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Tel Aviv: The locus of amnesia

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TEL AVIV: THE LOCUS OF AMNESIA

by

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ABSTRACT

Tel Aviv: A Locus of Collective Amnesia

by

Braha Kunda

Tel Aviv's architecture and urban fabric were shaped by the forces of the nationalist movement of Hebrew Revivalism and the progressivist modern movements. A series of local circumstances including the Arab-Israeli conflict and the clash of values and memories introduced by different immigrant groups have also played an important role in Tel Aviv's identity. The search for a suitable architectural language capable of representing the New Hebrew collective identity entered a new phase when Modernism was adopted as the National Style.

Tel Aviv's urban and architectural transformations mirror the changes in the collective identity of its residents as it rapidly evolved from its role as the locus of the Hebrew national revivalists to a cosmopolitan outward looking urban center. Progressivist obsessions brought about periods of amnesia during which the city failed to recognized some of its own "permanences" and as a result became self destructive. Whether these dynamics relate back to the Hebraic concepts of Space-Time is left open as a subject for speculation.
Acknowledgements

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Preface: 'Desert Storm' and Tel Aviv's skyline

During the winter months of 1991 Tel Aviv became a stage for missile attacks launched by Iraq. For the first time, the missile attacks were broadcast in real time over television networks. The extensive coverage of the war by the electronic media, introduced a somewhat surreal element into the chain of events. At times the war resembled an elaborate video game, or a contemporary space age war movie. As Tel Aviv and Baghdad were the two cities under attack their skylines became a familiar site in millions of homes throughout the world.

The Gulf War was conspicuously shaped by satellite technology from the weapons used to the media coverage. While Tel Aviv's residents sat in their sealed private rooms detached from the streets, the Television cameras transmitted the public realm to the rest of the globe. The flow of information was reversed and moved first to the United States and only later was transmitted to Israel. Rather than direct reporting, Israelis often received explicit information surrounding the whereabouts of missile attacks from CNN before the local networks disclosed any information. So that while the direct experience of the sirens and the sounds of explosion were heard by residents of Tel-Aviv the information came from abroad. The sight of Tel Aviv's skyline and streets on the screen was accompanied by the sound of people speaking through gas masks.

Tel Aviv as a military target was incomprehensible to me.

While, the billboards at the entrance to Tel Aviv introduce it as "The City that never Stops", or "The City that never takes a Break", the streets were deserted by dark, and the intense beat of the city came to a halt. It was paralyzed. The locus of public activity shifted from the streets and cafes to television screens, telephones and radios in the sealed rooms. The sound and resonance of explosions replaced the noise of heavy traffic and crowds that typically accompany life in Tel Aviv. Ironically, while
the physical site of the city's public realm was deserted, the collectively experienced trauma greatly intensified the sense of community.

Sitting abroad the idea that my home was under fire was ludicrous. Tel Aviv is Israel's central metropolitan area. For an Israeli it represents much of what New York symbolizes for the American or Baghdad for the Iraqi. It is the heart of civic life and as such is representative of a more encompassing national vitality.

Tel Aviv's skyline as captured from an elevated camera is composed of a generic pattern of buildings that are three, four and five stories high with taller buildings protruding to greater heights dotting the skyline in a random manner. Tel Aviv's skyline reflects no clear order and is primarily the result of a rapidly growing density and recent urban transformations. The new camera driven perspectives of Tel Aviv disclosed a significant shift from a city once dominated by horizontal massing to a metropolitan scale that is encroaching heavy handedly, on the skyline. Surprisingly, I was somewhat unfamiliar with viewing Tel-Aviv from this new vantage point. Tel Aviv was filmed from various elevated angles and revealed a cityscape in which I found it difficult, at times impossible, to orient myself. The primary elements which would have made it easier to orient oneself in the city's skyline were not broadcast for obvious security reasons. These are important to consider as they constitute Tel Aviv's singularity, for example the "wall" of hotels along the beach, or the coast line with the hill of ancient Jaffa rising in the south. As a result, the task of orienting myself in Tel Aviv became a memory game.

The television camera revealed many more high-rises than I had remembered. The daily experience of Tel Aviv does not ordinarily offer this encompassing view of the city. Tel Aviv is predominantly experienced at the street level, and since it is flat it is discerned through its comprised and discrete sections rather than as a whole.
Cities are archetypally related to protection, shelter, and express the human inclination to collectively create centers of commerce, culture and politics. But for these very reasons they are also obliged to become the "stage" of history and exhibit the symbols of victory or scars of defeat. The fall or resistance of cities are traumatic experiences and as such they are channeled into the realm of collective memory; from then on the memory of a war becomes a mix of historical facts that develop mythic proportions.

The fall of cities are as documented as their birth. Within the history of the Jews for example, the Old Testament is filled with stories depicting the fall of cities including the conquest of Jericho by the Hebrews and the takeover of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and the Assyrians. Wars and conflicts have in many cases shaped the development of cities. The need for protection has informed permanences in cities from their siting and the determination of their boundaries to the erection of fortification walls and barracks. Constantinople, Rome, Paris, Berlin and Jerusalem, to name but few, were all significantly affected by the experience of wars.

Monuments and Boulevards live on to attest to the memory of these events. In turn, these testimonials to past victories evolve new meanings with each transformation of the collective identity.

Unlike the cities mentioned above Tel Aviv is a young city. Prior to "Desert Storm" I had never witnessed the traumatic experiences of war aimed directly at Tel Aviv. This is not to say that residents of Tel Aviv were sheltered from the trauma of war throughout Israel's short but war ridden history. Since the War of Independence in 1948 Tel Aviv was not under direct threat and the deadly repercussions of battles, and physical destruction were relatively distant. As a result Tel Aviv is considered the protected heart of Israel, and consequently wars are not associated with its prominent images. Unlike Jerusalem that is still deeply involved with the scars associated with its history of conflicts and unifications between 1948 to 1967 Tel Aviv
is conceived as relatively unscathed. Tel Aviv is conceived as a city of spectacle and earthly pleasures not directly shadowed by the Arab Israeli conflict. "Desert Storm" shattered the myth of Tel Aviv's isolation and relative calm. Although the experience of direct attack was collectively repressed by the city's residents immediately following the war the temporary disturbance challenged the predominant image of Tel Aviv. The city had been forced to stop.

The transformation of Tel Aviv's skyline captured through the routine coverage of the war and the significant challenge to the city's identity posed by the war prompted my investigation of Tel-Aviv's origins and development.

The following work attempts to grapple with the factors that have contributed to the collective memory of Tel Aviv.

My initial examination revolves around elements of the Israeli collective psyche, in particular the framework of collective memory evoke through a Surreal painting by Samuel Bak.

Throughout the successive study Dani Karavan's environmental sculpture White Square serves as a mediator to the city.

Both works evoke issues that are critical when perceiving the work of art and architecture as being the expression and reflection of cultural, political and social processes. From this perspective the singularity of an artifact is rooted in the society that "brewed" the perceptions and values of the individual author. Thus the ultimate singularity of an artifact for this mode of perception, lies in the memory that it encapsulates; it resides in the reminiscence of the particular cultural context in which the author has operated.

Tel Aviv's identity is portrayed thereafter through a range of selected collective artifacts such as buildings, streets and squares. Their evolution and position in the
urban skeleton are analyzed in accordance with some of Aldo Rossi's guidelines for
examining a city. As Aldo Rossi asserts:

"The city is the locus of the collective memory. The relationship
between the locus and the citizenry then becomes the city's
predominant image, both of architecture and of landscape, and as
certain artifacts become part of its memory new ones emerge."¹

Ultimately, the city defines and confines a collective as much as it is the outcome of
its aspirations and actions

¹ Aldo Rossi, The Architecture of the City, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and
Studies and The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1982), p. 130. Rossi bases his
theory on the writings of Freud, Halbwachs and Levi Strauss among others. "To
understand a city beyond its monuments, beyond the history of its stones, is to
rediscover the specific way of being of its inhabitants." Levi Strauss, (The City and
1) **Layers of memory in the painting of Samuel Bak**

**Introduction**

Memory is a phenomenon that preconditions various levels of perception and comprehension, and as such, plays a crucial role in the ways we experience built environments.

When seen in the light of Freud’s conception of psychoanalysis as the archaeology of the self, memory becomes analogous to archaeological layers. In this labyrinth of layers, randomly placed objects and outstanding sections appear and disappear. Their origins are hard to detect, and they may belong to different archaeological sites altogether. As in any archaeological excavation, it is difficult and at times impossible to grasp the whole by its parts in a conclusive narrative.

Several layers of memory are evoked through Samuel Bak’s Surreal painting. (fig 1) Whereas some layers relate to a-priori aspects of human perception and knowledge, and are universal in nature, other layers of memory are rooted in specific and local experiences and are regional.

The first category of readings springs from inherited sources of psychic life that are grounded and shaped by archetypes of human experience.
1. A painting by Samuel Bak, oil on canvas, (sixties)
This theory is largely based on Jung's work on the collective unconscious, that, he posits: "is not reducible to tradition", as its main source.\(^1\) The latter category of regional layers of memory relates to specific texts and experiences upon which a particular identity of a group is shaped.

**Generic framework of perception**

In his painting Samuel Bak portrays three elevated platforms positioned next to and above each other, ascending like giant steps towards the sky. The platforms are made of heavy stones and evoke the memory of ancient construction methods. Two guns, obviously the product of later periods, protrude above the bottom platform's wall. The presence of guns suggests that the platforms might in fact be an ancient fortification system developed over time. A 20th century white dwelling box situated on top of the highest platform makes the image somewhat absurd. The dwelling box is in a deteriorated state and gives the impression of being temporary while the material of its base, the platforms, evoke a sense of the archaic, and imply a permanence. It is clear that centuries have lapsed between the construction of the latest platforms and that of the dwelling cube. The dwelling box can therefore be perceived as a modern intervention on an archaeological site. The three bottom structures complement one another, while the white dwelling box placed on top of the site is foreign. There is no apparent justification for its location, and it blatantly ignores the memory embodied in the preceding structures. At the same time, the ancient piles of stones may contain the primary reason for the later construction of

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\(^1\) Marilyn Nagy, *Philosophical issues in the work of C.G. Jung*, (Albany New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 148-149. Jung's belief that all our substantial knowledge derives of "inner experience" was not asserted by empirically oriented psychology. Jung substituted "inner experience" for the Kantian concept of a-priori reason, via Nagy this vision springs from the ultimate desires to satisfy moral demands, believe in human individuality and hope for justice. Ibid. p. 37-38.
the dwelling cube. All of the structures were executed in an economical and minimalist manner.

A particular tension is evoked in Bak’s painting by the juxtapositioning of these three basic elements: the heavy stone platforms, the dwelling cube and the guns. A heightened sense of isolation and siege is triggered by elements indicating fortification and ammunition. The site cannot be too far from a border and is experienced as a potential battle field. Even without the guns the elemental tension would still be read through the contrasts between the new and the old, and the different qualities time has imprinted on them.

There is no human figure in the picture but the scale of a person in this environment is disclosed through the various components of the dwelling cube. The relative scale of the human figure in relation to the monumental construction would be similar to that of an ant. A tension is thus evoked between the representations of two "types" of time perceptions; the first is the universal time of material whereas the latter is time as measured through the human life span.² Bak’s painting discloses traces of the Romanticist notion of the Sublime, since man’s relative position in the vastness of time "produces a sense of awe".

² In his introduction to Rossi’s work, (1982), Peter Eisenman presents them as follows (p. 5-6):

"One process is that of production..., an object is literally made by the hands of men; the second process is that of time, which ultimately produces an autonomous artifact. The first process assumes a time which is only that of manufacture—a time with no before or after; it relates the object of manufacture, which has no extensive or indeterminate history, to man. The second process is not only singular as opposed to collective, but it supersedes man in that it has its own reason and motivation and thus its own autonomous form, which by virtue of not being determined by the subject man, is independent of its use."
The builders of the structures, the wider frame of reference and the specific narrative of the site are yet unknown. We are left without information surrounding the site's location and function.

**The Israeli frame of reference**

"Not only our memories, but the things we have forgotten are housed. Our soul is in an abode. And remembering "houses" and "rooms" we learn to "abide" within ourselves. Now everything becomes clear, the house images move in both directions: they are in us as much as we are in them."  

When examining the environment represented in Bak's painting within the context of locally shared experiences it becomes a critical metaphor of Israeli life. Profound aspects of Israel's collective memory are blatantly embodied in this composition. Understanding the collective memories evoked by this work is crucial when considering the specific dynamics of Israeli culture, and their implications on the built environment. The painting expresses both the dynamics of the Israeli life and its specific material manifestations.

This image was painted by Samuel Bak, an Israeli artist categorized as a Surrealist. It does not document a specific place, yet it depicts aspects of Israel's collective psyche presented as an archaeology. The elements incorporated into Bak's site can be found throughout Israel. While it does not represent any particular location it evokes the memory of actual places in which similar relationships between new and old elements coexist. The image can be perceived as a prototype of the Israeli environment. Consequently, it is not entirely far fetched to claim, that Bak's picture is perhaps more "real" than Surreal, and that Israeli collective existence embodies surreal aspects.

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This painting was executed in the sixties, a critical time in the development of Israel’s political, social and cultural identity. Much like the cultural revolution of the sixties throughout the Western world, Israel’s earlier collective values began to exhaust themselves during this period. Gaps between dreams and reality were recognized; sacred taboos were challenged and fundamental questions surrounding the absurdities of the Israeli existence surfaced. Amos Elon describes this condition as follows:

"Because Israel as a nation-state, originated in an act of self-consciousness, Israelis are continually fascinated and disturbed by themselves... there is probably no other country where people are as concerned with "defining themselves": "who are we?", "why are we here?", "what is an Israeli?" 4

Memories of the "people who dwell alone"

Bak’s work, like that of other Israeli artists, expresses the frustration experienced by constant exposure to external and internal conflicts, and the high price individuals must pay to secure the mere existence of the collective. Bak’s work represents a pessimistic reflection of the increasing complexity of issues in Israeli life and their unavoidable effect on the national cultural identity.

Bak expresses the trauma of the isolated and besieged, a significant layer in Israeli collective memory. These fears stem from the Arab-Israeli conflict that has not subsided since early in the 20th century. Several changes in Israel’s borders and the country’s limited dimensions have shaped individual and collective lives. Experiences of isolation, siege, destruction and reconstruction are fundamental components of

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the Israeli collective memory. These themes have continually played themselves out throughout the history of the Jewish people in and outside their land. Furthermore, the land itself has been repeatedly under threat of destruction. The anti-static history of the land is due to its geographical location but, even more so, it is an outcome of its significant role in the development of Christianity, Islam and Judaism, i.e. The Holy Land, The Promised Land, etc.

Unavoidably, memories of former persecutions, contemporary isolation and borders are passed on both collectively and as part of individual's life stories. These aspects of the Israeli sub-consciousness are bound to have their repercussions in built environments. Brutalism, for example was a Movement that was widely embraced by local architects. Many public buildings built in the sixties and seventies resemble fortresses in their heavy and monolithic massing, such as the Hebrew University campus on Mount Scopus, Jerusalem.

**Collective memory and archaeology**

The ancient eras captured by the site was the primary consideration for its selection. In the search of a national and cultural identity archaeology has served as the desired bridge to ancient periods. The past is viewed as the origins from which an new identity can be shaped:

"The millennia - spanning mixture of ancient and modern history, coupled with notions of "controversial" legitimacy, combine to produce

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5 Elon, (1972), p. 23-29. The beginning of the British Mandate and Lord Balfour’s declaration supporting the establishment of a State for the Jews in the Land of Israel can be seen as the outset to the Arab-Israeli conflict (1917). The first violent clashes clearly ignited by the conflicting Nationalist aspirations occurred as early as 1921.
this peculiarly Israeli syndrome. Archaeological finds have inspired nearly all Israeli national symbols, from the State Seal, to emblems, coins, medals and postage stamps... Israeli archaeologists, professional and amateurs, are not merely digging for knowledge and objects, but for the reassurance of roots, which they find in the ancient Israelite remains scattered throughout the country.\textsuperscript{6}

The image triggers references to specific archaeologies: The structures described earlier as platforms recall the ancient Canaanite and Hebraic altars: bamot, (in current Hebrew this term usually refers to performing stages). The profile of the bottom wall recalls Jerusalem's old city walls. The elemental rock appears either as an integral part of the site, like segments of Jerusalem's old city wall, or as ramps constructed by potential enemies, like in Massada.

