

Peace, Politics and PostZionism: Contemporary Left-Wing Graphic Design in Israel

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Thank you

תודה רבה

## Introduction

“Israel is a country still searching for its principles and its identity.”<sup>1</sup>

Pundits have quipped that Israel is a country with more history than geography. That surfeit could equally apply to the Israeli political system, which has been called a democracy on steroids. The number of political opinions, are jokingly said to outnumber the population. Israelis span a spectrum from the far left to the rabid right, and are rarely shy about making their opinions known. The leftist Israeli community has protested against the military occupation of the territories captured during the Six-Day War of 1967, the alleged violations of human rights and international law there, and the mistreatment of Palestinians in Israeli society. Objections against military and government actions by left-wing Israelis have taken various forms from political lobbying and legal advocacy to peaceful protesting and artistic expressions. Within this activity, one particular group of creative professionals, graphic designers, are using visual language to demonstrate their opinions and objections.

This paper presents the first attempt at a comprehensive historical account of politically left-wing graphic design produced in Israel from the early 1970s until the present, 2010 about which little historic documentation has been gathered or academic analysis has been written. This study of graphic design artifacts and practices demonstrates that a generation of Israeli designers in the 1970s initiated the continuing creation of culturally specific visual languages that challenge the grand narrative of Zionism, the political movement that led to the 1948 declaration of an independent Jewish state in Palestine and the settlement of millions of Jews there. The designers who initially contributed to the creation of a space in which alternative and minority voices could speak about the country's complex and contradictory political and social reality continue to be joined by new generations of practitioners.

The knowledge required to understand Israeli graphic design, particularly the work discussed in this thesis, is historically, culturally, traditionally and religiously dense. The biblical references, the stylistic quotations and subversion of visual elements from the early years of Zionism in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries and Jewish history, the appearance of local political figures, and the use of the revived Hebrew language create a body of work that is layered with culturally specific meaning. While the work is most

readily understood by those with the cultural map to read it, the analysis and information in this study attempt to make it accessible to a wider audience. Some readers may note subtle nuances that are best understood by Israelis; however, where necessary to understand the meaning, the historical context has been provided. For further information, refer to the historical timeline of the region in Appendix A.

Chapter One, “The Birth of a Nation: Visual Language and the Construction of the Zionist Narrative and Israeli Identity,” explains the origins of the visual language of Zionism and its ideological use during the Yishuv, the period of Jewish settlement in pre-State Palestine, and the early decades of the State of Israel. Symbols adopted by the Jewish nationalist movement at the turn of the twentieth century are described in relationship to the Zionist ideology they represented. This iconographic unpacking is followed by an account of the origins of the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem in relationship to the role the school played in the construction and dissemination of Zionist ideology. The chapter closes with a summary of poster art in Palestine and early Israel, an area of research which has been heavily explored in books and exhibitions such as *Art in the Service of Ideology* and *Derekh ha-'atsma'ut: 60 shanim ve-od ha-derech rav* (The Road to Independence: 60 Years and the Road is Still Long). The review lays a foundation for the following two chapters which present original research about a group of designers and a body of design work on which little research has been conducted and no academic writing has been done heretofore.

Chapter Two, “Breaking Out of the Narrative: the Birth of PostZionist Design” traces the growth of left-wing graphic design in Israel. The chapter discusses design activity following the 1967 Six-Day War through the first *Intifada* from 1987 to 1993. The work in this chapter is mainly taken from the portfolio of David Tartakover, the first and most notorious politically oriented graphic designer in Israel. Yarom Vardimon, a prominent designer and educator, discusses the revolutionary relationship between the socially engaged designers and the prevailing understanding of design in Israel as a formal discipline. Despite having been founded by a group of Zionists, by the 1970s, Vardimon recalls some students attending the Bezalel Academy together with a group of young lecturers employed there transformed the campus into a site for ideologically challenging visual explorations. The generational turnover as well as the shifting cultural and ideological landscape in Israel around the time of the Six-Day War is explained as part of the motivation behind the work of Tartakover and his contemporaries. The design activities are discussed in terms of the practitioners’ expectations about the political impact of their work as well as their understanding of their social responsibility

as designers. Selected examples outline the alternative opinions presented in the works and the new discursive space they created. The works' aesthetic sensibility is discussed in relationship to the designers' philosophies as well as global trends in aesthetic communication. The posters are organized thematically as well as loosely chronologically to provide both a linear sense of historical time and an ideological landscape in which the work was being done.

The leftist ideas expressed in Tartakover's work and that of his contemporaries is framed in relationship to the growth of the postZionist intellectual movement.<sup>2</sup> The practices are analyzed through the lens of postZionist theory, a broad term used in this paper to describe an ideology that is postnational, postmodern, and postcolonial. The works are described as part of the larger postZionist school of thought that expands the discourse of Israeli nationalism beyond the grand narrative of Zionism and introduces counter-hegemonic identities and ideas.<sup>3</sup>

Chapter Three, "Varied Voices: Expanding the Practice," explores how design practices changed as the work of the first generation of designers became familiar to a new generation of designers who began visually expressing their left-leaning opinions. The chapter discusses design activities from the beginning of the Oslo negotiations in 1993 through 2010; the examples used are again organized both thematically and loosely chronologically to outline designers' reactions to events and government policies as well as to new ideas being explored in Israeli society. In addition to their ideological significance, some projects are included to demonstrate the introduction of magazines, graffiti and interactive projects to a practice that had previously been dominated by the poster. The continued role of the Bezalel Academy and other institutions of higher education are explored to see how the expressive use of language is becoming commonplace in Israeli design. Designers comment on their views of the social role and responsibility of a graphic designer and the ways in which they used new media and alternative strategies to communicate with the Israeli public. The chapter explores the influence of Tartakover and his colleagues' stylistic and rhetorical approaches on the new generation's approach to politically-oriented design. The similarities and differences in the motivations behind the work are examined in terms of both changes in Israeli society as well as global design activity. The designers are spoken about in regards to the expectations they hold for the work as a tool for activism or reflection and the impact this has on their design practice. Despite overlaps in stylistic approaches, motivations and

expectations, leftist Israeli designers are not participants in an organized movement, but rather are a group of individual designers standing behind a similar political cause and a shared ideological outlook.

The body of work analyzed in this thesis was collected through designer contributions, archival research in the digital archive at Jerusalem's Bezalel Academy and The Design Archive and Research Center at Shenkar College of Engineering and Design in Ramat Gan, a survey of books and catalogues, and internet research. The analysis of the works is supported through a literature review and oral interviews conducted with twelve designers in Israel whose work is discussed in this paper. The narrative of left-wing Israeli graphic design is constructed using images, historical information and analysis; the voices of individual designers personalize the writing.

While a vast library has been written about the political, social, military, economic, cultural and psychological dimensions of Zionism, postZionism and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, little research or academic writing has been done regarding how graphic design and visual language in Israel have developed in opposition to the dominant Zionist narrative, the military presence in the territories Israel seized in the 1967 war, or the mistreatment of Palestinians. This thesis is the first attempt to comprehensively evaluate a large body of posters and other graphic works and to chart the multiplicity of styles, changing imagery and rhetorical approaches within left-wing Israeli design. In tracing the stylistic and ideological development of this specific group of designers in Israel, this paper demonstrates their participation in a larger project to broaden the Zionist narrative and expand the political, social and cultural discourse in Israel.

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<sup>1</sup> Laurence J. Silberstein, "Introduction," in *Postzionism: a reader*, ed. Laurence J. Silberstein, 3 (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2008).

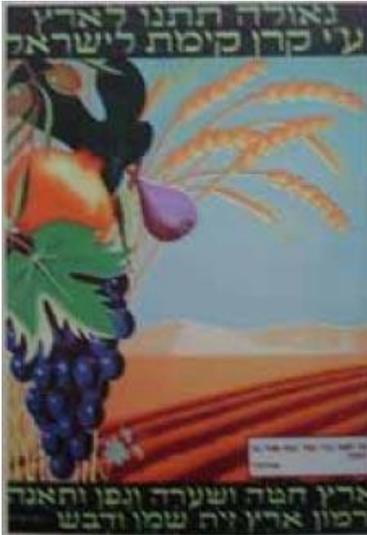
<sup>2</sup> As with any semantic debate, there are those who wish to label their approach postZionist and those who resist adopting the term, despite ideological similarities between their personal opinions and those discussed within postZionist writing. The reader should note that the designers spoken of in this paper do not label themselves postZionists; however, it is an appropriate lens through which to analyze the work.

<sup>3</sup> Uri Ram, "Postzionist Studies of Israel: The First Decade," in *Postzionism: a reader*, ed. Silberstein, 70-71.

## **Chapter One: The Birth of a Nation: Visual Language and the Construction of the Zionist Narrative and Israeli Identity**

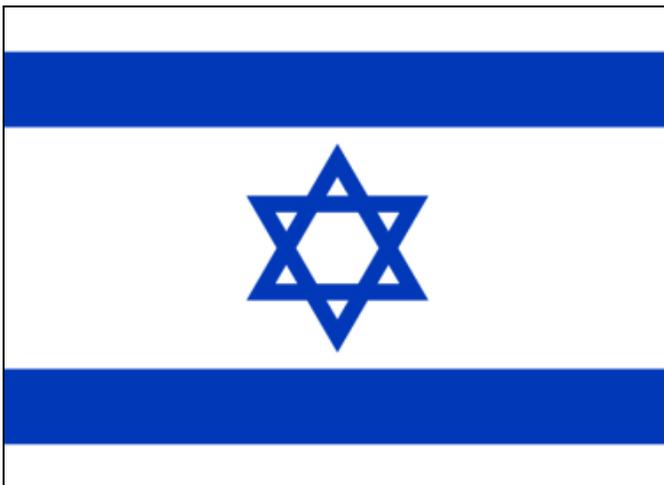
The development of a culturally specific visual language played a central role in the construction of the Zionist narrative and mythology. During the pre-State Yishuv in the early twentieth century, designers working for the Jewish Agency (JA), Keren Hayesod (KH), the Jewish National Fund (JNF), and various political parties and youth movements created an ideologically charged vocabulary of symbols and icons that legitimized and normalized the principles of Zionism. A visual language, developed in posters and pamphlets that were distributed internationally, played a key role in fostering nationalist aspirations and promoting the Zionist objectives of obtaining a Jewish national homeland in Israel which would allow the ingathering of Jews in exile suffering persecution. Through the first decades of the State of Israel, following the Declaration of Independence in 1948, the same visual vocabulary was used by the newly recognized government, the JA, KH and the JNF to maintain the ideological dominance of the Zionist narrative and to naturalize an Ashkenazi-*sabra* normative within Israel.<sup>1</sup>

In modern cultures, signs and symbols serve a dual function of representing ideas, objects or events which are intangible, as well as enabling communication and social exchange between people across time and space.<sup>2</sup> The creation of symbols and signs enabled the Zionist Organization to foster both a strong idea of Jewish nationalism and the desire for a Jewish homeland in Palestine.<sup>3</sup> Images commissioned by the JA, KH and the JNF of Jewish workers laboring over the land and soldiers engaged in battle as well as representations of a flourishing Land of Israel from Biblical times stood in for the security, prosperity and sense of belonging the absent state represented for the Zionist movement. The same language enabled Jews living in Palestine and the Diaspora to establish a shared national identity in different areas of the world across decades. Designers frequently referenced the Biblical roots of the Jewish people in an effort to establish a historical continuum between the ancient past and the Zionist present.<sup>4</sup> The Seven Species, *Shiv'at Ha-minim*, the seven fruits and grains of the Land of Israel (Deut. 8:8), were often depicted during these early years as part of the ideological mission to reinforce the Biblical connection between Jews and the Land of Israel.



*Redeem the Land*  
 1940s  
 Franz Krausz  
 Client: The Jewish National Fund  
*Zionism: Images of a State in the Making*

The Star of David was adopted as the national symbol of the Jewish people at the first Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897 as it was felt to represent the dual political and religious nature of the future state. Though the six-pointed star, known in Hebrew as *Magen David*, the Shield of David, did not originate as a Jewish symbol; it gained significance as a Jewish symbol during the Renaissance and quickly became one of the dominant icons of Jewish national pride and solidarity. The Star of David centered between two horizontal stripes was used as the banner of the Zionist Organization, and was later adopted as the official flag of the State of Israel. During the Holocaust, to add public humiliation to the discriminatory policies of the Nazi regime, Jews were required to wear a yellow Star of David at all times. When the State of Israel was founded, the Star of David was reclaimed as a symbol of pride, perseverance and determination.



Flag of Israel

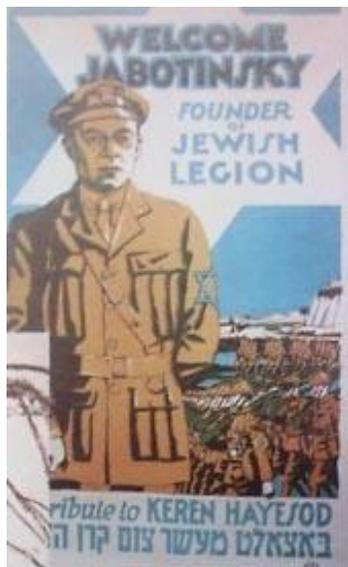
By the early twentieth century, as the Second *aliya* (mass immigration of Jews to Palestine) began, the prickly pear cactus was adopted as a symbol of the pioneering spirit of the Zionist movement. In the mission to reclaim the desert, this cactus became a metaphor of the conquest of desolate land and promoted the Zionist myth that the territory was uninhabited before the settlers arrived. The symbol was extended to include the fruit of the cactus, *tzabar*, which represented the success of the pioneers, the native born Israeli, *sabra*. The *sabra*, rough on the outside but sweet on the inside, represented the primacy of the authentic, local Israeli.<sup>5</sup> Ironically, the prickly pear cactus is not native to Israel. In having been brought to the Mediterranean by Conquistadores from Mexico, the prickly pear cactus, the unofficial symbol chosen to represent the native Israeli, contained an underlying meaning of conquest.

In support of the melting pot policy of the Zionist settlement in Palestine, the new Jew, a strong agricultural worker and fighter, was depicted as an ideological model for immigrants to emulate.<sup>6</sup> Images of war established military existence as one of the uniting factors of the Israeli experience. In early posters for the JA, KH and the JNF, fighting was represented as heroic, and violence was depicted as a vision of modernism, taking on a mythical element. In an effort to mobilize the new immigrant population for the Jewish-Arab conflict and struggles of nation building, the visualization of fighting created an ideological link between military strength and patriotism.<sup>7</sup>



Left: *Untitled (Give a hand to the Hagana Ezrabit - the Civil Guard)*  
1941  
Rothschild, Lipman,  
and Zabri  
*Bezalet 100*

Right: *Revenge and Redemption!*  
1945  
Shamir Brothers  
*Zionism: Images of a State in the Making*



Left: *Ze'ev Jabotinsky*  
1921  
Unknown  
Client: Keren Hayesod  
*Zionism: Images of a State  
in the Making*

Right: *Volunteer for  
National Service*  
1947-8  
Unknown  
*Zionism: Images of a State  
in the Making*

In addition to the visual icons that carried ideological significance, the Hebrew alphabet, which came into daily use with the revival of the Hebrew language in the late nineteenth century, embodied the Zionist project. Language is essential in any nation-building effort; within the Zionist framework, the revival of Hebrew as the lingua franca was inseparable from the ideological mission to create a Jewish nation with a sovereign land in Palestine. Speaking Hebrew, rather than Yiddish, a language spoken by most European Jews, reinforced the claim that Jews were indigenous to Israel and had a Biblical right to the land.

The use of Hebrew as the official language of civic life was instrumental in creating the Zionist subject out of immigrant Jews. Hebrew became the official public language with the founding of Tel Aviv, the first Hebrew city, in 1909, and new immigrants were required to learn Hebrew or face social exclusion. Besides exclusion a means to assimilate the multilingual Jewish immigrant population into a cohesive Zionist nation, Hebrew was also a way to exclude and alienate Arabs from the fabric of social life, as they could neither speak nor read Hebrew. Designing new infrastructure in Hebrew gave physical form to Zionist ideology; its presence in the public sphere imposed it as the dominant ideology of the territory.

The development of a visual language of Zionism was strengthened by the establishment of the Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts, the oldest and premier design school in Israel.<sup>8</sup> In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when the first and second wave of Jewish nationalists immigrated to Palestine, they felt it important to establish a set of aesthetic principles that would allow them to personalize the country as the Jewish homeland. In 1903, Boris Shatz (1867-1932) proposed the idea of an institution dedicated to developing

and promoting a distinctly Zionist style to ZO leader Theodor Herzl. In 1905, at the seventh Zionist Congress in Basel, the idea was approved and Shatz received 4,000 Francs as funding for the Bezalel School. In 1906, one year after receiving funding, the Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts officially opened in Jerusalem with the mission to “to find visual expression for the much yearned national and spiritual independence that seeks to create a synthesis between European artistic traditions and the Jewish design tradition of Eastern Europe, and to integrate it with the local culture of the Land of Israel.”<sup>9</sup> The name Bezalel, a reference to the chief artisan of the Biblical Tabernacle (Exodus 31:1-6), reinforced the founders’ commitment to the Zionist mission. If Bezalel was chosen by God to build the Tabernacle, the Holy Ark, and all other necessary utensils and ritual objects, the Bezalel School would be the training place for the craftsmen who would build the necessary visual environment for the new Jewish state.



*Bezalel Past, Present, Future*  
1910  
Matt Shatz  
*Bezalel 100*

In Jewish Palestine, design education and the development of design discourse took place within the ideological framework of Zionism. The original Bezalel staff was directly involved in the Zionist Organization, and the school was established as a partner in the nationalist struggle for statehood. In 1929, due to financial difficulties, Bezalel temporarily closed down. The school reopened in 1935 under the leadership of Jeseff Budko (1888-1940), a German print artist. Budko and many of the new faculty members were German émigrés who brought with them the influence of the Bauhaus ideology. The Bauhaus mission to design a social utopia complemented the utopian Zionist ideology and discourse.<sup>10</sup> In 1940, five years after his appointment, Budko

passed away and was succeeded by Mordechai Ardon (1896-1992), a Bauhaus-trained painter who “believed in pure art devoid of any political or social message.”<sup>11</sup> Ardon replaced Budko’s curricular emphasis on design that addressed the shifting social and economic needs of the time with a focus on teaching students to create art that could be appreciated and judged exclusively on its compositional makeup and design that could meet the needs of industry. The central role of Zionism during the early history of Bezalel, coupled with Ardon’s formalist orientation, left a lasting legacy on design discourse and education in Israel.

Posters played a central role in the development and growth of Zionist ideology. During the ’20s, ’30s and ’40s in Palestine, posters were used to encourage settlers to participate in community building, security and defense activities, and agricultural and economic development. Throughout this period, posters were the dominant communication medium, as television was not yet available while radio was still a luxury which many people did not have access to.<sup>12</sup> The early posters published by the JA, KH, the JNF, the *Histadrut* Labor Organization, political parties and youth movements spoke to their audience through a visual language borrowed from the techniques of advertising, a language settlers were familiar with. Poster designers gave graphic expression to the ambitions and concerns of the Zionist movement through simple, concise and straightforward messages in basic colors and catchy headlines.<sup>13</sup>

The lasting cultural importance of the poster is in part a result of the socialist ideology Jews of the second and third *aliyot* brought with them. In the socialist society Jewish immigrants established in Palestine, Jewish artists had to prove their worth as contributing members of the collective. For artists and designers, creating propaganda posters for Zionist organizations was a way to use their skill set to contribute to the effort of realizing nationalist goals. As the value of artistic practice in the struggling socialist communes was little appreciated, poster designers had to continually prove their work was meaningful in the Zionist project. Poster designers strongly aligned themselves with the national mission and used the activity of poster design to demonstrate support and loyalty to Zionist ideology. Though the early settler posters were highly propagandistic and utopian, there was room for designers to depict not only the utopian aspects of society but also the less pleasant, painful and bleak realities of the new immigrant based settler society.<sup>14</sup> The early allegiance of graphic design to Zionist ideology is undeniable; however, the expression of dystopian themes in early work contributed to later generations of Israelis exploring the posters as a forum for critique.



Left: *Lend a Hand to the Histadrut's Renewal*  
1942  
Yitzhak Ben-Menachem  
*Art in the Service of Ideology*



Right: *Third Convention of Hasbomer Hatzair*  
1944  
Yosef Walter  
*Art in the Service of Ideology*

During the Mandate period, election campaign posters were hung by Jewish settlers as part of the political and ideological battle to gain control over the streets.<sup>15</sup> Designers and citizens hung posters, establishing the medium as a form of political participation and debate within the settler society. Though the posters being hung during this period were ideologically Zionist, they set a precedent in Israel for the practice of using posters as a form of political activity.

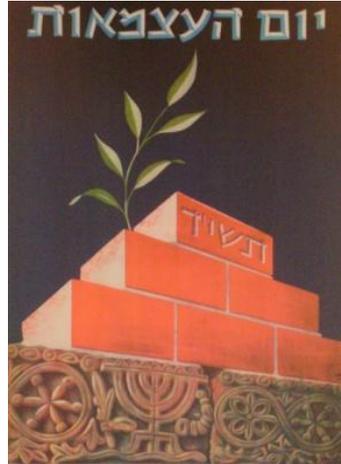
In the early decades of the State, following the Declaration of Independence in 1948, posters commissioned by the party in power or parties vying for electoral seats, the JA, KH, the JNF and youth movements, helped rally morale for national building efforts and constructed Zionist subjects out of the hundreds of thousands of immigrants from the Diaspora. Posters promoted the Jewish right to the land and valorized activities of reclaiming swamp land and desert.



Left: *Immigration, Security, Bread and Peace*  
1953  
Naftali Bezem  
Client: The United Workers' Party  
*Art in the Service of Ideology*



Right: *Lend a Hand to the formation of a progressive pioneering government*  
1955  
Shraga Welt  
Client: The United Workers' Party  
*Art in the Service of Ideology*



Left: *Conquering the Wasteland*  
1953

Abram Games  
Client: Keren Hayesod  
*90 Years of Keren Hayesod*  
poster exhibition

Right: *A new nation within an ancient homeland*  
1954

Rothschild & Lipman  
Client: State of Israel  
*60 years of Independence*  
poster exhibition

Following the Declaration of Independence and the 1948 War of Independence, posters contributed to the construction of a cultural myth in which Jews were peacemakers while Arabs were unwilling to come to the negotiating table.



*For the Sake of Peace, A War Loan*

1949

Abram Naton (Natanson)

*90 Years of Keren Hayesod poster exhibition*

Visual language was used to support the Zionist narrative of the 1948 war that denied any ethnic cleansing and claimed the 750,000 Palestinian refugees willfully left their land during that conflict. At times, justifications were made for the mistreatment of Palestinian refugees; mainly Palestinian national aspirations and basic human rights were ignored. This ideology went largely unquestioned until 1967. Following the end of the Six-Day War, the State of Israel entered a new era of self-assurance. The sense of existential threat that had loomed over Israel in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust and the 1948 war faded, and Israelis no longer felt the need to unwaveringly support their young nation.<sup>16</sup> As the State entered its adolescence, a new space began to

open up in society and Israelis started voicing alternate opinions that contradicted the dominant Zionist narrative and the ideology it supported.

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<sup>1</sup> Native-born Israeli Jews are called *sabras* after the prickly pear cactus plant that grows there. The cactus pear is said to be prickly on the outside but sweet on the inside. See page ten for a longer explanation of the meaning of the *sabra*.

<sup>2</sup> Johanna Drucker and Emily McVarish, *Graphic Design History: A Critical Guide*, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2008), 3.

<sup>3</sup> The World Zionist Organization was founded as the Zionist Organization (ZO) at the First Zionist Congress, held in Basil Switzerland in 1897. In 1960, it was renamed the World Zionist Organization (WZO).

<sup>4</sup> Shlomo Shealtiel, ed., *Art in the Service of Ideology: Hashomer Hatzair Political Posters 1937-1967*, (Yaari and the Ben-Gurion Research Center: Israel, 1999), 160.

<sup>5</sup> Gad Almaliyah, Batia Donner, and Suzanne Libenson, *Graphic design in Israel in 1985*, (Tel Aviv: Graphic Designers Association of Israel, 1985), 14.

<sup>6</sup> Shealtiel, ed., *Art in the Service of Ideology: Hashomer Hatzair Political Posters 1937-1967*, 161.

<sup>7</sup> Before 1948, the Jewish settlers were referred to as Palestinians while the Arab residents of Palestine called themselves simply Arabs. Only after the 1948 Declaration of Independence did the Arab population of former Palestine begin referring to themselves as Palestinians.

<sup>8</sup> In 1955 the school was renamed the Bezalel Academy of Art. In 1969, as part of its transformation into a degree granting academic institution of higher education the school was renamed the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design. "About Bezalel: Landmarks," Bezalel Academy of Art and Design Jerusalem, <http://www.bezalel.ac.il/en/about/landmarks>, (accessed December 20, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Bezalel Academy of Art and Design Jerusalem, "About Bezalel: Landmarks," Bezalel Academy of Art and Design Jerusalem, <http://www.bezalel.ac.il/en/about/landmarks/> (accessed September 5, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> "Mordechai Ardon, Biography," <http://www.ardon.com/Biography.htm> (accessed November 30, 2010).

<sup>12</sup> *Zionism: Images of a State in the Making*, (Public Affairs Division of the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Jerusalem, 1997), 2.

<sup>13</sup> Shealtiel, ed., *Art in the Service of Ideology: Hashomer Hatzair Political Posters 1937-1967*, 174.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 172.

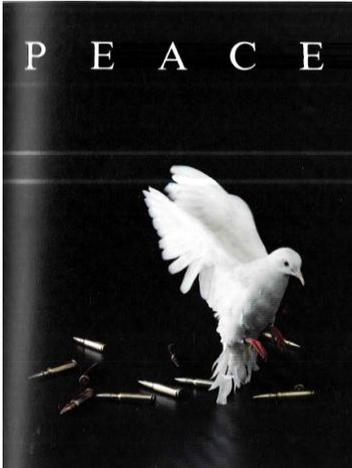
<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 181.

<sup>16</sup> Tamar Hermann, *The Israeli peace movement: a shattered dream*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 53.

## Chapter Two: Breaking Out of the Narrative: the Birth of PostZionist Design

The use of design as a language through which to open up new spaces in Israeli society began in the early 1970s. The 1970s and 1980s witnessed an enormous shift in the scope of activities and subjects design dealt with. Concurrent with the global design scene, the myth of the apolitical designer as content packager and not an author in his/her own right was being challenged.<sup>1</sup> Straddling the fence between modernism and postmodernism, designers coming of age at this time sought to break out of the limiting client/designer relationship in which they acted as service providers and began to consider themselves active players in a dialogue about contemporary social issues. Rather than understanding graphic design as solely a vehicle to give form to someone else's message, designers began thinking of visual language as a way to negotiate meaning by communicating with their audience.<sup>2</sup> Within Israel, graphic designers were using this new authorial power to question the government's political and military policies.

Until the early 1970s, graphic design in Israel was a largely formal discipline. Design was understood as an objective language used to create compositionally harmonious works that neutrally communicated a third-party message using aesthetic clarity and legibility. The potential of the practice was rarely discussed in terms of the context or ideology a piece could privilege. Following the 1967 war, as Israelis ushered in a new era, a new generation of designers emerged who expanded the disciplinary practices of design. Yarom Vardimon (b. 1941), played a leading role in promoting this new understanding of the broader communication potential of design. He saw "Design [as] a communication phenomenon; a junction where history of man and culture are reflected; a visual expression of questions that are local and global; personal and stylistic; a dialogue with anonymous people exercising overt as well as covert messages; a sphere where cultural values and the needs of growing economy could and should overlap."<sup>3</sup> Vardimon is a noteworthy figure in the Israeli design scene as he has played a fundamental role in shaping design education during the last three decades. He joined the Bezalel Academy faculty in 1972, and after a few years was the director of the Graphic Design Department, a position he held from 1976 until 1998. In 2010, Vardimon holds the position of Dean of the Faculty of Design at Shenkar College of Engineering and Design in Ramat Gan. Through his position of leadership, buttressed by his posters, which he creates in order to "[push people to observe...]", he continues to teach his pioneering attitude about the role of designers to design students in Israel.<sup>4</sup>



*Untitled*  
1985  
Yarom Vardimon  
*Personal Expressions of Peace*



*Left Right Left Right BOOM!*  
c1992  
Yarom Vardimon  
*Coexistence*

Vardimon, a charismatic, impassioned speaker, was born in Palestine. He spent his adolescence in Israel, but left in 1960 to pursue his design education at Britain's Chelsea College of Art and the Central London Polytechnic. After graduating in 1965, he returned to Israel and began working as a graphic designer and educator; however, his experience abroad laid the foundation for his career as an active participant in the international design scene. He served as a board member of the International Council of Graphic Design Associations (ICOGRADA) from 1972 until 1974, when he began his five-year position as vice president. In 1982 he was elected to the Alliance Graphique Internationale, and in 1988 became an honorary member of the Art Directors Club of New York. Vardimon is a regular figure in international design competitions; he has served on dozens of design juries and his work has received countless awards. His posters are included in the permanent collections of international art and design museums. Vardimon devotes equal attention to his international profile as he does to his role within the Israeli design community. In addition to his ongoing involvement in educational institutions, he served as the head of the Graphic Designers Association of Israel from 1970 to 1977.

