

Ido Michaeli
Bank Hapoalim carpet



The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

6 ARTISTS 6 PROJECTS

February – August 2015

Nathan Cummings Building for Modern
and Contemporary Art

Chief Curator: Mira Lapidot

Assistant curator: Shua Ben-Ari

Exhibition design: Rona Chernica Zianga
and Eyal Rozen

Ido Michaeli: Bank Hapoalim Carpet

Curator: Aya Miron

Assistant curator: Tamara Abramovitch

Catalogue design and production: Studio Shual – Guy
Sagge, Avihai Mizrahi

Translation (pp. XX–XX): Einat Adi

Translation and editing: Anna Barber

Photographs © Ido Michaeli

Printed and bound by A. R. Printing Ltd., Tel Aviv

Bank Hapoalim Carpet, 2013

Handwoven wool and silk, 250 x 320 cm; video, 10 mins.;

app with information about the images

Purchase, “Here & Now” Contemporary Israeli Art

Acquisitions Committee, Israel

The exhibition and catalogue were made possible by
the donors to the Israel Museum’s 50th Anniversary
Exhibition Fund:

Herta and Paul Amir, Los Angeles Fondation Albert
Amon, Lausanne, Switzerland Ellen Bronfman
Hauptman and Andrew Hauptman, Los Angeles, and
Stephen and Claudine Bronfman, Montreal, in honor of
three generations of Bronfman family support for the
Museum Claudia Davidoff, Cambridge, Massachusetts,
in memory of Ruth and Leon Davidoff The Gottesman
Family, Tel Aviv and New York, in memory of Dov
Gottesman and in honor of Rachel Gottesman The
Hassenfeld Family Foundation, Providence, Rhode
Island, in honor of Sylvia Hassenfeld Alice and Nahum
Lainer, Los Angeles The Nash Family Foundation, New
York Yad Hanadiv, the Rothschild Foundation in Israel

Catalogue no. 622

ISBN 978 965 278 440 7

© The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 2015

All rights reserved

83-82 *Foreword*

Mira Lapidot

80-77 *The Evolution of Carpet*

Aya Miron

76-68 *Keys*

Conversation between
Aya Miron Ido Michaeli

67 *Biographical Notes*

66-35 *Details*

Foreword

What is "Bank Hapoalim carpet" Item ethnographic or contemporary object? Who created it? Is it a sign advertising Bank Hapoalim "or undermining the values? Perry initiated capitalist or communist manifesto?

"Bank Hapoalim carpet" is the central chapter of the trilogy "Staalmeesters", which also included an embroidered curtain and gdabia fancy. Ido Michaeli Bank called to the carpet huge images from the Bezalel Academy of Art in Israel, archaeological items, posters socialist, social conventions, symbols of the Israeli establishment (paper money, coins or stamps), Renaissance art, and more. The architectural structure of the bank - an allegory of the social structure - as described in the carpet represented classes: the workers at the bottom Hamagshimim exclude into practice, above the middle class, and decision-makers on the top floor - hybrids created by the Zionist leaders and What is "Bank Hapoalim carpet" Item ethnographic or contemporary object? Who created it? Is it a sign advertising Bank Hapoalim "or undermining the values? Perry initiated capitalist or communist manifesto?

"Bank Hapoalim carpet" is the central chapter of the trilogy "Staalmeesters", which also included an embroidered curtain and gdabia fancy. Ido Michaeli Bank called to the carpet huge images from the Bezalel Academy of Art in Israel, archaeological items, posters socialist, social conventions, symbols of the Israeli establishment (paper money, coins or stamps), Renaissance art, and more. The architectural structure of the bank - an allegory of the social structure - as described in the carpet represented classes: the workers at the bottom Hamagshimim exclude into practice, above the

middle class, and decision-makers on the top floor - hybrids created by the Zionist leaders and

called to the carpet huge images from the Bezalel Academy of Art in Israel, archaeological items, posters socialist, social conventions, symbols of the Israeli establishment (paper money, coins or stamps), Renaissance art, and more. The architectural structure of the bank - an allegory of the social structure - as described in the carpet represented classes: the workers at the bottom Hamagshimim exclude into practice, above the middle class, and decision-makers on the top floor - hybrids created by the Zionist leaders and an allegory of the social structure - as described in the carpet represented classes: the workers at the bottom Hamagshimim exclude into practice, above the middle class, and decision-makers on the top floor - hybrids created by the Zionist leaders and and decision-makers on the top floor - hybrids created by the Zionist leaders.

80
81

James S. Snyder,
Anne and Jerom Fisher Director

Transformations of a Carpet

Aya Miron

What is *Bank Hapoalim Carpet*? Is it an ethnographic artifact or a contemporary work of art? Who made it? Is it an advertisement for Bank Hapoalim, or does it undermine the bank's values?¹ Is it the fruit of a capitalist venture, or a communist manifesto?

Bank Hapoalim Carpet is the central chapter in the trilogy "Cloth Merchants," which also includes an embroidered *parokhet* (Torah ark curtain) and an elegant galabiya.² Ido Michaeli's carpet comprises a huge "image bank," which includes images of Israeli art from the Bezalel period, archaeological items, socialist posters, social art, icons of Israeli sovereignty (banknotes, coins, and stamps), Renaissance art, etc. The carpet depicts the bank's architectural structure as an allegory of social structure – a representation of the social classes: at the bottom are the laborers, who implement ideas and turn them into reality; the middle class is depicted above them; and at the top layer are the decision makers – hybrids composed by Michaeli from portraits of Zionist and other leaders. All of the above are participants in a well-orchestrated event, which invites one to observe it both from afar and up close, suggesting, at one and the same time, a wide-angled perspective and a piercing gaze. The carpet is a communist, socialist, or Zionist mirage, bringing to mind ideologically engaged Israeli art. But despite the flatness of the imagery –

1 Similarly, Andy Warhol's Coca Cola bottles are both a critique and an advertisement in the museum space.

2 All of the trilogy's parts involve the use of traditional textile craftsmanship and include videos that document the artisans at work.

a graphic language commonly used in posters – it presents a multi-contextual, multilayered, encyclopedic complexity, and one could gaze at it endlessly.