Stones are indeed not taken lightly in Israel. Ancient stones still carry symbolic significance. Stones are threaded along the history of the Hebrews and the Israelites and continue to be of significance in modern Israel. As in other archaic cultures they represent power, substance and eternity. The material itself, its texture and color tell of the presence of earlier civilizations, and establish conscious and unconscious links to a material past. In the Old Testament, stones are mentioned in relation to built projects (e.g. Solomon's construction of the Temple), and as a commonplace weapon (e.g. the stone used to kill Goliath);\textsuperscript{7} Today stone is still used as a building material, primarily on facades in Jerusalem as stone cladding is an enforced regulation. Ironically, stones have returned as the weapon of choice among Palestinians in recent clashes since the outbreak of the Intifada.

The view that modern Israel serves as a contemporary link in a long historical chain is communicated to Israelis from early childhood in school and through various

\textsuperscript{6} Elon, (1972), p. 280.

\textsuperscript{7} Stones are also mentioned in relation to God's miracles (Moses hit the rock and water streamed out), and in a metaphoric way (Pharaoh's heart was hardened as stone, the stones will cry out of the wall).
rituals practiced on a national scale. Yet, while memory of ancient eras plays a significant role in Israel’s cultural evolution, it is surprising how limited consideration has been given to the ways in which the old and new meet in the built environment. There are few cases in which a fruitful dialogue between new structures and ancient material conditions has been developed. Equally rare are instances where ancient material conditions are considered as a valid source of inspiration for contemporary built forms.

Consequently, the uncomfortable relationship represented in Bak’s painting, between the ancient platforms and the white dwelling cube sitting on it, becomes clearer in the light of the specifically Israeli framework of collective memory. The white house on the archaeological site represents the alienation apparent in Israel, between contemporary cultural factors that inform architecture, including pragmatism, and international trends and the existing environmental context. The ambiguous relationship between "permanent" and "temporary", and the sacred and profane, are embodied in the building materials themselves with stone walls sitting beneath plastered walls. While stones age with dignity, plaster deteriorates back to its major component, sand. In the larger spectrum of Israeli collective cognizance, stone brings to mind ancient places such as the Jerusalem, Acre and Jaffa, while sand represent profane Tel Aviv and other New Hebrew projects.

**A house as an archaeological site**

The white dwelling cube in Bak’s painting evokes the image of typical Israeli housing "solutions" of the fifties and sixties. It is a dominant housing type and has many similar "relatives", including cubes resting on thin pilotis with parking underneath. While situated on an ancient site, they impose themselves and do not engage in any contextual discourse. This material condition is the outcome of a modern revivalist movement in an ancient land. The White Dwelling Cube is ascetically placed
because it is the result and expression of the efforts of people carrying ideas from their previous homelands. Rather than blending into their environment they boldly express themselves as a foreign entity in the region.

Several elements of the white dwelling cube portray layers of "contemporary archaeology". The lower balcony is enclosed by deteriorating shutters. Most Israelis live in apartments that are too small for their needs. It is then a popular trend to secure additional space by closing the balconies. The materials used for scaling the balconies are temporary in nature, yet, they have become a prominent hideous element in all parts of the country. Shutters are obviously inevitable in this region for providing protection from heat and bright light. The shutters documented in Bak's painting are made of asbestos and were commonly used in the sixties. Their predecessors were metal and wooden shutters and they were soon replaced by plastic. Evidently, pragmatism has shaped the Israeli urban landscape often to a greater degree than any given ideology.

White sheets are hung out to dry in the sun on the rooftop of the white dwelling cube. It provides the only sign of inhabitation, (in a second reading it may also signify a white flag of surrender!). A small room on the roof probably serves as the laundry room. In "Little Tel Aviv" of the thirties, tenants would gather on the roof in roofs like it to exercise the collective "rite" of laundry. These balconies later became the dominant site for hanging laundry and children in Tel Aviv still play on flat roof tops near the since abandoned laundry rooms.

In the basement of the white dwelling cube there is surely another space that is of great collective significance in the Israeli unconscious: the shelter. It is usually used as a storage space and an additional playroom for children, yet, in times of war it is collectively shared by the tenants.
2. Collective memory and transformations in the Israeli identity

I illustrated several layers of memory evoked through the material condition represented by Samuel Bak's painting. I suggested that whereas some layers relate to a-priori aspects of human perception and knowledge, and are universal in nature, other layers of memory are rooted in specific and local experiences and are regional. The latter category of regional layers of memory relates to specific texts and experiences upon which a particular identity of a group is shaped, i.e. collective memory.

Collective memory refers to history as experienced and internalized by a group of individuals.\(^8\)

History is filtered and represented by historians -- individuals who through their own framework of interests document and analyze past events. Whereas "collective memory" represents the same events filtered through the psyche of many individuals experiencing them, or their repercussions.

Collective memory is a cardinal aspect of Jewish existence. It can be traced back to the ancient Hebrews, who were commanded not only to remember but to pass on the memory of the Covenant, Exodus, the Promised Land and so forth from one generation to another.\(^8\)

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\(^8\) Amos Funkenstein. *Perceptions of Jewish History from the Antiquity to the Present*. (Tel Aviv: Am Oved Publishers LTD, 1991), p. 13-31. In the first chapter of his work Funkenstein summarizes several philosophers' perceptions regarding collective memory and its relation to history and the individual memory. For example: Hegel asserted that without memory there is no history in the sense of a meaningful unfolding of events for a group of people, and that a group's consciousness means collective memory. These, in turn, precondition the political structure, justice system and collective objectives.
generation to the next. In Judaism from its Hebraic sources memory was principally maintained through words, names and actions.\(^9\)

Historical cognizance and collective memory are inseparable -- (especially in Israel where there is so much history going on...). Historical episodes, have in effect been experienced within the life span of Israelis and as such have extensively shaped the collective identity.

"The value of history seen as collective memory, as the relationship of a collective to its place, is that it helps us to grasp the significance of the urban structure, its individuality and its architecture which is the form of this individuality."\(^10\)

Prior to understanding the relationship between the city and its inhabitants in the realm of collective memory it is essential to consider the distinct roles and motivations of the various "cultural agents" in operation. These include: the public, architects, the authorities and the relationship between them. These relationships in turn inform the collective identity and its corresponding cultural, social and political evolution.\(^11\) Ultimately, the interaction between these local "cultural agents" determines the individuality of architecture and the urban structure.

To Live with the Dream, a publication that followed from a recent exhibition at the Tel Aviv Museum, illustrates the nature and form of social, political and cultural transformations that have shaped the Israeli Psyche. The work compiles numerous


\(^11\) Arthur Koestler commented on the relationships between culture and politics in Israel: "Nothing could be more unfair than to judge this country of pioneers and refugees by the standards of mellower civilizations... All this is so obvious that it would hardly need stressing if any other country were concerned; but in the peculiar case of Jewish Palestine, expectations are quite out of keeping with reality, and here cultural factors play sometimes decisive part in shaping political destiny. "Promise and Fulfillment, Palestine 1917-1949, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 275.
state and political publications dating from 1923-69, along with advertisements, art works, and documentary photographs from this period. Together the composite provides a measure of the changes and transformations taking place within the Israeli collective experience. The multifaceted media used to survey Israel’s cultural development is highly descriptive and conveys a rich and tangible portrait of Israeli society, throughout its evolution.\(^\text{12}\)

The story opens with the surfacing of the New Hebrews in the thirties and forties, and later their metamorphosis and maturation into full-fledged Israelis in the fifties and sixties. Among others, the transformation involved the move from a less formal "collective" to statehood; from a primarily socialist political agenda to an increasing adoption of the primacy of the individual and from sweeping political and social consensus to a pluralistic society more critical of centralized dogma. The Israeli collective psyche is characterized as increasingly moving towards Western liberal/capitalist values. Consequently, there is a growing gap between popular value systems and the mythic image of the New Hebrew, with all of its ideological implications, still espoused as the official mainstay of Israeli life. Samuel Bak’s painting of the sixties represents this unfolding gap as described earlier.

Archaeologists speculate on past periods’ cultural and political transformations through the examination of assorted material manifestations. To Live with the Dream is thus a sort of contemporary archaeological excavation through documents which embody layers of Israeli collective memory. Although "Archaeology" ordinarily refers to ancient times, modern history changes so rapidly it resembles a situation in which a millennia has been condensed into a single century.

\(^{12}\) Batia Doner, To live with the Dream. (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Museum of Art 3/89 Dvir Publishers LTD, 1989).
The built environment, as the expression of human beliefs, desires, practical needs, and their relationships, encapsulate the very layers of collective memory touched upon by other mediums. But, unlike archival material, or works of art, the memory of these social transformations is experienced daily through the built environment and has a more permanent presence. Over time the architectural narrative became more complex embodying dualities and contradictions, imprinted by various authors. The city's environment can thus be read like a story that captures the collective memory of its inhabitants; the city, like its collective memory is a collage composed of an assorted range of events and moments.

For Tel Aviv, a city that was born at the dawn of the 20th century, collective memory is now making its first steps in forming the city's history.
2. White Square by Dani Karavan (1988)
3. White Square as a mediator to Tel Aviv

Introduction

White Square was designed by Dani Karavan. (fig. 2) Work on it began in 1977 and it was completed in 1988. White Square is described as "... a site specific environmental sculpture" and was presented together with three other selected projects, in the Israeli Pavilion for the 1991 Biennale in Venice.13

White Square is situated on a hill in the southern outskirts of Tel Aviv, overlooking the entire city and the sea to the west, and the Judean hills rising over the eastern horizon. The work is approached from the east through a path followed by white stairs, ascending towards a square shaped white plain. The figures on the plain visible from the bottom of the hill, are now experienced first hand, they include: a tower, a dome, a bisected wall behind which there are ascending stairs, a pyramid, and a sunken square shaped amphitheater which is only revealed at the level of the square.

The square and its components were molded out of white concrete, and express carved-out quality rather than resembling a surface that was added onto. The city is revealed from the square's plain, and its view is framed by the spaces formed by the sculpture whose presence is sensed simultaneously. The relative positions of the

13 "Israeli Pavilion, four places Jerusalem Tel Aviv" - catalogue, (1991), p. 18. The appropriate categorization of Karavan's work whether as "environmental sculpture" or "architectural environments" have been discussed in "Studio" no. 3/4 September - October, 1989), p. 11-14.
square's components and their visual discourse with the city, allows for an experience of re-discovering and re-evaluating the city.

The Tower at the south-eastern end of the square conjures the memory of an old steel alarm tower that was previously situated on the site. It overlooks La Gardia Street as an obelisk and is directed towards other vertical elements in Tel Aviv's skyline. The free standing stairs afford the ritual of ascending towards what can be perceived as the spot from which the individual contemplates the city. The dome, the pyramid and the wall are elements that reappear in other works by Karavan.¹⁴

**White Square as a sanctified place**

The components of the square and their relationship to each other and to Tel Aviv conceal symbolic meanings, which cannot be fully grasped by those who are unfamiliar with the city's possible narratives. The sculpture's purpose, or, the source of inspiration for its construction are left to individual imagination and speculation. White Square is experienced as an illusion. It has existed for less than a decade, but its presence and the ideas it evokes seem to predate the city. It is as if White Square offers itself as one of the primary reasons for the city's evolution between the hills and the sea. It becomes, then, a contemporary invention embodied with mythological origins which in reality Tel Aviv has never had. Consequently, it has the aura of a sanctified place, visited on pilgrimages, as if it was a temple or a tomb.¹⁵

The compositional qualities and position in relation to the city, at once are associated with an archaeological site and the realization of futurist dreamlike visions. White Square, thus, generates notions of archetypal constructions that are a-temporal.

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¹⁵ The notion of a pilgrimage site is mentioned in "Israeli Pavilion, four places Jerusalem Tel Aviv", (1991), p. 20. The general sense of a sanctified place, a temple is stressed by Dani Schwartz in 'Relationship between City and Sculpture', "Studio", (1989), p. 15.
Few locations offer a view of Tel Aviv like that offered by White Square, since it is located on one of the only hills within Tel Aviv’s boundaries. Many archaeological sites in Israel and elsewhere are located on peaks and slopes of hills including Jaffa in south Tel Aviv and Tel Kassila in the north. Both represent archetypes of security and transcendence. Thus White Square is a sacred place of sort.

In the Old Testament direct communication with God typically took place on mountain and hill tops: Mount Sinai and The Temple Mount are two familiar examples of these archetypical relationships between man, god and nature. Yet, White Square’s position above the city may also be referencing Bilaam’s curse of the Israelites (that turned out to be a blessing), and Moses’ final journey to the top of Mount Nevo to view the promised land which he would never be allowed to approach. Both Biblical stories describe individuals ascending to secluded elevated locations from which they observe, contemplate or address an invisible collective. The collective being addressed is represented by the land that lays below the viewer. White Square provides a contemporary version of approaching Tel Aviv’s residents by addressing the cityscape.

In White Square however, the "rite" being performed is not reserved for priests only. It is a spatial procession along which the cityscape and the sea behind it are revealed:

"The uniqueness of "White Square" lies in the changing relationship it creates between the city and the sea. From the apex of the square the city is nearly invisible. From the top of the free-standing stairs, the sea is a thin blue stripe cut off by tall buildings, while from the tower, the sea becomes a dominant element in the composition."\(^{16}\)

The Square mimics the Acropolis’ relationship with Athens -- a temple that metamorphosed into a memorial celebrating beliefs and ways of life that have since become extinct, a tourist attraction, or using Aldo Rossi’s terminology, "a

\(^{16}\) "Israeli pavilion, four places Jerusalem Tel Aviv", (1991), p. 20.
pathological permanence" in the city. While this comparison may seem somewhat stretched, White Square affords experiences such as discovery, observation and contemplation, that stand outside of the scope of profane daily life in Tel Aviv, "... an open and dynamic city for a secular society".

Furthermore, although White Square is part of the urban collage, it is not integrated into Tel Aviv's street pattern -- visiting the Square requires: driving, locating the somewhat hidden entrance to the park which is not easily found, parking, circulating through the park and finally climbing up the hill to the square itself, to find the monument overlooking Tel Aviv.

**White Square as a monument**

Using Aldo Rossi's terminology, monuments together with housing constitute "permanences" in a city. The permanences of a city embody a past that is continually experienced, and thus "Permanences are related to persistences". The criteria for determining what constitutes a monument must be examined in relation to the more general nature of the city's permanences -- which ultimately constitute its identity. Monuments represent physical signs of the past but they also act as "... fixed points in the urban dynamics and as such are stronger than economic laws." Like other

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18 "Israeli Pavilion, four places Jerusalem Tel Aviv", (1991), p. 6-7. In the introduction to the four Israeli entries to the Biennale in Venice, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem are described as the transfiguration of two polar myths: while Tel Aviv's development followed the ideas of innovation and progress, i.e., the desired image for the new (secular) society, Jerusalem is the "many leveled" historical sacred capital. While Jerusalem is "captured in her dreams" surrounded by the Judean hills and overlooking the desert, Tel Aviv is the city of the plain and the Mediterranean.


permanences monuments cannot be addressed in isolation from the city's transformations. 21

In contrast to old cities, in which monuments are accepted or recognized as fundamental permanences simply due to their age, and their relative position, Tel Aviv has not developed in accordance with pre-existing monuments. Although Tel Aviv originated as a suburb of ancient Jaffa, itself a "permanence", its growth was not centered around it. Jaffa served as a definitive border for Tel Aviv's development rather than a source of inspiration.

Tel Aviv is an example of a regional evolution of a 20th century Modernist city, with a particular blend of "singular" and "universal" developments. The dialectic between the two forces becomes more confusing when the "singular" story unfolds as consisting of aspirations and ideologies that are "universal" in their nature.22

Tel Aviv has been shaped by innovative drives and deep confidence in Modernist progressivist ideologies.23 The city's transformations throughout the past three decades reflect the gradual shift from a Socialist agenda to a Capitalist free market

21 In the introduction to Rossi's work (1982), p. 6, Peter Eisenman writes: "... this dialectics of permanence and growth is characteristic of time in Rossi's skeleton-city.".