When recounting the early years of his career, Vardimon explains, "functionalism was at its peak."<sup>5</sup> In the 1970s, commenting on political issues or contributing to political debate was not considered within the realm of a designer's activities. The only graphic design being produced dealing with political content was commissioned by government organizations or parties vying for support in an upcoming election. Propaganda was produced to encourage Zionist ideologies: typical commissions were pamphlets for the JA or KH about

immigration, absorption or communal lifestyle. When recalling the tradition of State-commissioned Independence Day posters that continue to be produced today and displayed in municipal buildings, schools, offices, restaurants, homes and at celebrations across the country, Vardimon critiqued them as being ideologically naïve and populist. While the Independence Day poster was supposed to help citizens share in a celebration of pride, joy and a sense of achievement of the State of Israel, Vardimon feels they were “Not necessarily something to be proud of.”<sup>6</sup> Most designers agreed that the annual competition was not an arena for designers to use the printed page as a visual expression of their opinions about the political and social reality in the country. Rather than encouraging aesthetic or ideological exploration, the government developed an expectation that the annual poster would include Zionist symbols that would reinforce State supported ideology. Designers became discouraged by the simple-minded, conformist work required by the government and participation declined. By the 1970s, as more designers refused to enter the poster competition on the grounds that it had become a medium for the visual reinforcement of the Zionist myth, the annual competition evolved into an annual assignment.

Despite government actions to reinforce and reproduce Zionist ideology through printed material and other media, by the 1970s communities formed around alternate and opposing ideologies in Israeli society. Graphic designers were a professional group in which early postZionist thought was explored and shared. The Bezalel Academy was one of the first places in Israel where graphic design transformed into a discipline that encouraged designers to visually express their opinions about the political reality they lived within. In the 1970s, a small and outsider group of students and faculty members, not the institution, were exploring design as an expressive language rather than as a scientific objective language. In Tzvika Rosenberg’s *Untitled* from 1973, produced during Rosenberg’s education at Bezalel, the text declared the feelings the viewer received from the poster the result of his successful use of associations and conventions used to communicate a message. Rosenberg drew attention to the fact that visual language plays an active role in creating the message and is not a neutral vessel which carries a message.



*Untitled*  
1973  
Tzvika Rosenberg  
Bezalel archive

Ilan Molcho (b. 1950), a student at Bezalel in the late 1970s, recalls that during the politically charged peace talks with Egypt, “the school wasn’t in tune with what was happening.”<sup>77</sup> Molcho describes the political work he was doing as “...really upstream. It was against what was normally viewed in the school as mainstream.”<sup>78</sup> The rip that tears through the word *ארץ*, set in the Palestinian national colors of black, green, and red, in Molcho’s *Land*, was one of the earliest graphic statements that the Israeli mistreatment of the indigenous Palestinian population was tearing the country apart.<sup>9</sup> After graduating from Bezalel, Molcho built his career as a practitioner, educator, and activist around the central tenet that being a designer is about more than being “a pipeline.”<sup>10</sup> For Molcho, being a designer means accepting responsibility for the messages communicated through your work.



Left: *Curfew*  
1979  
Ilan Molcho  
[www.molcholand.co.il](http://www.molcholand.co.il)



Right: *Land*  
1980  
Ilan Molcho  
[www.molcholand.co.il](http://www.molcholand.co.il)

Vardimon’s recollection of his years as a young staff member at Bezalel support Molcho’s assertion that the use of graphic design as a medium of political expression was a minority practice among students and staff members. In the mid 1970s, Vardimon felt that the curriculum was not encouraging students to use visual

communication as a way to explore controversial political and social issues and was disappointed to find only a small community of like-minded teachers and students. Despite the lack of institutional support, Vardimon noticed that during the 1970s at Bezalel, a growing number of “people started dealing with the problems on the borders.”<sup>11</sup> In Israel, a country with a mandatory military draft following high-school graduation, college campuses are filled with students who have recently completed their service in the Israel Defense Force. “People on campus were more sensitive to the border issue because of how close they were to the army.”<sup>12</sup> The shifting discourse about design and the student population at Bezalel created an environment in which students began developing a visual language that expanded the definition of design from formal concerns about the efficiency of communication, popularized by the International Style and Swiss Modernism, to include a discussion about the content being communicated. Questions of content and subjectivity entered a design discourse that for decades had been the exclusive domain of objective clarity, purity, legibility and perfection of form.<sup>13</sup>

The voices being expressed at Bezalel in the 1970s were part of a cultural shift that took place in Israel following the victory in the Six-Day War. Until 1967, the historic legacy of persecution and victimhood, coupled with the two decades of military mobilization in the effort to secure and defend the Zionist State, created a national “uniform collectivist mentality [that] left little room for nonconformist” thought.<sup>14</sup> During the first two decades of the new State of Israel, despite running against the long held Jewish tradition of diversity and heterogeneity, individualist and nonconformist worldviews were understood as demonstrations of egotism and viewed as harmful to the State’s security and internal goals.<sup>15</sup> Following the stunning victory in the 1967 war, the state-centric mentality lost strength. The existential threat represented by the Holocaust faded, and the military victory represented the ability of the young State to defend itself against external threat. The government gained a sense of legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens and as a player on the global scene.

The effects of the shifting internal political situation were compounded by the generational-shift taking place within the country. Beginning in the 1960s, the children of the 1948 “pioneer” generation were coming of age in this new climate of increased stability. Unlike their immigrant parents, who felt a constant need to defend their right to the land, this new generation had been born in Israel, raised speaking Hebrew and surrounded by Israeli culture. The severe economic hardships involved in establishing the State had been overcome, and this new generation was privileged to enjoy a higher standard of living.<sup>16</sup> After 1967, the

conservative atmosphere, maintained by social and economic policies dictated by the need to integrate and absorb hundreds of thousands of immigrants, began to open up. As old policies lost relevance, social, cultural and political ideas of Western liberalism percolated through Israeli society.<sup>17</sup> A growing awareness of the civil rights movement and anti-Vietnam protesting taking place in the United States at the time fueled the desire among the new generation of Israelis to cultivate a dissenting voice and engage in grassroots political activism.<sup>18</sup> Within the design community, this activist engagement found inspiration in the global popularity of posters as vehicles to challenge authority and spread ideas during social and political struggles.<sup>19</sup> Vardimon recalls that, as early as 1969, “I felt that we should be dealing with the real problem of what is happening to us and our society...[it was] the year after recovering from two years of winning the Six-Day War and there [were still] casualties on the borders every day; people started realizing that victory has its costs. From my own political views, dealing with occupied territories should be dealt with meaningfully.”<sup>20</sup> Vardimon was not the only designer who saw the need to address the political, economic, and socio-cultural consequences that arose as a result of the military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

David Tartakover (b. 1944), introduced the Israeli public to the politically engaged graphic designer through his work in the late 1970s. While other designers experimented personally with the new approach to design that viewed visual language as a tool for political participation in the early 1970s, Tartakover was the first to bring it into the mainstream. Tartakover, graphic designer, artists, researcher, teacher and curator, was born in Palestine and was a young boy of four when Israel declared Independence. Tartakover began his design education at Bezalel in 1964. Two years later, frustrated with Bezalel’s emphasis on the decorative rather than communicative aspects of design, he left Israel to complete his studies at the London College of Printing. Tartakover found himself back in Israel during the 1967 war fighting in the paratrooper’s brigade, but returned to London after the war to complete his studies.<sup>21</sup> In spite of, or perhaps because of the years he spent outside of Israel, Tartakover’s exceptional career is dedicated to exploring issues of locality and the post-1967 reality of living in a society that is an occupying power. Tartakover integrated his knowledge of and commitment to the local into his practice by signing his early works, “Produce of Israel.”

In 1975, Tartakover opened his own studio in Tel Aviv and has since been building his unique career centered on his philosophy that he is “designing culture.”<sup>22</sup> He does commercial work for cultural institutions to fund self-initiated political work dealing mainly with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Though his work,

produced mostly in Hebrew, is aimed at an Israeli audience, it receives international attention as it demonstrates a far-left point of view not typically associated with an Israeli position on the conflict. *Self Portrait*, from the beginning of his career, in which the void of Tartakover's head is filled with the silhouette of a *sabra* cactus, illustrates Tartakover's strategy of subverting Zionist symbols to achieve his mission of criticizing the injustice being done to the Palestinians through the occupation. Tartakover uses the iconic *sabra* cactus, to raise awareness of the problematic nature of ignoring the fact that Palestinians are equally native to the land as Israeli. In 2002, he completed *Stain, self portrait*, in which a stain in the shape of the West Bank appeared over his face. Both portraits, done twenty years apart, reflect Tartakover's familiarity with the visuals that define Israeli society and his sophisticated subversion of well known images as part of his protest against the occupation.



Left: *Self Portrait*  
1980  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>

Right: *Stain, self portrait*  
2002  
David Tartakover

In addition to his design work, Tartakover strengthens his knowledge about the legacy of local visual language as the foremost collector and researcher of Israeli graphic design, printed ephemera and vernacular visual culture; objects from his personal collection appear frequently in exhibitions about Israeli visual culture, many of which he curated. In 1996, he published, *Efob bayinu u-mab 'asinu: otsar shenot ha-hamishim veba-shishim* (*Where we have been and what we have done: the products of the 1950s and 1960s*), a lexicon of Israeli ephemera from the 1950s and 1960s. Tartakover's contribution to the Israeli artistic community was formally recognized in 2002, when he was awarded the Israel Prize for Design.<sup>23</sup>

Tartakover has taught at Bezalel since 1976. When speaking about the now popular practice of creating politically motivated design, he clarifies, "I was the first one to do this in Israel. The rest of the people doing

this [type of] work are my students.”<sup>24</sup> Though his political approach to design has been adopted by numerous students and designers, Tartakover tries “not to deal with the political situation with my students, but they know my work and they know my influence on their work.”<sup>25</sup> He avoids creating assignments for his students that demand they take a political perspective as he does not “believe in political work that is dictated. I believe in the self expression that people are passionate to react to the reality around them.”<sup>26</sup> Tartakover’s passion has earned him the respect of his fellow citizens and designers, many of whom view him as a role model and inspiration.

Before reading this account of the practices and work of Tartakover and his contemporaries who create left leaning political posters, the reader should understand that these designers do not constitute an organized social movement. The group of designers discussed here, despite working in the same physical space, addressing similar issues in their designs and the publication of many of their posters in catalogues, were not working collaboratively or as a movement with a set of collectively identified goals. In fact, many of the designers spoken of here have different opinions about their social responsibilities as designers as well as the potential influence of the work they create.

Tartakover’s earliest well-known piece, now a cultural icon, is his peace poster produced to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the State of Israel. The poster was designed two months before the visit of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and his now famous address to the Egyptian parliament in Cairo in which he expressed his willingness to visit Jerusalem. Prior to Sadat’s speech, the possibility of an Arab leader freely visiting Israel was unimaginable.<sup>27</sup> While more than forty years later, the blue sky and wispy clouds seem naïve, in 1977 associating this type of positive imagery with the potential relationship between Israel and an Arab country was unheard of. Tartakover seized on the unprecedented event to participate in the optimistic discussion about the potential outcomes of Sadat’s monumental visit. The piece was originally submitted to a national competition hosted by the State of Israel to create the official poster for the thirtieth anniversary of Israel’s independence. The poster received third place in the competition because the jury was uncomfortable with the minimalist conceptual design.<sup>28</sup> Despite not winning first place, Tartakover circulated the poster in the streets and on university campuses and the popularity of this easy-to-look-at image encouraged many Israelis to imagine a new future for the country.



Peace  
1977  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>

Tartakover continued the campaign during Sadat's visit in Israel with the production of the *Drishat Shalom* postcard. In Hebrew, *drishat shalom* literally translates into 'a wish of well-being,' a colloquial idiom used to greet a friend. However, when used by itself, the word *drishat* translates into the noun 'demand'; in the particular historical context of Sadat's visit, *drishat shalom* could additionally, if not primarily, be read as 'A Demand for Peace'.<sup>29</sup> Through his sophisticated mastery of the Hebrew language, Tartakover created a message that is simultaneously peaceful and provocative. His simple typographic treatment of the text places the message, not the visual, at the center of the piece. This early poster captures an aesthetic simplicity that characterizes Tartakover's body of work. His graphic approach prioritizes communication over creating a sophisticated or intricate visual design.



*Drishat Shalom*  
Above: postcard, right: billboard  
1977  
David Tartakover  
191177



Tartakover mailed copies of the postcard to Sadat, President Ephraim Katzir, Prime Minister Menachem Begin, all 120 members of Knesset, and every resident of Tel Aviv with the last name Shalom.<sup>30</sup> Additionally,

he printed the graphic as a full-scale billboard and hung it in five central locations across Tel Aviv where they remained up for the duration of Sadat's visit. Tartakover's design activities of 1977 demonstrated for the first time in Israel that a designer was not limited to commenting on the events occurring around them but could be an active participant, and potentially influence the political events unfolding in Israel.<sup>31</sup> By using his own funds to print and display his designs and mounting them in central Tel Aviv, Tartakover ensured that his message would be seen by a significant number of Israelis, not just designers. Though at present, urban interventions seem conventional, in the 1970s and 1980s in Israel when Tartakover began installing his public pieces, street art still carried a connotation of being a radical act of protest.

The following year, Tartakover repurposed *Shalom* as half of the logo for Peace Now, Israel's largest organized peace movement.<sup>32</sup> Peace Now began when a group of three-hundred and forty-eight reserve officers and soldiers from Israeli Defense Force (IDF) combat units published an open letter to Prime Minister Menachem Begin demanding that the opportunity for peace with Egypt not go unrealized.<sup>33</sup> In juxtaposing the word 'Peace', set in black using the Biblical inspired typeface Koren,<sup>34</sup> with the word 'Now,' set in red using a contemporary sans-serif typeface, Tartakover's design communicated the organization's approach of reverence for history as well as the need for urgent and timely action.<sup>35</sup> His use of two different typefaces from two different eras communicated the reality that the present situation is inextricably linked to the events and emotions of the past. The connotations carried in the different typefaces captured the decades of memories associated with the seemingly contradictory nature of the conflict; the visual harmony on the page suggested that these irreconcilable periods in time can coexist in the present.



*Peace Now logo*  
1978  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>

Tartakover's work and professional presence demonstrated to others that graphic design was a way for people to express a challenging opinion, and a tool that could be used to shift the discourse from one of black

and white (binary right and wrong) to include shades of grey. Though his influence on design within Israel is undeniable, Tartakover exercises modesty when speaking about the impact of his work. He insists, “I don’t think that my work influences people. It has an influence on students and on people who are interested in design. But to change public opinion you need a big budget. My work changes the consciousness of people, makes them think, but not their attitude.”<sup>36</sup> He acknowledges that as a graphic designer, “I’m not going to change reality. Reality is much stronger than my work. [My work] reflects the reality in the environment I live in.”<sup>37</sup> Rather than viewing his designs as having a specific goal, he understands his designs as “self expression and therapy.”<sup>38</sup> Molcho similarly views his designs as “mostly...self expression and a reflection.”<sup>39</sup> Vardimon concurs with Tartakover and Molcho, stating that as designers, “we cannot bring peace, [but] we can be a part of a movement of thought.”<sup>40</sup>

Despite acknowledging the limitations of design, Tartakover and Molcho used the poster as a way to call attention to invisible or intentionally overlooked aspects of Israel’s pervasive military culture. During the controversial 1982 war in Lebanon, they pasted posters in the streets and distributed them at demonstrations and on university campuses as a way to comment on and investigate the larger effects of the reality that “war [had become] the central common and private experience of the ‘Israeli man.’”<sup>41</sup> Rather than supporting the decisions of the IDF as necessary to State security, Tartakover and Molcho created posters in response to the First Lebanon War that emphasized the destruction, death and devastation the war caused for both sides. Through the juxtaposition of text and image, designers questioned the motivation and success of the military campaign given the high price that everyone involved seemed to be paying.

In *Who will utter the mighty acts of Israel*, produced after the massacres at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, Tartakover overlaid lyrics from a popular Jewish song about the heroic acts of the re-consecration of the Temple in the story of Hanukkah on top of an image of a woman in despair. The use of lyrics from a popular hymn about the Macabees, heroic Jews, subverted the original meaning and placed it in a new context that raised questions about the merits of fighting. Tartakover questioned the Zionist ideology in which military strength and patriotism had become inseparable. The nationality of the woman remained unknown and called to light the reality that both the Israelis and Lebanese were suffering from the ‘mighty acts’ of the IDF. The ambiguity of the image allowed Tartakover to explore the idea that meaning and values are neither fixed nor natural. The timing of the poster, produced just before the IDF entered its second year of the Lebanon War

and as the Israeli government declared the upcoming year the “Year of Heroism,” accentuated Tartakover’s subtle attack on the Zionist mythos being promoted by the Israeli government.<sup>42</sup>



*Who will utter the mighty acts of Israel*  
1982  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>



*To War*  
1983  
Ilan Molcho  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>



*The National Camp*  
1984  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>

The juxtaposition of ancient texts against contemporary imagery was and continues to be a frequently explored locally specific, left-wing design strategy. In *To War*, Molcho placed a quote from the *Song of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness*, one of the Dead Sea scrolls found in a cave near Qumran, below an image of a fallen soldier covered in an Israel flag. The quote reads, “When they go to war, they write on their flag, ‘In defense of God’s truth, God’s righteousness, God’s honor, God’s Justice.’” The title *To War* rests above the IDF badge used during the First Lebanon War. A popular account of the *Song of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness* asserts that it was written by the Essenes, a sect of Jews who flourished in isolation in Qumran from the second century BCE to the first century CE as they awaited the End of Days. According to this account, the Essenes believed that when the battle of the End of Days occurred, they, the “Sons of Light,” would battle the “Sons of Darkness.” With the aid of God, the “Sons of Light” would defeat the “Sons of Darkness” and return to Jerusalem to worship God in the future Temple.<sup>43</sup> In *To War* Molcho draws from this interpretation of Jewish history to suggest similarities between the invasion of Lebanon and the behavior the Jewish zealots at Qumran. Through the juxtaposition of this ancient text and contemporary imagery, Molcho used the tale of the Essenes as a warning of the potential dangers of legitimizing military actions using religious or Zionist doctrine. Molcho’s visual metaphor commented on the importance of differentiating between notions of human and

divine justice.<sup>44</sup> Recent scholarship on the Dead Sea Scrolls posits that Qumran was in fact a Roman plantation and that the Essenes never existed. That Molcho's poster was based on popular misinformation about the Essenes emphasizes that these posters are polemical. Their factual accuracy is immaterial; the emotional content is what gives them their communicative power.

In *The National Camp*, designed and printed two years after the start of the Lebanon War, Tartakover further probed the Zionist concept of Israeli patriotism by juxtaposing a black and white image of a military cemetery against the text 'The National Camp,' the slogan being used by the right-wing Likud party during the 1984 election. The morbid reference was intended to force the viewers to think about the repercussions of the country's military agenda. Again Tartakover graphically communicated the multivalent meanings behind Israeli nationalism. The use of journalistic photography in both posters enhanced the urgency and controversy of the message and the design. When describing Tartakover's early posters, Vardimon states that, "the use of photography, not illustration, was very provocative."<sup>45</sup>

Though the raw, immediate aesthetic used by Tartakover could be discussed within the general stylistic shift away from clean modernism that was taking place in the late 1970s and early 1980s across the globe or in terms of the technological and economic limitations within which he was working, Tartakover's approach has a culturally specific twist. His 1987 *Freehand Design* embodies his design philosophy which prioritizes communicating a message over adhering to an aesthetic agenda.



*Freehand Design*  
1987  
David Tartakover  
Photographer: zoom 77  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>

Tartakover's cut-and-paste approach was directly influenced by the events surrounding the 1986 arrest of Mordechai Vanunu, a former nuclear technician who, until 2004, was in prison for revealing Israel's atomic secrets to the British press. While Vanunu was being driven to court, under heavy escort, he used the only communication channel available to him to send a message to the press. He wrote the location and date when

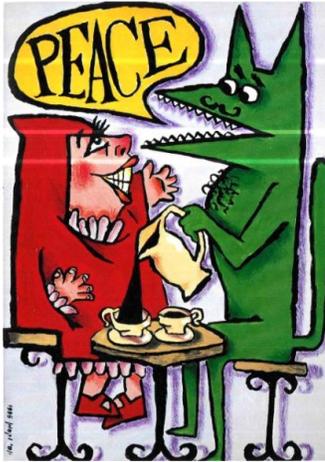
he was kidnapped by the Mossad, censored information that was banned for publication in Israel, on the palm of his hand in black marker and pressed his palm up to the window of the prison van.<sup>46</sup> Tartakover's language over style philosophy was inspired by Vanunu's ability to "[transmit] a direct message, in "real time", to the media."<sup>47</sup> Tartakover applied Vanunu's 'work with what you have' design strategy throughout his career. His frequent use of photography can be understood as a manifestation of his *Free Hand* philosophy; in the 1980s, before image processing software was available and these posters were created by cutting, pasting and layering rather than digital manipulation, large black and white images were "fast, direct, and cheap to produce."<sup>48</sup>

Other designers who were interested in using design to comment on the political situation shared Tartakover's ambivalence about the prominence of aesthetics in graphic design. Molcho agrees that, "I'm not into style, I'm into content."<sup>49</sup> While insisting, "for me personally, style was not very important," Molcho acknowledges that as a graphic designer "obviously you can't escape it because this is the environment you are working in, and technology and other people are influencing you."<sup>50</sup> He maintains that despite the pressure of external factors, "I have my own way of looking at things."<sup>51</sup> Molcho explained that this approach led him to develop a design process in which he will "start with a word, [think] of a concept and then try to work from there... [to find the appropriate images which have] to back [the concept] up."<sup>52</sup> Vardimon adds a slightly different opinion to the mix when he stated in a 2003 interview, "Trends are a visitor worth knowing. Get acquainted, be charmed, be adventurous, but never forget yourself."<sup>53</sup> Given that the designers all agree that style is a necessary outcome of visual creation but is not the goal of the visual act, the stylistic variation seen in the works should be understood as an expression of the priorities of designers in Israel. Rather than understanding style as a visual expression of design discourse, designers in Israel speak of style as a means to an end, not as the end in itself. The emphasis on style that dominated North American and European debates of design during the later decades of the twentieth century were not the focus of attention in Israel. The stylistic plurality can additionally be read as a manifestation of the characteristic multiplicity of social and political viewpoints that exist within Israel.

Though some designers were looking past the aesthetic potential of design to create critical posters, much of the work produced in the first half of the 1980s demonstrated a lack of sophistication in the use of design as an analytical language. Rather than using visual language as a way to raise questions about the status quo and the military, government or ideological apparatus being used to maintain it, designers used a utopian language

to express a desire for a peaceful coexistence. They did not investigate the meaning behind local images and symbols being used at the time nor what they represented about the ideological roots of the conflict. In 1985, to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary, the Graphic Designers Association of Israel organized a poster exhibition and catalogue addressing the theme of peace, to appear at the First International Congress of Visual Communication in Haifa.<sup>54</sup> The introduction describes a wide range of emotions communicated in the posters, “optimism, realism, pessimism, sometimes even desperation, but mainly hope—whether universal and humanistic or personal and national—which expresses the climate we live in.”<sup>55</sup> A closer analysis of the collection of posters reveals a more naïve story; perhaps equally expressive of the general climate of naïve optimism that was popular at the time.

Though the catalogue celebrated the work for “[deepening] the artistic link between the designers and the public” and “[helping] the Association to break out of its narrow professional limits into the area of art and culture,” only a handful of the posters published in *Personal Expression of Peace* pushed the use of graphic metaphor further than empty clichés.<sup>56</sup> Yossi Vaxman’s posters played on the ubiquitous children’s fairy tale Little Red Riding Hood. Vaxman used the tale as a metaphor to express his skepticism towards the good intentions of Israel’s partners in the peace process. Vaxman’s playful illustrative style reinforced his suggestion that Israeli policy in regards to the peace process was ignoring obvious warning signs of danger. Shimon Hai’s poster used a similarly childlike illustrative style to comment on the absurdity of the expectation that a viable peace could hatch from an egg of war. The critique that reappears in these and the other posters pointed out the inherent contradiction of nurturing the seeds of peace in a climate of war. Zvi Rosenberg’s poster communicated the feeling that turning back on peace was not an option and captured a popular opinion that there was no alternative than to continue the efforts, whatever the price, to reach a peaceful settlement.<sup>57</sup> By using the visual language of traffic signs, Rosenberg subtly commented on the fact that more Israelis die annually in traffic accidents than in terror and war. His image ironically pointed out that in the same way that Israelis routinely ignore traffic signs, they are ignoring the need to be active participants in the peace process. Rosenberg questioned the influence the Zionist description of Israel’s unwavering commitment to peace was having on the discussion at the time.



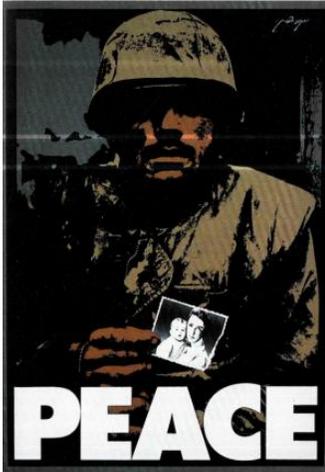
*Peace*  
1986  
Yossi Vaxman  
*Personal Expressions of Peace*



*Untitled*  
1986  
Shimon Hai  
*Personal Expressions of Peace*



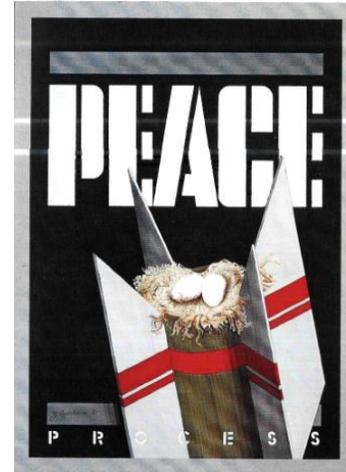
*Untitled*  
1986  
David Tartakover  
*Personal Expressions of Peace*



*Untitled*  
1986  
Yitzhak Yarkoni  
*Personal Expressions of Peace*



*Peace No U-turn*  
1986  
Zvi Rosenberg  
*Personal Expressions of Peace*



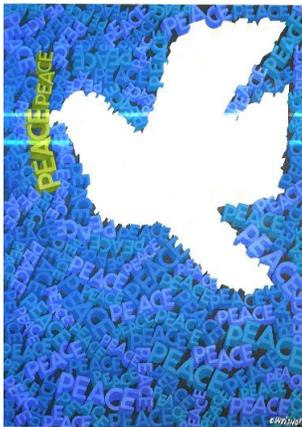
*Untitled*  
1986  
Yaacov Oppenheim  
*Personal Expressions of Peace*

Though a few designers used visual wit to explore the paradoxical peace process, the majority of works relied on visual clichés and lacked fresh insight into the causes of, or solutions to, the ongoing violent conflict Israel faced. Tartakover condemned the work of his contemporaries in the 1980s, and continues to differentiate himself on the basis that, “I don’t deal with shit like doves. This is all clichés. Most people who think they are doing agitation work are doing clichés. Very few people are doing stuff that has real meaning. I think I belong to a very small group of designers who are agitating reality. I don’t think there are many serious ones in the world.”<sup>58</sup> Tartakover’s harsh criticism accurately depicts the majority of posters that appeared in *Personal Expressions of Peace*. Whether referring to Maurice Arbel’s map of the world with the world ‘PEACE’ spelled out

twice, or to the countless posters in which the dove makes his appearance, the bulk of posters from *Personal Expressions* presented hollow metaphors of a decontextualized, utopian, undefined peace. Additionally, while many of the posters were bilingual, none employ Arabic, demonstrating a lack of cultural inclusion. In spite of this criticism, the optimism communicated through the bright colors used in these posters contributed to a hopeful dialogue in which designers encouraged the collective orientation to shift from a fearful orientation motivated by negative associations with past historical events to a hopeful orientation in which constructed positive images of the future.<sup>59</sup>



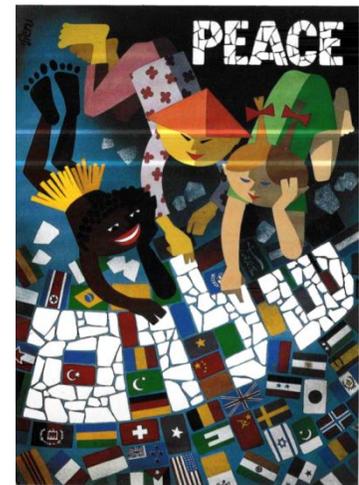
Untitled  
1986  
Jakov Enyedi  
*Personal Expressions of Peace*



Untitled  
1986  
Eliezer Weishoff  
*Personal Expressions of Peace*



Untitled  
1986  
Maurice Arbel  
*Personal Expressions of Peace*



Untitled  
1986  
Nachasholy Barak  
*Personal Expressions of Peace*



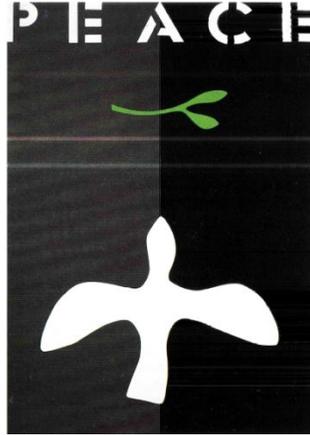
Untitled  
1986  
Ari Ron  
*Personal Expressions of Peace*



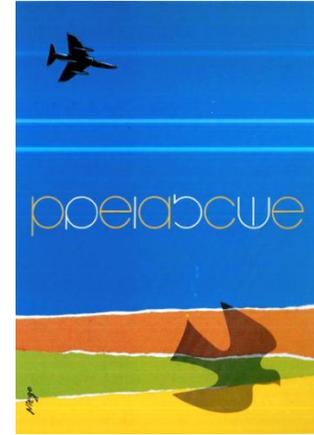
Untitled  
1986  
Moshe Amar  
*Personal Expressions of Peace*



*Untitled*  
1986  
Roni Rehav  
*Personal Expressions of Peace*



*Untitled*  
1986  
Amram Prath  
*Personal Expressions of Peace*



*Untitled*  
1986  
Shlomo Niego  
*Personal Expressions of Peace*

During the 1980s, the First Lebanon War and the strengthening expressions of Palestinian national identity and determination that culminated in the violence of the *Intifada* created an increasingly convoluted political and military situation in Israel. Graphic designers developed a more critical language as the reality that surrounded them could no longer be adequately understood through simple metaphors. As the decade unfolded, the optimistic blue sky of Tartakover's 1977 work transformed into a more cynical, violent language. By the mid 1980s, Tartakover and some of his contemporaries were developing a graphic language that drew from contemporary images and Israeli culture to critique the relationship between cyclical violence and the Israeli national identity.

