


# THE JERUSALEM POST

## BRINGING MODERN ISRAELI ART TO INDIA

The Petah Tikva Museum of Art celebrates 25 years of Israel-India relations with a spectacular show at the New Delhi National Gallery of Modern Art.

BY HAGAY HACOHEN / MAY 14, 2018 20:59 



*NAHALAL 2018 by Gal Weinstein. (photo credit: NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART NEW DELHI)*

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**W**hen Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Israel last July the world was moved to see the two leaders take a stroll on the beach after sharing a refreshing glass of desalinated water, another field in which India hopes to learn from Israeli technology. Today the growth of diplomatic and cultural relations between India and Israel can be witnessed by art lovers keen to take in the Israeli art now on display at the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi.

Titled "To the End of the Land" and jointly curated by director of the Petah Tikva Art Museum of Art Drorit Gur Arie and associate curator Or Tshuva, the show presents to the Indian public works by Yael Bartana, Anisa Ashkar, Sharon Yaari and Sigalit Landau, to name but a few among those selected to present modern Israeli art to the subcontinent.

In a phone interview with Gur Arie she shared a little of what went into the challenge, and the excitement, of presenting a whole generation to Indian art lovers.

"We chose to deal with agriculture, advanced technologies, earth and water because these issues are at the core of Israeli-Indian relations. Many of the artists currently living and working in Israel are somehow dealing with land – whether through its relations to issues of borders, territory and conflict, or through environmental, social, economic and religious questions, which can be all manifested through it," she says, "there are Indian art collectors who purchase Israeli artwork but they are relatively few [as] the exposure of Indians to Israeli art is not extensive."

Both India and Israel are ancient civilizations that are dealing with a fairly new political situation of independence from colonial rule. How did that influence the choice of the works presented?

"Modern Indian art is fantastically multi-sided when it deals with the issue of the West and in our thinking about the exhibition we wanted to touch on what is close to both these situations. Identity and boundaries, center and periphery, a globalization process that is taking over not only the West but also Asia. When I held conversations with National Gallery of Modern Art Director Shri Adwaita Charan Gadanayak, he very much wanted us to touch on the theme of spirituality. After all, religion holds a major role in Indian society. It is not only visible through the great number of temples, but also affects important aspects of everyday life and politics. New Delhi is surrounded by temples. So we brought in an art-video by Dafna Shalom in which women sing the Yom Kippur prayers and desert photographs by Joseph Dadoune in which a thorn is growing out of the pages of a book," say Arie.

The exhibition addresses the topic of rituals in video works by Orit Raff, which shows her pouring sugar into the sea to make it sweet; a sisyphic task. Another work is by Dadoune burying trees in the sands of the desert.

"One does not need to be familiar with the entire depth of Zionist thought to appreciate such images," says Arie.

Other works on display include David Adika's creation of fruit which is wrapped until it becomes like a diamond. Yael Bartana filmed a journey to Andromeda Rock on the coast of Jaffa during which an olive tree is replaced by an Israeli flag which is then replaced by an olive tree.

"Sharon Yaari presents photographs that show the Kinneret in purple- pink, as a very soft and romantic looking work shot in 1969, soon after the Six Day War. And the relationship between nature and nationalism including critical works by Arab-Israeli artist Anisa Ashkar, who writes on her face and body in Arabic and treats this feeling of being locked outside the discourse."

*"To the ends of the Land" opened on April 28. The National Gallery of Modern Art, Jaipur House, India Gate, New Delhi, India,*