22 The regional evolution was shaped by the various national and cultural groups: the Israelis, their predecessors the New Hebrews and the Mid Eastern: Arabic and Mediterranean cultures. The Israeli collective memory also contains layers that are intrinsic to previous environments: to immigrants' countries of origin, or earlier eras in the Land of Israel. For further discussion of these issues see: Yigal Lossin, Pillar of Fire - The rebirth of Israel a visual history, (Tel Aviv: Shikmona publishers Ltd, 1983). and Elon, (1972).

23 The Modernist progressivist ideologies blended into the Zionist agenda from its very beginning: the State that Herzl, Wizemann and other Zionist leaders and writers envisioned was at large an accommodation of Western models. See Ehud Luz, Parallels Meet Religion and Nationalism in Early Zionist Thought, (Tel Aviv: Am Oved Publishers LTD, 1985), and Yosef Gorny, The Quest for Collective Identity, (Tel Aviv: Am Oved Publishers LTD, 1990).
system. During this process Tel Aviv's monuments have not always been recognized as such, and in several cases have actually been treated as temporal objects. In light of this local amnesia, Dani Karavan has presented Tel Aviv with a "critical monument"; although White Square is not an integral part of the busy city's streets, and is a marginal participant in the urban dynamics, it nonetheless signifies a past still being experienced in the city. Tel Aviv's image as the White City, presents itself as a prominent layer of the urban texture and architecture. However, re-evaluating, and acknowledging the 'White City' as one of the dominant images shaping Tel Aviv is a process that has begun only recently. White Square, offers a frame of reference for viewing Tel Aviv as a collective artifact confronting the city with its self-image from its origins through its transformations. White Square is thus a monument embodying the memory of White City while the viewer overlooks its metamorphoses.

**White Square as a "window"**

Conceptually White Square can be perceived as an "urban window", through which Tel Aviv's transformations are observed and former images and dreams are evoked. Yet, the frame does not provide an objective viewpoint, as the window pre-determines both the direction and the scope of vision of the viewer.

Through White Square Tel Aviv is confronted with both the elements it has never had, and those it has forgotten and left behind: on the one hand archaic and archetypal themes, such as the "sacred mountain" are implicit, while on the other hand a permanent landmark, a memorial and homage to one of Tel Aviv's re-discovered permanences, the White City, is introduced.

By naming this work a "square" a new layer of significance is introduced: As a "square" it is conceptually directed towards other squares in Tel Aviv, and in particular evoke the memory of the first White Square: the Dizengoff Circle, the White City's Square which metamorphosed into a traffic junction, discussed later.
White Square as a square

White Square could easily be accepted as Tel Aviv’s most magnificent square, yet, it does not easily fall into what is commonly perceived as a town square:

"To the question as to why the site-specific sculpture in Edith Wolfson Park was called a "square" even though it is far from any urban center or main traffic artery, Karavan replied that a square is where people congregate, stroll or relax. This definition applies to other famous squares... But, we persist, "White Square" is not an intersection, nor is it at ground level, or encircled by buildings. It is a sort of pilgrimage site, to be visited for its own sake. So, replies Karavan, is the square in Siena."24

Nevertheless White Square does not function as a social place in which people congregate for a collective purpose. White Square does not serve the same function as other squares in Tel Aviv; people do not gather there for purposes of demonstration or celebration, like they do in the Kings of Israel Square, nor would they sit on a bench and observe the pedestrian traffic like they would in the Dizingoff Square. Additionally, White Square is not an integral part of the city’s circulation system, it is not a space inscribed by buildings, or carved out of the city’s pattern. However, it is the main square of Wolfson Park -- on nice days people stroll around or sit and relax on it and children use it as their play-grounds.

The Hebrew word for Square is Kikar, which in fact refers to Piazza. The word Kikar in the Old Testament related to a quantity molded into a shape: while gold and silver are presently molded into a block or a sheet in ancient times they were formed into a Kikar. Today the word Kikar refers both to a loaf of bread and an open public place used for collective events. Karavan’s work, although titled "Kikar" meaning piazza, does not conform to Biblical images of city squares. But as it was built of poured concrete and has been molded like a loaf...

While not conforming to traditional definitions of squares White Square becomes conceptually their reverse which in the way that reflections are the reverses of images.

**White Square as an antithesis to Tel Aviv - "A City that Never Stops"**

The clearly ordered platonic solids in White Square provide a sense of stability, purity, harmony and tranquility, all of which are contrasted with the chaos, dynamics and constant transformation of the city it overlooks:

"A city is not a formal or volumetric system, a city is a system of relationships. The existence of urban relationships extends that of individual buildings, those are being destroyed and rebuilt, unlike the city. The city maintains even after bombardments, or transformations conducted by either regimes or private developers, and its image is asserted and enriched. The essence of a sculpture is different: its design begins in a clear point in time and so does its end."\(^2^5\)

White Square is Tel Aviv's antithesis. In contrast with Tel Aviv's origins and its process of construction is clearly defined in time and space, with its boundaries and orders coherently established. As indicated in the formal publication for the Biennale in Venice:

"In planning the square the artist could scarcely rely on urban planning prototypes in Tel Aviv; there are virtually none."

At the same time White Square acknowledges Tel Aviv's former unique character as a White City with

"Its own urban traditions (that) are modernistic and European. Here the International Style was explored and its architectural and urban potential realized in the young city on the sea".\(^2^6\)

White Square recalls earlier periods of Tel Aviv's development in which dreams and visions were among the dominant forces shaping the city. While the sculpture

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\(^2^5\) Dani Schwartz, ("Studio" no. 3/4 September - October 1989), p. 15.

contains its own framework of memory, its major significance lies in both its conceptual and physical relationship with the city. It thus provides an experience of rediscovering past and present "moments" of Tel Aviv. It overlooks the city and contrasts its image and vision as a "White City" with its presently promoted identity as "A city that never stops".

What are the dynamics that have shaped Tel Aviv as "A city that never stops"? How have collective identity's transformations informed the essence of Tel Aviv's permanences?
The factors that have shaped Tel Aviv's urban collage and architecture are the subject matter of the following discussion.
3. Map: Tel Aviv's Site - 1909
4. Tel Aviv's growth and transformations - factors contributing to the urban collage and architecture.

Since its establishment, Tel Aviv has evolved from the First Hebrew Modern Garden Suburb of Jaffa (1909), to the First Hebrew Township (1921), to the First Hebrew City (1934), to Israel's central and most densely populated region. Tel Aviv and the cluster of satellite towns around it houses one third of Israel's population. It is the center of Israeli economic, cultural and political life. Trade union headquarters, political parties, the press, theaters, music and a lively night life are all concentrated in Tel Aviv.

a. Origins

Site

Tel Aviv is situated in the middle of Israel's coastal plain. Its rudimentary landscape components are the Yarkon bayou in the north, the Ayalon creek in the east with the Mediterranean sea defining its western edge.

Descriptions of the vicinity at the dawn of the 20th century portray Jaffa as a hilly nucleus, surrounded by a belt of fertile soil, consisting of orange groves and vineyards, and an outer sand dune belt. Tel Aviv was constructed north of Jaffa on the sand dunes and sandstone along the shore and on its eastern and southern edges it met orange groves and vineyards growing on fertile agricultural soil.
Tel Aviv is flat: the "Wandering Sands" as phrased in Hebrew, forming an impermanent topography, and was accommodated for construction through leveling. Whereas today sand dunes are only evident along the narrow shore, and the vineyards and orange groves have completely vanished, sandstone segment are still apparent, particularly along the coast.

Settlements

The Tel Aviv region was initially inhabited by several tribes that had migrated from the north during pre-historic times (7500-4200 B.C.). Artifacts and evidence of their dwellings were found by Tel Aviv's principal archaeologist Yacov Kaplan after the establishment of the State. These settlements were primarily located on elevated spots along the Yarkon bayou and disappeared for reasons not clearly understood.27 The area was inhabited throughout the Middle Bronze Age (2000 B.C.) by the Hixsos nomadic tribes, who migrated from the east and north, during the same period Abraham and his household moved through Canaan. One of the Bronze Age settlements was uncovered near the Hilton Hotel, on the sandstone cliff overlooking the Mediterranean sea.

The Philistines were the next to settle the region. Their temples, dwellings and warehouses were found in Tel Kassila, on the northern bank of the Yarkon. Tel Kassila itself was designated as a port city (1200 B.C.), and was later used by the Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines and during the early Arab period.

27 Shlomo Shva, Rising From The Sands, Tel Aviv the Early Days, (Tel Aviv: Zmora Bitan Publishers, 1989), p. 8-11. The ancient settlements of the area are portrayed by Shva. His description is based on archaeological findings and various speculative historical narratives.
In 86 B.C. Alexander Yanaí, the Hasmonean King, constructed a fortification system throughout the area; remnants of it are scattered around the city, resembling a geological phenomenon rather than an archaeological one.

Archaeological remains, however, were not uncovered prior to the establishment of Israel. Tel Aviv's founders were thus unfamiliar with the singular history of their site. Although "Tel Aviv" means "Spring ancient-hill", the founders understood it as an abstract metaphor for national revival, not realizing that several "ancient hills" in fact lie underneath the sand dunes designated to become Tel Aviv. Nevertheless, the founders were aware of the historical significance of the name they selected for the new settlement. The name Tel Aviv first appears in Ezekiel's vision as the Babylonian site on which the exiled prophet envisioned the dry bones coming back to life by the spirit of God. It was from here that the revived bones were to return back to Israel. The name--Tel Aviv--also represents the Hebrew translation of Alteuandl (old-new-land), the title of Herzel's work disclosing his influential utopian visions.

Despite the existence of archaeological layers in Tel Aviv they remain invisible, and are not commonly recognized by the general public. Tel Kassila is the only location in which an archaeological site generated a substantial permanence in Tel Aviv, and recently, a museum was built around it in recognition of its past significance. Unlike Jerusalem in which archaeology continues to inform the city's image and identity, in Tel Aviv past eras persist as an architectural framework several kilometers away in the core of Old Jaffa and not within the city center.

Jaffa

Tel Aviv's origins and development cannot be separated from Jaffa's history. The name Jaffa - Yaffo was probably derived from Phoenician and means pretty.
According to local legend Jaffa was named after Yefet the son of Noah, who settled there. Jaffa is an ancient port city located on a hill overlooking the Mediterranean sea. It was mentioned as one of the Canaanite cities conquered by Thutmose III in 1469 B.C. and archaeological findings indicate that an Egyptian fort had existed near the Canaanite town. Jaffa is also mentioned in the Old Testament, as the port through which the cedars of Lebanon were imported for the construction of the Temple, (II Chron. 2:15) and as the place from which Jonah the prophet sailed to Tarshish (Jonah 1:3).  

Settlement in Jaffa was mainly derived from its position in relation to the sea as a natural harbor, and it is not known to have been sanctified as a "cosmic center". Nonetheless, there are several ancient myths and legends associated with Jaffa in Egyptian, Greek and early Christian traditions.

Ancient Egypt controlled the city until 800 B.C., followed by the Assyrians, the Babylonians and the Persians who governed Jaffa until 330 B.C.. At that time Jaffa was conquered by Alexander the Great’s navy, along with the rest of the country. Between 135-66 B.C., the Hasmoneans controlled the city. The Romans, Byzantines, Muslims, Crusaders, and Egyptian Mamluks all sailed in and out of Jaffa’s port, until it was conquered by the Ottoman Empire in 1516 and controlled by them for the next four hundred years.

Throughout the 1830’s several Arab settlements were formed around Jaffa by groups migrating from Egypt including: Salame, Sumail, Jamusin, Abu-Kabir and Shaik-

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Munis. These settlements constituted "primary elements" in the area and thus effected Tel Aviv’s later development.\textsuperscript{29}

The final episode of Jaffa’s history as an ancient town is marked by the demolition of its walls in 1879. Towards the end of the 19th century Jaffa became a center for the growing Jewish community. It was the gate-way to Palestine and much like other countries of immigrants, the port city became over populated with new-comers. Consequently, various Zionist institutes and organizations, as well as Hebrew Newspapers and writers, settled in Jaffa.

Tel Aviv’s early development took place under Turkish rule, and like the rest of Palestine it was under British Mandate between 1917-1948.

\textbf{Memory of roads (part 1)}

Tel Aviv’s history corresponds to Jaffa’s and the region surrounding it. Historically, Canaan, The Land of Israel, Palestine - served as the intermediate zone between Mesopotamia and Egypt, Asia Minor and Africa, the sea and the desert. On a regional scale it can be perceived as a "corridor strip", functioning as a circulation system. The area therefore has served as a "strategic asset" by Empires throughout history to the present.

The framework of circulation on a local scale is even more significant when considering the country’s transcendental value to Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The country’s map and built environment complied with its "program" as a Holy Land, consisting of pilgrimage sites, and roads linking them.
Jaffa and its vicinity developed initially along the roads leading from its port to Jerusalem, the ancient Sea Road leading south to Egypt and north to Lebanon, and other secondary routes.

\textsuperscript{29} Shva, (1989), p. 12
Tel Aviv's fundamental development followed this canon of growth in relation to the pre-existing pattern of roads and paths, discussed later.
4. The founders of Tel Aviv parcelling the land out by lottery (1909)
Founders

The founding of Tel Aviv resulted from a series of deliberated, decisive and pragmatic acts. The sixty founders cooperatively purchase land and parcelled it out by lottery. The lottery represented Tel Aviv's first collective image, and was captured by Suskin photographing Tel Aviv in the making. (fig. 4) This image reveals a crowd of people dressed in early 20th century suits and long dresses, congregating in a white valley of sand. The picture expresses the founders strong belief that they were operating in a wholly new domain, as all the frame includes is a collective gathering in vacant sand dunes. Juxtapositions with any primary element in the landscape are conspicuously absent. The picture reveals nothing of the whereabouts of Jaffa, the sea or the adjacent Jewish neighborhoods. The camera is directed towards the area designated for future expansion, and its back is turned towards Jaffa. A long shadow cast at the corner of the picture is attributed to the son of a converted Jew, shouting at the crowd: "Crazy people, you build on sand, nothing will grow here!".  

Suskin documented some of Tel Aviv's early "moments", and in effect took a major part in shaping the mythology of the city.

Tel Aviv's image as a city rising out of the vacant white sands was its most dominant one until the sands were completely taken over by the city and finally forgotten. As far as the founders and their successors were concerned the sands were viewed as vacant -- a "clean slate" on which the New Hebrew project could unfold.

The lottery was performed with the aid of sea shells. In its essence, it expressed the desire to prevent an unfair allocation of more desirable plots. The egalitarian division of the plots erased any favoritism and distinction between wealthy and poor entrants despite the fact that Tel Aviv's founders were not Socialists but were

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wealthy members of the middle class most of whom were engaged in business in Jaffa.

Tel Aviv's founders were motivated simultaneously by pragmatics and aspirations to vivify the New Hebrew. Their major concerns revolved around the desire to secure a higher quality of life than that available in Jaffa, while the pursuit of Hebrew revivalism was the recognized underlying agenda. Commenting on the radical aspect of Tel Aviv's establishment Shlomo Lahat, the present mayor notes that:

"... today, from a seventy year perspective, it is difficult to understand the significance and revolutionary power of this decision.

It is essential to remember, that for 1900 years the Jewish people have had no significant experience in organizing a municipal management... It still had to be proven that the Jews are capable not only as farmers, but in creating efficient infrastructure for autonomous self rule.

This was the innovative aspect of Tel Aviv... In many respects Tel Aviv represented the general rehearsal for the future Jewish State."31

Despite the founders' attempt to operate in a wholly new framework, the program and characteristics they had envisioned were heavily influenced by their previous lives in Europe. The founders consciously expressed their ambition to establish a modern settlement. As a result, Tel Aviv is not the first Jewish neighborhood outside of Jaffa but it is the first to be directed by the notion of progress shaped by Western urban theories and visions of the Garden City. Despite the founder's aspirations, the idea of creating a contemporary regional version of settlement grounded in the European tradition did not always match the local reality and the available means.

31 Ilan Shchori, The Dream turned to a Metropolis, The birth and growth of Tel Aviv. The first Hebrew city in the world, (Tel Aviv: Avivim LTD, 1991). p. 11.
5. A plan for Tel Aviv offered by Vilhelm Stiasni, (1909).
6. Tel Aviv's first street layout, (1909).
b. Tel Aviv’s development from Garden Suburb to Municipality 1909-1924

Early agenda

In his book The Dream that turned to a Metropolis, Ilan Schori documents Tel Aviv’s early decades by relying on both official Neighborhood Committee’s correspondences and individual voices from within the community. A close reading of these documents reveal an overriding desire to secure the quality of Tel Aviv as a suburb with a healthy environment and a facilitated community.

