies not in its historicist gaze backward but in the distinctive rebound which occurred as soon as it reached its modernist progressive moment naturally defined by its willingness to look forward... Israeli postmodernism yearned for European modernism."

The White City movement was formed simultaneously with the evolution of postmodern techniques in Tel Aviv. Thus, the two tendencies were marked as an outcome of new political and economic changes occurring throughout the 1980s. This point of view will be further assessed, as it must have affected the aesthetic intentions of the city's architects.

Simultaneously, a new generation of young and avant-garde Tel Avivian architects, returning to the city in the 1980s, was bound to live in a conflict, opposing the modern heritage of their teachers and of the White City heritage on one hand, while on the other rejecting the boredom of new developers' housing boxes, all while witnessing the stagnation and loss of population in the city center. They found themselves in a city considered to be at its ugliest point of decay. By evoking some of these architects' design intentions and re-assessing their

imagined end-goals, a set of questions is raised, mainly concerned with legitimacy and authorship: Do these various criteria that architects announce as their intentions justify the end result, aesthetically and morally? In what ways should we analyze the statements made by the architects about their processes?

In the next phase of this study I will put forth a categorization of intentionality as a production of ugliness. I will build upon an examination of two cases of design processes through analyzing the intentions of their architects. These identified categorizations include firstly, a self aware, non-responsive and a non-apologetic stance, and secondly, a compensational and exploitative version of intent. These cases signals the emergence of ugliness through artistic desire and through contextual responses. By laying down these specific identifications I would like to discuss ugliness in a rather different manner than in a retrospective way and interpretive fashion. Thus, discuss it through the decision-making processes and through the stages of design in relation to specific historic background.

### Non-Apologetic Intentionality

Tzvi Harel was born in Haifa in 1953. He studied at the Technion (then the only Israeli institution teaching architecture), under the guidance of Ram Karmi, an influential modernist and brutalist architect in Israel. After graduation, he worked in Karmi's office for three years, mainly on largely unrealized schemes of urban planning and on brutalist mega-structures. Later he felt a need to emancipate himself from his teacher's stylistic grip. In the Technion he was also influenced by Leopold Grestel,

a revolutionary and unique character who "was practicing postmodernism before postmodernism."<sup>6</sup> He exemplified the ability of the architect to dismantle the structure while freely mashing up building fragments. Additionally, he taught Harel about the power of arbitrariness and playfulness in architecture. For Grestel, the mistake is part of the process and it is blessed.

In 1980, Harel moved to Tel Aviv while significant parts of the city were composed of empty houses in a dilapidated state. Very little construction was undertaken before the local currency devaluation in 1982 and the economic recession of 1983.<sup>7</sup> Harel ties the depression phase in the economy and construction to the military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza starting in 1967. Eventually, due to the recession in overall construction, Harel started animating a series of architecture caricatures, as a satiric column, for the local newspaper, Ha'ir,<sup>8</sup> allowing his imagination, oppositional stance, humor, irony, and cynicism to take form. The series included the sketch for a "Conjoined Villa," which later became his notable work.

Harel's narrative and theory of architecture in the postmodern age are ambiguous. He thinks that "postmodernism is obscene and also misunderstood and elitist. Maybe everything done in postmodern architecture is rubbish." Nevertheless, he presents a substantial analysis of the era as conceived by him in

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6 Quotations in this section are based on a set of Interviews with Tzvi Harel conducted by the author in Tel Aviv, 2015.

7 A financial crisis erupted in Israel in 1983 when the four largest banks collapsed simultaneously.

8 "Ha'ir" (The City), 1980-2013, was an influential periodical, advocating urban and architecture avant-gardism.

real-time:

“The postmodern revolution is characterized by a development that puts an end to modernism and at the same time originates from it. It is similar to children's disenchantment from the sins of their ancestors, and from believing in the superior human. It was reflected in a denial of tradition and continuity, and of a perception of the superior building, standing against the laws of nature and gravity.

“On this basis of postmodern pluralism, two main types can be observed: the fat man and the thin man, or the Gravitationists (gravity) on the one hand and the Entropists (entropy), on the other. The solid and responsible ones carrying a message for a pessimistic utopia, while facing the troubled, expressing their message for optimistic catastrophe.”

These articulated elucidations of the postmodern sentiment in which Harel operates can be beneficial for tracing the intents and inspecting the purpose which he assigns to his works. Apparently, he is fully aware of the disfiguration which is the result of the paradoxical claim that postmodernism is an evolution of modernism while simultaneously negating it. In fact, it might explain this division into two opposing interpretations of the postmodern. Harel exposes his contempt as well as admiration for this conflict and ridicule the mere existence of the debate. Moreover, for him the opposing ideologies do not contradict but complement one another, as he tries to manifest in his designs. His amusement takes the form of irony originating from this peculiar moment and then transformed into an aesthetic concretization in his works. This dualism is most notable in the design of the apartment building on Trumpeldor Street in Tel

Aviv (See image pp. 64-65)<sup>9</sup>.