*Happy New Year* is one of the first in the ongoing series of annual posters in which Tartakover reacts to the climate of the year. Tartakover mails out approximately two-hundred New Years posters to students, members of the media, universities and anyone he feels would be willing to hang the print. The 1983 poster features a close-up image of a hand grenade, commemorating Emil Grunzweig, a protester killed at a Peace Now demonstration in Jerusalem, when a grenade was thrown into the crowd by Yonah Avrushmi, a right-wing militant.



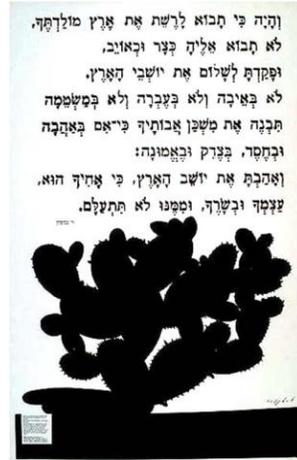
*Happy New Year*  
1983  
David Tartakover  
Photographer: Avi Ganor  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>

In Hebrew, the word for grenade is the same as the word for pomegranate, *rimon*. Pomegranates are traditionally eaten on Jewish New Years since according to Jewish tradition the fruit is said to have six-hundred and thirteen seeds; the number of commandments in the Hebrew Bible. This numerology makes the pomegranate a symbol of righteousness. By featuring the grenade, Tartakover made a visual connection between the historically held reverence for the sacred fruit and the contemporary reverence held for weapons. Through his wit, Tartakover remarked on the fact that fighting had become the new form of wisdom in contemporary Israeli culture. In a second layer of meaning, Tartakover alluded to the pomegranate's status as one of the Hebrew Bible's Seven Species, *Shiv'at Ha-minim*, which designers in the first half of the century imbued with Zionist symbolism.<sup>60</sup> Tartakover thus critiqued both the military force needed to maintain the security of a nation built on an ideological language that declared the territory the historical Jewish homeland, as well as the use of violence by right-wing Israelis against left-wing Israelis.

In *And the Truth Shall Spring From the Earth* and *And When You Shall Go In* Tartakover used the image of the cactus to question the cultural primacy of the *sabra* and the mistreatment of Israeli-Arab citizens living in Israel, and Palestinian refugees living in the occupied territories. Tartakover criticized the way Israeli culture denied the existence of a Palestinian population and their inhabitation of the land before the arrival of Jewish settlers and ignored the Palestinian refugee crisis.



*And the Truth Shall  
Spring From the Earth*  
1985  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>



*And When You Shall Go In*  
1980  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>



*And When You Shall Go In*  
1980  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>

In *And the Truth Shall Spring From the Earth* the word אמת, truth, reads from both left to right and top to bottom, as do the words תצמך, shall spring, and מארץ, from the earth. Through the typographic repetition, Tartakover spelled out his belief that regardless of the popular historical narrative which denied existence of an indigenous Palestinian population, the truth about their mistreatment by Zionist settlers would inevitably surface. In *And When You Shall Go In*, a project commissioned by a German gallery, Tartakover used a quotation from Rabbi Binyamin, a pseudonym of the humanist writer Yehoshua Radler-Feldmann, to demonstrate the hypocrisy of the Zionist use of the Bible to justify the ethnic cleansing that occurred during the 1948 War. The quotation, written in the 1930s reads,

And when you shall go in to possess your homeland, do not go therein as an enemy, nor as foe. You shall come to the inhabitants of the land in the spirit of peace. Not by malice, not by transgression, nor by animosity will you build the homeland of thy forefathers, but by love and mercy, righteousness and faith. And you shall love the inhabitants of the land, for thy brothers they are, your own flesh and blood, and you shall not disregard them.<sup>61</sup>

The image of the *sabra* raised the question of who is native to the land and reinforced Tartakover's skepticism towards the popular narrative that the Palestinians fled their land in 1948. Tartakover not only printed *And When You Shall Go In* as a poster, but also as a large scale outdoor graphic which he installed on public columns throughout Munich. By creating the public work in Germany, Tartakover probed the relationship between the destruction of the Jewish community in Munich during the Nazi regime and the discriminatory policies the

Israeli government has in place against Palestinians. The shock of seeing Hebrew letters on the streets of late twentieth-century Munich challenges the subtext of the ubiquitous presence of Hebrew on Israeli streets.

In the late 1980s, a number of factors converged to strengthen the critical voice of graphic design. Of primary importance was a generational shift unfolding within Israeli academies. After the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the shock of the 1973 Yom Kippur War near defeat, and the highly debated 1982 invasion of Lebanon, many young-adults in Israel felt they had been lied to and that they were being encouraged to focus their energies in order to sustain the false narrative. The moral rallying in support of the Zionist myth that had been so successful during the formative year of the State lost its original meaning among the younger generation who were suspicious of information being given to them through State propaganda, State curriculum and mainstream news media. Lahav Halevy (b. 1965), a practicing designer, comments on his place within the generational shift, “As the circle grows, issues change. I remember the Yom Kippur war. I was eight years old. All I knew [was] that three days after the war started, the mothers said that we were winning. I knew then that people were lying to us.”<sup>62</sup> Graphic designers were among the early adopters of publicly voicing this new skepticism.

This uncertainty strengthened as this new generation of thinkers reached maturity in the 1980s. During the late '80s, a group of academics, mainly historians and sociologists, published a large number of books promoting new, critical perspectives.<sup>63</sup> The New Historians made use of newly declassified military and government documents from 1948 to challenge long held conceptions about the War of Independence.<sup>64</sup> The Critical Sociologists analyzed pre-statehood documents through new frameworks to examine the ideological substructure of Israel.<sup>65</sup> Initially, the majority of academics, still within the largely conformist Zionist tradition, rejected the charge of Zionism as colonialism presented in the New History and Critical Sociology.

Despite being met by fierce critics, the New Historians and the Critical Sociologists worked tirelessly to defrock decades-old myths in order to broaden the Zionist discourse to include Palestinians.<sup>66</sup> Their work was revolutionary; for the first time in the history of the State of Israel, a large academic movement was encouraging a loss of certainty that Israeli actions were right. They defended their actions against those who called them traitors by explaining that ideological self-awareness on the part of Israel was the necessary first step to conflict resolution.<sup>67</sup> They stood firmly behind their claims that through admitting Israel's actions as a colonizing force, a better understanding of the tumultuous relationship between Israelis and Palestinians could

be reached. They further explained that a key component in understanding the power dynamic between the two nations would require both a historical recognition of the Palestinians' existence and an understanding of the Palestinian "disaster" of 1948, referred to in Arabic as the *Nakba*, caused by the establishment of the State of Israel.<sup>68</sup>

These dissenting voices, which had been marginalized during the first decades of the country while all efforts were focused on building the Zionist State, gained strength as Israel reached its national adolescence. The new discourse, often termed postZionism, offered Israelis a way to discuss the undemocratic and hypocritical government policies that had been employed through decades of building the Zionist myth. In the introduction to the seminal work *Postzionism: a Reader*, Laurence Silberstein succinctly summarizes the objectives of the postZionist discussion: "...postzionism seeks to bring to light and challenge the neglected, unseen, or concealed power effects of Zionist discourse."<sup>69</sup> The new intellectual space created through these discussions encouraged reflection and offered the possibility for a more critical, dynamic and diverse Jewish life in Israel.<sup>70</sup>

The outbreak of the first *Intifada* in 1987 pushed more graphic designers to shift the focus of their work from abstract expressions of a longing for peace to more pointed critiques of specific actions of the Israeli government. In line with the writings of the New Historians and the Critical Sociologists, designers worked to expose the myths of Independence and the ideological underpinnings of their culture. Many posters from the late 1980s presented the ideas of the New Historians and Critical Sociologist to the general public in a more accessible format than the dense academic writings. Like the publications, they functioned to widen discourse and make a cultural space where voicing dissenting opinions in an open discussion was more acceptable.

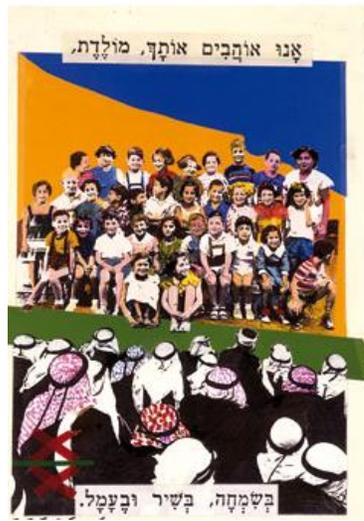
The violence of the first *Intifada* left the country in a state of constant emergency and ideological confusion. The continued rioting suggested that the method of military management was not the appropriate reaction to the rising strength of the Palestinian nationalist movement.<sup>71</sup> To many Israelis, the *Intifada* represented a need for change ideologically as well as politically. Tartakover played the leading role in the leftist design community who responded to the military and social climate of the time. He repurposed images from the media to add immediacy to his messages and ground them in real life. During this period Tartakover's designs continued to break down the barrier between designer and social commentator. Tartakover plastered the streets and university campuses with the posters he created during the years of the *Intifada*. He recruited the help of students to distribute his pieces, inviting a growing community of designers to participate in his graphic

protest and capitalize on the fact that “freedom of speech exists in Israel.”<sup>72</sup> While many of the posters provoked fierce debate, most were not taken down. When asked how he understood the function of his work within Israel, Tartakover remarked, “I see myself as a seismographer of social and political phenomena in Israel. I absorb the vibes and translate them into visual expression. My response to the reality I live in can sometimes be sharp, caustic, thought-provoking. Also, it is a kind of therapy.”<sup>73</sup>

The posters he produced during the first two years of the *Intifada* questioned the IDF’s brutal military tactics, and encouraged Israelis to empathize with rather than villainize the Palestinians. In *Mother*, the meeting of a Palestinian woman and a young Israeli soldier asks both sides to recognize the humanity of the other. As the Palestinian mother is reminded of her son by the soldier, the young soldier is reminded not only of his worrying Israeli mother, but also that this woman, and countless other women, are mothers concerned about the well-being of their children. In *We Love You Oh Homeland in Joy, Song and Labor...*, Tartakover contrasted his first-grade class photograph with a photograph of a group of Palestinians. By having the two groups face each other across a thick green line, referring to the 1949 to 1967 demarcation line known as the Green Line, Tartakover commented on the fact that both groups feel a sense of ownership and pride over the same territory and are equally influenced by nationalist propaganda from an early age. By using a photograph of his first-grade class and placing himself and his contemporaries as subjects in the work, Tartakover made the reality of the situation more tangible and acknowledged his personal role in working to both raise awareness and find a solution. In addition to encouraging an understanding of the Palestinian position amongst Israelis, Tartakover commented on the inseparability of violence and daily life during the *Intifada*. In *Happy New Year*, the 1987 poster that belongs to the ongoing New Years series, a Coca-Cola bottle is fashioned as a Molotov cocktail; Coca-Cola bottles were simultaneously being used by fighters in the *Intifada* to create home-made bombs and by local merchants as containers to sell olive oil.<sup>74</sup> During the *Intifada*, the Molotov cocktail had become as ubiquitous as Coca-Cola and olive oil in the region. Tartakover probed the relationship between the local and global economy and the recent rise in violence.



*Mother*  
1987  
David Tartakover  
Photographer: Jim  
Holander, Reuters  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il>



*We Love You Oh Homeland in Joy,  
Song and Labor...*  
1987  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>  
Client: Hadashot newspaper,  
Magazine cover



*Happy New Year*  
1987  
David Tartakover  
Photographer: Oded Klein  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il>

In *And Babies*, Tartakover references the international tradition of anti-violence posters. By quoting Ron Haeberle and Peter Brandt's famous anti-Vietnam poster from 1970, Tartakover aligned himself with the ideals of the Art Worker's Coalition. Tartakover associated himself with a group of artists who were disaffected with the established art institution and determined to create an institutional environment that publicly voiced a moral stance on the Vietnam War.<sup>75</sup> By reusing *And Babies* Tartakover equated the military atrocities committed by the IDF to those committed by the American military during the Vietnam War. In a similar way that Ron Haeberle and Peter Brandt called attention to the 1969 My Lai massacre, Tartakover called attention to the daily violent acts occurring in the occupied territories. Additionally, his repurposing of the posters created a conscious parallel between himself and the Art Worker's Coalition; as the Coalition called on the MoMA, Tartakover called on his fellow designers to take a moral stance on the *Intifada*.

In *Design & Society*, Tartakover used a national conference being held at the Israel Museum titled Design & Society as a basis for his criticism of the priorities of the design profession. Tartakover declined the invitation to attend the conference and sent the poster in his place. The poster was hung around the Museum during the conference, expressing his outrage that while Palestinian homes were being demolished or sealed off by the IDF, tangible effects of design decisions, the Israeli designer community was busying itself discussing theoretical issues and aesthetic possibilities.<sup>76</sup> In *And Babies* and *Design & Society*, Tartakover expressed a self-

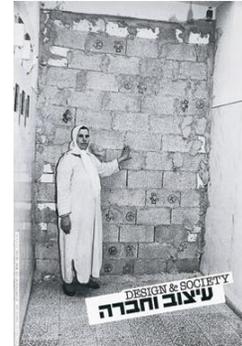
referential idea about the role of design in shaping cultural discourse and the physical environment in which the conflict was unfolding.



*Down with the Occupation*  
1987  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il>



*And Babies*  
1988  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>



*Design and Society*  
1988  
David Tartakover  
Photographer: Alex Lievack,  
Derech Ha-Nitzotz  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>

PostZionist design gained momentum and recognition through *Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters*, a collection of posters published in 1988 as an alternative to the State-initiated annual Independence Day poster competition. Given the early experimentation with computers that graphic designers in other parts of the world were engaged in by the late 1980s, the illustrative conceptual style of the posters was not aesthetically innovative. Despite this, the posters published in *Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters* were ideologically provocative and established an alternate tradition in which designers embraced their responsibility “to announce and point out the difficult and tragic phenomenon of racism, bigotry, aggressiveness, and violence occurring in front of Israeli’s eyes and warn society that if these trends continued, Israel would be led down a road of destruction and devastation.”<sup>77</sup> Molcho describes the annual tradition as “a once a year activity in thinking.”<sup>78</sup> They are significant in that they force designers to ask themselves “What do we have to think about, to do differently? [The annual poster encouraged designers to] pick-up an issue that was relevant.”<sup>79</sup> When discussing *Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters*, Vardimon noted that “the works were more critical than praising, and more disturbing than exciting...The phenomenon of ugly and aggressive design, which connects pain and anger through cynicism and through efficient and simple tools, was at times almost revolutionary.”<sup>80</sup> *Israel 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters* was a landmark exhibition in the subversive use of visual language by a growing number of leftist designers.

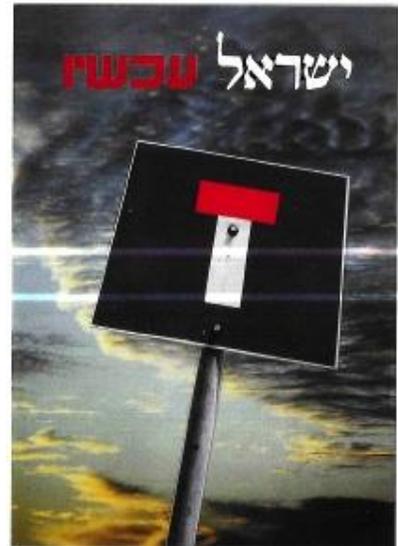
Iris Dishon’s (b. 1949) poster parodies an iconic photograph of the founding father of Zionism, Theodor Herzl, leaning pensively over a balcony at the first Zionist Conference in Basel, Switzerland in 1897. By

replacing the image of Herzl, who had become an ideological trade character in the Zionist project, with Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), Dishon asked Israelis to consider the similarities between Herzl, a national hero, and Arafat, a national villain. Dishon used the visual comparison to raise questions about the Israeli criticism of Arafat for his global capital raising travels, appearances at international conferences, and moral rallying of the Palestinian people behind the national liberation. In pointing out the parallels between Arafat's activities and those carried out by Herzl at the turn of the century, Dishon questioned the Zionist belief in the right of Israel to exist and the denial of the Palestinian right to nationhood.<sup>81</sup> Through a postZionist lens, Dishon's comparison reminded Israelis that the founding ideology of Zionism was not without flaw. Arafat's image calls to mind the major fault of the Zionist project: Zionism ignored the reality that there was already an Arab population inhabiting their homeland.<sup>82</sup> By pushing the limits of ideological conventions, the posters of Dishon and her contemporaries encouraged a healthy debate about the legacy of the Zionist project and its effects on the quest for peace during a period of instability and violent conflict.



Left: *Untitled*  
1988  
Iris Dishon  
*Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters*

Right: *Untitled (Israel Now)*  
1988  
David Harel  
*Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters*



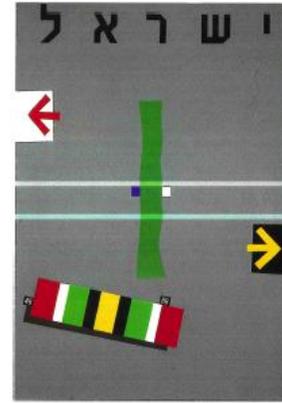
*Israel Ishmael*  
1988  
Orit Gilinsky  
*Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters*



Untitled  
1988  
Yigal Gross  
*Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters*



Untitled  
1988  
Arnon Togiland  
*Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters*



Untitled  
1988  
Yarom Vardimon  
*Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters*

Many posters in *Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters* spoke to the parallel narratives of Israelis and Palestinians. Orit Gilinsky's poster *Israel/Ishmael*, refers to the Biblical tension between Isaac and Ishmael, sons of Abraham. Ishmael, the son of Abraham with Sarah's handmaiden Hagar, was banished and is viewed as the father of the Arab nation. Gilinsky called out the historical tension between the two nations while simultaneously raising the question of how that history affects the contemporary conflict over the land. Acknowledging Ishmael punctured a hole in the argument that Land of Israel is the exclusive territory of the Jewish people from Biblical times. Gilinsky highlighted the danger of justifying contemporary actions with Biblical sources, as they are not only open for interpretation, but also a source of evidence for the opposing side.

David Harel's poster referenced Tartakover's 1977 *Shalom* as well as the Peace Now logo. Harel replaced Tartakover's wispy white clouds and light blue sky with an ominous sunset. Rather than reading, *Peace Now*, Harel's poster reads *Israel Now*. His replacements commented on the shift in government priorities during the decade. Harel's design remarked on the movement away from peace and towards self-serving State reinforcing land policies. The menacing sky intimated Harel's dire view of what such policy would bring.

*Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters* introduced the visual manipulations of the flag of Israel or the Star of David that replaced the use of the dove as the dominant symbol in graphic works by politically engaged designers. The recurring deconstruction of the national symbol can be read as representing a rising insecurity about the legitimacy of the Israeli national project. Zionism was constructed on a fundamental assumption that the physical land of Israel was the biblical right of the Jewish people and the Israeli flag came to symbolize that right. If the blue and white stripes and star of the flag were used to establish a consensual knowledge about the

natural right to the land and the national allegiance to the Jewish character of the State, the deconstruction of the ideologically significant and meaningful symbol promoted the postZionist awareness that a population of people already inhabited the land when the State was established. The powerful symbolic play encouraged further thought into the unspoken consequences of the ambiguities and uncertainties inherent in attempting to build a Jewish State.



Untitled  
1985  
Chava Mordohovich  
*Personal Expressions of Peace*



Untitled (40 years and not everything is blue and white)  
1988  
Ami Ravid & Yoram Tzoneg  
*Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters*



Untitled (Israel Peace Palestine)  
1988  
Prosper Ben Harosh  
*Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters*



Untitled  
1988  
Shumlik Selah  
*Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters*



Untitled  
1988  
Dov Paz  
*Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters*



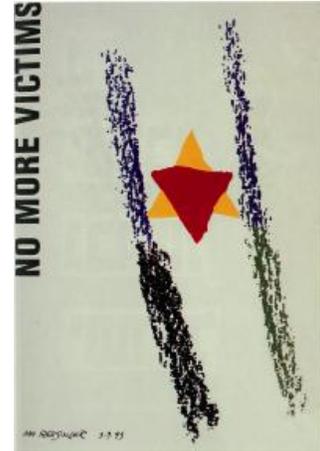
Untitled  
1988  
Rachel Dvir  
*Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters*



*Untitled*  
1988  
Eldad Shav  
*Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters*



*Roots*  
1991  
Ben-Ami Ratinsky  
*Both Sides of Peace*



*No More Victims*  
1993  
Dan Reisinger  
*Both Sides of Peace*

Tami Berger's *Independence Day* intertwined the Israeli and Palestinian flags. At the time, the poster was banned by the Israeli government under the premise that showing the Palestinian flag was illegal. The posters simultaneously commemorated the fortieth anniversary of Israel and the first anniversary of the *Intifada*. Berger's acknowledgement of both events through the knotted flags demonstrated that the two anniversaries were related and that the histories of the two peoples were inextricably linked to the events of 1948.<sup>83</sup> Zeev Harrari's poster represented the situation as a patchwork of two cultures attempting to be stitched together in one territory. The Star of David patch recalls the yellow star worn by Jews during the Holocaust. The star patch, used in the center of the Israeli flag, represents the Jewish collective memory of the Holocaust and the influence the European genocide had on the realization of the State as well as the continued impact it has on State policy. The circular patches of kaffiya, a scarf adopted as an emblem of Palestinian nationalism, represent Harrari's opinion that Palestinian nationalism was only being considered as an afterthought. The choice of dark, militaristic colors instead of blue and white communicated Harrari's pessimism about future of the sutured society in which he was living.<sup>84</sup>



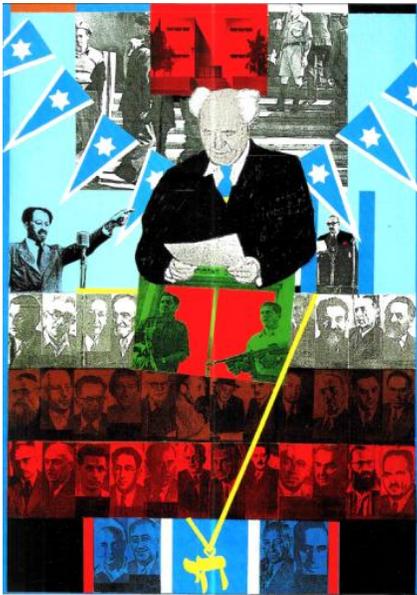
Left: *Independence Day*  
1988  
Tami Berger  
*Both Sides of Peace*

Right: *Untitled*  
1988  
Zeev Harrari  
*Both Sides of Peace*

Rather than limiting his celebration to one poster in *Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters*, Tartakover celebrated Israel's fortieth Independence Day by creating twenty-one collages to illustrate the nineteen paragraphs of the Israeli Declaration of Independence. Tartakover approached the Israel Museum with the project and the collages were mounted as Proclamation of Independence, an exhibition and printed book that was sold in the Museum shop and local bookstores. In each collage, Tartakover pulled images from centuries of Jewish history and layered them on top of each other; the finished compositions collapse decades of history into a single space that present the viewers with heavily layered visuals that at times act as an archeological dig through the annals of Zionist mythology and Jewish history. The juxtapositions created in each collage drew from the collective Israeli memory to expose relationships between people and events from different eras, locations and narratives. The rough cuts, saturated colors, pixilated and xeroxed images of the collages create a finished piece that demonstrates Tartakover's concern that his work be reflective rather than aesthetically pleasing.

Tartakover's intention, as stated in the introduction, was not to ask or answer questions such as 'what specifically makes a Jewish state,' or 'who is a Jew,' but rather to document a comparison between the original Declaration and the present day reality. He harshly and critically contrasted the flowery phrases and expressions of desire in the announcement of the State with the reality of life in Israel. In the collage accompanying the climactic paragraph of the Declaration, an image of David Ben-Gurion reading the Declaration is placed in front of a contemporary Israeli Independence Day decoration. The mass manufactured flags critiqued the banalization of the monumental day of the Declaration and the loss of meaning that resulted in the overuse of the symbol. The saturation of Israeli culture with the image of the flag of Israel drained the once ideologically

powerful symbol of its original strength and meaning; if once the flag stood for the victory of the Zionist movement, it had now become diluted by its ubiquitous appearance.



Collage accompanying paragraph eleven

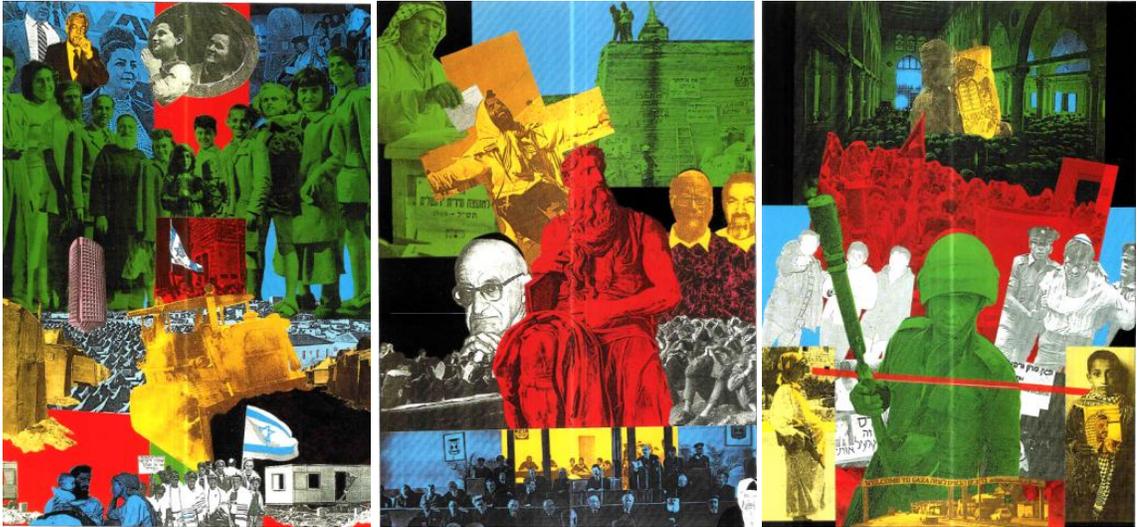
1988

David Tartakover

*ba-Hakbrazah 'al bakamat ha-medinah*

“Accordingly we, members of The People’s Council, representatives of the Jewish Community of Eretz-Israel and of the Zionist Movement, are here assembled on the day of the termination of the British Mandate over Eretz-Israel and, by virtue of our natural and historic right and on the strength of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz-Israel, to be known as the State of Israel.”