Tel Aviv’s initial program and construction policy revolved around practical organizational necessities, economics and communal identity. Construction was regulated by primary Building Laws, that specified sanitation standards, relationship of dwellings to the streets - building lines, zoned commercial streets, public and private property lines etc. The founders’ concern for controlled construction constitutes the ultimate difference between Tel Aviv and other Jewish neighborhoods developing during the same period. Thus Tel Aviv’s streets for example were designated to be twice and three times the width of earlier neighborhood’s streets that did not exceed five meters. Founded in 1909, Tel Aviv grew from a neighborhood of 1,490 in 1914 to a Township of 21,500 in 1924. The accelerated growth rate, limited budgets, unskilled labor, availability of construction methods, Jaffa’s presence and political transformations from the colonial power of the Ottoman Empire to the British Mandate, have all been a much more poignant influence in the shaping of the city than the few architects actively planning the city.32

Hebrew architecture

The practical and symbolic aspects of constructing the New Hebrew urban community under local circumstances and regional transformations played a central role in shaping the city. Construction was collectively configured at the level of program and general guide-lines, yet distinct architectural expression was not considered to be a matter for public debate.

The "Landlords" and contractors were the main forces in the shaping of individual buildings. Until the twenties architects' involvement was limited to the design of public buildings of primary symbolic significance like the Hebrew High School, or the first Synagogue.

Tel Aviv's first architects working during the twenties were trained in the European Beaux Arts tradition. Driven by 19th century Romanticist notions, these architects were concerned with the Hebrew revivalism and consequently, they searched for a style that would readily express a new Hebrew Architecture.

During the first two decades of this century the search for a suitable architectural language was primarily directed towards the past, and incorporated vernacular traditions.

The Herzelia High School, designed in 1910 by the engineer Barski is representative of the quest for a singular Hebrew architectural expression.(fig. 7) At the other end of the spectrum, the fantastic, represented by the "Casino" by Megidowitz (1923) and numerous other extravagant buildings, titled: "Dream Houses", expressed the desire to place Tel Aviv within the context of contemporary European culture. (fig 14)

Consequently, architecture during this early stage reflected fantasies and dreams stemming from the individual aspirations and memories of the builders' own countries of origin.
7. 8. 9. Herzelia High School designed by engineer Barski (1910).
Herzelia High School - Tel Aviv's first monument

Herzelia High School was Tel Aviv's first institution and monument. It represented "Tel Aviv's first source of pride". The school embodied the quest for national revival as it was the first secular school in which Hebrew was the principal and official language of instruction. At the dawn of the 20th century the Hebrew language was still in its nascent stages—evolving from an ancient and stagnant language of prayer to contemporary medium of daily communication. Herzelia High School was originally established in 1905 and operated in Jaffa. By 1909, with Tel Aviv's development the High School had established reputation in Zionist circles.

Tel Aviv, the first Modern Hebrew Neighborhood warmly embraced the High School. The revival of the Hebrew language and the resurrection of the Jewish People in their Historical Land were in their initial phase and Tel Aviv was designated to become the stage of this process, the scenery of History in the making. Herzelia High School, the city's first public institution and monumental building, was thus given special architectural consideration and it required proper symbolic articulation.

Primary attention was given to the location of the school in Tel Aviv's street layout. Discussions surrounded its placement in relation to Herzl street, Tel Aviv's main avenue. The founders decided to place the school at the northern end of Herzl Street, making the main facade visible from the train route originating in Jaffa and crossing Tel Aviv's main street. This kind of consideration illustrates the founders heightened sensitivity to their project and its significance and position in relation to Jaffa. The High School's location and scale in relation to Tel Aviv's first houses did not fall far from Vilhelm Stiasni's earlier Garden City layout for Tel Aviv, in which the Viennese architect had also included a monument with two vertical elements,
protruding above the uniform housing pattern.\textsuperscript{33} (fig. 5) The High School was situated in the most prestigious location in the new Neighborhood. In effect the Herzelia building served as the principal facade of Tel Aviv and constituted its primary collective identity. (fig. 8) In retrospect, this "royal gesture" limited the development of Herzl Street as Tel Aviv's central axis because the building prevented the further development of the street to the north. The placement of Tel Aviv's first monument was informed by its symbolic content as was its architectural articulation. But, whereas the location of the school was informed by a rather rational strategy the architecture of the building was fantastic and expressed a desire to establish a new "Hebrew Architecture". The Herzelia High School was designed by the engineer Barski in collaboration with Boris Shatz, the founder of Bezalel Art and Applied Arts School.\textsuperscript{34} Guided by Boris Shatz, the artist's agenda at the beginning of the century, revolved around the constitution of "Hebrew art". But what is "Hebrew art", and what could it sources be? The major difficulty encountered by this approach was one of securing authenticity, since the images of the desired past no longer existed in reality. Furthermore, there was no Hebrew building tradition at hand. The Temple was, in effect, the only building recognized as a legitimate and authentic icon from the past. However, the only remnants of the Temple are the Temple Mount, the Western Wall, its descriptions and memory. Its architectural configurations are limited to various interpretations of ancient texts and speculative models. The Temple, as a mythological imprint on the collective memory was bound to resurface in later

\textsuperscript{33} Schori, (1991), p. 43. Vilhelm Stiasni envisioned Tel Aviv as a Garden City with a central piazza surrounded by public buildings.

\textsuperscript{34} Shva, (1989), p. 123.
architectural projects, yet it was not sufficiently rich to inform the New Hebrew architecture.35

There was simply no Hebrew visual or architectural tradition at hand. The two main sources that inspired the Herzlia High School and other works of art during that period, were elements of local character and ancient Hebraic culture. Yet, the latter was ultimately dependant on the first, as the memory of the Hebraic is limited to literary texts and their interpretation:

"The Oriental, was grasped by the "Bezalel" artists as a sign of the Land of Israel's authenticity, as if it signified the Jewish People's 'racial' relationship at present, to its oriental ancestors from Biblical times."36

Local motives were filtered through a European Romanticist framework furnishing the necessary "picturesque" and exotic qualities for the formation of a "Hebrew Architecture". Since the Ottoman architectural styles dominated the built environment, the resulting "New Hebrew" style was in effect "Neo Ottoman". Herzlia High School's diagram consisted of three wings that defined a semi-enclosed courtyard in the back. The main facade facing Herzl Street was articulated in accordance with one of the reconstructions of a Canaanite Temple. In addition, it relied on several regional influences including the pointed arches of the openings adopted from Islamic forms. A monumental gateway framed by two towers dominates the center of the symmetrical facade. The towers reference the pillars of Boaz and Yachin in Solomon's Temple. The main facade, and in particular the gateway towers with their picturesque key hall openings, are reminiscence to scenes from Arab Legends. Photographs of the building during its early days intensify the

35 For example in the contemporary design for the Israeli Supreme Court competition, Ada Karmi's winning entry was based on the Temple's diagram. Michael Levin (curator) The Supreme Court Building Jerusalem an Architectural Competition. Translated by Jogendorf M., Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Museum Cat. 2/87, 1987.

fantastic quality of the High School: adorned with a camel, or a formal parade in its foreground the building resembles an extravagant set design for a Hollywood production. (fig. 9)

As the founders agreed that the building was to be constructed by "Hebrew labour", any stylistic manifestations in the building fell under the heading of "Hebraic", regardless of their form.\footnote{For further discussion on "Hebrew Work" in relation to national revivalism and the Arab Israeli conflict see: Elon, (1972), p. 171, and Shchori, (1990), p. 63-70.}
Herzelia High School - traces of a collective artifact

Tel Aviv's first monument, the Herzelia High School (1910-1958), has since been replaced by Tel Aviv's pioneer skyscraper, the Shalom Tower, completed in 1964. The school was demolished for practical reasons related to the flow of traffic on Herzl street that had greatly increased since its founding. The decision to tear down the school aroused little public attention at the time. In fact, the first acts of demolition were captured on film by Boris Karmi, a photographer and Pinhas Ben-Shahar, a pedestrian coincidentally passing by the site.38 (fig 10) Ironically, the image of the worker tearing down the building resembles the stereotyped silhouette of Hebrew pioneer laborers from the twenties and thirties -- an image heavily promoted by the socialist labor movement from that period.39 (fig. 11)

The first Hebrew High School, the pioneering monument of Tel Aviv, was replaced by what was then the tallest skyscraper in the Middle-East. The Shalom Tower is a simple tall box and its horizontal strip windows give it the impression of an extruded residential block. (fig. 13) The Tower houses a department store on the ground floors, and office space and an observatory on the upper levels.

12. Herzl Street - 1912
13. Herzl Street in the sixties
A Wax Museum and a miniature amusement park were later added to Shalom Tower’s lower balcony.

For more than a decade the Shalom Tower in southern Tel Aviv and the Power Station’s chimney in the north were the dominant vertical elements in Tel Aviv’s skyline. The development of a wall of hotels along the shore was initiated at the time of the Shalom tower’s construction. Three site images characterize Tel Aviv’s cultural development throughout the Sixties and became the city’s emblems: The Shalom Tower, The Hilton Hotel and Dizengoff Street. The first two developments characterize local attempts to assimilate American values into Israeli culture. Establishing the tallest business and commercial center in Tel Aviv on the ruins of the Herzelia High School, a central symbol of Hebraic revivalism, was a telling decision that illustrates the ideological shifts that had taken place within Israeli culture. The Shalom Tower, a symbol of commercial life based on the American model became Tel Aviv’s new icon. The Shalom tower’s towering image was readily adopted as Tel Aviv’s new icon despite its mundane architectural articulation.40

The Herzelia High School, a monument to the birth of Tel Aviv as the first Hebrew City, was slowly allowed to deteriorate. Over time, Tel Aviv’s main public centers shifted to the north and the area surrounding the school housed light industry and became a small business and banking district.

In retrospect, the demolition of Herzelia High School must be seen as a radical eradication of a city’s permanence. While from the outset Tel Aviv aspired to be modern during the sixties and seventies the city suffered from a particularly severe case of "amnesia", or repression of its own history. Its earliest permanences were not recognized as such as they no longer captured contemporary expressions of collective ambitions. Hebrew Revivalism, Tel Aviv’s original agenda was no longer a

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compelling objective and it was replaced by values veering towards the American model of capitalism and a consumer society.

Herzelia High School disappeared but interestingly, its image persists as an emblem of the city. In a contemporary map the images of the Shalom Tower and the High School's old building are both represented as graphic logos and accompanied by a text reading:

"At the head of the street stood the stylish structure Gymnasia Herzelia. It was the first secular high school where all subjects were taught in the revived ancient language, Hebrew. Today the school has moved to more spacious grounds and the Shalom Tower and Observatory has been built in its place."\textsuperscript{41}

The old building's silhouette remains the High School's emblem and the school's image is impressed on a mural located inside the Shalom Tower, as well as in several books that revolve around Tel Aviv's early stages.\textsuperscript{42}

Borrowing from Peter Eisenman's terminology the Herzelia High School represented an architecture of "strong form"; the main facade is instantly memorable, so that the building became Tel Aviv's first architectural icon. The Herzelia High School's building therefore still remains a powerful emblem of Tel Aviv years after its demolition. Paraphrasing Aldo Rossi's "pathological permanences", the Herzelia High-school can be regarded as a "mirage permanence".\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{41} From a map produced and published by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism (1983, Cat. No. 307/1)

\textsuperscript{42} The mural was painted by Nachum Gutman, who grew up in "Little Tel Aviv". Shva, (1989), p. 230.

\textsuperscript{43} Rossi, (1982), p. 6.
15. Allenby Street turned from its initial route (map 1923)
16. Allenby Street in the early twenties
The "Casino"

The "Casino Galei-Aviv" (1923-1939), is undoubtedly another representative case of architectural development in Tel Aviv. (fig 14)

The "Casino" was a unique and pioneering institution although it had little to do with the Hebrew revivalists agenda or Socialist values:

"There is no doubt that the "Casino" on Tel Aviv's beach, opened in 1923, was the dominant meeting place for the Bohemians. It was not a gambling club, but a stylized Cafe, visited by all the city's celebrities who came to sit by the sea and dance to the popular music of that time, like the Fox-trots and Charleston that was played by a live band."44

From its outset the building was a spectacle. Its flamboyant nature ranged from its concrete foundations poured into the sea to its fantastic external form. The engineer Alfred Gut and the architect Yehuda Megidowitz executed the construction of the most extravagant structure in Tel Aviv of that time. The building's articulation which recalled Villas and Club Houses on the Odessa beach, correspond to the architectural forms found in the birthplaces of both the client and the architect, as well as expressing the local desire to construct a European city on the sands of Tel Aviv.

The clients' vision was realized with the aid of Dizengoff, Tel Aviv's first mayor. To provide access to the Casino, Allenby Street, the main street in the twenties and early thirties, was shifted westwards instead of running parallel to the sea as was previously intended. (fig 15, 16)

Today Allenby Street which is the only major route in Tel Aviv that runs all the way down to the beach ending with a wide fanning gesture towards the sea, is the only remnant of the Casino. Recently a new fountain has been placed in front of the

44 Ilan Shchori, (1990), p. 368-370
beach and the surrounding buildings are in the process of renovation. Memory of the Casino itself, however, is limited to senior residents and historians.

**Tel Aviv's architecture in the twenties**

The architect Arieh Sharon describes Tel Aviv in the early Thirties, following the era of eclectic architecture:

"I remember, when I came from the Bauhaus after six years of absence, I walked through Tel Aviv, and I was very depressed by its architecture. After Berlin, which, in the late 'twenties', was the liveliest city in the world, making its unique contribution to literature, the arts, theater and architecture. Tel Aviv was a shock. I walked along the main street, Allenby Road, and found it was the commercial center of a provincial Mediterranean town. Around it, two to three-storey houses with little mediocre shops lined the streets. There were generally small apartments on the two upper floors, a mixture of street elevations, decorated with various different balconies and alcoves in the poor style of Eastern Europe.

Even the few, somewhat charming, oriental facades designed by pioneering architects of the early "twenties", were almost obliterated by the mass of new commercial building schemes of shops and apartments.

The little, rather, pleasant villas and houses of the first city fathers, were disappearing, making room for bigger two to three-storey commercial and apartment buildings. The richer houses were fitted with cantilevering balconies, terraces and alcoves, resulting a restless, heterogeneous building facades... The winding streets and little gardens were visually cut off from the only natural asset of the city, the sea shore. Even the famous "casino" - a charmingly naive Tea-room, at one time the meeting-place of the younger generation - built on steel pylons into the sea, and connected by a narrow bridge with the entrance to Allenby Road - was steadily deteriorating and disappearing."

Tel Aviv is the first New Hebrew's urban project. Yet, urban settlements were not considered as desirable ideologically. The act of reattachment to the ancient land

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was by means of working its earth following the footsteps of the ancient Hebrew's farmers. City and town life were characteristic of Jewish existence in the Diaspora and thus they signified the life of marginal people. So much for ideologies... in practicality the majority of New Comers preferred city life. Throughout the twenties and thirties massive immigration had brought in people with capital or with professions and occupations that dictated living in the city. That is primarily why Tel Aviv could not but evolve on the grounds of pragmatism and practical needs and at the same time develop its own niche in the New Hebrew's ideology and contemporary mythology.46

17. Tel Aviv's first map drawn by architect Sheinfeld for Tel Aviv's municipality (1923)
c. Tel Aviv’s development in relation to primary elements

As mentioned earlier Tel Aviv prior to 1909, included several other Jewish neighborhoods, Jaffa and Arab villages, two cemeteries, Sharona - the German Templars’ settlement, and roads and paths, all of which determined the directions of the city’s growth. These primary elements had limited the direction of possible development to the west and north. Furthermore the reduced land value of the sand dunes along the coast made them an attractive avenue for the city’s expansion. Until 1948, Tel Aviv grew primarily from south to north along the sea shore and its shape was long and narrow, mirroring the overall shape of Israel at that time. Whereas Tel Aviv’s site is flat its inconsistent street pattern implies a hilly topography; Tel Aviv’s map is composed of patterned segments that differ from one another in density and orientation, that were later stitched together by a deformed overlaid circulation system.47

Memory of roads (part 2)

Tel Aviv originated as an outgrowth of Jaffa, and its development was therefore adjacent to the major roads leading out from Jaffa to Nablus and Petach Tikva, to

47 The analysis of this chapter is based on a series of Tel Aviv’s maps and urban plans (1909, 1923, end of twenties, 1949, 1989), as well as on chronological data gathered from the works of Ben Shahar, (1990), Shchori (1990), and Shva (1989).
Jerusalem and to Salame, as well as to the railway to Jerusalem, Beirut, and Alexandria. Other neighborhoods outside Jaffa aligned along these roads prior to Tel Aviv's establishment, reflecting a typical process of city growth, much like contemporary satellite towns and suburbs develop adjacent to highways leading into cities.