This project was assigned to him in the mid-eighties by developers who purchased a small plot situated in front of the beach promenade. It was designated for a luxury condominium built on the newly developed seashore city front. Harel, yet a young and independent architect, grasped this opportunity to execute his ideas regarding postmodern complexities. As an initiative concept he made use of the satiric caricature named “Conjoined Villa.” There he ridicules the popular desire to own a single-family house in the suburbs, decorated using imported imitations of eclectic styles. These villas are stacked on top of each other, creating a pile of residential forms, referring to the common urban configuration of shared apartment buildings. Consequently, The building on HaYarkon Street has a unique appearance and is quite noticeable. It is contrived as a collection of styles, references, and manipulations of proportions and common structural traditions. Each apartment has its own unique floor plan, to meet the need for variation and personalization. In addition, considering its location, each room has a window overlooking the sea.

Harel describes his intentions during the design process as such: “A building with a disruptive plan is more intriguing. One with a different sub-consciousness, a hangover. I was interested in being critical, humorist and absurd, a narrator. I had to free the building from its restrictive program. I did a decent thing within the architectural discourse. I did something that made me happy, it's eye-candy. I wanted to look at the building and talk to it. You could argue it's a fallacy, but I had no choice. This is

<sup>9</sup> Architect Tzvi Harel, *2 Trumpeldor Street, Tel Aviv, 1996*.

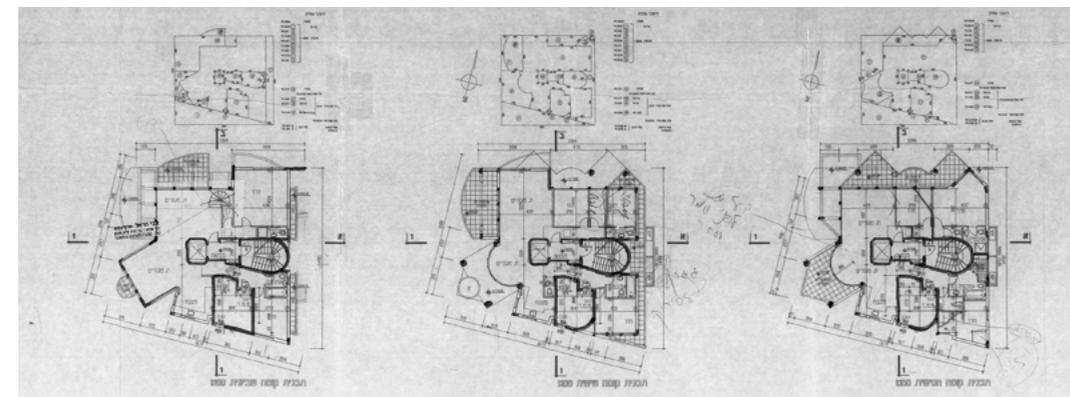


Fig. 1. Architect Tzvi Harel, *2 Trumpeldor St. Floor plans of 3 top floors from authorized documents, Tel Aviv, 1994*.

what I do.”

The avant-garde design was accepted with mixed feelings. While professionals could have a grasp and rightly assess and appreciate the ingenuity and efforts in realizing this construction, the general public was not able to read this collection of signs, symbols, and cultural references. The building is repeatedly portrayed in popular media as one of the ugliest buildings in Tel Aviv.<sup>10</sup> While on the contrary, the influential architecture critic of Ha'ir, Ester Zandberg, wrote while the building was under construction: “I have got no words to describe this apartment building, but this: incredible, bold, impudent, unique and amusing. Well done to architect Tzvi Harel who dared to offer a dream. Well done for the entrepreneurs who agreed to join this adventure which will increase the construction expenditure at 50 percent. They said enthusiastically that it will be the most beautiful building in Tel Aviv.”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The building was recently listed in the article, “Yuck and The City: The 10 ugliest buildings in Tel Aviv,” published in 2014, in a popular news website.

<sup>11</sup> Zandberg, Esther. “Incredible,” *Ha'ir*, 22 September, 1999. p. 77

In this building Harel introduces a sense of optimism and play. He perpetuates individualism and breaks free from modernistic constraints, enhanced by a catastrophic notion, as carried by the political situation and economic crisis. He exploits the freedom granted by the new entrepreneurial class in order to express his sophisticated design language. It is a source for amusement and a canvas for communicating his agendas together with other local narratives of wealth and locality.

Within this framework, which he learned to exploit, his ironic intentions are put forwards in a non-apologetic manner (This phrase could not be easily used in an agreed-upon-all harmless situations, yet it is valid here). With this, he builds a plot-line in an attempt to criticize or create a parody in a current context. Above all he seems to be arguing this is what he would have done all along, that it is an act of pure will and not historically reflective. It is energized through pure motivation, hence his non-apologetic tone of intent. The modernist heritage is not a prevailing part of his design vocabulary. Two other projects will be used to exemplify and further investigate this nuance of the ironic and non-apologetic intentionality.

For these projects Harel develops his method of storytelling while showing a more reciprocal relationship with the environs.