In the same way that the collage technique allowed Tartakover to collapse history into a single space, it also allowed him to challenge dichotomies of us versus them, construction versus destruction, and immigration versus emigration. In the first of the three-part collage below, Tartakover included images of different immigrant communities calling attention the reality that new immigrants faced discrimination. The abandoned settlement and bulldozer symbolized an inherent conflict in Israeli expansion; development on one end means destruction and evacuation on the other. In the second collage, Tartakover contrasted images from Judaism, Christianity and Islam to point out that Israel is more accurately depicted through its internal division than any attempt to represent it as a single entity. He questioned the success with which Israel is “[safeguarding] the Holy Places of all religions.” In the third collage he placed images of Jewish refugees from the Holocaust next to images of Palestinian refugees. The eerie similarity between the image of the entry gate to Gaza City at the bottom of the collage and the gate to Auschwitz, the Nazi death camp, drew on the collective memory of the Holocaust and demanded that Israelis remember the past in order to behave with equality towards Palestinian refugees. The various images of the *Intifada* questioned the level of faith with which Israeli policy was adhering to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Despite the politically controversial nature of the work, the exhibition remained on view at the Israel Museum for the full length and faced no pressure to be taken down.<sup>85</sup>



Collages accompanying paragraph thirteen  
1988

David Tartakover

*ba-Hakbrazah 'al bakamat ha-medinah*

“The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.”

As the *Intifada* continued, Tartakover continued his graphic crusade. Together with others, he worked to refute the victim mentality that is a part of the Israeli national identity. Frequently, the narrative of Jewish history discusses the last 2,000 years within a framework of persecution and threat: the destruction of the First and Second Temples respectively by the Babylonians and the Romans, the Islamic conquest, the devastating Crusades of the Middle Ages, the religious persecution during the Reformation, communal upheaval during the Industrial Revolution, the libels, imposition of distinctive dress, the levying of special taxes, religious, social and economic restrictions, forced conversions, deportations, expulsions and pogroms culminating in the Holocaust, a systematic genocide.<sup>86</sup> Many Israeli Jews relate to their heritage through the construct as the heirs of victims.<sup>87</sup> By exposing acts of violence, exclusion, oppression and marginalization that have become normalized in Israeli society Tartakover encouraged Israelis to recognize that they are no longer the victims. The imagery he used acknowledged that Palestinian victims were excluded from the Zionist narrative of the story of Independence and the decades that followed. He pointed out that in contemporary Israel, Jews have shifted from being the victims to become the victimizers. The collectively held history that had for decades

been considered untouchable was questioned, and the idea of multiple historic narratives came increasingly into favor.

In *What's Jollier and Merrier than a Mask Ha Ha...*, Tartakover showed the different masks worn by various participants in the conflict to raise questions about the differences between the actions of the participants in the *Intifada*. In placing a rock-slinging Palestinian youth, a machine-gun touting Israeli soldier, a Palestinian demonstrator and a gas-mask-clad child next to each other, Tartakover questioned who could be described as an the aggressor in the conflict.<sup>88</sup> While the mainstream Israeli media spoke of the Palestinians largely as villains, Tartakover discussed the more nuanced side of the *Intifada* and blurred the line between the defensive and the offensive in the nationalist struggle. Design, along with critical theory, paved the way for a more inclusive climate and encouraged Israelis to bring the Arab narrative back into Israeli discourse and history.



*What's Jollier and Merrier than a Mask Ha Ha...* 1989  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>

**THE  
INTIFADA  
WELCOMES  
THE  
ICOGRADA**

*The Intifada Welcomes the  
ICOGRADA*  
1989  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>

10th congress of IcoGrada international council of graphic design associations august 27-31 1989 tel aviv

In *The Intifada Welcomes the ICOGRADA*, Tartakover directly addressed the politically specific role of the designer in Israel. The poster was produced in anticipation of the biannual congress of the ICOGRADA that was held in Tel Aviv in 1989.<sup>89</sup> In the poster, which was distributed to every person attending the congress, Tartakover reminded the international design community that within Israel, a relatively young country involved in an intractable conflict, the locally specific visual language carries a strong ideological weight and designers play an important role in the conflict.<sup>90</sup> If designers are responsible for creating meaningful visuals and environments, it is particularly important during times of conflict that they have a firm grasp of their ideological stance and the social significance of their role as communicators.



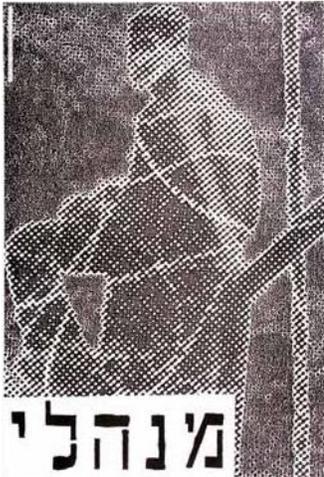
*Daddy, What Are You Doing in the Territories?*  
1989  
David Tartakover  
Photograph: Micha Kirshner  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>



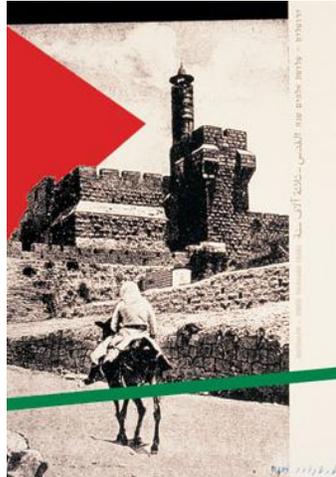
*Pain*  
1989  
David Tartakover  
Photograph: Micha Kirshner  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>

*Daddy, What Are You Doing in the Territories?*, a poster created in support of Yesh Gvul, a movement which supports Israeli soldiers who refuse to serve their military service in the occupied territories, illustrates Tartakover's point that within different regions of the world, a designer's role is contextually dependent on social needs. As in *And Babies*, he drew the image of the flower from the history of anti-violence posters to relate the violence of the *Intifada* to the Vietnam War. The historical reference reiterated his message that brutality is never an appropriate method of conflict resolution. Tartakover reused Micha Kirshner's photograph in *Pain*, a self produced poster that was pasted up in the streets, only to be taken down by angry citizens the same day.<sup>91</sup> In Hebrew, the word כאב, 'pain' can also be read as 'as a father'. Through clever word play placed over an image of a Palestinian girl who lost an eye to an Israeli rubber bullet, Tartakover personally appealed to Israeli soldiers who might also be fathers of children like the girl to refuse to serve in the territories.<sup>92</sup>

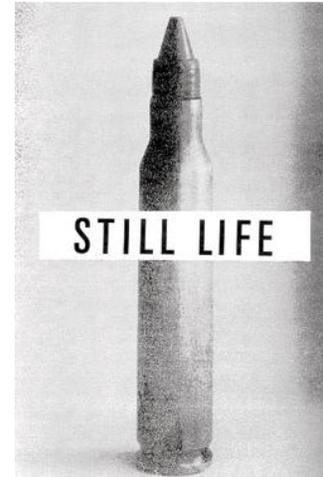
Tartakover worked tirelessly during the *Intifada*, to communicate his misgivings with Israeli military actions and encourage others to reevaluate the system of violence. *Administrative*, one of his most provocative works was produced for an artists' demonstration in front of Ansar III.<sup>93</sup> The specifics of Ansar III, a prison where the IDF holds Palestinian prisoners without warrants, are highly confidential; however, stories told by former detainees convey a sophisticated operation established to reform Palestinian nationalists into less threatening subjects. In *Administrative*, Tartakover called attention to the prison and the alleged human rights violations occurring under the administrative direction of the IDF in defense of the Jewish State.



*Administrative*  
1989  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>



*Jerusalem 3000 years*  
1989  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>



*Still Life*  
1989  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>

The activities of Tartakover, Molcho and Vardimon during the 1970s and 1980s broadened the role of a designer from that of a service provider to include being a social and political commentator. The personal posters and institutional involvement of these designers helped shift the definition of design from being exclusively a formal exercise to being recognized as a way to participate in a conversation about and renegotiation of Zionist ideology and its lasting impact on Israeli society. Their work created in their early careers expanded the discourse of design in Israel. Their roles as design educators gave them a platform from which to introduce young designers to the potential of design as a tool for protest and social commentary. Though Israeli designers continued to use the poster as the medium for the expression of their political opinions, shifting ideas about design as well as new technological capabilities expanded the left-wing activity beyond posters. As the 1990s unfolded, a group of emerging designers, influenced by the ideas explored by the previous generation joined the design activity taking place in Israel and advanced the way design as political commentary was conducted.

<sup>1</sup> Stephen J. Eskilson, *Graphic Design: A New History*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 417.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 417.

<sup>3</sup> Quoting Yarom Vardimon, in "100 Designers of the World," *Idea* (1994); non-paginated.

<sup>4</sup> Yarom Vardimon, in discussion with the author, January 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ilan Molcho, in discussion with the author, January 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> ארץ literally translates as land. הארץ, meaning the land, is also a colloquial term used by Israelis to refer to the State of Israel.

<sup>10</sup> Molcho, discussion.

<sup>11</sup> Vardimon, discussion.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Philip Meggs, *A History of Graphic Design*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 1999), 320.

<sup>14</sup> Hermann, *The Israeli peace movement: a shattered dream*, 47.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 53.

<sup>17</sup> Israeli Ministry of Culture, *Centenary of Zionism 1897-1997*, (Jerusalem: Israel Information Center, 1997) non-paginated.

<sup>18</sup> Hermann, *The Israeli peace movement: a shattered dream*, 53.

<sup>19</sup> Meggs, *A History of Graphic Design*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 411.

<sup>20</sup> Vardimon, discussion.

<sup>21</sup> Tartakover declined to comment on the reason for his return to Israel in 1967. David Tartakover, in discussion with the author, December 2010.

<sup>22</sup> David Tartakover, in discussion with the author, January 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Esther Zandberg, "Israel Prized to Ran Carmi and David Tartakover," *Haaretz*, February 20, 2002, <http://www.haaretz.com/culture/arts-leisure/israel-prized-to-ran-carmi-and-david-tartakover-1.52413> (accessed December 20, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> Tartakover, discussion.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> David Tartakover, *191177*, (Ra'anana: Studio College of Art, 2006), non-paginated.

<sup>28</sup> Tartakover, discussion.

<sup>29</sup> Tartakover, *191177*, non-paginated.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, non-paginated.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, non-paginated.

<sup>32</sup> Tartakover not only designed the logo for Peace Now, but also named the group.

<sup>33</sup> Peace Now, "Who We Are," Peace Now, <http://peacenow.org.il/eng/content/who-we-are> (accessed December 19, 2010).

<sup>34</sup> Eliyahu Koren designed the Koren Bible typeface in 1962, for the specific purpose of reprinting the Bible.

<sup>35</sup> Edna Goldstaub-Dainotto, "David Tartakover: the Imagery of Hope," *GRAPHIS* 53, no 309 (1997): 52.

<sup>36</sup> Tartakover, discussion.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Molcho, discussion.

<sup>40</sup> Vardimon, discussion.

<sup>41</sup> Baruch Kimmerling, "Academic History Caught in the Cross-Fire: The Case of Israeli-Jewish Historiography," in *Postzionism: a reader*, ed. Silberstein, 110.

<sup>42</sup> Dana Bartelt et al., *Both Sides of Peace: Israeli and Palestinian Political Poster Art*, (Contemporary Art Museum: Raleigh, North Carolina, 1996), 13.

<sup>43</sup> The Israel Museum, "The Qumran Library: The End of Days: The "War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness," The Israel Museum, [http://www.english.imjnet.org.il/htmls/page\\_1352.aspx?c0=14782&bsp=14389](http://www.english.imjnet.org.il/htmls/page_1352.aspx?c0=14782&bsp=14389) (accessed September 5, 2010).

<sup>44</sup> Dan Walsh, "The Palestine Poster Project Archives: Against The War," Liberation Graphics, <http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/against-the-war> (accessed September 5, 2010).

<sup>45</sup> Vardimon, discussion.

<sup>46</sup> Etgar et al., *70x100 Four Israeli Poster Designers*, (Tel Aviv: Open Museum Tefen, 1991), 7.

<sup>47</sup> Tartakover, discussion.

<sup>48</sup> Tartakover, discussion.

<sup>49</sup> Molcho, discussion.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Yarom Vardimon, interview by Michael Porciello, *Graphis Poster Annual*, (New York: Graphis, 2003), 15.

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- <sup>54</sup> Gad Almaliah, *Personal Expressions of Peace*, (Tel Aviv: Graphic Designers Association of Israel, 1986), non-paginated.
- <sup>55</sup> Quoting Shlomo Hillel, Speaker of the Knesset, in Almaliah, *Personal Expressions of Peace*, non-paginated.
- <sup>56</sup> Almaliah, *Personal Expressions of Peace*, non-paginated.
- <sup>57</sup> Bartelt et al., *Both Sides of Peace: Israeli and Palestinian Political Poster Art*, 38.
- <sup>58</sup> Tartakover, discussion.
- <sup>59</sup> Daniel Bar-Tal, "Why Does Fear Override Hope in Societies Engulfed by Intractable Conflict, as It Does in the Israeli Society?," *Political Psychology* 22, no 3 (2001): 605.
- <sup>60</sup> Almaliah, Donner, and Libenson, *Graphic design in Israel in 1985*, 11.
- <sup>61</sup> David Tartakover, "Political Works: *And When You Shall Go In*," David Tartakover, <http://tartakover.co.il> (accessed September 5, 2010).
- <sup>62</sup> Lahav Halevy, in discussion with the author, 2010.
- <sup>63</sup> One of the most notable books published at the time was Benny Morris's *The Origins of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, 1987
- <sup>64</sup> Gershon Shafir, "Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914," in *Postzionism: a reader*, ed. Silberstein, 46.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid, 47.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid, 51.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid, 50.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid, 47.
- <sup>69</sup> Silberstein, "Introduction," in *Postzionism: a reader*, ed. Silberstein, 6.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid, 21.
- <sup>71</sup> Shafir, "Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914," in *Postzionism: a reader*, ed. Silberstein, 52.
- <sup>72</sup> Tartakover, discussion.
- <sup>73</sup> Goldstaub-Dainotto, "David Tartakover: the Imagery of Hope," 52.
- <sup>74</sup> Bartelt et al., *Both Sides of Peace: Israeli and Palestinian Political Poster Art*, 99.
- <sup>75</sup> Drucker and McVarish, *Graphic Design History: A Critical Guide*, 292.
- <sup>76</sup> Bartelt et al., *Both Sides of Peace: Israeli and Palestinian Political Poster Art*, 77.

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<sup>77</sup> Quoting Arieh Luba Eliav in Aher Arnon and Dan Reisinger, *Israel: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Posters*, (Tel-Aviv: Grafi'adizain, 1988), non-paginated.

<sup>78</sup> Molcho, discussion.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Quoting Vardimon in Bartelt et al, *Both Sides of Peace: Israeli and Palestinian Political Poster Art*, 13.

<sup>81</sup> Dan Walsh, "The Palestine Poster Project Archives: Israel at 40," Liberation Graphics, <http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/israel-at-40> (accessed September 5, 2010).

<sup>82</sup> The reader may note that Dishon is one of the few female designers working at this time. The scope of this paper did not allow in depth research to be conducted in regards to the gender politics of the profession; however, in a December 20, 2010 e-mail exchange with the author, Dishon asserts that "The fact that I was in a women minority among the Graphic political designers, didn't occur to me at all until this real moment. I grew up seeing my mother and even my grandmother going out to work, I was a soldier serving near the [Syrian] border, and had always the feeling I am equal at least in my mental abilities to man. I never felt any kind of discrimination."

<sup>83</sup> Bartelt et al., *Both Sides of Peace: Israeli and Palestinian Political Poster Art*, 7.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 66

<sup>85</sup> Tartakover, discussion.

<sup>86</sup> Bar-Tal, "Why Does Fear Override Hope in Societies Engulfed by Intractable Conflict, as It Does in the Israeli Society?" 612.

<sup>87</sup> Adi Ophir, "The Identity of the Victims and the Victims of Identity: A Critique of Zionist Ideology for a Postzionist Age," in *Postzionism: a reader*, ed. Silberstein, 84.

<sup>88</sup> Bartelt et al., *Both Sides of Peace: Israeli and Palestinian Political Poster Art*, 97.

<sup>89</sup> Milton Glaser and Mirko Ilić, *Design of Dissent*, (Massachusetts: Rockport Publishers, 2005), 20.

<sup>90</sup> Tartakover, discussion.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Bartelt et al., *Both Sides of Peace: Israeli and Palestinian Political Poster Art*, 80.

<sup>93</sup> Tartakover, discussion.

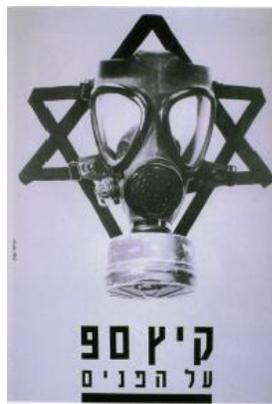
### Chapter Three: Varied Voices: Expanding the Practice

Through their roles as educators and the presence of their work in the public sphere, Tartakover, Molcho, Vardimon and their contemporaries became well known in Israel and informed a younger generation of designers who used visual language to voice their political opinions and to question social norms. Though the 1980s saw designers begin to explore the idea that meaning was unfixed, in the 1990s designers were increasingly motivated by a desire to explore new communication possibilities. Postmodern ideas about the arbitrary nature of language were translated into an understanding of the open relationship between text and image. This new awareness of the process of decoding and constructing meaning changed the way designers viewed the work they produced and their role within society. In the 1990s, the first generation of designers, who are still practicing in the early twenty first century, were joined by a younger group who contributed to the existing conversation through poster design as well as expanded the scope of activities. The younger designers continued to push the boundaries of design from criticism to activism. Around the turn of the century, designers began using design not only to contest ideology but also to be active participants in protesting government actions and producing a dialogue about the mistreatment of Palestinians, Israeli violations of human rights, and the collapse of the Zionist dream. Despite the expanded scope of activities in which the emerging generation of designers is participating, they hold similar opinions as the previous generation about the limited influence of design on the daily reality of the country and the ideologies of their fellow citizens.

By the early 1990s as more designers joined the left-wing activity, the availability of personal computers, desktop publishing software and advanced printing technology changed the way design was practiced.<sup>1</sup> The “unprecedented manipulation of color, form, space and imagery” enabled by increasingly sophisticated software expanded the creative potential of graphic design. Laser printers made individualized or short runs of color sheets possible at an affordable price.<sup>2</sup> The internet radically transformed the possibilities of sharing information; designers gained access to a vast resource of images and made their work available to a global audience. The internet not only expanded the audience from a local community and gallery visitor, but also allowed designers to keep their work in circulation for a longer period of time.

Despite the experimentation desktop software made possible, designers joining the activity of expressing left-wing views through graphic design continued to emphasize ideology over aesthetics. Leftist Israeli designers all agree that design is “Most of all ...about ideology; it’s really not about aesthetics at all.”<sup>3</sup> This

approach to visual language as a tool for communicating a message rather than a medium for aesthetic exploration can be attributed the influence of Tartakover, but also to the growth of design history and theory. The introduction of a foundation design theory class at Bezalel and other design institutions in Israel that includes theories of visual culture, semiotics and postmodern theory leveled the balance in design education between aesthetic practices and theoretical awareness. The emphasis on concept and content over style translates into designers working with a variety of styles. Despite this, similarities can be seen in the work of many designers. The physical and cultural proximity within which these designers practice and their exposure to a shared set of images is a likely explanation of the stylistic commonalities between their work.



Left: *Jonathan's Teddy Bear*  
1990

Eytan Handel  
*Both Sides of Peace*

Right: *On Your Face*  
1990

Yossi Lemel  
*Both Sides of Peace*

During the 1991 Gulf War, designers focused their attention on strengthening national solidarity. During this particular war, which presented an existential threat to Israel, most designers felt that voicing critical opinions was not an appropriate action. Following the end of the war, design students of the late 1980s and early 1990s were finishing their education at Bezalel and a wave of fresh design activity was gathering momentum. Under Vardimon's leadership, many students completed their education with a commitment to being socially active visual communicators. Adi Stern (b. 1966), a Bezalel graduate and Head of the Academy's Visual Communication Department, credits Vardimon as teaching him one of the more memorable lessons of his design education. Stern recalls that Professor Vardimon "used to ask us again and again 'What did you want to say?' It was a simple question but for a student at that moment in time in was really difficult to say."<sup>4</sup> Vardimon trained a generation of designers to evaluate their work based on how well it communicated their message rather than solely on the merits of its aesthetic sensibilities.

Stern represents the full picture of the shifting design environment. He recalls a pivotal moment in his design education when he found a copy of Katherine and Michael McCoy's book *The New Discourse* in the

Bezalel library. *The New Discourse*, published in 1991 at Cranbrook Academy of Art, emphasized the need to connect theory with practice. The designs and essays that filled its pages promoted a design practice which held nothing sacred. *The New Discourse* reflected the Cranbrook philosophy that critiqued and questioned traditions of modernism, aesthetically and ideologically and encouraged philosophical and methodological experimentation.<sup>5</sup> *The New Discourse* and the idea that meaning was open and destabilized shook the foundations of design; this exponentially expanded the possibilities of designing visual expression. In Israel at the time, graphic design was still considered a rational, systematic, formal practice. Stern recalls, “It was so different from anything I had seen before and I remember that influencing my work afterwards.”<sup>6</sup>

After graduating from Bezalel in 1992, Stern began working at Tartakover’s studio. Two years later he left to open his own studio in Tel Aviv which had a similar focus on design, specifically typography, for cultural institutions. In 2003, Stern left Israel to begin his studies at the Masters program in Typeface Design at Reading University in Britain. His approach to his position at Bezalel integrates lessons from his education at Bezalel, at Tartakover’s studio and at Reading. “I’m trying to train designers who will be the most influential creators in the world of visual culture...I think of our students as ambassadors of design and culture within Israeli society, culture, politics and life.”<sup>7</sup> Stern’s appreciation of the importance of design in shaping every aspect of Israeli society draws on the diverse experiences he has had in his career thus far.

Despite holding high hopes that the designers trained at Bezalel “will really change what will happen around here,” Stern understands that politically motivated graphic design is “much more about personal expression than about persuasive communication.”<sup>8</sup> Stern values politically expressive work because it teaches students to think about design as a form of rhetoric rather than as a neutral content-holder, but is of the opinion that “most of the work is speaking to the converted.”<sup>9</sup> He is highly skeptical of the persuasive potential of the work, stating, “I don’t really think it can even influence people’s ideology.”<sup>10</sup> His personal work aims to “convey my perspective, and...to show that both sides of the conflict are on the same side, of the same conflict. That Israelis are occupied almost the same way the Palestinians are occupied.”<sup>11</sup> *Occupation Kills Us All* and *Coexistence Noexistence* exemplify Stern’s understanding of the situation as a lose-lose situation.



*Occupation Kills Us All*

2001

Adi Stern

<http://www.icexcellence.com/prodtx.asp?id=31>



*Coexistence Noexistence*

2000

Adi Stern

<http://www.icexcellence.com/prodtx.asp?id=31>

While Stern believes the work will not alter ideology in Israel, he places importance on the international influence the work carries. He feels such work is important because “People overseas can see other aspects of Israeli society. It’s conveying a message that not everything...here is right-wing and radical and sometimes fascist.”<sup>12</sup> Stern values the work for the fact that it communicates the diversity of opinions that exist in Israel to the global community of both Jews and non-Jews. He identifies a number of motivating factors amongst his colleagues to produce left-wing self initiated work. Primarily, he sees the work as a desire for self-expression. “I think it is also [a] wish...to feel as though ‘I did something and was not totally passive.’”<sup>13</sup> He attributes the popularity of self-initiated work to the fact that designers enjoy working in a client-free arrangement because it allows them to be aesthetically experimental. Stern differentiated the work of Tartakover, saying, “but clearly with David’s work, he’s kind of a seismograph, he works very closely to the news and the current political situation.”<sup>14</sup>

Stern is part of the middle generation of designers who finished their design education in the early 1990s, as the country was recovering from the trauma of the *Intifada* and the Gulf War. In June 1992, after four years of right-wing political leadership, a Labor government headed by Yitzhak Rabin was elected to the Knesset. The climate in Israel changed rapidly under the Oslo agenda of the Rabin government, in which peace negotiations were of primary importance. In August 1993, The Declaration of Principles was signed in Oslo. On September 13, 1993, in a monumental ceremony in Washington, DC, Arafat, Rabin and Peres signed the Oslo Accord. For a brief period, the country was hopeful that a viable peace between the two nations could be achieved. Yossi Lemel’s (b. 1957) *Independence Day 1994* communicated the desire for a just solution to be reached. By coloring the mallet ends of the traditional hammer used to playfully hit others in the Jewish New Year’s Day celebration in red and green, the Palestinian national colors, he created an image that reminded

Israelis of their need to engage in fair and respectful negotiations with their Palestinian partners.<sup>15</sup> The image challenged the traditional Zionist portrayal of Palestinians as villains unworthy of being negotiation partners.



*Independence Day 1994*  
1994  
Yossi Lemel  
*Both Sides of Peace*

Lemel acknowledges that a poster cannot represent the complicated nature of any political situation; however, he finds strength in the simplicity of the poster. For Lemel, “the role of the poster is to sum-up, to present the spark or the essence of a particular phenomenon. Like a diamond.”<sup>16</sup> It is precisely the immediacy, potency and straightforward messaging enabled by the poster format that makes it an attractive communication medium to Lemel and others. Lemel, designer, art director, artist, curator and teacher, was born in Jerusalem. Since graduating from Bezalel in 1983, he has been a partner at an advertising agency while establishing himself as an internationally renowned poster artist.

Lemel sees his poster work as a way “to raise a subject and talk about it with people and to actually be involved in any possible way.”<sup>17</sup> He recognizes that designers and artists “are not politicians; we are not the doers, we are thinkers, we are the conceptual philosophers.”<sup>18</sup> He sees the primary role of his work as a way to “launch messages [and] concepts.”<sup>19</sup> Lemel is realistic about his role as a designer; he reasons that “It’s not that I think it’s within my capabilities to change the world, but it is possible that this will affect someone. Someone’s opinion will be shifted.”<sup>20</sup>



*Launching Messages*  
2009  
Yossi Lemel  
Courtesy of designer

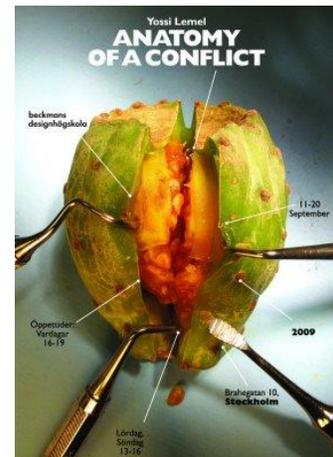
The effects of Lemel's career in advertising can be seen in his posters, which typically feature a bold, art-directed photograph with a sharp tagline. In his work, Lemel frequently revisits "traditional Israeli and Jewish symbols. I'm always happy to come back to the symbols, not to think of them as corny or trite, but to dig inside them more and find myself."<sup>21</sup> Lemel is particularly fond of the *sabra*, a symbol re-popularized by Tartakover in the 1980s. Lemel notes that the *sabra* is an exceptionally fascinating symbol in relationship to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as it represents the native born, but is not actually native to the region. Lemel returns to the *sabra*, in his ongoing exploration of his personal understanding of Israeli national identity.



"Lemel's Facebook photo"  
2010



*Political Poster Design from Israel*  
1999  
Yossi Lemel  
*Yossi Lemel Posters*



*Political Poster Exhibition*  
2009  
Yossi Lemel  
Courtesy of designer

Lemel's request for just negotiations in *Independence Day 1994* alludes to the political polarization that accompanied Israeli peace-talks with the Palestinians during the mid-1990s. Conflicting opinions about the need to evacuate settlements and participate in land-for-peace negotiations exacerbated tensions between the

Israeli right and left. In *Evacuate the Settlers from Hebron*, created for Peace Now and mounted on billboards throughout Tel Aviv, Tartakover used the 1994 massacre of Palestinians praying at a shrine in Hebron to criticize the continued settlement in the occupied territories and encourage a withdrawal of Jewish settlers from the West Bank. The text, a quotation from the Hebrew Bible reads “And shed blood: and shall ye possess the land.” (Ezekiel 33: 25) Tartakover’s use of the Biblical quote is poetic and ironic given that massacre took place in the Cave of the Patriarchs and was carried out by Baruch Goldstein, a settler and member of the fringe far-right racist party Kach. The red and green color scheme is a demonstration of sympathy with the Palestinian national cause, and the insurmountable obstacle created through the expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. In support of his feeling that his designs do not change people’s minds, Tartakover recalls that he only received reactions to *Evacuate the Settlers from Hebron* from people who supported Peace Now’s position on the occupation of Hebron.

