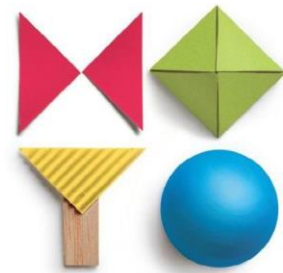


The Ruth  
Youth Wing  
for Art Education  
The Israel Museum  
Jerusalem

جناح الشبيبة  
والتربية الفنية  
على اسم روت  
متحف إسرائيل  
القدس

אגף הנוער  
והחינוך לאמנות  
ע"ש רות  
מוזיאון ישראל  
ירושלים



## **BRIDGING THE GAP: A "SHARED LIFE" PROGRAM OF THE RUTH YOUTH WING FOR ART EDUCATION**

**First Report for the 2021/22 Academic Year**



## **ABOUT THE ISRAEL MUSEUM**

The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, is Israel's foremost cultural institution and one of the world's leading encyclopedic museums with wide-ranging collections of art and archaeology of world-class status, numbering some 500,000 objects. Its three curatorial wings – Archaeology; Jewish Art and Life; and Fine Arts – offer a dynamic program of some 20 new exhibitions a year, and a rich annual program of publications, educational activities, and special cultural events which reach out to every sector of the population, attracting close to one million visitors annually.

[www.imj.org.il](http://www.imj.org.il)

## **ABOUT THE RUTH YOUTH WING FOR ART EDUCATION**

The Museum's educational arm, the Ruth Youth Wing for Art Education is renowned internationally as a model for art education in a museum setting, providing a dynamic and diverse program of exhibitions, activities, and special events intended to deepen the connection between the Museum and the public. The Youth Wing aims to make the Museum accessible and enjoyable for visitors from all walks of life, carrying an inclusive educational and cultural message to all sectors of the population, regardless of age, background, religion, ethnicity, or special needs. Its innovative programs cater to more than 100,000 children annually from schools and communities throughout Israel.

## **THE BRIDGING THE GAP PROGRAM: INTRODUCTION**

The Museum's "Shared Life" programs includes the flagship "Bridging the Gap" project which brings Arab and Jewish youth together to work on joint art projects. As its name suggests, Bridging the Gap, which is generously supported by the German Friends of the Israel, as well as by the HSS Foundation, Germany, utilizes the universal language of art to bring disparate groups together who might not otherwise meet in their everyday life. Arab and Jewish youth meet in the Museum's galleries and art studios, and work together on joint art projects. All meetings, held in a welcoming, friendly, and safe manner, are conducted in both Hebrew and Arabic. The combination of a warm and safe environment, and a prolonged period of time to explore art and creativity together, fosters mutual understanding, respect, and tolerance.

# **REPORT ON THE OPENING OF "BRIDGING THE GAP" IN 2021/22**

## **THE PROGRAM:**

The "Bridging the Gap" program commenced on November 17, 2021. Activities are held on a weekly basis on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. Approximately 80 Arab and Jewish children are participating in this year's program.

## **THE PARTICIPANTS:**

On Wednesdays, there is a total of 40 children: 10 from the Yefe Nof School; 9 children from the Agron School (midtown Jerusalem); and 21 children from the American School in Beit Hanina.

On Thursdays, there is a total of 37 children: 11 children from the Paula Ben Gurion School (Rechavia neighborhood); 6 children from the Keshet School (Katamonim neighborhood); and 20 children (native Arabic speakers) from the Al-Ula School in Sheikh Jarrah.

The children are transported by bus to and from the Museum from their respective schools, accompanied by an adult counselor. Upon arrival at the Museum, they receive light refreshments before proceeding to their activity.

The activities are conducted by professional educators of the Youth Wing: Nasser Chatab, Lina Alhalsa, Aluma Misher, Orly Nir, and Ruth Eliav.

The program schedule is for 20 meetings, ending on June 8, 2022.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM:**

This year the topic for the program is "**The Home.**"

The first meeting was dedicated to "meeting and greeting," with socialization ice-breaker games and working together on arts and crafts projects.

Each child is given a T-shirt with his/her name on it.

Initially, the children will learn to describe homes, and things associated with homes, using objective means. Afterwards, the emphasis will be on individual projects conducted in pairs of children; and finally, we will end the year with a group project. There will be options to use various materials and techniques throughout the year.

## **THE CHALLENGES:**

Our greatest challenge is recruiting children into the program and keeping their interest level high so that they will want to continue. The COVID pandemic has unfortunately added a further level of complexity: directly after the first meeting, one of the children tested positive, and because of this, the entire group was required to be in quarantine for seven days, as well as undergo PCR testing. Happily, no additional children were infected, but because of this, nine Jewish children left the program. We are currently actively seeking additional participants for the program.

**COVID PRECAUTIONS:**

We intend during the coming week to give each child an individual set of art materials for all upcoming projects, so that, in the case of unforeseen circumstances, the program can continue remotely (on Zoom) with each child working from home. Hopefully, all of the children will remain well and this measure will be purely precautionary.