For the modification of an office building on HaRakevet Street in Tel Aviv (See images pp. 68-69),<sup>12</sup> Harel was asked to redesign the facade, facing a busy thoroughway. He then recollected a story about a fast driver in the bustling city, who obtained a single image in his mind while driving. This image, captured by the angle of his eye, is a collage of the facades of the buildings he passes by, narrowed and joined. Segments of buildings are stitched together to create one image, one new facade. The outcome is a fragmented and distorted facade designed to elevate the memory of Bauhaus style and other contemporary facades of Tel Aviv. Harel deploys a much desirable historic notion, though in a disruptive manner. The facade is using the city's aesthetic heritage and signals out that nothing is holy or untouchable, that everything can be used in making a statement, be it ironic and playful. It is a manifestation of a personal and humorist stance within history.

Lastly, a more recent project is a pedestrian bridge built in Jaffa in 2003 (See image p. 66),<sup>13</sup> connecting a village-like Arab quarter with another neighborhood characterized by modern residential slabs, built by the government. For this project Harel decided to construct his version of a "Potemkin Village" as his way to criticize the uneven development of Jaffa's neighborhoods. He used the notion of the facade as deceit, a show that only meant to please the ruler. One side is ornamented with citations from the Arabic traditional construction language, though made out of concrete and built in

simple modern techniques. While the other side is constructed using a modernist, cubic language. The outcome is a schizophrenic creation, and a bridge that never meant to be a bridge but an urban event. Harel is using the place and time as references while intending to realize his whimsical and satiric point of view.

These examples highlight the form of non-apologetic and ironic intentionality. Harel makes clear that an architect can be non-apologetic with the fulfillment of his will. He seems to put forward the premise that architecture is always a response to expectation, a solicitation the architect fulfills or, in his case, does not.

### Compensational Intentionality

Simona Bar Sagi was born in Romania in 1942. She studied in the Technion (1961-1966), which was for her "all about modernism,"<sup>14</sup> later developing an argument fiercely opposing it. While traveling, after obtaining her professional degree, she was exposed to the European freedom insurgence of the beaux-arts school in Paris and of the period preceding May 1968. She also recalls a strong influence by the music of the Beatles, who were a yet unknown phenomenon in Israel. Following her return to Israel, she worked in Moshe Gilad's office in Haifa from 1966 to 1971. He was a prominent modernist architect with brutalist design tendencies. In 1975, she moved to Tel Aviv to find a comfortable atmosphere in the vibrant city's nightlife scene, with the rise of café culture and nightclubs, which marked the origins of Tel Aviv's

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<sup>14</sup> *Quotations in this section are based on a set of Interviews with Simona Bar Sagi conducted by the author in Tel Aviv, 2015.*

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<sup>12</sup> *Architect Tzvi Harel, 68 HaRakevet Street, Tel Aviv, 1992.*

<sup>13</sup> *Architect Tzvi Harel, Beit Pelet Street, Tel Aviv, 2003.*

current hedonist reputation.

Bar Sagi recalls her notions of the city and her designs as extracted here: "I moved to Tel Aviv in 1975 and have been living here since then. I loved this city, its parties, and rhythm, its people and the urban chaos. I saw Tel Aviv for its unusual real-estate and design potential, which we should exploit. We can't just build glass towers, that's terrible, we should not try to be America, or build cubes with their backs to the sea. Remember, the Bauhaus was here before."

Bar Sagi built more than 400 buildings in Tel Aviv throughout her career, so far. She represents the inherent relation of design and the real-estate market. This market was mainly managed by private contractors and was initially inflated by land speculations in the city center. Bar Sagi claims that the contractors working with her were able to charge 20% more for an apartment designed in her distinct style in the late 1980s. She furthered the growing involvement of architects in the speculative aspect of the construction business, together with the realization of contractors' needs in the new realm of privatization and neoliberalism.

This position envelopes a complex approach towards intentionality in Bar Sagi's design process. Her intentions are inclined to creating a set of compensatory mechanisms for the benefit of the market or as a reaction to regulations. Furthermore, she is motivated by her right and obligation to repair the existing unsatisfying aesthetic situation of the city. Evidence for this can be traced in her drawings and texts, and in her style which is unique and extroverted. It was executed purposefully in negation to the dull 'residential cubes' designed and built by developers, which the city was inundated with. Her deliberate intention was to create a

contrasting style, congruent with the needs of the market. However, her design process encountered municipal restrictions that were not fully aligned with her purpose. An example of this encounter can be found in her design reaction to the 'Balconies Act' of 1992.

Since the establishment of the city, the Tel Avivian balcony has played a major role in the housing culture and folklore. The Mediterranean climate enabled the architects to penetrate the facades with large openings to welcome the breeze and sunlight. While the population of the city grew older, followed by massive insertion of offices and small businesses into residential apartments, the balconies were seen as an option for floor-area expansion. Due to a lack of efficient monitoring and punitive administration, the phenomenon was silently and illegally accepted by the major public even though the balconies were usually sealed with ugly and cheap, off-white plastic shutters. The appropriation of a semi-public component of the buildings had a major affect on the uglification process of the city, coinciding with major depletion in population and general neglect.