*It’s Noble to Die for Our Country* used a similar rhetorical strategy as *Evacuate the Settlers from Hebron*. The text, echoing the famous and perhaps apocryphal last words of by Joseph Trumpeldor, a Zionist military hero from the 1920s, is set in the colors of the Palestinian flag. By setting Trumpeldor’s dying words in the Palestinian national colors, Berliner suggested that Israelis consider that the Palestinians are willing to give their lives for the realization of their national aspirations with the same zeal as Trumpeldor and the early Zionists.<sup>22</sup> Berliner questioned the discrepancy between the way Zionist fighters were elevated as national heroes, while Palestinian national liberation fighters were vilified as terrorists.



Left: *Evacuate the Settlers from Hebron*  
1994  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>

Right: *It's Noble to Die for Our Country*  
1994  
Arie Berliner  
*Both Sides of Peace*

*Happy New Fear*, Tartakover's 2005 annual Jewish New Year poster, captured his skepticism and pessimistic outlook about the ongoing Oslo negotiations. By replacing the traditional positive New Year's greeting with a gun, Tartakover commented on the mounting tension between factions of Jews. The handgun raised uncertainties in the belief in a unified Jewish people, an axiom of Zionist ideology.<sup>23</sup> In *Blue White*, Raphie Etgar (b. 1947) communicated a similarly pessimistic outlook on the state of internal affairs. The dirtied white of the soiled Israeli flag featured in the poster represents Etgar's perspective that the polluted political situation held little potential for a clean future. If the white background of the flag symbolizes peace, honesty, innocence and light, Etgar's dirtied flag questioned not only the notion that Israel and the Jewish people are a "light among nations" but also the innocence of the government and military actions over the preceding decades. Etgar's poster was heavily criticized by the Israeli right for being unpatriotic and rallying anti-State sentiment.<sup>24</sup>



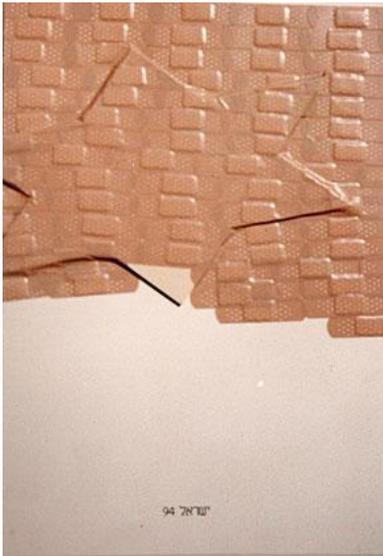
Left: *Happy New Fear*  
1995  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>



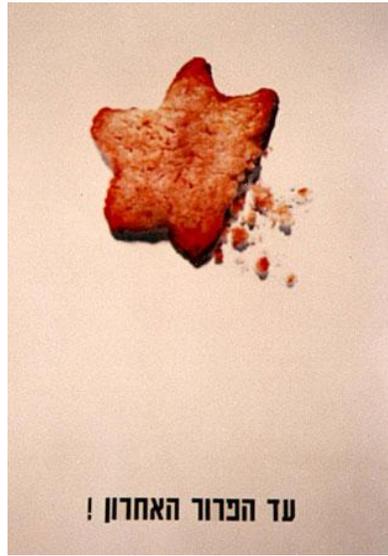
Right: *Blue White*  
1995  
Raphie Etgar  
*Both Sides of Peace*

After years of creating posters for Israel's leading cultural institutions, Etgar transitioned from designer to curator. In 1999, he established the Museum on the Seam, Israel's first museum solely dedicated to displaying socio-political contemporary art.<sup>25</sup> In October 2010, Etgar included *Blue White*, in *The Right to Protest*, an exhibition at the Museum. Twenty-five years later, re-contextualized in an exhibition presenting international artworks of protest, *Blue White* was received with little criticism. The inclusion of the image in *The Right to Protest*, testifies to the powerful message of protest the image held in 1995.

While Etgar depicted the actual flag without the Star of David, other designers played with the Star of David as a symbol of the uncertainty about the Zionist State. In *Israel 1994* and *Until the Last Crumb*, students at the West Galilee College represented the Star of David as a symbol of the damaged State and the loss of cooperation amongst Jews. If the blue Star of David stood for the unified Jewish nation, the heavily bandaged star in *Israel 1994* communicated the lack of cooperation amongst Israelis while the crumbling cookie in *Until the Last Crumb* captured the fear that the compromises made in the name of peace would lead to the demise of the Jewish State.



Left: *Israel 1994*  
Designer unknown  
1994  
West Galilee College



Right: *Until the last Crumb*  
Designer unknown  
1994  
West Galilee College

On November 4, 1995, the left-right schism reached a nadir when Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated at a peace rally in Tel Aviv by Yigal Amir, a right-wing Jewish fanatic. Not surprisingly designers continue to respond to the event, which was the defining moment in Israel's recent history. Lahav Halevy designs an annual poster to distribute at the Rabin memorial ceremony at the plaza in front of Tel Aviv City Hall, since renamed Rabin Square. Each year, Halevy prints five hundred copies of the poster with his own funds, and takes his children to Rabin Square to distribute the posters for free at the same spot where Rabin was shot. Over the years, Halevy has attracted a following at the event; people know where to find him and make a point of doing so. Through this tradition, he uses posters to foster a specific national mourning ritual. Halevy speaks of this design activity as "the way you teach children that it's not a civil act to kill someone because you disagree with their political opinions."<sup>26</sup> In addition to teaching this lesson to his own children, he uses the classroom as a forum to memorialize Rabin and discuss the meaning behind the assassination. In a

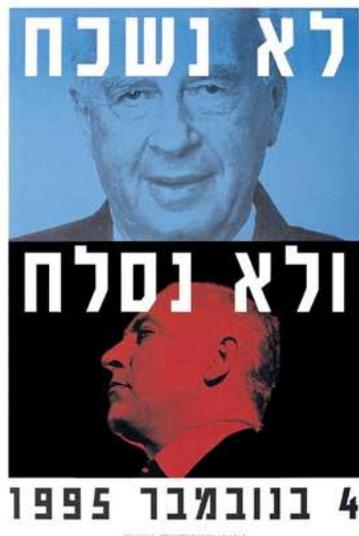
poster class he teaches annually at Shenkar College, Halevy has each student create a poster memorializing Rabin's assassination. One design is chosen and 1,000 copies are printed by the Rabin Center and distributed at the memorial. Halevy feels that having his students graphically memorialize the murder "is important culturally."<sup>27</sup> He uses design to encourage the development of a memorial activity that is locally specific and nationally inclusive.

Halevy's choice to distribute his posters to the public for free is part of a growing critique amongst designers of the self-aggrandizing nature of the poster biennale circuit. He explains, "If you do something and you have something to say, it has to be said for the outer world, not so people say how brilliant you are."<sup>28</sup> With a sense of humor typical of Halevy, he adds, "We are all exhibitionists and we want to know we are doing brilliant things, but it should only be ten percent of the motivation."<sup>29</sup> In addition to distributing posters, Halevy frequently prints two hundred copies of a postcard and mails them out to colleagues, friends and clients.

Molcho, one of the original Israeli left-wing poster designers, agrees that posters have become a designing-for-designers activity. Vardimon adds that "Often political posters have nuances that only designers will appreciate."<sup>30</sup> Molcho feels that "If it's not meant to be in the street it's only self-promotion."<sup>31</sup> Since 2008, Molcho has been involved in running a program teaching children visual literacy through photography. The participants in the workshops, operated in collaboration with the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, are each given a camera and thirty-six frames of color film, and instructed to take a set of photographs that represent who they are.<sup>32</sup> Molcho has shifted his focus away from poster design because he feels the photography program is more powerful than any poster he could create. Poster design gives him an outlet to express his opinions but lacks the power to change anything about the situation; his work with children provides them with the literacy skills to read the images that make up the visual landscape they live in, a necessary skill for them to be active participants in the production of culture and to build a common civil discourse.

Two years after Rabin's assassination, Tartakover printed 5,000 copies of *We Will Not Forget, We Will Not Forgive*, that were distributed legally by municipalities and pasted illegally in the streets. The poster, compositionally divided into two, features a picture of Rabin, with the words "We will not forget" on top of a picture of Benjamin Netanyahu, with the words "We will not forgive." The direct comparison created through

the divided page allowed Tartakover to communicate his criticism of the right for encouraging radical political rhetoric that many Israelis felt led Amir to assassinate Rabin and captured the division that existed within the country at the time. Tartakover used Netanyahu as a symbol of the right and “an icon of someone involved with the incitement of violence,” who he feels should be held accountable for fostering hatred.<sup>33</sup> The simplicity of the design mirrors the direct nature of the message. The polarizing message of the poster angered the right; ironically, during the 2005 withdrawal from Gaza, right-wing activists adopted the identical slogan as an attack on the left.



Right: *We will not forget, We will not forgive*  
2005

<http://www.katif.net/pics/2175.jpg>

Left: *We Will Not Forget, We Will Not Forgive*  
1997

David Tartakover

<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>

In 2006, Halevy printed *My Father is a Murderer* to comment on the recent legal decision to allow Amir to have a baby with his wife. The childlike illustrative style supported Halevy’s belief that “What I can do with my work is to show how absurd [reality] is.”<sup>34</sup> *It is Forbidden to Kill the Prime Minister*, Halevy’s memorial poster from 2007, used a similarly childish style to comment on the fact that the event affects the life of everyone in the country, regardless of age. The stylistic choice allowed Halevy to explore how different segments of society experience the assassination. By referencing children, Halevy demonstrated how the assassination has been woven into the cultural fabric of the country and will have a lasting impact on its development.



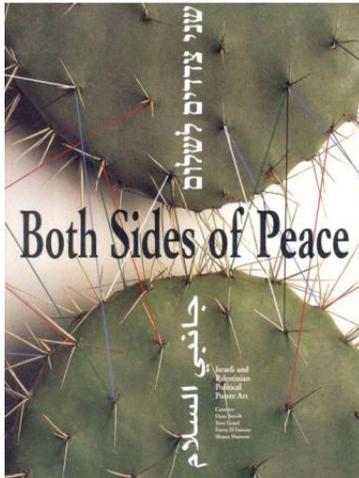
Left: *My Father is a Murderer*  
2006  
Lahav Halevy  
Courtesy of designer

Right: *It is Forbidden to Kill  
the Prime Minister*  
2007  
Lahav Halevy  
Courtesy of designer

Halevy, designer and teacher, was born in Upper Nazareth, and spent his formative years in Israel. After graduating from Bezalel in 1991 with a degree in graphic design, Halevy worked for three years at several newspapers in Tel Aviv. In 1995, he moved to New York City where he worked for five years as a graphic designer. While practicing design in the culturally distinct environment of New York, Halevy gained perspective on the differences between design in Israel and America. This time spent outside of Israel clarified his relationship to the country and solidified his desire to participate in anti-occupation activities. In 2000, Halevy returned to Israel and opened his own studio in Tel Aviv, Big Eyes Design, where he creates work that deals with Israeli culture, society and politics. Halevy agrees with his contemporaries about the primarily expressive quality of design. Despite being “well aware of the fact that no graphic design will ever change the world,” he practices with optimism, knowing that even if “you will not really change the world; you will put a mark on it.”<sup>35</sup>

Halevy’s approach, while unmoored from stylistic trends, is consciously informed by an aesthetic goal. For Halevy, “A political poster needs to look immediate. You can’t make it too beautiful; it then loses its immediacy.”<sup>36</sup> Halevy explains the visual consistency in many of his political works as being the result of his tendency to work last minute. He enjoys working right up to the deadline to create his political works to ensure they capture the latest beat in the country’s pulse. He uses similar techniques in many of his political posters because he often has to produce a finished piece quickly. Like Tartakover, Halevy likes photographs because, “They express the objects, are easier to print, [and] are easy to work with [in a short amount of] time.”<sup>37</sup>

Oslo negotiations continued after Rabin's assassination. Despite the overwhelming opinion that the peace talks were doomed to fail, designers used visual language to promote a peaceful dialogue. In 1996, Lemel partnered with Dana Bartelt, Fawzy El Emrany and Sliman Mansour to curate *Both Sides of Peace*, an exhibition of graphic work by Israelis and Palestinians about the Middle East conflict and the struggle for national security. On the cover of the catalogue, designed by Lemel, two prickly pear cacti approach. The image of the spiky cacti captured the tragic reality that the two nations, both *sabras*, are “trying to reach each other but because it is so painful they are approaching but can't touch.”<sup>38</sup> The colorful lines, in the colors of the Israeli and Palestinian flags, shooting out from the cacti represent the signs of peace being sent by both sides. Lemel explains the misfortune that despite the fact that “both sides are sending signs of peace, it's not peace, [it's] peace between non-friendly elements.”<sup>39</sup> If both Israelis and Palestinians are native to the land, both *sabras*, their equal claim to the land becomes an insurmountable obstacle in the peace process. The posters included in the exhibition, designed over the previous two decades carried an unfortunate message that despite designers' and artists' best efforts to encourage communication and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians, the conflict remained unsolved.



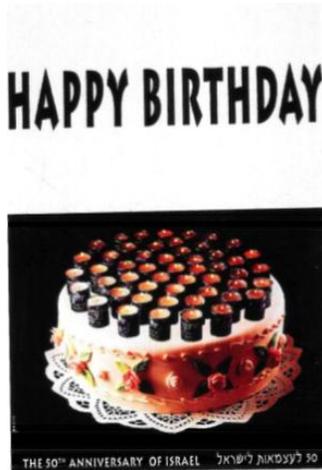
Both Sides of Peace (catalogue cover)  
1996  
Yossi Lemel  
*Both Sides of Peace*

By the late 1990s, tension in Israel reached new levels. In 1997, to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the occupation, Tartakover released *30 Years of Occupation*. The poster, an announcement of two six-hour protests against the occupation in Tel Aviv, layered three 'x's, one for each decade of occupation, over a heavy green line, referencing the 1949 demarcation line, in front of David Rubinger's iconic photograph of three generals entering Jerusalem during the Six-Day War. In addition to printing the poster on white paper, Tartakover printed some copies on existing ephemera such as memorial albums for fallen soldiers and commercial

posters.<sup>40</sup> The visually density of the overlaid images supported Tartakover's belief that the influence of the occupation is inseparable from every aspect of Israeli life.



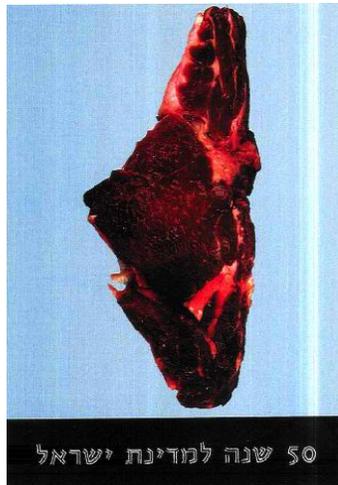
In 1998, ten years after the first alternate Independence Day poster exhibition, Tartakover curated 50x50, an exhibition of fifty posters marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel. The exhibition, mounted in the Reading Aleph Power Plant in Tel Aviv, was organized as part of the FestiVital, an annual event, organized by Vital, the Tel Aviv Center for Design Studies, which includes workshops for matriculated students as well as public lectures and exhibitions. Many of the posters in 50x50 had a general mood of pessimism, despair, and violence. Dishon's poster of a birthday cake topped with fifty *yizkor* candles, Jewish memorial candles, captured the sentiment that each passing year becomes additional lives to be mourned. Dari Zuran's image of a bomb made of birthday candles communicated his message that each additional year of independence adds more explosive content to the self-contained bomb that is the State of Israel. Dishon and Zuran's designs questioned the success of the Zionist project. They suggested that the daily social reality in Israel is as dangerous as the persecution faced by the Jews in the Diaspora that the Zionist State was intended to save them from.



Left: *Untitled*  
1998  
Iris Dishon  
50x50

Right: *Untitled*  
Dari Zuran  
1998  
50x50

Jonathan Faktor's poster represented the national decay with a more visceral image. The piece of meat in the geographic shape of the State of Israel communicated his feelings that the country was rotting. Adlai Stock (b. 1960), commemorated the death of the Zionist dream by rendering the Israeli flag a scene of road kill. In his rendition, the stripes have been replaced by tire tracks and the Star of David with a dead chicken. For Stock, five turbulent decades of violence flattened and destroyed the optimistic ideals and religious faith once held in the star and stripes of the flag.



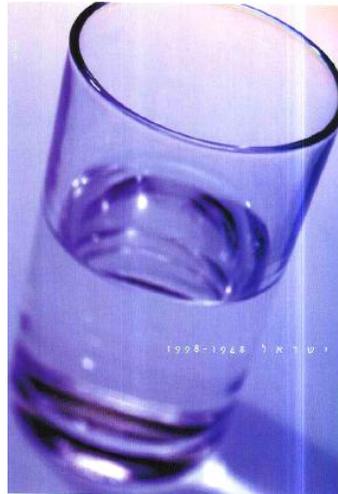
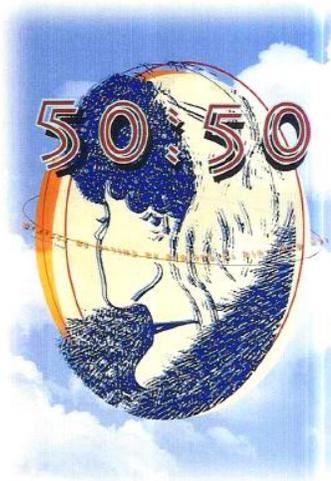
*Untitled*  
Jonathan Faktor  
1998  
50x50



*Untitled*  
Adlai Stock  
1998  
50x50

Not all the posters included in 50x50 focused on the intractable conflict and the death of the Zionist dream. Another theme introduced in 50x50 was that of multiple perspectives. Yael Bogen and Raffi Dayagi's posters commented on the fact that from a different point of view, the same situation can present a different

outcome. The old woman is equally a young beauty; the viewer makes the choice to see the glass half full or half empty. These visual metaphors encouraged people to question their outlook on the situation and consider other possibilities.



Left: *Untitled*  
1998  
Yael Bogen  
50x50

Right: *Untitled*  
1998  
Raffi Dayagi  
50x50

Considering multiple perspectives was seen as both a way to encourage an optimistic outlook, and also as a way to bring the Arab narrative back into Israeli history. In *November 29*, produced for the cover of Amnesty International's magazine in Belgium, Lemel contrasted an image of a Jewish celebration in 1947, after the United Nations adopted the Partition Plan, with an image of a contemporary Palestinian rally. For Israelis, the Partition Plan, which proposed independent nation-states for both the Jews and the Arabs, represented a monumental victory towards securing a homeland for the millions of persecuted Diaspora Jews. For the Palestinians, the day represented the beginning of their struggle for national recognition and decades of living as refugees. In 1977, the United Nations officially recognized the plight of the Palestinians and designated November 29 the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; the day has become an annual renewal of Palestinian national aspiration and determination to end their situation of stateless and refugee status. Through juxtaposing the two scenes, Lemel questioned the difference between the Jewish aspirations fifty years ago and the present Palestinian national aspirations.<sup>41</sup>



November 29  
2000  
Yossi Lemel  
<http://www.lemel.co.il>

In addition to acknowledging the plight of the Palestinians, left-wing designers called for a reevaluation of Israeli military actions against other neighboring Arab countries. The growing death toll of IDF soldiers serving in the ‘security zone’ inside the borders of Lebanon fueled the left-wing opposition to the continued military presence in Lebanon. In 2000, the year Israel withdrew its troops from Lebanon, both Tartakover and Lemel commemorated the lives lost during the occupation of Lebanon and questioned the ultimate outcome of the action with posters that featured imagery of military cemeteries. The morbid scenes memorialized the tragic military deaths and criticized the war as one which led men to their untimely graves. *Life (18) to the Lebanon War* featured a personal photograph with the grave of Goni Henik, Lemel’s childhood friend and a commander who was killed at twenty-five in the war. When asked in a 2005 interview, if he felt the message of the poster oversimplified the war as “as a war that led us to a graveyard, and that this is all it did,” Lemel acknowledged the complexity of the invasion but insisted that Israel must never stop questioning the heavy sacrifice of war.<sup>42</sup>



*1245 Soldiers Already Left Lebanon*  
1998  
David Tartakover  
photo: AP  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il>



*Life to Lebanon*  
2000  
David Tartakover  
Photograph by Rony Schutzer  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>



*Life (18) to the Lebanon War*  
2000  
Yossi Lemel  
<http://www.lemel.co.il>

The brutal predictions of the posters in 50x50 were correct. In September 2000, the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*, the second Palestinian uprising, erupted dashing any hope for peace that the Oslo decade represented. Lemel's *Untitled* from 2000 captures his feeling of helplessness at the situation. Using the metaphor of a computer crash, Lemel related the situation to a common, daily occurrence in the technological age. In *Jewish New Year 2001*, a year after the violence began, Miki Turgeman revisited the symbolically dense pomegranate, one of the Seven Species, *Shiv'at Ha-minim*, that were celebrated in the Bible as exceptional products of the Land of Israel. Twenty years earlier in a New Years poster, Tartakover alluded to the pomegranate to comment on the cultural shift away from Biblical and traditional wisdom towards militaristic thinking. In 2001, Turgeman featured a smashed pomegranate to describe the local landscape and to represent the shattered lives of Israeli as a result of the terrorism of the second *Intifada*. In *Israel Palestine*, Lemel created a thought-provoking poster he called “on one hand absolute and on the other hand quite layered.”<sup>43</sup> Lemel described the blood filled pristine white bathtub as a symbol of the “silence of death...ritualized sacrifice, a sense of myth [and] a collective ritual of suicide.”<sup>44</sup> The poster was created at the height of the second *Intifada*, when both sides were actively involved in the daily spilling of blood.



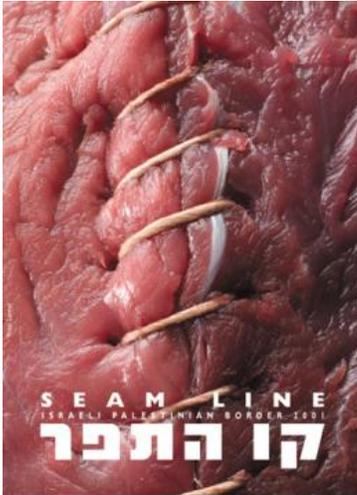
Left: *Untitled*  
2000  
Yossi Lemel  
Courtesy of designer

*Israel Palestine*  
2002  
Yossi Lemel  
<http://www.lemel.co.il>

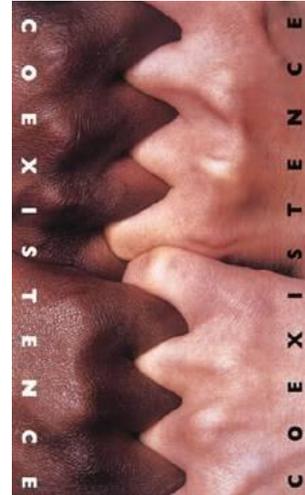
Right: *Jewish New Year*  
2001  
2001  
Miki Turgeman  
*Visual Communication in Israel 2002*

Lemel created the series *Seam Line*, in response to *Coexistence*, the poster he created for Coexistence, a traveling exhibition initiated in 2000 by Etgar at the Museum on the Seam intended to “contribute positive energy to people who will be encouraged to act with restraint, understanding and thoughtfulness to others.”<sup>45</sup> *Coexistence* spoke of utopia; *Seam Line* spoke of reality. Lemel used the raw imagery of meat to describe the brutality of the violent clashes between the two neighboring nations. The visceral reaction evoked by the close crop of the pierced raw flesh captures Lemel’s design philosophy that he tries to communicate through a triangle of organisms: the brain the heart and the stomach.<sup>46</sup> In a second poster in the series, Lemel returned to the iconic cactus. Unlike in the 1996 cover of *Both Sides of Peace*, in which sparks of peace fly between two distant but approaching cacti, in *Seam Line* the two cacti have met and their needles spear each others’ flesh. Lemel revisited the metaphor, this time to comment on how the two nations “are inside each other, [and] it’s painful.”<sup>47</sup>

Lemel feels that each poster he creates must have both a logical and an emotional appeal. Though he discusses the need for a balance between the logic and emotion, the appeal of his posters is more often emotional. Lemel explains, “We [think] that we are operating logically, but we are not.”<sup>48</sup>



*Seam Line*  
2002  
Yossi Lemel  
<http://www.lemel.co.il/>



*Coexistence*  
2000  
Yossi Lemel  
<http://www.lemel.co.il/>

In *An Eye for an Eye and Everyone Goes Blind*, Ronen Eidelman (b. 1971) drew on a number of traditions to communicate his message. The poster stylistically referenced posters created during the early years of the State that encouraged Jewish immigrants to participate in reclaiming agricultural land. By placing the Gandhi quote over a familiar image of an early Zionist settler driving a tractor, Eidelman asked the viewer “What happened to the dream?”<sup>49</sup> In a climate where bulldozers were destroying Palestinian houses and olive groves as frequently as they were being used for agricultural or urban development, Eidelman’s poster used complex layers to help the viewer contemplate the important message of how the situation reached its current state. *An Eye for an Eye* illustrated Eidelman’s assertion that “Posters can be complex. The more knowledge you have the more layers you can read into it.”<sup>50</sup>



*An Eye for an Eye and Everyone Goes Blind*  
c2002  
Ronen Eidelman  
Courtesy of designer



*An Eye for an Eye* exemplified Eidelman's approach which builds off his belief in "the power of history."<sup>51</sup> His preference for remixing visual elements from the legacy of old communist, socialist, and futurist posters illustrate his attitude that design is "not about creating new; it's about using what already exists."<sup>52</sup> His stylistic approach of historic quotation supports his belief that "my style is that I have no style."<sup>53</sup> Eidleman, like the designers who worked before him, emphasizes the importance of a design process in which the visual style grows out of the concept. His approach to historic quotations challenges the postmodern notion that all parody has devolved into pastiche.

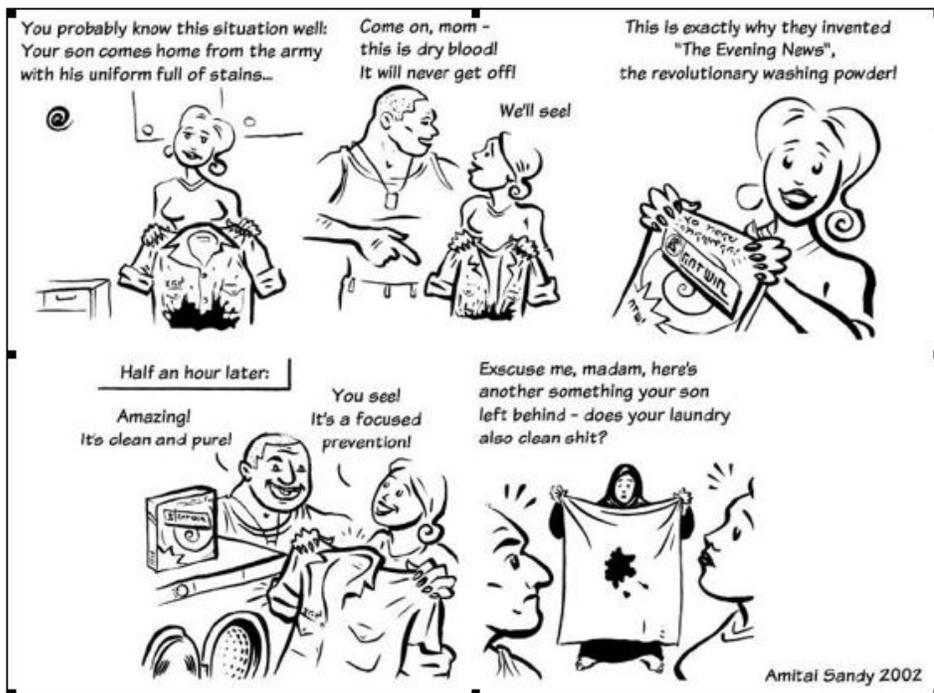
Despite Eidelman's belief that a poster can communicate a layered message, he explains his personal choice to explore writing and art as well as posters as the result of a desire to investigate issues with greater depth. Contradicting his earlier statement, Eidelman asserts, a poster "can't be complex; you can't have a nuanced message."<sup>54</sup> Eidelman enjoys writing because he feels the written word, unlike the poster, provides "more of a forum to build an argument."<sup>55</sup> He is cautious in his visual work, to ensure he does not fall into the trap of creating "visual clichés."<sup>56</sup> In 2004, Eidelman co-founded *Ma'arav*, an online art and culture magazine with Yonatan Amir, Galit Eilat and Michael Kesus Gedalyovich. Eidelman views *Ma'arav*, which translates in English as ambush, as a forum for renegotiating the borders between the center and periphery in the Israeli art community. The magazine, published by the Israeli Center for Digital Art in Holon, encourages discussion about pressing issues in Israel such as religion, violence, cultural relativism and politics.<sup>57</sup>

Eidelman, designer, artist, writer, editor, activist and cultural producer, was born in New York City, and grew up in Jerusalem. Since 2008, he has been living and working in Tel Aviv. In 1998, Eidelman received his BA in graphic design from Vital: The Tel Aviv Center for Design Studies. He continued his education abroad from 2006-2008, with an MFA from the program for Public Art and New Artistic Strategies at Bauhaus University in Weimar, Germany. Eidelman's approach to design and activism draws on his global experiences. His diverse work draws influence from his involvement in an international scene of artists, designers and thinkers. After years of being a student, Eidelman currently sits on the other side of the educational exchange. He teaches a course about social change in visual communication at Mishnar College of Art in Tel Aviv, a more experimental design school.