The road leading from Jaffa to Nablus runs from the north to the east, following the railroad. It then splits into two routes one curving south along the Ayalon creek following the roads leading out of Jaffa to Jerusalem and Salame, and the other curving to follow the Ayalon north. The repercussions of the curvature northward are evident in parallel streets, like Yehuda Halevi, the Rothchild Boulevard and Ahad Ha'am, which have all conformed to its flexed course. The configuration of these primary roads also shaped the secondary street system and the nature of Tel Aviv's early districts.

Initially this particular circulation pattern responded to topographic conditions. It had a significant influence on the southern edge condition of Tel Aviv and the nature of its border with Jaffa. The road from Jaffa to Nablus became the first border between the commercial and industrial zone that developed to the south, and the "healthy" housing districts that developed towards northwest. This road served as the generating spine of the city.

The street layout of several sections along the road were planned, like Tel Aviv's first Neighborhood Ahuzat Bait and the Menorah layout for the commercial district. The initial plans were not configured as a total system; each segment varied in pattern and ruling concept as discussed later.

The roads, leading out from Jaffa to Jerusalem or to Petach Tikva and Nablus, presently function as major traffic arteries. The memory of their previous function is preserved through their names: The Jaffa Road maintains its old curvature, then it
becomes the Petach Tikva Road and runs north parallel to the Ayalon creek, which functions as a major highway. The old railway was later moved out of Tel Aviv, but a curved segment of its route also retains its original name 'Railroad Street'.

Various other streets followed secondary routes and old camel tracks: Arlozerov Street existed earlier as the path leading west from the Arab Village Sumail to the Muslim Cemetery, the Promenade and Yarkon Street followed the route leading from Jaffa north along the shore to that same cemetery. This path also followed the course of the Sea Road connecting Egypt and Asia Minor in ancient times.

The ground conditions was another factor influencing the development of streets. The generous dimensions of Rothchild Boulevard, for example, one of Tel Aviv's widest streets, resulted from the discovery that the ground conditions under it were not suitable for laying foundations. In search of stable ground the street grew wider and was instantly inaugurated as the first boulevard.48

Memory of neighborhoods

Between 1887 and 1909 six Jewish neighborhoods were established outside Jaffa. These neighborhoods were incorporated into the Tel Aviv municipality in the early Twenties, as the latter became a Township (1921). These neighborhoods are still evident in the city pattern and form an intermediate zone between the wider modern streets of Tel Aviv to those of Jaffa.49

The neighborhoods that were united to form the Tel Aviv Township in the early Twenties were not planned in relation to one another, but independently. The Star of David Square exemplifies this type of growth: its name is derived from the shape

48 Shchori, (1990), p. 44.
formed by six streets that happened to converge at one point. The Square’s edge condition differs on each of its corners and follows from the orientation and density of each of the intervening streets’ patterns.

The arbitrary collage of southern Tel Aviv’s street pattern is a composition of independent segments that were joined together. This collage is a testimonial to Tel Aviv’s simultaneous beginnings. These segments were in fact developed by different Jewish groups, that had either their country of origin, occupation, or political agenda as common denominators. Consequently, each Neighborhood developed its own communal framework but they were all dependent on exterior urban services and shifted from being suburbs of Jaffa, to becoming a part of Tel Aviv.

It is important to stress that Tel Aviv’s agenda over-ruled any existing alternatives. Its progressivist nature the initiative and organizational capacities of its collective have all promoted Tel Aviv’s dominance. The residents of Tel Aviv were conscious of their contribution to the development of a New Hebrew urban identity. Nonetheless, they were always surprised by the intensity of growth and rapid pace of transformations that the project entailed.
18. The expansion of Tel Aviv’s municipal area 1909-1948.
a. Ancient Jaffa b. Tel Aviv’s first street layout.
The memory of municipal borders

Tel Aviv’s rapid growth and the recurrent changes in its municipal borders are also among the significant factors that generated the chaotic city street pattern.

The intense population growth resulted primarily from the increasing waves of immigrants from Poland and Germany throughout the Twenties and Thirties.

Between 1909 to 1948 Tel Aviv had expanded and changed its boundaries seven times; in some cases these border lines were traced by streets. Since these borders were determined by land purchase they were arbitrary and winding, and consequently, so are the streets and city segments that developed along them.  

Jaffa - the memory of a conflict

The Arab-Israeli conflict in its early stages affected Tel Aviv’s development. Jaffa was the locus from which Tel Aviv emerged, but in less than two decades the two settlements began to compete with each other and ultimately became rivals.

Tel Aviv challenged Jaffa even before it gained its municipal independence. The urban agenda Tel Aviv’s founders promoted had consciously conveyed the will to be different from Jaffa, and create its Hebrew alternative. According to the founders’ protocols they intended:

"To establish a Hebrew center in a a nicely ordered place good for the health that instead of Jaffa’s narrow filthy narrow streets will afford spacious clean environment. The Jews who are scattered around Jaffa, will unite and form a small community."

50 Based on Shchori, (1990), p. 200 and maps.

51 Shchori, (1990), p. 34-35, see also p. 71.
Tel Aviv was a part of the Jaffa City Municipality but it was a different entity from its very beginning. Both the political circumstances and urban aspirations had caused a rift between the two.

In 1921 tension between the Arabs and Jews turned violent, and Jews were attacked by furious crowds in the streets of Jaffa. These and later clashes (1936-1939) were triggered by Arab objection to the Jewish national revival taking place around them and supported by British through the Balfour Declaration of 1917. As a result of these clashes, Jaffa's Jews moved outwards to Tel Aviv inaugurated as an independent Township during that period.52

The population growth of the twenties was the cumulative outcome of newly arriving immigrants and heightened political tensions and clashes between the Arabs and Jews. As Tel Aviv became a Township in 1921, it had progressed from autonomy towards total independence from Jaffa. The construction of a second port in 1936, signifies the New Hebrew's adaptation to the condition of intensified conflict with the Arabs. The construction of Tel Aviv's Port can be seen as an important step in the constitution of Tel Aviv as an independent city-state. From this point on Tel Aviv became a central locus of the nascent nation.

A wide range of leading political and cultural institutions were located in the city. This period of intensive growth in the thirties and forties constitutes what has come to be known as the "White City" phase discussed later.

In his description of the War of Independence Shlomo Shva recounts:

"The Etzel (National Military Organization) initiated its own military campaign. On April 24th, 1948 hundreds of the Etzel men launched an

52 Shchori, (1990), p. 145. Prior to Shchori's research the 1921 riots were viewed as directly generating Tel Aviv's municipal independence. However, as Shchori establishes, Tel Aviv's leadership was interested in municipal independence prior to the clashes for economic and other pragmatic reasons.
attack from Neve Shalom to the adjacent Manshiya. Following four
days of fierce battles the Etzel fighters successfully reached the sea
shore and cut Manshiya off from Jaffa. The British informed Israel
Rokach, Tel Aviv’s mayor, that they would prevent the Ezel’s
conquest of Jaffa.

Two battle ships anchored in Jaffa’s port, thousands of soldiers went
off shore and British military aircraft circled above Manshiya. At the
same time the Arab towns and villages surrounding Jaffa were
conquered by the Hagana battalions (the Labour Movement’s
Underground)... Jaffa was surrounded and its Arab population began
fleeing... thousands of refugees with their belongings piled on cars and
carts, pulled away from the city while others fearfully embarked on
boats and ships to escape quickly.

Following negotiations Jaffa surrendered to Tel Aviv. On that very
night, May 14th 1948, the Independent State of Israel was declared at
the Tel Aviv Art Museum on Rothschild Boulevard. A circle in modern
Israeli history was completed for thirty nine years earlier the founders
of Tel Aviv gathered to allocate plots of land for the development of
the first modern Hebrew settlement and in 1948, the State of Israel
was declared on the same site. At the early dawn of the next day Tel
Aviv was shelled by Egyptian airplanes...

Throughout the War of Independence the resettlement of Jaffa had
begun: newcomers from Bulgaria, Rumania and North Africa settled
in the abandoned houses. Cruel is the desertion of a city by its
inhabitants who become refugees, but its new settler were also
refugees...

In July 1949 the military rule ended, Jaffa, apart of one Arab
neighborhood was all re-inhabited and united with Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv-
Jaffa was the new name given to the city... Jaffa was thousands of years
old, Tel Aviv turned forty, until then each existed for itself, now they
became one city of 250,000.53

Tel Aviv and Jaffa officially constitute one city, yet, the old border condition is still
apparent in the urban texture and built environment. The memory of rupture is
evoked through intermediate segments that were either re-developed as parks, or as
modern housing and business district.

The fate of Manshiya, an Arab neighborhood bordering Tel Aviv, manifests the
extreme of Post Independence transformations. Manshiya developed along the sea

shore north of Jaffa and formed a narrow extension that protruded into Tel Aviv.
19. Tel Aviv seen from the Jaffa port (1921)
20. Tel Aviv and Manshiya seen from Jaffa (fifties)
21. Tel Aviv's new business district built on Manshiya's previous site (eighties)
Tel Aviv's maps from the early twenties on, reflect the changes in the political relationships with Jaffa and with Manshiya in particular. (fig 20)

Early maps portray Tel Aviv within its regional context, and the imprint of Manshiya's streets is very clear. (fig 23) In Tel Aviv's later maps from the twenties Manshiya begins to fade out like the rest of Jaffa. Until 1949 Tel Aviv's maps were represented as an area cut out of the contemporary municipal borders, and revealed no reference to the neighboring parent city. (fig 24) In 1949 Jaffa reappeared on Tel Aviv's map. Manshiya, among other districts, was represented as a faded imprint of unpaved streets. (fig 25) The Manshiya district remained untouched for many years, then the bulldozers came and erased its deteriorating reminiscence.

During the Eighties a new business district was erected on the Manshiya's site. This recent project, however, is a rather conspicuous "stitch" between Tel Aviv and Jaffa. (fig 21) It extends the "hotel wall" along Tel Aviv's shore and does not respond to the scale and nature of Jaffa's hill. The contemporary Manshiya project was not designed as an intermediate zone between Tel Aviv and Jaffa but as an "updated" edge of Tel Aviv.

The ancient section of Jaffa including its port and adjacent districts were recognized as valuable permanences and developed as tourist attractions and artists' quarters. Jaffa's old core is surrounded by the Israeli prototypic apartment blocks, that are not very different from the one portrayed in Bak's painting. (fig. 1)

The names of streets and alleys were Hebrewtized in most cases and the Arab population constitutes a minority group. As the name Tel Aviv-Jaffa implies these are still two entities that differ in their architectural character, scale and identity. The Arab villages that bordered Tel Aviv's site were also "swallowed" by the rapidly expanding city following the War of Independence. Their reminiscences are few
small and deteriorated houses that persist as islands within the density of contemporary Tel Aviv.
22. a. The Menorah plan by engineer Tichler (1924)
b. The same district as appears on a recent map (1989)
d. **Early plans and programs and their contribution to Tel Aviv's growth**

**Early plans**

While in practice Tel Aviv was formed as a neighborhood of Jaffa its founders' visions varied in scale and character; on the one hand it was envisioned as a "modern suburb and a Garden Suburb", on the other it was seen as "a place with a Public Garden, theater and a Communal-Hall". Others viewed the project as the creation of "... a Modern Hebrew Neighborhood outside the city including all the comforts and innovations that a civilized person may desire". Despite these nuances, Tel Aviv was widely imagined as the "main gateway to the Land of Israel, like New York is to America" and as conforming with Theodore Herzl's utopian visions expressed in his book *Altneuland* (1902). The founders were also aware of Ebenezer Howard's conception of the Garden City that was influential in England and throughout Europe during the same period.

Tel Aviv's initial street layout was therefore resulted from a synthesis of these visions, and the few plans offered by Engineer Treidle, the Austrian City planner Vilhelm Stiasni, engineer Abraham Waldman, Boris Shatz and the engineer Barski. (fig 6). The resident's self consciousness and sensibilities manifested themselves in independently planned districts rather than in an encompassing planning strategy.\(^{54}\)

Since the founders hoped to secure the quality of a modern garden suburb including fresh air and clean streets, they placed commerce and industry at the outskirt of

\(^{54}\) Shchori, (1990), p. 31-34.
residential neighborhoods. The first business district was therefore located south of the road leading out of Jaffa to Nablus.  

Planned by engineer Tichler (1924), the layout for southern Tel Aviv incorporated the shape of the Menorah, a Jewish national emblem. (fig 22a) The Menorah shape was however distorted, probably due to ground conditions. (fig 22b) The Menorah urban plan was conceived during the period of 'fantastic architecture' and represents an example of the search for a Hebrew Style. The Menorah plan discloses the predominant forces shaping urban development during this period preeminently informed by Hebrew Revivalism, rather than by any rational planning strategy.

Tel Aviv's early neighborhoods and commercial districts were planned segmentally but the development of the city's skeleton was rather coincidental until the introduction of the Geddes plan (1925). Yet, even after the Geddes scheme, plans were altered by land availability, ownership, and ground condition.

23. "Tel Aviv, The built city and municipal borders 1924".
Urban program and identity

From its early years Tel Aviv exhibited signs of impatience and desire to mature rapidly in order to comply with its designation as the center of Hebrew Revivalism. In 1921 Tel Aviv was recognized as an independent Township by the British Mandate. Tel Aviv was twelve years old at the time and had already strayed from its initial program as a garden suburb:

"... the town is small and dense, and each of its residents knows what is cooking in his friend’s pot. ... As against its seventy seven impairments Tel Aviv has three virtues: it is a wholly Jewish town, it is the first Jewish town established by Jews in their homeland, and it is the first Jewish -- European city established in Asia. ... the first Jewish city was established on ancestors land, in the national home, in the place where every stone cries: the Land of Israel."\(^56\)

The range of institutions formed by Tel Aviv’s residents during this period did however affirm its position as the First Hebrew Town. Together, the Post Office and The Casino (1923), several Hotels, Movie Theaters and synagogues, The Land of Israel Theater (1924) and the Tent Theater, The Town Hall (1925), a library and a small museum, formed the urban program of that era.\(^57\)

By the end of the twenties Tel Aviv’s population reached 50,000, and had secured its position and identity as the cultural and political center of the New Hebrews in Palestine.

As Tel Aviv was rapidly taking on the role of a Township (including the establishment of the first Jewish Police force and along with the record of the First Jewish Thief), its residents pressed on to develop Tel Aviv into a city. At the same time waves of immigrants from Europe kept flowing into the city. The erection of


\(^57\) For further information on Tel Aviv’s first institutions see: Yona Fischer, Tel Aviv 75 Years of Art, (Israel: Massada, 1984), Shchori (1990), Shva (1989).
tent camps and shacks around the town's outskirts and a heightened level of
construction were the prominent facets of Tel Aviv throughout the twenties and
thirties.

Under these circumstances the Tel Aviv municipality commissioned Sir Patrick
Geddes, a Scottish city planner, to structure the town's future development by
introducing through an urban master plan.

Patrick Geddes' master plan surpassed any previously applied urban scheme in its
scope and foresight. For the first time Tel Aviv was envisioned as a total urban
system rather than a patchwork of planned and unplanned segments.

Professor Geddes, a Biologist by profession, introduced the British Garden City
agenda which he saw as agreeable with Tel Aviv's origins as a garden suburb of Jaffa.
Geddes advocated a Zionist and regional accommodation of the Garden City
principals.

In accordance with ancient Hebraic sources he envisioned Tel Aviv as an "Orchard
City" with vineyards, almond and fig trees planted in its many gardens.58

Sir Patrick Geddes did not ignore regional geography and politics as crucial factors in
shaping Tel Aviv's individuality. He perceived the first Hebrew City's architectural
and urban development as inseparable from its parent Jaffa. For example, he
suggested that Tel Aviv's boat deck be incorporated into Jaffa's port.