The carpet brings to mind Bezalel carpets,³ many of which have made their way to the Israel Museum from its predecessor, the Bezalel Museum. Such carpets combine images of Zionist personages, Jewish symbols, and archaeological images, all framed by architectural elements held sacred by Judaism or Zionism. Their design expresses the aim of Boris Schatz, Bezalel's founder, to develop an "original Eretz-Israel Hebrew"- visual language⁴ drawing on past Jewish artisanship, including high-quality Persian carpet weaving. The sketches for Bezalel carpets were drawn by European Jewish painters, while the weaving was done by "good workers," girls of *Mizrahi* (Oriental Jewish) extraction. In Schatz's Bezalel, craftwork intentionally brought together East and West: traditional Persian carpet weaving, Damascus inlay work, and Yemenite jewelry making were among the most notable pursuits of this establishment, founded as a school of both arts and crafts, alongside clearly Western traditions of depiction and composition.

With the help and mediation of the Israeli carpet trader Yitzhak Mattat, Michaeli's carpet sketch was sent to be woven in Afghanistan, of all places. The weaving process was documented, and the video documentation became part of Michaeli's final work. Throughout history, carpet traders were cultural agents of sorts, emissaries who mediated between East and West. For instance, for many centuries, Silk Road commerce transported items such as carpets, silk scarves, mats, and garments from China to Europe by way of Antioch. Oriental tradesmen were often depicted in occidental art as nostalgic, exotic figures exuding charm and having occult

3 Carpets produced by the Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts in Jerusalem during the early 20th century.

4 Quotations from Schatz found in: Nurit Shilo-Cohen, ed., *Bezalel, 1906–1929*, trans. Esther R. Cohen (exh. cat., The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 1983), p. 166.

knowledge. At the same time, they were often portrayed as inarticulate, boorish, greedy, and deceitful. Such Orientalist representations became well established in Western culture, distinguishing between Europeans and the Oriental Other and preserving the balance of power between them.

Patterns, colors, and materials have always attested to the country of origin of woven goods, while the weaving technique bespeaks the hard work put into them. Therefore, an experienced eye may calculate their exchange value, and skilled tradespersons would know that a good story raises their price – suiting their tales, which were often fabrications, to their audience.⁵ Michaeli, too, wanders through a space which straddles reality and fiction. His carpet depicts fictional figures – Aladdin, Dan Haschan (‘Thrifty Dan’)⁶ – alongside images taken from reality. In the film, Michaeli combines his documentary footage with a staged tour of the Israel Museum. Both the video and the visual glossary (the objects of Jewish life) that accompany the carpet generate an experience similar to a visit to the Museum’s ethnographic galleries, an experience produced by the artisans – who have hammered, embroidered, inscribed, or woven – as well as by the Museum, which displays their works after sifting, classifying, and repositioning them in accordance with Western tradition.

Carpet weaving is an ancient pursuit that requires the learning, assimilation, and application of rules whose secrets are handed down from one generation to another, becoming more elaborate with time. Traditionally encrypted symbols and motifs, which vary from one locale to another, find expression in a variety of patterns. As is often the case when information is transferred from one technique to another,

5 Interestingly, in Hebrew as well as English, there is a philological connection between “fabric” (*bad*) and “fabrication” (*sippurei baddim*); the English words “text,” “texture,” and “textile” share a common Latin root; and in many languages, verbs related to textile making (weave, embroider, spin) are often used to describe storytelling.

6 Dan Haschan was, starting in the 1960s, the cartoon figurehead of Bank Hapoalim’s campaign to promote savings among parents and children.

disruptions ensue and original meanings are altered. This is a widespread phenomenon in Judaica artifacts commissioned from non-Jewish artisans. Relying only on the form of the unfamiliar Hebrew letters, their makers would often confuse similar-looking letters such as *kaf* (כ) and *bet* (ב). Likewise, in literature, texts that were initially transmitted orally, such as the *Thousand and One Nights* represented in Michaeli's carpet, have migrated from Eastern to Western countries and have undergone quite a few transformations before they were written down. Michaeli's sketch, too, underwent many transformations prior to becoming a carpet: his color drawing on a small sheet of paper was sent to Afghanistan, where it was transferred to a sheet of the same dimensions as the final carpet. The design was then broken down into numbered sections, which were reproduced by the weavers one by one. As a result, on the bottom right-hand corner, the Hebrew letters *bet* (ב) and *peh* (פ) in the Bank Hapoalim logo face the wrong way—for the weavers regarded the letters as merely decorative elements and thought they would look more symmetrical as a mirror image of the left-hand corner.

Bank Hapoalim (The Workers' Bank) was established in 1921 by the General Federation of Labour in Israel and the World Zionist Organization to serve Zionist workers, in accordance with the socialist ideology which informed many institutions at the time and has waned with time. In 1996 the bank was purchased by Arison Holdings and, although it has retained its original name and symbols, its nature has changed. The mixture of ideologies and contradictory outlooks interwoven in the *Bank Hapoalim Carpet* combines the various styles of the many people representing diverse cultures who created the images quoted, together with Ido Michaeli's own hand and that of the Afghan weavers. In this long chain, the latter are given great weight by Michaeli. The accompanying video gives the viewer a glimpse into the methods by which carpets are produced in Afghanistan while presenting the encounter – which is unexpected to the point of absurdity –

between Afghan carpet weavers and Zionist figures and icons. This encounter, which continued for about a year, was bound to raise questions in their minds: What is the meaning of the carpet? How has it reached them? One cannot help but wonder if they had any idea where it came from and what its intended purpose was.

This carpet is a carnival of identities and hybrids, a masquerade whose characters are meticulously cast, interweaving popular tales and parables, facts and beliefs, ideologies and knowledge passed down by word of mouth and from hand to hand. In his attempt to reproduce the traces of the journey undertaken by all of the above, Michaeli has unstitched the seam between truth and fiction. Order, as it had appeared in the original images, has been broken. Here, the images appear in a new guise as part of an event that takes place under our feet, on the ground where oriental rugs are usually laid out, as well as in front of our eyes and heads, on the wall where western tapestries – and oriental carpets in museums – are hung.