Eidelman, along with many of his contemporaries, views the majority of politically oriented graphic work as "just morale for the troops."<sup>58</sup> He explains, "You aren't really trying to talk to people who don't agree with

you, but trying to give people who already agree with you material to use. Even if you are already on the side, you want to feel as though you are not alone in your opinions.”<sup>59</sup> Though Eidelman is aware of the limited influence print design has on general opinion, he stresses the importance of recognizing that opinions exist on an arch in which “you are on one side and the enemy [is] on the other side.”<sup>60</sup> Despite speaking exclusively with “people who are in some way agreeing with you,” he feels his role is important because he can help “to shift the spectrum [so that] the people who are close to my opinion [will] become more strongly opinionated [and] the neutral people will become opinionated.”<sup>61</sup>

In addition to the influence of the work being done by Tartakover, Vardimon, Molcho and others in Israel, the younger generation of designers drew inspiration from the writings of the French philosopher Guy Debord and the revolutionary activities of the 1960s group, the Situationist International. Designers coming of age in the media saturated landscape of the 1990s identified with the Situationist International’s satirical parodies, *détournements*, of earlier decades as well as with the contemporary activities of the culture-jamming movement, popularized in early 2000 through the writing of Kalle Lasn and the Canadian magazine *Adbusters*. In a 2002 illustration, Amitai Sandarovich (b. 1976), parodied a popular Israeli detergent commercial. The piece, created as an assignment for a course Sandarovich took at Bezalel and later published in a small leftist newspaper, commented on the media white washing of the military actions in the occupied territories.<sup>62</sup>



Untitled (detergent commercial parody)  
2002  
Amitai Sandy  
Courtesy of designer

Sandarovich, known as Sandy, used satirical comics of well known commercials to comment on the behavior of the IDF and expose acts of violence, exclusion, oppression, and marginalization that had become normalized within Israeli society. This comic, and the general strategy of jamming popular advertisements in a subversive and humorous way, supports Sandy's belief in "the importance of using humor as a way to challenge our beliefs and views."<sup>63</sup> Sandy compares the effects of humor to the alternate image created when an artist flips a perspective drawing upside-down in front of a mirror. "The new viewpoint will make the weird things pop out."<sup>64</sup> In the same way that an artist's vision can become distorted by familiarity, Sandy asserts that "we sometimes get so used to [our values] that we don't think about them."<sup>65</sup> In his work, he tries "to use humor to put the mirror in front of peoples' faces."<sup>66</sup> His comics force viewers to confront the values they hold as sacred and question whether these values should be reassessed.

Sandy is not alone in making humor a central element of his work. Lemel preaches the need for humor in his work because "As a father I must be optimistic, I must be joyful. In the midst of the chaos, the despair, the depression, and the fear, there is also a lot of humor to be found."<sup>67</sup> Lemel uses humor because he feels that despite the difficulty of the situation, humor is a way for people to relate to each other. Lemel notes that humor "is a Jewish thing."<sup>68</sup> Despite the culturally specific channel of communication, Lemel believes that whether the form of humor is irony, sarcasm or out loud laughter, humor functions as "communication across borders."<sup>69</sup>

Sandy, cartoonist, political satirist, designer, and teacher, was born in Israel and works in Tel Aviv. He has been exploring visual expressions of his political opinions since high school, when he collaborated with Mushon Zer-Aviv (b. 1976) on an independently published comic book called *Penguins' Perversions*. The politically oriented comic set the tone for Sandy's current comics, which are published in local newspapers as well as private publications. In addition to his practice, Sandy teaches a course in comics at Sapir College in Sderot. He agrees with his contemporaries that the main function of the political work being done is expressive. About his personal practice, he states, "It's a lot just taking it off my chest and feeling that I didn't shut up when the Germans came."<sup>70</sup> Despite his awareness that the work is not dramatically changing the face of Israeli politics, Sandy believes "that any small thing you do makes a little change."<sup>71</sup> He emphasizes that the size and nature of the audience of any design piece plays a significant role in the impact of the work, and is concerned that "many of the works don't get much exposure and are mainly seen by people who are already leftists themselves."<sup>72</sup> Sandy prioritizes audience accessibility as the integral element of his style and works in

different styles to ensure that the particular work is appealing to its intended viewers. He feels that in order to be radical, “there is a play between being accessible to the public and still [being] out of the box.”<sup>73</sup> Sandy’s work, which often pushes the boundaries of acceptability in Israeli society, demonstrates his commitment to questioning staid values.

Traditional Jews in Israel find that Sandy’s particular brand of humor is offensive. “Some people think my humor is just provocation and some people really get the joke.”<sup>74</sup> In *Yes, I fuck an Arab*, one of his more provocative posters, produced during his student years at Bezalel in a course taught by Stern, Sandy questioned racial assumptions and norms in Israeli society in order to criticize a culture he understands as racist. Sandy’s dark skin, hair and eyes make him easily mistakable for an Arab, while the light skinned girl is not easily identified as an Arab. Sandy forced the viewers to question their preconceived notions about racial identity based on appearances. The bold statement rejected the idea that one should feel shame or embarrassment about inter-racial relations.



*Yes, I fuck an Arab*  
c. 2002  
Amitai Sandy  
Courtesy of designer

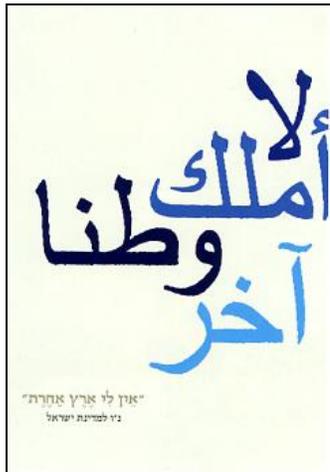
In a 2008 adabust of a government campaign encouraging settlement in Judea and Samaria, Sandy changed the text from “Judea and Samaria – the Story of Every Jew” into “Judea and Samaria – the Nightmare of Every Jew” and painted Hitler mustaches onto the faces of the children chosen to represent the diversity of Jews who could become settlers. The provocative reference to the Nazi regime incited angry reactions from Jews who failed to see the hypocrisy of a Jewish master-narrative, and read the Hitler mustaches as both insensitive to Holocaust survivors as well as anti-Semitic. Sandy explains the underlying meaning of the poster. “I think values aren’t sacred forever...We always have to be critical of our own values, to check again if they are still

valid.”<sup>75</sup> Though he expresses pessimism about Israeli values, he continues working because, “as long as I’m here I have to do something. I can’t feel like I’m doing nothing.”<sup>76</sup>



*Judea and Samaria - The Nightmare of Every Jew*  
2008  
Amitai Sandy  
<http://bit.ly/dIIJ2a>

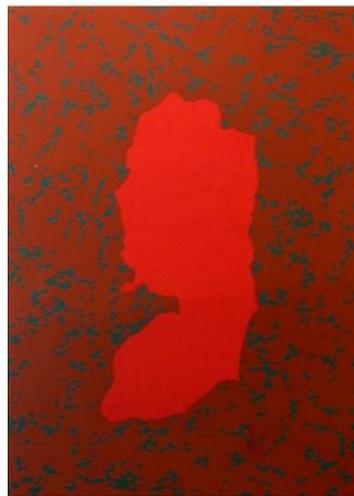
While Sandy challenged racial discrimination in an effort to bring the Palestinian “other” back into Israeli society, Halevy confronted the exclusionary nature of Hebrew. In *I Have No Other Country*, created in 2004 for 56x56, an exhibition of Independence Day posters mounted as part of FestiVital-Shenkar, Halevy wrote “I have no other country,” a famous Zionist phrase, in Arabic. The Arabic script set in blue and white, Israel’s national colors, explored the ideological omission of Palestinian locals naturalized in the Zionist phrase. Halevy pointed out that many Palestinian refugees have no home, and that Israel currently occupies both the land that used to be their home as well as the territory that could become their future home. The poster was heavily criticized by many Israelis who felt that the message crossed the line of sympathizing with the enemy.



*I Have No Other Country*  
2004  
Lahav Halevy  
56x56

As the violence of the second *Intifada* intensified, designers continued creating posters vocalizing their opposition to the occupation and treatment of the Palestinians. While much of the work was presented in a gallery setting or on the internet, Halevy continued the tradition started by Tartakover in his 1977 campaign marking the arrival of Sadat, and mailed postcards to reach a specific audience. In 2002, Halevy printed and

mailed two hundred copies of *Lebanon is Here* to journalists, designers, artists and clients.<sup>77</sup> The postcard featured a black and white map of Israel, with a color cut-out of a map of Lebanon pasted over the West Bank. As the rest of the country shied away from making comparisons between the occupation of the West Bank and the long-time occupation of Lebanon, Halevy designed a card that forced viewers to contemplate the similarities between the two situations. Halevy recalled that this, as well as other cards he sent out received “hundreds of responses. I wouldn’t do it otherwise. You do it so people notice what the situation is. Otherwise it’s useless.”<sup>78</sup> The graphic simplicity of the design supports Halevy’s feeling that “the meaning of words has become rather meaningless and existence in many ways has lost meaning.”<sup>79</sup> Through designing and distributing his postcards, Halevy works to create awareness that “too many people are dying for nothing.”<sup>80</sup>



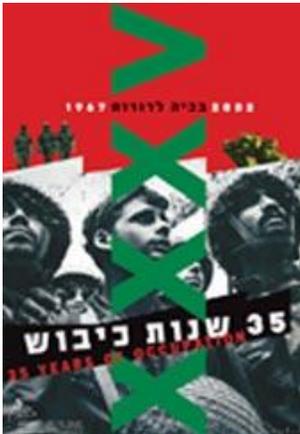
Left: *Lebanon Is Here*  
2002  
Lahav Halevy  
Courtesy of designer

Right: *35 Years of Occupation*  
2002  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>

While Halevy used cartographic imagery to represent the West Bank as a geo-political stain in *Lebanon is Here*, Tartakover chose to represent the West Bank as an abstracted glowing sore in *35 years of Occupation*. The work, done as part of 35 Years of Occupation, a collaborative exhibition with thirty-five other Israeli and Palestinian artists mounted at Tzavta in Tel Aviv, demonstrated that the poster can be more than personal expression. The collection of posters that comprise 35 Years of Occupation continued Tartakover’s mission to use poster art as a bridge between the individuals and communities directly involved in peace-making efforts. The artist statement in the exhibition catalogue expressed the participants’ use of the poster as a way to promote a dialogue between feuding nations. “In defiance of the painful situation in which we presently find ourselves—violent, oppressive and seemingly without a solution—and in a direct challenge to the renewed threat of population transfer, re-occupation and terror, we, as artists are determined to persist in our efforts to promote peaceful dialogue, towards a shared peaceful future for both peoples.”<sup>81</sup> This activity demonstrates the

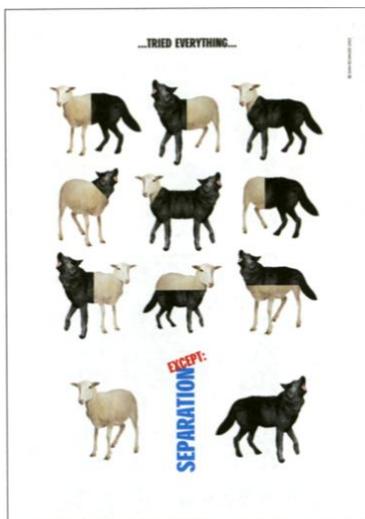
way Israeli and Palestinian artists and designers embraced visual expression not only as a form of protest, but also as a way to unite in their campaign to end the occupation. In addition to the exhibition, Tzavta hosted a conference about the occupation. The cultural exchange occurring between artists and designers challenged stereotypes that Israelis and Palestinians were unwilling to cooperate, and created an example for others about the possibilities of joint efforts.

In addition to promoting a dialogue between the citizens from the two nations and expressing his opinion about the state of affairs, Tartakover continued using design as a way to assist organizations that support actions encouraging others to adopt or stand behind the left-wing cause. Since Tartakover believes his personal work has little influence on public opinion, collaborations with left-wing organizations involved in direct action campaigns are a way for him to have his work reach a larger audience and influence direct action. Tartakover's second 2002 *35 Years of Occupation* was created for Yesh Gvul, the previously mentioned Israeli organization that campaigns against the military occupation by morally and financially supporting soldiers who refuse to serve their military service in the occupied territories or refuse duties "of a repressive or aggressive nature."<sup>82</sup> The poster, a publicity piece for a discussion being hosted by Yesh Gvul, featured David Rubinger's iconic photograph, *Paratroopers at the Western Wall*, taken in June 1967 after Israel took control of East Jerusalem. The text reads "Weeping for Generations, 35 Years of Occupation." By using the iconic photograph that has come to represent the outcome of the 1967 War as a victory in a poster protesting the military occupation, Tartakover questioned the declared victory of the IDF mission. Rather than celebrating the unification of divided Jerusalem and ignoring the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, Tartakover illuminated the direct relationship between the two situations and muddied the pristine narrative so often told about the Six-Day War. The poster, which was pasted up in the streets, was banned by the Tel Aviv municipality, though allowed to be shown in Jerusalem.<sup>83</sup> The government response to Tartakover's powerful discussion of the grittier side of the occupation demonstrated that his graphic support of the refusal movement was viewed as a significant threat.



*35 Years of Occupation*  
2002  
David Tartakover  
Poster for Yesh Gvul  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>

By 2003, the violence had escalated to a point where most Israelis felt peace was no longer an option and designers responded with diverse reactions. Dan Reisinger (b. 1934) used the poster as a way to express his support for the two-state solution. Reisinger's visual display of the combinations and permutations of joining the two nations supported his statement that "...tried everything, except separation." Reisinger seized a tragic moment as an opportunity to express support for a two state solution. Lemel had a more contemplative response. Rather than suggesting a course of action, *Israel Palestine* mourned the death of the peace process. Lemel's poster captured the collective sense of despair the country felt as the Oslo decade officially came to a fruitless end and hope for peace became no more than a specimen of the past that could be studied but not revived.

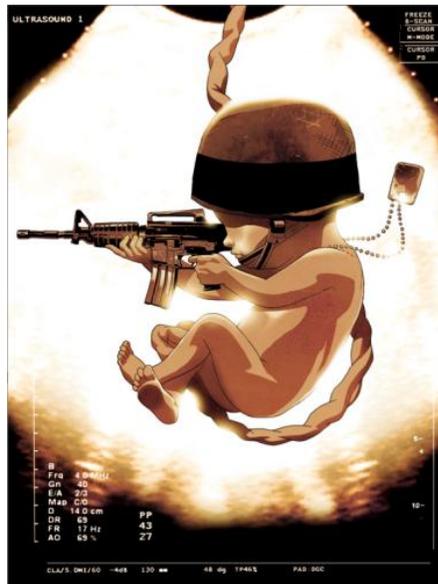
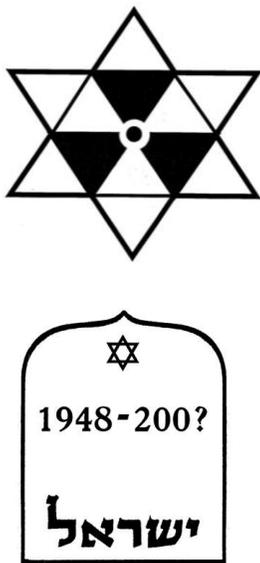


Left: *Separation*  
2003  
Dan Reisinger  
*Design of Dissent*

Right: *Israel Palestine*  
2003  
Yossi Lemel  
*Design of Dissent*

Students' work tended to be more dramatic and defeatist in their representations and explorations of the post-Oslo state of affairs. By 2000, politically oriented design was commonplace on campuses across Israel.

Bezalel introduced a course called *אין לי ארץ אחרת*, I Have No Other Country, in which students created weekly posters analyzing local mythology and responding to the national socio-political climate.<sup>84</sup> The two untitled pieces below address the explosive relationship between violence and national destiny and boldly declare the impending destruction of the State of Israel. *Fetus* explored the perversion of the ideal Zionist fighter constructed during the Yishuv. Rather than cultivating well rounded-Jewish citizens, to whom self-defense was one of many skills, the image suggested that the focus had shifted to developing a nation of combat soldiers. Though students were increasingly taking up political issues, Zer-Aviv cautioned that the work was not always motivated by a desire to create political change. “In a lot of cases students are looking to make a name for themselves.”<sup>85</sup> Zer-Aviv expresses concern that students create designs about political and social justice not because of a genuine stance, but because they want to add legitimacy to their work. Zer-Aviv holds no delusions “that design should be pure,” but he insists, “Design needs to be serving the politics, not the politics that need to be serving design.”<sup>86</sup> Zer-Aviv discourages political design as a method to gain recognition.



Left: *Untitled*  
2001  
Arkadi Steinberg  
Flickr.com

*Untitled*  
2001  
Mor Eliazarov  
Flickr.com

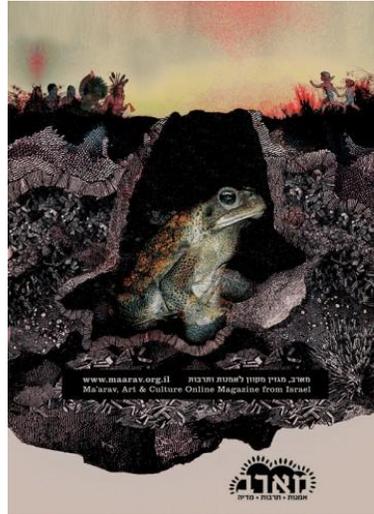
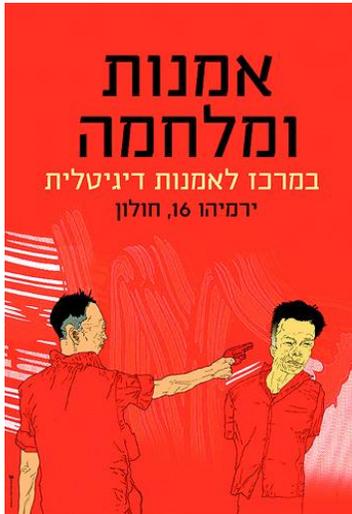
Right: *Fetus*  
c2000  
Asaf Hanuka  
Courtesy of Zer-Aviv

Eidelman struggles as well with finding a balance between encouraging his students to think about social issues and receiving socially or politically motivated work that lacks ideological commitment. For Eidelman, helping his students develop a social or political conscience is directly related to helping them understand their responsibilities as designers. “There is this attitude that the designer is just a tool that the desires of the client go through, but you are never a neutral thing.”<sup>87</sup> Eidelman encourages his students to think critically about what they want to say and the form their message will take. While he hopes his role as an instructor will help

students learn to visually communicate their opinions, he insists that “there are no secret formulas” to create strong politically or socially aware designs.<sup>88</sup>

Zer-Aviv, designer, multi-media artists, media activist and teacher, was born in Israel. In 2005, Zer-Aviv left Israel to pursue a Masters in New Media from Tisch School of the Arts, New York University. In 2010, he returned to Israel but hopes that during his time spent as an expat living in the United States his representations of Israel had “an influence on the way people in North America are viewing the situation.”<sup>89</sup> Zer-Aviv’s decision to move back to Israel was largely based his belief that it is “the Israeli community (not the international one) that holds the key for solving the conflict,” and the difficulties he encountered trying to “address the political questions that bother me from a distance.”<sup>90</sup> In his interdisciplinary practice, Zer-Aviv focuses on the influence of politics, culture and the networked society of the World Wide Web on perceptions of space, territory and borders. He explains his frequently changing style as the result of his opinion that “style is a tool.”<sup>91</sup> Zer-Aviv’s stylistic flexibility allows him to transition from print to web. While Zer-Aviv admits that “Some styles are sexy and I am interested in playing with them, it’s not what motivates [my work and] I don’t want to tie myself to any one style.”<sup>92</sup>

In 2002, after graduating from Bezalel with a degree in graphic design, Zer-Aviv co-founded Studio Shual with Guy Saggee (b. 1968), a 1994 Bezalel graduate. Studio Shual, a small graphic design firm located at the Israeli Center for Digital Art, focuses on design for cultural institution and events, artists and alternative thinking. Saggee, designer, teacher and artist, was born and raised in Ramat Gan. Like his partner Zer-Aviv, Saggee moved to New York to pursue a Masters Degree. After receiving his MFA in illustration from the School for Visual Arts in New York in 1998, he returned to Israel. Though Saggee takes on independent projects, the majority of his practice is focused on designing promotional and supplementary material for exhibitions and programming run by the Israeli Center for Digital Art. By having the Israeli Center for Digital Art, a non-profit art space dedicated to investigating the relationships between power, politics, and art as tools to break down cultural, national, and religious barriers between societies in the Middle East, as his main client, Saggee’s practice is heavily political.



Left: *Art and War*  
2005  
Studio Shual  
Israeli Center for Digital Art

Right: Promotional poster  
for *Ma'arav*  
2008  
Studio Shual  
Israeli Center for Digital Art

Saggee, like his contemporaries, is realistic about the role his designs play in affecting political change. Despite feeling that his graphic work will have no influence on political decisions, he stresses that his “attitude toward design is very serious. Somehow, I feel that what I do, that is reflected in my work will not change anything but will show that this thing called graphic design should be taken seriously as a professional practice, with a lot of passion and commitment.”<sup>93</sup> Saggee explains the eclectic style of his work, as the result of his philosophy that design is “not based on form, it’s based on ideas.”<sup>94</sup> Saggee feels that rather than a belief in the strength of any specific aesthetic, it is “my personality and my approach to design [that makes] my style. It’s commitment.”<sup>95</sup> He believes that communicating this passion and commitment is particularly important in the context of his work because “In Israeli society things are done half-baked, half-way, without deep examination and this is why we are deteriorating as a society. I do things seriously, so that other people will recognize that they should approach their work in the same professional way.”<sup>96</sup> In addition to his design practice, Saggee teaches in the Visual Communication Departments at Bezalel as well as at the Neri Bloomfield Academy for Design in Haifa. In his work as an educator, Saggee shares his professional approach with his students and encourages emerging designers to approach the practice with commitment, passion and dedication.

In April 2001, a year after the violence and terror of the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* began, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon approved the construction of a barrier separating Israel from the West Bank. The construction of this barrier has been a point of contention between the left and the right in Israel. For some, the wall is a pragmatic solution to the security issues of the *Intifada*. For others, the wall is an illegal construction that is creating

innumerable human rights violations and disguising a land grab under the guise of security. Left-wing designers continue to protest the construction, expansion and existence of the wall as undemocratic, illegal and immoral.

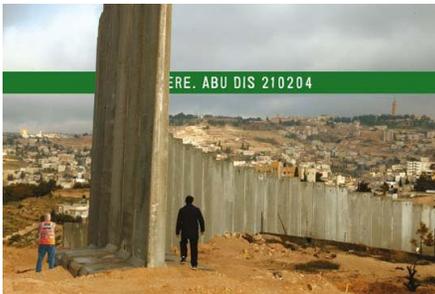
Zer-Aviv's 2004 poster *Arik*, designed for 56x56, an exhibition included in the FestiVital-Shenkar annual design event, draws a visual link between a popular Israeli popsicle, known as an *artik*, and the construction of the separation wall being promoted by Ariel Sharon, who is popularly nicknamed Arik. Zer-Aviv cleverly demonstrated that if the separation wall was uncontested it would become a cultural artifact on par with the *Artik*. As Israel celebrated its fifty-sixth anniversary of Independence, Zer-Aviv criticized the ease with which Israelis swallow the decisions of the government as necessary security measures and suggested that one motivating factor might be the maintenance of the comfortable lifestyle Israelis have grown accustomed to. All fifty-six posters displayed in 56x56, like *Arik*, were critical of Israeli policy and the expressed negative views of social and political climate. "The extent of the self-criticism presented in the posters drew a great deal of public attention and criticism in the media."<sup>97</sup>



*Arik*  
2004  
Mushon Zer-Aviv  
56x56

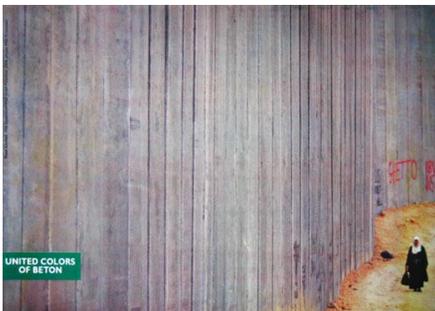
Tartakover dealt with the construction of the separation wall in *I'm Here. Abu Dis. 210204*. Part of *I'm Here*, an ongoing series in which Tartakover digitally inserts a photograph of himself, wearing an emergency services vest bearing the word 'artist', into press images of events surrounding the occupation. In *I'm Here. Abu Dis. 210204* Tartakover digitally inserted himself into the construction scene, challenging the Israeli approach of visually distancing oneself from the physical wall as an attempt to ignore the complex consequences it would create. In the series, which has been exhibited internationally, Tartakover declares his active involvement in the situation by choosing to make himself a witness to situations he did not experience firsthand. Through his role

as an artist and designer, Tartakover assumes responsibility for not only being aware of what is happening in his country, but also for educating his fellow citizens and a broader international community.<sup>98</sup> Zer-Aviv espouses a similar philosophy about the importance of assuming responsibility for the events occurring in Israel. He feels that “Detachment from responsibility is a huge problem. You have to feel responsible and work out of responsibility rather than resistance. The problem with resistance is that it is defining itself as the opposite to something else; it draws its existence out of what’s wrong rather than what’s good.”<sup>99</sup>



Left: *I'm Here. Abu Dis*,  
210204  
2004  
David Tartakover  
Photographer: Ziv Koren  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il>

*United Colors of Beton*  
2005  
Yossi Lemel

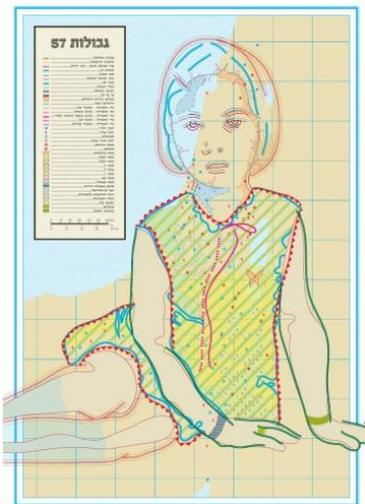


Right: *He Who Rules Others  
Has No Freedom*  
2005  
Ronen Eidelman  
Courtesy of Zer-Aviv

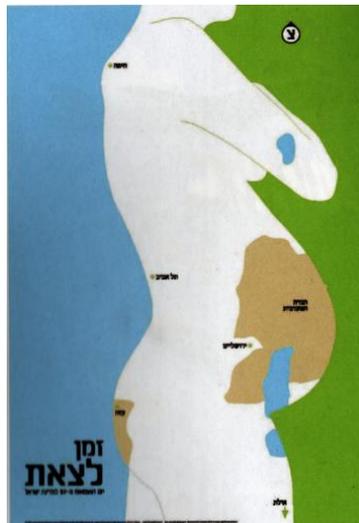
While Tartakover placed himself within the image frame to demonstrate his personal opposition to the government decision to construct the wall, Lemel chose to focus his critique on how the wall affected Palestinians. The image of a solitary Palestinian woman trapped by the towering presence of the wall highlighted the lack of consideration on the part of the Israeli government about how the wall isolates and alienates the Palestinians living on the other side. *United Colors of Beton* commented on the unilateral nature of the decision to construct the wall. The title plays on the popular United Colors of Benetton ads; however, the concrete wall, (*beton* translates as cement in Hebrew, German and Polish) is dividing, not uniting.

