

מוזיאון ישראל, ירושלים
the israel museum, jerusalem
متحف إسرائيل، أورشليم القدس

Prof. Ido Bruno
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Dear Sonja,

I am pleased to send you my second report as Israel Museum Director. Since assuming the directorship, I have had the privilege of meeting many of the Museum's friends and leading supporters, both in Jerusalem and around the world, and am constantly impressed by their commitment, friendship, encouragement, and wise counsel. This past year at the Museum has been full of activity and development and I am delighted to share with you some of the highlights. The 2019 Israel Museum Journal which accompanies this Report provides a detailed overview of the exhibitions, publications, and special events that took place in 2018 in the Museum and in our satellite spaces, Ticho House, and the Rockefeller Archaeology Museum.

Attendance

The year 2018 ended with an attendance of more than 900,000 visitors. We welcomed visitors from every sector of Israeli society, as well as from countries all over the world, making the Israel Museum an outstanding cultural ambassador for the State of Israel. We expect to end 2019 with a similar, or even increased, attendance, and the first half of 2019 has already shown record attendance figures, the largest since the Museum's opening in 1965.

Exhibitions and Programming

We concluded our 2018 programming with a successful 2018/19 winter season which featured several groundbreaking exhibitions, among them: *Victory over the Sun: Russian Avant-Garde and Beyond* in the Edmond and Lily Safra Fine Arts Wing, and *Maimonides: A Legacy in Script* in the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Wing for Jewish Art and Life.

In 2019, we continued to explore new concepts and themes that have appeal for our diverse audiences. The 2019 Spring/Summer season opened with an intriguing exhibition in the **Jewish Art and Life Wing**: *Veiled Women of the Holy Land: New Trends in Modest Dress*, exploring the similarities and differences in the over-covering of Jewish, Muslim and Christian women in Israel. The **Bronfman Archaeology Wing**

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presented two inter-disciplinary exhibitions: *Through Time and Space: The Diary of Astronaut Ilan Ramon and a Scroll from the Dead Sea*, displays two original manuscripts that survived, against all odds: the space diary of Ilan Ramon, Israel's first astronaut, who was killed in the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster in 2003; and a fragment of the *Scroll of Enoch*, one of the 2,000-year-old Dead Sea Scrolls. *Peter and Pan: From Ancient Greece to Neverland* explores the metamorphosis of the Greco-Roman God Pan into the fictional character of Peter Pan created by Scottish author J. M. Barrie.

Marking the Bauhaus School's centennial year, our **Ruth Youth Wing for Art Education** opened its annual theme exhibition *BAUHAUS: our work, our play, our party*, in July. Focusing on the educational aspects of this revolutionary school, this exhibition brings the extraordinary legacy of the Bauhaus to a new generation.

Our Youth Wing has also diligently continued advancing the Museum's community outreach programs, a central element of its philosophy and mandate. These programs include joint art courses for Arab and Jewish students and teachers, and for participants from secular and orthodox Jewish communities, as well as programs and activities for under-served groups such as immigrant children, children and adults with special needs, senior citizens, youth at risk, disabled army veterans, soldiers on active duty, and families from peripheral communities.

In the **Edmond and Lily Safra Fine Arts Wing**, three diverse exhibitions opened in July: *Lisa Reihana: In Pursuit of Venus (infected)* is a monumental video installation that re-imagines 18th-century scenic wallpaper of seafaring expeditions. We were honored to have Lisa Reihana with us at the opening. *A Modern Love: Remarkable Photographs from the Israel Museum* presents a display of photographs from our own collections by some of the greatest European and North American photographers of the late 19th century and early 20th century. In Israeli Art, *Gilad Efrat: Inside Painting* presents a large-scale solo exhibition exploring the evolution of this influential artist's unique painting style.

Our fall season features two seminal exhibitions: *Fateful Choices: Art from The Gurlitt Trove*, presenting one hundred artworks from the trove discovered in Munich and Salzburg, originally amassed by museum director, art dealer, and art agent for the Third Reich, Dr. Hildebrand Gurlitt. The exhibition is a collaboration between the Israel Museum and the Kunstmuseum Bern and the Bundeskunsthalle Bonn. At the **Rockefeller Museum**, the Museum's satellite site in eastern Jerusalem, *A Glimpse of Paradise: 100 Years of Jerusalem Armenian Ceramics* provides a retrospective of a century of Armenian ceramics in Jerusalem, exploring these outstanding symbols and central features of the city's architectural landscape.

With many exciting and diverse exhibitions in preparation, planning towards 2020 and 2021 proceeds apace and we look forward to sharing this with you in due course.