In 1992, a new regulation was conceived in order to fight back. Hence, it simply prohibited the construction of overlapping balconies. The balconies had to be arranged in an echelon formation. This would prevent a situation where the balcony has a ceiling, and in that manner could not be closed down and easily appropriated.

Bar Sagi's design interpretation of the act was specifically articulated in the residential building on HaYarkon Street (See image p. 72).<sup>15</sup> Bar Sagi

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<sup>15</sup> *Simona Bar Sagi, Architecture and Town Planning, 272-274 Hayarkon Street, Tel Aviv, 1993.*

remembers that “since this building was built two streets away from the beach, I gave it waves in ocean colors. The waves are smashing the front facade of the regular contractor’s box, making it dynamic.” Her declared aesthetic statement is

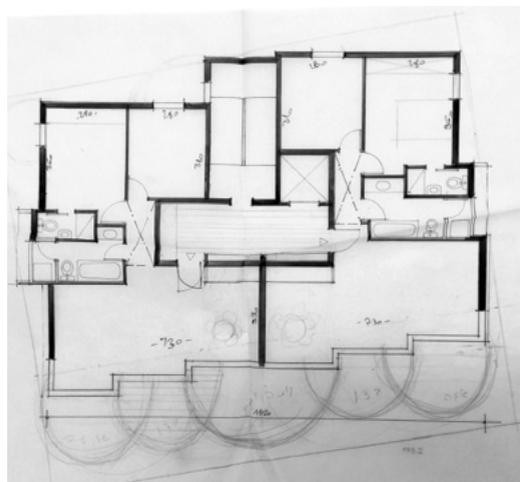


Fig. 2. Simona Bar Sagi, 272-274 Hayarkon Street, Tel Aviv, Draft sketch, 1992.

blended with a design reaction to the place and with the new restraining regulation, that was designed to fight back against ugliness.

The building received a fierce critique by the local professionals. Zandberg denounced its appearance and claimed to unveil some of the architect’s intentions: “The building on HaYarkon Street is one that you cannot miss. This building is vulgar and blatant, in its design and finishing materials and its colors, not to mention the final color matching. And the saddest thing is that you can see the building heard something about the Bauhaus and the white city, but abused its memory. The building’s back side seems like every contractor building from the seventies, with clothes shafts and all, only coated with baby-pink ceramic mosaic, presumably to converse with the luxurious

pink stone covering the other half. The result is complete gibberish.”<sup>16</sup>

Bar Sagi’s reactions to regulations, historic context and the role she takes in the evolving real estate market should now be assessed in relation to her intentions. This relation can be separated into three different levels: a responsive level, a metaphoric one, and a contextual level.

The first layer of intent is evident in the sketch drawing of the HaYarkon building, (Fig. 2) where the typical apartment floor-plan is ornamented with a layer of semicircular balconies, added to its front. These appear as unintentional and unnecessary components. Coupled with the rather conventional floor plan, and box-like structure, the free standing facade, contrived of jumping balconies, is playing a major role in turning the simple into a spectacle, into intentional ugliness. The overall effect of the new regulation was later observed by Zandberg, concluding that “the new ‘Balconies Act’ caused a monstrous mutation in the buildings of the city and created the new style of De-Balconism.”<sup>17</sup>

The second layer is metaphoric and is manifested in designing the balconies as an “echo to the waves of the sea.” In addition, the blue color of the railings adds a definite persuasion to that end. Additionally, the solid pink stone covering the facade is another reaction to a municipal regulation demanding that all new buildings be covered with a resistive material in order to prevent the weathering of the favored plaster coating - the traditional coating of the

16 Zandberg, Esther. “The De-Balconism Style,” *Ha’Ir*, 13 March, 1993. p. 29

17 *Ibid.*

international style. This coloring, assimilating the sand of the beach, in addition to the wave-like structure represents the attempt to individualize the facade and maximize its metaphoric effect.

Another level of intention that the architect uses depends on the heritage of the city, and raises a dispute regarding the boundaries of quotation and reference. Declaring the development of a new style in Tel Aviv’s architecture, Bar Sagi reified her discontent with the modern heritage of the city, while referring to another building: “In these years all buildings were squares, standing on stilts with brisoleis. I wanted to give something back to the streets and the residents, so I did something different. This building interprets the Bauhaus heritage of Tel Aviv in a new way. It created a new design style - The Post-Bauhaus.” Her intention of compensation is put forward, as she chooses to quote specific modernist gestures, mostly external and superficial, in order to boast a semi-historic meaning for a seemingly mundane structure. The added value develops a higher market value and have a distinct performance which attracts attention. Nevertheless, the adaptation process of the Bauhaus style tends to be fragmented. Her buildings usually have much heavier performance and so their shapes, rhythms, and proportions, weakly allude to the Bauhaus style (See images p. 73).