The construction of the wall is only one of the tactics used to enforce the occupation and uphold the status quo. Although the government represents the occupation as part of a larger, necessary security policy, the left criticizes the occupation and the colonialist policy used to enforce it. The Green Line separating 1949 Israel from territory captured in the 1967 war is a frequently used motif used by designers questioning

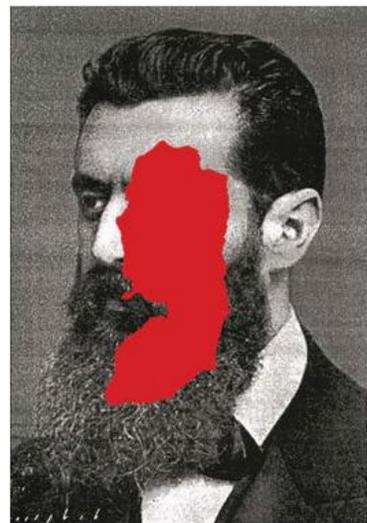
colonialist land policy during and after the establishment of the State. In *Borders 57*, Zer-Aviv attempted to track the shifting geographic shape of the State of Israel during its fifty-seven years of statehood. In the piece, Zer-Aviv refers to his childhood memories of “growing up not knowing the borders of my country, and at some point being too embarrassed to ask.”<sup>100</sup> In contemplating his “private border conflict” he confronted the viewer with an image of “my imaginary future daughter's experience...when faced with this question.”<sup>101</sup> Zer-Aviv invited the audience to assess how they as a parent would answer questions about the border to a young child when their personal understanding of it remains convoluted. Lee Schwarz represents Israel as a pregnant woman, in her third trimester ready to give birth. The West Bank is positioned over her stomach. Schwartz drove home the point with the text, “It’s time to get out.” Both Zer-Aviv and Schwartz represented the country through the metaphor of human life in its early stages of development. The visual reference suggested that the country, alive and growing, was still in the process of discovering its identity as a country and its place within the region.



*Borders 57*  
2005  
Mushon Zer-Aviv  
57x57



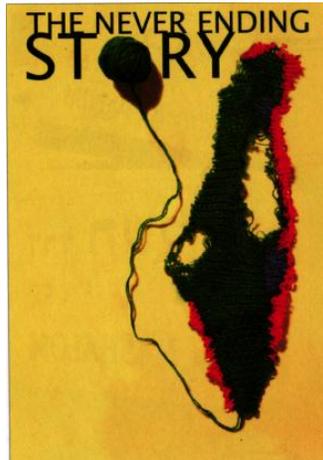
*Untitled*  
2005  
Lee Schwartz  
57x57



*Stain, Herzl*  
2005  
David Tartakover  
<http://www.tartakover.co.il/>

Tartakover continued to use the red stain from *35 Years of Occupation* in his series *Stain*. Each piece in the series featured a famous figure from Israeli history with the bright red form of the West Bank placed directly over their face. In each composition in the series, Tartakover deconstructed an idealized image of a historical hero and forced the viewers to consider the influence of his legacy on the current reality.

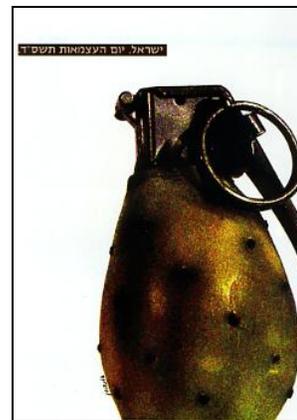
As the country approached its unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, other, designers responded to the rising tension by representing the country as a physically damaged territory. Stock created the form of the country out of band-aids and humorously referred to Israel as “The Holy Land, since 1948,” while Yehoshua Gali Ray depicted the literal “unraveling of the geographic fabric of the country.”<sup>102</sup>



Left: *Untitled*  
2005  
Adlai Stock  
57x57

Right: *Untitled*  
2005  
Yehoshua Gali Ray  
57x57

In both 2004 and 2005 an increasing number of posters created for Independence Day represented the foundation of national identity as violent and based on Israeli military actions. Ruthi Rotem’s 2005 poster sarcastically celebrated the fifty-seventh year of Independence as the cumulative efforts of fifty-seven years of military actions. The bottom left spot in the grid, labeled “the decoration of peace,” was left blank. The empty spot in the neatly organized chart of ribbons, honors and decorations that have been given out during the fifty-seven years of IDF fighting highlighted Rotem’s disapproval of the military actions and suggested that the sum of all these actions is not the establishment of peace but rather a history marked by war, and a society weighed down by the effects of ongoing violence.



Left: *Untitled*  
2005  
Ruthi Rotem  
57x57

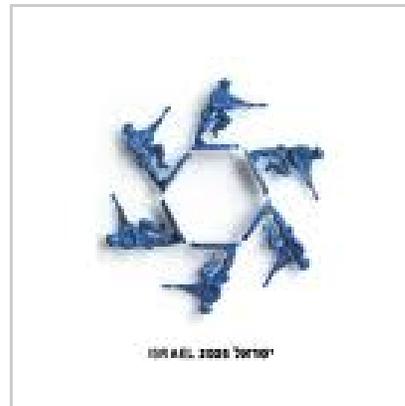
Middle: *Untitled*  
2004  
Adi Stern  
56x56

Right: *Untitled*  
2004  
Amos Ellenbogen  
56x56

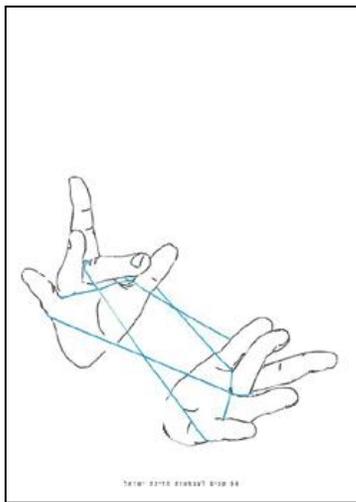
Designers continued to use the Star of David in their symbolic exploration of national identity and Israeli ideology. The Star of David created out of machine guns in Stock's 2004 *Untitled* and toy soldiers in Lemel's *Israel 2005* critiqued the militaristic State whose core values rest on violence and brutal domination. Both posters suggested that the systematic military violence was creating a society trapped within an inescapable cycle of devastation. Idan Zilberberg and Chen Arye played with the Star of David to represent the pointless games that keep Israel stuck in a stalemate. The meaning of the powerful symbol that had carried positive connotations during the early years of the State was increasingly being subverted to represent the deterioration of the Zionist dream.



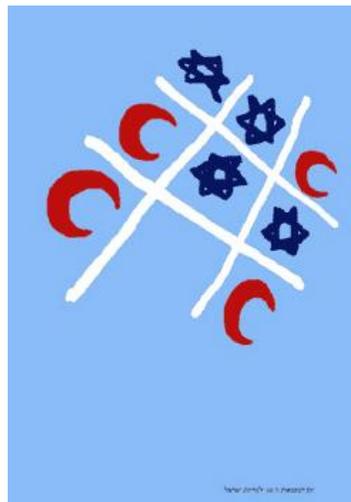
Left: *Untitled*  
2004  
Adlai Stock  
56x56



Right: *Israel 2005*  
2005  
Yossi Lemel  
Shenkar archive



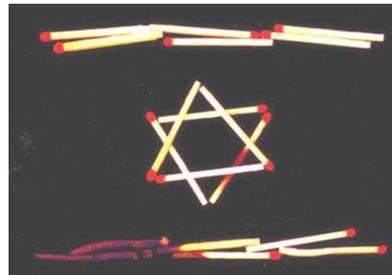
Left: *Cat's Cradle*  
Idan Zilberberg  
2006  
WIZO Design Academy



Right: *Tic-tac-toe*  
Chen Arye  
2006  
WIZO Design Academy

The 2005 unilateral evacuation of all 9,000 Jewish settlers from the Gaza Strip and the dismantling of their neighborhoods and agricultural areas exacerbated the internal division as Israelis debated the legitimacy and legality of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. The uprooting of the Gaza settlers brought the debate from the ideological level down to the reality of everyday lives of Israelis. The conflicting opinions about the

disengagement weakened the concept of a unified Jewish nation living in Israel. *Who is More Zionist* acknowledged that despite the Zionist axiom, it is more accurate to speak about multiple Jewish peoples than a single cohesive group. *Who is More Zionist* alludes ironically to the use of violence between Israelis to defend a movement which originally included Jews of differing religious, social, economic and cultural beliefs. *Explosive Situation* predicts the possibility of a civil war as religious and secular Jews clash over the future borders of the country.



Left: *Who is more Zionist*  
Gitit Brightbard  
2005  
Shenkar Design Archive

Right: *Explosive Situation*  
2005  
Eyal Gershon  
Shenkar Design Archive

The tension between secular and religious Jews, heightened during the 2005 disengagement from Gaza, continues to be a source of concern for left-wing Israelis. *Tolerance*, a 2008 poster by Jonathan Lax (b. 1982), captured the ongoing hostility between fighting factions of Jews in Israel. For Lax, “The disengagement was merely a symptom of what happens here all the time, sometimes on a smaller scale and other times on bigger scales.”<sup>103</sup> Lax ironically quoted Psalm 133:1 “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity,” to remark on the strife between secular and religious Jews in Israel.



*Tolerance*  
Jonathan Lax  
2008  
<http://yonil.com/>

The collective trauma of 9,000 Israelis losing their houses in the 2005 Gaza disengagement brought the concept of home to the forefront of many Israelis’ minds. In 2005, students from WIZO Academy of Arts and Design as well as Holon Institute of Technology participated in the Home International Poster Project, an

international design program with a mission to “[promote] dialogue through design by linking design students from schools all over the world to address the universal theme of ‘Home.’”<sup>104</sup> Participating students created a poster that explored Israel as their home; the posters were overwhelmingly negative and expressed a deep sense of despair and discomfort with the home in which they grew up. The powerful posters, which were displayed in the Czech Embassy in Tel Aviv along with posters created by Czech and Slovakian students, attracted little attention outside of a small circle of teachers and students.<sup>105</sup>

Lax represented home as a hamster wheel made of Stars of David on which he runs, blindfolded. Lax’s poster painted a picture of his experience of home as being one in which he felt trapped within the blue and white colored legacy of Zionism and the continued struggle faced by Israelis to define what it means to live in a Jewish state. Yael Shinkar (b. 1981) described her home as intricately knit and slowly unraveling. Michal Rosenwein portrayed her home using the metaphor of the yellow brick road from *The Wizard of Oz*. Her journey, while informed by Western popular culture, is following a different path. Unlike Dorothy in her blue gingham jumper, Rosenwein follows her winding trail in a full military uniform. Rosenwein chose to depict the scene without an emerald city looming in the background. Her home is a place where she must march forward, not sure what the end has in store.



*Untitled*  
2005  
Jonathan Lax  
Home Posters



*Untitled*  
2005  
Yael Shinkar  
Home Posters

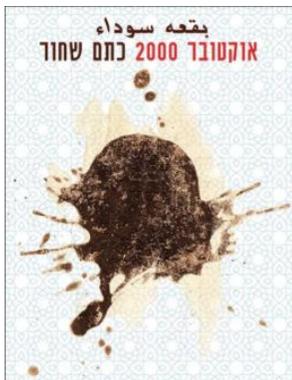


*Untitled*  
2005  
Michal Rosenwein  
Home Posters

In addition to criticizing Israeli behavior and the soiled reality that resulted from decades of constructing the State on the foundation of violence and domination, designers worked to draw attention to Palestinian suffering resulting from Israeli action. Parrhesia, a group of activists, artists, designers, and photographers work

collaboratively to construct a respectful, humane, civil language that can sustain a dialogue that includes previously marginalized and excluded voices. In the fall of 2005, Parrhesia hung *Black Stain*, in Wadi Nisnas, a mixed Arab-Jewish neighborhood in Haifa. The large banner, created in conjunction with Beit Hagefen, a Jewish-Arab Community Center, was on view during “The Holiday of the Holidays” in memory of the thirteen Arab Israeli citizens killed by Israeli police during an October 2000 riot. The dark stain of the poster critiqued the clean narrative presented by Israeli history and mainstream media.

*Black Stain* was one of Parrhesia’s first public projects in which they try “to help ourselves and other people think and see and act.”<sup>106</sup> By hanging their work in public, rather than in a private gallery, Parrhesia uses location to bring their design to a wider, non-design oriented audience. By reaching a larger audience they encourage more people to “be more critical and to talk with one another.”<sup>107</sup> By hanging *Black Stain* in a public space during the time of a heavily attended festival, this project, unlike many of the posters which are only viewed online or in a gallery setting, capitalized on the streetscape to visually reminded the crowd and inhabitants of Wadi Nisnas that rather than sweeping events under the rug, both Israelis and Palestinians need to acknowledge the soiled spots in the history of the country.



*Black Stain*  
2005  
Parrhesia  
Courtesy of Ofer Kahana

Ofer Kahana (b. 1968) founded Parrhesia in 2004. He explains his own shift away from traditional posters towards more collaboratively produced, publicly engaging works stating, “Once the poster was something that really had an impact but today the poster is a very sad object. It’s more of a graphic design issue between graphic designers.”<sup>108</sup> Kahana avoids creating designs which will only be understood by like minded, trained design professionals. He explains, “I try not to fall in love with graphic design...For me design is a tool, I like to play but I more like the meaning and the way it can create talk.”<sup>109</sup>

Kahana and his colleagues at Parrhesia work with an open-minded, non-didactic approach in recognition of the complexity of the social and political issues they deal with. When speaking about Parrhesia's work, Kahana stresses that "We don't think there is a clear message that we are trying to get through or that we know something other people don't know. We don't have the legitimacy to tell other people how to act or what to believe."<sup>110</sup> Parrhesia places importance on raising questions and inviting an ever expanding group of Israelis to think about them. Kahana and his colleagues are at the far end of the design spectrum that emphasizes questions over answers and dialogue over monologue.

Kahana, designer, social activist, teacher and student, was born in Ashkelon. In addition to his work with Parrhesia, he is exploring the discourse of design and the meaning of visual language in his doctoral studies in the Department of Interpretation and Culture at Bar Ilan University. His research focuses on the relationships that create the discourse of design and the powers that influence what is said and created as much as what is not said and not created. "I don't think there is one definition of design. There are a lot of practices and I'm trying to map all the practices and then give a better idea of why we are doing it."<sup>111</sup> Kahana's design practice and academic research complement each other in his personal pursuit to use visual language to expand boundaries and renegotiate the relationship between center and periphery.

Kahana's attitude towards design was directly influenced by his years at Bezalel in the early 1990s. He recalls that the curriculum objectives of the school had not changed in any significant way since the 1970s. In his first year at Bezalel, Kahana remembers waiting to see "when are they going to raise the question 'what is graphic design?' and 'what is the role of the designer?'" and there was never really a point that we tackled this question seriously."<sup>112</sup> He was disappointed that his education was more about producing than investigating. "Questions really never had a place there. For me that was very difficult, because I am the kind of person who asks a lot of questions."<sup>113</sup> After decades of limited institutional discussion, Kahana and some of his contemporaries are working to shift the emphasis of design discourse to a more inclusive one. In a course he teaches at Bezalel called Civil Design, Kahana encourages his students to think about the relationship between their design activity and the social structure in which their practice takes place. Rather than teaching his students to view design as a practice which starts and begins with them, Kahana wants his students to learn to investigate design as "an event in which a lot of people take part."<sup>114</sup>

The time Kahana spent at Bezalel started him on his search to find a practice that lined up with his values of social justice; his practice matured during the time he spent in Paris. In 2001, after years of admiring the work of Grapus, the French poster collective formed in 1970, Kahana moved to Paris to work with Pierre Bernard and Gerard Paris-Clavel, two founding members of Grapus.<sup>115</sup> Kahana identifies with Grapus because, “Most of the time things that are politically intense are very graphically boring and things that are graphically new are rather politically un-contextual. I think Grapus is a really unique example of something which is beautiful, creative, [and] groundbreaking but is really politically meaningful.”<sup>116</sup> On the subject of style, Kahana explains “I’d like to think I was influenced by Grapus,” he modestly adds, “but [maybe] it’s not true.”<sup>117</sup> Aesthetically, Kahana’s work does not resemble the stylistic chaos of the posters created by Grapus; however, much of his work embodies the founding principles of Grapus to create social and political change while maintaining a creatively inventive practice.<sup>118</sup>

As the occupation continued in the second half of the decade, more designers worked to expose the daily realities of Palestinians living in the occupied territories. Unlike the traditional Zionist narrative in which Jews needed a refuge from global persecution and anti-Semitism, the postZionist narrative supported by these designers explored victims other than the Jews in both the story of Independence and the sixty years of Israeli history. In this new mission of exposing Palestinian persecution, the role of graphic design grew to include journalism. Eidelman explained, “There is always an attitude when you teach design that you are a problem solver, and I always had a bit of a problem with that.”<sup>119</sup> Eidelman embraced design journalism because he wanted to work without a client to “expose the truth and dark spaces [by] putting a spotlight on places that need it.”<sup>120</sup>

*Absolut Jenin*, created for *Khan*, an independent political magazine, exemplifies Eidelman’s philosophy about using graphic design to report on the truth. While Israeli media ignored the frequent demolitions and targeted bombings executed by the IDF in the occupied territories, Eidelman made this poster to call attention to the IDF’s illegal activities. The spoof on the Absolut Vodka advertisements, one of the most successful advertising campaigns of all time, made a clever comparison between the strategy employed by the Israeli government in selling their brand of security, and the Swedish vodka company’s marketing campaign, which created a profitable, globally demanded brand out of an indistinguishable product. Eidelman’s poster successfully communicated his opinion that the IDF is in the business of selling an ideology and packaging the

truth in a more attractive, appealing format. After *Absolut Jenin* was published Eidelman received a letter from the lawyers representing Absolut Vodka in Israel. Under the claim that his design infringed on their corporate copyright, they warned him not to publish the image again. In defense of his right to free speech Eidelman responded by asking them to “please sue me.” Eidelman never received a response from the legal team. The image resonated with such a large audience it was eventually featured in *Time Out Tel Aviv*.<sup>121</sup>



Left: *Absolut Jenin*  
c2007  
Ronen Eidelman  
Courtesy of Mushon Zer-Aviv

Right: *Happy New Jewish Year*  
2007  
Amitai Sandy  
Courtesy of designer

In *Happy New Jewish Year*, Sandy repurposed a photograph of an installation created by the people of Bil'in, a Palestinian village located a few kilometers east of the Green Line that has been bisected by the Separation Wall. Since January 2005, the village has staged a weekly protest against the Separation Wall. Though the protests are intended to be peaceful demonstrations, they often end as violent conflicts between the protestors and the IDF. In an ironic statement, Sandy juxtaposed a traditional New Years' greeting, “A good year, a peaceful year, and justice for all,” against an image of a peace sign created from shock grenades and tear gas canisters collected by the villagers from the weekly demonstrations.<sup>122</sup> *Happy New Jewish Year* was never printed and distributed exclusively through e-mail and flickr, a photo sharing social networking site. The rising popularity of digital sharing demonstrates how designers are embracing newly available technology to disseminate their ideas to a wider audience.

In 2007, Halevy, along with Tartakover, photo-journalist Miki Kratzman and journalist Gideon Levi, organized *The Last Forty Years*, an exhibition commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the Israeli occupation. The exhibition was sponsored by Yesh Din -Volunteers for Humans Rights, a legal organization

which advocates against human rights violations of Palestinians living in the occupied territories. The exhibition, mounted in an abandoned building in downtown Tel Aviv, featured forty works, which according to Halevy, “express a personal approach to the reality of occupation, the passage of time, the accumulating past and the unclear future.”<sup>123</sup> The works communicated a shared perspective that the present is not an isolated moment, but a reality that is built on a dense history and will become the foundation for an unknown future. Halevy, Tartakover, Kratzman and Levi organized the exhibition to express the responsibility they felt towards the conditions of the occupation. In his written contribution, Levi declared, “The occupation has become an inseparable part of our lives and we have all become infected, stained, accomplices in this outrage, to our eternal disgrace... We are all soldiers at checkpoints, we are all shabak [Israeli Security Agency], we are all border police, we are all settlers, we are all guilty.”<sup>124</sup>

The posters Halevy created for *The Last 40 Years* were graphically bright and bold. Halevy attributes his use of saturated, bright colors to an aesthetic he developed during the time he spent living in New York. “Israeli design tends to use more basic colors. It has to do with all the aspects of life in Israel, it’s not varied enough. You have to live outside of Israel to see the world differently, to breathe differently. Israel is a rough place; the sun is rough. For six months a year the sky is white, not blue. Colors are burned in Israel. You need bold colors because of the strength of the sunlight.”<sup>125</sup> Halevy explained that the harsh colors are symptomatic of Israeli culture. “Everything is harsher here, people are quicker. There is no concept of tomorrow. People don’t think about time the same way in Israel.”<sup>126</sup> Halevy’s stylistic variance from the dark colors traditionally used in political posters matches the ideologically alternative perspective he tries to advance.



*Hear O Yisra'el, The Line is Not Green, 40 Deleted Olive Trees, There Are Arabs with a Human Heart, A Jew Does Not Evacuate Another Jew!, The House the Olive, The Child the Earth, We Shall Kill an Arab and Take a Rest,*



*Years and Nothing is Over Yet, We Got No One to Count On But Our Lord in the Sky, Israel/Palestine, Olive Tree, Lahav Halevy 42 Years Old (left to right)*  
2007  
Lahav Halevy  
*The Last Forty Years*

In addition to his atypical use of color, Halevy pushed the aesthetic limits of political design in these posters with his use of a graphic style rather than the use of photography. Halevy explains this stylistic shift as the result of the tendency for posters to become “more sentimental and hurtful during times of war. [But] you cannot see pictures of dead kids over and over.”<sup>127</sup> He describes the candy-like colors as a desire “to make the world look better. To make Tel Aviv more beautiful...The single goal is making the world better, more beautiful and more aesthetic.”<sup>128</sup> Halevy defends his aesthetic approach empirically. “When I lived in New York I used to have discussions with a professor of philosophy saying, whatever looks good is good. A war that doesn’t look good is not a good war. When soldiers look like heroes it is a real just war. When the concept of the occupation looks bad it’s because it is bad. The Separation Wall looks bad because it’s a wrong doing in the first place.”<sup>129</sup> Following Halevy’s logic, a good protest poster must then also be a beautiful protest poster.

*40 Deleted Olive Trees* features forty olive trees that have been “X”ed out. Each tree stands for one year of occupation and thousands olive trees that have been destroyed by the IDF in the West Bank. The olive tree symbolizes Palestinian livelihood, as it is not only a source of food, but also a staple in their economy. The heavy black lines of the X’s represent destroyed opportunities and jeopardized futures. The repetition of the image and compositional grid communicate Halevy’s opinion of the occupation as both systematic and totalizing.

A number of the posters Halevy displayed in *The Last 40 Years* explored the deep ideological roots of Israeli mistreatment of Arabs. In *There are Arabs with a Human Heart* Halevy played with the lyrics from a popular Six-Day War song to demonstrate the discrimination that sits at the cultural base of Israeli society. In the original song, a mother writes about her lost child, “there are people with hearts of stone.” In switching the

lyrics, Halevy questions the hatred towards Arabs that has become accepted as normal within Israeli society. Through his subversions of popular Israeli phrases and the use of Arabic script, Halevy encouraged Israelis to explore the Palestinian situation from a humanist perspective. Halevy is concerned that, “We are not really humanists. We have lost compassion as a society. It is a natural process when you occupy something for so many years, but it is a very sad fact.”<sup>130</sup>

*The Line is Not Green* raised questions about the language used to discuss the conflict. Referring to the Green Line, the colloquial phrase used to reference the demarcation line drawn in 1949 between the declared State of Israel and the West Bank. Halevy points out that the phrase the Green Line reifies a politically charged situation into a benign expression. In addition to appearing in *The Last Forty Years*, the poster was hung in a restaurant in Tel Aviv and after receiving numerous complaints from patrons, it was taken down by police demand.

Tartakover exhibited thirteen prints from his *XL* series for *The Last Forty Years*. Tartakover explained the *XL* series as being perfect because “it’s been forty years of occupation and it’s the size of the situation.”<sup>131</sup> The series was comprised of a collection of posters from the four decades of Tartakover’s career as a political designer with “XL 1967-2007/40 Years of Occupation” printed overtop the originals. The series brought together forty years of Tartakover’s political crusade in a demonstration that the issues he addressed years ago remain relevant. *XL* visually embodied Levi’s statement that “The State of Israel has existed twice as long with the occupation than without it. Nobody can still say seriously it is a temporary, passing phenomenon.”<sup>132</sup> The layered images communicated the historical depth of the situation. By repurposing his older work, Tartakover created a visual history of four decades of conflict. The series acts as a reminder of Tartakover’s dedication and commitment to raising public awareness through graphic design.



*XL*  
2007  
David Tartakover  
*The Last 40 Years*





Anarchists Against the Wall logo  
c2003  
Unknown  
Courtesy of Ronen Eidelman



*Anarchists Against the Wall*  
2009  
Unknown  
Courtesy of Ronen Eidelman



*Untitled*  
c2002  
Unknown  
*It's All Lies*

Designers, working through a postZionist lens, questioned collectively held myths of Zionist history and encouraged the idea of multiple historic narratives as a way to bring the Arab narrative back into Israeli history. Designers used the visual sphere as a place to disrupt the norm and to have the “other” included and recognized within society. In particular, Parrhesia works on projects that encourage the recognition of Arabic as a national language and work to help bring the Arab experience into the public eye. *Through Language* a graffiti campaign brought an Arab-Hebrew dictionary into the streets of Jerusalem and Jaffa. In Jerusalem, the project was initiated in response to the frequent removal of Arabic from street signs. In Jaffa, the project was carried out in response to the gentrification and rising cost of living that was making it increasingly difficult for poor Palestinian citizens to remain in the city. The project was also carried out in Vienna in conjunction with *Overlapping Voices*, an exhibition of Israeli and Palestinian art at the Essl Museum that dealt with the ongoing conflict. In Vienna, German was added to the stencils, raising issues of lingering anti-Semitism as well as local xenophobia.<sup>136</sup>



*Through language*

2006, 2007, 2008

Parrhesia

Courtesy of Ofer Kahana

The participatory nature of *Through Language* illustrates Kahana's political philosophy. "I think politics, from a deep sense, real politics is a real action [and] is something that is done with other people. It's never alone and it doesn't have a purpose."<sup>137</sup> Kahana and his collaborators at Parrhesia enjoy the ambiguity and endless possibilities provided by the stencils. They work with this framework because they recognize that despite their intentions, they cannot control the outcome of any actions they set in motion. They hope that reintroducing diversity into the streetscape will encourage a dialogue; they both recognize and celebrate that the open nature of the project creates a situation in which "you can know how it begins but you can never know where it's going."<sup>138</sup>

*Sedek*, a magazine produced in collaboration with Zochrot, a collective of Israeli citizens working to raise awareness about the *Nakba*, is one of the more controversial projects Parrhesia works on. *Sedek*, translated as crack or fissure, was created to help Zochrot in their mission to raise public awareness of the Palestinian *Nakba* (catastrophe) of 1948. For the first sixty years of the State of Israel, the story of Independence was told through the Zionist lens of Jewish victory; until the 1980s, Palestinians and their historical perspective were largely ignored. *Sedek* seeks to educate Israelis about the *Nakba* and engage both Jews and Palestinians in a dialogue

about the events of 1948 and the common history shared by the two peoples. *Sedek* challenges the Zionist collective memory and encourages Israelis to recognize multiple narratives. By presenting the material in Hebrew, the creators of *Sedek* hope to shift the discourse around the ethnic cleansing that occurred during the formation of the State. In acknowledging the existence of the Palestinian people and their history, *Sedek* demonstrates a readiness on the part of the participants to accept responsibility for the disaster.<sup>139</sup>



Cover and spread from *Sedek*  
2008  
Parrhesia/Ofer Kahana  
Courtesy of designer

Kahana explains the use of photography and simple, clean typography as an attempt to keep the work open to a wider audience. In all his work, though particularly with *Sedek*, Kahana avoids designing “things that look like political posters or protesting” in order to make controversial issues in Israel accessible to a non-designer crowd.<sup>140</sup> Kahana’s minimalist approach works to “create an environment that you can move inside and you don’t think too much about the design.”<sup>141</sup> The aesthetic of *Sedek* challenges the assumption that revolutionary ideas require revolutionary aesthetic approaches.

As the decade closed out, an increasing number of designers explored the use of new media and participatory design strategies. *You Are Not Here*, a collaboration between Zer-Aviv and Thomas Duc, Lalia El-Haddad, Kati London, and Dan Phiffer, provided participants in Tel Aviv and Gaza City an opportunity to experience and explore the daily reality in the other city. Notwithstanding that the two cities are only an hour apart, most Israelis are likely never to tour Gaza City; similarly, inhabitants of Gaza City are unlikely to ever

visit Tel Aviv. The double-sided map, available to download free at [youarenotthere.org](http://youarenotthere.org) creates a physical connection between the geography of the two cities when held up to the sun. By flattening the two cities into one printed piece, participants are given an opportunity to explore the cultural landscape of the unfamiliar territory through a familiar one. Landmarks on both maps are marked, indicating to the tourist that a story or explanation is available via cell phone. The accompanying recordings animate the similarities and differences between the urban experiences in the two coastal cities. The project aims to create a cultural exchange between the two politically and culturally detached locales. *You Are Not Here* is part of the growing body of innovative participatory design that practitioners like Zer-Aviv are exploring. Rather than speaking at the audience through a still image, multimedia design experimentations actively engage the audience and encourage a dynamic co-creation of new experiences and practices.