The Key Ring

Aya Miron in Conversation with Ido Michaeli

Aya Miron Three years ago, you approached me with what seemed like a zany idea: to send a small sketch for a large carpet to Afghanistan, to be woven there and eventually displayed, like Bezalel carpets, at the Israel Museum. Already at that early stage in this project, you believed the involvement of the museum on the one hand and Bank Hapoalim on the other to be of key importance. Could you elaborate on the way in which these institutions are reflected in the carpet?

Ido Michaeli Woven into the carpet are key images which I thought would be necessary in order to complete the project. They were meant to convince all the institutions involved to help realize it. I inserted images that represent both the bank and the museum – such as the bank’s Dan Haschan figure, and pieces from the museum’s collection. The carpet is a play on form and content. It has the appearance of an ethnographic, historical artifact and institutional resonance, but a second look reveals representations of theft and bank-vault robbery and references to social injustice as well as allusions to the bank’s long-forgotten socialist heritage.

74
75

A.M Artworks have a provenance – a record of the paths they have taken and the hands they have passed through. Often, it may be gleaned from traces on the back of the works. This is the space where their history is located. Could one say that you wrote the history of the carpet before it was even made?

I.M The sketch may be read as a program outlining the itinerary I had planned for the carpet. When I started this project, I

wanted it to be woven in Afghanistan and exhibited at the Israel Museum with funding from Bank Hapoalim. I started out by presenting the sketch to members of the bank's Board of Directors and asking them to fund it. I explained to them that the carpet would serve as a huge advertisement for the bank within the museum walls. After several months of discussions, I got a laconic e-mail saying "The bank has no wish to be connected to this project," with no further explanation. At this stage, I approached publisher Amos Schocken, who owns the *Haaretz* art collection, and told him I wished to produce a carpet dedicated to Bank Hapoalim even though the bank refused to be connected to it. Happily, he agreed to sponsor the project and soon after, the work started.

A.M How did the connection with Afghanistan come about?

I.M When I was looking for someone in Israel who would be able to do the job, I met Yitzhak Mattat. Even though there are no diplomatic relations between Israel and Afghanistan, he made it all possible. Afghanistan is considered an enemy state, but for Mattat the boundaries are flexible and he lives in both worlds at once. The connection was maintained through smartphones, e-mails, and envoys who met in a third country. The sketch was delivered to the workshop's representatives during a carpet fair in Berlin, and they sent it to Afghanistan. A series of agents – dealers, emissaries, border control officers, customs officers, flight attendants, museum employees – all worked together as links in a chain that enabled this work to finally reach the museum. The video, filmed partly in Afghanistan and partly in Israel, shows the carpet's production stage by stage, including all the connections and contacts that have made possible its arrival from Afghanistan and its hanging at the Israel Museum.

A.M Several central icons of Western – particularly Israeli –

culture, such as images and official symbols related to official or institutional ceremonies, spur you into action. Is this why you felt you had to exhibit this carpet at the Israel Museum?

I.M Institutionalism is indeed a starting point of the project. As in previous works I produced, here, too, I assume the roles of both the establishment – the bank, the museum – and the people who undermine it – the workers, the robbers. I believe that it is precisely through masquerading as institutional that a work may produce an ironic stance that disrupts and continues reverberating. The work offers two readings at once. The irony is evident to seasoned art viewers adept at critical reading, while a naïve reading may see it as an advertisement for the bank.

A.M Would you also like viewers to observe it as they would an ethnographic artifact?

I.M In order to gain the viewer's trust, it was important that I produce the real thing, not just a carpet metaphor. I like the encyclopedic aspect of the Israel Museum, which gathers under one roof diverse art forms: Oriental art, ethnography, archaeology, and contemporary art. At the same time, as Israel's main museum it also has an obligation to participate in the formation of a national identity and the formulation of a national ethos. I felt it was important to "plant" the carpet in the museum and see whether it may shed new light on items from its permanent collection. I see art as part of an extensive cultural milieu. I try to blur the distinction between categories such as art and craft. This carpet provokes a critical viewing rather than a definite, one-dimensional ethos. It is therefore like a Trojan horse inserted into the museum, celebrating the triumph of disruption, divergence, and reproduction over essential, original identity.

A.M Could you speak about earlier works in which you

impersonated someone else? Acts in which you functioned as both artist (mimic) and “state employee”?

- I.M Impersonation, masquerading, and mimicry are practices I employ as an artist to produce an ambivalent stance. I explore the extent to which my ability to mimic allows me to fabricate symbolic, or even economic, value. For instance, in my series “Urban Legends” I produced ten postage stamps whose appearance was reminiscent of Zionist aesthetics. I used a formal visual language to depict unfounded rumors. I put the stamps on envelopes, sent them by mail, and they all reached their destinations. The cancellation stamped on them by some postal clerk confirmed that the mimicry worked. My grandfather, Michael, immigrated to Israel from Iraq wearing a galabiya and a kaffiyeh. Here, he wore a suit and a hat – Western clothes. He tried to fit in and mimic the appearance of a Westerner, but possibly his clothes emphasized the mimicry and accentuated his foreignness even more. In 2011 I posed for a photograph as Mossad agent Eli Cohen [who was hanged in Syria in 1965 after being convicted of spying for Israel]. In producing this photograph, I pursued a question related to the hybrid combining oriental and occidental appearance. It is a deceptive image because it isn’t quite clear whether this is a costume or clothes that in fact make visible my inner, authentic truth by accentuating my Mizrahi appearance. I would like to think that such hybridized images, as well as the carpet as an object, do away with categories. It was important to me to enter the museum as an “oriental carpet artisan,” with a carpet that celebrates traditional oriental craftsmanship, whose execution by artisans in the East was mediated by a Mizrahi dealer. This is another reason why it is vital for me to install the work at the Israel Museum. There are many representations of Orientalism in the museum’s permanent collection, and I wanted to install my work next to them.

- A.M You mentioned your grandfather and your biographical

connection to a practice of mimicry. Is this one of the reasons for your choosing to masquerade?