### Postmodern Intentionality

In the light of the materialistic analysis of local and specific intentions, I would like to re-evaluate the postmodern approach to design processes within the framework of the creation of ugliness. This explication begins with the proposition of Jameson that postmodernity signals “the end of the bourgeois ego.” Later caused the end of style and of

distinct individual representation, to the extent that of the elimination of the personal hand-signature (In architecture it is made clear with the transition to computer-aided design processes). Jameson does not argue that postmodernism is deprived of generating feelings as part of the liberating project from the old modern world, however, these feelings are now “free floating and impersonal.”

Correspondingly, in his contemporary reflection on postmodern ghostly utopia, Reinhold Martin further develops Jameson’s ideas and suggests that “postmodernism is not a style; it is a discursive formation... a cruel combination of freedom and servitude, truth and lies.”<sup>18</sup> He then relates it to corporate capitalism which encompasses the aesthetics as well as the formalist sides of architecture. In conclusion, Martin asserts that “architecture’s claim to formal autonomy played right into the demand for a maximum of spectacularization (in what is now called “signature architecture”) that even Guy Debord might have had difficulty imagining.” Architecture therefore becomes an “autonomous form.”

In effect, a local implementation of the theoretical infrastructure of Jameson and Martin can be assigned to the case studies presented here. Taking into consideration their definitions and diagnosis of the form of postmodernism, the case of Tel Aviv does not seem to take an exceptional path compared to that of the rest of the western world. In like manner, the entrepreneurial forces thriving in the capitalist city mobilized the creative burst of the young rebellious architect to their needs. This

18 Martin, Reinhold. “Utopia’s Ghost: Architecture and Postmodernism, Again,” *University of Minnesota Press*, 2010. p. xiv.

later resulted in unique and impersonal forms which are the product of a direct request of the developer. Similar descriptions are illustrated by the architects in the cases of HaYarkon and Trumpeldor buildings, which are facing busy streets and the beachfront.

With that in mind, responding to the postmodern attempt to eliminate their “distinct individual representation,” Harel and Bar Sagi chose dissimilar positions. Harel exploits the demands and tries to break the rules of representation. For instance, he designs a deliberate citation of the sculptor Claes Oldenburg’s oversized “Clothespin.” He turns the clothes drying shaft at the back of his building into a giant clothespin (See image p. 64) This creates an impersonal gesture and others can be easily found in his works. These gestures resemble the mechanized reproduction and alienation of the Pop-Art and of late-capitalism, which causes a deepening of the gap between the object and the subject. Whereas, Bar Sagi produces facades that were considered revolutionary and marked a breakthrough in regard to resource investment in the housing market by the private sector. Thus, her facades are instruments aiming to satisfy and compensate the client, be it the developer, the investor, the buyer or city’s officials.

Another inspection of intentional ugliness must depend on the negation and counter-cultural reaction to the rediscovery of the modern heritage and its attributes. This phenomenon of looking back at the recent past granted the rise of preservation and the White City movement with a backwind, and also supported the concept of historic imitations. Hence, it was presenting a dilemma to the avant-garde, they were asking themselves: “Why should we look back?” and if so, “why should it be the modernist past that we look after?” The popular

postmodern reaction to these questions accentuate the pastiche, the neutral practice of mimicry tended to conceive a contemporary representation of history. This practice is part of the postmodern toolbox, though is it the case in Tel Aviv?

Undoubtedly, according to Rotbard’s point of view, the preservation movement illustrates notions of pastiche. It also stands for the unjust and imbalanced consecration of a style and specific period of time while diminishing the probability of unifying the various aesthetics and their agents from the north and the south, for both Arabs and Jews. Accordingly, for Rotbard, the outburst of postmodern architecture in the Israeli context occurred at the paradoxical moment when it should have looked forward, but instead chose to look backward at the past. In utilizing a forward glance, the preservationists could have striven to repair historic mistakes and segregating acts. They could have supported a unification of the city’s opposing poles and written a multicultural, non-biased history of Tel Aviv. Martin accurately concludes this notion, stating that “This logic of futurity, the eternal return of the repressed utopian future, haunts postmodernism and to some extent defines it, even as its architecture seems condemned to reproduce a world-historical status quo.”<sup>19</sup>

At the same time, derived from the same will to mend the past, Bar Sagi’s attempts are in agreement. She establishes a compensation strategy intended to make up for prior mistakes and deficiencies which she assigns to the modern period and its evolution. Indeed, she names her new attributional style “post-Bauhaus”

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* p. *xxi*.

(later adopted by other local architects). She acknowledges the importance of the modernist language, internalizes its meanings to some extent, though eventually does not leave a trace that signals anything other but pastiche. The post-Bauhaus buildings are severe and burdensome, and most of all lack humor and a sense of intellect. Additionally, her designs mainly focus on the presentation of facades, covering somewhat ordinary residential blocks. This camouflage of the ordinary is the founding formula of the real estate speculation market, planting its first seeds in the new capitalist state. Elevating new ordinances, concerning balconies and tiling materials, uncovers yet another way to misappropriate the Bauhaus tradition into speculative attempts to communicate luxury. This is her version of intentionality, the coloring of intention as a fixing or compensation enterprise. One which imposes the notion that the architect can repair the past, that he or she is a kind of a savior.