International Collaborations

Over the past year we continued developing the Museum's global reach through an extensive program of traveling exhibitions, exchange of loans, and collaborations with our sister institutions, both in Israel and throughout the world. Our exhibitions over the past year, such as *Russian Avant Garde, Pan and Peter*, and *Maimonides: A Legacy in Script* have featured seminal items from leading museum and institutions

from around the world, among them: the State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow; the Hermitage, St. Petersburg; the Louvre Museum, Paris; the National Archaeological Museum, Athens; the National Library of Israel; the Vatican Library, and many more.

We continued to travel exhibitions internationally, exposing new audiences to our collections. Most notably, this past year we exhibited works from our rich collection of Dutch artist M. C. Escher at four different venues in Japan, for the first time. The exhibition was very well received and viewed by more than 400,000 visitors.

Special Events and Visits

During the past year, the Museum had the pleasure of welcoming many special visitors and international dignitaries, among them German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and Oscar-winning actor Morgan Freeman. We were also pleased to host some of the most important traditional social events on the Jerusalem calendar, such as the fourth Annual Jerusalem Jazz Festival, and the sixteenth annual Wine Festival. The Museum was also selected to host *Designing / Engineering the Future*, the flagship conference of the eighth Jerusalem Design Week. Some 300 professionals participated in a broad range of thought provoking discussions on future innovations and design. The conference integrated seamlessly with the Museum's own content and material related to the subject.

Our program of international events likewise continued to thrive, thanks to our dedicated Friends Associations, now in fifteen countries around the globe, which organized numerous events on behalf of the Museum with enormous creativity and professionalism. Closer to home, the ninth annual gala event of the Association of Israeli Friends was held on October 15, 2018, with the participation of more than 500 local and international guests. The Israeli Friends is now our second largest contributor of funds after the United States, having contributed more than 78 million shekels to the Museum over the past decade.

Our summer exhibition season coincided with the arrival of 110 guests from twelve countries for our annual International Council that took place on June 2–5, 2019. This year's theme – *From Thought to Form* – offered a unique behind-the-scenes look at how our exhibitions are created, from initial concept to actual opening. We were again honored to welcome many leading artists and designers among our guests. With an outstanding program already in preparation for 2020 – which is also the Museum's 55th birthday! – I hope you might be able to join us for our next International Council in Jerusalem on June 7–10, 2020.

Strategic Planning

The Museum is not only Israel's leading cultural institution, but also one of the world's preeminent museums. Far-reaching socio-political and technological developments have taken place in recent years that have created a strong motivation for leading cultural institutions to adapt and assess their needs accordingly. Taking into account the Museum's unique history and promising future, and in light of the Museum's new professional management, we feel this is an appropriate time for the Museum to carry out an in-depth analysis that will examine the Museum's achievements and challenges, and formulate a long-term strategic plan and mission statement that will take the Museum forward into the 21st century.

Some of the planned physical and administrative developments as we move forward will include restructuring the storerooms and conservation laboratories, and reducing the Museum's ecological footprint through such projects as connecting to the natural gas pipeline, and upgrading the gallery lighting to a state-of-the-art LED system.

Capital Development

Your generous support is vital and deeply appreciated. In common with all cultural and educational institutions in Israel which depend upon international donations, the Museum has faced complex financial challenges since 2017, which will most likely accompany us for the next year or two. The current financial deficit was caused, *inter alia*, by the falling exchange rate of the US dollar vis-à-vis the strong Israeli shekel. At the same time, the Museum is in an unprecedented flourishing period, and is enjoying an all-time record number of visitors which makes us confident that the Museum will weather any financial challenges it faces in the future. In addition, the Museum has undertaken a number of serious steps to reduce its annual operating and exhibitions' budget, which are being implemented with the full support of our staff. In parallel, we are making concerted and successful efforts to raise additional financial support from Israeli and international individuals, foundations, and corporate entities, while also exploring new geographical areas of activity.

As an esteemed friend and valued member of the Israel Museum's global "family" your generous support is crucial in enabling the Museum to maintain its preeminent position on the world stage. I would like to thank you once again for your vital role in our flourishing endeavor. I look forward to seeing you in the not-too-distant future, whether at the Museum in Jerusalem, at an international Friends event, or in your home community. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time if I or my staff can be of assistance in any way.

In the meantime, I would like to take this opportunity of wishing you and your family a sweet, happy, healthy, and fulfilling Shana Tova!



Ido Bruno
Anne and Jerome Fisher Director