I.M I believe every Israeli can identify with this sense of multiple identities. Certainly, as a Mizrahi Jew, growing up with an Iraqi culture at home but studying at the Thelma Yellin High School of the Arts, I felt the split quite clearly. The cultural knowledge with which I arrived in high school seemed irrelevant to the new world I encountered. I had to learn a new language and leave behind my former cultural attributes, somewhat like my grandfather leaving the galabiya behind. Perhaps this is the origin of my need to mimic and use someone else's voice. When your own voice has no room to be heard, you develop strategies that allow you to have your say anyway. Western culture and art seemed like a treasure trove to me and I had a great desire to succeed in "decoding" it so I could plunder it. At present, I draw on both these worlds at once. In my last body of work I feel like I've succeeded in bridging and finding points of connection between East and West. The carpet does not include many representations of Mizrahi culture, because my work was based on materials I collected, and I couldn't find many Mizrahi representations among Israeli symbols of sovereignty. Currently, in relation to the replacement in progress of Israeli banknotes, there has been a renewed public discussion about the absence of Mizrahi figures from these banknotes. When Mizrahi people have no part in the money, the only role left for them is that of the thief. And this is indeed the role they got in the carpet – a composition which is entirely composed of external sources of inspiration.

A.M One cannot think about a bank and treasures without thinking about the thieves. In the carpet, you combined an image of the helmet worn by the *Ofnobank* (Motorcycle

Bandit),¹ which brings to mind a skull (both the attribute of the sinner and the symbol of his punishment), vault robbers, and looters of the Temple. The carpet also includes a text that is like a Song of Songs love poem to the bank vault – a quotation from *The Brain*, an autobiography by Yitzhak Drori, the first robber to break into a Bank Hapoalim vault.² What are these robbers doing in the carpet?

I.M The robbers are hiding inside the bank. They are committing a crime on behalf of the class struggle. Drori's quotation is from the autobiography he wrote in prison, in which he describes how he stole a safe and hid it in a secret apartment in order to practice breaking into it. He calls it "the bride," writing, "I touched every part of my bride and lovingly said to her, 'Now I need to take you apart and study you until I know everything. I will find your weak spots and I will treat you like a queen.' I went on caressing her and playing with her locks . . ." There is something moving about this poetic, erotic description of breaking into the vault of a bank, the very same bank that represents for him the white hegemony of the Labor Party. This quotation charges and activates the entire work. It is inscribed in a way that makes it difficult to read, masking its contents. I wanted to make it hard for the bankers to read, so it wouldn't upset the perfect image of their world.

A.M We spoke earlier about imitation as an artistic practice on the one hand, and a strategy of a weakened minority on the other. Could your work also be likened to robbery? One could say that you have robbed a multitude of robbers. In the

1 The *Ofiobank* (a combination of the Hebrew words for motorcycle and bank) is the nickname given to Israeli bank robber Ronnie Leibowitz because of his modus operandi. He was apprehended by the police in October 1990 while standing by a bank branch he was not intending to rob.

2 In the 1970s Yizhak Drori, nicknamed "the Brain," broke into the safe of a jewelry store in Jerusalem, and in the 1980s he broke into private safes in the vault of a Jerusalem branch of Bank Hapoalim.

Internet Age it's relatively easy to do the job of forty thieves.

I.M In a way, my practice is piratical, it raises questions about the infringement of copyrights. It's like sampling, or collecting existing materials and editing them in a new context. I appropriate and rob symbols, historical materials, and existing techniques and use the associations with which they are charged and their tone of voice to tell a different story.

A.M You say it's the same tone of voice yet a different story...

I.M Yes, otherwise it would be forgery. Forgers need to find the technological means by which to produce an identical product. Mimicry, on the other hand, is a cultural act – children mimic their parents, cultures mimic neighboring cultures, a work of art mimics what is considered “art” in its culture. Otherwise it wouldn't be understood. As in a conversation, where each speaker tries to mimic the logic of the last sentence and extend it further, mimicry always adds something new. From this point of view, forgery is exploitative while mimicry is productive.

In his *Politeia*, Plato calls artists coin counterfeiters and claims that they pose a real threat to the state. I am interested in these power relations between the state and its citizens, in the silent ways in which symbols of the state influence our behavior. I adopt the voice of an institution or public establishment in many of my works, speaking on their behalf. Naturally, this provokes suspicion and criticism, directed at both the work and the institutions. And so, in a way, I am also their agent. Of course, to some extent we are all like unwilling double agents of cultural institutions.

A.M Your video documents the weavers, as if you are directing the viewer to identify with the workers. When one notes the great amount of labor put into the making of the carpet by these artisans, one realizes that the video may also raise

its value – that the final object is not valued just for itself, but rather has left behind a trail of dust which may yet turn into diamonds. Does the carpet belong to the bank, or to the workers (*poalim*)?

I.M As far as I'm concerned, the true protagonists of the carpet are the workers. The carpet is dedicated to them. Its content and form belong in popular culture. It is made to fit their taste, it's stylized and has a gaudy, flashy appearance. The fact that a lot of work went into it will appeal to people who appreciate physical labor. In addition, the project also includes a glossary of workers' aesthetics, which brings to mind the weekly picture riddle for children in the newspaper and appeals to everyone.

A.M The video makes a connection between us and the workshop workers in Afghanistan and their labor. It also raises questions regarding their working conditions as it presents the relations of production. The fact that the carpet you had them make comprises images that are foreign to the workers may increase their sense of alienation.

I.M In fact, I acted like a capitalist entrepreneur, but on the face of it the carpet looks like a communist manifesto. The sources it draws on are related to the historical connection between European Jewry and communism. The State of Israel was established by like-minded people. For the leaders' level I collected mainly personages whose hairstyle recalls communist leaders. Like the promise embodied in the name Bank Hapoalim – bank of the workers – *Bank Hapoalim Carpet* tries to raise this ideology anew and revive it.

A.M After all, in the looters' level you planted a skull, a candle, and a still life – all clearly Christian images of *memento mori*. You embedded them there like a moth awaiting the moment it will attack a splendid carpet. They are also a representation

of a super-morality which does away with hierarchies and reduces everyone to the same status. What were you thinking when you collected this Christian imagery?

