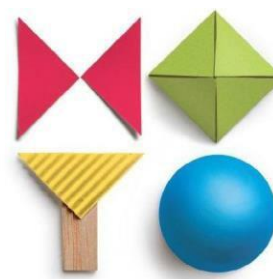


The Ruth
Youth Wing
for Art Education
The Israel Museum
Jerusalem

جناح الشبيبة
والتربية الفنية
على اسم روت
متحف إسرائيل
القدس

אגף הנוער
והחינוך לאמנות
ע"ש רות
מוזיאון ישראל
ירושלים



BRIDGING THE GAP

REPORT TO THE GERMAN FRIENDS OF THE ISRAEL MUSEUM



August 2022

BRIDGING THE GAP ARTISTIC ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN ISRAELI, ARAB, AND JEWISH CHILDREN IN THE ISRAEL MUSEUM, JERUSALEM

BACKGROUND

This program creates opportunities for children from the Arab and Jewish sectors of Israeli society to meet each other and work together in an atmosphere of peace, faith in life, and genuine coexistence.

Bridging the Gap is a unique program that enables an unmediated encounter between Arab and Jewish children from eastern and western Jerusalem neighborhoods through unique art-making workshops offered by the Ruth Youth Wing for Art Education at the Israel Museum. In a setting based on joint creative and imaginative efforts, the children work together to materialize their artistic vision. Working together towards a shared goal in a supportive environment encourages the young participants to engage on a personal level, leaving their prejudices behind.

As Israel's preeminent institution of art and culture, the Israel Museum serves as a safe and supportive venue for conducting the meetings and monitoring the children's experience.

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE PROGRAM

- **Inter-personal meetings:** The social events that we facilitate lead to closeness and friendships based on personal experience with the "other," leading the children to discover the common denominators that they share with each other.
- **Artistic creation:** The world of art and culture is one that has no boundaries; it crosses cultures and enables self-expression and direct communication. Joint artistic creations provide a common basis for meaningful discussions through the universal language of art.
- **The Museum:** Getting to know the Museum's galleries, exhibitions, and rich collections exposes the children to positive cultural values that are both local and universal.

MAJOR GOALS OF THE PROJECT

- Facilitating meetings that foster open dialogue and an opportunity for children to create shared experiences and get to know each other's backgrounds, personalities, and interests.
- Enabling self-expression through the creation of art, while acquiring proficiency in artistic methods and mediums.
- Enriching and expanding the artistic and cultural knowledge of the participants.
- Encouraging the development of an ability to accept, understand, and adopt tolerance and open-mindedness.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Bridging the Gap activities took place in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, on the following dates:

November 17, 2021 – June 1, 2022

Wednesdays, 16:00-18:00

Participating schools: Agron, Yefe Nof, Beit Hanina

November 18, 2021 – June 2, 2022

Thursdays, 16:00-18:00

Participating schools: Keshet, Paula Ben Gurion, El-Ola

Transportation for the students was provided to and from the Museum, escorted by an adult counselor.

The children received light refreshments upon arrival at the Museum (sandwiches and soft drinks).

ATTENDANCE STATISTICS

The program began on schedule, on November 17, 2021. The program accepted 80 participants, 40 of which were Jewish and 40 Arab. By the time the program concluded on June 2, 2022, each group had participated in 19 sessions, 38 in total. The final session, held on June 2, 2022, had 40 participants, from both days, and an additional 35 parents.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM IN 2021/22

The opening session was held in the presence of participants and their parents. The evening included a presentation of the program's outline; a visit to the Youth Wing exhibition *1001 Characters: From the Studio of Yaacov Kaufman*; and a hands-on drawing session in the exhibition.



The following sessions included fun and challenging games which helped the participants to get to know each other through a variety of different experiences, including the creation of a collaborative drawing.



Working in pairs, participants designed their very own drawing on a T-shirt.



Exploring analog photography, participants worked together to develop film and print their photos in the Youth Wing's darkroom.



Bridging the Gap 2022 focused on the concept of **Home** as its main annual theme.

Participants were asked to take a picture of a chair in their home and bring it to the session. The variety of chairs presented, and the similarities and differences between them, were successful in triggering curiosity and bringing the children

closer through discussion. Participants were later asked to select a chair, and their chair of choice inspired creations in different mediums such as collage, drawing, and sculpture.



URBAN EXPERIENCE OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM – A VISIT TO JAFFA

On March 3, 2022, the groups enjoyed a day trip to Jaffa, one of Israel's mixed cities (cities with mixed Jewish and Arabic populations). The trip's program included a performance at the Arab-Hebrew Theater entitled "Stories from the Silence," which was held in both Arabic and Hebrew. The performance blurred the boundaries between the Arab and Jewish actors, and constituted a foundation for discussion about differences and similarities, and a possible future.