On the other hand, Harel seems to be arguing that his realized work is what he would have done all along, that it is an act of pure will and non-submissive to what was there before. He is energized through pure motivation, and nonetheless fully aware of the past and of the inevitable conflicts of the present. His way to handle volatile situations is by deploying humor

and irony. It might be exaggerated or blown out of proportion, yet it is made with a sense of sophistication and deliberate incorrectness. Rosenkrantz’s intentional ugliness is put forward to play. It is an honest concretization of the desire to produce incorrectness, to create an intelligent kind of ugliness through manipulation of style and place. Hence his non-apologetic tone of intention.

In conclusion, this paper put forward questions which challenge the scholarly and popular perceptions of postmodern architecture and its motivations. Dwelling on intentionality in the production of a stylistic language appeared to be a nutritious way of handling these questions. The architects analyzed here sets a varied and fascinating background for further investigation of this era from the perspective of intention. Following that, I strive to consider postmodernism as a case that is more connected to its place and time, rather than to its theory, which is usually dedicated to different and not-necessarily-related cultures. Although the local postmodern architecture in Tel Aviv might not be as magnificent or ugly as portrayed in American magazines, closely studying its designer’s intentions will surely benefit and diversify the local, but more importantly, the general knowledge about postmodern architecture.

# Afterwors / 3 Bridges

Tal Yam, Photographs from the "Three Bridges" series, 2015



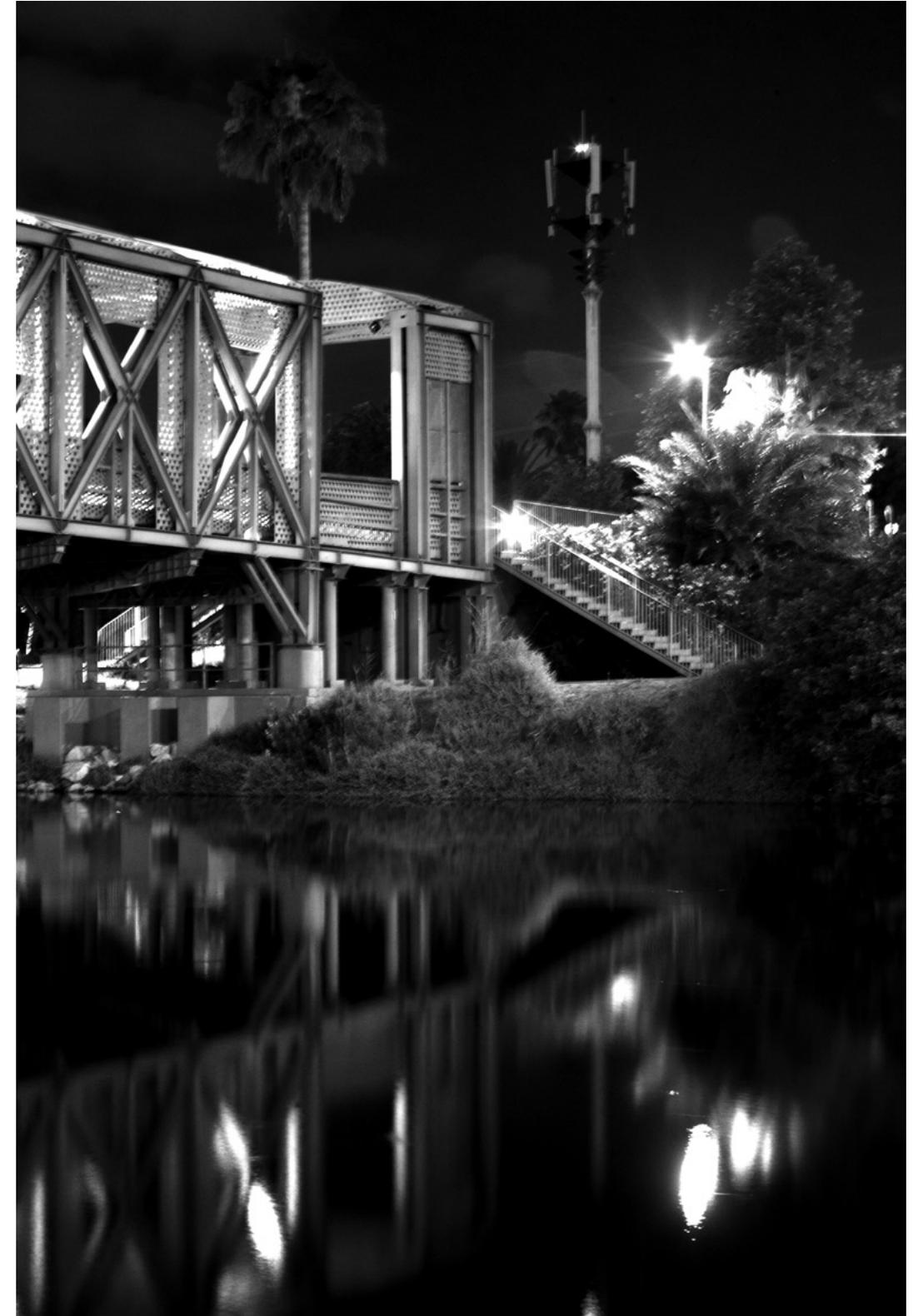
*Yaakov Rechter, Rokah pedestrian bridge*



