



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

The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Celebrates 50th Anniversary in 2015

Year-Long Season of Special Exhibitions and Programs Illuminates Visual Culture in Israel from its Early 20th Century Roots in Europe to its Most Contemporary Expressions Today

A Centerpiece of the Anniversary Year is *A Brief History of Humankind* as Told through Twelve Seminal Works from Museum's Universal Holdings

Jerusalem (February 3, 2015) — The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, celebrates its 50th Anniversary in 2015 with a year-long series of special exhibitions reflecting on the Museum's achievements since its founding and underscoring the local and universal dimensions of its collections and programming. From exhibitions uniting seminal works from across the Museum's encyclopedic holdings, to displays showcasing masterworks on loan from sister institutions, the Museum's anniversary year features the shared narratives of cultures and civilizations worldwide. Special focus is given to the trajectory of Israel's own visual culture, from its roots in Europe more than 100 years ago, to the founding of the Museum in 1965, through the present day. Major gifts across all of the Museum's collections that have been committed since the Museum's renewal in 2010 are also on view throughout the year, highlighting the breadth of support worldwide that has contributed to the ongoing growth of the Museum's encyclopedic holdings.

“Since the Israel Museum's founding in 1965, we have made remarkable strides in building a preeminent collection that stretches across the breadth of world culture and reflects the global cultural and historical narrative that is shared by all of our audiences,” said James S. Snyder, the Museum's Anne and Jerome Fisher Director. “Throughout 2015, we are celebrating our accomplishments over the past 50 years, in parallel with the unfolding of Israel's visual cultural history during this same time and in relation to the 50 preceding years of modernist visual culture in Europe that would become the foundation for Israel's aesthetic heritage. We also look forward to the next chapter in the Museum's history, building both on the transformative renewal achieved across our 20-acre campus in 2010 and on the generosity and support of our network of international friends, as well as the collegial support of our sister institutions worldwide.”

“It is a rare privilege to have led the Museum's Board of Directors for more than a decade, and it is particularly rewarding now as we celebrate this tremendous institutional milestone,” said Isaac Molho, Chairman of the Museum's Board. “When he founded our Museum five decades ago, Teddy Kollek envisioned a truly encyclopedic museum in Israel. In the years since, the Museum has succeeded in creating meaningful connections with cultures from around the globe and with our nation's creative heritage. I am certain that the Museum's message of universalism, emanating from Jerusalem, will continue to resonate across the world's cultural landscape within Israel and internationally.”

Kicking off the Museum's celebratory year are several solo exhibitions by contemporary Israeli artists working today— offering snapshots of Israel's visual creativity of the moment—coupled with an

examination of Israel's visual culture at the time of the Museum's founding. *1965 Today* (March 31 – August 29, 2015) immerses visitors in the visual character of Israel during the mid-1960s, beginning with a dioramic illustration of the popular design aesthetic of the time. The exhibition includes works by artists who participated in Israel's emerging art scene and also references the art and artists they would have seen or known internationally at the time. Complementary exhibitions focus on early film and photographic imagery from the same era and on the iconic graphic design work of one of Israel's most important practitioners during the mid-1960s. Concurrently, *6 Artists / 6 Projects* (February 10 – August 29, 2015) presents new works by some of today's leading contemporary artists in Israel, whose practice resonates in counterpoint with the aesthetic traditions that accompanied the opening of the Museum 50 years earlier.

Opening in May as a centerpiece of the anniversary year is a focused exhibition that features fourteen pivotal objects from across the Museum's collections that illustrate the history of human civilization from prehistoric times through the present day. *A Brief History of Humankind* (May 1 – January 2, 2016) presents a series of seminal objects—from the first evidence of communal fire nearly 800,000 years ago, to early depictions of gods and goddesses, to the earliest evidence of writing, and finally to Albert Einstein's original manuscript for the special theory of relativity—that each in its own way represents a turning point in the trajectory of civilized human history.