Land availability determined that the new planned zone would be in the form of a
narrow strip along the coast. The plan relied on a grid in which main streets ran
north-south, parallel to the shore. (fig 24) Geddes determined this orientation since
it both complied with the previous directions of street development and provided the
favorable east-west orientation to the majority of houses. Apparently, Geddes' main

58 Haim Luski, A city and Utopia, (Tel Aviv: The Israeli Publishing
Apparently, Geddes’ main concerns revolved around allowing for the Mediterranean breeze to reach the individual homes. In retrospect however, orientating the main streets parallel to the beach was unsuccessful on the urban scale since it detached the beach from the city’s main streets. The Geddes plan suggested green stripe along the beach, but this area has since been used to develop Tel Aviv’s wall of hotels some fifty years later.

Side by side, the street hierarchy established in the Geddes plan allowed pleasant and quite housing developments. Consequently, the Geddes plan was among the prominent factors informing the diverse urban fabric of South and North Tel Aviv.

Tel Aviv’s population growth had repeatedly exceeded predictions:

"The residential quarters were planned for an expected population 40,000. Thus it would be a typical, English style dormitory garden city, although located on the Mediterranean. Nobody, including Sir Patrick, dreamt in those days of greater Tel Aviv becoming a commercial-industrial metropolis with a population of nearly one million. This would have necessitated, of course a different conception with a different urban scale and different sizes of buildings, streets, piazzas and services." 59

Consequently, Tel Aviv’s urban skeleton is lacking in geometry, diagrammatic clarity and uniformity found in other planned cities. Tel Aviv’s map, unlike its architecture, was not formed according to any over ruling Modernist urban dogma prior to the establishment of the Israeli State (1948). The city’s "natural" process of growth and development is still evident in Tel Aviv’s urban morphology.

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25. Tel Aviv-Jaffa 1949
26. Tel Aviv's succession of squares
e. The succession of squares

While Tel Aviv's early segmented plans did not provide for public squares a hierarchy was nonetheless established within the public domain. The city grew out of several main streets, secondary routes and one coincidental boulevard. The Herzelia High School's foreground served as Tel Aviv's first public space. Other successive public places were situated beside municipal services, entertainment and cultural buildings -- such as the first movie theater. Tel Aviv's early squares were in effect the result of coincidental intersections, like the Magen David Square described earlier. (fig. 26)

City Hall Square was the first planned square resembling a real piazza. It is a pleasant small square, yet its location at the end of a side street off Allenby Street, then the Township's central axis, diminishes its significance. The side street off Allenby is in the shape of a horseshoe with the Square situated at the end of its arc. There is no apparent reason for this particular twist in the street, except that following the Menorah plan which is in effect a sequence of horseshoes it seems as a rather reasonable solution...

The next two squares developed in the vicinity of the City Hall Square. Both were formed as a result of the "Casino" that, as I mentioned earlier required that Allenby Street be shifted from its initial course so that it would lead up to the beach. The first square "November 2nd Square", is located at the point where Allenby Street was moved westwards and flexed northwards. The second square is located several blocks away, where Allenby meets the shore in front of the Casino's former location. The "November 2nd Square" was formed as a result of the intersecting streets meeting there. It was endowed with public significance once the Mugrabi Opera was built beside it. The Mugrabi Opera was the largest auditorium in Tel Aviv of that period and primarily served as a movie theater. Designed by Yoseph Berlin in 1926,
the Mugrabi Opera was among the most spectacular buildings of its period. The building's main facade was fashioned in the Art Deco style, but its main attraction was a mobile roof that rolled open and revealed the summer nights' stars.\textsuperscript{60}

Although the square was officially named "November 2nd Square", it is popularly known as "The Mugrabi Square". Its colloquial name has outlived the Mugrabi Movie Theater itself that burnt down several years ago.

The square in front of the "Casino", was developed in parallel with the Mugrabi Square. Unlike the Mugrabi Square, it resulted from a T-intersection of Allenby Street and the beach, rather than an intersection of two streets. Designed by Joseph Neufeld in 1925 the Opera Square fans out towards the beach making a generous gesture towards the sea. The symmetrical arcades on both sides of the square formed by a series of triangular arches define its boundaries. These arcades were the first of their kind in Tel Aviv.

The Opera Square offers the sensual experience of approaching the vastness of the sea from a dense street pattern. It is the only location in Tel Aviv where a main street and the sea shore meet in such a celebrated manner.

The flat topography of the site permitted this development, whereas, the emerging sandstone cliff a few blocks to the north provides a different kind of city edge. The Opera Square's development was also the outcome of the pioneering nature of this event. It was the first time in which Tel Aviv's main street reached the sea.

While Tel Aviv's early development was oriented towards the northwest and south, the Opera, Mugrabi and the Town Hall squares mark a shift in the direction of the city's growth northwards along the beach.

\textsuperscript{60}"Listened to Begin's first public speech in an open-air cinema, with thousands throning in the streets and on the roofs of the houses around." Koestler, (1949), p. 274.
These three squares comprise the last urban developments prior to the introduction of the Geddes Plan. Following the Geddes Plan Tel Aviv's squares were formed within the overall city plan. The succeeding squares were distributed more consistently throughout the city and grew larger and further apart as the city expanded. Squares were no longer born out of coincidental road intersections. One significant square, Dizengoff Circle, was however transformed back into a traffic junction. (fig. 28, 29)
27. Dizengoff Circle designed by Genia Averbuch and Y. Griniz (1934).
Dizengoff Circle - the transformation of a collective artifact

Brief history:

1925 - Dizengoff Circle was presented as one of two squares included in the Geddes Master Plan.

1934- Dizengoff Street and Circle, are set up and named after the city’s first mayor and his wife.

1934- Genia Averbuch and Y. Griniz were awarded second prize in the competition for the Dizengoff Circle’s design. No first prize was awarded.

1938 - The Circle was inaugurate. The buildings around the square were designed by various architects according to the guidelines of the winning entry. (fig 27b) Genia Averbuch designed the central plaza with a fountain in its middle. 61 (fig 27d) The Circle became the prominent image of Tel Aviv during this period. It served as Tel Aviv’s main Square until the 'Kings of Israel Square’ was established in the sixties.

1978 - Due to heavy traffic Dizengoff Circle was altered to accommodate Tel Aviv’s changing needs. (fig 28) Designed by Zvi Lishar the revised Circle was adorned with a new fountain replacing the original one and designed by the artist Ellen David. 62

61 "Tel Aviv Municipality News", 1937-8
62 "Ha’aretz" newspaper, July 19th 1978
28. The new Dizengoff Square designed by Zvi Lishar (1978)
1986- The Square's central sculpture was replaced by Yacov Agam's "Fire and Water", a kinetic piece swelling out a flame and water at designated times of day.  
(fig 28)

1991- The city municipality announced that Agam's fountain will be removed and the Circle will be rebuilt to conform with its original design.  

From the "Tel Aviv Municipality News", 1937-8:

"Zina Dizengoff Circle located in the heart of the area called 'Central Tel Aviv' connects the south-eastern part of the city with the northern part. The locus is made in the shape of circle into which six streets join.

The buildings around the square are unique in their built form, and are designated as a commercial zone (it is among the only zones in which the height of four floors is permitted in the new city plan). In June 1934, a competition for the design of the Circle was announced, the objective was to find the proper architectural form for the buildings around the square, as well as find the right solution in relation to the overall urban plan.

The Circle’s Plan: The Circle’s designers considered its central place in Tel Aviv. The place is not just a nice garden for strolling around and relaxing, but also an area that represents and displays Tel Aviv. It was thus necessary to combine the functional and beautiful into one plan."

This old news clip expresses concern for Tel Aviv's identity and image. The Dizengoff Circle is inscribed by curved buildings. Genia Averbuch determined a uniform design for the facades of the buildings that served various functions. Horizontal strips play against the buildings' mass promoting the Stream Lined design.

During this period definite criteria for judging a "right" solution from a wrong one were voiced, and a united collective conception of the agenda allowed their expression in built form. In 1938 central architectural concerns revolved around the need to combine the functional and the beautiful whereas in less than fifty years the

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63 "Ma'ariv" Newspaper, July 15th 1986

64 "Yediot Achronot" Newspaper (October 11th 1991)
focus shifted towards attaining a feasible traffic solution, absent of aesthetic considerations.

"The renewed Dizengoff Circle's area is 13,000 square meters, the paved pedestrian area is 7,500 square meters, one third larger than the previous Circle. The new square consists of two levels.

A fountain composed of glass, light and water was placed in the upper central level and conforms with the previous fountain's dimensions and perimeter. A modern information post was built on the circle's lower level and hundreds of public sitting places were added.

The new Circle was designed by the architect Zvi Lishar who combined an architectural and urban solutions in order to maintain the Circle as a pedestrian center, a place for public events and allow for traffic flow through Tel Aviv's busy central crossroad."65

The new square is in effect a floating circular platform above a "busy central crossroad". Transplanted into the Circle it isolates and overshadows the street level and the original rounded buildings surrounding the circle. (fig. 28) Like a fat octopus the transplanted Square extends its ramped arms shovelling the pedestrians upwards into the mouth of 'Fire and Water'. This animistic square plan is lacking any mythological dimensions and no expressionist attempt was intended in the placing of the steep ramps. The intervention and its form were determined by pragmatic consideration for resolving the traffic flow. Dizengoff Circle can no longer be regarded in its old sense -- but has since been transformed into an elaborate bridge linking Dizengoff Circle's fast food outlets that have taken over the street level spaces on the square's perimeters.

As reported recently, Tel Aviv's mayor "changed his mind and admitted he was wrong regarding Dizengoff Circle's transformations".66 The expensive maintenance costs of Yacov Agam's piece and the negative public response to the new square are the main forces behind the new decision to revitalize the form of the original Circle.

65 "Ha'aretz" newspaper, (July 19th 1978).
66 "Yediot Achronot" Newspaper (October 11th 1991)
From "Yediot Achronot" Newspaper (October 11th 1991):

"Memories - by Emanuel Bar Kadma

Returning Dizengoff Circle to its own self. No news could be better since Tel Aviv never knew a greater loss than Dizengoff Circle. Underneath the ugly concrete dome supposedly solving traffic problems the prettiest spot of Tel Aviv's young body sunk.

The harmonious white facade around the Circle was composed of buildings similar in their forms, texture and rounded facades. In the center laid a pool and a fountain surrounded by a lawn. Around the circled path were benches on which mothers with children sat in the morning, senior citizens chatted in the afternoon and lovers at night."

The new Square including Agam's 'Fire and Water' will soon be "removed" and the contemporary version of the "old" circle will be resurrected. Its relative position within the urban framework can not however be restored. Whereas during its previous life time Dizengoff Circle was the navel of Tel Aviv, today it is merely another circle in the metropolis. Furthermore, in its immediate context the circle became an intermediate space between Dizengoff Street and Dizengoff Center, Tel Aviv's first and largest shopping mall. The intended restoration is nonetheless a unique process showing awareness of the importance of "collective memory". Ironically, this restoration implies "stopping" and returning to the predominant image of Tel Aviv in its White City phase of the thirties and forties. In retrospect, this period has come to signify "ideal" period in the city's development in which Tel Aviv was shaped by a unified collective. Consequently, Dizengoff circle's "restoration" represents Tel Aviv's most recent recognition of its own individuality, colored by sentimental longing for the recent past.

Tel Aviv's infatuation for spectacles (from the Casino to Agam's Water and Fire)
From the initial stages of its design the central part of the Circle was marked by a pool and a fountain. The first fountain was modest and fit the scale of the Circle.

67 Tel Aviv's "America", or in Hebrew: "The heart of Dizengoff".
While the successive fountain by Ellen David followed the perimeter of the original fountain, Agam's sculpture presently occupying the Circle is massive and ignores the scale of its surrounding.

The succession of fountains placed in this site serves as an example of which collective artifacts persist in function while undergoing change their in articulation that address transformations in the communal identity. Although the fountain never aimed at celebrating a "cosmic center" it occupies a central place in the city's skeleton, and in effect together with the Circle became one of Tel Aviv's central emblems. Dizengoff Circle and its fountains constitute a persistent type of artifact that is currently being recognized as a "permanence".

Agam's fountain resembles a giant wedding cake situated on the Square's elevated platform, or alternatively it looks like a spaceship that was too heavy to take off. 'Fire and Water' was indeed a spectacle, and Israelis from all over the country came with their children to see the kinetic show: at set hours of the day the cylinder shaped layers start rotating to the sounds of music, spilling water and tongues of fire to the sky. The rotational acceleration of the "cake" is not unfortunately sufficient however, to allow it to take off and vanish. This spectacular nature of the show was quickly exhausted, especially considering the high maintenance costs of this extravaganza.

In describing the inauguration of the Circle "Tel Aviv News", (1938-1939), reported that:

"On May 4th 1934, on the occasion of the city's twenty fifth jubilee, the opening of a street carrying Dizengoff's name and a square named after his wife were celebrated in a public ceremony attended by Meir Dizengoff. A pole covered with the national colors and flowers was erected at the center of the empty sand-square carrying the name of the late Mrs. Dizengoff. In the formal inauguration ceremony, mayor Rokach, cut the ribbon at the garden's edge and presented the square to the public. At that time he turned on an electric switch lighting the square. The central water fountain was then lit by various colors and reminded the spectators of beautiful other squares around the world..."
Paralleling this description the "Ma'ariv" Newspaper, of July 15th 1986, reported that:

"Yaacov Agam's sculpture 'Fire and Water', the result of four years work will be inaugurated today at the Dizengoff Square in Tel Aviv. At 7:30 PM the Prime Minister Shimon Peres will press a computer switch - activating a mass of fire, accompanied by a water flow, accompanying the sculpture moving to the sounds of music."

Tel Aviv's infatuation with spectacles surfaced repeatedly throughout its short and intense history. This theme was manifested in the Mugrabi Theater's "magic" roof, as I have described earlier, but it can be traced back even further to the "Casino" days. Beyond the carnivalesque image of the "Casino", the public was offered unique "... fountains of water and electricity-fire, that shot water throughout the day and cold and spectacular electricity-fire at night." A line of spectacles that has yet to be interpreted can be traced throughout the city's history: often there is a magic switch that is turned on by an important persona, followed by an impressive act consisting of water, fire, electricity, or computer generated images.

Spectacles, however, tend to rapidly exhaust themselves, especially in a city that cherishes itself as "a city that never stops". The "Casino", like Agam's piece became a source of disgrace and criticism; both were recognized as hideous artifacts that do not comply with the city's desired identity, and thus cannot remain in place as 'monuments'. The Casino was demolished in 1939, on the pretense that it was "blocking the sight of the sea", and ironically since its demolition the sea has been blocked by a long line of high-rise hotels no better fitting the city's layout.68

The succession of squares - conclusion

Dizengoff Circle was the last Square designed prior to the establishment of the Israeli State in 1948. From here on the new squares of Tel Aviv reflect the shift in Tel Aviv's identity towards complying with its role as the Israeli Metropolis. Cultural

and political transformations are embodied in the scale, program and architectural configurations of the new squares.

Names given to the locus of different public domains echo the principal cultural and political evolutions taking place within the country: from the Star of David Square and the Settlement Square to the Opera and the November 2nd Square (the Balfour Declaration date), the Dizengoff Square named after the first mayor followed by the Kings’ of Israel Square (1964) and finally the State’s Square (seventies).
29. The Levant Fair Grounds, 1934.
30. 'Flourishing Tel Aviv' a photomontage by Itzhak Kalter
31. The Fair Grounds at present.
F. The White City phase

Throughout the thirties Tel Aviv's consecutive developments reflected a shift from a town's scale to the program of the urban locus of a nation in the making. The New Hebrew's political, and cultural leadership and the general public, designated Tel Aviv as the collective's center and its "window to the world". The dominant public projects of this period include: The Levant Fair Grounds, Tel Aviv's Port, Dizengoff Circle and Habimah National Theater. Dizengoff Circle and the Civil Center were central contributions towards shaping Tel Aviv's public realm and identity as the modern Hebrew City, whereas the Levant Fair and the Port, in adjacent locations at the northern part of the city, embodied aspirations for national independence.69

The Flying Camel

The Levant Fair expressed a desire not only to open a "window" towards the West, but in effect represented an attempt to actively participate in the International Modernist project. (fig 29) The "Levant Fair" aimed at placing Tel Aviv in line with other prestigious cities that hosted International Exhibitions and Fairs throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Tel Aviv was designated, then, to represent the New Hebrew's project. The city served as a propaganda apparatus - an exhibition of Zionist achievements, potential and promise of future progress.