- I.M To Christian eyes, the carpet may also be seen as a testament to dark stereotypes of the Jew. Financial pursuits, banking, charging interest on loans, these are all parts of the Jewish caricature engraved upon the Christian mind since Judas Iscariot. At the center of the carpet is the image of the chief treasurer, sitting behind the reception desk. The image is taken from an anti-Semitic cartoon depicting a fat Jew and small people shoveling money and gold into his mouth. From this perspective, one may see the entire work as an image of the money-lending Jew pursuing lucre.

At the same time, one may interpret the tiered structure as a religious allegory of life – in this world, heaven, and hell. Giotto's wall paintings in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua are among the carpet's key references. The chapel was commissioned by a philanthropist who had made his fortune lending money. Since this practice is forbidden by Christianity, the chapel was built in penitence for his sins. The images in it refer to punishments for greed and usury. One of them shows Jesus assaulting the money changers and ejecting them from the Temple.

- I.M We, too, like the carpet, have taken a long, winding path from Bank Hapoalim, through Bezalel and the Israel Museum, Iraq, Giotto's chapel, and all the way to the Temple. We were accompanied by robbers (mostly of Mizrahi extraction, but also one Ashkenazi), counterfeiters, treasurers, merchants, secret agents, artisans, workers, and also your grandfather. Each holds a different key to this carpet, to this secret cave in which you have hidden so many "inalienable assets."

Ido Michaeli / Biographical Notes

Born Petah Tikva, Israel, 1980, Lives and works in New York

Education: 2008–10 M.F.A., Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Tel Aviv /
2007 HaMidrasha School of Art, Beit Berl College, Kfar Sava / 2001–5

B.Des., Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem **Solo Exhibitions:**

2011 The Fabric Merchants, HaKibbutz Gallery, Tel Aviv / 2010 "Roses,"
in Salame 10, Graduate Exhibition of the Bezalel M.F.A. Program, Bezalel
Gallery, Tel Aviv / 2009 Pecking on Guard, Rosenfeld Gallery, Tel Aviv /
2008 Stalking the Fox, HaMidrasha School of Art Gallery, Beit Berl College,

Kfar Sava **Selected Group Exhibitions:** 2014 Wilderness Hora, Genia
Schreiber University Art Gallery, Tel Aviv University / Until You Get Out
of My Voice, Ashdod Museum of Art – Monart Center / 2013 Centrifuge,
Nathan Cummings Foundation, New York / 2012 Cabinets of Wonder

in Contemporary Art: From Astonishment to Disenchantment, Herzliya
Museum of Contemporary Art / 2011 Nimrod's Descendants, Jerusalem

Artists' House / 2010 Shelf Life, Haifa Museum of Art **Selected Grants**

and Awards: 2012 CCA (Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv) Fund for
Video Art and Experimental Film / Ministry of Culture and Sport Award
for a Young Artist

Details





הכדים הגנוזים

האחים שמיר ויעקב צים, שטר 10 לירות
ישראליות, מגילות קומראן, 1959

Jars From Qumran

Shamir Brothers and Jacob Zim,
Israeli 10 pound note showing the
Dead Sea Scrolls, 1959



הפועל העברי

אריה אלחנני, הפועל העברי, 1934
פסל ל"יריד המזרח" בנמל תל-אביב

Hebrew worker

Arieh El-Hanani, The Hebrew
Worker, 1934. Sculpture for the
Levant Fair, Tel Aviv



הסבלים

יוחנן סימון, חלוצים (פרט), 1955, עיפרון
על נייר רישום הכנה לציור-קיר בקן השומר
הצעיר בבואנוס איירס

Porters

Yohanan Simon, Pioneers, 1955
(detail). Pencil on paper, sketch
for a mural in the Buenos Aires
meeting





מנורת המשאלות

חברת וולט דיסני, אלאדין ומנורת הקסמים מן הסרט "אלאדין ומלך הגנבים", 1996

Aladdin's lamp

The Walt Disney Company, Aladdin and His Magic Lamp, from the movie Aladdin and the King of Thieves, 1996



כד עלי באבא

עלי באבא וארבעים השודדים מאיור מאת וולטר קריין, 1874

Ali Baba jar

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves from an illustration by Walter Crane, 1874



הרמב"ם

צבי נרקיס בסיועו של אריה גלזר, שטר 1000 שקלים, 1983

Maimonides

Zvi Narkiss, assisted by Arie Glazer, Israeli 1,000 shekel note, 1983



האורג

זאב רבן, שער לילקוט בצלאל (רבעון לאמנות), 1927

Weaver

Ze'ev Raban, Title page of the art quarterly Yalkut Bezael, 1927 Bezael were Sephardic Jews.





כספת ארקדיה

ניקולה פוסן, אפילו בארקדיה אני קיים, סוף שנות ה-30 של המאה ה-17, מוזיאון הלובר
בציור מתוארת חבורת רועים המגלה קבר
ועליו כתובת שהיא מִקְנָטו מורי, תזכורת
למוות, ומשמעה שהמוות שוכן גם בארקדיה,
המקום הפסטורלי והשלי מכול

Arcadia vault

Nicolas Poussin, Et in Arcadia
Ego, late 1630s. Musée du Louvre.
A group of shepherds discover
a tomb in pastoral Arcadia and
read its inscription, "I [too] am
in Arcadia" – a memento mori:
a reminder that death is ever-
present, even in the most idyllic
setting.



שרביט הרימון

רימון השנהב משרביטו של הכהן הגדול, ימי
הבית הראשון, מוזיאון ישראל, ירושלים
המוזיאון רכש את הרימון - שריד יחיד מבית-
המקדש הראשון - אך התגלה שהוא נושא
כתובת מזויפת

Pomegranate finial

Ivory finial "from the staff of the
High Priest." This ancient artifact
in the collection of the Israel
Museum was once considered the
only known object associated with
the First Temple, but its inscription
was discovered to be a forgery.