*Kisselov Kaye Architects, Ussishkin pedestrian bridge*



*Tzvi Harel, Ha'Baal Shem-Tov pedestrian bridge*



*Kisselov Kaye Architects, Ussishkin pedestrian bridge*



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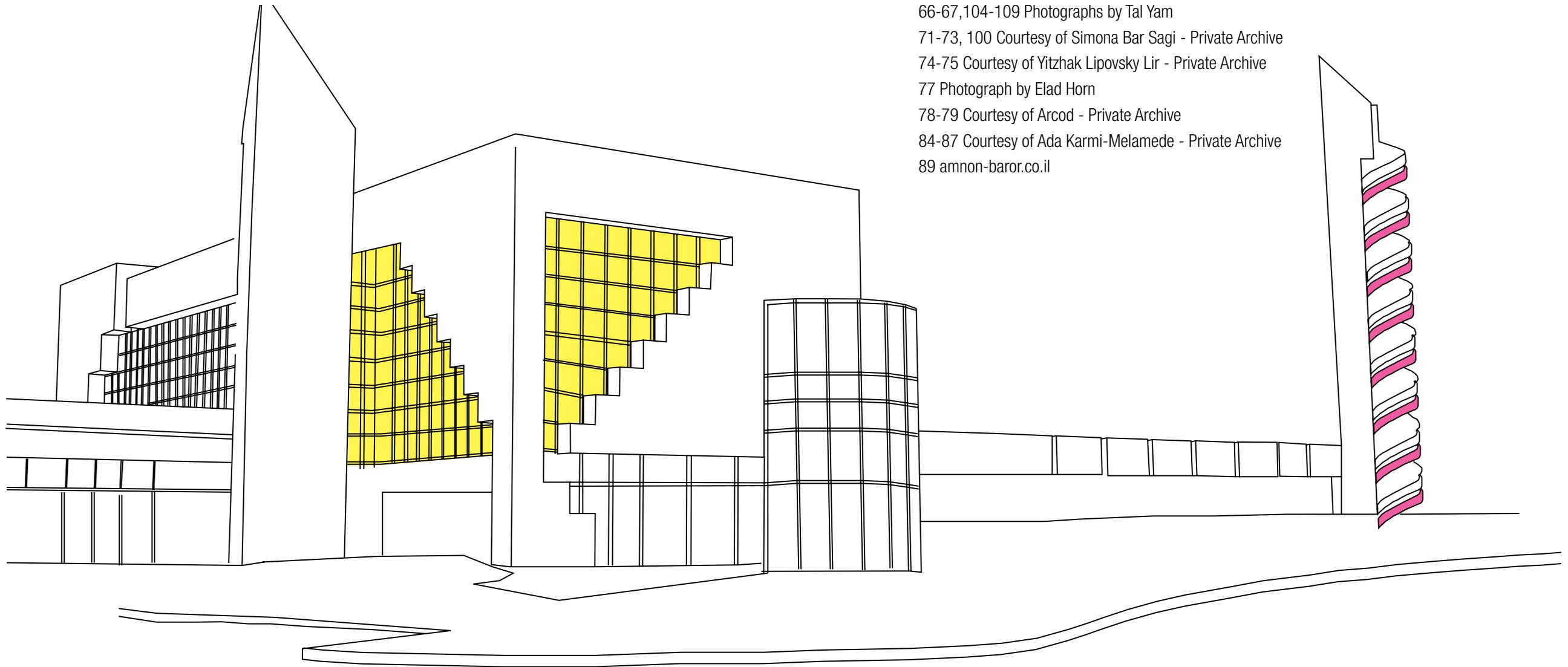
74-75 Courtesy of Yitzhak Lipovsky Lir - Private Archive

77 Photograph by Elad Horn

78-79 Courtesy of Arcod - Private Archive

84-87 Courtesy of Ada Karmi-Melamede - Private Archive

89 amnon-baror.co.il



# PopUp Pomo TLV - Catalog

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Text Editing: Matthew Schultz

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# PopUp Pomo TLV - Exhibition

Exhibition commissioned and organized by The Conservation Department of the Engineering Administration Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality

Concept, Curation and Exhibition Design: Jeremie Hoffmann and Elad Horn

Production and Exhibition Design: Sabrina Cegla, Adi Rose

Exhibition Graphic Design: Dropouts.me

Exhibition construction: Tamir David, Hagai Weinbloom

Public Relations: Moran Shambar

## Participants:

Ramy Gill and Shmuel Grovman, Roni Zeibert and Marsel Krugman, Ada Karmi, Arcod - Orit and Doron Pinchas, Kisselov-Kaye, Rechter Architects, Kimmel Eshkolot, Tzvi Harel, Simona Bar Sagi, Elyakim Architects, Yitzhak Lipovtzi Lir, Plastic Plus, Ronen Levin, Noa Olchowski, Elad Horn, Dani Dothan and HaClique, Tal Yam, Rani Blair, Michal Sofer and Evyatar Cohen