69 Habimah Theater was designed by Oscar Kaufmann in 1934 as a part of the Civic Center project. Fischer, (1984), p. 102, 109.
Following four smaller scale exhibitions during the twenties the first Levant Fair took place in 1932. The Fair was viewed as a success and as a result permanent grounds were located for ensuing Fairs in the northern end of Dizengoff street. The second Levant Fair took place on this site in 1934, as did the third Fair two years later. World War II curtailed additional fairs in the future.70

The exhibition's "logo", was a Flying Camel, consisting of a sculpture positioned on top of a pole ready for take off. The sculpture was designed by the architect Arieh Sapoznikov -Elhanani in 1936, and employed in the various publications of material related to the Fair.71 (fig. 29)

The "Flying Camel" captures the image of mythical creatures composed of different animals' parts, like minotaurs and lions with wings. Such legendary creatures appeared in ancient Mesopotamian, Greek and Gothic traditions to name but few. The composite form represents an archetypal motif touching on the human desire to attain supernatural powers and re-design nature. The ideological implication of this pastiche creatures were rejected by the Hebraic, as they signify man's attempt to challenge and equal his Creator, a concept antithetical to the Jewish tradition.72

The camel's figure is not particularly graceful or beautiful; resembles a decomposed animal of sort, even before addressing the tagged on wings: its hump rests on thin long legs; the "S" shaped profile of its hump and neck ends with a face featuring the long eyelashes and a huge mouth that seems to continuously chew everything. The camels' regular pace is slow and monotonous and they simply are not designed to fly.

70 Ben Shahar, (1990), p. 164-165. Fischer, (1984), p. 102: Arieh Elhanani served as the chief architect in both fairs. Other architects that participated in the design of the various pavilions were, Richard Kauffmann, Yoseph Neufeld, Genia Averbuch, and Arieh Sharon.


72 For further discussion on these issues see Richard Kearney, The Wake of Imagination, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p. 37-78.
Whether intentional or not the "Flying Camel" added a humorous touch to the Levant Fair.

Camels signified the Levant as they were a unique desert vehicle. Camels appear in many photographs and paintings from Tel Aviv's early days, including an image of a camel parked in the Herzelia High School foreground, or convoys of camels carrying building materials along Tel Aviv's beach. With a camel at its front, Herzelia High School resembles a stage set from a Hollywood's Biblical Film production, whereas on the Tel Aviv beach the camels walking along International Style architecture presents an even more surreal juxtaposition. (fig. 9, 31) The image of the "Flying Camel" represents the desire to integrate the spirit of western progress with the slower pace of the east.

During World War II the Fair Grounds were transformed into a British military as a base, and have not recovered as Fair Grounds since then. The Flying Camel remained on top of its pole as the Fair Grounds deteriorated and served as warehouses, while other more spacious exhibition grounds were established elsewhere in the city. (fig 31) Nevertheless, the potential of this area located on the shore was not forgotten, and Tel Aviv's municipal authorities are presently in the process of configuring its re-development.

Adjacent to the declining compound there is a pub called: "The Flying Camel", pointing to the fact that names often persist as constant testimonials more than artifacts or buildings in Tel Aviv.  

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73 Another example: the Tel Aviv Zoo, in Hebrew: Animal Garden, was replaced by a shopping mall called the City Garden... For more on memory encapsulated in the names of places see Shiva, (1989), 253-258.
5. Why was the International Style adopted as the National Style?

"To the best of our knowledge, Tel Aviv in the thirties was the first city in the world to be constructed almost entirely in the international style. Aerial photographs of Tel Aviv clearly depict the white cubes which comprise the urban fabric. Only a few of these buildings reached the level of the exemplary structures erected several years earlier in Europe, yet no other city could boast such a mosaic of houses similar in sizes and forms, virtually all of which were built in the International Style".

Tel Aviv's abounding of International Style constitutes its singular identity within the framework of universal modernism.

Modernism in Palestine started as early as the twenties prior to the International Style of the thirties.

The shift from eclectic architecture that relied on both vernacular and European Beaux-Art tradition to the International Style occurred within the course of a few years.

As described earlier the architectural context consisted of various traditions that were at hand in Palestine: the Ottoman and vernacular Arabic, the British, German Templars and earlier Jewish neighborhoods that accommodated vernacular models to specific needs. Environmental conditions requiring architectural consideration include the need to protect against bright light, a hot climate, and salty air from the sea.

In White City Michael Levin examines the local adoption of the International Style in relation to environmental conditions and regional architecture but also as largely

influenced by Le Corbusier, who in turn was inspired by Mediterranean building traditions.

During the thirties the International Style was adopted as the prominent image of collective constructing itself in built form, streets, rural settlements and towns. At the time there was seemingly no hesitation surrounding its adequacy and appropriateness as an architectural language.

**The effect of local circumstances**

In absence of an architectural tradition at hand that could represent the New Hebrews, Modernism was easily adopted. A cultural vacuum existed and it had to be filled.

The lack of Jewish craftsmen trained in stone technology and the high cost of stone as a building material were among the initial pragmatic reasons involved in turning to the International Style, based on concrete construction with stucco finish.

In the case of Tel Aviv the use of the International Style building technology signified the final departure from Jaffa, the city’s origin. The construction of the Tel Aviv Port (1934), competing with Jaffa’s and the adoption of International Style as the National architectural language, correspond to the rising tension between the Arabs and the Jews throughout the thirties. 75

Whether the International Style’s adoption was a result of circumstances or a conscientious decision, it nonetheless signified the difference and distance between the New Hebrews and local Arab population.

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75 The Israeli-Palestinian relationships and conflicts are embodied in the local construction market. Following the Six Days War and up until the Intifada Palestinians were the major source for construction workers in Israel.
Ideological tenets

"Modern architecture is surely most cogently to be interpreted as a gospel-as, quite literally, a message of good news; and hence its impact. For, when all the smoke clears away, its impact may be seen as having very little to do with either its technological innovations or its formal vocabulary. Indeed the value of these could never have been so much what they seemed to be as what they signified."\(^{76}\) -

From its very origins Tel Aviv was deeply informed by two most influential trends: the European mind set and the task of national revivalism. The New Hebrew's identity, was a synthesis of 19th century Romanticism and ideologies that promoted the New, i.e Progressivism. As stressed earlier, Zionism, the Jewish National Movement, was born out of a self conscious project, and the New Hebrews were well aware of their crucial and fantastic task: to create and direct their own history shaping the identity of an old-new collective.

"... the mystical attachment of the Jews to their ancient country must be regarded as an extreme case of homesickness of expatriate communities, mixed with mankind archaic yearning for a lost paradise, for a mythological Golden Age, which is at the root of utopias -- from Spartacus' Sun State to Herzel's Zionism."\(^ {77}\)

The New Hebrews conceived of themselves as the "modern link in a historical chain". In practical terms Revivalism entailed the reinterpretation of ancient Hebrew to fit the contemporary perceptions, and conditions of Modernism.

The power of utopian visions, the force of revolution and the absolute belief in progress were significant catalysts in the New Hebrews' project. The construction of


\(^{77}\) Koestler, (1949), p. 3.
a modern State for the Jewish People in the Land of Israel was in itself an act of revival.78

In the New Hebrew era, (1904-1948), the act of construction represented a collective redemption, along with an obvious response to urgent needs. (fig. 30)

The image of Hebrew workers was promoted as representing an ideal of resurrection through the glorification of manual labor, presented as the Socialist alternative to the condition of the Diaspora. (fig. 11)

The International Style was well suited to the Labour Movement’s agenda, since it was identified with European Socialism and its accompanying Avant-Garde. The dominance of the Socialist agenda’s during the thirties explains why Modernism instantly became the vanguard. Simplicity was valued and even idealized, by the Labour Movement’, but in the end it was also a guideline one could both preach and practice considering local circumstance. The International Style’s functional and minimalist character complied with both puritanical perceptions and meager means.

The International Style, in particular the works exhibited at the Weissenkof Exhibition in Stuttgart of 1929, was condemned by the Nazi propaganda for its resemblance of an Arab village. The unique quality of the massing found in Arab villages was not rejected as a source of inspiration by pioneer artists and architects.

78 Elon, (1972), p. 331-332. The Declaration of Independence of the Jewish State embodies this dialectic between the tenets of Hebrew Revival, Modernist Progressivism and socialist revolution.

"The Land of Israel was the birth of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and national identity was formed. Here they achieved independence and created a culture of national and universal significance. Here they wrote and gave the Bible to the world."

This historical perception is then synthesized into a Progressivist vision:

"The State of Israel will promote the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; will be based on percepts of liberty, justice and peace taught by the Hebrew prophets; will uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens without distinction of race, creed or sex;"
Leopold Krakauer for example studied the morphology of the Arab house in relation to topography.\textsuperscript{79} Whereas direct incorporations of Arab vernacular traditions were rejected, there was no resistance to abstracting their features and introducing them through Modernist architectural forms. Cooperate apartment buildings formed a significant building programs executed in the International Style. The largest schemes dating from this period did not exceed 150 units. In Tel Aviv, the scale of cooperative housing schemes was limited by the reality of relatively small land parcels.\textsuperscript{80}

Workers' Housing, Kibbutz Dining Halls and other Labour Movements' institutes were among the first programs resolved via the International Style in Palestine. As these programs served the Labor Movement's implementation of communal values, they reflect the local perceptions of a Socialist society. The International Style was also incorporated into civil and national institutes such as hotels, office buildings, the National Bank and private houses. The Revisionist movement located on the Right side of the political spectrum did not supply an alternative to the International Style and was invisible in terms of mass built projects during that period.

The International Style represented an opportunity to begin a new episode in Israel's history, as such it was well suited as an architectural framework for the project: the Modern Jewish State project.

\textsuperscript{79} "The way rectangles are connected by the balconies and the roofs, the patio and the terraced construction all parallel Krakauer's drawings of Arab houses which blend into the Judean hill's landscape." Levin, (1984), p. 17-18. Levin demonstrates how early Modernist architects in Palestine incorporated vernacular building elements and diagrams in their architecture.

\textsuperscript{80} "The existing system of land division and ownership, and the building bye-laws, made building according to these cooperative ideas very difficult. The garden-city plan of Sir Patrick Geddes envisioned small plots of 400 to 500 sq.m., each, intended for two or three-storey buildings with four to six apartments, providing the tenants with a feeling of enjoying privacy and the individual ownership in their homes however small the apartments might be." Sharon, (1976), p. 48.
The architects' role

The "Engineers and Architects Association" was formed in 1922, but specific architectural voices surrounding Tel Aviv's development, are hardly heard prior to the early thirties. The earliest architects and artists were interested in forming a suitable vocabulary for Hebrew architecture, whereas the Modernists supplied the apparatus for the massive construction, which in fact constituted the physical aspect of revival.

While the Herzelia High School symbolized the resurrection of a picturesque fabricated past, the International Style signified a New Collective in the making. Modernism was introduced to Palestine by several persons trained in Europe during the twenties and thirties. Several of these architects studied at the Bauhaus or alternately interned in the offices of disciples of the International Style. Michael Levin presents the principle sources of influence for White City as revolving around the Bauhaus trained architects, Le Corbusier's work and early Modernist architecture in Palestine by Erich Mendelsohn, Richard Kauffman and Leopold Krakauer.

The biographies of the prominent architects as portrayed by Michael Levin present their work as a bridge between a New Hebrew collective and European Modernism. Arieh Sharon's biography is especially telling since his work included a heightened involvement with the political and cultural leadership. Like fellow disciples of the International Style, Arieh Sharon was sympathetic to Socialism. He was a Labour Movement member prior to his studies and came to the Bauhaus from Kibbutz life.

"The parallel which Sharon draws between the Bauhaus and the Kibbutz originates in rebellion against accepted ideas and the overall atmosphere of beginning anew, which fosters creative stimuli."81

Arieh Sharon returned to Tel Aviv in the early thirties and together with Joseph Neufeld, Zeev Rechter, Dov Karmi and several other architects formed the avant-garde group that introduced the International Style to Palestine. As Sharon returned to Tel Aviv he first designed the Hebrew Labour Federation's pavilion for the Levant Fair (1932). Throughout the thirties he planned several Cooperative Housing Estates. The ideological tenet that Sharon subscribed to informed both the design and construction processes, as he recalls:

"The avant-garde architects of the thirties were closely identified with the character of their times; design fitted the sociological pattern of the period like a glove fits a hand. Architects were even ready to live in the cooperative houses designed by them, and they also had their small offices there. The plans were thoroughly discussed and criticized by members of the cooperative who would live in this building."

Ultimately, the adoption of the International Style marked a significant change in the architect's public role.

Following the establishment of Israel Arieh Sharon served as the director and chief architect of the National Planning Department of the Prime Minister's Office (1948-1953).

This position signified a shift in local architectural practice, that previously operated through close contact with the people "who would leave in this buildings", to a more distinct relationship of executing an official national policy on a grand scale. Arieh Sharon explains his position as follows:

"The main aim of this National Plan was to spread the population away from the Mediterranean seaboard into the country's empty areas, by directing the ever growing stream of immigration into the new regions. If we had not taken radical action, all industrial and commercial development would continue to be concentrated on the coastal strip between Haifa and Tel Aviv, and the Jewish population there, 82% of the total of 1948, would be increased.

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82 Sharon, (1976), p. 49.
This plan to balance the distribution of population over the entire country was recognized as the ideal solution by the Prime Minister, but was much criticized as too optimistic a target by many Israeli 'realists'. ... We also prepared master plans for 20 new towns.\textsuperscript{83}

Throughout the New Hebrew era (1909-1948) architecture represented a series of independent construction forming a collective, once the State of Israel was established the program became a conscious attempt to construct a Nation via a central plan. During the fifties and sixties, construction revolved around massive housing solutions and master plans were configured throughout the country. New towns and settlements appeared in all parts of the country resembling each other in their housing types and general layouts and exhibiting the urgency and pragmatism involved in their construction. The task was to construct a Nation, thus the individual character of towns and neighborhoods, was not a primary concern.

\textbf{Memory of Modernism}

"Modernism was not merely an artistic style in the historical procession, but an active partner in the formation of Israel. Its absence creates a rupture which cannot be instantly bridged. European Modernism and Zionism as its product brought about the establishment of the Jewish State in the Land of Israel, and consequently it is fundamental to the State’s very image. Modernism had inspired all aspects of action and construction."\textsuperscript{84}

While it was the architects who introduced the International Style to the public, it was readily substantiated since it captured the shared Modernist aspirations, and afforded pragmatic solutions to contemporary needs. As apparent in Tel Aviv, there was both a conscious desire and pragmatic need to find an alternative to the local building traditions and to resolve the issue of Hebrew versus Arab labour source. Thus the dialectic between Hebrew Revivalism to Modernist agendas was shaped by local circumstances and the Jewish immigrants’ memory.

\textsuperscript{83} Sharon, (1976), p. 78.

\textsuperscript{84} Architect David Knnafo in "Studio", (1989).
While national rivalry had affected Tel Aviv's evolution in the urban scale, the adoption of the International Style formed the ultimate architectural difference between the cities. Modernism, in its various evolutions and vernaculars became the predominant architectural style and formed the typical Israeli architectural context with the exception of existing old and ancient built forms. The "universal" essence of Modernism filtered through this "singular" collective experience informed the adoption of the International Style as a National Style. The International Style became a singular experience and as such it embodied the memory of the New Hebrew's utopian dreams, values and actions as well as their eventual exhaustion.
32. Tel Aviv and ancient Jaffa (1990)
Conclusion: The "singular" and the "universal" in Tel Aviv's identity

In the previous discussion I have shown how the particular relationship between universal tenets, and local reality shaped Tel Aviv's architecture and urban pattern. In the modern era however, the "Universal" cannot be reduced to a-priori knowledge or, as Marshall Berman propose:

"Modern environment and experiences cut across all boundaries of Geography and ethnicity, of class and nationality, of religion and ideology: in this sense, modernity can be said to unite all mankind." 85

Boundaries and borders between cultures have been altered in the age of the Global-Village, so that, social, political and cultural processes are shared "universally". Thus the singularity of a specific culture lies in its relationships with what must be considered global human experience. Intensifying rates of information flow, available media sources and the particular collective psyche that synthesizes them precondition cultural singularity at present.