קהלת

לורנצו גיברטי, דמותו של קהלת משערי
גן-עדן (לוח "שלמה ומלכת שבא"),
בית הטבילה, פירנצה, 1425-1452
מגילת קהלת, העוסקת בהבלי הכסף והחומר -
נושא הנקשר לסוגת ציורי הוויניס - מיוחסת
לשלמה המלך

Ecclesiastes – The Preacher

Lorenzo Ghiberti, Image of the
Preacher, relief of Solomon and
the Queen of Sheba, 1425–52,
Baptistry doors, Florence. The
speaker (translated as "the
Preacher") in Ecclesiastes, who
is traditionally identified as King
Solomon, bemoans the vanity of
wealth and the material world.
Ecclesiastes is the source of the
word vanitas, used – along with
memento mori – for a type of
painting on this theme.



מגל

פטיש ומגל, סמל רוסיה הסובייטית

Sickle

Hammer and sickle, symbol of
Soviet Russia



ענף השקד

עידו מיכאלי, אוחזת ענף עץ השקד מסדרת
הבולים "אגדות אורבניות", 2005
קהלת אוחז ענף עץ השקדייה המסמל
את מטה אהרון שהצמיח פרחי שקד ונשמר
בקודש הקודשים בבית-המקדש

Almond branch

Ido Michaeli, Almond Branch
Stamp, from the "Urban Legends"
series, 2005. The Preacher holds
an almond branch, symbolizing
the miracle of Aaron's Staff, which
sprouted into an almond branch
and was kept in front of the Ark of
the Covenant.



הגולגולת והנר

פיטר קלאס, טבע דומם, 1625
ייצוג קלסי למימרה הלטינית "מִקְנָטו
מורי" ("זכור את המוות") שבאמנות זכתה
לאסרביוטסים נפוצים, כגון נר דועך וגולגולת,
שנועדו להזכיר את היות האדם בן-חלוף

Skull and candle

Pieter Claesz, Still Life, 1625. A
classic memento mori, in which
symbols such as skulls and
guttering candles are intended to
remind viewers of their mortality.





כותרת חסרה

ג'טו די בונדונה, הדמות המסמלת חמדנות
מיום הדין האחרון (פרט), 1303-1305, קפלה
ארנה, פדובה

missing title

Giotto di Bondone, Last Judgment,
1303–5 (detail), Scrovegni Chapel,
Padua



מניף הדגל

נתן רפופורט, אנדרטת מגילת האש, 1971,
יער הקדושים שבהרי ירושלים

Standard-bearer

Nathan Rapoport, Scroll of Fire
monument in the Martyrs' Forest,
Judean Hills, 1971



המרגלים

שער טיטוס (פרט), 82 לספירה, רומא
תבליט משער טיטוס מתאר איך בוזו הליגיון
הרומי את אוצרות בית- המקדש. בחירת ייצוג
זה של המנורה לסמלה של מדינת ישראל הוא
השבה סמלית של הגניבה

The Spies

Detail from the Arch of Titus,
Rome, 82 CE, showing the Roman
legion looting the Temple in
Jerusalem. Choosing the depiction
of the menorah in this relief as the
model for the emblem of the State
of Israel in a way symbolized the
return of what had been stolen.



42
43





השטיח של אלאדין

חברת וולט דיסני, השטיח המעופף מהסרט
"אלאדין", 1992

Aladdin's carpet

The Walt Disney Company,
The Flying Carpet, from movie
Aladdin, 1992



כותרת חסרה

הגדת ראשי הציפורים, בקירוב, גרמניה,
מזוואן ישראל, ירושלים
לראש הדמות "כובע היהודים" שאולצו יהודי
אירופה לחבוש בימי-הביניים

missing title

Birds' Head Hagaddah, Germany,
ca. 1300. The Israel Museum,
Jerusalem. The figure wears the
sort of hat imposed on European
Jews in the Middle Ages.



עץ גבעתי

שועל מתמתח, עידו מיכאלי, עץ גבעתי, 2008

Stretching fox

Ido Michaeli, Givati Tree, 2008



היהודי הנודד

מפעל הפיס, קריקטורת פרסומת, שנות ה-70
הדמות נכנסת לבנק מימין ויוצאת משמאל

The Wandering Jew

Israel National Lottery
advertisement, 1970s; a man
enters, crying, at right, and
exits smiling





מטאטא הרצפות

יוחנן סימון, חלוצים, 1953, מתווה לציור קיר

Sweeper

Yohanan Simon, Pioneers, 1953.

Sketch for a mural



הדלי של סבא

שלום סבא, מים, 1960, מן הסדרה
"האלמנטים"

Bucket

Shalom Sebba, Water, 1960, from
the "Elements" series



צוות הניקיון

אפרים משה ליליין, ותחינה עינינו בשוכר
לציון ברחמים, ההזמנה לקונגרס הציוני
החמישי, 1901

Cleaning crew

E. M. Lilien, "May our eyes behold
Your compassionate return to
Zion." Postcard of the 5th Zionist
Congress, 1901





גמדים

דן חסכן (דמות מצוירת לבנק הפועלים), 1960

Dwarves

Dan Haschan (Thrifty Dan), brand character of Bank Hapoalim, 1960



גמדים

דן חסכן, 2013

Dwarves

Dan Haschan, 2013



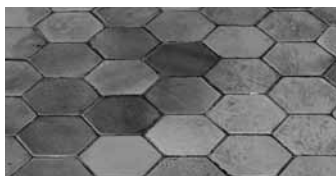


דבורה פועלת

מוזס רוודן, תגליות נוספות על הדבורים,
חיבור משנת 1679

Worker bee

From: Moses Rusden, A Further
Discovery of Bees, 1679



חלת הדבש

חברת אקרשטיין, מרצפות משושים
רצפת הבנק בנויה כחלת דבש

Honeycomb

Ackerstein floor tiles. The bank's
floor has a honeycomb pattern.



מלכת הדבורים

מלך מצרים העליונה ומצרים התחתונה,
2613-2686 לפני הספירה
ההירוגליף בצורת דבורה מסמן את שמו
של המלך

Queen bee

King of Upper and Lower Egypt,
2686–2613 BCE. This hieroglyph
signifies the king's name.