*You Are Not Here*

2009

Thomas Duc, Lalia El-Haddad, Kati London, Dan Phiffer  
and Mushon Zer-Aviv

<http://www.youarenotthere.org>

Despite a growing number of designers participating in left-wing projects, Israeli practitioners agree that their activities are not part of an organized movement. Saggee firmly believes that “There is no movement, it’s just individuals.”<sup>142</sup> Likewise, Zer-Aviv notes that “I don’t think that we’re working as a design movement. It [is individual] people and they are using design as their tool...to convey information about social, political, and personal statements...because that is how they know how to work and not because they are part of a movement. If they are a movement it is more a political movement than an aesthetic movement.”<sup>143</sup> Eidelman thinks of himself as “part of a community that has a view of the world that we believe in.”<sup>144</sup> The global network that Eidelman describes is made up of “teachers, lawyers, cooks, bike repairmen, artists, designers, and musicians.”<sup>145</sup> Each member uses his particular skill set to support the community. Eidelman is proud to use his work to promote the anti-racist, feminist, socialist, optimist worldview held by the community, and works

to “give back what I feel I get out of other members of the community.”<sup>146</sup> Eidelman’s perspective hints at the postnational ideology that is becoming increasingly favored within left-wing social activism. Though these Israeli designers are not members in a formalized movement, their shared political and cultural orientation often leads to crossed paths. While these personal and professional interactions often result in respectful collaborations, they also take the form of ego-wars and name calling.

The diversity of approaches, media and styles taken up by left-wing designers in Israel reflects the range of opinions in the country. As graphic design undergoes dramatic changes given the speed of technological advancements, and the transformation of communications processes and the nature of work, the future of left-wing design activity in Israel is unknown.<sup>147</sup> If the essence of graphic design continues to be giving form to ideas and expressing feeling and opinions, designers in Israel will respond to the technological and social changes with new and exciting techniques of communicating their message, negotiating meaning and contributing to the ongoing debate.

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<sup>1</sup> Philip B. Meggs and Alston W. Purvis, *Meggs’s History of Graphic Design*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2006), 489.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 498.

<sup>3</sup> Guy Saggee, in discussion with the author, January 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Adi Stern, in conversation with the author, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Meggs and Purvis, *Meggs’s History of Graphic Design*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed, 492.

<sup>6</sup> Stern, discussion.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Bartelt et al., *Both Sides of Peace: Israeli and Palestinian Political Poster Art*, 109.

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<sup>16</sup> Amnon Zilber and Efrat Shaked, trans. Alma Schneider, “An Interview With the Poster Artist Yossi Lemel,” Israeli Design Center, <http://www.tasteofisrael.org/?CategoryID=154&ArticleID=95> (accessed September 5, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Yossi Lemel, in discussion with the author, January 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Zilber and Shaked, trans. Alma Schneider, “An Interview With the Poster Artist Yossi Lemel.”

<sup>21</sup> Lemel, discussion.

<sup>22</sup> Bartelt et al., *Both Sides of Peace: Israeli and Palestinian Political Poster Art*, 112.

<sup>23</sup> Silberstein, “Introduction,” In *Postzionism: a reader*, ed. Silberstein, 19.

<sup>24</sup> Bartelt et al., *Both Sides of Peace: Israeli and Palestinian Political Poster Art*, 153.

<sup>25</sup> The Museum on the Seam, “Raphie Etgar – CV,” The Museum on the Seam, [http://www.coexistence.art.museum/coex/pages/curator\\_CV.asp](http://www.coexistence.art.museum/coex/pages/curator_CV.asp) (accessed December 2, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> Halevy, discussion.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Vardimon, discussion.

<sup>31</sup> Molcho, discussion.

<sup>32</sup> Azazmeh Children Taking Pictures: Visual Literacy Workshop in Cooperation with Wadi Al Na’am Committee, (Israel: Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2008), 31.

<sup>33</sup> Tartakover, discussion.

<sup>34</sup> Halevy, discussion.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Lemel, discussion.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Tartakover, discussion.

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<sup>41</sup> Dan Walsh, “Antonym/Synonym: The Poster Art of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, November 29, 2000,” Liberation Graphics, <http://www.liberationgraphics.com/ppp/November29.html> (accessed September 5, 2010).

<sup>42</sup> Zilber and Shaked, trans. Alma Schneider, “An Interview With the Poster Artist Yossi Lemel.”

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Raphie Etgar, “Curator’s Words,” Museum on the Seam, <http://www.coexistence.art.museum/coex/pages/curator.asp> (accessed December 20, 2010).

<sup>46</sup> Lemel, discussion.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ronen Eidelman, in discussion with the author, January 2010.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ma’arav, “Who We Are,” Ma’arav, <http://maarav.org.il/english-home/> (accessed December 22, 2010).

<sup>58</sup> Eidelman, discussion.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> The piece was originally in Hebrew. Sandarovich translated the strip into English for an exhibition at a university in the United States. He could not recall what university hosted the exhibition, nor the other works included in the show. Amitai Sandarovich, e-mail message to author, December 20, 2010.

<sup>63</sup> Amitai Sandarovich, in discussion with the author, January 2010.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Zilber and Shaked, trans. Alma Schneider, "An Interview With the Poster Artist Yossi Lemel."

<sup>68</sup> Lemel, discussion.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Sandarovich, discussion.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Dana Gilerman, "Protest Postcards," *Haaretz*, March 18, 2002, <http://www.haaretz.com/culture/arts-leisure/postcard-protest-1.50169> (accessed September 5, 2010).

<sup>78</sup> Halevy, discussion.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Venetia Porter, "35 Prints – 35 Years of Occupation," *Contemporary Practices*, [http://www.contemporarypractices.net/essays/volume6/features/35%20Prints\\_35%20Years%20of%20Occupation\\_207-215.pdf](http://www.contemporarypractices.net/essays/volume6/features/35%20Prints_35%20Years%20of%20Occupation_207-215.pdf) (accessed September 5, 2010).

<sup>82</sup> "About Us," Yesh Gvul, [http://www.yeshgvul.org/about\\_e.asp](http://www.yeshgvul.org/about_e.asp) (accessed September 5, 2010).

<sup>83</sup> Moshe Reinfeld, "Yesh Gvul fights TA Ban on 'political' posters," *Haaretz*, July 5, 2002, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/yesh-gvul-fights-ta-ban-on-political-posters-1.40480> (accessed September 5, 2010).

<sup>84</sup> Bezalel Academy of Art and Design Jerusalem, "I Have No Other Country," Bezalel Academy of Art and Design Jerusalem, <http://www.bezalel.ac.il/services/dean/projects/registerProjects/eretz/> (accessed December 23, 2010).

<sup>85</sup> Mushon Zer-Aviv, in discussion with the author, October 2009.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Eidelman, discussion.

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Zer-Aviv, discussion.

<sup>90</sup> Mushon Zer-Aviv, e-mail message to author, December 28, 2010.

<sup>91</sup> Zer-Aviv, discussion.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Saggee, discussion.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> David Grossman, *57x57: Independence Day Posters 10, 12-16.05.05*, (*Tel Aviv: Israel Community of Designers, 2005*), non-paginated.

<sup>98</sup> The Israeli Center for Digital Art, "David Tartakover, from Evil to The Core," The Israeli Center for Digital Art, <http://www.digitalartlab.org.il/ExhibitionPage.asp?id=377&path=artist> (accessed September 5, 2010).

<sup>99</sup> Zer-Aviv, discussion.

<sup>100</sup> Mushon Zer-Aviv, e-mail message to author, November 6, 2010.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Grossman, *57x57: Independence Day Posters 10, 12-16.05.05*, non-paginated.

<sup>103</sup> Jonathan Lax, e-mail message to author, September 2, 2010.

<sup>104</sup> "The Project," Home International Poster Project, <http://www.homeposters.org/> (accessed September 5, 2010).

<sup>105</sup> Guy Saggee, e-mail message to author, December 28, 2010.

<sup>106</sup> Ofer Kahana, in discussion with the author, January 2010.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Meggs and Purvis, *Meggs's History of Graphic Design*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed, 445.

<sup>116</sup> Kahana, discussion.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Meggs and Purvis, *Meggs's History of Graphic Design*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed, 445.

<sup>119</sup> Eidelman, discussion.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Eidelman, e-mail message to author, December 28, 2010.

<sup>122</sup> Amitai Sandarovich, "Political Art & Design Set," Flickr.com, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/amitai/1350690540/in/set-72157594143749769/> (accessed September 5, 2010).

<sup>123</sup> Quoting Lahav Halevy, Yesh Din Annual Activity Overview, 2007, pg7 [http://www.yesh-din.org/site/images/Yesh%20Din%20activity%20report%20\\_Sept%2006-Sept%2007\\_%20\\_5\\_.pdf](http://www.yesh-din.org/site/images/Yesh%20Din%20activity%20report%20_Sept%2006-Sept%2007_%20_5_.pdf) (accessed September 5, 2010).

<sup>124</sup> Gideon Levi, "Everlasting Contempt," *The Last Forty Years*, (Tel Aviv: Yesh Din, 2007), non-paginated.

<sup>125</sup> Halevy, discussion.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Tartakover, discussion.

<sup>132</sup> Levi, "Everlasting Contempt," *The Last Forty Years*, non-paginated.

<sup>133</sup> "About Anarchists Against the Wall," Anarchists Against the Wall, [http://awalls.org/about\\_aatw](http://awalls.org/about_aatw) (accessed September 5, 2010).

<sup>134</sup> David Massey, *It's all lies; leaflets, underground press and posters: the fusion of resistance and creativity in Israel*, (Tel Aviv: ha-Soknut le-kedum tarbut bikoretit 'etsma'it, 2002), 2.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 2.

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<sup>136</sup> Gunther Oberhollenzer and Karlheinz Essl, *Overlapping Voices: Israeli and Palestinian artists*, (Germany: Klosterneuburg, 2008) 158.

<sup>137</sup> Kahana, discussion.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ella Shohat, “Rupture and Return: Zionist Discourse and the Study of Arab Jews,” in *Postzionism: a reader*, ed. Silberstein, 247.

<sup>140</sup> Kahana discussion.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Saggee, discussion.

<sup>143</sup> Zer-Aviv, discussion.

<sup>144</sup> Eidelman, discussion.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Meggs and Purvis, *Megg's History of Graphic Design*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed, 592.

### **Concluding remarks**

The body of work from the last thirty years documented and analyzed in this thesis demonstrates the way Israeli designers are using visual language to question the legacy of the Zionist narrative and introduce alternative and peripheral thought into the center of Israeli society. Through decades of work, the designers discussed in this thesis have transformed the definition of design in Israel from solely a service-providing, formalist discipline to a practice in which designers act as political commentators engaging other citizens in a political dialogue.

The designers working in Israel on left-wing efforts share a realistic understanding about the fact that graphic design alone will not create an ideological shift. Despite recognizing the limitations of design as a catalyst for change, they take their responsibilities as designers seriously and acknowledge the role, however limited, they play in negotiating cultural discourse. They place importance on their continued work using visual language to discuss the legacy of Zionism and to critically investigate the ways in which contemporary Israeli society lines up with the founding ideas of the Jewish nationalist movement. They use their skills to protest against what they understand to be the unjust treatment of the Palestinians through the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. They encourage others to support them in acknowledging wrongdoings on the part of Israel and in establishing a more democratic society in which citizens of all ethnicities and religions are treated equally. They propose small scale solutions and individual actions Israelis can support in order to promote their agenda.

Though common themes appear in many of the works discussed in this thesis, the designers represent neither an organized aesthetic nor a social or political movement. The work is best understood as a collection of artifacts that visualize the opinions of a group of people, for whom design is the language in which they communicate. Though these designers are not working in unison, they possess a commitment to common beliefs and an understanding that design is a way for them to give form to their opinions and share their beliefs with others. All the designers prioritize concept and idea over style in their approach to the use of visual language making their lack of stylistic commitment the only aesthetic rule underwriting the body of work.

Through documenting the visual language that accompanied the ideological shift that began in 1967 and continues on in twenty-first century Israel, this thesis has for the first time charted the development of postZionist design. The analysis explores the way designers are subverting the symbols of Zionism and

repositioning them to create a new language that questions government actions as well as the ideological foundation of the country. This research can assist scholars conducting further investigations into the symbolic legacy of Zionism and its renegotiation through the subversion of established icons and objects from the history of the country.

Zionism, national identity and opposition to political and military policies are frequently explored themes in Israeli art as well as design. A sophisticated body of work exists, including photography, painting, installation, sculpture, performance and video, which could be discussed in a larger, more inclusive analysis of the visual culture of Zionism and postZionism. Institutions such as the Israeli Center for Digital Art, exhibitions such as *Three Cities Against the Wall*, *The Promise the Land*, *Overlapping Voices: Israeli and Palestinian artists*, and the work of artists such as Yael Bartana and Sigalit Landau visualize and explore the multi-dimensional Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Though the design work and the artistic work often function similarly to challenge the ideological dominance of Zionism, the design work is isolated here as it is part of a secondary debate about the role of the designer. Given the focus of this thesis in the history of design, only the work of those people defining themselves as designers, or who were trained in one of Israel's higher education design establishments, is included.

As the academic project of writing the history of design is young, and within Israel, the history of local design remains almost entirely unwritten, this research can contribute to the writing of a more comprehensive history of Israeli graphic design. The information and analysis presented in this thesis can be utilized in an investigation of the relationship between the work of these designers and other areas of design. The reader should note that the works discussed in this thesis represent a sliver of the design work being done in Israel. While the cultural significance of the left-wing graphic design surveyed in this thesis is undeniable, a comprehensive study of Israeli visual language would include right-wing graphic design, commercial advertising and branding, way-finding, editorial and other print design.

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## Appendix A: Timeline

1517 – 1917 – The area currently known as the State of Israel, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank was ruled by the Ottoman Empire

1881 – 1939 – 5 major *aliyot* (waves of immigration)

1<sup>st</sup> aliya 1881-1904

- 30,000 people
- Russian traditional Jews who spoke Yiddish and Russian
- Came because of the pogroms in southern Russia and growing anti-Semitism
- The beginning of the rise of Zionism
- Settled in Rishon LeZion, Petach Tikva, Rechovot, Rosh Pinah, Zichron Yaakov, Gederah and around Jaffa
- They created *moshavot* (small villages not socialist)
- By 1883 most of the *moshavot* are on the verge of bankruptcy; Baron Edmond Rothschild funds all the settlements and is in charge of them. He appoints French overseers to each settlement.
- Problems with disease, swamps, insects, climate
- Arabs are doing most of the farming work
- Rothschild was running the *moshavot* as a business, and not because of Jewish nationalism

1885 – Nathan Birnbaum coins the term ‘Zionism’ in a periodical promulgating the ideas of the *Hovevei Zion* movement

1890 – The Hebrew Language Committee is founded by Eliezer Ben Yehuda

1896 – Theodor Herzl publishes *The Jewish State*

1897 – Herzl organizes the first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland. The Zionist Organization is founded.

1901 – *Keren Kayemet LeIsrael* (the Jewish National Fund) is founded by the Zionist Organization

2<sup>nd</sup> aliya 1904-1914

- Approx. 30,000
- Russians
- They set up *Kvutzot* (communes)
- Mostly young people who were not family oriented
- They were socialists: politically and ideologically
- They established the *Poalei HaZair* and *Poalei Zion* which became the basis for the labor parties when the country was formed
- Many of these early Zionists adopted elements of Arab culture
- At this time people started to assert cultural independence and Hebrew is revived as a language
- Hebrew teachers are the first trade union to form
- David Green – David Ben Gurion was part of this wave of immigration

1907 – *Hashomer* (a group for self defense) is founded

1909 – Jews settle on the sand dunes north of Jaffa in Achuzat Bayit, which becomes Tel Aviv

1917-1918 – Palestine is conquered by Britain

1918 – After the Ottoman Empire collapses in defeat at the end of WWI, Britain gains control over the area and begin to introduce many important social systems and structures (sewage, mail, police, ports, trains)

3<sup>rd</sup> aliya 1919-1923

- 37,000
- Set up *kibbutzim*: extensions of the *kvutza*
- Meant to be a socialist society
- Despite lacking a representational government, political parties were formed. There was a school system, youth movements, newspapers, a defense force and health funds
- Until the 1970s, most of the major political leaders arrived during the third *aliya*

July 1920 – The Keren-Hayesod-United Israel Appeal (KH-UIA) is founded as the official fundraising arm of the World Zionist Organization

1920 – The *Histadrut* (labor federation) is formed

1920 – The *Hagana* (defense organization) is formed

October 1920 – the *Va'ad Leumi* (National Committee) is formed

1921 – The first *moshav* is set up. The *moshav* is a new communal structure for people who wanted an agricultural lifestyle but less communal. No collective ownership.

4<sup>th</sup> aliya 1924-1926

- 70,000 people
- The largest wave of immigrants
- Mostly from Poland
- Post WWI Poland is recreated including many different nationalities: Jews were 10% of the population and 1/3 of the urban population. Treaties accompanying WWI reformation required Poland to recognize national minorities. Many Poles felt they were being forced to accommodate Jews and felt this limited their sovereignty. In response, they passed economic restrictions which discriminated against Jews.
- Many immigrants during this wave settle in urban centers
- Middle class
- There is an economic crisis in Palestine because many Poles buy real estate and then their currency goes down and they cannot finish payments
- Tel Aviv really comes into its own during this wave
- Mostly in favor of the Revisionist Party which is middle class

August 1929 – *Sochnut* (The Jewish Agency) is established

- The organization is intended to give all Jews a role in the building of Palestine

5<sup>th</sup> aliya 1933-1939

- 225,000
- With the rise of the National Socialist Party (Nazi) in Germany, many Jews seek to emigrate
- 1/4 German, Austrian and Polish Jews
- Well educated, students, artists, industrialist, publishers
- This *aliya* brings the Jewish population of Israel up to around 450,000

1939-1947 – Large-scale illegal immigration takes place

June 19, 1947 – The Status Quo letter is written

- Written by David Ben Gurion, head of the Jewish Agency
  1. Shabbat – will be the official day of rest
  2. Kashrut – all State kitchens will be kosher
  3. Personal law – marriage and divorce will be done according to religious law so as not to split people
  4. Education – autonomy of different school systems will be guaranteed

November 29, 1947 – UN Partition Plan for Palestine is passed

- Each state would have a provisional council that would set up elections for a constitutional assembly who would write a constitution
- Britain refused and pulled out and the UN borders are not set into action

March 1, 1948 – The *Va'ad Leumi*, Jewish Agency (JA) and political parties comet together to form

1. *Moetzet Ha'am* (The People's Council)

- The legislative branch of government who pass laws
- 37 people, done by a party key
  - 10 – Mapai
  - 6 – General Zionist Party
  - 3 – Agudat Israel (the religious party)
  - 1 – Communist Party

2. *Minbelet Ha'am* (The People's Administration)

- The executive branch of government – run country based on laws passed by legislative branch
- 13 members, built on a party key

- Did not include revisionists, communists
- Included the religious party

May 5, 1948 – The People's Council becomes the Provisional State Council and the People's Administration becomes the Provisional State Government.

May 14, 1948 – The Proclamation of Independence

May 15, 1948 – Arab states invade Israel beginning the War of Independence

- Approximately 200,000 Jewish immigrants, mainly Holocaust survivors, are housed in evacuated Arab villages, towns and neighborhoods

July 11, 1948 – Operation Dani – tens of thousands of Arabs were expelled from Lydda and Ramleh and marched or transported to Ramallah. They set up camps there which eventually became the current refugee camps.

May 19, 1948 – The Law and Administration Ordinance

1948 – Day of Rest Ordinance.

1948 – 1951 – 700,000 Jews come to Israel. The population doubles

January 25, 1949 – Elections for constituent Assembly

- Elections were a tally of all the national votes
  - Labor
    - Mapai – 46
    - Mapam - 19
  - Liberal – 7
  - Chayrut (center right) – 14
  - Religious – (Mizrachi and Agudat Israel) – 16
  - Arabs – 2

February 16, 1949 – Transition Law also known as the small constitution.

- Legislature known as the Knesset
- The President was chosen by the Knesset through secret ballot and he needed an absolute majority to win.
- President
  - Largely a figure head
  - Signs laws and treaties, appoints diplomats, set sentences, chooses a member of Knesset to form a government
  - If the chosen member succeeds in forming a government, they become Prime Minister
  - The term of presidency is the Knesset term and 3 months. It was later changed to twenty-five year terms
- The provisional government must resign but stays in power until a new government is formed
- The new government must win and maintain the confidence of the Knesset

February 16, 1949 – Chaim Weizmann is elected president of Israel, the government resigns

February 24, 1949 – Weizmann appoints David Ben Gurion Prime Minister

1949 – Compulsory Education Law: all kids must go to school (Jews and Arabs)

January 1950 – A debate occurs about the pros and cons of writing a constitution. In the end they decide that a constitution will not be written, but that it will be compiled bit by bit as legislation is enacted

Pros:

- Ensure civil rights and personal freedoms
- Ensure that a minority will not suffer tyranny under a majority

Cons:

- Population is fluid; making laws is unrealistic given the lack of information about the population reality, and they should wait until they have more info
- Why do they need a written constitution; they could have an unwritten constitution.
- There are already basic laws in effect
- From a religious standpoint; would women have equal rights? Civil rights become hard if you need to put man made laws over the laws of god. (the Torah is the constitution.)
- At the beginning of the State, in a time of emergency it is time to put limits on power?

- This is not the time to debate religious and cultural nature of the State
- 1950 – The Law of Return
- A Jew has the right to settle in Israel, except criminals
- 1952 – The Law of Nationality
- Defines who can become a citizen
    - If you came under the law of Return
    - If you lived in Israel during the creation of the State
    - The descendent of an Israeli
- The “Basic Laws”
- 1958 – Knesset: lays out how the Knesset is structured and functions
  - 1960 – Israel Lands Law: Ownership of national land shall not be transferred. JNF land cannot be sold
  - 1964 – President of the State
  - 1968 – The Government: Process of forming the government. Changed in 1992 and 2002
  - 1975 – The State Economy: Taxes must be passed by the Knesset
  - 1976 – The Army: role and control
  - 1980 – Jerusalem is the capital of Israel
  - 1984 – The Judicature: defines the court system
  - 1988 – The State Comptroller: defines the role of this overseer.
  - 1989 – NEVER PASSED – The Basic Law of Fundamental Human Rights. Would have stated that you cannot infringe on basic human rights
  - 1992 – The Freedom of Occupation: people have a right to engage in any trade and profession
  - 1992 – The Human Dignity and Liberty: you must protect liberty and dignity except in accordance with the law
- 1951 – Approximately 100,000 Jews are living in tent cities and transit camps
- 1952 – Approximately 250,000 Jews are living in transit camps
- 1953 – New economic policy helps improve the government
- 1953 – Marriage and Divorce Law: marriage and divorce is under the responsibility of religious courts. For Jews this means Orthodox Rabbinate. Marriages done abroad are recognized
- 1953-1958 – 100,000 Jews from North America move to Israel
- 1957 – Law passed that recognizes Druze as a State religion with its own court. Druze men are required to serve in the IDF
- 1964 – The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) is formed
- June 1967 – The Six-Day War
- Egypt expelled the UN from Peace Keeping positions and blockaded Eilat
  - Arab leaders declare their intentions to destroy Israel. Israel decided to carry out a pre-emptive attack
- June 5, 1967 – Israel destroys Egypt’s air force. Israel proceeds in 6 days to take the Sinai Peninsula, West Bank and Golan Heights
- Post-war the government is willing to trade the territories for peace
  - At the end of June 1967, Israeli law was extended to East Jerusalem. The borders were expanded which considerably increased the Arab population
  - The government at the time was led by the Labor party. They debated and felt that the territories should be held onto as bargaining chips, but not occupied or settled because this would cause too many problems
  - Arab states refused Israeli peace offers: No Peace, No Recognition, No Negotiation
- November 22, 1967 – UN Resolution 242
- Was trying to be a compromise between Soviet and Arab demands for unconditional Israeli withdrawal, and the American and Israeli demands for recognition
  - Recognition of all states and rights to live in secure recognized borders without violence
  - Withdrawal of Israeli forces from territories of recent conquest
  - Just settlement of Palestinian refugees
- 1968-1970 – The War of Attrition
- Ends in August 1970

- Egypt shelled Israeli positions on the Suez Canal so Israel build the Bar-Lev fortified line
  - Considerable casualties
  - PLO terrorists were infiltrating the Jordanian border
- 1970 – The Rogers Plan
- US mediated the ceasefire
- 1970 – Golda Meir ignored a peace proposal from Anwar Sadat
- October 1973 – The Yom Kippur War
- Begins with a surprise attack and lasts for three weeks
  - The war is seen as a failure of the Labor government in terms of military intelligence and people become unsure of their leadership
- 1977 – The Likud Party comes to power, headed by Menachem Begin
- They support and encourage settlement of the territories
- November 19, 1977 – Anwar Sadat arrives in Israel
- 1978 – Negotiations at Camp David
- 1978 - *Shalom Achshav* (Peace Now) is founded
- 1979 – A peace treaty between Israel and Egypt is signed
- All of the Sinai is to be given back to Egypt and all of the settlements that were built there are to be dismantled and evacuated by 1982
- 1981 – Israeli civilian law is extended to the Golan Heights
- Druze residents of the Golan are given ID cards
- 1982 – First Lebanon War
- The war was really controversial; widely perceived as a war of choice
  - Sabra and Shatila massacre: Ariel Sharon was forced to resign as defense minister
- 1984 – Operation Moses
- 8,000 Ethiopian Jews come to Israel
  - Another 8,000 Ethiopians come over the rest of the decade. Many come through Sudan and thousands die on the way
- 1987-1993 – The First *Intifada*
- The first *Intifada* is often described as the unarmed *Intifada* because the Palestinian were mostly unarmed. This title should be taken with a grain of salt, as Qassam rockets are certainly a form of arms.
  - The term *Intifada* was coined by Arafat, but was not initiated by the PLO
- August 2, 1990 – February 28, 1991 – Gulf War
- 1990-1997 – 710,000 Jews from the Soviet Union move to Israel
- By 2005 the estimate was that there were 1,000,000 Soviet Jews in Israel
- May 24-25, 1991 – Operation Solomon
- 14,000 Ethiopian Jews are airlifted from Addis Ababa and brought to Israel
  - By the end of 1993 50,000 Ethiopian Jews are in Israel
- June 1992 – Labor government (Rabin) elected
- 1993 – Oslo process begins
- August 1993 - The Declaration of Principles signed in Oslo
- September 13, 1993 – The Oslo Accord signed in Washington DC between Arafat, Rabin and Peres
- November 4, 1995 – Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated after addressing a huge peace rally in Tel Aviv
- 1995 – Shimon Peres became acting Prime Minister
- 1996 – Wave of Palestinian terror attacks
- 1996 – Labor party losses election to Likud (Netanyahu)
- January 1997 – Hebron agreement implemented
- 1998 – Wye River memorandum signed
- 1998 – Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law
- Mid 1999 – Netanyahu Likud government fell
- May 1999 – Labor party wins election - Barak elected Prime Minister
- May 2000 – Israel withdrew its forces from Lebanon
- July 2000 – Camp David (Barak and Arafat met on the invitation of Bill Clinton)

- Upon Barak's return he declared all former understandings "null and void"
- "there is no Palestinian partner agenda begins"

September 28, 2000 – Ariel Sharon visits the Temple Mount; the second *Intifada* (also known as the *al-Aqsa Intifada*) begins

2001 – Likud government wins election - Ariel Sharon elected Prime Minister

September 11, 2001 – Attack on Manhattan's World Trade Center

- The war on Terror shifted the way Palestinian actions were framed (by some) from self-determination to part of the global Islamic Jihad

Spring 2002 – a group of Palestinians signed a document condemning suicide bombing

April 2001 – Sharon gives a green light to the construction of the separation Barrier

2003 – Likud/Sharon government re-elected

December 18, 2003 – Sharon announced his plan for the unilateral disengagement from Gaza

- 4 reasons for disengagement cited in Sharon's speech: security, economics, political considerations and demography

November 2004 – Yasser Arafat died. He is succeeded by Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen)

2005 – Ariel Sharon founds Kadima party

Summer 2005 – Israel disengages from Gaza

2006 – Hamas is elected as the leadership in Gaza election

July 12, 2006 – Second Lebanon War begins and lasted 33 days

November 2007 – Annapolis peace initiative; President Bush invited Olmert and Abu Mazen to a peace conference at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis MD

2010 – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas begin peace talks