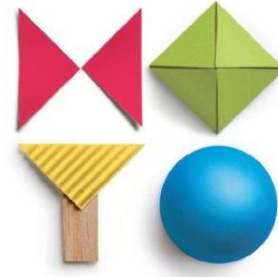


The Ruth	جناح الشبيبة	אגף הנוער
Youth Wing	والتربية الفنية	והחינוך לאמנות
for Art Education	على اسم روت	ע"ש רות
The Israel Museum	متحف إسرائيل	מוזיאון ישראל
Jerusalem	القدس	ירושלים



## **MIDTERM REPORT TO THE GERMAN FRIENDS OF THE ISRAEL MUSEUM**

### **"BRIDGING THE GAP", APRIL 2022**

#### **General:**

The program started as planned on November 17, 2022.

We started with 80 students, half of them Arab and half Jewish. Until the end of March we were able to conduct 32 sessions in total, 16 for each group.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March we a total of 50 participants of the program traveled together to Jaffa – 22 of them Jewish and 28 Arabs

During April and the beginning of May because of Ramadan and Passover vacations we will have to skip some meetings. The program will resume on May 11<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Curriculum and Content of the sessions**

The participating students and their parents were present at the opening gatherings separate for each group, 80 children altogether, 40 in each group.

The first meeting included a presentation of the program and a visit to the Ruth Youth Wing exhibition *1001 Characters: From the Studio of Yaacov Kaufman*, followed by a drawing session in the exhibition gallery.



" Bridging the Gap" participants in the Youth Wing's exhibition *1001 Characters: From the Studio of Yaacov Kaufman*

The three meetings that followed were devoted to a series of fun introductory games and playful "ice breakers" designed for the children and staff to get to know each other. Following these games, the students painted a large-scale group drawing that was connected to the introduction games, giving it an artistic twist.



Collaborative large-scale drawing created by group members

The next meeting was devoted to working in pairs, and included a T-shirt decoration activity.



Product of a T-shirt decorating session

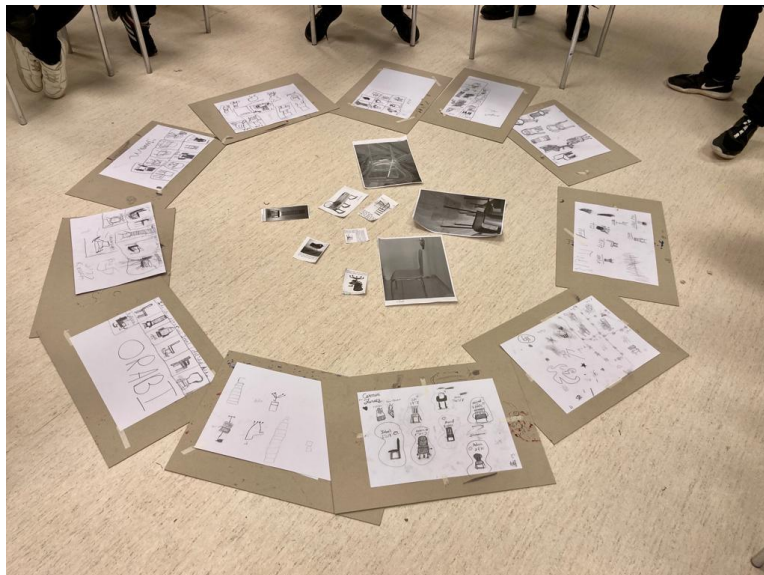
The next session introduced the medium of photography, which was selected as this year's annual artistic medium, and accompanied a number of consecutive sessions during which the students explored conceptual and practical aspects of photography. They learned about analogue photography and the use of film, and visited the Youth Wing's dark room for an educational experience about film development, guided by the Wing's professional staff.



Experimenting with photography

After focusing on photography, the participants were introduced to this year's main subject matter and dominant theme, "The Home."

We began exploring the concept of the home by focusing, as a group, on "The Chair." Each student was instructed to take a picture of a chair in his or her home and bring it to the next group meeting, in order to share it with the rest of the group and expand the conversation about chairs. Later in the session, the students were asked to choose another chair from the selection, this time they were instructed to choose one that appealed to them because of its design. In the next sessions, the students drew, cut, and pasted sketches of the two chairs and eventually transformed them into a work of collage. At the end of the process, they sculpted the chairs from clay.



Chair presentation

On March 3<sup>rd</sup> all the group enjoyed a visit to Jaffa, where they saw the play ""Stories from the Silence" at the Jaffa Theatre - A Stage for Arab-Hebrew Culture. The play, presented simultaneously in Arabic and Hebrew, is about a storyteller who cannot decide whether to speak Hebrew or Arabic who meets a mime artist. The storyteller discovers that in silence she can tell stories in both languages She alternates between Hebrew and Arabic and between words and silence. The children were very excited to take a trip outside of Jerusalem to be in Jaffa, a city with both Arabic - and Hebrew-speaking residents.

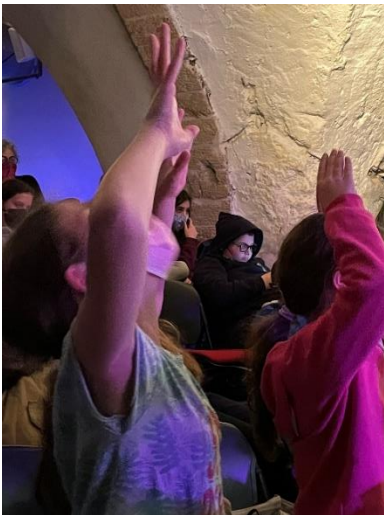




Scene from the play *Stories from the Silence*



Poster of the play *Stories from the Silence*



"Bridging the Gap" participants watching the play *Stories from the Silence*

In the last meeting before the break for the holidays, we visited the new exhibition in the Museum, *Drifting with Magritte: Castles in the Air*. The students enjoyed a tour of the gallery and learned about Magritte's monumental painting, its importance, and legacy, and later spent time drawing freely in the gallery in a creative atmosphere inspired by the artwork.



"Bridging the Gap" participants in the exhibition *Drifting with Magritte: Castles in the Air*

### **Challenges**

The main challenges so far were posed by the limitations and restrictions of Covid-19. As early as the first session, one of the participants was found positive, and as a result additional participants caught the virus as well. Following this case of infection, ten participants left the program and we have not been able to replace them. Two of the sessions in December were canceled to, altogether we had too many cases of infected participants. Later on, a number of sessions didn't have full attendance, but we were pleased that the meetings occurred anyway, and that many of the students chose to return and take part in the program despite the complexity of the situation.

An additional challenge (though less unfortunate) was caused by the weather, when Jerusalem was covered in snow for a day, and the meeting was canceled that day.

A more recent challenge is the current political status, particularly the recent outbreak of violence in a number of cities in Israel, which raises the level of tension across Israel's population, and could have an effect on a program such as ours. We hope for quiet and a halt of escalation.

### **The Staff**

All the teachers are practicing artists from the Youth Wing's educational team- Naser Hatab, Lina Alhalsa, Aluma Meishar, Orly Nir, Ruth Eliav. The staff is guided by psychologist Hadas Levy, who provides professional assistance addressing any difficulty that might arise during the sessions. The staff regularly reflects upon the cultural differences among the students and among themselves, constantly working together to come up with ideas and solutions for delicate situations.