

The Tel Aviv Crafts and Design Biennale, 2020

A first-time innovative project based on an international model

In 2020, MUSA, the Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv, will exhibit the first Tel Aviv Crafts and Design Biennale, which will draw a picture of the current scene in the various fields of crafts and design, with special emphasis on ceramics, glass, jewelry-making, textile and paper. The biennale is the natural result of the museum's longtime interest in local material culture. It will collaborate with the Ceramic Artists Association of Israel and seek the support of the art and design academies and the leading institutions in the field. The chief curators of the biennale are Henrietta Eliezer Brunner and Yuval Saar, together with deputy curators Merav Rahat, Nir Hermet and Leora Rozin.

The biennale, which will be on display over a six-month period, will be deployed in all the museum areas and will deal with several integrated spheres. The On/Off theme will seek to present works centered on the tension between the past, present and future; between older handicrafts and the use of advanced technologies and digital tools, between the traditional and the experimental, between the one-time, the conceptual, and the artistic and the industrial, practical and functional. The objective is to show the general public the quotidian world of local craftspeople and designers, how these practices are manifested in the 21st century, and their reciprocal impact.

The first-time exhibition of a multidisciplinary biennale derives from the perception that in the 21st century the various crafts do not operate in a vacuum, not from the perspective of the relationship between new technologies that affect the work processes, nor from the perspective of the creative sources of inspiration. Cultural, social, ecological, political and other aspects constitute a basis for creativity in the various fields and are expressed in works in all areas. We believe that a multidisciplinary approach and a combined presentation of crafts and design that articulate new dialogues and annul earlier hierarchies, will fully reflect the zeitgeist and the dynamic and ever-changing fields of creativity, and do them justice.

Dr. Debby Hershman, deputy CEO and chief curator: "Eretz Israel Museum continues to celebrate its commitment to local material culture in a comprehensive exhibition that deals with history, technological innovation, art, and design with emphasis on the past-present, and with thinking devoted to the future. This groundbreaking project, carried out for the first time in Israel, will comprise a central exhibition, and satellite exhibits which will be deployed throughout the museum spaces and in the various pavilions. This extensive exhibit will attract a large and diverse audience and will direct a spotlight on ceramic art and on all the other fields."

As part of the biennale, activities will be held for the general public which will include workshops, lectures and fruitful discussions together with representatives of academic institutions and artists from Israel and abroad.

A wide-ranging catalogue will accompany the exhibition, which will present a broad and vital picture of the contemporary world of ceramics and craft in Israel.