When examining the singularity of an artifact through the realm of collective memory it is crucial to consider the relationships between the universal and the local within collective memory itself. The dynamic discourse between the "singular" and "universal" at present becomes even more complex when considering art and architecture in immigrant or migrant societies.

It is arguable whether such distinctions between perceptions conditioned to specific cultural and social circumstances and those that are universal in nature are indeed so clear-cut when considering Tel Aviv's identity.

Ultimately, Tel Aviv's singularity, as any other city, is rooted in the mind set of its inhabitants. The experiences, needs, beliefs and desires shared by Tel Aviv's residents imprint themselves on the city's image.

In the first case study I described the framework of the Israeli collective memory through Samuel Bak's painting. This image encapsulates the contrasts between new and old in the Israeli built environment, including the condition of isolation and the memory of wars.

In the second case I introduced Tel Aviv through a contemporary environmental sculpture: White Square by Dani Karavan, a work strongly related to Tel Aviv both physically and conceptually, evoking the memory of collective tenets throughout the White City phase.

Ultimately, the condition depicted by Samuel Bak and the dialogue created between White Square and Tel Aviv can both be perceived as critical commentaries on universal issues and as architectural metaphors on a singular Israeli collective identity. These two works represent prominent layers of Tel Aviv's and consequently Israeli collective memory.

When referred to as "Tel Aviv-Jaffa" the city's image corresponds to Samuel Bak's Surreal painting. The juxtaposition of "new" and "old", or rather, fast-aging to ancient, manifest in Bak's painting but are also found in Tel Aviv's skyline and urban morphology. The architectural relationships between Tel Aviv and Jaffa are as contrasting as the relationship between the "white dwelling box and the ancient platforms".

Tel Aviv bears the marks of the Arab-Israeli conflict from origins. The initial urban skeleton reflect the relationships between the Arabs and Jews prior to 1948. This rupture so intensely experienced, is embodied in the contrasts between Jaffa -- an old town persistent throughout millenniums and Tel Aviv that developed in the span of a human life time. (fig. 32) The "stitch" area between Tel Aviv and Jaffa can still be traced in the city's urban morphology and architectural collage. The degree to which the architectural discourse between Tel Aviv and Jaffa has been a deaf and mute one is a matter for further examination.
On the other hand White Square, an island of harmony within the chaotic city, evokes the memory of beliefs and visions fundamental to Tel Aviv’s identity as the White City.

The city’s skyline viewed from White Square discloses other significant factors informing Tel Aviv’s identity -- these are experienced universally, and are mainly the product of a shift towards Capitalism.

I have examined the ways by which the framework of singular and universal factors informed Tel Aviv’s identity and shaped its collective memory. Herzelia High School building (1910-1959), "Casino - Galei Aviv" (1923-1939), and Dizengoff Square (1938, 1978, 1991...) among others, were examined in relation to their location within the city, their function in contemporary public life, and the manner in which their position was altered with Tel Aviv’s growth. These built forms represent crucial "moments" throughout the city’s growth when pragmatism and identity transformations vetoed any symbolic significance embodied in their architecture.

My analysis disclosed several significant catalysts shaping Tel Aviv’s architectural and urban identity including:

1. Ideological tenets -

Hebrew Revivalism, Progressivist Modernism and Socialist agendas corresponding to Tel Aviv’s image as the First Hebrew City, Garden City, and White City.

2. Reality and pragmatism -

The Arab-Israeli conflict, Jewish immigrants’ memory and Capitalism have all effected Tel Aviv’s development.

3. Stage-Setting -

Tel Aviv’s evolution was informed by its role as a propaganda apparatus, a cosmopolitan outward looking city and the city of provisional spectacles.
Cultural threshold

Tel Aviv's development and transformations correspond to the dynamics of revival, revolution and progress. These perceptions constitute the historical scale of modern civilization, and thus of architecture as its elementary product. The specific nature of Hebrew revivalism, social revolution and progress and their relationship have largely informed the singular Israeli architectural discourse between old and new, local and universal.

Tel Aviv's designated roles as "The First Hebrew City" to the nation's cosmopolitan heart determined its nature as the Israeli cultural "window" looking simultaneously inwards and outwards.

The memory encapsulated in the city's skeleton and permanences, is that of the Israeli political, economic, social and cultural processes imprinted by the universal maelstrom of Modernism.

Israel, an isolated entity in the Middle East has always desired to keep up with Western trends, likewise Tel Aviv aspires to be compatible with European and American models of cosmopolitan centers. Given these cultural, political and economic circumstances architecture could fulfill such ambitions only partially and segmentally.

Although the Israeli dialogue between East and West has been directed by contemporary European and American conceptions it was ultimately affected by Jewish immigrants' memory and the inherited transients' pragmatism.
Collective memory

"Israel, then, is a freak of history. When writing about events, past and present, which led to the resurrection of the Jewish State, objectives like "unique" and "unprecedented" are difficult to avoid. But "unique" is a tiresome objective, probably because it refers to an experience which can be fitted into no general scheme and has no claim to general validity. On the other hand, freak phenomena are merely the extreme extensions of normality. Thus the peculiarities of the Jewish character, that apparently unique blend of pride and humbleness, spirituality and cupidity, inferiority complex and over-compensation, calculated cunning and dripping sentimentality, could probably induce by a team of determined psychiatrists in any community kept for no more than a couple of generations under hot-house conditions approximating those of the Polish ghettos."86

Since collective memory is composed of the memory of individuals it can similarly be manipulated only to a limited degree. (We remember things we wished we had forgotten and vice versa).

Aldo Rossi asserts that: "The city is the locus of collective memory". But following the examination of Tel Aviv from various perspectives, it seems that Tel Aviv has been as much the locus of collective amnesia: Herzelia High School, the Casino, the new Dizengoff circle, the Fair Grounds, Manshia, and Arab villages are all examples of Tel Aviv's amnesia.

The various factors informing collective suppression and recollection have imprinted themselves on Tel Aviv's architectural permanences.

Tel Aviv's singularity revolves around cycles of self-forgetfulness and remembrance and is embodied in the memory of its replaced artifacts and the ambition behind establishing new ones.

"Urban artifacts have their own life, their own destiny... When the Parisians destroyed the Bastille, they were erasing the centuries of abuse and sadness of which the Bastille was the physical form."87

86 Koestler, (1949), p. 3.
Demolishing a building of communal value should be recognized as an act containing symbolic significance paralleling that of constructing a new one. The relationship between construction and demolition must be considered with respect to the singular collective identity and its transformations.

Construction, destruction, renovation and fabrication in itself became the city’s very identity. Tel Aviv was designated to become the stage of the New Hebrew’s project, the scenery of History in its making. The dynamic history of the city has, over time, provided numerous temporal "stage sets" that together form a composite in the "backstage" of memory. Herzelia High School, the Casino, and Dizengoff Circle among others, represent episodes within the universal "maelstrom of Modernism" as much as they reflect an intense search for a local Israeli identity.  

The cycle of Jewish history seen as collective memory revolves around construction and destruction. These historical cycles are of essence to Israel’s identity and affected Tel Aviv – the locus of Jewish immigrants collective memory.

Like other immigrant communities the New Hebrews could not but retain their places of origin. As postulated by Arthur Koestler:

88 Berman, (1988), p. 16. "The maelstrom of modern life has been fed from many sources: great discoveries in the physical sciences, changing our images of the universe and our place in it; the industrialization of production, which transforms scientific knowledge into technology, creates new human environments and destroys old ones, speeds up the whole tempo of life, generates new forms of cooperate power and class struggle; immense demographic upheavals, serving millions of people from their ancestral habitats, hurling them half-way across the world into new lives; rapid and often cataclysmic urban growth; systems of mass communication, dynamic in their development, enveloping and binding together the most diverse people and societies; increasingly powerful national states, bureaucratically structured and operated, constantly striving to extend their powers; mass social movements of people and peoples, challenging their political and economic rulers, striving to gain some control over their lives; finally, bearing and driving all these people and institutions along, an ever expanding, drastically fluctuating capitalist world market. In the twentieth century, the social processes that bring this maelstrom into being, and keep it in a state of perpetual becoming, have come to be called 'modernization'".
"The national dance of the Hebrew youth is the Ukrainian Horra; the national anthem of Israel is a melody by the Czech composer Semantana; the popular son of the day, the "Negeb", is the song of the Russian partisans fitted with Hebrew words.

By and large, the Jews in Palestine have remained untouched by the native mode of life; they have not learnt from the Arabs how to build houses that are cool, spacious and cheap...

They have imposed upon the country their own immigrants’ pattern; but unlike other pioneers, who had roots in the national traditions of their mother country, out of which their colonial civilization developed, the Jewish colonist had no particular mother country and no specific cultural roots of their own. They came from the Diaspora, from the ghettos and suburbs and D.P. camps of the world, and brought with them bits of alien civilizations picked up in transit. That is perhaps why life in Israel’s capital has such a shapeless, nondescript quality about it, and why Tel Aviv gives the impression of being the large Jewish suburb of a non-existent city."

The collective memory of life in ghettos, towns and modern urban centers and the communal spirit have all significantly shaped Tel Aviv. It is possible then, to speculate on how some aspects of Israeli environments embody previous modes of life in other urban settings.

A significant environmental condition the Jews brought from their old world was centuries of living in high density districts. This in turn is suggested as a factor informing Tel Aviv’s urban density. The Garden City’s agenda was found attractive as it supplied an alternative to both Jaffa and the immigrants places of origin.

However, the pragmatics of land availability, massive immigration and local conflicts dictated haphazard urban development and high density building.

Throughout their history as displaced People the Jews did not gain significant construction skills, nor were they conscious of architectural expression as a mean of representing a collective. As I have established in the case of the Herzelia High School, Jewish or Hebrew architectural languages simply do not exist.

89 Koestler, (1949), p. 325-327
A city that never stops

"To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformations of ourselves and of the world -- and at the same time, that threatens to destroy, everything we have, everything we know, everything we are." 90

The range of case studies investigated reveals that transformation is the most constant force shaping Tel Aviv's identity.

The city's transformative identity is reflected in the move from its identity as the first Hebrew City envisioned as a Garden City, to its image as a White City raised on pilotis, and ultimately to the Israeli metropolis that never rests.

The slogan of "A city that never stops" was recently selected by Tel Aviv's municipality to introduce Tel Aviv. Although the slogan has elements of self promotion, it definitely captures the city's identity. After all, Tel Aviv does not only inspire the rhythm of a "metropolis" it in effect serves as the Israeli source of "new trends".

In practice a significant implication of these dynamics are traffic jams. Tel Aviv's contemporary map displays a chaotic layer of arrows orienting the designated traffic routes. (fig 33) Automobile traffic became a cardinal factor informing the city's urban and architectural developments. Massive platforms floating above main traffic arteries serving as public grounds constitute the generic strategy applied in addressing the traffic flow problem. Whereas, architecturally the problem lies in the heavy handed solutions applied, in an urban scale the essentiality of these interventions is doubted.

33. Tel Aviv - Jaffa map 1989.
Much like Dizengoff circle, traffic engineering repeatedly overrule architectural concerns in Tel Aviv. As portrayed throughout this work Tel Aviv's development and its transformation revolved around its rapidly intensifying circulation system, a significant facet of the city's identity.

Tel Aviv's intensive growth and changes occurred within the span of eighty years. Aldo Rossi asserts that cities change within the cycle of fifty years.\textsuperscript{91} The implication of this rule is crucial when addressing Tel Aviv, a modern city whose origins lay on the borderline between collective memory and history.

Excessive dynamics have pushed Tel Aviv forwards, but at the same time they have generated a parallel process of reevaluating permanences. Dizengoff Circle and the Heart of Tel Aviv are contemporary manifestations of this process of recognizing this permanences. At the same time construction as an apparatus of self invention never really ceases.

The intensity of universal and local dynamics should be addressed but not necessarily from a nostalgic point of view. As a result of this discussion the architects' traditional position in shaping such a dynamic built environment is severely challenged. Consequently, the Israeli architect's responsibility and involvement as a local cultural agent operating in a global village condition, must be reassessed.

\textbf{Tel Aviv the first Hebrew City}

I chose to examine Tel Aviv in relation to the idea and framework of collective memory. Since Tel Aviv functioned as the locus of Hebrew Revivalism I hoped to trace the relative place of the Hebraic in relation to its growth, development and transformations.

\textsuperscript{91} Rossi, (1982), p. 138.
Tel Aviv was the first modern city in which Hebrew was the formal spoken language. Since Tel Aviv was the first formally Hebrew city it also became the center of the linguistic revival. Hebrew writers and poets collaborated and documented the making of the city. National literary figures such as Bialik and Ahad Ha'am had their streets named after them during their lifetime. Spoken Hebrew was not taken for granted, it represented - the locus of Revivalism.

The Israeli search for the Hebraic can not be separated from the more general aspiration to secure a national, social and consequently, cultural identity. The search for the Hebraic played a significant part in the pre-Israel visions and actions, in its establishment, and is still relevant today. It is a local search in its essence, it is specifically bound to the stage of relocation -- the Jews returning to their historical homeland, the land of their ancient ancestors called the Hebrews, for whom Hebrew was the spoken language. Tel Aviv served as the urban core of revival.

I recently came across another version of the Hebraic, which in the Post Modern era is recognized as one of the main sources of Western culture; a play on "including the excluded". This perception is based both on linguistics and theological issues.\(^{92}\) It identifies the Hebraic with "dynamic concepts of space-time" as opposed to the Hellenic ideas of Harmony ("Becoming" versus "Being", "Formation" versus "Form" etc.). Although this version of the Hebraic was enlightening and intriguing it did not seem tangible, or directly relevant to our contemporary world.

Abstract distinctions and categories are essential tools for ordering our world but in the case of the Hebraic they seemed too detached from real life experiences.

What are "Dynamic concepts of Space-Time"? Isn't Modernism exactly that?!! Can we distinguish definitively between the two today?! As I began to focus on the

Hebraic as a source of Israeli cultural identity Modernism and the Hebraic were inseparable. Can anyone claim that the Israeli short and dynamic history is indeed the outcome of the "Hebraic concepts of space-time" rather than the outcome of a Modern European mind-set combined with the influence of local circumstances? I doubt if anybody in Tel Aviv last winter experienced the War in the Gulf as the "dynamic concepts of space-time".

The previous analysis of Tel Aviv, as the first New Hebrew urban project, reaffirm these notions. Tel Aviv’s dynamics of growth and transformation have ultimately been informed by the universal maelstrom of modernism, local circumstances of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the mind-set of Jewish immigrants.

The Hebrew in the theological sense had no relevance in informing Tel Aviv’s architecture. On the contrary, for the New Hebrews the profane was sanctified and religion was largely rejected since it embodied the Diaspora condition.

In the realm of the unconscious Tel Aviv’s dynamics can be related to the Hebraic concepts of space-time, but in practice the project of National revival and the adoption of the Modernist ideologies dominated the scene.

The possible implications of the revival of the Hebrew Language on architectural language is open to speculations as they were in the main indirect and unconscious. Jewish thought from its Hebrew and religious origins undoubtedly revolves around ethics rather than aesthetics and collective memory has been ultimately preserved through words and actions rather than images and forms.

"One can say that the city itself is the collective memory of its people, and like memory it is associated with objects and places..." 93

In many of the cases introduced, memory is preserved through words rather than buildings. Names of places and districts on the one hand and books on the other

encapsulate the memory of temporary permanences that became invisible, and a history still present. Both the invisible permanences and singular history still cast their long shadows. Are these then the traces of the "Hebraic dynamic space-time concepts?"

"The reader will discern, first and foremost, the heavy shadow of the past that lurks behind the modern facade of an ostensibly brand-new nation. The new technology, the demands of total and perpetual war, the smooth efficiency of the military machine, science-based industry and urbanization—all are significant ingredients of the life and temper of the country... The past is lengthening shadow that diffuses as the years go by; yet it continues to cast a spell which few Israelis ignore.

In this sense, Israel remains one of the least "synchronized" countries on earth. Its several clocks strike different hours. Israel resembles a man running ahead with his eyes turned back in a gaze transfixed by a landscape that constantly recedes into the distance. Memory, a main source of inspiration of Zionism, remains one of Israel's major resources today."  

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