המגף

ג'ק לונדון, עקב הברזל, 1908
ספר המתאר מאבק פועלים שמדוכא על ידי
כוחות שוק רבי-עוצמה

The boot

Front cover of: The Iron Heel,
Jack London's novel describing the
oppressed workers' struggle against
rampant capitalism, first published
in 1908





נושאות המפתח

אישה פלסטינית אחוזת מפתח סמל
לזכות השיבה

Keyholders

Woman holding a key to a house,
symbol of the Palestinian right
of return



נושאות המפתח

יועצת ההשקעות יפעת כרמון במסע פרסום
של בנק הפועלים, 2010

Keyholders

Investment advisor Yifat Carmon
in a Bank Hapoalim advertising
campaign, 2010



הגזבר הגדול

קריקטורה אנטישמית מהמאה ה-20

Chief Treasurer

20th-century anti-Semitic caricature



52
53





הסוכן א

עידו מיכאלי, הסוכן א (דיוקן עצמי), 2011

Agent A

Ido Michaeli, Agent A
(Self-Portrait), 2011



נציגת האוצר

טליה לינק, אוצר החיים, 2010
ספר עצות דיגיטלי

Treasury representative

Talia Link, The Treasure of Life,
2010. Digital self-help book



ברל כצנלסון

מנהיג ציוני; מייסד בנק הפועלים

Katznelson

Berl Katznelson, Zionist leader who established Bank Hapoalim (literally, the workers' bank)



יוסיף סטלין

שמש העמים, שליטה השני של ברית- המועצות (מאמצע שנות ה-20 ועד מותו ב-1953). הדיוקן לקוח מגליליה קומוניסטית

Stalin

Joseph Stalin, totalitarian leader of the USSR from the mid-1920s until his death in 1953. Image taken from a Communist postcard



חיים ויצמן

נשיאה הראשון של מדינת ישראל, לקוח משטר של 5 שקלים, 1978. עיצוב: פאול קור ואדריאן זנגר

Weizmann

Chaim Weizmann, first President of the State of Israel. Image taken from the Israeli 5 shekel note, 1978, designed by Paul Kor and Adrian Senger



ולדימיר איליץ לנין

מנהיג מהפכת אוקטובר 1917 ומייסד ברית-המועצות

Lenin

V. I. Lenin, leader of the October 1917 Bolshevik revolution and founder of the USSR



הקיסר אספסיאנוס

דיוקן הקיסר הרומי לקוח ממטבע יהודה השבויה, 69 לספירה

Vespasian

Titus Flavius Vespasianus, Roman Emperor, 69–79 CE. Image taken from a Judea Capta coin



דוד בן גוריון

ראש הממשלה הראשון של מדינת ישראל, הדיוקן לקוח משטר של 50 שקל, 1978. עיצוב: פאול קור ואדריאן זנגר

Ben-Gurion

David Ben-Gurion, first Prime Minister of the State of Israel. Image taken from the Israeli 50 shekel note, 1978, designed by Paul Kor and Adrian Senger



זאב תאודור הרצל

חוזה המדינה, הדיוקן לקוח משטר של 10 שקלים, 1978. עיצוב: פאול קור ואדריאן זנגר

Herzl

Theodor Herzl, Central European Jew who founded political Zionism.

Image taken from the Israeli 10 shekel note, 1978, designed by Paul Kor and Adrian Senger



פסל למסו אשורי

706 לפני הספירה

Lamassu

Sculpture of Lamassu, a protective figure placed at the entrance to Assyrian cities and palaces, 706 BCE

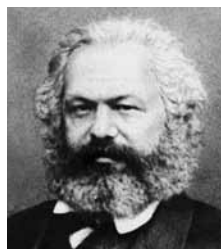


הברון רוטשילד

הוגה סוציאליסטי ציוני

Rothschild

Baron (Edmond Benjamin James) de Rothschild, Zionist philanthropist and member of a Jewish banking dynasty



קרל מרקס

הוגה-דעות ומהפכן ממוצא יהודי שעבודתו הניחה את היסודות להבנת כוחות השוק ופעולתם על החברה

Marx

Karl Marx, revolutionary thinker of Jewish origin whose work introduced a new understanding of economic power relations at work in society



נחמן סירקין

הוגה סוציאליסטי ציוני

Syrkin

Nachman Syrkin, political thinker and founder of socialist Labor Zionism



לאון טרוצקי

מהפכן והוגה דעות קומוניסט, מייסד הצבא האדום; הוגלה מברית-המועצות בימי סטלין

Trotsky

Leon Trotsky, revolutionary leader and ideologue who was expelled under Stalin



56
57





מניף הלבנה

גינתר נגל, עוזר להיטלר לבנות - קנה סחורה
גרמנית, ברלין, 1932-1945

The brick-lifter

Günther Nagel, Help Hitler Build –
Buy German Goods, Berlin, 1932–45



סמל מדינת ישראל

האחים שמיר, סמל מדינת ישראל, 1949

Emblem of Israel

Shamir Brothers, Emblem of the
State of Israel, 1949



סמל ירושלים

אגודת הציירים הירושלמים לגרפיקה
שימושית, סמל העיר ירושלים, 1949

Emblem of Jerusalem

Society of Applied Graphic Artists
in Jerusalem, Emblem of the City of
Jerusalem, 1949



בונה הסמל

האחים שמיר, כרות יום העצמאות לכבוד 1
במאי, 1952

The emblem-maker

Shamir Brothers, Poster for
Independence Day and May Day
("Israel's Independence through the
Worker's Independence"), 1952





לחיצת היד בחלון

סמל כל ישראל חברים, תבליט עץ על דלת
בית-הכנסת במקווה ישראל, 1895

Handshake in the window

Emblem of the Alliance israélite
universelle, wood relief on the
synagogue door, Mikveh Israel, 1895



ראש הצריח

טוביה כהן, גוף האדם כבית, רישום מן החיבור
המדעי והפילוסופי "מעשה טוביה", ראה אור
בפעם הראשונה בוונציה, 1707

Top of tower

Tobias Kohn, The Human Body as
a House, drawing from his scientific
and philosophical work Ma'aseh
Tovyah, first published Venice, 1707