The second half of the anniversary year, opening in the fall, surveys the European roots of modern visual culture in Israel. *Twilight Over Berlin* (October 20, 2015 – March 26, 2016) features 50 masterworks that celebrate the avant-garde freedom that flourished in Germany in the first half of the 20th century. Among others, Expressionists Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Emil Nolde and such Weimar-period innovators as Max Beckmann and Otto Dix are represented with works on loan from the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin through an institutional partnership that marks the concurrent celebration of 50 years of diplomatic relations between Israel and Germany. At the same time, the Museum presents companion exhibitions spotlighting the European modernist heritage that influenced the pioneers of modern Israeli typography, graphic arts, and architecture. Together, this ensemble of exhibitions amplifies the ways in which aesthetic traditions migrated from Europe to Palestine in the period before World War II and became foundational for the development of Israel's visual culture and, in parallel, of the Museum itself.

Coinciding with the Museum's anniversary celebrations are two special installations in the Museum's **Shrine of the Book**—home to the Dead Sea Scrolls—which opened to the public in April 1965 as a prelude to the inauguration of the Museum's entire campus. On view beginning April 19, 2015, is a dedicated display examining the history of the Shrine itself, whose design by Frederic J. Kiesler and Armand P. Bartos has been lauded as an icon of international modernist architecture, as well as being the only permanently executed example of Kiesler's trademark language of expressionist modernism. Additionally, as a contemporary counterpoint to the ancient history of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the world's smallest Hebrew Bible, the Berrie Nano Bible created by the Russell Berrie Nanotechnology Institute of the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, will go on view for the first time.

For a complete listing of 50th Anniversary programming, please refer to the Advance Exhibition Schedule available online.

Sponsorship and Credits

The anniversary season in 2015 is generously supported by the Museum's 50th Anniversary Exhibition Fund: Herta and Paul Amir, Los Angeles; Foundation Albert Amon, Lausanne, Switzerland; Ellen Bronfman Hauptman and Andrew Hauptman, Los Angeles, and Stephen and Claudine Bronfman, Montreal, in honor of three generations of Bronfman family support for the Museum; Claudia Davidoff, Cambridge, Massachusetts, in memory of Ruth and Leon Davidoff; The Gottesman Family, Tel Aviv and

New York, in memory of Dov Gottesman and in honor of Rachel Gottesman; The Hassenfeld Family Foundation, Providence, Rhode Island, in honor of Sylvia Hassenfeld; Alice and Nahum Lainer, Los Angeles; The Nash Family Foundation, New York; and Yad Hanadiv, the Rothschild Foundation in Israel.

About The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

Over the past five decades, the Israel Museum has become one of the leading art and archaeology museums in the world, with a comprehensive collection totaling more than 500,000 objects from prehistory to the present day. Home to the most extensive collections of Holy Land and Biblical archaeology in the world, the Museum's Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Archeology Wing draws connections across many of the world's ancient cultures and religions through exhibition programming, publication, and research, advancing new scholarship in the field. Its Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Wing for Jewish Art and Life holds among the world's most comprehensive collections of Judaica and of the ethnography of the world's many and diverse Jewish communities, together with its unique set of interiors of synagogues from Europe, Asia, and the Americas. The encyclopedic holdings in its Edmond and Lily Safra Fine Arts Wing range from Old Masters to contemporary art, including dedicated departments for Asian Art; the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas; Prints and Drawings; Photography; and Architecture and Design.

In addition to the tremendous growth of its collections, the Museum has also increased its architectural footprint ten-fold since opening in 1965. The original landmark campus designed by Alfred Mansfeld and Dora Gad was enhanced most recently by a comprehensive expansion and renewal project, completed in 2010, which was led by James Carpenter Design Associates, New York, and Efrat-Kowalsky Architects, Tel Aviv. The goals of this transformational project were to heighten the visitor's experience of art and archeology against the setting of the Museum's architecture and landscape; and to renew and reconfigure the presentation of its three collection wings, allowing for the complete reinstallation of its encyclopedic holdings. The project also introduced new temporary exhibition galleries, orientation facilities, and public spaces that further enhance the visitor experience.

The Museum also organizes and presents programming at its off-site locations in Jerusalem at the Rockefeller Archaeological Museum, where it presents archaeological artifacts from the Land of Israel, and at its historic Ticho House in downtown Jerusalem, a venue for exhibitions of contemporary Israeli art.

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