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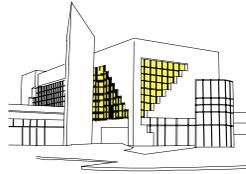


Federal Ministry for the  
Environment, Nature Conservation,  
Building and Nuclear Safety  
with support of the Robert Bosch Stiftung

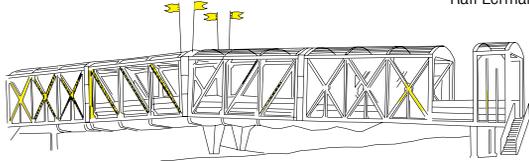
# POPUP POMO TLV

Tel Avivian Architecture 1980-90

Search for a new language in the  
**POSTMODERN CITY**

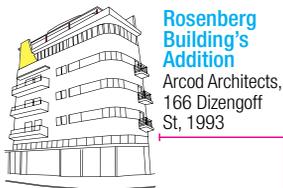


**Fire Station**  
Rafi Lerman, Ibn Gabirol 231, 1989

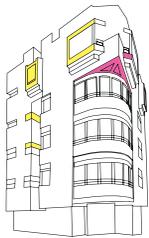


**Pedestrian Bridge**  
Kisselov Kaye Architects, Ussishkin St, 1999

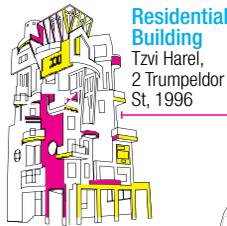
The new 'Balconies Act' caused a monstrous mutation in the buildings of the city and created the new style of De-Balconism (Esther Zandberg, Ha'ir, 1993)



**Rosenberg Building's Addition**  
Arcod Architects, 166 Dizengoff St, 1993



**Residential Building**  
Roni Zeibert and Marsel Krugman, 28 Chen Blvd, 1986



**Residential Building**  
Tzvi Harel, 2 Trumpeldor St, 1996

**Kalisher College**  
Kisselov Kaye Architects, 5 Kalisher St, 1995

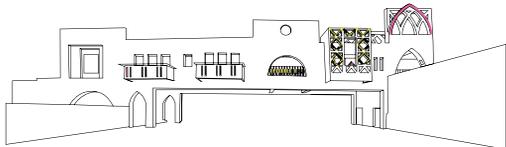


**Lev Ha'ir Quarter**  
Ada Karmi, 3 Maze St, 2003

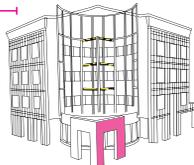


**Seashell House**  
Ilan Pivko, 23 Ha'Tzedef St, 1989

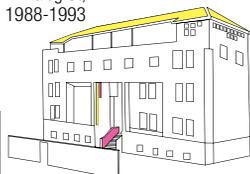
**Pedestrian Bridge**  
Tzvi Harel, Beit Pelet St, 2003



**Neve Tzedek Houses**  
Kimmel Eshkolot Architects, 6 Sharabi, 16 Elroy, 33 Amzaleg, 8 Amzaleg St, 1988-1993



**Kopilov Building**  
Yitzhak Lipovtzi Lir, 8 Levontin St, 1989

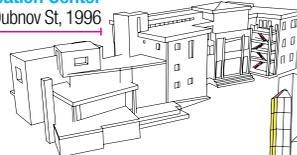


**Office Building**  
Ram Karmi, 48 Montefiore St, 1999



**Performing Arts Center**  
Rechter Architects, 19 King Saul Blvd, 1994

**The Meyerhoff Art Education Center**  
Tav Group, Dubnov St, 1996



**Tel Aviv Cinematheque**  
Salo Hershman, 2 Ha'Arba'a St, 1989



**Transformation Station**  
Kalman Katz, 32 Ha'Arba'a St, 1998



**Zur-Shamir Building**  
Rappaport Architects, 47 Menachem Begin St, 1991



In such a small country, if you are running away somewhere, it could only be to Tel Aviv (Crows, Ayelet Menahemi, 1989)



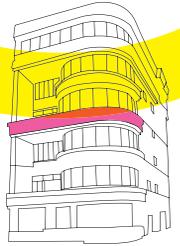
**Entrance Plaza, Tel Aviv University**  
54 Haim Levanon St  
**University Art Gallery**  
Bracha and Michael Chyutin and Dan Eytan, 1988  
**Student Center and Entin Square**  
Moshe Atzmon, 1993



**Jack Green Biotechnology Building**  
Moshe Zur, Tel Aviv University, 1993



**The Palmach History Museum**  
Zvi Hecker and Rafi Segal, 10 Haim Levanon St, 1988



**Residential Building**  
Simona Bar Sagi, 42 Isaiah St, 1984

Ibn Gabirol Street parallel to Dizengoff Street. And Dizengoff Street parallel to Ben Yehuda Street. As three strings deserted, that survived on David's harp (Meir Wieseltier, 1976)