כיפת הצריח

ארמן פיליפ ברטוס, פרדריק ג'ון קיסלר,
חיכל הספר, 1965
מקום משכנן של המגילות הגנוזות מוויאון
ישראל, ירושלים

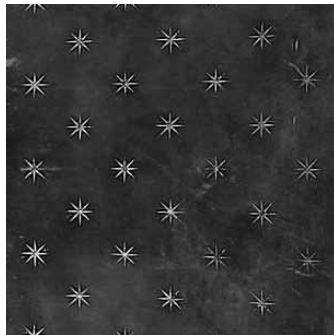
Cupola at the top of the tower

Frederick Kiesler and Armand
Bartos, The Shrine of the Book
at The Israel Museum, Jerusalem,
built to house the Dead Sea Scrolls,
completed 1965



60
61





שמים של כוכבים

ג'וטו די בונדונה, תקרת הכוכבים, 1303-1305,
קפלה ארנה, פדובה

Starry sky

Giotto di Bondone, Starry Ceiling,
1303–5, Scrovegni Chapel, Padua



הינשוף והעורב

עידו מיכאלי, בלי כותרת (צלחת), 2008

מטבע יווני, אתונה,

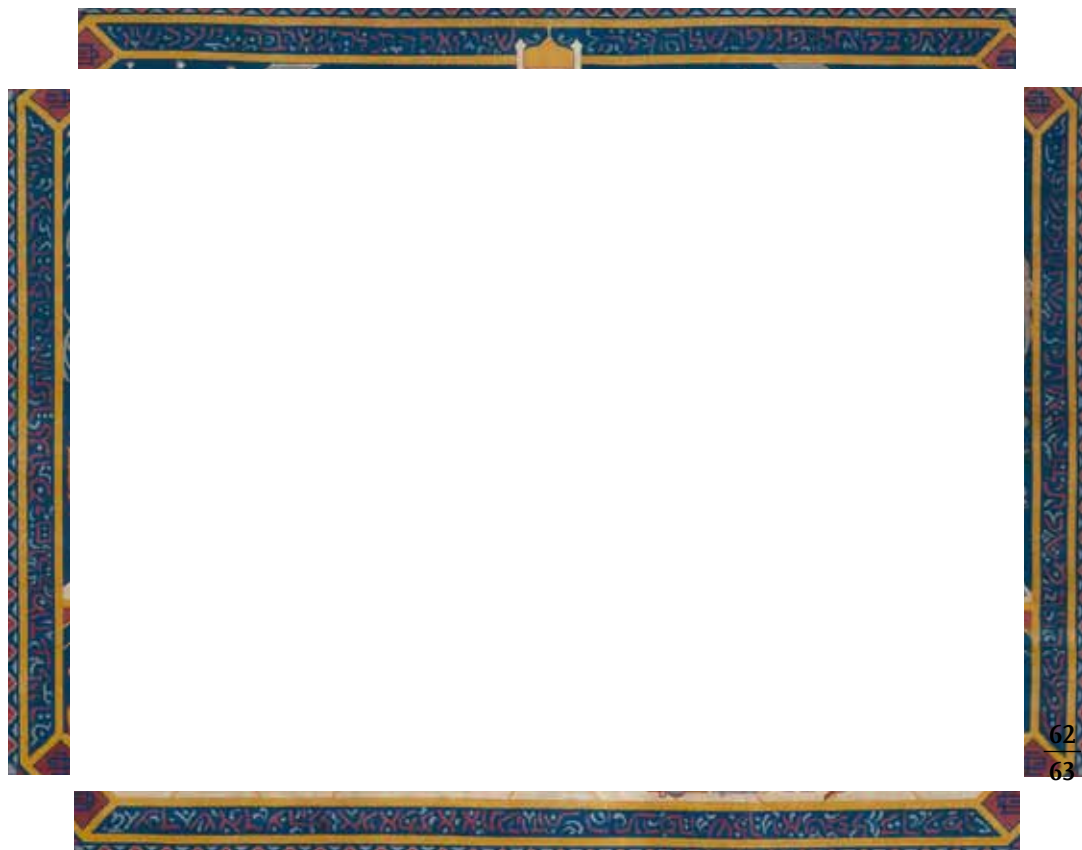
449-454 לפני הספירה

בצדו השני של המטבע דמותה של
האלה אתנה

Owl and raven

Ido Michaeli, Untitled plate, 2008

Greek coin, Athens, 449–454 BCE.
The other side shows the goddess
Athena.



62
63

I



II

II

עמ

חתימת האמן עידו מיכאלי בראשי תיבות

I. M.

Artist's signature: Hebrew initials of
Ido Michaeli's name

I

המוח

יצחק דרורי ואילן בכר, המוח, ביוגרפיה של
יצחק דרורי, עמ' 323, ספריית מעריב, 1988
מילותיו של דרורי, שפרץ לבנק הפועלים
ב-1985, מעטרת את מסגרת השטיח: "נגעתי
בכל חלק מגופה של הכלה שלי [הכספת]
ואמרתי לה באהבה: 'עכשיו אני צריך לפרק
אותך לגורמים וללמוד עליך עד שאדע הכול.
אני אמצא את נקודות התורפה שלך ואטפל
בך כמו במלכה'. המשכתי ללטף אותה ולשחק
במנעוליה"

The Brain

Yitzhak Drori and Ilan Behar, The
Brain, Hebrew autobiography of
Drori, Sifriyat Ma'ariv, 1988, p. 323.

The following words by Drori, who
broke into a Bank Hapoalim vault
in 1985, are written in the carpet's
border: "I touched every part of
my bride [the vault] and lovingly
said to her, 'Now I need to take you
apart and study you until I know
everything. I will find your weak
spots and I will treat you like a
queen.' I went on caressing her and
playing with her locks . . ."



יצחק דרורי, החשוד המרכזי בשוד הכספות
בבנק הפועלים במשפטו, צילום: סקופ 80,
1985

Yitzhak Drori, prime suspect in the
Bank Hapoalim break-in, at his trial.
Photo: Scoop 80, 1985































